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COMPARATIVE STUDY ON QUALITY OF WORK LIFE OF EMPLOYEES IN SELECTED INDUSTRIES

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ABSTRACT

In the industrial sector, Textile and Engineering industries are the major players which not only account for enormous production and export but also they are the big employment providers. Maintaining good quality of work life in these sectors is of great importance and the study of Quality of Work Life in these two sectors is of great relevance which may help understand the overall Quality of Work Life in Indian industry. This study is able to pinpoint some grey areas with respect to the factors of Quality of Work Life in both the industries that need special attention. These involve both hygienic and motivational factors such as training and development, human relations, work environment, work schedule and counseling. The researcher recommends that the administrators of these industries may take steps to address the problems by enacting the recommendations with suitable modifications that fit their organizations. The Quality of Work Life of engineering and textile industries of Coimbatore, the general impression one would get is that the Quality of Work Life in engineering industry by and large, is better than textile industry.

Key Words: Engineering Industries, Textile Industry, Work Life.

INTRODUCTION

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 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.

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Quality of Work Life in these two sectors is of great relevance which may help understand the overall Quality of Work Life in Indian industry.

The Quality of Work Life is the degree to which the employees feel a comfortable and enjoyable work life. It is the degree of favorable work situation which is existing within the organization. Work situation here refers to both content and context of the job.

The Quality of Work Life refers to the level of satisfaction, motivation, involvement, and commitment individuals experience with respect to their lives at work. It is the degree to which individuals are able to satisfy their important personal needs while employed by the firm.

Undertaking the study in the highly industrialized districts like Coimbatore is highly pertinent and relevant. The study by their author entitled "Comparative study on Quality of Work Life of employees in selected industries" focused on the factors viz., 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.

REVIEW OF RELATED STUDIES

It is noteworthy that employees perception of Quality of Work Life varies based on demographic and organizational variables. Understanding this perception would help the leaders of the industries to work on improving the Quality of Work Life.

Rice (1985) emphasized the relationship between work satisfaction and Quality of people's lives. He contended that work experiences and outcomes can affect person's general Quality of life, both directly and indirectly through their effects on family interactions, leisure activities and levels of health and energy.

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.

Singh (1983) conducted studies in chemical and textile factories in India that were designed to improve the Quality of Work Life by reorganizing the work and introducing participatory management. Bhatia and Valecha (1981) studied the absenteeism rates of textile factory and recommended that closer attention should be paid to improve the Quality of Work Life.

Kavoussi (1978) compared the unauthorized absenteeism rates in two large textile factories and recommended that closer attention be paid for improving the Quality of Work Life. Raghvan (1978), the Ex-Chairman of BHEL, a public sector organization, stressed the need for worker's participation in management. According to him, "participation of workers in the management of undertakings, establishments, or other organizations engaged in any industry is underscored by Constitution of India".

Besides improved working conditions in the organization, there are ample evidence to highlight the implication of autonomy and participation at work to foster the meaning to work. Ritti (1970) in his study found that lack of opportunity to perform meaningful work is at the root of frustration among engineers and who have more autonomy at work-place feel more satisfied with their work life.

In a study, Sirota (1973) found that underutilization of worker's skill and abilities cause low Quality of Work Life and suggested job enrichment programme to correct the problems of worker's skill and abilities. Trist (1981) suggested that there should be optimum level of autonomy according to requirements of technology system.

Allenspach's (1975) report on flexible working hours based on experiments in Switzerland, discussed its advantages and disadvantages, including its effects on job satisfaction and employee and management attitude.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study was undertaken with the following objectives:

- To identify the major factors that influence the Quality of Work Life of employees in the industries;
- To compare the Quality of Work Life that prevails in Engineering and Textile industries; and

- To suggest the measures to improve the Quality of Work Life in the two industries.

PERIOD OF THE STUDY

The study was conducted for a period of two years i.e., 2013 - 2015. The respondents were contacted and interviewed in the factory premises itself during their off-duty hours.

RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

A structured, non-disguised interview schedule was prepared for the purpose of collecting the data. The factors of the study were drawn out from the related studies and the statements of the schedule were framed representing the factors. These were given shape in consultation with the field experts. The survey was preceded by a pilot study, conducted by interviewing a sample of 50 respondents.

