


Influence of quality of life on work productivity: A narrative literature review

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ABSTRACT

Quality of life is a relevant topic in the business context, highlighting the active role of organizations in implementing this concept, following victories achieved through labor movements. Elements such as emotional well-being, work-life balance, motivation, and continuous development of employees are identified as fundamental to creating an environment conducive to increasing work productivity. Investing in quality of life not only benefits individuals but also generates positive impacts on organizational dynamics, fostering excellence and the achievement of goals. The objective of this study is to examine a possible correlation between quality of life at work and productivity. For this purpose, a narrative literature review is conducted to investigate how studies address this correlation in the literature, as well as how quality of life at work affects organizational outcomes. The selected databases were ProQuest, SciELO, and Scopus. The results show that the influence of quality of life on work productivity highlights the relationship between workers' well-being and performance, emphasizing the importance of organizational policies for overall success. It is concluded that a work environment becomes healthy and balanced through social support and opportunities for personal development, boosting employee efficiency. Investing in well-being reduces absenteeism, increases talent retention, and enhances corporate image. Caring for employees not only benefits them individually but also promotes long-term organizational success, becoming an essential competitive.

Keywords: Environment of work, Job satisfaction, Organizational performance, Productivity at work, Quality of life at work.

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INTRODUCTION

In agreement with Ceballos and Santos (2013), the concept of well-being has expanded into various areas of society, including the workplace, where the relationship between the individual and their work environment is being examined. Well-being in the workplace is described as a positive subjective experience. This occurs when positive feelings during work outweigh the negative ones, while also providing opportunities for the development of individual skills and achieving personal fulfillment (Warr 2007).

Job satisfaction is a multifaceted phenomenon that reflects the emotional state of professionals in relation to their work activities (Vieira; Silva; Teixeira, 2020; Simões; Teixeira; Gouveia, 2021). Influenced by factors such as personal expectations, working conditions, and alignment with individual values, job satisfaction plays a crucial role in employee productivity and overall well-being (Subgashini *et al.*, 2014; Teixeira; Silva; Brito, 2021; Spector, 2022). Research indicates that meeting employees' needs and understanding the determinants of this satisfaction are essential for organizational growth and talent retention (He *et al.*, 2018; Afzai; Abid, 2021; Rus *et al.*, 2023).

According to Maringoni (2013), historically, at the end of the Empire in 1889, Brazil had a large number of workers and newly freed slaves who were employed in small workshops and a few large factories. However, the employers saw no reason to offer decent wages or grant significant rights to the workers.

At that time, according to Maringoni (2013), there were reports of some labor demands aimed at improving working conditions, which directly impacted the quality of life of workers. The predominant demands included wage increases, the reduction of working hours (which often ranged from 12 to 16 hours per day), the fight against the exploitation of minors and women, and the pursuit of improvements in overall working conditions, among other demands.

It is a fact that significant changes have occurred in the business environment, affecting labor relations and continuing to impact people's lives to this day, such as productive organization, national cultures, and the global economy. Limongi-França (2004) asserts that there are two sides to this current scenario: on one side, the intensification of competition and competitiveness at any cost; on the other, the growing awareness of workers, consumers, and citizens regarding stress and the increasing importance of quality of life at work, as well as new labor market conditions and, above all, environmental and social responsibility issues, which pose immense challenges to organizational management.

Dessen and Paz (2010) argue that work plays a crucial role in people's lives, being vital for their survival and adaptation to the world. After all, a significant portion of life is spent in the workplace. For this reason, it is essential that individuals feel well in this context to ensure healthy



and productive functioning. Based on this premise, quality of life (QoL) is recognized as a relevant topic for companies.

According to Dal Forno and Finger (2015), organizations have actively participated in the discussion and implementation of this concept, seeking to plan, implement, and evaluate production options that promote greater satisfaction, well-being, and health for their employees.

