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Quality of Work Life: A Dynamic Multidimensional Construct at Work Place – Part II

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Abstract

Quality of Work Life is the part of overall quality of life that is influenced by work. It's more than just Job Satisfaction or work happiness, but the widest context in which an employee would evaluate is their work environment. It's important because a good quality of working life is associated with better retention and lower absence. Quality of Work Life matters to employees. It refers to the stresses and strains caused by a lack of equilibrium between work-related tasks and non-work related tasks like maintaining family relationships. Most importantly, people make choices about who to work for and whether to stay based on judgments about the quality of the working environments provided by their employers. All these aspects depend upon several indicators, which are highlighted through this paper.

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Quality of Work Life is important since there is evidence demonstrating the nature of work environment which is related to satisfaction of employees and work-related behaviours (Greenhaus, Bedian & Mossholder, 1987). Quality of Work Life is also found to affect employee's work responses in terms of organisational identification, Job Satisfaction, Job Involvement, Job Effort, Job Performance, intention to quit, organisational turnover and personal alienation (Efraty & Sirgy, 1990).

Quality of Work Life is a multidimensional construct, which includes: job security, better reward system, higher pay, opportunity for growth, participative groups and increased organisational productivity. Quality of Work Life refers to employee satisfaction with a variety of needs through resources, activities and outcomes stemming from participation in the workplace. It has generally been agreed however that Quality of Working Life is conceptually similar to well-being of employees but differs from job satisfaction which solely represents the workplace domain (Lawler, 1982).

Walton (1985), identified eight factors to improve Quality of Work Life of employees: (1) fair compensation, (2) safety and health, (3) self-development, (4) growth and security, (5) social integration, (6) constitutionalism, (7) life space and (8) social relevance. Quality of Work Life is dependent on the extent to which an employee feels valued, rewarded, motivated, consulted and empowered. It is also influenced by factors such as job security, opportunity for career development, work patterns and work life balance. Quality of Work Life is an outgrowth of the human relations movement. Its goal is to increase productivity, while at the same time improve employee's satisfaction by addressing the emotional needs of workers. The purpose of Quality of Work Life management is to create an atmosphere of freedom, participation and autonomy in which the worker is a partner in sharing a common objective and subjective indicators.

Objective Indicators

1. *Safe and Healthy Working Conditions:* It is widely accepted that Employees should not be exposed to working conditions that can adversely affect their physical and mental health (Orpen, 1981). Safe and healthy work conditions means using proper work procedures, use of protective clothes and devices, safe handling practices, first aid and avoid using hazardous materials. Assurance of safe and healthy workers is by setting and enforcing standards; providing training and education, establishing partnership and encouraging continual improvement in workplace safety and health. Protection from ill-health and injury at work and outside of work are enhancement of good health and work environment. Based on this studies have been reported by Harrison (2000),Wyatt and Wah (2001), Sirgy, Efraty and Lee (2001), Niosh (2010), Newell (2002), Edvardsson and Gustavsson, (2003), Van Praag, Frijters, and Ferrer-i-Carbonell (2003), Kotzé, (2004), Martel and Dupuis, (2006), Mirsepasi, (2006), Bohlander and Snell (2007), Rethinam and Ismail, (2008), Vinopal (2009), Adhikari and Gautam (2010), Koonmee, Singhapakdi., Virakul, and Lee (2010), Gayathiri and Lalitha (2013).

2. *Future Opportunity for Job Security:* Job security deals with the steadiness of employment, with the feeling that one has reasonable chance of working under conditions of organisation stability. It represents strength of the organisation to provide permanent and stable employment regardless to the changes in work environment. Job security includes opportunities of continuous growth and individuals with security feeling will feel valued, self-adequate and will have opportunity to learn trade or job. This has been contributed in the studies of Sirgy, Efraty and Lee (2001), Niosh (2010), Saklani (2004), Furnhan (2005), Martel and Dupuis (2006), Beham, Drobnic and Verwiebe (2006), Green (2006), Rethinam and Ismail (2008), Vinopal (2009), Dahl, Nesheim and Olsen (2009), Zare, Hamid, Haghgooyan, Zolfa and Asl, (2012), Gayathiri and Lalitha (2013), Rose, Beh, Uli and Idris (2006).