POPULATION AND SAMPLE PROFILE

The study was confined to Coimbatore District of Tamil Nadu. This district was selected, keeping in mind that it is well endowed with human resources. For the purpose of comparison of perceived Quality of Work Life of employees in engineering and textile industries, five concerns from each industry were selected. Out of five concerns three were selected from the urban area and two were selected from the rural area. It was decided to collect the necessary information from 500 employees of each industry. These employees were drawn from five concerns according to the number of employees on the roll at the time of the study. A Non-probability, proportionate quota sampling was used for the study.

COLLECTION OF DATA

For collecting the data the respondents were contacted individually and given a brief description about the nature and purpose of the study. For the convenience of the respondents the statements were translated into local language so that the respondents could give their response with ease.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The data collected from the primary sources were analyzed using SPSS 11.0 package. Analysis of the significance of association between the opinions on each factors of Quality of Work Life of the respondents and the nature of industry was carried out.

A. Nature of Job: The major determinant of Quality of Work Life is the job itself. The job which is interesting, challenging, that provides status and pride, entails involvement and makes employees feel pride is considered to be the ideal one. As such, the Quality of Work Life is assessed based on the opinion of the respondents with regard to the sub factors viz., interesting nature of job, challenging job, job involvement, job status, matching of job and skill and pride in job. The following hypothesis is framed to find the association between nature of industry and satisfaction on nature of job.

H_o: There is no significant association between nature of industry and satisfaction regarding nature of job.

Table No. 1

Association between Nature of Industry and Satisfaction regarding Nature of Job

S. No.	Industry	No. of Respondents		Total
		Satisfied	Dissatisfied	
1.	Engineering	346 (53.7)	154 (43.3)	500 (50)
2.	Textiles	298 (46.3)	202 (56.7)	500 (50)
Total		644 (100)	356 (100)	1000 (100)

χ^2 Value: 10.050 df : 1 Result: Significant at 0.01

The results show that there is a significant association between nature of industry and satisfaction regarding nature of job at 1 per cent level. Among the satisfied respondents, 53.7 per cent belong to engineering industry and the remaining 46.3 per cent belong to textile industry. Out of the dissatisfied respondents, 56.7 per cent belong to textile industry and the remaining 43.3 per cent belong to engineering industry.

B. Pay and Compensation: Next to Nature of Job, the factor which has influence on Quality of Work Life is Pay and Compensation. The typical impetus to work is to earn a living, it is fundamental therefore; that Quality of Work Life is affected by how well this aim is achieved and what level of earning is adequate for particular job. The following hypothesis is framed to find the association between nature of industry and satisfaction regarding pay and compensation.

H_o: There is no significant association between nature of industry and satisfaction regarding pay and compensation.

Table No. 2

Association between Nature of Industry and Satisfaction regarding Pay and Compensation

S. No.	Industry	No. of Respondents		Total
		Satisfied	Dissatisfied	
1.	Engineering	287 (48.7)	213 (51.8)	500 (50)
2.	Textiles	302 (51.3)	198 (48.2)	500 (50)
Total		589 (100)	411 (100)	1000 (100)

χ^2 Value: 0.929 df : 1 Result: Not significant at 0.01

It is clear from the above table that there is no significant association between the nature of industry and satisfaction regarding pay and compensation. Among the satisfied respondents, 51.3 per cent belong to textile industry and the remaining 48.7 per cent belong to engineering industry. Out of the total number of dissatisfied respondents, 51.8 per cent belong to engineering industry and the remaining 48.2 per cent belong to textile industry.

C. Development and Encouragement: Quality of Work Life is ensured by the opportunities provided by the job for the development of the employee and encouragement given by the management to perform the job. An attempt is made to verify the association between nature of industry and the factor development and encouragement using the following hypothesis.

H_o: There is no significant association between nature of industry and satisfaction regarding development and encouragement.

