

Quality of Work Life as a Determinant of Employee Satisfaction: An Empirical Study

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Abstrakt

The aim of the study is to analyse the impact of Quality of Work Life (QWL) on employee satisfaction in a selected subsidiary of an international organisation operating in Slovakia. The theoretical section draws on multidimensional QWL models that highlight the importance of working conditions, social relationships, fair compensation, opportunities for professional development, and work–life balance. The empirical part is based on a quantitative questionnaire survey (N = 69; response rate 66%), which assesses the level of employee satisfaction and identifies the factors that most strongly influence their work experience. The results indicate that the most significant determinants of satisfaction are fair compensation, the quality of the working environment, and supervisory support. Although employees also evaluate career development and interpersonal relationships positively, these areas do not show a statistically significant association with satisfaction, pointing to a distinction between motivational and satisfaction-related factors. Compensation emerged as the strongest predictor of satisfaction, while the working environment plays a stabilising role in shaping a positive work experience. The study provides managerial recommendations aimed at optimising the compensation system, strengthening development opportunities, and maintaining a high-quality working environment. The findings also serve as a basis for further, more in-depth research into the determinants of employee satisfaction across different organisational and sectoral contexts.

Keywords: quality of work life; employee satisfaction; work environment; compensation; workplace relationships

JEL klasifikácia: M12; M54; J28;

1. Introduction

Quality of Work Life (QWL) has become an increasingly prominent topic within contemporary human resource management, reflecting the growing recognition that employee well-being is closely linked to organizational performance and workforce stability. Organizations acknowledge that employees who experience favourable working conditions tend to demonstrate higher productivity, stronger commitment, and lower turnover intentions. QWL represents a multidimensional construct encompassing physical, social, and psychological aspects of work that collectively shape employees' everyday experiences. These dimensions include the working environment, interpersonal relationships, compensation systems, and opportunities for professional development. This study examines the extent to which selected dimensions of QWL influence employee satisfaction within a subsidiary of an international organization operating in Slovakia. By integrating current theoretical perspectives with empirical findings, the research aims to identify the factors that most strongly determine satisfaction and to clarify their relevance for managerial practice. The results provide evidence-based insights that may support the development of targeted human resource policies and contribute to broader discussions on how improving QWL can enhance employee engagement, motivation, and long-term organizational sustainability.

2. Quality of Work Life – Theoretical Background

Quality of Work Life (QWL) is understood as a multidimensional construct reflecting employees' overall experience at work, including working conditions, social relationships, psychological well-being, compensation, development opportunities, and work–life balance (Swamy et al., 2015). Contemporary approaches emphasise its subjective nature and explain it through the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) theory, which distinguishes between job demands leading to strain and job resources fostering motivation and engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Bakker, Demerouti & Sanz Vergel, 2023).

Empirical studies highlight several core dimensions of QWL:

- **working conditions and safety**, fundamental for satisfaction and retention (Swamy et al., 2015);
- **social relationships and support**, shaping well-being and engagement (Swamy et al., 2015);
- **development and career opportunities**, enhancing performance and satisfaction (Anwar & Abdullah, 2021);
- **fair compensation**, a key determinant of job satisfaction (Alam & Asim, 2019);
- **work–life balance**, associated with well-being and lower turnover (Brough et al., 2020);
- **autonomy**, supporting motivation and engagement (Bakker, Demerouti & Sanz Vergel, 2023).

High QWL is linked to reduced turnover intentions, particularly when supported by fair rewards, supportive leadership, and balanced workloads (Almalki, FitzGerald & Clark, 2012). Job resources also increase engagement, a central mechanism through which QWL influences performance (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). QWL further contributes to psychological well-being through social support, autonomy,

and manageable demands (Brough et al., 2020), while investment in development strengthens productivity and organizational outcomes (Anwar & Abdullah, 2021). Overall, QWL functions as a strategic HRM tool that enhances satisfaction, engagement, and long-term workforce stability.

3. Employee Satisfaction

Employee satisfaction is a cognitive–emotional evaluation of work reflecting the extent to which individual needs and expectations are met (Judge & Klinger, 2008). It is shaped by perceptions of working conditions, relationships, fairness, and development opportunities. Research shows that satisfied employees exhibit higher motivation, lower burnout risk, and greater psychological resilience (Inceoglu et al., 2018). Satisfaction is also a strong predictor of performance, with meta-analytic evidence confirming its positive effect on productivity and work quality (Katebi et al., 2022), and it supports prosocial behaviours such as initiative and cooperation (Anwar & Abdullah, 2021). Satisfaction significantly reduces turnover intentions, particularly when supported by favourable conditions, fair compensation, and supportive leadership (Chen, Li & Xia, 2021). It also reinforces engagement, as demonstrated by recent studies (Knight, Patterson & Dawson, 2017). Within the JD-R model, satisfaction arises when employees perceive sufficient job resources—autonomy, support, feedback, and development opportunities—to buffer job demands (Bakker, Demerouti & Sanz Vergel, 2023). The Effort–Reward Imbalance model similarly highlights the importance of fair rewards (van der Heijden, Brown Mahoney & Xu, 2019). Overall, employee satisfaction is a central construct influencing well-being, performance, and organizational stability, underscoring the need to develop supportive working conditions and adequate job resources.