3. *Adequate and Fair Compensation:* Reward system includes pay, income, wages, earning, salary, finance and remuneration and are interchanging used. Reward system deals with financial incentives (short term vs. long term, base vs. incentive pay, and pay for performance vs. pay for seniority). The extent to which reward systems are linked to strategic plans encourages employees to work towards accomplishing business needs and meeting customer requirements. Studies have been emphasised by Walton (2005), Furnham (2005), Maurin and Postal-Vinay (2005), Green (2006), Mirsepasi, (2006), Huang, Lawler, and Lee (2007), Tang (2007), Dahl, Nesheim and Olsen (2009), Adhikari and Gautam (2010), Sinha (2012);,Zare, Hamid, Haghgooyan, Zolfa and Asl, (2012), Gayathiri and Lalitha (2013).

4. *Constitutionalism in the Work Organization:* Industrial psychologists are concerned not so much with how people behave but rather with what rights they should enjoy, whether they exercise them or not and only if the work organization ensures that the following so-called rights of individuals are officially respected can the quality of life be high. The following are some of the workers' rights that should be noted in the work place, that is, privacy, free speech and the right of individuals not to be penalized as of their membership of any particular group or class. It implies that all individuals are entitled to expect to be treated in the same way as others, irrespective of the sex, race, religion or social class.

5. *Work and Total Life Space:* Work and total life space refers to the extent to which there is a balanced role of work in the employee's other life spheres. This concept of a balanced role encompasses work, schedules, career demands, and travel requirements that do not continually take up leisure and family time and advancement and promotion that do not require repeated geographical moves (Walton, 1973).The importance of this point for the concept of quality of

life is that work organizations, by virtue of this kind of 'spill over effect', influence an individual's life of the job (Orpen, 1981).

6. *The Social Relevance of Work Life:* Socially responsible behaviour, includes a broad array of actions such as behaving ethically, supporting the work of non-profit organizations, treating Employees fairly, and minimizing damage to the environment (Mc Williams & Siegel, 2001; McWilliams & Siegel, 2001; Porter & Kramer, 2002; Saiia, 2002; Margolis & Walsh, 2003; Boutin-Dufresne & Savaria, 2004).

7. *Work Load or Pressures at Work:* Van Eerd (2002), mentioned that having high levels of time pressure can endanger the loss of enthusiasm and an ability to act. High levels of time pressure produce stress, which in-turn lead to passivity and avoidance may occur. At the individual level, time pressure leads to (1) faster performance rates, (2) lower performance quality and (3) more heuristic information processing, meaning, people stop considering multiple alternatives, engage in shallow rather than thorough and systematic processing of information and refrain from critical probing of a given seemingly adequate solution or judgement (De Dreu, 2003; Durham, Locke, Poon & McLoed, 2000; Kelly & Loving, 2004). Under high time pressure workers see task completion as their main objective and complete the task as quickly as possible, but at the sacrifice of quality (Van der Kleij, Lijkwn, Rasker & De Dreu, 2008).

8. *Work and Life Balance:* Work and life balance deals with encouragement, and improvement in workers retention and turnover, reduces recruitment and training costs, reduces all forms of absenteeism, provides positive publicity for organisations, improves motivation and loyalty and thence productivity and increases customers satisfaction. Work life balance is all about flexible working, greater virtual communication, workload, work time, high commitment and cognitive demands. This has been emphasised by Furnham (2005), Rethinam and Ismail (2008), Connell and Hannif (2009), Zare, Hamid, Haghgooyan, Zolfa and Asl, (2012), Gayathiri and Lalitha (2013).

9. *Role Ambiguity:* Role ambiguity refers to not knowing what one's tasks are and also not knowing what is expected from oneself (Van Der Doef & Maes, 1999; Kleynhans, Markham, Meyer & Van Aswegen (2006). According to Diedieff and Rubin (2007), roles in organizations are generally defined as the patterns of behaviours that are perceived by organizational members to be expected or required. The clarity with which individuals perceive their work roles has been linked to several important organizational outcomes, including job performance, organizational commitment and Job Satisfaction (Tubre & Collins, 2000). Work role ambiguity may result from unclear articulations of expected role activities, performance contingencies and work methods.

