

QUALITY OF WORK LIFE IN TEHRAN UNIVERSITY OF MEDICAL SCIENCES HOSPITALS' CLINICAL LABORATORIES EMPLOYEES

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ABSTRACT

Objective: A high quality of work life (QWL) is essential for organizations to continue to attract and retain employees. In health organizations, such as hospitals, specifically clinical laboratories, QWL has been described as referring to the strength and weakness in total work environment. Health professionals such as clinical laboratories' employees are exposed to critical influence and pressures when socialized into work environment. The requirements of CLIA and JCAHO have focused labs attention on the need for a formal system of employees' QWL assessment and documentation. The objective of this study was to look into positive and negative attitude of Tehran University of Medical Sciences Hospitals' Clinical Laboratories' employees from their quality of work life (QWL).

Methodology: A cross - sectional, descriptive and analytical study was conducted among 65 Employees by questionnaire consist of 30 elements of QWL at 15 Tehran University of Medical Sciences(TUMS) Hospitals' Clinical Laboratories during 2005-2006.

The respondents were asked to determine impact on their overall quality of work life. The data was analyzed and saved by SPSS software.

Results: Most of the employees (79.7%) without executive position are more unsatisfied with their QWL. There is (80%) expressed that they were very unsatisfied with their job environment and 96.9% of the respondents indicated that their pay was not fair and 92.3% of them believed that they were unsatisfied with cash payment to them. Two third of the employees expressed that they were unsatisfied with their environment and occupational health.

Conclusion: TUMS Hospitals' Clinical Laboratories' Employees responding to this survey have a poor quality of work life. This indicates that majority of employees are not satisfied with most aspects of work life.

KEY WORDS: Quality of Work Life, Employees, Hospital Clinical Laboratory.

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INTRODUCTION

A high quality of work life is essential for organizations to continue to attract and retain employees.¹ QWL is a comprehensive, department - wide program designated to improve employee's satisfaction, strengthening workplace learning and helping employees, better manage change and transitions.²

Quality of work life is a dynamic multidimensional construct that currently includes such concepts as job security, reward systems, training and career advancement opportunities, and participation in decision making.³ In

health care organizations, such as hospitals, specifically clinical laboratories, quality of work life has been described as referring to the strength and weakness in total work environment.⁴

Health professionals such as clinical laboratories' employees are exposed to critical influence and pressures when socialized into work environment.⁵ Introduction issues about quality of work life and their importance in organizations have been debated and experimented with for decades. Most organizations today view QWL as important, but do not formally link it to any of their strategic or business plans.⁶ Quality of work life incentives may be the most powerful type of reward you can offer.⁷ Managers who help employees to improve their quality of work life at home as well as at work reap rewards in loyalty, productivity and retention.

Employment affects quality of work life in four areas: Competency, Health, Time and Wealth.⁸ Goetzel et al⁹ addressed the subject of employee depression and its impact on business. Evidence is mounting that worker depression may have its greatest impact on productivity losses. Kirimaki et al¹⁰ revealed that an economically feasible TQM implementation may not necessarily affect the well being (in term of job satisfaction, work motivation, and organization commitment) and work - related perceptions including goal and process clarity, openness of communication, extent of participation and innovativeness and degree of autonomy of the staff .

There are several framework used by health care organizations to improve their performance through the development of their employees. Such framework include performance management mechanisms, employees' career development, employees' involvement and continuous improvement.¹¹

The requirements of CLIA and JCAHO have focused labs attention on the need that "The laboratory must have an ongoing mechanism to evaluate the effectiveness of its policies and procedures for assuring employees' quality of work life.¹² The research reported here aimed to provide into positive and negative attitude

of Tehran University of Medical Sciences Hospitals' Clinical Laboratories from their quality of work life at 2005 - 2006.

SUBJECTS AND METHODS

A cross-sectional, descriptive and analytical study was conducted among 65 TUMS Hospitals' Clinical Laboratories' Employees as twenty percent of total hospitals' clinical laboratories' employees by questionnaire at 15 studied clinical laboratories. The respondents were asked to determine factors impacting on their overall quality of work life. The data was analyzed by SPSS software and analyzed by statistical methods. Before beginning the main survey, a pilot study performed to check the reliability and validity of questionnaire instrument. The reliability coefficient for this measure was relatively high (Cronbach alpha = 0.92)

RESULTS

Table-I shows the frequency distribution of attitude of TUMS Hospitals' Clinical Laboratories' Employees' QWL by executive position. It seems the employees with executive position are more satisfied with their QWL. These are significant correlation between executive position and QWL. ($p < 0.05$)

Majority (90%) of the clinical laboratories' employees had maximally 10 years work experience and 91.6% of these employees earned less than 2,500,000 Rials Pay per month. Three fourth (74%) of the employees were single.

Two third of the respondents were female and one third of them were male. The employees who responded to the QWL questionnaire had different educational degrees. 90% of these employees had under graduate degrees and 10% of them had postgraduate degrees. Most

Table-I: Attitude of Employees' QWL by their executive position, $\chi^2 = 6.299$, $P < 0.05$

QWL Executive Position	Very Satisfied N %	Satisfied N %	Unsatisfied N %	Total N %
No	—	12 (20.3)	47 (79.7)	59 (100)
Yes	—	4 (66.7)	2 (33.3)	6 (100)
Total	—	16 (25)	49 (75)	65 (100)

of the respondents are 20-25 years old and were borne at Tehran. 31% of the respondents were working in small size, 29% of them were working in medium size and 40% of these employees were working in large size hospitals. 64% of the employees were working in general hospitals and 36% of them were working in special hospitals.

