



RECENT CHANGES IN EMPLOYEES EXPECTATIONS WITH REFERENCE TO QUALITY OF WORK LIFE

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ABSTRACT

The objective of the study is to identify the recent major changes in employees' expectations with reference to Quality of Work Life (QWL). The research methodology adopted is the secondary method of data collection, as all the major reviews of HR Leaders and Major magazines are reviewed. The research would aim at identifying the major reasons along with the changes in employees' expectations, as a recent change in the mind set of employees of Post and continuing COVID impact. It concludes with the suggestions that the corporate houses need to understand and adapt with, so as to ensure employees' retention and getting the work done for attaining organizational goals.

KEYWORDS :- Quality of Work Life, Employee Expectations, HR Practices.

INTRODUCTION

Quality Of Work Life .

Quality of Work Life (QWL) is a philosophy, a set of principles, which holds that people are the most important resource in the organization as they are trustworthy, responsible and capable of making valuable contribution and they should be treated with dignity and respect. The elements that are relevant to an individual's quality of work life include the task, the physical work environment, social environment within the organization, administrative system and relationship between life on and off the job. QWL consists of opportunities for active involvement in group working arrangements or problem solving that are of mutual benefit to employees or employers, based on labour management cooperation. People also conceive of QWL as a set of methods, such as autonomous work groups, job enrichment, and high involvement aimed at boosting the satisfaction and productivity of workers. It requires employee commitment to the organization and an environment in which this commitment can flourish. Thus, QWL is a comprehensive construct that includes an individual's job related well-being and the extent to which work experiences are rewarding, fulfilling and devoid of stress and other negative personal consequences.

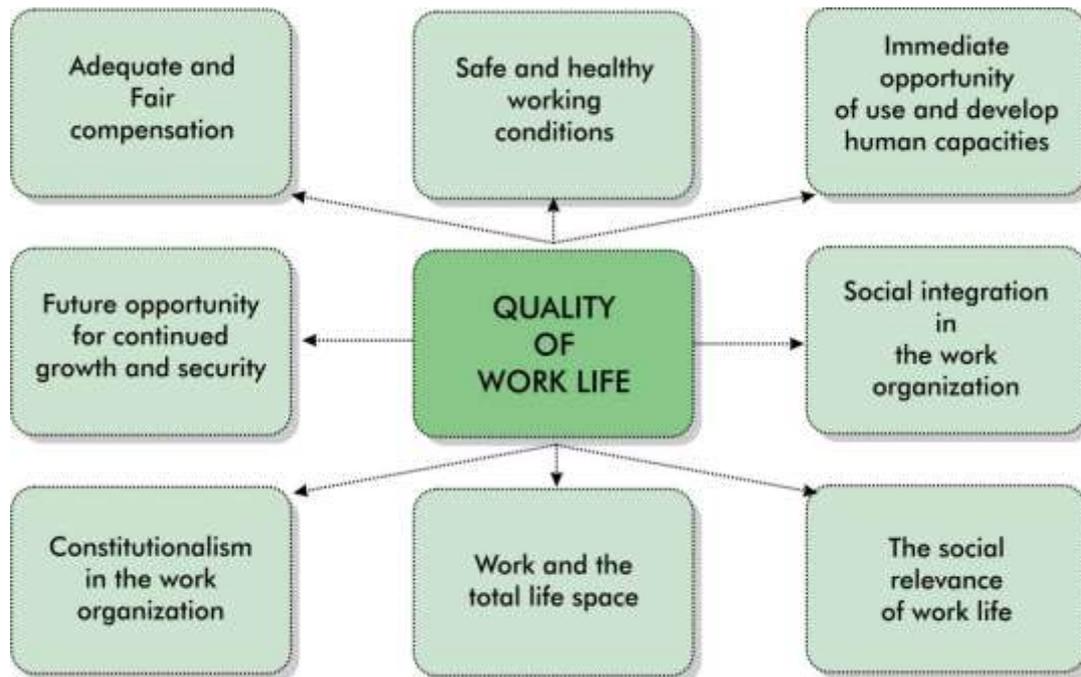


Figure 1 : The Walton's Practices of Quality of Work Life

Recent Changes in The Perception of Quality Of Work Life .

In the past decade organizations has propelled towards preparing for the VUCA world - a world which is **volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous**. The true test, however, of that preparation has come in the current times through the COVID pandemic. Employees had to suddenly start working from home. Organizations and HR Leaders had to plan for this without a clear view of the duration of this phase.