10. *Job Insecurity:* Job insecurity refers to uncertainty about one's job (Van Der Doef & Maes, 1999). According to Sverke, Hellgren and Naswall (2006) many organizations have strived for functional and numerical flexibility which resulted in demands for new types of skills as well as changes in employment contracts. Job insecurity has emerged as one of the most important issues in contemporary work life (Sverke, Hellgren & Naswall, 2006).

11. *Social Support Supervisor:* Hawkins and Shohet (2004), also stated that a good supervisor can also help one to use one's resources better, manage one's workload and challenge inappropriate patterned ways of coping. Spence, Wilson, Kavanagh, Strong & Worrel (2001), maintain that the personal support aspect of supervision aims to optimize motivation, morale, commitment, and to minimize work-related stress, burnout and mental health problems of the employee. Supervision includes monitoring, implementing changes and maintaining the co-operate culture. Supervisory behaviour is to co-operate with others in the team, persist in overcoming obstacles to complete a task, define the supervisor's decisions and voluntarily do more than the job requires helping others or contributing to unit effectiveness. Supervision has been

mentioned in studies by Winter, Taylor, and Sarros (2000), Mosharraf (2000), Borman, Ilgen and Klimoski (2003), Niosh (2002), Furnhan (2005), Huang, Lawler, and Lee (2007), Connell and Hannif (2009).

12. *Social Support Colleagues:* Social support colleagues refer to instrumental and emotional support provided by colleagues (Van Der Doef & Maes, 1999). According to Jenkins & Elliot (2004) support can be emotional, such as the action of caring or listening sympathetically, or instrumental, involving tangible assistance such as help with a work task. Social support is a straightforward resource in that it is functional in achieving work goals (Bakker, Demerouti & Euwema, 2005).

13. *Physical Conditions:* The perceived ability of an individual to perform accustomed functions and activities of daily living as part of the expectation of an organisation largely depends on their physical conditions. A healthy work environment provides the basis for the person to enjoy working. Physical conditions include satisfaction with physical health. These are also emphasised by Haworth and Hart (2007), Niosh (2010), Saha (2006), Reithinam and Ismail (2008), Rutten, Meij, and Mathus-Vliegen (2009).

14. *Working Conditions:* Working conditions centres on the physical space that the employee is working in or a space that will be of use in the future. It also includes features like temperature, loud noise, crowding, poor lighting, cleanliness, ventilation, humidity and adequate tools. An ideal work condition should be mentally stimulating. Many studies have been reported by Niosh (2010), Vinopal (2009), Pandala and Suryanarayana (2010), Gayathiri and Lalitha (2013).

Subjective Indicators

1. *Opportunities to use and develop Human Capacities:* Walton (1973), asserts that experiencing a high QWL is dependent upon the extent to which jobs allow the employee to use and develop his/her skills and competencies. Jobs should contain a number of features that would allow Employees the opportunity to use and develop their human capacities and eventually experience QWL.

2. *Social Interaction in the Work Organization:* According to Walton (1973) and Orpen (1981), the importance of social interaction is another determinant of QWL. Five factors, namely supportiveness, tolerance, equality, mobility and identification are considered essential for these interactions to have beneficial outcomes for individuals.

3. *Acknowledgment for Achievement:* Recognition for achievement is defined by Kotze (2008), as the recognition for achievements by management, colleagues, subordinates and clients. Closely related to task significance is feedback. Feedback refers to the necessity of organizations to speedily provide Employees with information and accurate knowledge regarding their performance and its wider organizational impact (Orpen, 1981; Walton, 1973). Hackman & Oldham (1976), suggested that feedback is a critical factor in reducing absenteeism, and employee turnover. Further, feedback is effective in delivering the personal and behavioural outcome variables.