Table No. 3

Association between Nature of Industry and Satisfaction regarding Development and Encouragement

S. No.	Industry	No. of Respondents		Total
		Satisfied	Dissatisfied	
1.	Engineering	277 (63.2)	223 (39.7)	500 (50)
2.	Textiles	161 (36.8)	339 (60.3)	500 (50)
Total		438 (100)	562 (100)	1000 (100)

χ^2 Value: 54.665 df : 1 Result: Significant at 0.01

The Chi-square value found in the table indicates that there is a significant association between the nature of industry and satisfaction regarding development and encouragement at 1 per cent level. Further it is concluded that among the satisfied respondents, 63.2 per cent belong to engineering industry and the remaining 36.8 per cent belong to textile industry. But among the dissatisfied respondents, 60.3 per cent belong to textile industry and the remaining 39.7 per cent belong to engineering industry.

D. Human Relations and Social Integration: Work and career are typically pursued within the framework of social organization and the nature of personal relationships becomes an important dimension of Quality of Work Life. Acceptance of the worker is based on work related traits, skills, abilities and potential without regard to race, sex, physical appearance etc. The following hypothesis attempts to verify the association that prevails between nature of industry and human relations and social integration.

H_o: There is no significant association between nature of industry and satisfaction regarding human relations and social integration.

Table No. 4

Association between Nature of Industry and Satisfaction regarding Human Relations and Social Integration

S. No.	Industry	No. of Respondents		Total
		Satisfied	Dissatisfied	
1.	Engineering	376 (58.6)	124 (34.6)	500 (50)
2.	Textiles	266 (41.4)	234 (65.4)	500 (50)
Total		642 (100)	358 (100)	1000 (100)

χ^2 Value: 52.646 df : 1 Result: Significant at 0.01

The results show that there is a significant association between the nature of industry and satisfaction regarding human relations and social integration at 1 per cent level. Among the satisfied respondents, 58.6 per cent belong to engineering industry and the remaining 41.4 per cent belong to textile industry. Out of the total number of respondents dissatisfied, 65.4 per cent belong to textile industry and the remaining 34.6 per cent belong to engineering industry.

E. Workers Participation in Management: Participation has been widely recommended as a means of improving the Quality of Work Life and increasing the productivity. In theory, participation releases the creative energies and provides workers with a sense of accomplishment. Thus it strengthens the path-goal relationship and also enhances the work environment. It offers a morally attractive solution to many of the problems of industries. The following hypothesis is framed to find the association between the nature of industry and workers participation in management.

H_o: There is no significant association between nature of industry and satisfaction regarding workers participation in management.

Table No. 5

Association between Nature of Industry and Satisfaction regarding Workers Participation in Management

S. No.	Industry	No. of Respondents		Total
		Satisfied	Dissatisfied	
1.	Engineering	284 (66.4)	216 (37.8)	500 (50)
2.	Textiles	144 (33.6)	356 (62.2)	500 (50)
Total		428 (100)	572 (100)	1000 (100)

χ^2 Value: 80.060 df : 1 Result: Significant at 0.01

The results show that there is a significant association between the nature of industry and satisfaction regarding workers participation in management at 1 per cent level. Among the satisfied respondents, 66.4 per cent belong to engineering industry and the remaining 33.6 per cent belong to textile industry. Out of the dissatisfied respondents, 62.2 per cent belong to textile industry and the remaining 37.8 per cent belong to engineering industry.

F. Working Conditions: Safe and healthy working conditions ensure good health, continuity of services, decreased bad labour management relations. A healthy worker registers a high productivity. He is cheerful, confident and may prove an invaluable asset to the organization. The following hypothesis is framed to find the association between the nature of industry and working conditions that prevail in work place.

H_o: There is no significant association between nature of industry and satisfaction regarding working conditions.

Table No. 6

Association between Nature of Industry and Satisfaction regarding Working Conditions

S. No.	Industry	No. of Respondents		Total
		Satisfied	Dissatisfied	
1.	Engineering	348 (69.9)	152 (30.3)	500 (50)
2.	Textiles	150 (30.1)	350 (69.7)	500 (50)
Total		498 (100)	502 (100)	1000 (100)

χ^2 Value: 156.819 df : 1 Result: Significant at 0.01

It is clear from the above table that there is a significant association between the nature of industry and satisfaction regarding working conditions at 1 per cent level. Among the satisfied respondents, 69.9 per cent belong to engineering industry and the remaining 30.1 per cent belong to textile industry. Out of the total number of dissatisfied respondents, 69.7 per cent belong to textile industry and the remaining 30.3 per cent belong to engineering industry. It is concluded that the working conditions in the engineering industry is better than that of the textile industry.

