

## The Impact of Quality of Work Life on Organizational Commitment

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### Abstract

*Quality of Work Life (QWL) is a multidimensional construct usually referring to overall satisfaction with working life and with work-life balance, a sense of belonging to a working group, a sense of becoming oneself, and a sense of being worthy and respectable. Research has provided empirical support to the contention that enhanced quality of work life leads to improved employee satisfaction and fulfillment, increased mutual trust, reduced stress and improved health, increased job security and commitment. The purpose of this paper was to investigate the impact of Quality of Work Life (QWL) on Organizational Commitment (OC) amongst a sample of employees at apparel industry in Sri Lanka. Based on the historical and current literature, the conceptual framework was developed. Researchers have selected Sri Lankan apparel industry firms as one of the most dynamic and vibrant sectors of the economy. Researchers adapted the mixed method for this study but more biased towards quantitative method. The unit of observation of the study was at individual level, operational level employees. 200 operational level employees were selected through simple random sampling method for the study. Both primary data and secondary data were collected for the study. Primary data was collected using a structured questionnaire and in-depth interview. Questionnaire was pre-tested using test-retest method for estimating the reliability. SPSS computer package was used as a tool for compiling and processing data. The hypotheses were formulated based on the study framework and it stated as QWL prevailing in the apparel industry in Sri Lanka significantly influences the organizational commitment. The results showed that there was a significant impact of QWL on OC and provide insights how apparel industry firm of Sri Lanka could improve upon their employee commitment.*

**Key words:** - Quality of Work Life (QWL), Organizational Commitment (OC), Normative Commitment, Affective Commitment, Continuance Commitment

### Background of the Study

Quality of Work Life is the essential concept of favorable situations in a working environment. The Quality of Work Life facilitates employee's training opportunities, job satisfaction and working conditions. A better Quality of Work Life improves the growth of the employee's along with the organization growth. It seems unlikely that organizations will survive in an increasingly competitive environment if they ignore people related business concern (Schular & Walker, 1990). Success of an organization heavily depends on the human resources due to unique characteristics of human resource. The physical and psychological health of employees is a critical factor of organizational performance. Any impairment could lead to undesirable consequences of organizational performance. QWL has implicitly, if not explicitly adopted a contemporary view of job satisfaction, stress, labour relations, organizational commitment and a broad view of occupation (Rose et al, 2006). A number of researchers and theorists have been interested of the quality of work life concept and have tried to identify the kinds of factors that determine such an experience at work (Kahn, 1981, Kalra & Ghosh, 1984, Mirvis & Lawler, 1982, Kerck & Booth-Kewley, 1993). QWL is a philosophy, a set of principles, which holds that people are the most important resources in the organization as they are trustworthy, responsible and capable of making valuable contribution and they should be treated with obligate and respect (Straw & Heckscher, 1994). According to Suttle (1997) QWL is the degree of work are able to satisfy important personal basic needs through their experience in the organization is no longer relevant. The elements that are relevant to an individual's QWL include task, the physical work environment. QWL consists of opportunities for active involvement in group working arrangements or problem solving that are of mutual benefits to employees or employers, based on labour management corporation. 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. 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. QWL encompasses working conditions, working time, form of wages payment, health hazards issue, some financial and non-financial benefits and management behavior towards workers (Islam and Sienthai, 2009).

Organizational Commitment (OC) has been a popular topic of research in organizational behavior (Mayer & Allen, 1997). OC refers to the strength of an employee's involvement in identification with the organization (Hellrigel, Slocum & Woodman, 1998). Allen and Mayer (1997) define OC as a psychological condition that relates the criteria in the employee's relationship in the organization and the implications on the decision to remain in the organization. Steers (1991) stated that the sources of OC may vary from person to person. Caldwell (1990) suggested that OC is largely determined by the rewards offered by the organization. Allen and Mayer (1990) conceptualized OC in terms of three distinct dimensions affective, continuance and normative.

