

Quality of Work Life of Mental Health Professionals in Albania

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Abstract

Numerous studies conducted on the quality of working life have shown that a high quality of work life leads to a higher productivity of the organization, and higher performance, motivation, commitment, pride, satisfaction of employees at work. The subjects of this study are mental health workers in Albania. This article reviews the meaning of quality of work life and analyses constructs of quality of work life based on Walton model. The constructs of quality of work life discussed are, adequate and fair compensation, safe and healthy working conditions, opportunity to use and develop human capacities, future opportunity for continued growth and security, social integration in the work organization, constitutionalism in the work organization, work and total life space, the social relevance of work life. This is mainly a quantitative study, with some elements of qualitative methods. Specifically, are used the scale measuring satisfaction with the quality of working life (adapted from the model of Walton), interviews and observations. At the conclusion of the study came out that overall mental health workers general are satisfied with their quality of work life. Quality of work life is positively related to all its constructs.

Keywords: *quality of work life; mental health worker; adequate and fair compensation; safe and healthy working conditions; human capacities; social integration;*

1. Introduction

Quality of work life is a very important element of an employee's life. A high quality of work life would bring many benefits to the employees and the organization itself. Mental health services location in Albania are located in four regions of the country, Tirana, Elbasan, Vlorë and Shkodra. Services are provided by psychiatric hospitals, protected homes and community mental health centers. The study aims to assess the satisfaction of Albanian mental health workers with quality of work life taking into consideration all its dimensions. Therefore, it aims to identify weaknesses and strengths of employees' life, and to provide specific recommendations to improve the situation.

Quality of work life is a widespread notion, with specific meanings in different countries. Often the quality of work life contains any conditions required in a particular organization to motivate employees to give their work more than the minimum of care and effort (Stern, 1982, p. 121). Despite being in different time, different researchers have conceptualized and studied the quality of life at work in many different forms, we should note that this conception, not only depends on the viewpoints and scholarly studies in different historical periods, but also on perceptions, viewpoints and attitudes of the employees themselves. Thus, the specifics of the workforce in different historical contexts have also led the ways researchers have examined and perceived quality of work life. In addition, it should be noted that employees who perform different jobs could have different meanings and attitudes with regard to quality of work life. Different segments of the workforce have different interpretations of the meaning that the quality of working life have for them (Hanson & Lubin, 1995, p. 81). Organizations with a high quality of work life will have high customer satisfaction, which in turn, will provide higher growth and profitability (Lau & May, 1998, p. 211). Quality of work life has a positive influence on esprit de corps, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment among employees (Lee, Singhapakid, & Sirgy, 2007). The quality of work life dimensions many include the SHE (safety, health and environment) dimensions but also others such rewards, job security, growth opportunities, recognition and others. Positive results of quality of work life have been supported by a number of studies, including reduced absenteeism, lower turnover, work pride and improved job satisfaction (Steenkamp, & Schor, 2008, p. 90). Improving quality of work life could conceivably yield the following kinds of economic benefits to employers: Lower wage scales; Reduction in direct cost of training due to reduction in turnover; Increase in output per employee-hour, at a given standard of quality; Increase in quality of output (Stern, 1982, p.64).

2. Literature review

2.1 Definitions of quality of work

Below are presented some of the most popular definitions of quality of work life listed in chronological order.

Year	Author	Concept of quality of work life	Source
1977	Suttle	Is the extent to which members of the labor organization are able to satisfy important personal needs through their experience at work	Kaila, 2006, p. 430
1979	American Society of Training and Development	Is the extent to which employees are able to meet their important personal and at work	Geet, Deshpande, & Deshpande, 2009, p. 2.12
1980	Frederick	The degree to which members of the labor organization are able to satisfy important personal needs through their experiences in the organization	Frederick, 2002, p. 272
1987	Beukema	The degree to which employees are able to actively shape their work in accordance with their options, interests and needs.	Weert, Dulmen, & Bensing, 2008, p. 90
1990	Kiernan, & Knutson	It refers to the level of individual satisfaction with the role of his \ her relationship with the tasks in the workplace	Schalock, & College, 1997. p. 64-65
1995	Wagner III & Hollenbeck	The degree to which the work and the members of an organization facilitate the completion of important personal needs and interests.	Wagner III & Hollenbeck, 1995
1998	Lau & May	Conditions and favorable working environments that support and promote employee satisfaction by providing employees bonuses, job security and opportunities for growth	Lau & May, 1998, p. 213
2001	Khosrowpour	Represents the fulfillment of human needs at work. A high degree of consistency between job characteristics (duties) and a limited group of human needs (including health and the social profiles) can improve both the quality of working life and the profitability and efficiency of the system.	Khosrowpour, 2001, p. 378
2001	Sirgy, Efraty, Siegel, & Lee	Employee satisfaction with a range of needs through resources, activities and outcomes arising from participation in the workplace.	Sirgy, Efraty, Siegel, & Lee, 2001, p. 242
2010	Pizam	Is related to the issues of rewarding or enjoyable time spent in the work environment.	Pizam, 2010. p. 551

2.2 Components of quality of work life

Quality of working life takes different meanings for different segments of the working population (Tayler, 1978, p. 155). However, in historical perspective are noticed different conceptions on the components of quality of work life.

