

The impact of quality of work life on job engagement among nurses working in health institutions

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Abstract

This study explores the impact of Quality of Work Life (QWL) on job engagement in Saudi healthcare institutions. QWL is a multidimensional concept encompassing workplace strategies, conditions, and practices that improve employee satisfaction and organizational performance. The research highlights the critical role of QWL dimensions, such as job security, workplace safety, career advancement opportunities, participation in decision-making, and fair compensation systems, in fostering job engagement. Through a review of literature and analysis of studies conducted in the healthcare sector, the findings demonstrate that enhancing QWL not only boosts employees' job satisfaction and engagement but also improves organizational productivity and service quality. Specifically, the study emphasizes the importance of creating a supportive work environment that addresses employees' psychological, social, and material needs. In Saudi healthcare institutions, where employees face unique challenges, improving QWL through targeted interventions can reduce turnover, enhance loyalty, and ensure better patient care outcomes. The study concludes that prioritizing QWL is essential for achieving sustainability, competitiveness, and high-quality care delivery in the healthcare sector. This research offers valuable insights for policymakers and organizational leaders seeking to enhance employee engagement and organizational success.

Keywords:

Introduction

Since the turn of the millennium, the idea that negative human psychological states account for half of the psychological aspects already identified in the workplace, and that positive cognitions, emotions, and behaviors are also prevalent and require study, has been widely investigated [1]. Quality of work life (QWL) is a process by which employees and stakeholders of an organization gain insight into how to better work together to improve both the employee's quality of life and the organization's effectiveness. This concept essentially explains how an organization can protect the employee's overall well-being rather than focusing solely on job-related features [2].

The Saudi official health care system was established somewhat later than in developed countries. The first public health department was established in Mecca in 1925 to provide health care services

to residents and pilgrims [3]. The state's interest in the health care system continued until it reached its current state. Job attachment is one of the basic pillars of any institution, and it is the complete result of the employee's feeling of complete satisfaction with his work, and his satisfaction with supervision, wages, and other benefits.

It is one of the important areas that has attracted the attention of management scholars, in order to achieve the highest strategic goals and visions, and maximize the employee's belonging to his institution, in order to develop and grow him and open him to the practical environment, towards achieving the highest level of utilitarian goals, returns, and quality, through invention, diligence, innovation, and practical practice with fruitful benefits aimed at creating a job attachment that aims at administrative integration.

Research Problem:

High quality of work life (QWL) is a critical issue for healthcare organizations to have qualified, dedicated and inspired employees. Among the different specialties in healthcare settings, the health profession environment has a large share among other healthcare providers. Therefore, they must experience better QWL to provide comprehensive high-quality care to those who need help. Through the researcher's study and review of research and studies in this field, she sensed the existence of a problem linking quality of work life and job engagement in healthcare institutions, hence this study came to answer the following question: "What is the effect of quality of work life on job engagement in Saudi healthcare institutions?"

Aim of the research

The current research aims to identify the concept of quality of work life, the concept of job engagement, and the impact of quality of work life on job engagement among employees in Saudi health institutions.

The concept of quality of work life

There are many concepts proposed for the quality of work life from the point of view of researchers in this field, as (Shafaat et al) viewed it as "a multidimensional conceptual construct that includes security and safety at work, better reward systems, fair and equitable wages, participating and cooperative work groups, and better opportunities for growth. The quality of work life and its quality are represented in two basic aspects, the first of which is the use of all human capabilities to display increased productivity through the development of human systems more than other systems in the work environment [4].

Quality of work life is defined as the consideration of employees' needs and desires regarding working conditions, wages, career development, work-family balance, safety, social interactions in the workplace, and the social significance of the employee's work itself [3], [5], [6]. Quality of work life represents a set of strategies, actions, and workplace atmospheres that work together to improve and maintain employee satisfaction by seeking to improve the working conditions of the organization's employees [4].

Al-Qahtani (2005) believes that the importance of the quality of work life lies in its direct and indirect impact on administrative phenomena and behaviors within organizations, and what can effect on the total activities and tasks of these organizations, whether in their performance of their tasks or their relations with the external environment as individuals or organizations, and thus achieving their goals [6]. This is what many applied research and studies conducted in different environments have confirmed, that improving the quality of work life has an impact on many important organizational outputs of organizations, which has created direct moral relationships between the nature of the prevailing environmental quality and the outputs of these organizations. Therefore, most researchers have confirmed that the degree of success of any organization in the

short and long term depends largely on the ability to create a suitable work environment in these organizations [7].