G. Occupational Stress: Perceived stress refers to the extent to which one perceives one's situation to be uncontrollable and burdensome. Individuals who report high levels of perceived stress generally are manifesting the symptoms that associate with "*dis*tress", including nervousness, frustration, irritability, and generalized anxiety. Perceived stress has been linked to job dissatisfaction, depressed feelings, work absence, and turnover. The following hypothesis is framed to find the association between nature of industry and the steps taken to reduce occupational stress.

H_o: There is no significant association between nature of industry and satisfaction regarding the steps taken for the reduction of occupational stress.

Table No. 7

Association between Nature of Industry and Satisfaction regarding Occupational Stress

S. No.	Industry	No. of Respondents		Total
		Satisfied	Dissatisfied	
1.	Engineering	292 (70.4)	208 (35.6)	500 (50)
2.	Textiles	123 (29.6)	377 (64.4)	500 (50)
Total		415 (100)	585 (100)	1000 (100)

χ^2 Value: 117.644 df : 1 Result: Significant at 0.01

The Chi-square value found in the table indicates that there is a significant association between the nature of industry and satisfaction regarding the steps taken by the management for the reduction of occupational stress at 1 per cent level. Further it is concluded that among the satisfied respondents, 70.4 per cent belong to engineering industry and the remaining 29.6 per cent belong to textile industry. But among the dissatisfied respondents, 64.4 per cent belong to textile industry whereas 35.6 per cent belong to engineering industry.

H. Alternative Work Schedule: Many employers have found it beneficial to allow alternate work arrangements for their employees. This is one way to improve employee productivity and morale. The advantages of these alternate work arrangements to the employee include flexible work hours, shorter or no commute, and a comfortable working environment. The advantages to the employer include less need for office space, increased productivity, low use of sick leave, and improved employee morale. The following hypothesis is framed to find the association between nature of industry and satisfaction on alternative work schedule.

H_o: There is no significant association between nature of industry and satisfaction regarding alternative work schedule.

Table No. 8

Association between Nature of Industry and Satisfaction regarding Alternative Work Schedule

S. No.	Industry	No. of Respondents		Total
		Satisfied	Dissatisfied	
1.	Engineering	288 (70.4)	212 (35.9)	500 (50)
2.	Textiles	121 (29.6)	379 (64.1)	500 (50)
Total		409 (100)	591 (100)	1000 (100)

χ^2 Value: 115.378 df : 1 Result: Significant at 0.01

The results show that there is a significant association between the nature of industry and satisfaction regarding alternative work schedule facilities provided by the management at 1 per cent level. Among the satisfied respondents, 70.4 per cent belong to engineering industry and the remaining 29.6 per cent belong to textile industry. Out of the total number of dissatisfied respondents, 64.1 per cent belong to textile industry and the remaining 35.9 per cent belong to engineering industry.

I. Grievance Procedure: Grievance procedure presents a systematic attempt to listen to the problems of the subordinates and take necessary action. It is expected that all organizations would develop their grievance machinery suited to their technology and environment. The most significant characteristic of any grievance procedure that would make it effective are the urgency and level. Grievance handling machinery does not make sense unless the grievances are processed and decisions are taken in the shortest possible time and at the level at which the grievance have arisen. The following hypothesis is framed to find the association between nature of industry and grievance procedure adopted in the organization.

H_o: There is no significant association between nature of industry and satisfaction regarding grievance procedure.

Table No. 9

Association between Nature of Industry and Satisfaction regarding Grievance Procedure

S. No.	Industry	No. of Respondents		Total
		Satisfied	Dissatisfied	
1.	Engineering	278 (63.2)	222 (39.6)	500 (50)
2.	Textiles	162 (36.8)	338 (60.4)	500 (50)
Total		440 (100)	560 (100)	1000 (100)

χ^2 Value: 54.610 df : 1 Result: Significant at 0.01

The Chi-square value found in the table indicates that there is a significant association between the nature of industry and satisfaction regarding grievance procedure adopted in the organization at 1 per cent level. Further it is concluded that among the satisfied respondents, 63.2 per cent belong to engineering industry and the remaining 36.8 per cent belong to textile industry. But among the dissatisfied respondents, 60.4 per cent belong to textile industry and the remaining 39.6 per cent belong to engineering industry.

