

Quality of Life and of Working Life: Conceptions and Research

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to define the conception of quality of life and its components, to prepare a model of quality of life, and to present the quality of working life evaluation in an organisation after corrective actions in the work environment. The results of the research into the work-family conflict and the balance of work and personal life study are also presented in the article. This paper follows the analysis of scientific and methodological literature, the methodology of social research and a case study. A model of quality of life was designed, which includes eight domains of quality of life and their factors. This model was used to study the quality of working life in one particular company. The quality of working life could be defined as the synthesis of workplace strategies, processes, and environment, which together stimulate the employee's job satisfaction. This also depends on working conditions and the organisation's efficiency. The concept of the quality of working life encompasses the following factors: job satisfaction, involvement in performance at work, motivation, efficiency, productivity, health, safety and welfare at work, stress, work load, burnout, etc. The research findings show that the quality of working life can be measured, improved, and managed. An organisation has possibilities to increase its employee's quality of life and loyalty by improving the working conditions and environment. The high value of the quality of working life directly influences the higher quality of life. Quality of life, happiness, life satisfaction and subjective well-being are interrelated. The new integrated indicator "Total quality of life" (TQL) is proposed by the author, and the world's top 10 cities measured by TQL are also presented in the article.

Keywords

management; quality of life; quality of working life; total quality of life; balance of work and personal life; indicator; model

Introduction

The paper analyses *quality of life* (French – *Qualité de vie*; German – *Qualität des Lebens*). It is defined as a concept of economics, sociology and political science which encompasses an individual's spiritual (emotional), social and physical well-being. This concept originated in Western Europe in the middle of the 20th century when attempts were made to identify the correlation of society's traditional material interests and newly evolved needs as compared to the potential of society. The conception of quality of life conflicts with excess profits of monopolies and reckless profit accumulation. Sustainable development (this concept comprises the methods which strive to assure the development in the way that meets people's well-being at present and at the same time does not reduce it in future) refers to quality of life too. The aim of this conception is to mitigate poverty, to fix meaningful life standards (quality of life), to meet the individual's basic needs, to stimulate economic growth and political development, to avoid damage to natural resources (Akranavičiūtė & Ruževičius, 2007; Ruževičius, 2012). Attempts to answer the question concerning quality of life are found in ancient myths, religions and philosophy. Ancient Greek philosophers were looking for meaning of life and guidelines that could have helped to achieve a higher level of existence. The concept of “good life” is analysed in Plato's and Aristotle's works but their theories are different. The highest value for Plato was logically based contemplation which excelled human feelings. Aristotle's view was different; he declared that life without feelings even if it involved risk was useless. Modern health concepts are based on the views of these two great philosophers: “Health is not absence of a disease but absolute physical, psychological and social well-being” (this reminds Plato) and other modern theories claim that risk, stress are natural parts of life. This theory reminds Aristotle's concept of “good life” (Akranavičiūtė & Ruževičius, 2007).

The concept “quality of life” was first used by A. C. Pigou in his book about economic well-being in 1920. There was no reaction to this and it was ignored until the end of World War II. At that time The World Health Organization (WHO) expanded the definition of health and included the concepts of physical, psychological and social well-being. The WHO defines quality of life (QOL) as an individual purpose-aligned cultural and value system by which a person lives, relative to their aims, hopes, living standards and interests. This is a detailed concept which incorporates individuals' physical and psychological health, their degree of independence, their social liaisons and how they relate to their surroundings. Quality of life is an area of study that has attracted an ever increasing amount of interest. Quality of life conceptual models and instruments for research, evaluation and assessment have been developed since the middle of last century (McCall, 2005; Ruževičius, 2012). However, Greek philosophers were searching for meaning of life which could help people pursue a higher existential level of their life. In the past century quality of life was determined as material welfare or wealth. Later, the perception's changes of the meaning of life and values influenced quality of life conception and all factors changes (Ferrer, 2002). Evaluation of quality of life must encompass all elements. The quality of working life is an important component quality of life. This aspect of quality of life has never been analysed in scientific literature. The quality of working life includes such work areas as employees' health and well-being, guarantee for employment, career planning, competence development, life and work balance, and others. The results of evaluation of quality of working life factors could be possibility for social programs establishment, implementation and development in organisations, at national or international levels (Akranavičiūtė & Ruževičius, 2007; Brown *et al.*, 2004; Ruževičius, 2012; Van de Looij, 1995).

The *scientific problem* of the study is to adjust evaluation method on the quality of working life (QOWL) and consequently improve an organisation's performance results. The

purpose of the paper is to prepare a model of quality of life, to study the balance of work and personal life and to evaluate changes of employees' quality of working life after corrective measures in the organisation under research. *Methodology*. This article is worked out by using the analysis of scientific and methodological literature and the methodology of social research. The research data was analysed using descriptive and statistical methods. The data analysis was performed using standard questionnaire data treatment software: *Microsoft Excel 2000* and *SPSS (SPSS 15.0 for Windows Evaluation)* packets. The research sample comprises all the employees (50) of a small industrial organisation. The results of the research carried out in 2006 were published in the article (Akranavičiūtė & Ruževičius, 2007). Referring to the mentioned research, measures of work environment corrective measures were prepared and implemented in the organisation. A few years later, at the beginning of 2014, the author carried out research from the point of view of QOWL concerning the efficacy of applied measures.

1. The factors, dimensions and the model of quality of life

The main problem is that there is no universal quality of life determination. Quality of life is influenced by an individual's physical and mental health, the degree of independency, the social relationship with the environment, and other factors (Ruževičius, 2012; Shin, 1979). Quality of life could be defined as an individual's satisfaction with his or her life dimensions comparing with his or her ideal life. The evaluation of quality of life depends on the individual's value system and on the cultural environment where he lives (Gilgeous, 1998).