4. *Meaningfulness and Significance of Work:* According to Chalofsky (2003), meaning and work may present an even greater challenge to define and purports that meaning at work implies that there is a relationships between the individual and the organization in terms of commitment, loyalty and dedication. Chalofsky (2003) identifies three themes which determine meaningful work, namely, a sense of self, the work itself, and the sense of balance which overlap and intertwine and are reflected in the term integrated wholeness or meaningful work.

5. *Autonomy and Control:* The feature of autonomy suggests that a job should be designed in such a manner that it affords the employee a degree of independence and discretion in terms of how the job is carried out (Orpen, 1981). Stein (1983), too emphasizes the importance of autonomy or control and defines it as the ability to influence one's working environment. Similarly, Newell (2002), suggests that QWL involves providing Employees with greater responsibility and autonomy. In addition, Kerce & Booth-Kewley (1993), reflect upon the work of Herman & Hulin (1972), and Loscocco (1990), who point towards various situations and or structural factors, entitled the structural approach, within a job that affect QWL. A job that lacks autonomy will result in low QWL. Several studies with the Demand Control Model (DCM) have indeed confirmed that autonomy may act as a buffer against the influence of job demands (work overload, time pressure; Van der Doef & Maes, 1999).

6. *Identification with and Enjoyment of Work:* Experienced meaningfulness of work is enhanced primarily by skill variety, task identity and task significance. Experienced responsibility for work outcomes is linked to the presence of autonomy in a job. Knowledge of results is increased when a job elicits a high level of feedback (Hackman & Oldham, 1980). An individual who has a strong desire for accomplishment and growth should respond positively, but an incumbent who has a low need for accomplishment or growth may feel intimidated and consequently may not respond favourably (Lee-Ross, 2002).

7. *Creativity and Innovation:* Researchers defined creativity as the generation of new and useful products, practices, services etc. Creativity is the prerequisite for an organization's innovation, effectiveness and long-term survival and an organization's adjustment to shifting environmental conditions and to take advantage of emerging opportunities (Oldham, 2002; Shalley, Zhou & Oldham, 2004).

8. *Skill Discretion:* The feature of skill variety allows Employees the opportunity to use and develop their human capacities through exercise of their competencies, skills and abilities rather than the reception of limited, narrow skills (Orpen, 1981; Walton, 1973). Ramlall (2004) pointed out that the inclusion of task variety as an element of job design is consistent with the concept of growth need satisfaction, as well as with more psychological approaches taken by activation theory. It is not consistent, however, with Herzberg's approach, which refers to the simple addition of tasks as horizontal job loading or as job enlargement.

9. *Task Control:* According to Moen, Kelly & Huang (2008) occupational health literature have recognized the importance of employees' degree of control over how they do their jobs and how they manage their multiple responsibilities. In the classic job strain model, job control describes latitude or autonomy regarding how work is done using different skills and knowledge. It does not attend to control over when and where work is done. While job control is especially important for workers facing high job demands (Karasek & Theorell, 1990), work-time control may matter to workers with high family or job demands, enabling Employees to alter their work schedules in response to exigencies at home or at work.

10. *Stress and its impact on QWL:* Several theoretical concepts of stressful work have been developed (Antoniou & Cooper, 2005), two models have received special attention recently: the demand-control model (Karasek & Theorell, 1990) and the effort–reward imbalance model (Siegrist, Starke & Chandola, 2004). The former model identifies stressful work by job task profiles that are characterized by high demand in combination with low control (low decision latitude), whereas the latter model claims that an imbalance between high efforts spent and low rewards received in turn (money, esteem, career prospects, and job security) adversely affect health. This is mainly due to the fact that a basic principle of social exchange, reciprocity, is violated under such conditions.

11. *Resiliency:* Resilience is a multi-dimensional construct and the efforts to be resilient, such as adaptive strategies to manage demands, should be considered separately to resilient outcomes, such as better mental health or better relationships (Kumpfer, 1999). By managing the ups and downs in life, resilient individuals can be more effective in managing the changing nature of the current workplace and finding a balance between work and personal lives (Luthans, 2002).In this way, the efforts to be resilient can be targeted and normative adaptive processes can be enhanced through promoting competence in the appropriate contexts (Yates & Masten, 2004).

