

Relationship between the quality of working life and job involvement of Iranian physical education teachers

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ABSTRACT

Introduction. The increase in the job involvement (JI) of employees has always been significant to all employers, who have thus tried to identify factors influencing the JI of the working population.

Aim of Study. The prime objective of the study was to investigate the relationship between the quality of working life (QWL) and job involvement (JI) of physical education teachers from Ahvaz, Iran.

Material and Methods. The statistical population consisted of all physical education teachers from Ahvaz, Iran in 2011 (N = 144). The whole population was selected as the study sample. The data were collected using a questionnaire on demographic characteristics, Walton's standard criteria of quality of working life, and the Edwards & Kilpatrick job involvement questionnaire. The reliability of the questionnaires was confirmed by Cronbach's alpha (QWL = 0.89, JI = 0.73). Descriptive and inferential statistics (Pearson's correlation, multiple regression analysis, t- test, and one-way analysis of variance) were applied ($\alpha = 0.05$).

Results. Results demonstrated moderate levels of QWL and JI amongst physical education teachers. The study also found a significant relationship between the QWL and JI of PE teachers. Furthermore, according to the results of multiple regressions, significant multiple relationships were found between the QWL and JI criteria. In addition, significant differences were also observed between the QWL of teachers of different gender, academic degree, and work experience, as well as the JI of teachers in different age groups.

Conclusions. In order to increase the JI of physical education teachers it is important that the Iranian educational authorities and executives endeavor to ensure efficient organization of school physical education courses in standard conditions and with maximum facilities, through research and efficient planning.

KEY WORDS

quality of working life, job involvement, physical education teachers.

Introduction

Human resources are certainly the most fundamental and strategic resources of any organization. The success of an organizational system depends upon their efficient and scientific utilization. To face the challenges posed by efficient utilization of human resources, it is essential to recognize a number of related concepts, constructs and tools, and to gain skills to use them efficiently [1].

Nowadays, the efficiency and quality of working life (QWL) are considered to be the most dominant factors affecting the organizational function. Joseph Juran's [2] named the 21st century "the Century of Quality". This clearly highlights the importance of collecting further information about such effective factors.

Given the ever-growing complications of human societies as well as job markets and human resources, the QWL has been proven to be of vital importance. According to some experts, the current recession in terms of efficiency and product quality is caused by the reduction of the QWL, which in turn accounts for changes in the interests and priorities of the working population [3]. It is evident that the working population seeks to exert more supervision and interference in their working life, and refrain from being regarded as pawns on huge chessboards. It can be taken for granted that if any working population, especially organizational employees, are treated with respect and provided with the opportunity to express their opinions and to participate in decision making processes, their observed reaction

will be far more optimal. In fact, special attention currently paid to the QWL reflects the importance attributed to this fundamental aspect. It seems that a remarkable number of the workers/employees are not satisfied with their current jobs, and are, thus, looking for better occupations [4].

Although the term "quality of working life" has recently grown prevalent, it has not been yet given a uniform definition by all experts. However, two major definitions of the term can be distinguished. The first refers to results inferred by the working population such as occupational satisfaction, growth opportunities, psychological matters, occupational security, interpersonal relations (relationship with the employer and other employees), and low risk of occupational accidents. The second corresponds to organizational functions including participatory management, occupational enrichment and secure work conditions. In this regard, the organizational programs aimed to improve the QWL might be considered parts of the human resource strategies including the QWL and organizational efficiency programs [5].

The majority of QWL definitions point to the fact that to ensure a high QWL the personal and organizational goals should be considered in parallel. According to Hakman and Sattel [6], the QWL represents a degree to which employees can satisfy their needs through the occupational experience obtained in the organization. Doch Landan [7], the former president of the General Motors Company, describes an organization with a high level of QWL as an environment where workers and employees are considered the essential members of the system, where human soul is encouraged to compete, where human spirit is inspired, and thus where the accomplishment of different missions is ensured.

The term "job involvement" (JI) recently introduced into the field of organizational behavioral sciences is defined as consideration of one's work as the representative of one's character, and refers to a degree to which a person believes his job to represent his personality, and his occupational efficiency to account for his prestige and credit. Job involvement signifies a degree to which the person gets involved in his work with fixation, conformity and loyalty, and to which he tries to do his best for the fulfillment of the previously accepted occupational goals [8].