Nonetheless, when analysing quality of life, it should be kept in mind that this concept is wider than the issues of an individual's health. Brown (1993) observes that from both political and philosophical perspectives, the perception of quality of life can be based on one of the following three points of view (quoted from Diener *et al.*, 1997):

- The characteristics of good life can stem from normative ideals based on religious, philosophical or some other systems. For instance, an individual can be positive that the essential element of quality of life is helping other people – based on one's religious principles.
- The essence of quality of life lies in the fulfilment of the individual's priority needs. Due to scarce resources, people prefer things that enhance the quality of their lives. Therefore, people organise their lives considering the resources available to them, as well as their personal needs.
- Quality of life can also be perceived through an individual's life experience. If a person perceives her or his life as good and desirable, it is possible to assume that it is indeed so in her or his case. From such a point of view, the core criteria for the evaluation of quality of life are joy, pleasure and contentment with life.

According to B. K. Haas (1999), quality of life can be most accurately defined by the following five criteria (quoted from Merkys *et al.*, 2008):

- Quality of life is the assessment of the current (here and now) circumstances of an individual's life.
- Quality of life in its essence (content) is multifaceted.
- Quality of life is based on individual values, and is variable.
- Quality of life encompasses objective indicators as well as subjective evaluations.
- Quality of life can be most accurately evaluated by individuals who are capable of conducting subjective self-assessment.

Quality of life is considered to be a construct which encompasses various tiers of the realization of social welfare – the macro-layer (social layer), i.e., general social conditions and

prerequisites; the communal (municipal) layer, i.e., specific opportunities, the infrastructure and the quality of services; the tier of the individual, i.e., the actual exploitation of social resources; as well as the assessment of subjective opportunities and contentment from the perspective of personal experience (Merkys *et al.*, 2008). It must be noted that all these layers are interrelated – society or community life cannot be considered to be that of quality if the experiences of individuals are not positive. On the other hand, the high quality of municipal life is not to be considered as the sum of those experiences at the layer of the individual (*The Economist...*, 2005). Therefore, in order to carry out a comprehensive evaluation of quality of life, all the three layers of the realization of social welfare must be taken into consideration.

The concepts of quality of life and happiness cannot be equated, as people perceive their content, characteristics and indicators differently (Susnienė & Jurkauskas, 2009). This is how French poet and thinker *Nicolas Chamfort* defined the issue of happiness:

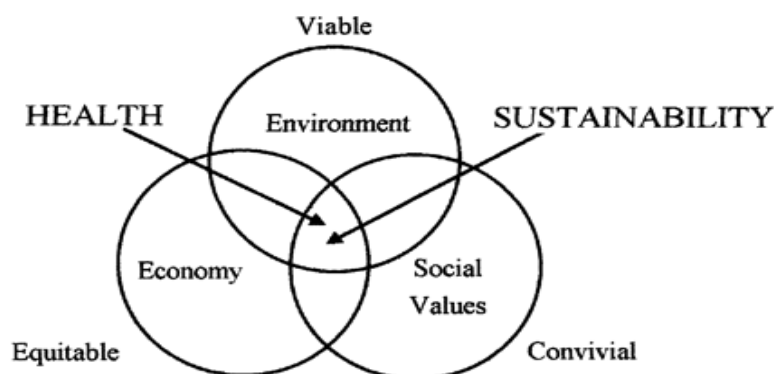
“Le bonheur n’est pas chose aisée. Il est très difficile de le trouver en nous, il est impossible de le trouver ailleurs” - “Happiness is not easy to find. It’s very difficult to find it in yourself and impossible to find anywhere else”.

While analysing sustainable development, the conceptual model of sustainable development elaborated by C. Price *et al.* (1997) must be mentioned; it is argued that health and eco-balance are essential indicators of quality of life, and are perceived as the result of the interaction of economic, environmental, and social values (Dooris, 1999). In essence, this model points to the fact that when speaking about quality of life, it is not possible to ignore either the subjective or objective element of quality because they are both essential to the all-embracing perception of this conception. According to this model, the indicators of the objective quality of life are the individual assessment elements of the wholeness of the environmental and economic situation; whereas the subjective component should be related to individual social values (see Figure 1).

R. Veenhoven distinguishes four dimensions of quality of life which are necessary for the fulfilment of a good quality of life (Veenhoven, 2000):

- “Livability” of the environment. This dimension includes the opportunities provided by the environment, as well as the possibility of establishing social relations.
- Self-assessment, which encompasses the awareness and perception of one’s own personal characteristics, as well as strengths and weaknesses.
- External benefit. Quality of life depends also on whether the individual has a life goal or goals, and on whether s/he pursues higher values.
- “Inner appreciation” of quality of life. Every individual evaluates the quality of her or his life subjectively while comparing the acquired experience and expectations of life.

Figure 1. A conceptual model of health and sustainable development



Source: Price *et al.*, 1997; quoted from Dooris, 1999

It must also be noted that quality of life depends not only on the person's age and state of health, but also on the person's emotional condition, and cognitive, as well as social functioning (Arnold, 1991; quoted from Brown *et al.*, 2004). The findings of the research, which involved the entire population of Norway, demonstrated that the older part of the population highlighted the assessment of physical condition; women evaluated quality of life worse than men did; family status had the greatest impact on the emotional area of life, whereas education – affected all areas related to quality of life (Kazlauskaitė & Rėklaitienė, 2005).