The basic philosophy of QWL is in regard to employee learning capability (Camman, 1984) and learning organization environment (Zain, 1999). Otherwise job becomes under threat and insecure, result in an increased level of employee dissatisfaction on work performance (Islam & Siengthai, 2009). To date studies on QWL and its impact on OC in Sri Lanka have been somewhat limited (Gnanayudam & Dharmasir, 2008). Few researchers (Gnanayudam & Dharmasir, 2008) have addressed this research problem in their studies and found positive relationship between QWL and OC in relation to apparel industry firms in Sri Lanka. Thus it is the purpose of this present study to fill this existing gap that currently exists in the areas of QWL and OC research in Sri Lankan context.

#### Literature Review

Quality of life is an important aspect of one's and it's composed with two main aspects i.e. quality of work life and quality of family life. QWL can be described as the way of individual perceive and evaluate the characteristics intrinsic to his/her work. QWL is affected by the characteristics of the organization workplace, job and performing

tasks in individual performance, by the environment that surrounds to the individual and by other subsystems that exists in the work system. Although QWL is also influenced by factors from outside the organization, it is measured by evaluating the level which people face good reward or satisfied with their work. The evolution of QWL began in late 1960s conceptualizing the human dimensions of work by focusing on the quality of the relationship between the worker and the working environment. QWL as a discipline began in the U.S. in September 1972 when the phrase was coined as "Democratization of work" conference held at Columbia University's Arden House. The first was a political movement in Western Europe called "Industry Democracy" and the second was the emergence in the U.S.A. of social science theories about "humanizing the workplace" (Davenport, 1983).

There is a plethora of literature the factors critical for the assessment of QWL (Calson, 1978, Kalra & Ghosh 1974, Morton 1977, Rosow 1980, Srinivas 1994, Waiton, 1973, Levine et.al.1984, Mirvis & Lawler 1984, Taylor, 1978, Walton 1975). Lau (2000) found that QWL companies have a higher growth rate as measured by the five-year trends of sales growth and assets growth. The outcomes for profitability yield mixed results on Walton's (1974) conceptualization of QWL.

The construct of organizational commitment is one of the more frequently studied work attitudes in the organization development literature. There are wide varieties of definitions and measures of organizational commitment exist. commitment is an attitude reflecting an employee's loyalty to the organization, and an ongoing process through which organization members express their concern for the organization and its continued success and well being (Northcraft and Neale, 1996). It shows the degree to which the employee loyal to the organization (Opatha, 2009). Mowday et al (1982), define, people who are committed are more likely to stay in an organization and work towards the organization's goals. The attitudinal approach views organizational commitment as an employee attitude that reflects the nature and quality of the linkage



between an employee and an organization (Porter et al., 1974; Mowday, Steers & Porter, 1982). The healthcare organization must foster a caring, sharing, and supportive work environment to build and retain a committed, trusting, satisfied, and equally supportive work force. Mowday et al. (1982) posited that organizational commitment holds greater significance as a variable than others because it is a more dependable indication of an employee's identification with and involvement in an organization over the long term. Individuals who are committed to the organization are less likely to leave their jobs than those who are uncommitted. Individuals who are committed to the organization tend to perform at a higher level and also tend to stay with the organization (Porter et al., 1974).

Saklani (2004) stressed that with the ever changing technology and increased access to information, the study of organization with respect to productivity, efficiency and quality of services very crucial in order to improve the performance of work through employee commitment in India. Loscocco and Rescheelle (1991) have found that there is a positive relationship between career stages and work commitment when career stages are defined in terms of age. Islam (2009) has found that a positive and significant relationship between QWL and employees job satisfaction. Another study done by Normal and Daud (2010) found that there was a relationship between QWL and OC amongst employees in Malaysian firms.

#### Significance of the Study

QWL is one of the most prominent factors which determined the organizational performance as well as individual performance. The results of the study will be considered to be significant because they were intended to assist decision makers in identifying key workplace issues in order to develop strategies to improve quality of working conditions in each organization. On the other hand, previous empirical studies on this research have been based on some European, USA and Asian research. But this particular research area neither has nor paid much attention in Sri Lanka and as a result there is a knowledge gap within the Sri Lankan context. Hence, this research has made an attempt to fill the existing knowledge gap on QWL and

OC in Sri Lankan context. It is hoped that this study will primarily be important for apparel industry in Sri Lanka and it will be in a position to identify employee commitment and this will help to successfully attain the HR objectives as well as organizational objectives. Also this study may be of assistance to all other organizations in Sri Lanka in general for the purpose of improving their organizational performance through enhancing employee commitment. Moreover this study may be useful for those who are interested in understanding the impact of QWL on OC.

