The Relationship between Quality of Working Life and Interpersonal Forgiveness among Faculty Members

Ahmad Kachoie[1], Hoda Ahmari Tehran[2*], Fariba Dehghani[3], Hossein Didehban[2], Marziye Raisi[3]

1 Clinical Research Development Center, Qom University of Medical Sciences, Qom, Iran.
2 Department of Medical Education, Tehran University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, Iran.
3 Spiritual Health Research Center, Qom University of Medical Sciences, Qom, Iran.

Abstract

Background and Objectives: University faculty members, as the largest providers of educational services, must enjoy a good quality of working life in order to provide excellent educational services to their students. Thus, this paper aimed to examine the relationship between their quality of working life and interpersonal forgiveness.

Methods: This descriptive-analytical study was conducted through a cross-sectional method. Accordingly, 76 faculty members of Qom University of Medical Sciences were selected in 2013 using the convenience sampling method. The data were collected using demographic information questionnaire, Walton's Quality of Working Life and Interpersonal Forgiveness Scale. Then, the data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation coefficient and One-way ANOVA, which were run in SPSS (V.16) Software.

Results: The results of this study indicated that the majority of participants enjoyed a moderate quality of working life and interpersonal forgiveness. Besides, it was found that there was a significant relationship between faculty members' quality of working life and interpersonal forgiveness.

Conclusion: Regarding the significant relationship between faculty members' quality of working life and interpersonal forgiveness, it seems that authorities and officials must adopt appropriate strategies and solutions to improve their quality of working life. Consequently, the required conditions to improve the quality of educational services will be provided.

Keywords: Faculty, Forgiveness, Interpersonal Relations, Manpower, Quality of Life.

*Correspondence: Should be addressed to Ms. Hoda Ahmari Tehran. **Email:** ahmari9929@gmail.com

Introduction

The quality of working life refers to overall experience of individuals at work and it constitutes a part of the management accountability in any given organization. Besides, managers always attempt to raise the organization's performance as well as employees' quality of working life. In other words, individual and organizational performance of any given organization must be balanced with employee satisfaction (1,2). Meanwhile, the latter should be provided in a desired manner so that employees may determine the desirability or undesirability of workplaces. Actually, the quality of working life is meant to be a comprehensive and pervasive program dedicated to improve employee satisfaction. In this sense, it is vital to attract and retain employees in any given organization. However, it depends on the ability of employees to meet their important needs (3) because it leads to a positive attitude as well as increased efficiency and motivation in them (4). Two concepts of working life and personal life last reciprocal and intensifying impacts on each other. As such, any individual who has several problems in these two parts will certainly experience some problems in such domains as professional focus, work satisfaction, happiness in the workplace and organizational efficiency. Establishment of relation with friends, development of a loving atmosphere, acquisition of successful

experiences and appropriate workplace and physical space are among the most important factors in the quality of work. It should be noted that the latter factors are important in the development of emotions and happiness. Furthermore, such factors as salary and reward system affect the feeling of happiness in individuals (5). Universities must be able to continually and effectively recreate themselves to respond to the environmental requirements and ensure their viability and effectiveness in today's changing conditions (6). In the meantime, faculty members play a key role in universities and it seems that there is a dire need for doing research about the quality of their working life and organizational performance (7). Since universities are major and influential players in any society and owing to this fact that they are characterized with continuous development and role playing patterns, it seems essential to analyze academic jobs (8). Walton has investigated the notion of quality of working life under the following eight working dimensions: adequate and fair compensation, safe and healthy working condition, opportunity for continued growth and security, total life space, constitutionalism in the work organization, social relevance of working life, social integration in work organization and human development (9). On the other hand, the concept of forgiveness is a psychological, communicational and spiritual process that plays a key role in promoting physical, mental and spiritual growth and health. Actually, this component is required for communicational, emotional and physical growth (10). However, the essence and meaning of forgiveness differs from person to person. In this context, Goldman (11) believes that the beliefs about forgiveness are significantly influenced by human basic values, beliefs and culture. Klevnick (12) asserts that forgiveness is a praiseworthy and unconditional act, which is in power of any given annoyed individual. Besides, Freedman and Enright believe that most individuals should be taught about forgiveness so that they may learn how to forgive others. Accordingly, the present study attempted to examine the relationship between faculty members' quality of working life and interpersonal forgiveness (10).