In their model, Boon and Kurtz [9] demonstrated that the empowerment of employees, group work, and apprenticeships are ways to increase the JI level. The term empowerment refers to a process in which employees are given the authority to make decisions associated with their own work, without being externally meddled with. This leads to a higher sense of responsibility toward the key objectives and guidelines of the organization. This way, the intellectual powers of employees are activated toward the resolution of organizational issues, which in turn leads to an increase in their problem solving capacity affecting their ability to deal with problems in their personal lives. It is believed that the recognition of the role and position of any organization depends upon the information and instructions offered to its employees.

In another study, Frahani et al. [10] investigated the relationship between the organizational commitment factors and the QWL of physical education teachers in the East

Azerbaijan province of Iran. Their results demonstrated a significant correlation between the two criteria of organizational commitment (emotional commitment and normative commitment) and the QWL, but no significant relationship between the subfactor "rational commitment" and the QWL. Furthermore, a significant difference in the QWL was observed amongst teachers of different age, marital status, academic degree, work experience, and sport committee experiences, although gender and type of sportive activity was not associated with significant differences in the QWL.

Hosseini et al. [5] showed the existence of a positive and significant correlation between the quality of working life and organizational commitment of the employees in the Isfahan department of physical education. The analysis indicated that the employees' emotional and normative commitments were influenced by the QWL. In another study, Beikpour et al. [11] investigated relationships between the QWL and the tendency to stay on a specific job. The study found a positive and significant relationship between the QWL and the organizational commitment as well as the tendency to maintain the job. Layer et al. [12] demonstrated that the employees' QWL was significantly parallel to their cognitive demands and the improvement of functioning in the work environment. Furthermore, TajUddin [13] conducted a study of the relationship between the QWL and occupational satisfaction of nurses working in Bangladeshi hospitals. The results indicated that the total QWL of the nurses was low, while a significant correlation was found between this factor and job satisfaction.

Moradzadeh [14] studied the relationship between the JI of physical education teachers from Ahvaz and the organizational atmosphere. The results showed that the JI of these teachers was on an average level (52.80), while a significant correlation was found between JI and the organizational atmosphere. Pestonge and Sing [15] investigated the effects of anxiety on JI. Their results suggested that in order to ensure high levels of occupational function and JI, low anxiety levels are required. Even when JI is the highest, high anxiety can be destructive.

Aim of Study

The results of all aforementioned investigations suggest that the application of scientific and practical approaches to enhance the productivity of an organization is ensured only when special attention is paid to the management of human resources and administration of the affairs of the staff as important parts of the organization. The study of the QWL and its effect on the JI of physical education teachers is crucial for the fulfillment of the goals of education and training organizations. The present research is devoted to the investigation of this relationship in the Iranian city of Ahvaz.

Material and Methods

The statistical population consisted of all male and female physical education teachers of Ahvaz high schools in 2011. Due to the limited size of the statistical population, the whole population was selected as the study sample

(N = 144). Of the 144 questionnaires distributed, 127 were completed and returned (88%). The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was applied to check the normal distribution of data, while descriptive statistics were used to compare the frequency and mean values and to plot the graphs. To analyze the collected data, the independent t-test, one-way analysis of the variance (one-way ANOVA), Pearson's correlation coefficient, and multiple regression test were conducted. The data were collected using the Wolton Quality of Working Life Questionnaire (1973) which included eight different criteria: fair and appropriate compensation, work conditions, social relevance of work in life, chance of growth and security, constitutionalism, use and development of capacities, work and the total space of life, and social integration in the organization. The significance level for all tests was set at $p = 0.05$. Furthermore, the Edwards and Kilpatrick Job Involvement Questionnaire (1984) composed of 20 items on a 4-point Likert scale was also applied for further data collection.

The validity and reliability of these internationally standard questionnaires have been confirmed several times by the Iranian and foreign experts. In separate investigations, Sayadi Toranlu et al. [16] and Hosseini et al. [5] calculated the validity of the QWL and JI questionnaires at 0.85 and 0.86, respectively. Dezfouli [17] determined the validity of JI questionnaire at 0.73. In the current study, the validity of the QWL and JI questionnaires were calculated in a group of 40 physical education teachers at 0.89 and 0.73, respectively.

Results

The sample consisted of 77 women (66.6%) and 50 men (39.4%). In addition, 98 subjects (77.2%) were married (30% men, 47.2% women), while 29 (22.8%) were single (9.4% men and 13.4% women). The majority of subjects (41.7%) were in the age bracket of 20-30 years, while the minority (1.6%) were aged between 51 and 60 years. About 2.4% of subjects did not report their age.