#### Problem Statement and Objectives of the Study

According to the existing literature there is an empirical knowledge gap in Sri Lankan context in respect of QWL and OC, a very few studies (Gnanayudam and Dharmasiri, 2008) have been reported on QWL in Sri Lankan context. Therefore, this study will attempt to fill the above knowledge gap in Sri Lanka. Therefore, the problem addressed in this study is to investigate the impact of QWL on OC amongst employees in the apparel industry in Sri Lanka. In relation to the research problem following research questions were raised.

1. What is the relationship between QWL and OC?
2. What are the factors that influence on QWL of employees in the apparel industry in Sri Lanka?
3. What are the factors that influence OC of employees in the apparel industry in Sri Lanka?

This study also attempts to achieve following objectives.

The main objective of the study was to identify and the extent of QWL of apparel industry employees in Sri Lanka and to investigate the impact on organizational commitment.

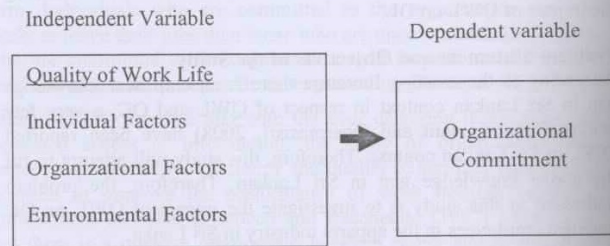
The objectives of the study were as follows;

1. To discover the association between QWL and OC operational level employees of apparel industry in Sri Lanka.
2. To study the impact of QWL and sub-variables of QWL (individual, organization and environment factors) on OC of operational level employees of apparel industry in Sri Lanka.
3. To evaluate the level of QWL and OC of operational level employees of apparel industry in Sri Lanka.

4. To recommend solutions to improve the organizational commitment and the QWL of operational level employees of apparel industry in Sri Lanka.

#### Study Framework

Based on the historical and current literature, the conceptual Framework was developed.



Source: Author developed

Five hypotheses were constructed for the present study in order to get a useful direction and a basis for future knowledge and explain the social phenomenon associated with the study.

**H1: There is appositive relationship between quality of work life and organizational commitment of operational level employees of apparel industry in Sri Lanka**

**H2: There is a significant impact of quality of work life on organizational commitment of operational level employees of apparel industry in Sri Lanka**

**H2a: There is a significant impact of individual factors on organizational commitment of operational level employees of apparel industry in Sri Lanka**

**H2b: There is a significant impact of organizational factors on organizational commitment of operational level employees of apparel industry in Sri Lanka**

**H2c: There is a significant impact of environmental factors on organizational commitment of operational level employees of apparel industry in Sri Lanka**

#### Quality of Work Life

QWL is a concept originated by behavior scientist, and the term was first introduced by Davis in 1972 (Mathur, 1989, Hian and Einstein, 1990) In 1990 Robins defined QWL is a process by which an organization responds to employee's needs by developing mechanisms to allow to share fully in making the decisions that design their live at work. The key elements of QWL in the literature include job security, job satisfaction, better reward system, employee benefits, employee involvement and organizational performance (Havlovic, 1991, Scobel, 1975). The behavioral scientists such as Abraham Maslow 1973, Hall 1976 Andrews and Withey 1976 defined QWL as the combination of social and psychological factors. Nedler and Lawler (1983) provide a working definition of QWL as a way of thinking about people, work and organizations.

Warr (2000) defined QWL as the absence of stressors in the work environment. Carayon et.al (2003) defined QWL as the quality of the relationship between employees and the total working environment, with human dimensions added to the usual technical and economic consideration. Therefore the concept of QWL can be defined as **Favorable working and environmental conditions which helps o enhance the quality of work on employees**

#### Dimensions of QWL

Individual factors, organizational factors and environmental factors were identified as dimensions of QWL and these dimensions were measured through elements as identified by Walton (1975). They are adequate fair and compensation, safety and healthy working conditions, immediate opportunity to use and develop human capabilities, opportunity for continuous growth and security, social integration in the work organization, constituonalism in the work organization, work and life space and social relevance of work life.



### Organizational Commitment

Organizational Commitment (OC) has been a popular topic of research in organizational behavior (Meyer & Allen, 1997). OC refers to the strength of an employee's involvement in and identification with the organization (Hellrigel, Slocum & Woodman, 1998). Allen and Meyer (1997) define OC as a psychological condition that relates the criteria in the employee relationship in the organization and the implications on the decision to remain in the organization. This means that committed employee will remain in the organization as compared to non-committed employee. According to Steers (1991), the sources of OC may vary from person to person. In this research researcher defined OC as

**The degree to which the employee loyal to the organization (Opatha, 2009)**

### Dimensions of OC

Based on the multidimensional nature of organizational commitment, there is growing support for a three-component model proposed by Meyer and Allen (1990). All three components have implications for the continuing participation of the individual in the organization. The three components are

Affective commitment is characterized by the presence of emotional attachment to the organization such that the affectively committed individual identifies with, is involved in and enjoys membership in the organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990).

Continuance commitment refers to an awareness of the cost associated with leaving the organization. Employees whose link to the organization is based on continuous commitment remain because they need to do so (Allen and Mayer, 1990)

Normative commitment focuses on feelings of loyalty to a particular organization resulting from the internalization of normative pressures exerted on an individual (Hackett, Bycio & Hausdorf, 1994, Popper & Lipshitz, 1992)

### Research Methodology

#### Study Design

The main focus of the study is to identify and the extent of QWL of apparel industry employees in Sri Lanka and to investigate the impact to organizational commitment. Researchers adopted the mixed methodology for the study but more biased towards the quantitative methods. Study was analytical in nature rather than exploratory or descriptive in nature. The data were collected at a single point; hence the study was cross sectional in time horizon. Unit of analysis was individual, operational level employees. The study was conducted in the natural environment of the organization with minimum interference by the researcher with the normal flow of work. Research interference refers to the degree of manipulating and /or controlling variables in order to answer the research question (Opatha, 2003).

#### Sample

A predominantly quantitative approach was adapted for this study. Organizations were selected randomly. A total of twenty organizations were identified. Each organization was contacted to gain permission to distribute the questionnaires. A random sample of 200 operational level employees was selected. 167 participants respond and return the questionnaire and thus responded rate was 83.5%.

#### Variables Measure

##### Independent Variable – Quality of Work Life

After reviewing the literature, researcher developed an questionnaire to measure all the dimensions of QWL which was identified in the theoretical framework. Some question items were adapted from an earlier QWL study of Walton (1975) and modified by Mohd Hanefah et.al. (2003). Respondents were asked to point out their agreement or disagreement about QWL question with anchors ranging from strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1).

### Dependent variable – Organizational Commitment

To measure the construct of organizational commitment researchers used the instrument developed by Allen and Mayer.

### Procedure

A questionnaire is a pre-formulated written set of questions to which respondents record their answers, usually with in rather closely defined alternatives. Questionnaire was designed to fit the objectives of the study and the conceptual framework of the study.

The questionnaire was divided into three sections

- A - The first part of the questionnaire measured the general information of respondents.
- B - The second part of the questionnaire measured QWL
- C - The Third part of the questionnaire measured Organizational Commitment

### Validity and Reliability of Instrument

The content validity of the measures was ensured by conceptualization and operationalization of the domains of the variables based on adequate literature review. The dimensions and elements of the variables were delineated carefully after developing the working definitions based on the literature. The instruments were developed with the careful judgment of the researchers.

Reliability of measure is established by testing both consistency and stability. Interitem consistency method was used for testing the internal aspects of reliability of the instruments. Interitem consistency method tests the degree which question items of the instrument independently measure the same concept. The Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha was used to test the degree of the interitem consistency of the instruments. The results revealed that alpha value of QWL of the questionnaire was 0.821 and OC was .847. These results implicated that the internal reliability of the questionnaire was at satisfactory level.

