

Full Length Research Paper

Effect of quality work life relationship on occupational stresses among Bu-alisina university staff in Hamadan province, IR Iran

Behzad Imani^{1*}, Arezo Karampourian², Zohreh Ghomian³, Mahmoud Taajobi⁴

¹Hamedan University of medical sciences, Hamedan

²Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences

³Department of Health, Safety and Environment, Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, Iran

⁴Bu -Ali Sina University .Hamedan .Iran

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Quality of Work Life (QWL) is a comprehensive program leading to promotion of productivity, performance and satisfaction of staffs. Occupational stress is also an individual's physical, mental and emotional reactions which are experienced due to working life needs and changes therefore, this research aims to determine the relationship of QWL and occupational stresses of Bu-Ali Sina university staff. The study is of cross sectional-descriptive type carried out in 2012. The research population consisted Bu-Ali Sina university staffs of whom 178 were included in the research as sample. The data were collected through self-expression standard questionnaire of determining QWL and questionnaire of classification of individual's stress (Holms and Roy). These two questionnaires were distributed among the individuals simultaneously and after they were filled, they were collected. To test the hypotheses, Pearson correlation coefficient and Lambda test were used. The results showed that the level QWL in the population of the study was at the medium and there was a positive significant relationship between QWL and staffs' education ($p=0.001$) and between QWL and staffs' working experience ($p=0.044$). Based on Pearson correlation test, there was obtained a significant relationship between score of QWL mean and mean of individuals' stress. ($p=0.004$). In another word, the greater the individuals' QWL, the less they experience stress. Regarding the research findings and confirmation of relationship of QWL and occupational stress, managers can improve the level of QWL through cooperative programs and team working, making relationships and attention to personnel's needs and expectations, job enrichment and staff empowerment to reduce occupational stress and increase efficacy and productivity of human resource.

Keywords: QWL Occupational stress, satisfaction.

Introduction

In contemporary management, the concept of QWL has turned into a common social topical over the world (Martel and Dupuis 2006). QWL is a multi-faceted, relative concept influenced by time, place, and social and individual values and depends on individuals' view and

approach to life at individual level (Saraji-Nasl and Dargahi 2006) so that QWL can be classified into two categories; objective and subjective (Flippo 2008). In fact, QWL is a multidimensional structure containing concepts such as treatment services and welfare. In fact, QWL has a multidimensional structure containing concepts such as welfare actions and treatment services, incentive schemes, job proportion, job security, job design, job importance and individual status in organization, Provision of growth participation in

*Corresponding Author email: behzadiman@yahoo.com

decision-making, conflict and job ambiguity reduction, and reward systems (Saraji-Nasl and Dargahi 2006). In the past few decades, individual life (non-working) was focused on. (Mohebbali 2005), while proponents of QWL theory search for systems and programs to help the staff make a balance between working life and personal life (Akdere M (2006). The program of QWL consists of any improvement in organizational culture which promotes growth of individuals in organization. (Martocchio *et al* (2009) .It means a process by which all organization members affect the decisions which influence their job and environment through open and appropriate communication channels. Therefore, they become more satisfied with their job and work stress decreases. (Gordon (1993). The research findings show that implementation of this program reduces the number of staffs' complaints, absenteeism rate, regulatory actions, and increase staffs' positive attitude and their participation in suggestion system program. (Shareef and Reginald 2003). On the other hand, meeting the staff needs leads to improvement and long term efficacy of organization (Danna and Griffin, (1999). Dana and Griffin (1999) believe that QWL acts as a pyramid in which life satisfaction (top), job satisfaction (middle) and satisfaction with other work-related aspects such as salary, coworkers and observers. Consequently, the domain of QWL goes beyond the job satisfaction (CheRroso, 2006). Nowadays, most of experimental researches carried out on QWL have affirmed new prospective of job stresses and job-related concepts. (Holmes, 2001). One of the factors influencing the individuals' performance in organizations is stress which threatens the health of most people. (Rezaian A (2004) Therefore, stress has become one of the main topics in organizational behavior (Lee and Wong (2002). Stress is physical, mental and emotional reactions which are experienced due to individuals' life needs change in various scales. The individuals' response to life change varies. Positive stress can be a motivator while negative stress can be created when these changes defeat the person. (Randall and Elizabeth (1994).Stress is directly related to job satisfaction and person's performance, and is believed to be one of the influencing factors on health, safety and QWL. Damage compensation and costs related to diseases and complications from work stress have forced managers to have a special attention to stress. (Sundberg and Palmqvist (2009).

Methodology

This is a cross sectional-descriptive study of correlative type. The research sample is all the staffs of Bu-Ali Sina University of whom 178 were chosen to participate in the research voluntarily. Data were collected through standard questionnaire of QWL and that of classifying individual's stress (Holmes and Rahe, 1997). QWL

questionnaire was developed from walton's components with some modifications. Holmes and Rahe (1997) showed that the events which change the life can make individuals susceptible to mental diseases. QWL questionnaire consisted of two parts: the first part contains individual features such as sex, education, marital status, age and working experience and the second part contains 21 items in four-rank scale classifying QWL in very low, low, relative, complete. The staffs had to answer the questions. The stress classification questionnaire had 45 questions to which the respondents marked the stresses he/she had in the previous years. Finally, the total score of stress for the previous year was calculated. To determine the reliability of the questionnaire, Chronbach alpha method was used with the result obtained to be 0.92 for job stress and 0.78 for QWL questionnaire. Data were analyzed with descriptive and inferential statistics methods and pearson correlation coefficient and lambda test were used to assess the relationship of job stress and dimensions of QWL. Spss16 was used to do the analysis.