Quality of life also depends on external factors. Good living conditions or circumstances will determine high quality of life, but if these conditions vary, the individual's satisfaction with his or her quality of life will vary too. Quality of life is influenced by many various factors and conditions, such as: accommodation, employment, income, material welfare, moral attitudes, personal and family life, social support, stress and crises, health-related quality of life, health care service, working conditions, nourishment, education opportunities, relationships with the environment, eco-factors, and others. The author's proposed model of quality of life is presented in Figure 2.

The domains of quality of life are (Ruževičius, 2012):

1. Physical state (health, working load, stamina, nourishment);
2. Material state (welfare, living conditions, economics quality; average income, purchasing power, work and recreation conditions, etc.);
3. Psychological state (emotions, attitudes, values, self-esteem, job satisfaction, stress; moral psychological climate within the family, an organisation, the community, the nation);
4. Education and self-development (learning, education quality, skills and application of knowledge)
5. Social relation (relationship with people, family, society, support);
6. Self-expression possibilities and leisure (recreation, hobby, creation, entertainment);
7. Safety and environment (physical personal security – body, legal, social; work environment, economic, political, juridical environment).

2. Quality of life in cities

It is possible to evaluate quality of life of an individual (a person), as well as quality of life and the eco-quality of life of communities, cities, countries, or whole regions. In order to evaluate and compare people's quality of life in different countries general indicators are employed that evaluate the aspects of economical, socio-cultural, political environment, services of health care, education, transport, public sector as well as supply of products and services, aspects of natural conditions. Quality of life is identified according to nine main indicators. They are ranked according to the importance:

- 1) material welfare (according to GNP);
- 2) health;
- 3) political stability and safety;
- 4) family life;
- 5) social life;
- 6) climate and geographical location;
- 7) employment;
- 8) political freedom;
- 9) gender freedom.

Figure 2. The quality of life model



Source: designed by the author, following Considine, 2002; Shoepke, 2003; Ruževičius, 2012

The consultancy company *Mercer Human Research* conducts systematic evaluations of quality of life in various cities worldwide. The evaluation encompasses 39 criteria of quality of life. European cities overwhelmingly top the list. Thus, the top 10 cities ranked by *Mercer* in 2012 on the basis of quality of life include (Quality, 2012):

1. Vienna (Austria).
2. Zurich (Switzerland).
3. Auckland (New Zealand).
4. Munich (Germany).
5. Vancouver (Canada).
6. Dusseldorf (Germany).
7. Frankfurt (Germany).
8. Geneva (Switzerland).
9. Copenhagen (Denmark).
10. Bern (Switzerland).

According to this ranking, the following cities take these positions: Vilnius – 79; Brussels – 22; Paris – 29; Helsinki – 32; Oslo – 32; London – 38; Rome – 52; Warsaw – 64; Prague –

69. Tbilisi ranked 213 - the lowest position among the Eastern European cities. Baghdad (Iraq) ranked 221 - the worst city in the whole world from the perspective of quality of life.

The eco-quality in cities worldwide is also ranked, and reflects several environmental indicators. In 2010, Calgary (Canada) was ranked the best eco-city in the world; Honolulu (the USA) came second; Ottawa (Canada) and Helsinki (Finland) took joint third positions (Top, 2010). The author of the present article proposes a new indicator – the indicator of *the total quality of life*, which integrates the *Mercer* indicator of quality of life in cities, as well as the indicator of eco-quality (Ruževičius, 2012). From the perspective of the indicator of *the total quality of life*, the top city in the world should be Auckland (New Zealand) (third according to quality of life, and thirteenth on the basis of eco-quality). From the viewpoint of this indicator, the top 10 cities in the world would be ranked as follows:

1. Auckland (New Zealand) (3+13=16).
2. Copenhagen (Denmark) (17).
2. Ottawa (Canada) (17).
3. Vancouver (Canada) (18).
3. Wellington (New Zealand) (18).
6. Zurich (Switzerland) (21).
7. Bern (Switzerland) (23).
8. Stockholm (Sweden) (28).
9. Helsinki (Finland) (35)
10. Montreal (Canada) (36).

3. The concept, specificity of the evaluation, and the ways of enhancement of quality of working life

The quality of working life (QWL), according to the English researcher G. James, can be defined from three different perspectives:

1. QWL is a target (e.g., to improve the working place, make the working environment more comfortable, etc.);
2. QWL is a process (it combines the needs of the employees and the goals of the organisation);
3. QWL is a philosophy (the individual is valued as an asset that can be nurtured through knowledge, experience, etc.) (James, 1992).

QWL should be analysed as related to the total quality of life. Therefore, it is of paramount importance to establish their correlation. The quality of working life is one of the dimensions which comprise the composition of the total quality of life. In turn, the quality of working life is interrelated with and inseparable from other areas of QL in multiple ways, such as the individual's social life, education, development, and opportunities for self-realization, material welfare, etc. A visual model of this interrelationship is presented in Figure 2.

The quality of working life can be defined as synthesis of work place strategies, processes and environment, which stimulates employee's job satisfaction. It also depends on work conditions and the efficiency of the organisation (Considine, 2002). An individual's quality of working life directly influences the quality of his or her life value. Generally, quality of life is also determined as an employee's and his or her work environment's relationship quality (Kajzar & Kozubkova, 2007; Ruževičius, 2012; Schoepke, 2003). All the components of quality of life are interdependent and influence an individual's satisfaction with the quality of his or her life.