The relationship between quality of life and work productivity has gained prominence in contemporary discussions on business management. Various authors, such as Walton (1973), Westley (1979), Werther and Davis (1983), Hackman and Oldham (1975), Lippitt (1978), Nadler and Lawler (1983), and Huse and Cummings (1985), have studied the importance of promoting work environments that foster employee well-being as a key factor in increasing efficiency and professional satisfaction.

Frederick Herzberg (1968) investigated factors that generate satisfaction and dissatisfaction at work, creating the Two-Factor Theory. In his findings, Herzberg identified that factors associated with the job itself or the nature of the tasks performed by an individual are considered motivational factors, as they are influenced by the environment in which the individual is immersed and relate to the conditions under which they perform their work. These factors primarily serve to prevent dissatisfaction and are classified as maintenance or hygiene factors.

Herzberg (1968) emphasizes that motivational factors, such as recognition and personal achievement, play a crucial role in job satisfaction. The presence of quality of life at work, in an environment where these factors are nurtured, becomes a catalyst for professional success. He concludes that professional success is a determining factor for having quality of life at work.

The pursuit of quality of life at work is not just a matter of acceptance but an essential strategy for optimizing productivity and promoting a sustainable work environment (Teixeira; Teixeira, 2023). In this context, this study addresses the guiding question: How can quality of life contribute to work productivity? It is based on the hypothesis that providing employees with a healthy, balanced, and stimulating work environment can directly enhance various aspects that drive work productivity.

Certain elements are fundamental for creating an environment conducive to increasing work productivity, such as emotional well-being, work-life balance, motivation, and the continuous development of employees. Investing in quality of life not only benefits the individual by promoting satisfaction and fulfillment but also generates positive impacts on organizational dynamics, fostering an environment conducive to excellence and goal achievement.

The objective of this study is to review the literature to understand what studies indicate about the correlation between quality of life at work and productivity, and to explore how these



topics are interconnected, how this correlation is outlined, and how quality of life at work impacts organizational outcomes. To achieve this, a narrative literature review will be conducted.

QUALITY OF LIFE AT WORK

According to Garcia (2010), the origin of Quality of Life at Work (QWL) emerged in the private business context, which has historically and progressively become more competitive. Thus, this topic has frequently been used to enhance employee satisfaction, aiming to increase their commitment to organizational processes and objectives.

Initially, quality of life is associated with better facilities, physical conditions, salary claims, workload reduction, benefits, among other factors. This implies additional costs, increased expenses, and changes. Thus, obstacles arise for the implementation of QWL programs due to budget management issues, as highlighted by Bohlander (1979). The importance of continuing research in this area is evident when Fernandes (1996) notes that QWL can be seen as a flexible and adaptive management of the physical, sociological, psychological, and technological elements that permeate the work structure within the organization. These elements influence culture and impact the work environment, directly affecting employee productivity and satisfaction.

Authors such as Walton (1973), Westley (1979), Werther and Davis (1983), Hackman and Oldham (1975), Lippitt (1978), Nadler and Lawler (1983), and Huse and Cummings (1985) are considered pioneers in the scientific approach to QWL. Although their propositions have been subject to criticism in subsequent years, they are widely recognized as fundamental references in QWL. Their theories, regarded as both classic and modern and comprehensive, are frequently cited in the literature, and their models are applied in research on the topic (Ferreira; Alves; Tostes, 2009; Garcia, 2010; Limongi-França, 2008; Stefano *et al.*, 2006; Veloso; Schirrmester; Limongi-França, 2007).

The concept of QWL began in the 1950s in England, when Eric Trist and his team from the Tavistock Institute conducted studies on the relationships within the individual-work-organization triad. They developed a socio-technical approach to work organization with the aim of improving workers' quality of life through task restructuring (Fernandes, 1996; Rodrigues, 1999 apud Dal Forno *et al.*, 2015).

However, it was only in the 1960s that the concept gained attention, driven by the development of studies on the most effective practices for task execution, with a focus on health and overall well-being of workers (Angrad, 2012). Scientific studies highlighted factors influencing productivity increases, emphasizing indicators related to personal needs and aspirations. This shift in focus occurred in response to the challenge of seeking productivity and strong economic-

financial performance of companies, driven by international competitiveness (Monteiro *et al.*, 2011).