12. *Positive Attitudes:* Employees who enjoy their work and feel happy make a very positive judgement about their Quality of Work Life. This enjoyment or happiness is the outcome of cognitive and affective evaluations of the flow experience (Diener, 2000). When Employees are intrinsically motivated, they will continuously be interested in the work they are involved in, therefore being fascinated by the tasks they perform.

13. *Self-efficacy:* There is considerable evidence regarding the positive effects of self-efficacy on work performance and well-being in different domains such as the workplace, school, and sports (Bandura, 2001). Research in the domain of work shows that high level of efficacy beliefs to have a positive impact on employee well-being (Grau, Salanova & Peiro, 2001) and work engagement (Salanova, Llorens, Cifre, Martinez & Schaufeli, 2003), and can buffer the negative impact of job demands on burnout. Efficacy beliefs influence the challenges people pursue, the effort they expend and their perseverance in the face of obstacles.

14. *Self and Self Development:* Self development occurs when one is recognised and appreciated of one's work within the organisation (i.e.) recognition and reward for doing a good job at work and also outside the organisation. It is also the degree of experienced meaning and purpose in life which will naturally increase one's own self-respect, esteem and actualisation. Similar variables have been mentioned in studies by Greenberg and Baron (2003), Walton (2005), Muchinsky (2006), Martel and Dupuis (2006), Rutten, Meij, and Mathus-Vliegen (2009), Pandala and Suryanarayana (2010), Zare, Hamid, Haghgooyan, Zolfa and Asl, (2012).

15. *Well-Being:* It is the psychological and physical aspects of an individual in work environment. It is achieved by the simultaneous and balanced satisfaction of personal, interpersonal and collective needs and by a therapeutic relationship with natural, built and social environment. This has been contributed in the studies by Sirgy, Efraty, and Siegal (2001), Diener, Oishi and Lucas (2003), Veenhoven (2006), Tennath, Hiller, Fiahwick, Platt, and Joseph (2007), Huang, Lawler and Lie (2007), Rethinam and Ismail (2008), Rutten, Meij and Mathus-Vliegen (2009).

16. *Self-actualization:* Self-actualization, according to Maslow (1954), is the desire to become more and more from what one is to anything that one is capable of becoming. Promotion and career progress are important in that regard. Promotion from within programs serves to enhance the value of the work role identity and promotes multiple work role identities (e.g., specialist, team player, and supervisor/manager). Meeting the needs of more role identities and highly valued role increase the likelihood of experiencing positive self-evaluations at work, which in turn contribute significantly to subjective well-being.

Quality of work life in Indian context

The success of any organization is highly dependent on how it attracts recruits, motivates, and retains its workforce. Today's organizations need to be more flexible so that they are equipped to develop their workforce and enjoy their commitment. Organizations are required to adopt a strategy to improve the Employees 'Quality of Work Life' (QWL) to satisfy both the organizational objectives and employee needs.

According to Saklani (2004), an attempt to empirically evaluate the importance of various QWL factors pertaining to employees and to measure the status of their existence in work organisation was made in Indian context. Rejecting the commonly held stereotype, evidence has been found to suggest that apart from monetary considerations, employees in India accord a high value to the factors that satisfy self-esteem and self- actualisation needs of higher order. Also, study finds that the existing status of QWL in Indian organisation in not poor.

In India, QWL offers a value frame and the social technology of organizational change leading to task effectiveness of micro-entities through utilization and unfolding of human potential. In the 1970s the ideal of QWL was conceived which, according to Walton, is broader than these earlier developments and is something that must include 'the values that were at the heart of these earlier reform movements' and 'human needs and aspirations'. The theories of motivation and leadership provided a sound base for the concept of QWL. If the lower-order needs are satisfied, people seek satisfaction for the higher-order needs. Some evidence of the rising tide interest in the Quality of Work Life issue is the fact that the second International Conference on Quality of Work Life held in Toronto in 1981 attracted 1,500 participations. The 200 unionist and 750 management people combined out-numbered the, academicians, consultants and government officials in attendance (Bharathi, Umaselvi & Kumar, 2011).

In the Indian context, QWL is viewed as a wide-ranging concept, which includes adequate and fair remuneration, safe and healthy working conditions and social integration in the work organization that enables an individual to develop and use all his or her capacities. The aim is at achieving the effective work environment that meets with the organizational and personal needs and values that promote health, well being, job security, Job Satisfaction, competency development and balance between work and non-work life. It also emphasize that the good feeling perceived from the interaction between the individuals and the work environment results in increased QWL.

The Impact of QWL on the Workplace

Concern for QWL preoccupied social scientists for the past several decades. QWL is a major issue for Employees, and how organizations deal with this issue is of both academic and practical significance (Dolan, Garcia, Cabezas & Tzafrir, 2007). Therefore it is no wonder that thousands of studies revolved around the concept of Job Satisfaction, and stress as the core concept of it. QWL and its relationships with employee health and performance became an explicit objective for many of the human resource policies in modern organizations (Dolan, Garcia, Cabezas & Tzafrir, 2007). As organizations are struggling to survive and become more efficient, an accrued interest has evolved around the concept of professionals working life. An increasing body of evidence links what could be termed management related conditions of work with psychological stress and negative QWL and more specifically health outcomes.

Application to the Work Place

Quality of Work Life is specifically related to the level of happiness a person derives for his career. Each person has different needs when it comes to their careers; the quality level of their work life is determined by whether those needs are being met. While some people might be content with a simple minimum wage job as long as it helps pay the bills, others would find such a job to be too tedious or involve too much physical labour and would find such a position to be highly unsatisfactory. Thus, requirements for having a high "Quality of Work Life" vary from person to person. Regardless of their standards, those with a high Quality of Work Life generally make enough to live comfortably, find their work to be interesting or engaging and achieve a level of personal satisfaction or fulfilment from the jobs that they do. In other words, Employees who are generally happy with their work are said to have a high Quality of Work

Life, and those who are unhappy or unfulfilled by their work are said to have a low Quality of Work Life.

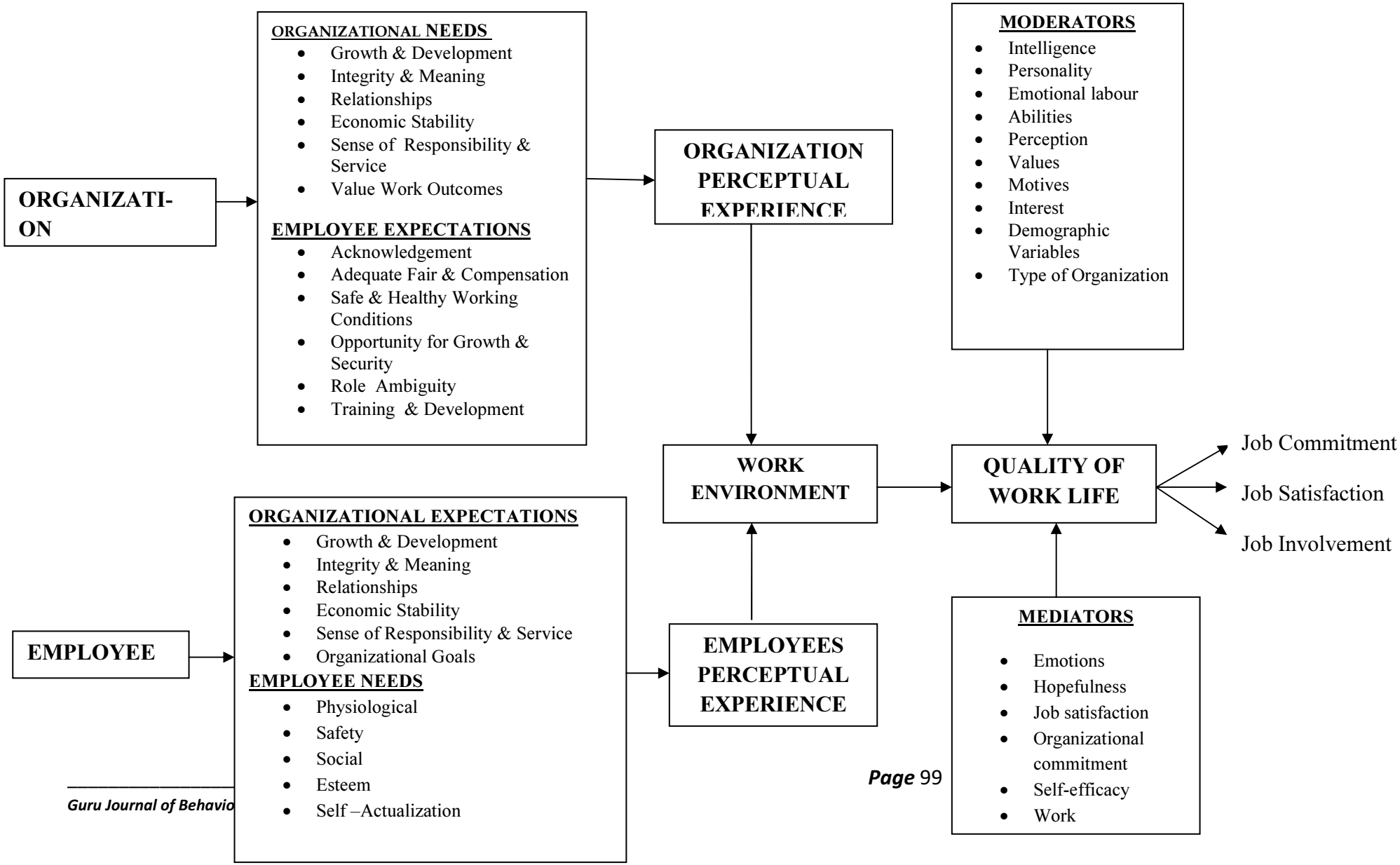
Based on the above indicators, which contribute to quality of work life and its relevance and implication to the Indian context, the model mentioned in Part-I is revised as follows:

Work is an integral part of everyday life. Work is worship, work is hard working, and work is a challenge. For many, work is a necessary evil. On an average we spend around 10-12 hours daily in the work place. This should yield to a fulfillment of having done a task fruitfully, constructively and purposefully. At the end of the day it should give satisfaction and an eagerness to look forward to the next day. Organisation success is based on the highly motivated and committed team of Employees in the work place. Thus an attempt to integrate employee's needs and well-being with an intention of improved productivity, greater work involvement, and higher levels of Job Satisfaction is Quality of Work Life.

Quality of Work Life is philosophical which holds on a set of principles that people are the most important resource in the organisation as they are trustworthy, responsible and capable of making contributions and that they should be treated with dignity and respect. Quality of Work Life is an umbrella term which includes many concepts. QWL means the sum total of values, both materials and non-materials, attained by the worker throughout his life. Robbins (1998) defined QWL as "a process by which an organisation responds to Employees needs by developing mechanisms to allow them to share fully in making the decisions that design their QWL lives at work". The intangibility, variability, and perish ability of the service process together with the volatility of customer expectations are some of the prominent dimensions that inhibit the delineation of the phenomenon of QWL.

Interestingly, managers, commentators and social scientists have either avoided the task or have been unable to develop a contemporary service QWL criteria during the past three decades since the illumination of the enigma by Seashore (1975), who advanced a conceptualization of QWL should consider the ongoing changes of workers' aspirations as a result of their interactions with the wider socio cultural environment during their life courses. Further advice was given by Davis (1983), who has defined QWL as 'the quality of the relationship between Employees and the total working environment, with human dimensions added to the usual technical and economic considerations'. Across time definitions of QWL have changed and have been used at different times to refer to different variables (Nadler &

QUALITY OF WORK LIFE MODEL



Conclusion

A high quality of work life is essential for organizations to continue to attract and retain employees. QWL is a process in which organizations recognize their responsibility to develop job and working conditions that are excellent for the employee and organization. Quality is no more a specialized word but has become a necessary and a must work for the best survival. In this era, Quality of human inputs is the greatest asset to any organization. Employees are the force that is behind every successful organisation. No organisation can become successful with technology only because for the use of technology also, organisations need to have strong work force. The indicators of QWL will effectively utilize the employee potentials by ensuring great participation and involvement of workers; thereby increases organisations effectiveness as a whole.

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