According to the findings of the present study, the means and standard deviation of the QWL (127 subjects) were calculated as 46.62 and 10.81, respectively. The same values for the JI questionnaire amounted to 52.90 and 6.11. This suggests that the levels of subjects' QWL and JI were

average. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test revealed normal distributions of the QWL and JI ($p = 0.563$ and $p = 0.190$, respectively).

Table I shows a significant positive relationship between the QWL and JI of the physical education teachers. In addition, a significant relationship was found between six QWL criteria (work conditions, social relevance of the work in life, chance of growth and security, use and development of capacities, work and the total space of life, and social integration in the organization) and the teachers' JI. However, no significant relationship was noted between the criteria of fair and appropriate compensation and constitutionalism and the JI level.

The results of stepwise multiple regression analysis in Tables II and III point to multiple relationships between the QWL criteria and JI. However, amongst different QWL criteria, social relevance of work in life was determined to be the best predictor of JI, while other criteria played a less highlighted role.

It can be inferred from Tables IV and V that significant differences existed between the QWL of physical education teachers of different gender, academic level, and work experience. Nevertheless, the observed difference was not significant amongst teachers of different marital status, age, and sport experience.

According to Tables VI and VII, the JI of physical education teachers varied significantly based on their age range, but not on the basis of their marital status, gender, academic degree, work experience and sport experience.

Discussion

It is evident that a significantly positive relationship exists between the QWL and JI of physical education teachers ($r = 0.294$, $p = 0.05$). Moreover, the findings of the present study demonstrated that the levels of the QWL and JI of PE teachers were average. The results showed a significant relationship of the QWL and its criteria with PE teachers' job involvement. In other terms, an increase in the QWL and its criteria leads to the increment of the teachers' JI. This is in accordance with the findings of Farahani et al. [10], Sayadi Toranlu et al. [16], Sabkro et al. [18], Hosseini

Table I. Pearson's correlation of the occupational life quality and its subfactors with job involvement

Statistical index	Predictor and criterion variable	Correlation coefficient (r)	Significance level (p)	Significance
Total QWL	Job Involvement (JI)	0.294	0.001	significant**
Fair and appropriate compensation		0.166	0.062	non-significant
Work conditions		0.205	0.021	significant*
Social relevance of the work in life		0.278	0.002	significant**
Chance of growth and security		0.258	0.003	significant**
Constitutionalism		0.171	0.054	non-significant
Use and development of capacities		0.228	0.01	significant**
Work and the total space of life		0.27	0.002	significant**
Social integration in the organization		0.236	0.008	significant**

* Level of significance equal to 0.05

** Level of significance equal to 0.1

Table II. Stepwise multiple regression test results for QWL and JI

Statistical index	Variable	Multiple regression coefficient (R)	Determinant coefficient (RS)	F	Significance level (p)
	Social relevance of work in life	0.279	0.078	10.463	0.002*

Table III. Stepwise multiple regression test results for QWL criteria and JI

Stepwise regression equation	Non-standard coefficients		Standard coefficient	t	p
	B	Standard error	Beta		
Constant	47.024	1.902	-	24.719	0.001*
Social relevance of work in life	0.885	0.427	0.279	3.235	0.002*

*Level of significance equal to 0.01

Table IV. T-test results for QWL based on subjects' gender and marital status

Statistical index	Variable	Mean	Degree of freedom	t	Significance level (p)
QWL	Gender	Men = 43.940 Women = 48.376	125	-2.296	0.023*
	Marital status	Married = 45.898 Single = 49.103	125	-1.407	0.162

* Significance level equal to 0.05

Table V. One-way variance analysis results for QWL based on subjects' age, academic degree, sport experience, and work experience

Statistical index	Variable	Degree of freedom	F	Significance level (p)
QWL	Gender	3	2.65	0.052
	Academic degree	2	4.565	0.012*
	Sport experience	5	0.3	0.912
	Work experience	5	1.887	0.003**

* Significance level equal to 0.05

** Significance level equal to 0.01

Table VI. T-test results for JI based on subjects' gender and marital status

Statistical index	Variable	Mean	Degree of freedom	t	Level of significance (p)
JI	Gender	Men = 52.48 Women = 53.181	125	-0.63	0.53
	Marital status	Married = 45.898 Single = 49.103	125	0.238	0.162

Table VII. One-way variance analysis results for JI levels based on subjects' age, academic degree, sport experience and work experience