In a pre-pandemic world, the employee expectations were focused primarily on equitable rewards, fair promotion and a great workplace environment. Post the pandemic, the expectations have shifted drastically and organizations as well as HR Leaders have to re-assess and re-align their approach with reference to Quality of Work Life .

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

- To understand the change in perception of employees towards Quality of Work Life .
- To identify the new dimensions of QWL which have recently emerged .
- To understand the reasons and importance of such changes .
- To suggest the appropriate measures to cope up with the changing Environment .

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Secondary Method of Data Collection has been adopted ,as all reviews and surveys of employees research conducted by major newspapers and magazines has been reviewed. Personal Observation and review has been the adopted method of research.

FINDINGS

Measures related to employee health and well-being :- A survey conducted through FYI, which is a health-tech product, by MindMap Advance Research sheds light on what those expectations are. The survey shares that 93% of the employees are stressed about returning to the work place. The biggest expectation that has arisen in these past few months is that their organizations should be providing the best solutions for protecting the health of their employees, and ensuring a safe and sanitized workspace. There is also an expectation that the Leaders should be communicating the health guidelines they have implemented before the employees are asked to return. In addition to that, measures such as regular work-from-home provisions, rotational presence in office premises and routine check-ups are also expectations from a growing set of the workforce.

Awareness of this expectation is the first step In addition to that, HR Leaders and organizations need to proactively identify how they can implement these measures. Finally they need to communicate how they



understand these expectations. A few organizations such as Mahindra, pre-empted these to some extent and started extensive employee wellness within a few days of the lockdown. These include sessions with a nutritionist, exercise approach, emotional well-being and so on. Also in order to prepare for the return of the employees many organizations such as Maruti Suzuki, Hindustan Unilever, ITC and several others have developed and launched their in-house apps. These apps are designed to allow them to assess and declare their health status and contacts.

Hindustan Unilever's HUL COVID-19 Preparedness app went live before the official lockdown in March. Similarly HR teams in Reliance are monitoring employee responses related to their health on a daily basis. Such measures create a higher level of confidence within employees about how their leaders and organizations are committed towards creating a safe and healthy workplace.

Relevance of existing employee benefits :- With organizations facing a large degree of economic crisis there have been severe cost optimization measures that are being undertaken. One of the areas that is being revisited is employee benefits. A survey by Ekincare showed how only 50% of the responding organizations felt that their current set of benefits was helpful during this pandemic. Employees expect relevant and new-age benefits in the current situation. There is a need to include benefits that are connected to overall mental well-being and also accessible virtually. There is a need for the current workforce to understand the investments organizations are truly making towards them.

Citi India has initiated COVID-19 support for its employees by providing Rs 18,000, subject to income tax, to each of its employee whose annual base salary is up to Rs 10.8 lakh. In addition to that they have revamped their benefits to include expenses incurred on the treatment of Covid-19 for employees as well as enrolled dependents under insurance, with some provisions. Organizations such as Intuit India, have moved a step ahead by providing specialized learning programs for the children of their employees, since schools are not functional. These are the kind of benefits that employees truly value as we shift into a new world.

The rise and continuation of remote working :- When the announcement of the lockdown took place, not many companies were prepared for their entire employee population to work remotely. In the past few months, the individuals as well as their organizations have discovered the positive aspects and benefits of flexible working. That has led to an expectation that there will be changes in policies and practices in the long run which will foster a culture of work-life balance. In many cases, being able to work remotely has allowed the employees to spend time with their families in a more significant way. They will want to be able to continue with that. Employee productivity has also remained high. Some companies have taken cognizance of this and already made announcements. For example, TCS has shared that by 2025, 75% of its current workforce will be working from home. Several organizations have put specific details in place such as infrastructure needed, internet support and other elements, to help employees shift to that model seamlessly. The impact of this need is such that a survey by JLL India, shared how 13-14 % of corporate workforce may continue to work from home permanently even after the pandemic and 65% of the employees responded that they wanted to be able to work from home as well as office. This indicates a paradigm shift in the mindset of employees which is guiding organizations to also adopt future-focused policies.

HR Leaders and organizations, have to begin by understanding these changed expectations. They need to review the entire set of policies, programs and practices they have currently. There are some big aspects to be aware of as they realign the above – the guidelines issued by local and central authorities with respect to employee safety and health, and the presence of a robust business continuity plan. Protecting the core of their business, which is people, has taken precedence and leaders have to create cultures of empathy and acceptance. In addition to that, transparent and frequent communication is a key area to work on. There are several dimensions of employee well-being such as financial, emotional, physical and social which are getting severely impacted. HR Leaders and organizations need to be aware of these dimensions and rework the people strategies to incorporate them.