The concept of quality of working life encompass the following factors: job satisfaction, involvement in work performance, motivation, efficiency, productivity, health, safety and welfare at work, stress, work load, burn-out, etc. These mentioned factors can be defined as physical and psychological results of work which affect the employee (Arts, 2001). Other authors suggest to involve in this concept more work factors: fair compensation, safe and hygienic working and psychological conditions, knowledge and opportunities to realise one's skills, social integration and relationship, life and work balance, work planning and organisation (Van de Looij, 1995). Some quality of working life factors are the same as in quality of life, but they are related with the employee's working environment and his or her job.

The quality of working life domains and factors are as follows:

1. Consideration of work (material and non-material);
2. Emotional state (appreciation, esteem, stress, self-motivation, job satisfaction, safety for job);
3. Learning and improvement (career opportunities, acquisition of new knowledge and skills);
4. Social relationship in the organisation ("relations" with colleagues and supervisors, delegation, communication, command, division of work);
5. Self-realization (career opportunities, involvement in decisions making, etc.);
6. Physical state (stress, fatigue, burn-out, work load);
7. Safety and work environment (Gilgeous, 1998; Arts, 2001; Juniper, 2002; Schoepke, 2003; Ruževičius, 2012).

3.1. Quality of working life evaluation – case study.

A continuous study of quality of life (QOL) and of QWL at a small industrial organisation in Lithuania was performed in 2006-2014. The research sample comprises all the employees (50) of this enterprise. Quality of life must be measured by subjective and objective criteria. Objective criteria can be measured, counted, monitored, whereas subjective criteria of quality of life exist in the individual's consciousness, and researchers are able to identify them only from the individual's responses. Comprehensive research must involve both criteria (Juniper, 2002). Work and working environment directly influence employee's quality of working life. A high level of quality of working life (QWL) induces the employee's loyalty to the organisation and a decision to work in it (Ruževičius, 2012). Quality of working life has more than one research methodology and model. Quality of life and quality of working life are measured according to subjective and objective criteria. The study must provide answers to the following answers: how important particular factors of quality of life are for an individual and how an individual is satisfied with these factors. Dissatisfaction in one domain of quality of life may not influence individual's quality of life in general, if only this domain is less significant than other life domains. Conversely, when the factors of quality of life are evaluated as significantly worse, this works against the general level of quality of life (Akranavičiūtė & Ruževičius, 2007). Quality of life domains are set hierarchically in a person's consciousness. The general quality of life is at the top and all domains of quality of life are situated subject to individual (Sirgy, 2001). Greater satisfaction in one domain increases the level of satisfaction in the domain above. For example, high quality of working life increases the general quality of life. However, dissatisfaction in one quality of life domain may have no influence on other domains. If a person is dissatisfied with his work he will compensate it with paying more attention to the family and social relationship. The author suggests to measure quality of life using following formula:

$$QOL = a \times S_{ph} + b \times S_m + c \times S_e + d \times S_s + e \times S_i + f \times S_l + g \times S_{se} \quad (1).$$

QOL – quality of life value, Sph - physical state value, Sm – material state value, Se - emotional state value, Ss - social relationship value, Si - self-development value, Sl - self-expression and leisure value, Sse – safety and environment value, a-g – quality of life domains weight coefficients (sum total is 1). (Shin, 1979; Sirgy, 2001; Scoring..., 2001). Quality of working life value is calculated similarly.

A study questionnaire was designed according to factors mentioned above. The first section of the questionnaire aimed to find out the most important life domains for the respondents (physical state, material state, emotional state, social relationship, education and self-improvement, self-expression and leisure, safety and environment). The weight coefficients were given to these domains according to the responses. Quality of life value was derived through simple means of the seven life domains values. The total score of quality of working life was obtained in the same way. The questionnaire consists of 19 items concerning quality of life and 21 items about quality of working life. The 5-point Likert response format was used, ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). Total scores reflect higher degrees of quality of life and quality of working life. In the second section of the questionnaire, demographic-social questions were used to collect the information about respondents' characteristics, including: age, gender, education and income.

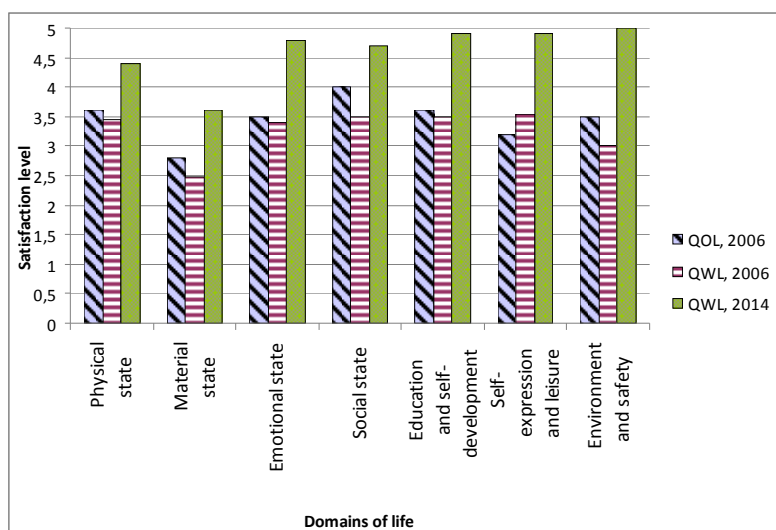
The study can approve the designed research method and evaluate the organisation's employees' quality of life and quality of working life. After analysis of the responses, the weight coefficients of quality of life and quality of working life domains were determined:

$$QOL = 0,3 \times Sph + 0,2 \times Se + 0,18 \times Sm + 0,12 \times Si + 0,1 \times Ss + 0,05 \times Sl + 0,05 \times Sse \quad (2)$$

The domains of quality of life have the same weight coefficients.

The results showed that the surveyed employees were most satisfied with two domains, i.e. social relationship (average evaluation is 4.0 points) and education and self-development (3.8 points) out of seven quality of life domains. The higher evaluation of quality of working life domains accrued also to education and self-improvement domain (3.6 points) and to self-expression and leisure domain (3.5 points). The respondents were dissatisfied with their material state (2.4 and 2.8 points) (see Fig. 3), especially with their material income, compensation of work and living conditions. These findings might be attributed to the facts that most employees have higher education, but they receive an average payment. The employees' expectations of fair compensation did not match with the real situation.

Figure 3. Evaluation of quality of life and quality of working life domains



Source: 2014 – author own study and calculation; 2006 – Akranavičiūtė, Ruževičius, 2007

Many respondents pointed out that they were dissatisfied with their career opportunities and work related stress. The quality of life of males was higher than the quality of working life (QOL is 3.5 points; QOWL – 3.2 points) than that of females (QOL – 3.3 points; QOWL – 3.3 points). An exhaustive study will point out the reasons of these evaluations.

The strength of correlation between quality of life and quality of working life, their domains and demographic-social characteristics were analysed. A strong correlation was found between quality of life and quality of working life ($r = 0.76$). However, the employees' demographic - social characteristics weakly correlated with both quality of life and quality of working life (r varies from -0.79 to 0.39). Very positive correlation was found between quality of life and its domains: physical state ($r = 0.84$) and material state ($r = 0.71$). The weakest correlation was found between quality of life and education and self-improvement domain ($r = 0.48$), as well as safety and environment domain ($r = 0.48$). The results revealed that quality of working life moderately correlated with material state ($r = 0.66$) and education and self-development domain ($r = 0.66$). The remaining domains were also moderately related. The regression analysis was used to predict the value of quality of life based on quality of working life value. The dependent variable (quality of life) was significantly associated with quality of working life ($R = 0,758$; $R^2 = 0,574$; $R^2 \text{ adj} = 0,563$). Linear equation was found:

$$\text{QOL} = 0.74 + 0.85 \times \text{QWL} \quad (3) \quad (\text{Akranavičiūtė \& Ruževičius, 2007}).$$

On the basis of the results of the research in the organisation, corrective measures and measures for work environment were prepared and implemented. They involved training of employees, their professional development and substantial improvement of the conditions of work environment referring the occupational health and safety management system (OHSAS) requirements. A repeated research was performed a few years later (2014), and focused on implementation of the above mentioned measures. The research demonstrated high efficiency of the applied measures concerning the improvement of QWL (see Fig. 3). *Although the material state of the employees hadn't changed significantly, the above mentioned measures significantly improved the employees' emotional state, education and self-development as well as assessment of safety. This has positive impact not only on general QWL evaluation, but on the QOL level as well.* The research findings showed that analysed organisation has possibilities to increase their employee's satisfaction of quality of life and loyalty by improving the working conditions and environment. High quality of working life evaluation can influence higher quality of life in general. The author of this study concludes that *quality of working life can be managed, measured and evaluated.*

3.2. *The work-family conflict and the balance of work and personal life*

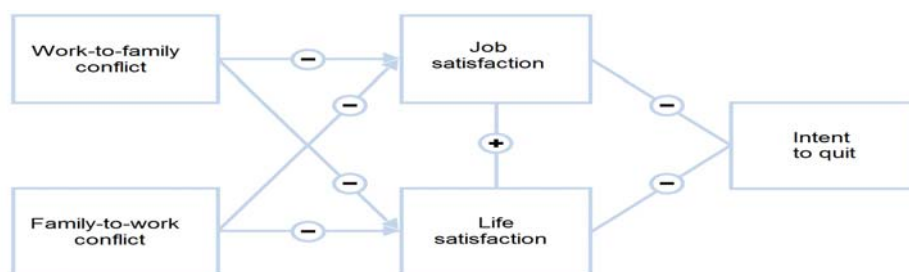
Having analysed the concept of quality of life and its correlation with the quality of working life, and also having reviewed the factors that have an impact on QWL, it is possible – from both the theoretical and practical points of view – to analyse the relevant aspects of the balance of work and personal life; such research would be most natural in the context of work-family conflicts. Work and family are the two pivotal areas in our lives, however, very often people encounter great difficulties while seeking to combine them in such a way that neither of them suffers.

It is especially difficult to combine work and family life for those who have certain commitments, e.g. for those who are raising minors, caring for the elderly, or are taking care of the disabled. The work-family conflict is a discrepancy between certain social roles: of employee, bread-winner, custodian, as well as father, mother or spouse (Rode *et al.*, 2007). Apart from its self-explanatory meaning, the balance of work and personal life – i.e. combining professional and family life – encompasses certain other aspects. In his article, F.

Pichler mentions the concept of the balance of work and personal life suggested by U. Byrne (2005). *It is like juggling the five aspects of our life: work, family, friends, health, and the spiritual condition, in order for the activity and aspirations in one area not to have a detrimental impact on the remaining four areas* (Pichler, 2009). This list, however, can be expanded to include leisure time, cultural entertainment, and the maintenance of ties with relatives, other favourite activities, hobbies, etc.

J. C. Rode analysed the conflict of work and family as a root cause of leaving one's job. The model itself was called the "intent to quit" (Rode, 2007). Figure 4 demonstrates that the conflict of work and family life is actually comprised of two conflicts, depending on whose perspective is taken. It is two trends of those two conflicts. *The work-to-family conflict* reveals how strongly working conditions impact and restrict the individual's family life; as well as how often family life has to be adjusted to the working conditions. Alternatively, *the family-to-work conflict* reveals how family commitments affect the quality of the duties performed at work (Pichler, 2009).

Figure 4. The model of "the Intent to quit"



Source: Rode, 2007

According to the intent to quit model, the work-to-family conflict has a negative impact on one's job satisfaction (and concurrently on one's contentment with life), which means that the working conditions do not make it possible to properly carry out the family commitments. Therefore, the individual is dissatisfied his or her job, and at the same time, with such a life in general. Similarly, a distinct family-to-work conflict leads to the individual's discontent with one's life (and with his or her job as well). Conversely, job satisfaction has a positive impact on one's general contentment with life: a person who is content with her/his job (i.e. does not experience conflicts of roles or only experiences minor ones) is satisfied with her or his own life as well. This leads to the conclusion that if one is satisfied with one's job and life, the intent to quit should not be harboured. Conversely, the individual who is dissatisfied with his or her job and life will strive to change something.

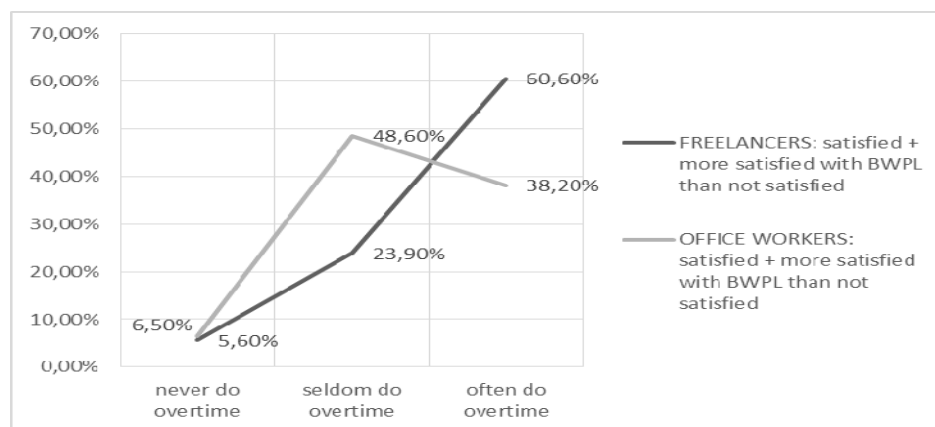
Research on the evaluation on the balance of working life and personal life among freelance and office staff. Rasa Braškutė-Saulė – a master student in Vilnius University – participated also in this research. The analysis of the scientific literature on the concept of the quality of working life (QWL) and on the factors which have an impact on the quality revealed that the aspect of the balance of work and personal life (further BWPL) is extremely relevant from both the theoretical and practical points of view. It is obviously of paramount importance to absolutely every working person, starting with CEOs to rank-and-file workers, to representatives of various non-traditional specialities.

The analysis of the scientific literature leads to several insights. *Firstly*, the balance of work and personal life is becoming more expensive. This rise in price must be different for individuals who have well-paid jobs in stable businesses or structures, and who can afford not to search for additional jobs or can afford not to shorten (officially or not) their work days, for

instance, on Fridays; these employees, after all, are not pressed by the necessity to work at home or in the evening. On the other hand, those who do not have fixed or stable jobs, or who have inadequate income, or those whose income significantly depends on their performance and results at work would probably sacrifice their personal time for extra income; such workers would more often resort to taking on additional jobs, or would do overtime if this resulted in extra income. These premises are based on two factors – the nature of work and income. *Another insight* is that the balance of work and personal life, in general, is the balance of two aspects of worth – work and personal life. A job, in essence, provides the contemporary individual with the financial opportunities to experience a true personal life, and to enjoy it. It should follow from this that when there is excessive ‘free’ time for one’s personal life, the employee is not necessarily content because this can simply mean that one does not have sufficient work and income to live that personal life adequately. This problem is usually experienced by most individuals who work in the field of projects or in creative fields, and who do not have a fixed long-term contract. Thus, the above premises are also based on the same factors – the nature of work and income. In order to assess the evaluations of the balance of work and personal life (BWPL), some research was carried out through in-depth interviews. The research included two target groups: the first group consisted of individuals working in creative fields (freelancers), while the other was made up of full-time employees working “from 8.00 until 17.00”, referred to below as office workers. The first group under research consisted of actors, photographers, and designers. The category of office staff was comprised of managers, and representatives of senior management (i.e. those who, in the entry on profession noted their position as ‘manager’ or ‘head of department’).

Fragments of the research findings are presented below. The correlation of the frequency of working overtime and satisfaction with BWPL (the balance of work and personal life) is presented in Figure 5.

Figure 5. The correlation between the satisfaction with BWPL and the frequency of working overtime

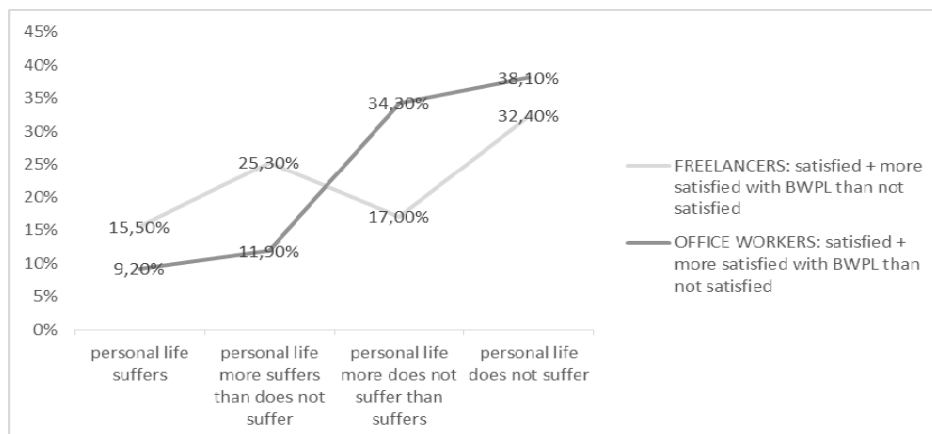


The research findings disclosed the obvious discrepancy between the frequency of working overtime and the freelancers’ and office workers’ satisfaction with the BWPL. Figure 5 presents only the data concerning the respondents who were satisfied (or more satisfied than not) with the balance of work and personal life. The discrepancy is most obvious within the ‘intersection’, which emerges in the overtime evaluation zones ‘seldom’ and ‘often’. The largest part of the freelancers who were satisfied with the balance (60.6%) *often* do overtime, which exceeds the number of respondents who *seldom* do overtime by more than twice. Conversely, the office employees showed the opposite tendency. The majority of those satisfied with the balance of work and their personal life (48.6%) claim that they seldom that they do overtime, which accounts for more than the office staff who often do overtime. It is

possible to make the assumption that *freelancers – even though they have obviously less time for personal life due to overtime – are as satisfied with their personal lives as office workers, who do overtime less frequently.*

The personal life of freelancers who are satisfied with their BWPL suffers due to work more than the personal life of office employees (see Fig. 6). In turn, the office workers – more often than the freelancers – pointed out that their personal life either does not suffer at all due to work or is more inclined not to suffer than to suffer. In the context of the pivotal question of the research on whether the respondents are satisfied with their BWPL – both the freelancers and office staff claimed that they were satisfied with their BWPL. Nevertheless, when the respondents were asked whether their personal life suffered due to work, the freelancers’ and office workers’ responses differed significantly; as did the responses concerning the frequency of overtime. Therefore, it is obvious that the evaluation of the balance of work and personal life by those two research target groups is subjective and specific to the character of their work. This, however, does not mean that the BWPL of freelancers and office workers is in essence similar. In other words, even though both groups evaluated their BWPL as similar – they are content with it in general – the balance of work and personal life is not identical (or even similar) when both those groups are viewed separately. Figure 6 demonstrates obvious differences between the office workers and freelancers, which is visually reflected in the ‘intersection’ in the zones of evaluation of personal life.

Figure 16. The correlation of satisfaction with the BWPL, and the responses to the question whether personal life suffers due to work



In general, the most significant correlation was observed between the nature of work and the need to do extra jobs in order to receive extra income. The freelancers especially stood out with 72% taking on extra work in order to gain additional income. This demonstrates that it is income that can be considered the core and distinctive factor which impacts the balance of work and personal life in the context of the different nature of work. As mentioned earlier, the findings of the research revealed that when compared to the office workers, the freelancers stood out as both more likely to be lacking in income and actively undertaking additional jobs – and thus sacrificing the time which could be dedicated to their personal life, which distinctly distorts the balance of both work and personal life.

The evaluation of the factors that positively affect people’s emotional life at work among the employees of both groups is presented in Table 1, which also provides a comparison with the findings of previous research carried out in South Korea. From the data presented in Table 1 some differences related with employees’ working life quality in Korea and Lithuania can be noticed. It is conditioned by different level of economical prosperity as well as cultural

differences in these countries. Table 1 demonstrates that for the target groups of our research, the most important factor was acknowledgement by superiors and colleagues. It was only slightly more important for the office workers (64%) than for the freelancers (58%). It is impressive that informal communication in the workplace is more important for freelancers than to the office workers, even though the difference in the opinions is not substantial either. Differently from the research conducted in 2009-2010, this research included a neutral variant – a response ‘other’, which was selected by as much as 11 % of the freelancers (whereas the office workers did not select it at all). It is possible to assert that there are certain other specific factors, not included in the variants of the responses, and perhaps personal reasons why freelancers experience affective job satisfaction. These might include a stronger sense of vocation, creative nature, self-realization, or a deeper perception of one’s contribution to work results in general. Table 1 also demonstrates that a mere 4 % of the freelancers responded that they feel best in the workplace when they are unexpectedly offered incentives. Hence, unexpected incentives, increments or bonuses were not the pivotal motivators for the freelancers.

It is worthwhile comparing the findings of the latter research with the previously conducted research into the quality of working life. According to the data of 2010, the representatives of the organisations in Lithuania (a significant 43% of the respondents) claimed that unexpected increments or bonuses were the principal factors which determined affective job satisfaction. However, a mere 29 % of the respondents selected this response in analogous research conducted in South Korea in 2009. On the one hand, this figure is considerably lower than that of the Lithuanian respondents; on the other hand, it is substantially higher than the findings of the 2012 research in Lithuania among the freelancers and office workers. In the South Korean case, it is possible to assume that these differences were determined by both cultural factors and perhaps different organisational management styles, or deep-seated traditions.

Alternatively, the comparison of the findings in 2010 and 2012 among the office employees also demonstrates rather substantial differences. The importance of the superiors’ presence in the workplace (which can be treated as supervision, control, certain restriction) dramatically decreased, whereas the significance of informal communication for affective job satisfaction increased. Furthermore, the acknowledgement of one’s achievements at work was much more important in 2012 than in 2010, and among the office workers is even more obvious (in 2010 – 39 %, in 2012 – already 64 %). In this way, the findings confirm the shifting trends, and the changing evaluations of the workplace, the environment and the positive affective microclimate in the workplace. This, naturally, should have impact on one’s satisfaction with one’s working life, with one’s job in general and probably on the satisfaction with one’s balance of work and personal life.

