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**SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH OF FACTORS OF FORMATION  
OF QUALITY OF LABOR LIFE FROM THE POSITION  
OF WORKER AND EMPLOYER**

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**Purpose**

Analysis and evaluation of the factors of formation of the quality of working life from the position of an employer and an employee.

**Methods/methodology of carrying out the work**

Expert survey of the employees of Irkutsk, questionnaire survey of the employed population of Irkutsk.

**Results**

A comparative analysis of the opinions of employers and workers on issues of definition of the most significant factors forming the quality of working life, and the evaluation of the level of the quality of working life is carried out.

**Scope of application of the results**

Contains information about the factors forming the quality of working life in the organization, that require regulation to improve the quality of the working life of the staff.

**Conclusions**

The points of view of employers and workers coincide neither in evaluation of the quality of labor life, nor concerning the factors forming quality of working life. The lack of the unified position in understanding of this problem impedes the growth of quality of working life.

**Keywords:** quality of working life; factors; staff; employer; Irkutsk.

## **СОЦИОЛОГИЧЕСКОЕ ИССЛЕДОВАНИЕ ФАКТОРОВ ФОРМИРОВАНИЯ КАЧЕСТВА ТРУДОВОЙ ЖИЗНИ С ПОЗИЦИИ РАБОТНИКА И РАБОТОДАТЕЛЯ**

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### **Цель**

Анализ и оценка факторов формирования качества трудовой жизни с позиции работодателя и работника.

### **Методы / методология проведения работы**

Экспертный опроса работодателей г. Иркутска, анкетный опрос занятого населения г. Иркутска.

### **Результаты**

Проведен сравнительный анализ мнений работодателей и работников по вопросам определения наиболее значимых факторов формирования качества трудовой жизни и оценки уровня качества трудовой жизни.

### **Область применения результатов**

Содержит информацию о факторах формирования качества трудовой жизни в организации, требующих регулирования с целью повышения качества трудовой жизни персонала

### **Выводы**

Точки зрения работодателей и работников не совпадают ни в оценке качества трудовой жизни, ни в отношении факторов формирования качества трудовой жизни. Отсутствие единой позиции в понимании данной проблемы сдерживает рост качества трудовой жизни.

**Ключевые слова:** качество трудовой жизни; факторы; персонал; работодатель; Иркутск.

The beginning of the formation of the concept of the quality of working life

(QWL) was initiated in the 70-s of the XX century after the publication of research results concerning labor problems, commissioned by the Ministry of Health, Education and Social Security of the United States of America.

The essence of the concept is that the quality of working life is determined by the level of satisfaction with the labor achievements, as a result of self-realization and self-expression, and such motives as salary and career growth are of secondary importance. Being widely spread in Western European countries, this scientific direction was recognized with the International Labor Organization.

In Russia the concept of quality of working life, according to which the labor force is considered not only as labor resources of certain composition, but in close connection with the conditions in which its potential can be developed and realized, became widespread later. According to the opinion of Russian scientists, the borrowing of the generally accepted concept of the quality of working life, focused on the social aspects of labor activity, has certain difficulties, associated not only with cultural peculiarities, but with the level of socio-economic position of the Russian employed population, which differs from that of abroad.

In accordance with modern ideas, the concept of the quality of working life is based on the creation of conditions, ensuring the optimal use of labor potential of a person. Changes in the quality of working life are possible by modifying any of the parameters that affect the lives of people. In particular, with the involvement of employees in management, their training, management training, implementation of programs of promotion, improving the organization of work, etc. As a result, conditions for maximum development of labor potential are created, and the company receives a high level of labor productivity and maximum profit.

In modern science, there is no single approach to the definition of “quality of working life”, due to the vastness and polysemy of the concept, as well as the presence of different scientific approaches and points of view of researchers, as well as different economic situations and the time of fixation of the concept by researchers.

In the works of Russian and foreign authors, quality of working life is defined, in most cases, as the degree (level) of meeting the organization members' personal needs, achievement of their personal goals and fulfillment of strong desires by means of work in this organization, that is, in the process of labor activity. The resultant index of QWL – degree of compliance of opportunities, provided by the enterprise, with expectations of the worker, taking into account his abilities and requirements.