Year	Author	Dimensions of Quality of work life	Source
1973	Walton	Safe environment and healthy workplace, the opportunity to use and develop human capacities, future opportunities for growth and security, the integration of work and life, participation and work design	Walton, 1973, p. 15
1976	Glasier	Job security, good working conditions, adequate and fair compensation.	Islam, 2011, p. 344)
1979	Guest	Economic rewards, safety working conditions, organizational and inter personal relationships and inner meaning in one's life.	Guest, 1979, p. 76-77
1980	Baumgartel	Safety at work, wage equality, individualism and democracy in the workplace	Baumgartel, 1980, p. 247
1984	Mirvis & Lawer	Safe working environment, fair wages, fair employment opportunities and opportunities for advancement	Mirvis & Lawler, 1984, p. 197-212
1984	Straw & Heckscher	Safety at work, the best reward systems, higher wages, opportunity for growth and among other participating groups.	Ahmadi & Salavati, 2012, p. 236
1995	Guillory & Galindo	Opportunity for creativity, self-motivation, self-management, pride in work, organizational involvement, loyalty and self-actualization	Guillory & Galindo, 1995, p. 21

Although the conception of Walton for dimensions of quality of work life is one of the earliest, his conceptions summarize almost all dimensions described by other researcher in later years.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 The questions and hypotheses of the study

Q 1: What is the level of satisfaction with quality of work life among mental health staffs?

Q 2: What is the level of satisfaction with each of constructs of quality of work life?

H 1: There is a significant relationship between personal factors (age, status, education level, work position, work experience) and overall satisfaction with quality of work life.

H 2. Satisfaction with adequate and fair compensation is positively related to overall satisfaction with quality of work life.

H 3. Satisfaction with safe and health working environment is positively related to overall satisfaction with quality of work life.

H 4. Satisfaction with opportunity to use and develop human capacities is positively related to overall satisfaction with quality of work life.

H 5. Satisfaction with future opportunity for continued growth and security is positively related to overall satisfaction with quality of work life.

H 6. Satisfaction with social integration in the work organization is positively related to overall satisfaction with quality of work life.

H 7. Satisfaction with constitutionalism in the work organization is positively related to overall satisfaction with quality of work life.

H 8. Satisfaction with work and total life space is positively related to overall satisfaction with quality of work life.

H 9. Satisfaction with the social relevance of work life is positively related to overall satisfaction with quality of work life.

3.2 Participants

The subjects of this study are mental health professionals employed in psychiatric hospitals psychiatric hospitals, protected homes and community mental health centers in Albania located in four regions of the country, Tirana, Elbasan, Vloora and Shkodra. Despite the study aimed to include all employees, at the end 231 employees participated in study.

3.3 Instrument

The study used quantitative research methods as well as qualitative ones. The necessary information is collected through measurement scale, natural observation and interviews. The methodology developed in this work was initially based on bibliographical review of research of the main factors and criteria in quality of work life considerate in literature. Quality of work life was assessed by using Walton's scale, a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from "Strongly dissatisfied" (value of 1) to "Strongly satisfied" (value of 5). The entire scale involves 30 polar affirmations regarding quality of work life and is reliable enough (Cronbach's Alpha $\alpha=0.9$). Also the 8 subscales are reliable enough

Subscales	Cronbach's Alpha α
1. Adequate and fair compensation	0.849
2. Safe and health working environment	0.720
3. Opportunity to use and develop human capacities	0.735
4. Future opportunity for continued growth and security	0.748
5. Social integration in the work organization	0.695
6. Constitutionalism in the work organization	0.751
7. Work and total life space	0.712
8. Social relevance of work life	0.677
Entire Scale	0.900

4. Findings and discussion

4.1 Demographic variables

The collected data were analyzed using the SPSS 16 package. The analysis reveals that the respondents were aged 21-30 years (23%), 31-40 years (21%), 41-50 years (33%) and over 51 years (23%). Marital status was singles (19%), married (73.3%), divorced/separated (5.3%) and widow (2.2%). Their education was secondary education (41%) bachelor degree (18%), 4 years higher education (19%), and master's degree (17%), PhD (4%). Their positions were physicians (7%), psychologists (7%), social workers (8%), staff nurses (50%), and custodians (14%), sanitary (13%). In this study majority (74%) of respondents are female and remaining (26%) are male.