Methods

This descriptive-analytical study was conducted through a cross-sectional method. Accordingly, 76 faculty members of Qom University of Medical Sciences were selected in 2013 using the convenience sampling method. The data were collected using demographic information questionnaire, Walton's Quality of Working Life and Interpersonal Forgiveness Scale. The Walton Standard Questionnaire, whose validity and reliability were confirmed (Cronbach's alpha of 95%) in a study conducted by Mirkamaly and Narenjy Thani (2007), was used to assess the quality of working life in this study (13). The Interpersonal Forgiveness Scale, whose validity and reliability were confirmed (Cronbach's alpha of 88%) in a study conducted by Ehteshamzadeh (2010), was used to assess the interpersonal forgiveness among the statistical population of this study (14). This tool included 3 factors and 25 items and it was confirmed in regard to Iranian population. Having obtained the informed consent of the professors, the questionnaires were distributed by two trained interviewers. Then, the data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation coefficient and Paired T-test, which were run in SPSS (V.16) Software. It should be noted that the significance level for all tests was less than 0.05.

Result

The majority of faculty members were male (68.4%), married (84.2%) and Assistant Professor (60.5%). Besides, most of the samples were located in 31-40 age group and they had 5 to 10 years work experience (Table 1). The findings of this study indicated that the majority of the research population (51.3% and 48.7%, respectively) enjoyed moderate levels of quality of working life and interpersonal forgiveness. The Pearson statistical test showed that the quality of working life was significantly associated with age and teaching experience (p<0.05). However, One-way ANOVA test indicated that there was no

statistically significant difference (P>0.05) in the quality of working life across different academic ranks (namely, Associate Professor, Assistant Professor and Instructor) (Table 1).

Table 1. Demographic variables of research samples

Variable	Unit	Number	Percent
Gender	Male	52	68.4
	Female	24	31.6
Marital status	Single	11	14.5
	Married	64	84.2
Academic rank	Associate Professor	6	7.9
	Assistant Professor	46	60.5
	Instructor	24	31.6
Age	20-30	6	7.9
	31-40	48	63.2
	41-50	16	21.1
	Over 50 years	6	7.9
Teaching experience	Less than 5 years	24	31.6
	5-10	27	35.5
	11-15	17	22.4
	16-25	7	10.5
Advisor Professor	Yes	37	48.7
	No	39	51.3
Part-time or full-time status	Yes	19	25
	No	57	75

Furthermore, there was no relationship between total score of the scale of quality of working life and interpersonal forgiveness using Pearson's correlation coefficient. Regarding the components of quality of working life, it was found that there was only a relationship between safe and healthy working condition and total score of interpersonal forgiveness. Also, there was a significant relationship between safe and healthy working condition and realistic understanding (p<0.05). It should be noted that the latter was one of the components of interpersonal forgiveness (Table 2).

Although there was a significant difference between quality of working life for women and

men groups (p<0.05), the Paired T-test statistics indicated no significant difference between the two groups in terms of interpersonal forgiveness (p>0.05) (Table 3).

Table 3. Comparison of interpersonal forgiveness on the basis of gender of faculty members

Components of interpersonal forgiveness	Male Mean (SD)	Female Mean (SD)	t	p
Reconnect and control of revenge	32.07 (3.73)	32.95 (3.53)	-0.97	0.33
Resentment tolerance	17.59 (2.00)	18.45 (2.99)	-1.48	0.14
Realistic understanding	20.36 (2.49)	20.70 (3.85)	-0.46	0.64
Total score of interpersonal forgiveness	70.03 (6.32)	72.12 (6.13)	-1.34	0.18

There was a significant relationship between total score of quality of working life and interpersonal forgiveness (p<0.05). Regarding the components of quality of working life, it was found that there was a relationship between safe and healthy working condition and total score of interpersonal forgiveness. Besides, there was a significant relationship between safe and healthy working condition and realistic understanding (p<0.05). It should be noted that the latter was one of the components of interpersonal forgiveness. The Paired T-test statistics indicated no significant difference between the two groups in terms of interpersonal forgiveness (p>0.05).

Discussion

The notion of quality of working life is a comprehensive and pervasive program that increases employee satisfaction, strengthens their learning in the workplace and helps them to represent a good performance in such domains as management, changes and

Table 2. The relationship between quality of working life and interpersonal forgiveness across participants