Statistical index	Variable	Degree of freedom	F	Significance level (p)
JI	Gender	3	3.065	0.031*
	Academic degree	2	2.734	0.069
	Sport experience	5	0.861	0.51
	Work experience	5	0.818	0.539

* Level of significance equal to 0.05

et al. [5], Beigpour and Hosseini [11], and Dolan et al. [19]. Amongst these Farahani et al. [10] confirmed the relationship between the QWL and organizational commitment, while Beikpour et al. [11] revealed a significant relationship between the QWL and JI. Dolan et al. [19] investigated the impact of different variables such as supervisors' support, demand for the job, and motivation on the QWL. Their results suggested a significant relationship between all these variables and the QWL, though each variable influenced the QWL in a different way. Furthermore, Narangrit and Thongsrie [21] found that the total QWL of their subjects was on an average level, which is in accordance with the findings of the present research. However, these results are in contrast with the findings of Johnsrud et al. [22], who confirmed a significant relationship between the QWL and the occupational function, but reported a weak relationship between the QWL and JI. Also TajUddin et al. [13] pointed to a non-significant relationship between the two aforementioned factors. This contrast might be due to differences in the statistical populations, type and nature of organizational environment, and effects of subjects' viewpoints. For instance, the statistical population studied by Johnsrud et al. [22] consisted of employees of several companies, whose viewpoints could have differed significantly from those of physical education teachers.

In this study, a significant relationship was found between six different QWL criteria (work conditions, social relevance of work in life, chance of growth and security, use and development of capacities, work and total space of life, and social integration in the organization) and JI, though no significant relationship was observed between JI and the other two criteria (fair and appropriate compensation and constitutionalism).

With regard to the means, constitutionalism (6.61), and fair and appropriate compensation (4.07) scored the highest and lowest, respectively. Amongst the eight different criteria of occupational life quality, six were significantly related to the teachers' job involvement. This highlights the importance of these criteria for the enhancement teachers' JI. However, the results of the multiple regression analysis demonstrated that different QWL criteria had multiple relationships with JI. Among them social relevance of work in life served as the best JI predictor. This is in accordance with the findings of Sayadi Toranlu et al. [16], Sabgro et al. [18], Hosseini et al. [5], and Dolan et al. [19]. For instance, Sayadi Toranlu et al. [16] confirmed the existence of multiple relationships between the QWL and organizational commitment in their study of employees in the Yazd education system. However, these results are in contrast with the findings of TajUddin et al. [13], which might be due to the difference in the type, nature, and function of the executive systems of the studied organizations.

Furthermore, the results of the analysis demonstrated that the QWL differs significantly on the basis of demographic characteristics such as gender, work experience, and academic degree. Nevertheless, factors such as marital status, age, and sport experience do not influence the QWL level significantly. This is in accordance with the findings of some studies, but in contrast with other ones. For instance, Farahani et al. [10] reported a significant difference in the

QWL levels of physical education teachers of different age, marital status, and academic degree, though no significant difference was found in terms of their gender. In another study, Ayati et al. [21] reported a significant difference in the QWL of the Behshahr educational system employees based on their gender and work experience, which is in accordance with the findings of the current investigation. Nevertheless, the same study did not report academic degree as a significantly effective factor, which is in contrast with the results of our investigation. These contradictions might be due to differences in the type, nature, and function of the studied organizations.

Koedphol [23] stated that age, gender, academic degree, position, and income are factors affecting the QWL, of which all but age are confirmed by the present study. Moreover, the results of the present study contradict the findings of Considine and Collus [24] who reported a non-significant effect of gender upon the QWL. Dezfouli [17] reported gender and marital status as non-significant factors impacting the JI of physical education teachers, though age was found to be of significant effect. In addition, Moradzadeh [14] reported the non-significant influence of gender on the QWL, which is confirmed by the findings of the present research. In yet another study, Ching Cheng [25] introduced gender and age as factors which significantly impacted the JI of primary school teachers, while marital status was reported to be non-significant. Their results with regard to age and marital status are in accordance with the findings of the present research, while those concerned with gender were contrary to them.

Conclusions

The current study demonstrated a significant, positive relationship between the QWL and JI of physical education teachers. In other terms, an increase of the QWL of PE teachers leads to their higher JI levels. In addition, considering the fact that most of the Ahvaz physical education teachers have work experience of 1 to 5 years and hold a bachelor degree, it is important that the executives in charge of the educational system provide them with proper work quality and post-graduate opportunities to enhance their QWL, and subsequently their JI. This will, of course, facilitate the achievement of organizational objectives such as promotion of students' health and exhilaration.

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