The correlation between the employee's QWL with their years of experience, pay per month, marriage status, sex, educational degrees, age, place of birth, size and type of hospitals were studied but there are not correlation between the employees' QWL with them. The distribution frequencies of attitude of TUMS Hospitals' Clinical Laboratories' Employees by the elements of QWL are shown at Table II.

DISCUSSION

The research represents here is the first of ongoing process to ensure better QWL for clinical laboratories' employees. These are several positive attributes of this study. First, to our knowledge, it is the first QWL investigation of clinical laboratories' employees in IRAN. Second, it is also unique in that we collected information from employees at 15 hospitals' clinical laboratories. Third, we developed our own questions and found 30 variables to be satisfaction with QWL. This is according to Kruger's study. Kruger et al. using with the self administered questionnaires collected employees' perceptions about elements of their QWL reported between 15-30 variables were found to be satisfactory with QWL.¹³ Our findings and Kruger's results indicated that QWL is a multidimensional construct and some QWL elements appear to be organization and context specific.

The vast majority of TUMS Hospital' Clinical laboratories' employees were dissatisfied with their career prospects, low monetary compensation, desired job environment and balance between work and family. This is according to Litter's study in Australia. Because he showed that a number of contributing factors such as low income, career prospect, stress, work and family balance lead to organizational dissatisfaction.¹⁴

Table-II: The distribution frequency of attitude of TUMS Hospitals' Clinical Laboratories' Employees by the elements of QWL

<i>Elements of QWL</i>	<i>Very Satisfied N (%)</i>	<i>Satisfied N (%)</i>	<i>Unsatisfied N (%)</i>
Job security feeling	3 (4.6)	12 (18.5)	50 (76.9)
Psychological calmness feeling	2 (3.1)	21 (32.3)	42 (64.6)
Participation in decision making	2 (3.1)	14 (21.5)	49 (75.4)
Support from coworkers	12 (18.5)	35 (53.8)	18 (27.7)
Career prospect	1 (1.5)	12 (18.5)	52 (80)
Desired job environment	9 (13.8)	12 (18.5)	44 (67.7)
Motivation for job promotion	1 (1.5)	12 (18.5)	52 (80)
Balance between work and family	1 (1.5)	2 (3.1)	62 (95.4)
Trust to senior management	14 (21.5)	28 (43.1)	23 (35.4)
Monetary compensation	1 (1.5)	1 (1.5)	63 (96.9)
Job welfare	—	1 (1.5)	64 (98.4)
Physical education	—	4 (6.2)	61 (93.8)
On the job training	—	2 (3.1)	63 (96.9)
Cash payment	—	5 (7.7)	60 (92.3)
Non cash payment	—	—	65 (100)
Indirect privileges	2 (3.1)	11 (16.9)	52 (80)
Low job accident	10 (15.6)	10 (15.6)	44 (68.8)
Environmental health	—	17 (26.6)	47 (73.5)
Clear organizational goals and policy	1 (1.6)	15 (23.4)	48 (83)
diversity in job	2 (3.1)	19 (29.7)	43 (67.2)
Job responsibility	29 (45.3)	24 (37.5)	11 (17.2)
appropriateness between job and personality	14 (21.9)	23 (35.9)	27 (42.2)
Human relation observation	5 (7.8)	24 (37.5)	25 (54.7)
Social working care	1	3 (4.6)	61 (95.4)
Occupational health	6 (9.4)	9 (14.1)	49 (76.6)
Medical examination	—	1 (1.6)	62 (98.4)
Job environment inspection	—	1 (1.6)	63 (98.4)
Management by suggestion system	1 (1.6)	5 (7.8)	58 (90.7)
Transportation facility	4	16 (6.3)	44 (68.7)
Health Insurance	23	25 (35.9)	16 (25)

The Nursing work Life Satisfaction survey results showed that pay and Autonomy were two most important components of nurses' quality of work life. These results are similar to

American hospitals and TUMS hospitals' clinical laboratories where monetary compensation and job welfare are ranked as most important.¹⁵

It is not uncommon for employees to believe that upper management should be responsible for their career development and continuing education.¹⁶ Two third of the TUMS clinical laboratories' employees had trust to their senior management for developing their carrier prospect and continuing education. But the findings of this study showed that the majority of the employees were dissatisfied with their career prospect and on the job services training. It seems these senior managers could not guaranteed job security as well as salaries and promotions directly to their length of service. Although, senior managers wish to care about with employees, tend to have a loyal motivated workplace, but the employees need to know what is available.¹⁷

TUMS hospitals' clinical laboratories' employees felt that four most important factors that make works a positive experience are monetary compensensation, job welfare, career prospect and job environmental health. Powerful keys to provide quality of work life incentives are offering a fair base salary, creating measurable goals, good communication, good management which are four components of a successful plan.¹⁸ These findings are approximately similar to TUMS hospitals' clinical laboratories' about their QWL. But Iranian clinical laboratories' employees believe that basal needs such as salary and monetary compensation are most important components of their quality of work life.

CONCLUSIONS

TUMS Hospitals' clinical laboratories' employees' responding to this survey have a poor quality of work life. This is indicating that majority of the employees are not satisfied with most aspects of their quality of work life. We suggest senior managers should quite reasonably devote significant resources to management life stage and care about with employees tend to have a loyal motivated workplace.

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