J. Promotion Policy: Promotion opportunities and the promotion and reward evaluation criteria used are both under the direct control of an organization and subject to the organization's policies. If these two elements are found to have significant effects on outcomes such as Quality of Work Life, organizational commitment, job satisfaction and turnover intent then that direct control permits their alteration as necessary to produce a positive impact on those outcomes. The following hypothesis is framed to find the association between nature of industry and the satisfaction regarding promotion policy.

H_o: There is no significant association between nature of industry and satisfaction regarding promotion policy.

Table No. 10

Association between Nature of Industry and Satisfaction regarding Promotion Policy

S. No.	Industry	No. of Respondents		Total
		Satisfied	Dissatisfied	
1.	Engineering	230 (65.3)	270 (41.7)	500 (50)
2.	Textiles	122 (34.7)	378 (58.3)	500 (50)
Total		352 (100)	648 (100)	1000 (100)

χ^2 Value: 51.136 df : 1 Result: Significant at 0.01

The results show that there is a significant association between the nature of industry and satisfaction regarding the promotion policy adopted in the organizations. Among the satisfied respondents, 65.3 per cent belong to engineering industry and the remaining 34.7 per cent belong to textile industry. Out of the dissatisfied respondents, 58.3 per cent belong to textile industry and the remaining 41.7 per cent belong to engineering industry.

SUGGESTIONS

This study is able to pinpoint some grey areas with respect to the factors of Quality of Work Life in both the industries that need special attention. These involve both hygienic and motivational factors such as training and development, human relations, work environment, work schedule and counselling. The researcher recommends that the administrators of these industries may take steps to address the problems by enacting the recommendations with suitable modifications that fit their organizations.

i) Effective Training and Development: Employees in engineering industry are normally more educated and skilled than the textile industry and it is quite natural that the more enlightened employees expect the management to take some measures for their development. As the technology grows in rapid pace it is imperative for the engineering industry to keep the employees acquainted with development and train them appropriately.

ii) Good Human Relations and Social Integration: The complex nature of production processes and the heterogeneous nature of employees are the reasons for the not so healthy human relations and social integration in textile industry. Hence, the management has to take some special efforts to improve this factor. It is suggested that at least once in a month, meeting at departmental level may be arranged by the supervisors where the employees could put forward their opinion and speak out their problems.

iii) Conducive Work Environment: It is quite understandable that the very nature of textile industry is such that the administrators work overtime and spend huge resources to create and maintain good working condition. It is suggested that the management may take steps to replace the old machineries and equipments with modern ones, so that the employees may feel more comfortable, more variety and less fatigue in their jobs. It is a fact that introduction of novel ideas and equipments would make the employees excited, active, feel proud and focused on their work.

iv) Flexible Work Schedule: The tight and rigid work schedule will always keep the employees under pressure. The employees of textile industry are not much impressed regarding work schedule practiced in the industry. Hence it is suggested that a weekly or monthly schedule, which is flexible in nature may be evolved with the help of supervisors.

v) Comprehensive Induction Training: It is suggested to both the industries to arrange for induction training which would help the new entrants to fully acquaint with the job, co-workers and organization.

vi) Effective Employee Counseling: It is also suggested that both the industries may give special attention on employee counseling. These industries normally attract many young unmarried men and women. Their lack of exposure to realities of work life and social life make them more emotional and problematic.

CONCLUSION

Going through the various findings regarding the Quality of Work Life of both engineering and textile industries of Coimbatore, the general impression one would get is that the Quality of Work Life in engineering industry by and large, is better than textile industry.

As both industries are in the forefront of the industrial growth and accommodate the major chunk of the work force of the country, concerted and concrete efforts for enhancement of Quality of Work Life would do a lot to improve the morale and motivation of the employees and as a result there would be improvement in the health of our Indian industry.

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