Table 1. The evaluation of the factors that have a positive impact on emotional life at work

In which situations do you feel best at work?	LITHUANIA			S. KOREA
	2010	2012		2009
		Freelancers	Office staff	
When my work is valued and acknowledged by my superiors (when my work is recognised)	39%	58%	64%	46%
When I unexpectedly receive an incentive (salary increment, bonus) at work	43%	4%	16%	29%
When I can informally communicate at work with colleagues I like	18%	24%	20%	9%
When my superior is away on business, when s/he is not at work	16%	3%	0%	8%
Other	-	11%	0%	-

Source: author’s survey; Dahlggaard-Park, 2009

The research exposed the fundamental differences between the natures of work of the two groups. Freelancers are much more involved in their work, are more loyal to their selected work activity, are committed to it not only in the working environment or during working hours, but also after work. Freelancers are more able to perceive their contribution to the work result, and they are more acutely aware that their job corresponds to their abilities. Moreover, even though the freelancers' incomes from their main workplace are often insufficient, they experience the intention to quit less often – differently from office employees. In other words, freelancers more often identify themselves with their work activities and do not draw a clear-cut line between work and personal life, i.e., they lead the life that is popularly called a “vocation”.

The proposed hypothesis that the different nature of work determines the differently assessed balance of work and personal life proved to be only partially true. The pivotal discovery of the research manifests itself in the divide of the subjective and objective viewpoints. The different nature of work does determine the balance of work and personal life (the objective point of view); however, practically, does not have any impact on the evaluation of the BWPL by the researched groups of different nature of work (the subjective point of view). The research revealed that irrespective of the respondents' nature of work, overall they are satisfied with their balance of work and personal life.

Bearing in mind that office workers as a category of employees probably reflect the major part of working society (fixed working hours, a concretely established salary, clearly defined duties and nature of work), it is possible to form a more general view and conclude that the employees of the creative sector experience, in the researched aspect, graver deprivations and tend to sacrifice their personal lives more than the majority of society does. This mainly results from the inconstant, unstable, and insufficient incomes of freelancers. Nonetheless, as the findings of the research demonstrated, freelancers are not overly demanding in terms of personal life and its needs. This might be explained by finding a fulfilling ‘vocation’, the different nature of creative people or their different perception of life, which as the research revealed – differs substantially from the rest of society. Creative employees are much more tolerant to excess workloads (overtime and doing additional jobs), or have fewer requirements as to the quality of their personal life – which, naturally, suffers as a result of their work.

Conclusions

Nowadays, when human basic needs in our society are almost satisfied, questions on the whole quality of life arise quite often. The key issue in such a situation is what the concept itself is and moreover, it is not finally clear how to evaluate it in the best possible way. The integrated evaluation of quality of life must include all the domains and components, including quality of working life. The concept of quality of life is related to various factors of working life, such as: job satisfaction, involvement in work performance, motivation, efficiency, productivity, health, safety and welfare at work, stress, work load, burn-out, etc.

Quality of life is influenced by an individual's physical and mental health, the degree of independency, the social relationship with the environment, and other factors. Quality of life could be defined as an individual's satisfaction with his or her life dimensions compared with his or her ideal life. The evaluation of quality of life depends on one's value system. The quality of working life could be defined as synthesis of the work place's strategies, processes and environment, which stimulates employee's job satisfaction. It also depends on work conditions and the efficiency of the organisation. The concept of quality of working life encompasses the following factors: job satisfaction, involvement in work performance,

motivation, efficiency, productivity, health, safety and welfare at work, stress, work load, burn-out, etc.

The model of quality of life was designed and it includes eight quality of life domains and their factors. This model was used in the research. It revealed high efficiency of the applied measures concerning the improvement of QWL. Although the material state of the employees hadn't changed significantly, the organisation's investment into the training of employees, concern for them and improvement of work conditions significantly raised the employees' assessment of their emotional state, education and self-development, as well as safety. This has a positive impact not only on the general QWL evaluation, but on QOL level as well.

The research findings demonstrate that the studied organisation has possibilities to increase their employees' quality of life and loyalty by improving working conditions and environment. The high value of the quality of working life directly influences the higher quality of life. The findings suggest that the designed research method is suitable for evaluation of quality of working life and quality of life. It is possible to generalize that quality of life and quality of working life can be managed, measured and evaluated.

The comparative leadership and working life study between organisations in South Korea and Lithuania demonstrate some differences related to the employees' working life quality evaluation in these countries. It is conditioned by different level of economic prosperity as well as cultural differences in these countries. Psychological microclimate is the main factor influencing both employees' satisfaction with job and loyalty for organisation. It is worth highlighting that supervisor-leader is the most responsible for the quality of such microclimate. Problems concerning relations with leader and colleagues as well as adequate appreciation and evaluation of accomplished tasks are the major forces influencing working life quality. It is important to accentuate that a monetary reward is not a critical factor affecting employees' satisfaction with their job in both countries – South Korea and Lithuania.

The balance of work and personal life, when subjectively assessed by freelancers and office workers themselves, is perceived as adequate and satisfying. In essence however, it is not identical. The objective evaluation of the research findings reveals that the balance of work and personal life of freelancers is distinctly worse than that of office workers. Freelancers more often tend to do additional jobs, do overtime more frequently, and consequently due to work, their family life, leisure time, entertainment, hobbies suffer more than office workers' respective facets of life. Nevertheless, all these negative factors are perceived by freelancers as not weighty enough to have a negative impact on their own perception of their balance of work and personal life.

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