In Walton's (1973) studies, an increased interest in reconfiguring the nature of work through QWL was observed, driven by two main concerns. The first was the lack of attention to humanistic values and environmental issues in the face of advancing technology, industrial productivity, and economic growth. The second concern was the feasibility of increasing competition among companies in the global market.

Hackman and Oldham (1975) share these concerns, which are further intensified by the authors' perception of the relative effectiveness of strategies for implementing job redesign projects. In response, they propose that this redesign be conducted using a diagnostic tool called the "job diagnostic survey." In other words, the authors argue that by conducting a diagnosis of work conditions, it is possible to identify strengths and weaknesses to be addressed, aiming to achieve a higher balance between the individual and their work.

Lippitt (1978) argues that the conception of QWL needs to transcend a purely technical focus. He advocates for an ideological and political shift within the organizational environment. However, the key elements highlighted by this author, which include aspects such as the work itself, the individual, labor production, and organizational structure, appear to focus more on instrumental dimensions rather than on effective political and ideological transformations related to the treatment and recognition of people within the organization.

Westley (1979) outlined four challenges arising from the nature of work in industrial society organizations, which workers face and which affect both performance and the humanization of these individuals: insecurity, injustice, alienation, and anomie. Therefore, QWL models that propose ways to mitigate these four dimensions would likely result in increased employee satisfaction.

On the other hand, Nadler and Lawler (1983, cited in Bowditch & Buono, 1992; Garcia, 2010) describe the revival of interest in Quality of Work Life (QWL) in the United States up until the mid-1970s as the first cycle. During this period, other concerns, such as inflation control and energy costs, diverted researchers' attention, resulting in a decrease in interest in the topic. According to these authors, the resurgence, or the second cycle of interest in QWL, began in 1979, driven by the conviction that improving productivity was necessary in light of intensified international competition, highlighted by new managerial models such as the Japanese model.

In the early 1980s, Quality of Work Life (QWL) regained its prominence as a topic of interest and concern in the national landscape of the United States (Bowditch & Buono, 1992). During this period, various lines of research emerged with the purpose of elucidating its meaning and exploring the ways it could be applied for the benefit of organizations (Garcia, 2010).



PRODUCTIVITY AND WELL-BEING AT WORK

Fleury (1980) notes that there are three basic theoretical approaches concerning the organization of industrial work: task rationalization, job enrichment, and semi-autonomous groups. Each approach has a distinct proposal, but all are based on the assumption of increasing productivity.

According to Fleury (1980), the first approach pertains to Scientific Management as proposed by Frederick W. Taylor. It focuses on finding the optimal way to perform a task, separating the planning from the execution of the task, selecting the best worker for the task, the employees' desire to maximize their monetary gains, and the need to avoid work groups.

The second approach deals with Job Enrichment, as described by Fleury (1980), which is divided into several techniques: job rotation, involving the rotation of employees within the work system; horizontal and vertical enlargement, referring to grouping tasks of the same and different natures into a single job, respectively; and job enrichment, which incorporates both enlargements into a single job. In summary, this approach aims to expand the job responsibilities by diversifying the tasks performed and gradually delegating part of the responsibilities.

The third and final approach, according to Fleury (1980), involves semi-autonomous groups, a concept that emerged from experiments with various work methods. A semi-autonomous group consists of employees who collaboratively perform assigned tasks without predefined roles for its members. In essence, the group is given a task with broad guidelines, provided with the necessary resources, and granted autonomy to structure the task throughout the development process.

Quality of life has a significant impact on worker productivity (Pacoal & Silva, 2019). When employees are able to balance work and personal life and have access to essential resources, their overall well-being improves, positively reflecting on productivity (Vieira *et al.*, 2018). Employers can contribute to this quality of life by providing access to healthcare, childcare support, and career development opportunities, which enhances employees' quality of life, resulting in increased productivity and job satisfaction. By focusing on employees' quality of life, companies can foster a more engaged and motivated workforce, leading to better business outcomes.

