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Challenges of Quality of Work Life: Evidences and Implications in Developed and Developing Countries
Loo-See Beh

Introduction
The concepts of Quality of Work Life (QWL) and work-life balance are not new. In its initial development in the mid-1970s, QWL was first 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 was defined in terms of techniques and approaches used for improving work such as job enrichment, self-managed teams, and labor-management committees (Davis & Cherns, 1975, Davis, 1977). The expansion of QWL beyond the initial development include 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).

This paper briefly reviews some of the issues facing industrialised developed and developing countries in regards to work-life balance and quality of work life. As Duxbury & Higgins (2003) said that work-life conflict is not only a moral issue but also a productivity and economic issue, a workplace and social issue and needs to be addressed as such. The evidences for QWL suggest that it is not only a concern for the individual but also a consideration for the organisation and society at large, both individual and collective experiences.

Staffs expect greater freedom, flexibility and cooperation from their employer than ever before. Hence, the challenge for employers was to develop a flexible working strategy that helped meet the needs of its people whilst improving its competitiveness. There exists constantly the push for a flexible labour market with flexibility at work so that jobs, and careers are part of what we do and who we are and of which we can have control though may be limited. Having the flexibility to strike the right work-life balance improves morale, and helps organizations with staff retention.

Literature Review
In autumn 2005, the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) funded by the European Social Fund, launched an investigation into transforming work, looking at how work organisation can be transformed to improve productivity for businesses and the economy and better lifelong choices for men and women. According to Jones et al. (2007), sustainable ‘transformed work’ is EOC Work that balances the needs of employees, customers and the organisation in a flexible way to increase the productivity and efficiency of the organisation and to meet the needs of individual employees and customers as shown below in Figure 9.1.

Figure 9.1: Meeting the Needs of Productivity and Efficiency

Despite the importance of paid work, more people desire to have a balance between work and other activities. A Work Foundation survey found that nearly three-quarters of full-time workers want to spend more time with their family and that this includes those without children, with nearly two-thirds of those without children in agreement with this. Flexibility is not just about changing when, where and how you work – it is also about who makes that choice and what the results are for individuals, customers and employers, as these can vary. Flexibility is about being able to change when, where and how one work. It includes a wide range of different arrangements, with some of the current types identified in Figure 9.2 below: