

SMART

JOURNAL OF BUSINESS MANAGEMENT STUDIES

(An International Serial of Scientific Management and Advanced Research Trust)

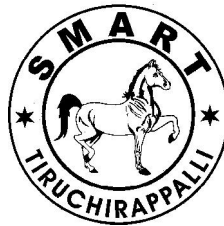
Vol.5

No. 2

July - December 2009

ISSN 0973 - 1598

Chief Editor
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India



**SMART Journal is indexed and abstracted by Ulrich's Periodicals Directory,
Intute Catalogue (University of Manchester) and CABELL'S Directory**

SCIENTIFIC MANAGEMENT AND ADVANCED RESEARCH TRUST
(SMART)

TIRUCHIRAPPALLI (INDIA)
<http://www.geocities.com/smartbard>

IMPACT OF DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES ON QUALITY OF WORK LIFE OF SUPERVISORS

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Abstract

In the modern industrial scenario, it is imperative for any employer to provide healthy, human, technological and organizational climate which leads to good Quality of Work Life. This study was undertaken with the objective of identifying the impact of demographic variables on the perceived Quality of Work Life of supervisors working in engineering industry in Coimbatore District. A Multiple Linear Regression Model was employed to measure the combined effects of independent variables on the dependent variables. The 't' value and the significance level indicate that only two factors, namely, gender and age significantly contribute to the Quality of Work Life of supervisors. The authors hope that the findings may help the employers of engineering industry to redesign their policies so as to meet the needs and aspirations of supervisors.

Introduction

If a business enterprise has to achieve and maintain sound and profitable operations, it has to recognize the importance of its workers as human beings who enter the organization with certain needs, wants, motives, expectancies and aspirations. 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 organization. Many managers seek to reduce job dissatisfaction at all organizational levels, including their own. This is a complex problem, however, because it is difficult to isolate and identify all the attributes which affect the Quality of Work Life. To improve the quality of work life and eliminate job stress, employers can also make efforts to be more aware of the workload and job demands. Employers need to examine employee training, communication, reward systems, coworker relationships and

work environment. Employees are often able to give employers the best advice on reducing work stress. How the various factors of QWL are perceived by the employees of different categories need to be studied and understood.

Statement of the Problem

Of late, a growing emphasis is placed on the significance of human resources in India. More and more people are beginning to realize that like finance and machine, workforce is an equally significant input in the survival of an organization. This realization has culminated in the formation of Ministry of Human Resource Development. Therefore, major investments have to be made in keeping this significant aspect of organization in 'best shape' for it to perform. In the industrial sector, engineering industry is the major player which not only accounts for enormous production and export but also for big employment. The study of Quality of Work Life in this sector is of great relevance which may help understand the overall Quality of Work Life in Indian industry.

Related Studies

Studies related to this subject show that individuals have completely unique sets of standards for evaluating the quality of work settings (Walton, 1974; Seashore, 1975). Groups of individuals share particular personal attributes which cause them to evaluate work in common, systematic, measurable and predictable patterns. Among other things, the nature of different occupations can be responsible for differences in evaluating the quality of work situation.

The study, conducted by Singh (1984), clearly indicates that the overall perceived Quality of Work Life in the Indian industries is considerably poor. While this finding is common to all the work dimensions studied, the Quality of Work Life is perceived to be the poorest in the area of democratization of work culture, leading to a state of mismatch between motivational profile and the existing quality of work life.

The study, conducted by Karrir and Khurana (1996), found significant correlations of Quality of Work Life of managers from three sectors of industry viz., Public, Private and Cooperative, with some of the background variables (education qualification, native/migrant status, income level) and with all of the motivational variables like job satisfaction and job involvement. The perceived stress has been linked to job dissatisfaction, depressed feelings, work absence, and turnover. It is highest among women, especially those working in service occupations (Wilkins & Beaudet, 1998).

Ganguly and Joseph (1976) found that majority expressed high degree of overall job satisfaction regarding pay and working condition. Very few studies could be cited in the context of human relations to review how good relationships between superior and subordinates enhance quality of their working life. Singh and Pestonjee (1974) studied the differential effect of supervisory behaviour on job satisfaction those who are under employee-oriented supervision.

Objective of the Study

The study was undertaken with the objective of identifying the impact of demographic variables on the perceived Quality of Work Life. However, this paper confined to the Quality of Work Life of supervisors working in the Engineering Industry in Coimbatore District.

Factors Considered for the Study

The factors such as nature of job, pay and compensation, development and encouragement, human relations and social integration, workers participation in management, working conditions, occupational stress, alternative work schedule, grievance procedure and promotion policy determine the Quality of Work Life.

Hypothesis

There is no significant difference in the degree of influence of demographic variables, viz., gender, marital status, age, education, experience, income and level of skill, on the perceived Quality of Work Life of supervisors.

Sample Design

To determine the impact of demographic variables on Quality of Work Life of the supervisors working in engineering industry, the authors feel that Exploratory Research is most suitable. Data required for the study were collected from supervisors of engineering concerns situated in Coimbatore District. Among 1000 and odd engineering concerns in Coimbatore District, five were selected from different blocks and from each concern, adequate number of respondents were selected according to the size of the concern. Five hundred respondents were selected on the basis of quota cum convenient sampling method.

Data Collection

A structured, non-disguised interview schedule was prepared for the purpose of collecting the data. The survey was preceded by a pilot study.

Period of Study

The study was conducted for a period of two years i.e., 2005 - 2007.

Tool Used

A Multiple Linear Regression Model was selected to measure the combined effects of independent variables on the dependent variables.

The Multiple Linear Equation is :

$$Y = b_0 + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + \dots + b_6X_6$$

Where Y = Total Quality of Work Life of employees

X1 = Gender

X2 = Marital Status

X3 = Age

X4 = Experience

X5 = Monthly Income

X6 = No. of Years of Schooling

b0 = Regression Constant and

b1, b2, b3,...b6 = Regression Coefficients of Independent Variables.

The statistical significance of regression coefficients was worked out and tested by applying 't' test. The coefficient of determination R^2 was computed to determine the percentage variation in dependent variables. The 'F' value was computed to test the significance of R^2 with 'F' distribution at 1 and 5 per cent significance level. In order to identify the effects of demographic variables on the perceived Quality of Work Life of the supervisors, Multiple Regression Analysis (Enter Method) was used.

Limitation

The study is confined to the supervisors of Engineering Industry in Coimbatore District of Tamil Nadu. Hence general application of the results may be restricted only to similar industry.

Analysis

Out of the total 500 respondents considered for the study, 74 respondents were from the supervisor category. The Table No.4 shows the variables associated with the Quality of Work Life of supervisors.

The mean score of total Quality of Work Life of supervisors is 89.27 (Table No: 1). It is evident from the correlation analysis (Table No: 2) that out of six personal factors, three factors are found to be negatively correlated with the Quality of Work Life. The highest correlation is observed for the factor 'gender', followed by experience and monthly income. The R^2 tells the goodness of fit and the degree of association between dependent and independent variables. In this case, R^2 is 0.27. Although it is not much close to 1, it shows a better fitness. The value of F (4.131) depicts the significance of R^2 , which further means that regression as a whole is significant (Table No: 3). Hence the hypothesis is rejected, which means that there is significant difference in the degree of influence of demographic variables on QWL of supervisors.

Considering the Beta value (Table No.4), it is clear that the age explains the maximum proportion of variation for Quality of Work Life, followed by gender and marital status. The 't' value and the significance level indicate that only two factors, namely, gender and age significantly contribute to the Quality of Work Life of supervisors in Engineering Industry. In the case of age it is obvious that increase in the age leads to increase in the perceived Quality of Work Life. In the case of gender, the negative value of 't' indicates that female respondents recorded more positive opinion about the Quality of Work Life than male respondents. In both the cases, the relationship was significant at 1% level.

Findings

The results of multiple linear regression analysis, used to identify the influence of demographic variables on Quality of Work Life of supervisors, are listed as under.

Among the supervisors, it is found that higher their age, higher is the satisfaction with the Quality of Work Life. The rationale behind this may be that the supervisors have already attained better status than other categories of employees considered for the study and they may have the feeling that the job matches their skills and naturally they may have pride feeling about their job.