Research indicates that employees who receive support to maintain a healthy work-life balance tend to experience higher job satisfaction and greater commitment to their roles. Offering flexible hours and remote work options can help employees manage family responsibilities alongside their professional obligations. Additionally, providing wellness programs and fostering a positive work environment can reduce stress and enhance overall well-being. A 2023 report by the International Labour Organization revealed that increased work flexibility—such as varied start times, shift sharing, and remote work options—leads to higher productivity and better work-life balance (Moss, 2023).



In addition to these initiatives, employers might consider offering comprehensive health benefits, on-site childcare, and professional development opportunities. These measures not only enhance employees' quality of life but also directly impact their productivity and performance. As organizations recognize the link between quality of life and productivity, investing in employee well-being strategies will become increasingly crucial for maintaining a competitive edge in the market. According to Mendoza-Ocasal *et al.* (2022), the relationship between Quality of Work Life and well-being helps organizations design strategies for success.

According to Mendoza-Ocasal *et al.* (2022), Quality of Work Life and happiness in the workplace are crucial aspects for a company and providing optimal conditions to improve these factors has been a challenge. Several strategies are being employed to promote these aspects, such as flexible working hours, incentives and benefits, and health promotion. These incentives contribute to creating a balance between employees' personal and professional lives (Salas-Vallina & Alegre, 2021).

Mendoza-Ocasal *et al.* (2022) mention that the department responsible for managing and retaining talent is Human Resources, which has become a strategic partner for organizations in promoting quality of life by developing policies related to employee happiness and well-being.

Deloitte (2022) argues that a strategic trend in companies is to focus on strengthening each employee's talents through effective market positioning, influenced by the team's sense of belonging to the company. This approach enables organizations to achieve greater commitment from employees and better attainment of objectives.

There is a certification called Great Place to Work, which can be obtained through consultancy services that support organizations in achieving better results by fostering a culture of trust, high performance, and innovation (Great place to work, 2024). Mendoza-Ocasal *et al.* (2022) note that companies with higher scores in the ranking are considered the best places to work, which helps build a favorable image for organizations and attracts qualified talent.

According to Seligman (2011) as cited in Mendoza-Ocasal (2022), workplace happiness is promoted by five key elements. These include positive emotions, which enhance overall perceptions of life and work; positive relationships, which are crucial for our social nature and emphasize the importance of cultivating effective interpersonal connections for optimal team performance through clear communication. Additionally, commitment to tackling company challenges and fostering employee loyalty, a focus on achievement orientation, which is crucial for self-motivation and work productivity, and a sense of purpose or meaning directed towards personal and organizational goals, are essential for achieving success (Mendoza-Ocasal *et al.*, 2022).



METHODOLOGY

Rother (2007) states that review articles, along with other types of scientific articles, represent a form of research that relies on bibliographic or electronic sources to gather the results of previous studies conducted by other researchers, with the aim of providing a theoretical foundation for a specific objective.

There are three types of literature reviews: systematic reviews, integrative reviews, and narrative reviews. The latter will be used in this article, as it is suitable for providing the theoretical foundation for scientific works such as articles, theses, dissertations, and capstone projects, as described by Cavalcante and Oliveira (2016).

According to Ribeiro (2014), narrative reviews are categorized as a form of literary analysis that aims to provide comprehensive and narrative syntheses of previously published information. This research method serves as an educational tool, being highly beneficial due to its organization and systematization of information. It is widely used in the discussion and description of various topics across multiple fields of knowledge.

The Narrative Review distinguishes itself from the other two types of reviews by focusing solely on mapping the knowledge generated in a specific area, without adhering to systematic criteria for searching, selecting articles, and extracting information (Cordeiro *et al.*, 2007; Rother, 2007; Soares *et al.*, 2013).

This type of review generally explores topics in a broader manner, lacking specificity. These analyses are primarily based on the author's interpretation and include journals, books, and articles. Consequently, it is a subjective method, susceptible to variations depending on the researcher's experience and perspective. Sanches *et al.* (2021) notes that current narrative literature reviews play a crucial role in ongoing education by allowing readers to quickly acquire and/or update their knowledge. For the selection of studies, the search focused on: quality of work life and productivity. The selected databases were ProQuest, SciELO, and Scopus, with a priority given to the investigation and analysis of peer-reviewed scientific articles in Portuguese.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 provides an overview of the studies researched for this work and reflects on the influence of quality of life on work productivity.

Author/year	Journal	Title	Main findings
Salgado (2015)	Revista do Serviço Público	Quality of Work Life: Evolution and Analysis at the Managerial Level	The evolution of the concept of "quality of work life" and its various connotations over time, influenced by changes in work relationships and the continuous socioeconomic transformations since the Industrial Revolution.
Carneiro e Bastos (2020)	Arquivos Brasileiros de Psicologia	Work-Related Well-Being: Analysis of Concepts and Measures	The aim of this article was to analyze both conceptually and practically how work-related well-being is being addressed in Brazil.
Dal Forno e Finger (2015)	Revista Brasileira de Qualidade de Vida	Quality of Work Life: Concept, History, and Relevance for People Management	The evolution of the concept of Quality of Work Life (QWL) and its relevance for contemporary organizations.
Dessen e Da Paz (2010)	Psicologia: Teoria e Pesquisa	Personal Well-Being in Organizations: The Impact of Power Configurations and Personality Traits	The aim of this study was to investigate the growing interest in fulfilling individuals' needs and desires while performing their roles within the organization. The literature indicates that both organizational and individual characteristics influence occupational well-being.
Fernandes e Gutierrez (1988)	Revista de Administração	Quality of Work Life (QWL) – A Brazilian Experience	Innovative experiences in various developed countries, aimed at improving organizational health through new ways of organizing work, are widely discussed under the term "Quality of Work Life (QWL)." In Brazil, the topic has garnered interest among entrepreneurs and managers due to its contribution to increasing employee satisfaction and business productivity.
Ferreira, Alves e Tostes (2009)	Psicologia: Teoria e Pesquisa	Management of Quality of Work Life (QWL) in the Federal Public Service: The Discrepancy Between Issues and Managerial Practices	The central aim of the article was to understand the Quality of Work Life (QWL) practices in federal public agencies.
Fleury (1980)	<u>Revista de Administração de Empresas</u>	Productivity and Work Organization in Industry	Research was conducted on the characteristics of work organization processes in industrial production systems, with a focus on the organizational aspects

			directly related to productivity.
Herzberg (2003)	<u>Harvard Business Review</u>	One More Time: How Do You Motivate Employees?	The author discovered that the factors motivating employees differ from those causing dissatisfaction. True motivation comes from intrinsic factors, such as interesting work and challenges. These findings have influenced managers.
Mendoza-Ocasal <i>et al.</i> (2022)	<u>Polish Journal Of Management Studies</u>	Subjective well-being and its correlation with happiness at work and quality of work life: An organizational vision	Economic crises and changes faced by organizations impact people's lives. Understanding the relationship between quality of life at work and happiness is essential for companies, as this relationship will help organizations develop strategies that enable them to succeed.
Monteiro (2011)	<u>Revista de Administração da UEG</u>	The Impact of Quality of Life at Work (QWL) on the Revenue of Metallurgical Industries in the State of Pará	This article presented the results of a management research that examines the impact of Quality of Life at Work on the revenue of metallurgical companies in the State of Pará.
Pilatti (2012)	<u>Revista Brasileira de Qualidade de Vida</u>	Quality of Life at Work and Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory: The Limits and Possibilities for Organizations	This study evaluated the possibilities for organizations to promote quality of life at work for their employees, using Frederick Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory as the analytical model.
Silva <i>et al.</i> (2021)	<u>Gestão e Desenvolvimento</u>	Managing the Change Process in Healthcare Organizations: A Narrative Review of the Literature	Healthcare organizations are complex, dynamic, and constantly changing environments. With rapid technological advancements and the process of globalization, it is crucial for them to adopt change management strategies to stay current and address daily needs.
Santos e Ceballos (2013)	<u>Psicologia em Estudo</u>	Well-Being at Work: A Review Study	The emphasis on well-being at work reflects changes in human resources and organizations, which now recognize the health risks associated with neglecting this aspect. The goal is to transform the workplace into a space for human development, moving beyond a limited perspective and promoting positive impacts on both individual and collective well-being.

Stefano (2006)	<u>Revistas Gerenciais</u>	Job Quality of Life Satisfaction in Relation to Biopsychosocial and Organizational Factors: A Comparative Study Between Public and Private University Faculty	The aim of this article was to explore in greater detail the level of satisfaction among university faculty in the public sector with job quality of life (QWL), compared to those in the private sector.
Veloso; Schirrmeister; Limongi-França (2007)	<u>Revista Administração e Diálogo</u>	The Influence of Quality of Life at Work in Professional Transition Situations: A Case Study on Voluntary Resignation.	The aim of this study was to investigate the relationships between voluntary resignation and the perception of quality of life at work, as well as to analyze the influence of QWL during professional transitions.

It is evident that the benefits of quality of life at work on labor productivity are numerous and significant. When workers enjoy a good quality of life at work, it translates into various positive aspects for the organization, such as greater engagement with company tasks, lower absenteeism rates, increased talent retention, improved organizational climate, enhanced creativity and innovation, and an improved company image among employees.

In general, it is observed that the influence of quality of life on labor productivity addresses the relationship between workers' well-being and their job performance. It examines how factors such as a healthy work environment, work-life balance, social support, and personal development directly impact productivity. Furthermore, it highlights the importance of organizational policies and practices aimed at improving employees' quality of life, focusing not only on individual well-being but also on the overall success of the company.

CONCLUSION

The relationship between quality of life and labor productivity is a topic of growing importance in the contemporary world. Studies have shown that workers who enjoy a healthy work environment, work-life balance, social support, and opportunities for personal development tend to be more productive. This is because a satisfied and well-cared-for employee has greater motivation, energy, and focus to carry out tasks efficiently.

Additionally, companies that invest in promoting their employees' quality of life typically experience reduced absenteeism, increased talent retention, and improved corporate image—factors that significantly contribute to long-term organizational success. Thus, the pursuit of strategies that promote employee well-being becomes not only an ethical issue but also an essential competitive advantage for companies.



Employee well-being is an essential component in promoting productivity within organizations. When employees feel valued, respected, and supported in their work environment, they are more likely to dedicate themselves with greater enthusiasm and commitment to their tasks. Furthermore, a state of physical and mental well-being directly contributes to workers' concentration, creativity, and decision-making abilities—crucial elements for efficiency and effectiveness in performing their duties.

On the other hand, professional environments characterized by high levels of stress, lack of recognition and support, and poor work-life balance tend to generate dissatisfaction and demotivation, negatively impacting productivity. Therefore, investing in employee well-being is not just a humanitarian issue but also a smart strategy to boost organizational performance and results.

It was highlighted that academic literature shows a deficiency in providing research that evidences the continuous implementation of measures to improve productivity through quality of life at work. Due to market changes caused by technological advancements that impact the professional environment, it is necessary for employers to continuously contribute to maintaining a healthy work environment, promoting work-life balance, recognizing and rewarding employees, maintaining clear and objective communication, and fostering professional development.

The relationship between quality of life and labor productivity is a relevant topic in the current context. Studies have shown that workers who enjoy a healthy work environment, work-life balance, social support, and opportunities for personal development tend to be more productive. This is because a satisfied and well-cared-for employee exhibits greater motivation, energy, and focus to perform tasks efficiently and effectively. Furthermore, companies that invest in promoting their employees' quality of life typically experience reduced absenteeism, increased talent retention, and improved corporate image—factors that significantly contribute to long-term organizational success. Therefore, future studies should systematically seek strategies that promote employee well-being, which is essential both from an ethical standpoint and as a competitive advantage for companies, especially in the educational context.



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