Implementation of caused and prospective needs of the worker is directly paired with his activity in the concrete organization, when in the process of consumption of the labor force, the development of abilities of a person takes place and the directions of his development are defined. Therefore, the quality of the working life of a certain worker is inextricably linked with the QWL of the organization and is formed under its influence.

This circumstance determined the object of our study – the quality of working life in the organization. Factors which form the QWL of the staff and their evaluation from the point of view of the employer and the employee are allocated by us as the subject of the research. Method of the research – sociological survey of the employers and employed population of Irkutsk. For employers a form of the expert survey was developed, and for workers – a questionnaire. The research was conducted within the framework of the project “Strategic directions of regulation of the quality of life of the population of a large Siberian city (Federal Target Program “Research and scientific-pedagogical personnel of innovative Russia in 2009-2013” of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation).

In the course of the research, 50 employers, engaged in various sectors of economy, were interrogated. The form of expert poll included a list of factors forming the QWL, distributed by six groups: the group of “wages”, the group “content and organization of work”, the group “labor conditions”, the group “opportunities for professional growth and employment guarantee”, the group “management of the organization and the labor collective”, the group “legal guarantees and social benefits”.

Each group contained from 10 to 15 indicators of the QWL, which were evaluated on a 5-point scale (5-excellent, 4 – good, 3 – satisfactory, 2 – there are problems, 1 – critical state according to this indicator). Then the total score of the group was calculated, on the basis of which the assessment “excellent”, “good”, “satisfactory” and “unsatisfactory” was given. From the list of factors, the employers had to allocate ten of the most important ones (from their point of view) forming a certain level of the quality of working life in the organization.

The polling was conducted in the form of distributing questionnaires at the place of residence of respondents. The sample population for this research was formed by the combined method on the basis of the three-step selection of respondents by sex and age. The estimated volume of the sampling amounted to 520 persons. The questionnaire included questions on the evaluation of various parameters of the quality of working life and identification of the most significant factors of the QWL from the point of view of the respondents.

Based on the analysis of the data, 10 of the most significant factors forming the QWL, from the position of employers and workers, were identified. The opinions of employers and workers, concerning the main parameters that form the QWL, differ significantly (see table 1).

The opinion of employers and that of workers coincide, concerning only three criteria relating to the size and timeliness of payment of wages, as well as concerning the provision of social guarantees, provided by the Labor Code. Along with this, the evaluation of the importance of these parameters will even coincide.

Table 1

**Comparative Analysis of the most Important Parameters Determining  
 the Quality of Working Life from the Position of Employers and Workers**

Employers		Workers	
Place	Parameters of working life	Place	Parameters of working life
1	Size of wages	1	Size of wages
2	Compliance with safety standards at the working place	2	Career development prospects
3	Timeliness of payment of the salary	3	Timeliness of payment of the salary
4	Official registration for work	4	Relations in the collective
5	Provision of social guarantees, stipulated by the Labor Code	5	Opportunities for qualification improvement, retraining
6	Official registration of a full size of wages	6	Provision of social guarantees, stipulated by the Labo Code
7	Stability of employment	7	Combination of personal goals and objectives of the organization
8	Provision and payment of a sick-list	8	Attitude of the management towards the subordinates
9	Voluntary medical insurance at the expense of the means of the employer	9	Working conditions
10	Observance of labor rights	10	Working hours

In the first place – size of wages. The majority of the respondents (65.6%) specified that the size of the salary does not exceed 15000 rubles, while the living wage for the employable population in Irkutsk, at the time the research was carrying out, was 6653 rubles. Half of the respondents (53.3%) spend from 25% to 50% of the family budget for food and a quarter of the respondents (26.4%) – from 50% to 75% of the family budget. Thus, the income from labor activity is able to provide a minimum standard of living and to cover expenses only for the most necessary needs,

such as food.

The majority of the factors, selected by the employers as affecting the QWL of the personnel, are the statutory rules, obligatory for execution. Among them, there are some factors such as official registration for work, official registration of a full salary, timely payment of wages, provision of social guarantees, stipulated by the Labor Code, compliance with safety standards at a working place.

In the post-Soviet period, the problem of informal employment has become actual. The lack of official registration of labor relations is widespread now too. Within the research, the respondents were asked about how their employment relationship was registered. Only half of the respondents (50.2%) answered that the employment contract was signed and the entire amount of wages was formalized. One third of respondents (33.4%) specified that the labor relations were formalized partially (the employment contract was signed, however only part of the salary was officially issued). Such practice is generally widespread at many officially existing jobs in the commercial sector. Every sixth respondent (16.4%) did not recognize his labor relations officially formalized.

In the current situation, it is not surprising that the employers allocated these factors as significant ones defining the QWL of a worker. It is possible to draw a conclusion that the observance of laws in the sphere of work is considered by employers as a merit, competitive advantage when hiring personnel.

Workers, in turn, do not refer observance of the labor law to significant parameters. The percent of cases of violation of the labour rights is high (49.8%), therefore, probably, it is perceived by workers as a norm, initially set condition, within which the labour relations are established.

To a greater degree, workers are interested in maintaining their competitiveness, on a labour market, therefore, the workers referred possibilities of professional development and career growth to significant parameters. The socially-psychological climate in the team: relations within the team and those with management were also considered to be an important aspect of the working life. A combination of personal

goals and objectives of the organization, conditions of work and working time regime were also identified as significant parameters.

None of the employers indicated the following factors as influencing the quality of working life: existence of an income component that depends on labour productivity and personal achievements; regular certification of the personnel; staff rotation; possibility to participate in the management of the organization (enterprise).

The research revealed that the leaders rated the quality of the working life of the personnel high. By counting the total score for each section (group of factors), the following results were obtained. Two groups of indicators of the QWL were rated as “good” by the majority of the respondents: wages and legal guarantees and social benefits. All other groups were evaluated as “excellent”.

Some components of the group “compensation for work” such as “premium for seniority”, “premium by year-end”, “quarter premium”, and the increase of the wages when taking into account the inflation growth, have problems from the point of view of employers (the majority of the respondents evaluated these components less than “satisfactory”). Highly, with “excellent”, were assessed timely payment of wages and its full size formalization (73.3% and 66.7% of respondents respectively).

The level of observance of legal guarantees for workers and granting social benefits to them was estimated as good. Half of the indicators in the group received positive evaluation (above 3 points). Such factors as availability of additional pension and health insurance (70% and 53.3% of respondents respectively) are in a critical condition (1 point), according to the viewpoints of the majority of the employers. Compensation for expenses for food, possibility of obtaining soft credit for housing or a car purchase; support for mothers of young children; payment/provision of sport-recreation services; financial assistance for vacation were estimated less than “satisfactory” by half of the respondents. It is obvious that the lowest marks were given to the indicators that assess the social component that indicates to what expenses on the personnel (over the standards prescribed by the law) the employer is ready to incur. Among the social criteria only one – presenting gifts for holidays and anniver-

saries – received a positive evaluation.

As for the rest groups, the quality of working life was assessed by “excellent”: content and organization of work, working conditions; opportunities for professional growth and employment stability, management of the organization and the labour collective.

It is possible to assess the quality of working life, from the position of the employee, i.e. to find out if the opportunities, provided by the employer, meet the employee’s expectations, after evaluating the level of satisfaction of the worker with various parameters of the QWL (Table 2). The estimation “excellent” corresponds to the response “fully satisfied”, “good” – “rather satisfied”, “satisfactory” - rather unsatisfied”, “unsatisfactory” – “completely unsatisfied”.