4. Methodology

The empirical part of the study examined the level of Quality of Work Life (QWL) and its relationship to employee satisfaction in a Slovak subsidiary of an international organization. Out of 104 employees, 69 participated (66% response rate). The sample consisted mainly of women (72%), with an average age of 31.7 years and predominantly Slovak nationality (92%). Most respondents held a second-cycle university degree. Data were collected through a semi-structured questionnaire distributed via e-mail and personal contact, using both open and closed items on a five-point Likert scale. Descriptive and inferential statistical methods, including correlation analysis, were applied.

5. Results and Discussion

The results show that the Quality of Work Life (QWL) in the examined organization is shaped by several interrelated dimensions that differ in their importance for employee satisfaction. These findings align with the multidimensional conceptualization of QWL proposed by Swamy et al. (2015), who emphasize the interplay of material, social, and organizational factors.

The results also support the assumptions of the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Bakker, Demerouti & Sanz Vergel, 2023), which argues that job resources—such as fair rewards, supportive environments, and development opportunities—enhance motivation and well-being, while job demands may contribute to strain. In this study, job resources such as compensation and work environment emerged as the strongest predictors of satisfaction.

5.1 Key Findings Across QWL Dimensions

Compensation as the strongest determinant

Compensation was the most influential factor, showing the highest correlation with satisfaction ($\rho = 0.537$; $p < 0.001$). Although 55% of employees reported satisfaction with their reward package, a substantial proportion expressed dissatisfaction. This finding is consistent with Alam and Asim (2019), who identify fair compensation as a primary driver of job satisfaction. Given the relatively young age of respondents (mean 31.7 years), financial stability likely represents a central priority.

Work environment as a stabilizing factor

The work environment was evaluated very positively (89% safe and comfortable; 83% adequately equipped) and demonstrated a moderate, statistically significant association with satisfaction ($\rho = 0.378$; $p = 0.001$). This aligns with Brough et al. (2020), who highlight the importance of supportive and well-designed work environments for psychological well-being and retention.

Motivation and satisfaction are strongly linked

Employee motivation was lower than satisfaction, yet the two variables were strongly correlated ($\rho = 0.523$; $p = 0.000$). This supports Knight, Patterson and Dawson (2019), who argue that satisfaction and engagement reinforce each other. The findings suggest that while employees may be satisfied with their conditions, this does not automatically translate into high motivation.

Career development and workplace relationships: valued but not decisive

Career development received the highest positive evaluation (94% satisfaction), but showed no significant relationship with overall satisfaction ($\rho = 0.119$; $p = 0.329$). Similarly, workplace relationships—although rated very positively (89–91%)—did not significantly predict satisfaction ($\rho = 0.138$; $p = 0.258$). These results may reflect the cultural context, as Slovakia tends toward individualism, where interpersonal relations and development opportunities are appreciated but not central to satisfaction. Younger employees may also view development primarily as a means of increasing employability rather than organizational commitment.

5.2 Hypothesis Testing

Table 1 presents the results of the hypothesis testing.

Table 1. Hypothesis testing

Hypothesis	Result	Interpretation
H1: Motivation is significantly associated with satisfaction	Supported	Strong positive correlation ($\rho = 0.523$; $p < 0.001$) confirms that higher satisfaction is linked to higher motivation.

H2: Career development is associated with satisfaction	Not supported	Weak, non-significant correlation ($\rho = 0.119$; $p = 0.329$).
H3: Workplace relationships are associated with satisfaction	Not supported	No significant relationship ($\rho = 0.138$; $p = 0.258$).
H4: Work environment is associated with satisfaction	Supported	Moderate, significant correlation ($\rho = 0.378$; $p = 0.001$).
H5: Compensation is associated with satisfaction	Supported	Strongest correlation ($\rho = 0.537$; $p < 0.001$).

Source: own research

5.3 Theoretical Integration

The findings reinforce the JD-R model's view that job resources are central to employee well-being. Compensation and the work environment emerged as the strongest predictors of satisfaction, while social and developmental resources played a secondary role—consistent with evidence that financial rewards and working conditions are particularly salient for younger employees balancing career and financial demands. The results also support the distinction between affective and cognitive aspects of work: although relationships and development opportunities enhance motivation, they do not necessarily increase satisfaction. Overall, the study confirms that QWL is a multidimensional system in which different factors contribute unevenly to satisfaction, highlighting compensation, a supportive work environment, and development opportunities as key levers for improving employee well-being and organizational stability.

6. Conclusion

The study demonstrates that employee satisfaction in the examined organization is primarily shaped by compensation, work environment, and motivation, while career development and workplace relationships—although positively perceived—do not significantly influence satisfaction. These findings highlight the central role of structural job resources in shaping QWL among younger employees. The results cannot be generalized beyond the studied organization due to the limited sample and context; however, they provide a valuable basis for further research on QWL determinants in similar organizational settings.

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