



“Utilizing Models to Understand People Management in Brazil”

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Abstract: *In this article we use the Richard Walton model in order to perceive the strengths and weaknesses in the management of people from two Brazilian companies, specifically, in relation to the quality of life at work. Thus, the study allows to observe all the criteria adopted in the Walton model, that is, we can verify the following aspects in the two companies 1 - fair and adequate compensation, 2 - safety and health conditions of work, 3 - opportunity to use and development of human capacity, 4- Opportunity for continuous growth and security, 5 - social integration at work, 6 - constitutionalism in the organization, 7 - work and total living space, 8 - social relevance of work.*

Keywords: *Quality of Work Life, Human Resources, Workers.*

1. INTRODUCTION

This research was conducted at two large companies located in the state of Minas Gerais, Brazil. We compared the organizations to understand the best business policies related to human resources which could benefit workers and avoid physical and mental diseases, and also what kind of policies should be avoided.

The first major company analyzed is in the metallurgical sector, which applies the principles of quality of work life (QWL). The second company is one of the largest banks in the country, and its policies are marked by few stimuli to the quality of work life, in addition to achieving very high goals.

We adopted the model of Richard Walton in our research about quality of life at work, one of the most used models in Brazil and in the world. An exploratory research was carried out in order to collect preliminary data for further study. We did a qualitative research through interviews, we analyzed the view of some employees on the human resources policies, especially about quality of life at work. We interviewed 10 employees of the operational level of both companies.

First, in this paper, we will analyse the origins of quality of life at work, and then we will show the research performed, and finally the conclusions.

2. QUALITY OF WORK LIFE (QWL): ORIGINS AND MAIN THEORIES

Quality of work life (QWL) is concerned with themes such as motivation, satisfaction and well-being at work. It is an instrument that aims to promote a greater humanization of work, increase the well-being of workers and a greater participation of workers in organizational decisions and problems (Limongi, 2004). It can be considered a reaction to the Taylorist methods of work, marked by the specialization and dehumanization of work (Sant'Anna and Kiliminik, 2011). QWL creates opportunities for workers, giving them greater responsibility, autonomy, participation in decision-making, results and development (Fernandes, 1996). Still in this context, the individual may potentially assume greater opportunities for personal fulfillment and professional progress. (Rodrigues, 2009).

Thus, the quality of life at work began in the 1950s with the work of the Tavistock Institute in London, where Eric Trist and colleagues developed a sociotechnical approach to work. They studied the consequences and interconnections of the technological system with the productive (human) social system, aiming at the satisfaction of the worker in the organization. In the United States, at the same

time, changes were made in the production line, in order to make the work more pleasant and plausible. (Huse & Cummings, 1985).

In the 1970s, the main QWL theories emerged and became world-renowned. Thus, an important model developed in this decade and widely used in Brazil and the world, is the model of Hackman & Oldham (1975). For them, high motivation and job satisfaction as well as high productivity depend on the existence of three psychological states at work: perceived significance of work, perceived responsibility for work outcomes, and knowledge of work outcomes. But for this to occur, the work must consist of five basic dimensions: 1 - variety of skills, 2 - identity of the task, 3 - significance of the task, 4 - autonomy and 5 - feedback at work (Hackman & Oldham, 1975).

Another important model of QWL, currently used, is the Richard Walton (1973) model. He was concerned about the overestimation of technological advances and business productivity to the detriment of the loss of humanistic values in organizations. His proposal was to value the worker, and for that, he proposes a model that has the following criteria: 1 - fair and adequate compensation, 2 - safety and health conditions of work, 3 - opportunity to use and development of human capacity, 4- Opportunity for continuous growth and security, 5 - social integration at work, 6 - constitutionalism in the organization, 7 - work and total living space, 8 - social relevance of work. (Walton, 1973).

An author also widely used in QWL research is William Westley (1979). He highlights four main elements that are obstacles to the achievement of quality of life at work - the economic, political, sociological and psychological aspects. For the author, the economic exploitation of workers generates a sense of injustice (economic problem). The concentration of power in the hands of few generates a problem of insecurity for the workers (political question). In the sociological aspect we have the anomie, that is, the organizational rigidity, the mechanization and the loss of the sense of work, lead to the lack of involvement of workers in work processes. We also have the psychological elements, the alienation of workers caused by the differences between expectations and achievement at work. For quality of life at work, these four elements should be prioritized (Westley, 1979).

In the 1980s, other important theories of quality of life at work (QWL) were created. We highlight the Huse & Cummings (1985) theory, which explained the main factors for QWL at work: 1- Adequate and satisfactory reward, 2- Safety and health at work, 3- Human capacity development, 4- Growth and Occupational safety, 5- Social integration, 6- Workers' rights, 7 - Total living space at work, 8 - Social relevance of work.

3. THE RESEARCH PERFORMED

The model adopted for analysis in our research is one of the most used models in Brazil and in the world, that of Richard Walton. As we said earlier, he was concerned about the loss of humanistic values in organizations, and with the needs and aspirations of workers, including aspects related to their greater participation in the decisions that concern them, moving towards industrial democracy and humanization of work, emphasizing the criteria of corporate social responsibility.

