Performance Improvement

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CONTENTS

Editor's Notes Performance Support Tools and Strategies 2
Holly Burkett

Commentary Performance Gaps or “Performance Gripes”: The Case for Proactive Needs Assessing 5
Charles S. Duncan

LO + EPSS = Just-in-Time Reuse of Content to Support Employee Performance 8
Frank Nguyen and Matthew Hanzel

Selling and Implementing Leadership Development: Chapter, Verse, and Lessons Learned from Carlson’s Story 15
Rick D. Clevette and Stephen L. Cohen

Teamwork in Secular and Faith-Based Organizations 25
Arnold R. Grant

Linking QWL and Job Performance: Implications for Organizations 30
LooSee Beh and Raduan Che Rose

Road Maps to Results 36
Fred Nichols

Surveying Attitudes: Questionnaires Versus Opinionnaires 42
Jay Alden
LINKING QWL AND JOB PERFORMANCE: IMPLICATIONS FOR ORGANIZATIONS
LooSee Beh | Raduan Che Rose

This study contributes to the literature on quality of work life (QWL) by testing the relationship between QWL and job performance by using questionnaires to survey a sample of 475 managers in a manufacturing industry in Malaysia. The results indicated a significant positive relationship between QWL and job performance. A two-factor model with correlated factors was postulated and supported. Structural equation modeling procedures showed that the two constructs are highly correlated (r = 0.94) and represent a distinct concern on work life. Implications of results and directions for future research are offered.

WHEN INITIALLY DEVELOPED in the mid-1970s, quality of work life (QWL) was defined in terms of people's reaction to work, particularly individual outcomes related to job satisfaction and mental health. Using this definition, QWL focused primarily on the personal consequences of the work experience and how to improve work to satisfy personal needs. A second definition included terms about techniques and approaches for improving quality of work, such as job enrichment, self-managed teams, and labor-management committees (Davis & Cherns, 1975; Davis, 1977). The expansion of QWL beyond its initial development includes defining features of the workplace that can affect employee productivity and satisfaction, such as reward systems, work flows, management styles, and physical work environment (Cummings & Worley, 2005).

Similarities exist between QWL and job performance in that both are organizationally based. Job performance is a function of both the individual and the organization. Therefore, the two constructs are situationally based and contextual to the workplace. This means that individuals and organizations are interdependent. As such, QWL can be identified as a plausible predictor of job performance.

Many studies have examined the multidimensional and complex construct of job performance. For example, Campbell, McHenry, and Wise (1990) identified eight major dimensions of performance: (1) job-specific task proficiency, (2) non-job-specific task proficiency, (3) written and oral communication tasks, (4) demonstrating effort, (5) maintaining personal discipline, (6) facilitating peer and team performance, (7) supervision, and (8) management and administration. A number of theoretical perspectives have been put forth, some representing performance on jobs in general and some specific to managerial jobs (for example, Borman & Brush, 1993; Yukl, 1989). In the literature, dimensions of individual job performance include units of production, quality of work, tenure, supervisory and leadership abilities, output, quality, lost time, turnover, training time, promotion, and satisfaction. Hunter and Hunter (1984) described characteristics that can predict future job performance. Their list includes past performance on related jobs, job knowledge, psychomotor skills, cognitive abilities, social skills, and job-related attitudes such as the need for achievement, enthusiasm, stress, and control. Viswesvaran, Ones, and Schmidt (1996) identified 10 dimensions of job performance: (1) overall job performance, (2) job performance or productivity, (3) quality, (4) leadership, (5) communication competence, (6) administrative competence, (7) effort, (8) interpersonal competence, (9) job knowledge, and (10) compliance with or acceptance of authority. Witt, Burke, Barrick, and Mount (2002) identified eleven dimensions: quality of work, quantity of work, initiative, customer communications, planning, organizational commitment, job knowledge, allocation, interpersonal orientation, self-development, and account management. The literature has also attempted to include organizational citizenship behavior, which refers to behaviors beyond task proficiency (Organ, 1997).

Some have distinguished between task performance and contextual performance. Task performance is defined as behaviors that are formally recognized as part of the job and directly or indirectly contribute to the organization's technical core. Contextual performance is defined as behaviors that do not directly support technical core