### Results of the Study

#### Descriptive Statistical Analysis

In order to describe the responses for the major variable of the study, descriptive statistics were used. Table 1 shows results of the descriptive statistical analysis. It shows the overall results of mean, standard deviation for all the independent variables and dependent variable.

**Table 01: Descriptive Statistics**

Variable /Sub Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Individual factors	4.12	.588
Organizational factors	4.42	.533
Environmental factors	3.91	.512
<b>Quality of Work Life</b>	<b>4.12</b>	<b>.407</b>
Affective commitment	3.78	.438
Normative commitment	4.17	.722
Continuous commitment	3.88	.739
<b>Organizational Commitment (OC)</b>	<b>4.09</b>	<b>.438</b>

Source : Survey data

According to the findings of the study, it clearly shows that mean values of QWL dimensions fall between 3.91 and 4.42. It further illuminated that organizational factors contributed highly to their quality of work life. In case of OC, the mean values for all three elements fall between 3.78 and 4.17. In this case it's appeared all these three variables are in the above average level. The identification of above mean values ensures the achievement of third research objective of the study.

#### Correlation Analysis

To understand the association between independent variable and dependent variable correlation analysis was used.



**Table 02: Correlation between QWL and OC**

		QWL	OC
QWL	Pearson Correlation	1	.532
	Sig. (1-tailed)		.000
	N	167	167
OC	Pearson Correlation	.532	1
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	
	N	167	167

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed)

As shown in the table 02, the Pearson's correlation coefficient .532 indicates a moderate positive correlation between QWL and OC of operational level employees at a statistical significance of 0.01 level.

The table 03 shows the results of correlation analysis. The correlation values for individual factors, organizational factors and environmental factors were 0.568, 0.479, and 0.452, respectively. These figures show the positive relationship between sub variables of QWL and organizational commitment at the significant level of 0.01. The highest correlation shows in the individual factors with organizational commitment compared to other variables. According to the results of correlation analysis it can be concluded that there is a positive relationship between QWL and OC of apparel industry employees in Sri Lanka.

**Table 03: Summary of Correlation Analysis**

QWL Variables	Organizational Commitment (Pearson Correlation)	Significance (1-tailed test)	N
Individual factors	0.568**	.000	167
Organizational factors	0.479**	.000	167
Environmental factors	0.452**	.000	167

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed)

Source: Survey data

Correlation results of the above tables provide evidence to test the hypothesized associations in the study. Accordingly, the correlation between QWL and OC are supportive evidence to accept the hypothesis 1 of the study. Therefore, the test results explain positive association between QWL and OC. Moreover, the above hypothesis test results fulfill the attainment of first objective of the study.

#### Regression Analysis

The result of simple linear regression is shown in the table 04. As indicated by R square, 37.6% of the variance in organizational commitment of operational level employees was explained by quality of work life. The *F*-test revealed a relative magnitude of the regression which indicates 42.82 statistically significant at .01 level ( $p=0.000$ ). Accordingly, the statistical evidence substantiated the hypothesized impact of QWL on OC is significant.

**Table 04: The Model Summary of Linear Regression**

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	F Value	Sig. F
.532 (a)	.376	.341	.34107	42.82	0.000

a Predictors: (Constant), Quality of Work Life (dependent Variable: Organizational Commitment)

The results of multiple regression of independent sub-variables (QWL) against the dependent variable (OC) are shown in the table 05. The results revealed that individual factors account for about 38.1% of the total variance in organizational commitment ( $R^2 = 0.381$ ,  $F= 48.45$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). The impact of organizational factors on OC is positive and the results show that the organizational factors account only for about 42% of the variance in the organizational commitment ( $R^2 = .420$ ,  $F=39.81$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). Further the result shows the environmental factors account for about 33% of the variance in the organizational commitment ( $R^2=.73$ ,  $F- 23.38$ ,  $P<0.001$ ). The  $\beta$  values of QWL variables of individual factors, organizational factors and environmental factors were significant at  $p<0.001$ .