His proposal was to value the worker, and he proposes a model that has the following criteria: 1 - fair and adequate compensation, 2 - safety and health conditions of work, 3 - opportunity to use and development of human capacity, 4 - opportunity for growth and security, 5 - social integration at work, 6 - constitutionalism in the organization, 7 - work and total living space, 8 - social relevance of work. (Walton,1973).

The research sought to identify the evaluation of the employees of two companies on aspects of quality of life at work. An exploratory research was carried out in order to collect preliminary data for further study. The research had a qualitative bias through interviews (semi-structured), which were guided by the premises of Walton. We interviewed 10 employees of the operational level of one company of the steel sector and in the banking sector. Both companies were located in Minas Gerais, Brazil.

Thus, we will follow the main conclusions that we have reached. Regarding the first criterion, compensation system, we have in the bank a dissatisfaction with salary, expressed in phrases such as: "I already have children, and the salary does not reach", or "there is no spare money for leisure or courses." There is also dissatisfaction with internal equity: "older employees earn more" but there is satisfaction with external equity. In the steel industry, there is satisfaction with salaries and benefits,

which are many, as well as the internal and external equity of wages. There is a point of attention only in the relationship responsibilities x compensation.

Regarding the working day, in the bank it is considered exhaustive and stressful, which are revealed in statements such as: "the collection of goals is exaggerated, there are few employees", "the journey is stressful", "no use taking breaks or gymnastics to relax at work". Although the physical environment is considered adequate, there are also criticisms: "we are sitting for a long time, which causes me problems in the spine". At the steel company, the physical conditions of the work environment are well evaluated, although there are problems of worn equipment, however, the relation work load x stress also presents criticism by the employees.

With respect to the opportunity for use and capacity development, in the bank there is a dissatisfaction with the autonomy and use of skills, which are revealed in the speeches: "work is bureaucratic", there are rules for everything". Besides that, bosses and colleagues interrupt the work and there isn't enough recognition ("there are direct boss charges and comparisons of results"). At the steel company there is satisfaction with autonomy, use of skills and recognition at work, but there are exceptions: ("when you get the machine stopped, even if it is not your fault, you are charged, then the production speaks louder").

Regarding the opportunity for growth and safety, the employee bank has satisfaction with safety and the possibility of career growth, but dissatisfaction with training and qualification ("there should be more courses, more specific as well, so we would be better prepared to the work"). Already in the steel industry there is satisfaction with safety, training (there is a "virtual university") and career possibilities, although the latter can also be improved.

With regard to social integration, equal opportunities were criticized at the bank ("those who are more combative internally or with the unions have more difficulties"). The relationship with colleagues is seen as satisfactory, but bosses are criticized because of the goal regime. In the steel industry, the relationship with colleagues "is very good", but also with managers ("I have never seen anything that undermines the company"), but equal opportunities are criticized "there is lack of transparency in internal recruitment").

About the subject respect to laws and rights, in the bank this issue was considered as satisfactory by the interviewees, except in relation to cases of moral harassment. Freedom of expression is seen as unsatisfactory and partial ("bosses do not pay attention to employee's suggestions and claims that contradict the company's vision"). In the steel industry respect for rights is seen as satisfactory, for example, the correct payment of overtime, among others. The worker can also comment on various aspects of the work.

Regarding work and living space, in the bank was seen as unsatisfactory the preservation of personal life - work time x personal life. ("If you add the 8 hours of work plus the displacements, plus the trainings after work, there is little time left for the family"). Already in the steel industry, the relation time of work x personal life was seen as satisfactory, with the proviso that the "extra effort is still accepted, but it should not be" Concerning to the Social relevance aspect of Work in Life, in the bank although they are proud of his role in society, employees emphasize that many actions of social responsibility "exist only on paper." In the steel industry employees are proud of the company and its social projects (education, culture, among others).

4. CONCLUSIONS

As we stated before, the first major company analyzed is in the metallurgical sector, which applies the principles of quality of life at work. Thus, the company offers employees several advantages, such as: medical and dental insurance, healthy food, flexible hours, participation in decisions and profits of the company, possibility of career growth, leisure alternatives, among other benefits. The consequences of such policy are an atmosphere of friendship and respect at work, as well as low rates of turnover and absenteeism.

The second company is one of the largest banks in the country, and its policies are marked by few stimuli to the quality of life at work, in addition to achieving very high goals. This entails a high competitiveness among employees and bad working relationships. Therefore, the consequences for the physical and mental health of the workers are quite negative. They have a high level of stress, and

there is a high turnover in the company. In addition, there are several work breaks because of occupational and psychic illnesses, as well as many cases of bullying. In short, the second company shows what should be avoided in human resources policies if we want to have productive and, above all, healthy workers.

In summary, we have that bad working relationships in the bank (absence of quality of life) have negative consequences for the well-being and health of employees. There is a greater number of dismissals, occupational diseases, absences from work, among others. The labor relations in the steel industry, although marked by conflicts and problems, provide a better organizational environment for its employees, providing a well-being for them.

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