The importance of quality of work life lies in achieving many positive benefits and advantages, which are represented in reducing absenteeism rates and turnover, as it has a moral impact on the behavioral responses of employees, such as organizational identity, job satisfaction, and personal isolation. In addition, it does not only contribute to enhancing the organization's ability to attract competent employees, but also enhances its competitiveness. The importance of quality of work life programs is because they represent the basic seed for the success of many organizations, due to the increase and improvement of productivity that they have achieved, and at the same time, they have fulfilled the hopes of employees by satisfying all their needs and requirements at work environment [7].

Dimensions of Quality of Work Life

The responsibility for achieving the goals of quality of work life is distributed between human resources (employees) and the institution in which they work, each of which has its own goals. The increasing interest in employees and good management of their work life, to provide the opportunity for human resources to advance in their careers, will lead to the formation of a productive and willing human force. The more employees realize the strength of the relationship between their skills and abilities and the opportunities available to them for advancement and career progression, the more this will increase their loyalty and devotion to the institution and their sense of belonging to it.

Table 1: dimensions of QWL:

Author	Dimensions of Quality of Work Life
Al-Maghribi (2008)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Providing a healthy and safe work environment 2. Providing environmental and moral conditions that support worker performance 3. Actual participation in its broad sense 4. Providing the requirements for stability and job security 5. Redesigning and enriching jobs to keep pace with modern developments and satisfy workers' aspirations 6. Fairness in wage systems, rewards, and incentives (both material and moral) 7. Providing opportunities for promotion and career advancement 8. Improving productivity through suitable conditions 9. Building integrated work teams 10. Promoting social justice while preserving workers' dignity and privacy.
Jad al-Rab [8]	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Providing a healthy and safe work environment free from stress, anxiety, and diseases 2. Participation in decision-making 3. Providing the requirements for stability and job security 4. Fairness in wage systems, rewards, and material and moral incentives.

The Concept of Job Engagement

Practitioners and researchers often confuse the concept of work engagement with various constructs that relate to existing organizational commitments and attempt to classify them as work engagement. For example, affective organizational commitment means emotional attachment to

the organization, or a desire to remain with the organization. In addition, work engagement has been confused by practitioners with extra-role behavior [9].

The term “job engagement” was first coined by Khan (1990) in his paper: “Psychological Conditions of Personal Engagement and Disengagement at Work.” In that article, Khan explained that “job engagement refers to the simultaneous employment and expression of one’s preferred self in task behaviors that enhance connections to work and to others, personal presence, and full effective performance.” [10].

Engaged employees are highly active and self-efficacy and could change surrounding events to reflect their positive attitudes and lives. They transmit their positive feelings and engagement to their environment and co-workers, making work engagement a contagious experience [11]. Hard and challenging work is enjoyable for them because it is associated with positive achievements. They have no difficulty disconnecting from work and enjoying their personal life, unlike workaholic employees who cannot resist the drive to work [12]. Moreover, engagement is an indicator of better performance and services. Engaged employees are less likely to be involved in occupational injuries and report fewer errors. According to a meta-analysis conducted in 8,000 work units in 36 companies, engaged employees had better performance, loyalty, and profitability.

The relationship between the quality of work life and job engagement

Many studies have shown that improving the quality of work life and paying attention to its various dimensions and programs will inevitably lead to increased productivity and raising the levels and rates of job satisfaction and engagement in business organizations, in addition to satisfying the needs of workers in all their material, social and moral forms, and the needs of job security and stability. Below, we will discuss the most important dimensions of the quality of work life and its relationship to the job engagement of workers [8]:

1. Social relations and their relationship to job engagement: Strengthening social relations with all employees in the organization, whether they are subordinates or leaders, depends on the degree of the individual’s preference for belonging and the strength of his social need, and this is necessarily reflected in the job engagement of workers and thus in the quality of work life of these employees.
2. Participation and its relationship to job engagement: Individuals working in the organization often tend to support and back the decisions they participated in making in the organization. This depends on the organizational policies followed by the organization and the extent of the space that the organization’s leadership and management allow for operations and participation of employees, especially regarding the decision-making process. If there is constructive participation based on real practice by the organization and employees together to determine goals, solve problems, and accomplish tasks to improve work conditions and raise the efficiency of performance at the individual and organizational levels, all of this constitutes a fundamental point in the success of business organizations regardless of their size and type. This is necessarily reflected in the employees’ job engagement and thus in the quality of work life for these employees.
3. Job security and stability and its relationship to job engagement: The employee’s sense of job security and stability and not feeling threatened by the possibility of being abandoned at any moment by the organization will raise his morale and help him focus more on achieving the organization’s goals instead of thinking about looking for another job, as job stability and security benefit the employees and the organization. It is an essential element and success factor in any organization because it creates an atmosphere of loyalty and belonging among employees towards their organization, which motivates them to innovate

and develop their work and do their best to achieve the goals, which achieves its success, development and continuity.