Components of quality of working life	Components of interpersonal forgiveness			Total score of interpersonal forgiveness
	Reconnect and control of revenge	Resentment tolerance	Realistic understanding	
Adequate and fair compensation	0.113	0.033	0.157	0.020
Safe and healthy working condition	0.023	0.109	0.373	0.230
Opportunity for continued growth and security	0.013	0.026	0.036	0.040
Total life space	0.172	0.020	0.137	0.010
Constitutionalism in the work organization	0.175	0.066	0.180	0.043
Social relevance of work life	0.029	0.266	0.204	0.021
Social integration in work organization	0.086	0.114	0.298	0.021
Development of human capabilities	0.104	0.023	0.070	0.102
Total score of quality of working life	0.136	0.076	0.183	0.03

developments. The results of this study indicated that the majority of participants enjoyed a moderate level of quality of working life. Noorshahi et al. (2012) conducted a study and found that there was no significant relationship between quality of working life and age, gender and academic rank (15). Similarly, the majority of samples in the present study (48.7%) were embedded with moderate level of interpersonal forgiveness. Besides, Koening (1990, 2007) reported that mental and physical health of human beings was positively correlated with their moral life and quality of life. Accordingly, those individuals who had strong religious beliefs could cope better with life situations (16,17). In a similar vein, Sharifzadeh and et al. (2012) indicated that there was a significant positive relationship among components of quality of working life and all aspects of organizational performance. Besides, it was found that there was a predictive and positive relationship among aspects of organizational performance and such components as adequate and fair compensation, safe and healthy working condition, opportunity for continued growth and security, total life space, constitutionalism in the work organization, social relevance of work life, social integration in work organization and development of human capabilities (18). Conversely, the results of a study conducted by Mirkamaly and Narenjy Thani (2007) indicated that professors of University of Tehran and Sharif University of Technology were located at a relatively undesirable level in terms of quality of working life. However, they were located at a relatively favorable level in terms of job satisfaction. In addition, there was a positive relationship among components of quality of working life and job satisfaction. Finally, they found that there was not any significant difference between their quality of working life and job satisfaction (13). Interestingly, Hadizadeh and et al (2014) reported that there was a significant positive relationship between job satisfaction and quality of working life so that higher levels of quality of working life led to greater levels of job satisfaction among employees (19). Consequently, the results of

such studies as Kumar and et al (2013) and Boonrod (2009) confirmed these latter results (20,21). Neto (2007) conducted a study titled "forgiveness, personality and gratitude" and concluded that there was a relationship between Neuroticism and resentment tolerance and the desire for forgiveness (22). Shepherd and Belicki (2008) examined the trait forgiveness via the HEXACO model of personality and found that agreeableness was the strongest predictor of forgiveness. Also, the results showed that the two traits that were related to Neuroticism (ambivalence and irritability) suppressed the forgiveness. Furthermore, these traits might re-experience negative emotions towards the wrongdoer and, thus, postpone the development of positive emotions (23). According to the results of this study, it was found that there was no statistically significant difference between the two groups in terms of interpersonal forgiveness. Ehteshamzadeh et al. (2010) reported that the observed correlation was higher in women than men. In other words, most of the correlations obtained between these two variables were significant for women. However, this relationship was not significant in men. Besides, there was a weak negative (non-significant) correlation between these two variables (in some subscales) in men. Since different variables were correlated with forgiveness, one could possibly conclude that the relationship between forgiveness and other variables was more vigorous in men than families (14). Since forgiveness is one of the most sublime human traits and it is considered as a shortcut to achieve human dignity and mystical positions, one may argue that forgiveness generates some useful physical, mental, social and spiritual benefits. As such, if human beings respect this sublime trait, they can enjoy happiness and joy in their life. Similarly, Asgari et al. (2010) examined the relationship between religious beliefs and happiness and forgiveness among students of Islamic Azad University (Ahwaz Branch) and concluded that there was a positive relationship between students' happiness and forgiveness. Consequently, if students felt more happiness, they could represent higher levels of

forgiveness and vice versa (24). As such, these results were consistent with the results of the study conducted by Ehteshamzadeh et al. (2010). Thus, those individuals who are embedded with pleasant trait of forgiveness may experience more happiness and joy in their life (14). So, if due attention is paid to employees' quality of working life (i.e., putting emphasis on the ways which can transform organizations), job satisfaction may improve as well (20).

Conclusion

This study aimed to investigate the relationship between quality of working life and interpersonal forgiveness among faculty members of Qom University of Medical Sciences. Since university, faculty members must enjoy a good quality of working life in order to provide excellent educational services to their students, the university authorities should meet their financial and spiritual needs, create a good working environment and prepare them to serve better students and accomplish their formal duties. Actually, paying due attention to improvement of quality of working life creates a sense of dependence and accountability and, ultimately, improves individuals' performance. Besides, it may be stated that improved quality of working life leads to further achievement-seeking activities, creativity, efficiency and effectiveness. The results of this study indicate that faculty members enjoy a moderate level of quality of working life and interpersonal forgiveness. Since there is a statistically significant relationship between quality of working life and interpersonal forgiveness, it is recommended that these two valuable components are reinforced so that the quality of working life may be improved thereof.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Acknowledgements

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