No one-size-fits-all approach :- With these findings in mind, there is no 'one size' fits all solution for work practices and we see businesses adopting a hybrid working strategy to offer the flexibility UK employees are looking for. It's exciting to consider the opportunities and innovation that may emerge as businesses explore the future of the working environment. I'm looking forward to continuing this conversation and discussing how Nespresso can support businesses as workplaces evolve. As the future of our working environment changes, businesses must not forget to focus on providing quality employee experiences – through offering flexible working arrangements and dynamic spaces, as well as creating a culture of trust and collaboration, and recognising the need for a balanced lifestyle. It's not just satisfied employees who will reap the rewards. Those



businesses that push forward with new employee initiatives will be rewarded with engaged employees, better retention in the workforce and a positive reputation.

SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

Modern employees value meaningful work and look for companies that value a healthy work-life balance. Positive company cultures and mentorship are also high on modern employees'

Purpose :- Modern employees are driven by a sense of purpose, and they demand more from a company than just a salary. A poll concluded that 57% of younger Americans said that they wanted to be part of something that was enjoyable or made a difference in society, demonstrating that fulfillment is a key driver of employee happiness.

Culture :- Culture is tied closely with purpose, and is typically immediately evident within a company. A company's culture is a company's personality, and it has wide ranging impact across an organization. "How your organization does business, how your organization interacts with one another and how the team interacts with the outside world, specifically your customers, employees, partners, suppliers, media and all other stakeholders.

Onboarding : Having a great onboarding process isn't a "nice to have"—it's an absolute must. When BambooHR surveyed more than 1,000 currently employed Americans, nearly a third of respondents indicated that they'd left a job before hitting the six-month mark. One of the top reasons for leaving so quickly? A poor onboarding experience. An employee's first few days at a company send a powerful message about what their experience will be like going forward. From the messaging of the official welcome meeting, to what they see, hear, and do during working hours, onboarding experiences can either confirm or undermine the impressions new hires formed during the hiring process. If an employee feels like they've been misled by their interview process, it could severely color their productivity and engagement going forward, or even push them to leave.

Growth opportunities : Employees who don't feel supported in their professional development are three times more likely to search for a new job. Modern employees are always looking up, and 59% of younger workers say opportunities to learn and grow are extremely important to them when applying for a job. In fact, it ranked in the top three job attributes that younger employees value most, separating them from previous generations. This is an area that many companies are sorely lacking since only 39% of those young employees say that they learned something new in the past 30 days that they can use to do their jobs better. Providing opportunities for career development and training goes a long way in both engaging and retaining employees—and represents a competitive edge for the companies that do so

Leadership : Consider this: 40% of employees who do not rate their supervisor's performance highly have interviewed for a new job in the last three months, compared to just 10% of those that do rate their supervisor highly. Managers can make or break their employees' work experience, so it's important for every leader in your organization to continue growing their management skills in order to retain employees. Strong leadership also has huge implications for company culture. If leaders don't embody and reinforce company values and beliefs, it's hard for employees to believe in a company's mission. In order to positively influence their employees, leaders have to talk the talk—and walk the walk.

Autonomy While mentorship and guidance are certainly welcome, most employees want to have control of their work. They want to be able to decide when, where, and how their work gets done. Nobody likes being micromanaged, because it indicates a lack of trust. As emphasized in a recent HBR article:

"Micromanagement" is a dirty word in today's workplaces. Bosses who intervene too often or too extensively in their subordinates' activities get a bad reputation, and most forward-thinking organizations have come to value employee autonomy more than oversight.

-HBR

By resisting the urge to micromanage your employees and giving them the autonomy to do their jobs, you'll show them that you trust them—the second most important expectation modern employees have of their employers, according to SHRM. Plus, the more independent work they do, the more opportunities you have to recognize your employees for the great work they do!



Recognition

Giving recognition is foundational in retaining and engaging employees, and it's an underutilized engagement tool despite being a simple, low-overhead interaction. Recognition doesn't cost anything, and it takes very little time to say "thank you."

The takeaway

The world is changing, and so is the workplace! It's important to stay dynamic and evolve in order to attract and retain the best employees. With a better understanding of what modern employees expect of their employers, from growth opportunities to purpose-driven work, you can create an environment that your people will love. If you can provide an experience that exceeds your employees' expectations, chances are good that you'll grow with them, too.

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