Results

Based on the results, majority of participants were made (67.4 %), with bachelor degree (41%) and married (82%). Most of the participants were in the age range of 30-40 years old (58.4 %) with working experience of 10-20 years (28.7%). (Table 1). Lambda test showed that the variable of QWL does not have a significant relationship with sex, marital status and age while the average of QWL has a significant correlation with education level and, working experience (table 2). Regarding the results of staffs' QWL score average was medium (2.8) and staffs' stress level was high (167.75). Based on pearson correlation test in table 3, there is a significant relationship between QWL scores and staffs' job stress. From graph 1, this relationship is shown to be linearly inverse, meaning increasing the job stress reduces QWL.

Discussion

The present study examines the relationship between some individual features and stress with QWL. The findings of this study are in some cases compatible and in some incompatible with other international studies. Based on the findings of this study, there was not a significant relationship between sex and QWL. The results of the study by Sundberg and Palmqvist (2009) and Kintner (2008) confirm this. They did not find any relationship between sex and QWL (16-1). In the present research, there was a significant relationship between QWL and education level [$p=0.001$]. Increasing education level and having higher job status made the staffs' QWL

Table 1: Frequency distribution of research units

Sum	Variables	Frequency percent	No	No	Percent
Sex	female	32/6	58	178	100
	male	67/4	120		
Education	Under diploma	4/5	8	178	100
	diploma	15/7	28		
	Association of art	25/3	45		
	bachelor	41	73		
	postgraduates	13/5	24		
Marital status	married	82	146	178	100
	single	18	32		
Age(years)	20-30	18/5	33	178	100
	30-40	58/4	104		
	40-50	23	41		
Working experience years	> 5	20/2	36	178	100
	5-10	26/4	47		
	10-20	28/7	51		
	20-30	24/7	44		

Table 2: comparison of QWL in terms of respective variables

Variables	variables	QWL		Test results
		Sd	Average	
Sex	Male	0/10	2/73	Lambda value=.135 P=.215
	Female	0/83	3/03	
Education	Under diploma	0/15	1/83	Lambda value=.333 P=.001
	Diploma	0/10	2/80	
	Association of art	1/46	2/78	
Marital status	Post graduates	0/09	2/91	Lambda value=.000 P=1
	Married	0/11	2/90	
Age(years)	Single	0/87	2/12	Lambda value=.178 P=.131
	20-30	0/30	2/41	
	30-40	0/03	2/86	
Working experience years	40-50	0/11	3/11	Lambda value=.217 P=.041
	> 5	0/08	2/12	
	5-10	0/08	2/80	
	10-20	0/07	2/01	
	20-30	1/01	3/14	

Table 3: comparison of relationship between QWL scores and staffs` job stress

	SD	Average	Pearson correlation
QWL	0/001	2/8	P=.000
Job stress	0/908	167/75	

more favorable. In general, having an occupation helped the people to promote their QWL. As Kintner (2008) stated the employed have better QWL than the unemployed. (Kalpaklioglu and Baccloplu (2008). Among

the employed, those with higher level of education can have better QWL due to better job. Kalpaklioglu and Baccloplu (2008) found a significant relationship between education level and QWL (Alvin *et al.*, 2009).

In contrast to our study, in a study by Kalpaklioglu and Baccloplu (2008) there was a significant relationship between age and QWL of asthma patients. (Alvin *et al* (2009). It seems that this difference originates from the healthy and patient population in the studies. In our research, there was not observed any significant relationship between material status and QWL Alrin *et al* (2009) point out that supportive resources influence patients' conditions for recovery and the patients living alone have unfavorable QWL. (Lees and Kearns (2005).). the difference is due to the effects of marital status on QWL compared with the QWL in disease. The results of our study showing a more favorable QWL with the increase of staffs' working experience is consistent with that of Leese and Keems (2005). They pointed the greater the working experience is, the greater the satisfaction and QWL for staffs. (Khaghanizadeh *et al* (2008). In this research, there was seen to be an inverse linear relationship between staffs' QWL scores and job stress. ($p=0.000$). Increasing staffs' job stress reduces the QWL and vice versa. The study of Khaghani Zadeh *et al* (2008) shows there is a significant inverse relationship between job stress and QWL in that every unit of increase in staffs' job stress score reduced their QWL score at 0.3 unit.

Conclusion

Regarding the research findings and confirmation of inverse relationship of QWL and occupational stress, managers can improve the level of QWL through cooperative programs and team working ,making relationships and attention to personnel's needs and expectations ,job enrichment and staff empowerment to reduce occupational stress and increase efficacy and productivity of human resource while providing opportunity for staff to continue their education during their job or job-related training programs.

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