4. Promotion and career advancement and its relationship to job engagement: The promotion and career advancement systems for employees in the organization depend on giving the element of efficiency, creativity and excellence in work performance the necessary importance when promoting by the organization and its management, and this will positively reflect on the productivity and performance rates of employees and the organization as a whole, and thus achieve the required goals for the individual by satisfying his needs for excellence and the ambitions he seeks, and achieving the organization's goals by achieving the required productivity to ensure continuity, survival, competition and success.

The impact of quality of work life on job engagement

The quality of work life has a fundamental and direct impact on job engagement. By reviewing many studies and research on the concepts and components of quality of work life and its impact on job engagement, the researcher believes that it is necessary to pay attention to the social, psychological and moral dimensions of employees in organizations, in order to reach the feelings and emotions of employees, to form an important entry point in linking the goals of employees to the goals of their organizations and thus raising their level of job engagement.

In the study of Al-Maliki et al. (2012), they indicated that a standard multiple regression was conducted between turnover intention as a dependent variable and the four dimensions of QWL (work life/home life, work design, work context, and world of work). The highest beta value in this case was for work context followed by work design, work life/home life, and world of work, which confirms the importance of the impact of quality of work life on job engagement [3].

In another study to measure the quality of work life of nurses in Saudi Arabia, it evaluated the quality of work life of nurses in primary health care centers in Jazan region of Saudi Arabia (the southern region). They used a cross-sectional survey developed by Brooks containing 42 items with four subscales. They concluded in their study that the quality of work life of nurses should be given greater attention to achieving the objectives of the sample studied and increase their job engagement [13].

Study results:

The results extracted from this study are as follows:

1. The quality of work life represents a set of strategies, procedures and atmospheres related to the workplace that work together to improve and maintain employee satisfaction by seeking to improve the working conditions of the institution's employees.
2. The quality of work life directly and indirectly affects the administrative phenomena and behaviors within organizations, and what it can effect on the total activities and tasks and thus achieve their goals.
3. The quality of work life is based on a few dimensions that contribute to shaping the basic structure of the quality of work life.
4. The quality of work life for employees in health institutions is improved by enhancing opportunities for promotions and career advancement, providing the opportunity for employees to participate in the decision-making process, and activating incentive and compensation systems for employees.
5. Improving the quality of work life and paying attention to its various dimensions and programs will inevitably lead to increased productivity, raising levels and rates of satisfaction and job engagement in business organizations, in addition to satisfying the

needs of employees in all their material, social and moral forms, and the needs of job security and stability.

Study Recommendations:

1. The necessity of improving the quality of work life for employees in health institutions by enhancing opportunities for promotions and career advancement, which leads to improving the level of job engagement for employees.
2. The necessity of providing the opportunity for employees to participate in the decision-making process and activating incentive and compensation systems for employees to improve the level of job engagement for employees.
3. The necessity of focusing on the dimensions that contribute to forming the basic structure of the quality of work life and thus raising the level of job engagement among employees.

Conclusion

The concept of Quality of Work Life (QWL) has emerged as a pivotal framework for improving organizational effectiveness and employee satisfaction. This study underscores the fundamental relationship between QWL and job engagement, particularly in the context of Saudi healthcare institutions.

The results reveal that QWL encompasses a set of strategies and conditions designed to enhance employee satisfaction and organizational productivity. Key dimensions—such as job security, workplace safety, career advancement opportunities, decision-making participation, and fair compensation systems—are instrumental in fostering a conducive environment for employees. These dimensions significantly influence employees' job engagement by addressing their social, psychological, and material needs.

In healthcare settings, where employees face unique challenges, QWL becomes even more critical. By investing in comprehensive QWL initiatives, organizations can improve job engagement, reduce turnover rates, and enhance service quality. The study highlights that improving QWL dimensions—particularly by enabling participation in decision-making and providing opportunities for growth—can significantly elevate employees' loyalty and innovation.

These findings emphasize the dual benefits of prioritizing QWL: enhanced employee well-being and organizational performance. For healthcare institutions, adopting QWL-focused strategies is not just beneficial but essential to achieving sustainability, competitiveness, and high-quality patient care. This approach serves as a blueprint for other sectors aiming to strengthen employee engagement and achieve long-term success.

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