4.2 Level of satisfaction with quality of work life

The research questions is: "What is the level of satisfaction with quality of work life among mental health staffs?". Based on the five-point scale used, the minimum quality of work life rating was 1.87 and a maximum of 5.53. The mean quality of work life rating was 3.39, with a standard deviation of SD=0.48 implying that employees in general are satisfied with their quality of work life

4.3 Level of satisfaction with conceptual categories of quality of work life

The research question: "What is the level of satisfaction with each of constructs of quality of work life?" For initial analysis of the 30 questions considered in this study had been grouped in 8 criteria idealized by Walton (1973). For each criterion the average of the questions of the research referring to the criterion had been calculated and is presented in Table 1. This table indicates the mean ratings for the conceptual categories of quality of work life.

Conceptual categories of quality of work life	Mean	SD	Level of satisfaction
Adequate and fair compensation	3.06	1	Neutral
Safe and health working environment	3.04	.68	Neutral
Opportunity to use and develop human capacities	3.56	.60	Moderate
Future opportunity for continued growth and security	2.99	.91	Neutral
Social integration in the organization	3.80	.65	Moderate
Constitutionalism in the work organization	3.59	.66	Moderate
Work and the total space of life	3.52	.72	Moderate
Social relevance of the work life	3.55	.66	Moderate

In general employees are satisfied at a moderate level with: Social integration in the organization, Constitutionalism in the work organization, Opportunity to use and develop human capacities, Social relevance of the work life, Work and the total space of life. For the other factors such as, Adequate and fair compensation, Safe and health working environment, Future opportunity for continued growth and security, they are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. But considering the data from the interviews, it can be said that in general the employees have a tendency to be not satisfied with these factors.

4.4 Correlation of quality of work life

Based on the conceptual framework of the present study, the quality of work life was independent variables of some dependent variables some called conceptual categories and other demographic variables. The findings reversed that the personal factors: age, status, education level, work position, work experience were not relate to the quality of work life at 0.01 level. Thus, the research hypothesis Nr 1 "There is a significant relationship between personal factors (age, status, education level, work position, work experience) and overall satisfaction with quality of work life" was rejected. The descriptive statistics, correlations of quality of work life and other predictor variables are shown in Table 2. The findings indicate that the quality of work life is positively related to all conceptual categories of quality of work life.

Correlation between quality of work life and its dimensions	Pearson Correlation (r)	Sig (2-tailed) (p)	Level of relation
Adequate and fair compensation	.553	.000	Moderate positive
Safe and health working environment	.788	.000	Strong positive
Opportunity to use and develop human capacities	.755	.000	Strong positive
Future opportunity for continued growth and security	.642	.000	Moderate positive
Social integration in the organization	.620	.000	Moderate positive
Constitutionalism in the work organization	.795	.000	Strong positive
Work and the total space of life	.654	.000	Moderate positive
Social relevance of the work life	.530	.000	Moderate positive

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level and the results of Table 2 show that all correlations are significant ($r < 0.01$). The findings indicate that the quality of work life is positively related to all conceptual categories of quality of work life. There is a strong positive relationship between satisfaction with quality of work life and Constitutionalism in the work organization, Safe and health working environment, Opportunity to use and develop human capacities.

5. Conclusion

Even it can't be said that mental health workers in Albania are dissatisfied with their quality of work life, it can't be said that they are satisfied. The most problematic areas for the employees are the issues of compensation, safety of working environment, opportunity for continued growth and security. Albanian is a country in development, so there issues are perceived as problematic even in other public sectors. The base salary of mental health workers is low, but they receive an additional salary for their night shifts. At the end of the month they receive a moderate compensation, but have sacrifice a lot of nights without sleep. Only 18% of employees are in general satisfied with the security equipments, individual and collective protection provided by their company. About 40% of employees are not satisfied with their working conditions, with the use of technology in their tasks. Only about 30% of employees are satisfied with their opportunity of professional growth, with the trainings they participate, and with the incentives that their institution give to them to study. All the 8 conceptual categories of quality of work life determine the satisfaction with quality of work life in the organization. They are positively correlated with quality of work life. So by improving these factors, quality of work life in mental health institutions can be enhanced. It is important to notice that there is a strong positive relationship between satisfaction with quality of work life and safe and health working environment and at the same time the employees are not very satisfied with their working environment. So it is strongly recommended to improve this factor. Quality of work life is the shared responsibility not only of the management and employees, but also by the society.

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