**Table 05: Summary of Regression Analysis**

OC Dimensions	Individual factors $\beta$	Organizational factors $\beta$	Environmental factors $\beta$
Affective commitment	.32**	.41**	.54**
Normative Commitment	.36**	.07	.43**
Continuous Commitment	.21**	.09	.18*
R <sup>2</sup>	.381	.420	.330
F	48.45	39.81	23.38

Source : Survey data

The results implied that individual factors of QWL have higher significant impact on organizational commitment. The overall result shows that there is significant impact of QWL on OC of operational level employees of apparel industry in Sri Lanka.

The regression results in the table 04 assist in testing the hypothesis 2 and also facilitates in appraising the accomplishment of the second objective of the study. In this respect it can be seen that OC is significantly and positively influenced by QWL. Moreover, table 05 assists the test of hypotheses 2a-2c and help in assessing the second objective of the study. The results show that sub-variables of quality of work life (individual factors, organizational factors and environmental factors) have significant impact on organizational commitment. Accordingly, it can be identified that there is sufficient evidence to accept the hypotheses 2, 2a, 2b, and 2c.

#### Discussion and Conclusion

This section discusses the conclusions derived in the study based on the findings presented in the previous section. Further, the discussion

is performed by relating the findings of the study to the predicted associations under the conceptual framework and achievements its objectives.

The results of descriptive analysis revealed that mean values of QWL and OC was at satisfactory level. The application results in the correlation analysis show an existence of moderate positive association between QWL and OC. Further it can be witnessed a positive association between sub variables of QWL i.e. individual factors, organizational factors and environmental factors and OC. Moreover, results derived from the regression model which tested the impact of QWL and its sub variables on OC indicate that; significant and positive influence. QWL was explained 37.6% of the variance in OC of operational level employees of apparel industry in Sri Lanka and it further implied that unexplained variance is 62.4% where there are other factors that may influence on QWL. However, environmental factors of QWL explain the highest variance on OC.

The comparison of conclusions of the study with the extant literature would also provide an impetus for the current study. In this regard researcher selected several key studies of QWL and OC. Saklani (2004) stressed that with the ever changing technology and increased access to information, the study of organization with respect to productivity, efficiency and quality of services very crucial in order to improve the performance of work through employee commitment in India. In a Sri Lankan study Gnanthungam and Ajamtha Dharmasiri, (2008) has found a significant impact of QWL on OC and these findings are consistent with the results of this study. Another study done by Normal and Daud (2010) found that there was a relationship between QWL and OC amongst employees in Malaysian firms. Therefore, the results of this study are also consistent with the above findings. Thus it can be conclude that quality of work life has positive and significant impact on organizational commitment and provide insights how apparel industry firm of Sri Lanka could improve upon their employee commitment.



Although the study has been able to generate important findings on the selected phenomenon in Sri Lankan context, it is not free from some limitations that are discussed in detail in following section.

#### Limitations and Future Research Areas

The present study has certain limitations that need to be taken into account when referring the study, and its contribution. Moreover, any subsequent researcher who wishes to draw upon this study will have to consider the limitations arise out of the empirical context within which this study has been undertaken. More specifically, the inability to generalize findings beyond the selected empirical context remains as the forefront limitation. Because, researchers selected only 200 employees from the apparel industry in Sri Lanka. Therefore this raises the issue of generalizability of findings. Further researcher addressed only operational level employees. Therefore again this generalization problem will arise. Future research can be conducted in different level of employees in different occupations. Hence it is needed to encourage the research in this area as it may lead to valuable findings about the deep nature that influence the organizational commitment.

The study also limited to the extent that the researcher had to rely on information's of questionnaire, recall abilities and self-reporting. Understanding level of respondents, situational factors such as tired, time ...etc, are influencing on their answer.

The study has the potential value for further researchers. To ensure representativeness, the study should be replicated to cover a bigger sampling frame in other industries and results should be compared to those found in this study. Here researcher taken in to the consideration only eight elements of QWL which are presented by the Waltan. But it can be taken in to account elements such as health and safety, type of the job, trust in the management, recognition of the work efforts, competency development...etc. In this study researchers have addressed OC as a dependent variable. But those who interested in QWL, they can study QWL with other dependent variables such as job satisfaction, organizational performance, career success...etc.

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