Table 2

### Level of Satisfaction of Employees with Parameters of Working Life

Im- portance (place)	Parameters of working life	Assessment
1	Size of wages	unsatisfactory
2	Prospects for career growth	satisfactory
3	Timeliness of payment of wages	good
4	Relations in the team	good
5	Possibility of skill improvement, retraining	satisfactory
6	Provision of social guarantees, stipulated by the Labour Code	good
7	Combination of your personal goals and objectives of the organization	good
8	Attitude of the management towards the subordinates	good
9	Working conditions	satisfactory
10	Working time regime	good
11	Nature of the work, its contents	good
12	Granting (by the employer) additional ( in excess of legislatively established) social benefits ( such as free meals, compensation for sanatorium -and-resort expenses, medical insurance, etc.	good
13-14	Prospect of employment stability ( stability of the position of the organization)	good
13-14	Observance of labour rights of employees	good
15	Existence of career plans, developed by HR (human resource) department	satisfactory
16	Public recognition of the work, social significance of the work	good

Five indicators of labour life received a low rating. Three of them are included in the top five of the options chosen by the respondents as the most important ones that define QWL. The most of the respondents are not satisfied with the salary size. The perspectives of professional and career growth, working conditions and availability of career plans, developed by the HR department, do not satisfy the respondents in equal degree. The remaining factors were rated “good”.

The level of observance of the labour rights and providing social guarantees, established by the Labour Code, was estimated as good. Due to the high level of informal employment (49.8%) which was mentioned above, we can conclude that there is no active position of the employees in respect of the protection of their labour rights. This conclusion is confirmed also by the evaluation (by workers) of the indicator “Provision, by the employer, of additional (in excess of legislatively established) social benefits, which received “good”, while the employers estimated it as “unsatisfactory”. This figure was not also included by workers in the list of the significant parameters determining the quality of labour life.

The employers expressed a more optimistic viewpoint than the workers in assessing the quality of working life. Employers consider that the size of wages is good, but workers – unsatisfactory. In addition, as it is shown by the analysis, the size of wages is not always attached to the results of work. The lack of premiums by the end of the year, the quarter and also the lack of accounting of the labour productivity and personal achievements significantly reduce the incentive function of wages.

The majority of the factors, selected by the employers as affecting the quality of working life of the personnel are the statutory rules, obligatory for execution. Social aspects of labour activities, focused on the development and implementation of the labour potential of the employee, do not cause an interest on the part of the employer.

The high estimation by the employers of the quality of working life of the personnel indicates the low motivation of the leaders to the QWL growth. The lack of interest, unwillingness to spend additional (in excess of statutory ones) funds for

personnel are the result of the targeting of the employer to receive a current profit but not long-term development of the enterprise ( organization), that negatively affects the quality of labour life of a separate worker, branch, region and society as a whole.

The main factors hindering the growth of the quality of working life of the staff are:

- low level of wages
- non-observance of norms of the the labour legislation
- lack of active position of the workers concerning the protection of their labour rights
- lack of interest of the employers in the growth of indicators of the quality of working life.

The lack of motivation of managers in improving the QWL of the staff is the main problem, as it is the employer, who is the main subject (person), regulating the quality of labour life at the organization level. The interest of the employer in the growth of current income, in improving efficiency of the activity due to costs savings, including those for the personnel, significantly hinders and sometimes prevents the growth of the quality of working life.

The problem of motivation of the employers to increase the QWL of the staff must be solved at the level of Federal and regional authorities. Development and realization of measures of the state stimulation and support of activity of the enterprise environment, aimed at the growth of the QWL, will promote improvement of the quality of working life in the country.

In addition, control for observance of standards of labour legislation has to be strengthened and active assistance to the employees, concerning protection of their labour rights, must be rendered from the side of state authorities.

The achievement of the new quality of labour life is the result of close interaction and cooperation of employers and employees, aimed at rapprochement of the goals and interests of the parties. The level of the QWL developing in the organiza-

tion, determines the quality of working life at the sectoral, regional and national levels, while the sectoral and regional specifics is “smoothed down” at the level of the society. In our opinion, in the process of regulation of the quality of working life, special attention should be paid to the harmonization of the purposes and interests of the employer and the worker, to the elimination of the obstacles for development of interaction of the given subjects.

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