With increase in age, they may show more understanding and become refined. The maturity they acquire over the years may make them to be more favourable and positive towards the factors of Quality of Work Life. They may feel satisfied not only with the personal benefits such as pay and compensation but also with other factors that exist in the organization. Understandably they may feel positive with regard to working conditions, work schedule, developmental opportunities, promotional policy and other schemes and procedures that are operational in their organizations.

The female supervisors of engineering industry show more satisfaction towards Quality of Work Life than the male supervisors. This finding corroborates the common opinion that women employees experience more job satisfaction than men employees. Women employees, in conformity with their inherent nature of the gender they belong to, may show content feeling with regard to all the sub factors. Normally women employees show fair amount of involvement in their jobs. In respect of factors such as pay and compensation, working condition, work schedule, development

programmes also, their expectation level is less than their male counterparts. This may be the reason for the female supervisors being more satisfied towards Quality of Work Life.

Suggestions

In the light of the above findings, the following suggestions are made for the improvement of the Quality of Work Life in engineering industry.

- i) **Comprehensive Induction Training :** It is suggested that the industry may arrange for induction training which would help the new entrants to fully acquaint themselves with the job, co-workers and organization. This arrangement would help the new employees to settle down quickly and help to cull some of the new employees out who may not find the goings-on to their satisfaction and help them to go for some other job. The company also may not lose partially trained employees in the middle of the course.
- ii) **Effective Employee Counseling :** It is also suggested that companies may give some special attention on employee counselling. The industry normally attracts many young unmarried men and women. Their lack of exposure to realities of work life and social life make them emotional and problematic. Some employees in a fit of rage may quit the job and some of them may always be problematic in the organization. A few may become tardy and a few may go on leave without intimation. The companies may think of hiring professional counsellors. The employees may be encouraged to meet the counsellors in person and get counselling from them. This kind of interaction may be arranged at least once in a month.

Conclusion :

It may be concluded that Quality of Work Life of employees are related to an individual's expectation of different characteristics of the job and perception of how much is attained. The aspiration varies for various reasons from individual to individual and within the same individual at different times of age, education, length of service. This accounts for the conflicting results with regard to effect of these variables on quality of work life.

Scope for Further Research

One may take up a number of organizations and make a comparative study. In continuation with this line of thinking, it is also suggested that comparable units or organizations in the public sector may also be studied to know whether the findings are due to sector effect or due to functional effect.

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Table No - 1
Variable Definition and their Summary Statistics

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation
TOTAL QWL	89.2703	6.80511
Male (=1 else 0)	0.7838	0.41447
Married (=1 else 0)	0.5405	0.50176
Age	27.28	4.630
Experience	5.57	2.270
Monthly Income	4971.62	1585.683
Years of Schooling	8.7432	3.62284
Sample Size	74	

Table No - 2
Correlation Matrix

Variables	QWL	Male	Married	Age	Experience	Monthly Income	Years of Schooling
QWL	1.000	-0.275**	-0.160	0.019	-0.226*	-0.212*	0.006
Male	-0.275**	1.000	0.109	0.454**	0.220*	0.049	-0.448**
Married	-0.160	0.109	1.000	0.570**	0.557**	0.362**	-0.171
Age	0.019	0.454**	0.570**	1.000	0.585**	0.403**	-0.374**
Experience	-0.226*	0.220*	0.557**	0.585**	1.000	0.658**	-0.265*
Monthly Income	-0.212*	0.049	0.362**	0.403**	0.658**	1.000	-0.066
Years of Schooling	0.006	-0.448**	-0.171	-0.374**	-0.265*	-0.066	1.000

** The mean difference is significant at the .01 level.

* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

Table No - 3
ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	912.953	6	152.159	4.131	0.001
Residual	2467.642	67	36.830		
Total	3380.595	73			

Table No - 4
Variables Influencing QWL of Supervisors

Variables	B Coefficients	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	85.507	5.980		14.300	0.000
Male (=1 else 0)	-8.077	2.098	-0.492	-3.850	0.000
Married (=1 else 0)	-3.416	1.867	-0.252	-1.830	0.072
Age	0.781	0.230	0.532	3.390	0.001
Experience	-0.593	0.497	-0.198	-1.192	0.237
Monthly Income	-8.115E-04	0.001	-0.189	-1.335	0.186
Years of Schooling	-0.233	0.227	-0.124	-1.027	0.308

R = 0.520

R² = 0.270

F(6,67) = 4.131**