

# Exploring the Relationship Between Quality of Work Life and Motivational Theories

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## Abstract

The aim of the present research paper is to examine the relationship between some popular motivational theories and the quality of work life in order to understand the role which motivation play to enhance quality of work life. It discusses the famous motivational theories like Maslow's Hierarchy of needs, Herzberg's two factor theory, Alderfer's ERG theory, McClelland's needs theory in a very comprehensive way by a thorough literature review. The paper examines Maslow's claim that satisfying fundamental needs has a positive influence on QWL, Herzberg's classification of motivational and hygiene factors contributes to QWL, Alderfer's ERG theory of employee's existence, relatedness and growth needs improves QWL, McClelland's needs theory of meeting employee's achievement, power and affiliation needs is positively correlated with QWL. Findings show that motivation plays a crucial role in determining job satisfaction, impacting organizational commitment, encouraging a healthy work-life balance and benefiting employee general well-being. The paper concludes by emphasizing that it is significant to integrate motivational theories into organizational practices to optimize QWL.

**Keywords:** Quality of Work life, Motivational theories, Maslow, Herzberg, Alderfer, McClelland

## INTRODUCTION

The QWL has grown in significance in today's dynamic and competitive work environment, as it influences organizational performance and employee satisfaction.

According to Scully et. al., (1995), the process through which an organization addresses the demands of its workforce by creating systems that enable them to actively participate in creating the policies and procedures that govern their working lives is known as "quality of work life."

Motivational theories are essential to understand and to raise the standard of living at work by exploring the elements that drive and sustain employee motivation. Motivational theories fall into three broad categories: content, process, and contemporary theories. In particular, the content theory- which forms the foundation of this study's significance- focuses on what drives people and how that shapes their behavior. These theories include Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory, Fredrick Herzberg's Two-Factor theory, Alderfer's ERG theory, McClelland's Needs theory (Saif et, al., 2012).

Although the significance of motivation and work life quality is increasingly acknowledged, further research and examination of the underlying ideas and practices are still required. Existing research ignores some aspects of QWL or fails to sufficiently address the complex nature of motivational processes in

various organizational contexts. This study seeks to address this gap by examining the association between motivational theories and QWL. By synthesizing appropriate literature, the study aims to review and assess the motivational theories relevant to QWL, to investigate the essential elements of QWL and to study the interconnection between QWL factors and motivational theories. Through this exploration, the research aims to broaden knowledge regarding how organizations may improve both employee motivation and work-life efficiency, ultimately resulting in more engaged and productive work force.

### OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY-

1. To review and assess the motivational theories relevant to QWL.
2. To explore the essential elements of QWL and their importance in organizational environment.
3. To study the interconnection between QWL factors and motivational theories.
4. To offer suggestions to improve QWL in various organizations.

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research paper is based on secondary data which is gathered from several articles, journals, websites, books and other sources to study the relationship between motivational theories and quality of work life.

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

According to **Davis & Charles (1975)**, the phrase “Quality of Work Life (QWL)” was first used in 1972 at the Arden House, International Labor Relations Conference, which was hosted by Columbia University in New York. Employee well-being has been referred to as “quality of work life,” despite the fact that the concept is still relatively new. Some claim that Mills (1978) was the first to coin the phrase “QWL”, and he proposed that QWL had become a permanent term used by management and unions. QWL is significant from a business perspective since research indicates that work-related behaviors and employees’ satisfaction are correlated with the characteristics of the place of employment (**Greenhus et. al., 1987**).

**Delamoite & Walker (1976)** in their study stated that, according to the modern management tradition, job satisfaction with QWL was determined exclusively by extrinsic variables such as pay and other monetary advantages furthermore, performance safety and hygiene. The human relations approach, in contrast, emphasizes that intrinsic rewards are the primary indicators of the performance, efficiency, absenteeism, and turnover even though extrinsic rewards are also significant. These intrinsic benefits consist of characteristic specific to the task done, the task content, autonomy, skill levels and challenge. The word “motivation” comes from the word “movere,” which means “to move” though this may not adequately convey the meaning. The force that persuades workers to act and perform in a way that results in reward is known as motivation (**Dessler, G. 1980**).

**Cavry (1995)**, remarked that a mutually beneficial interaction between work, home, the organization, and the individual is known as “quality of work life.” In order to maintain an individuals’ happiness and motivation, the organization must fulfill their requests which comprise security, well-being and compensation. Further, it is essential to keep employees happy in order for them to be able to better serve clients, boost performance and morale.

**Ahmad et al. (2010)**, mentioned that employees stay motivated and keep contributing to increased productivity if people believe that their contributions such as their efforts, dedication, loyalty, trust and excitement for the company are fairly and adequately rewarded by their outputs such as monetary and

non-monetary benefits or incentives. Workers become demotivated due to perceived absence of such equity.

What's important about QWL programs was noted by **Jayan (2012)** in her study, "Role of Quality of Work Life on the Job Attitude and Personal Effectiveness of Engineering College Teachers" provided employees with training prospects for growth and advancement, which in turn raised job satisfaction. Creating a friendly and accommodating work atmosphere was another priority for QWL. Even in the academic field, there was a significant link demonstrated between team effectiveness, personal development, and job happiness. The growth of the institutions and the employees both depended on a high QWL.

The literature supports QWL's applicability to motivational theories (see **Sari et al., 2019; Narehan et al., 2014**). **Maslow's (1943)** theory states that addressing lower order requirements takes precedence over meeting higher level, specific employee wants and builds motivation on the contentment of a hierarchy of needs (safety, esteem, physiological, social or affiliation needs, and self-actualization) (**Narehan et al., 2014**).

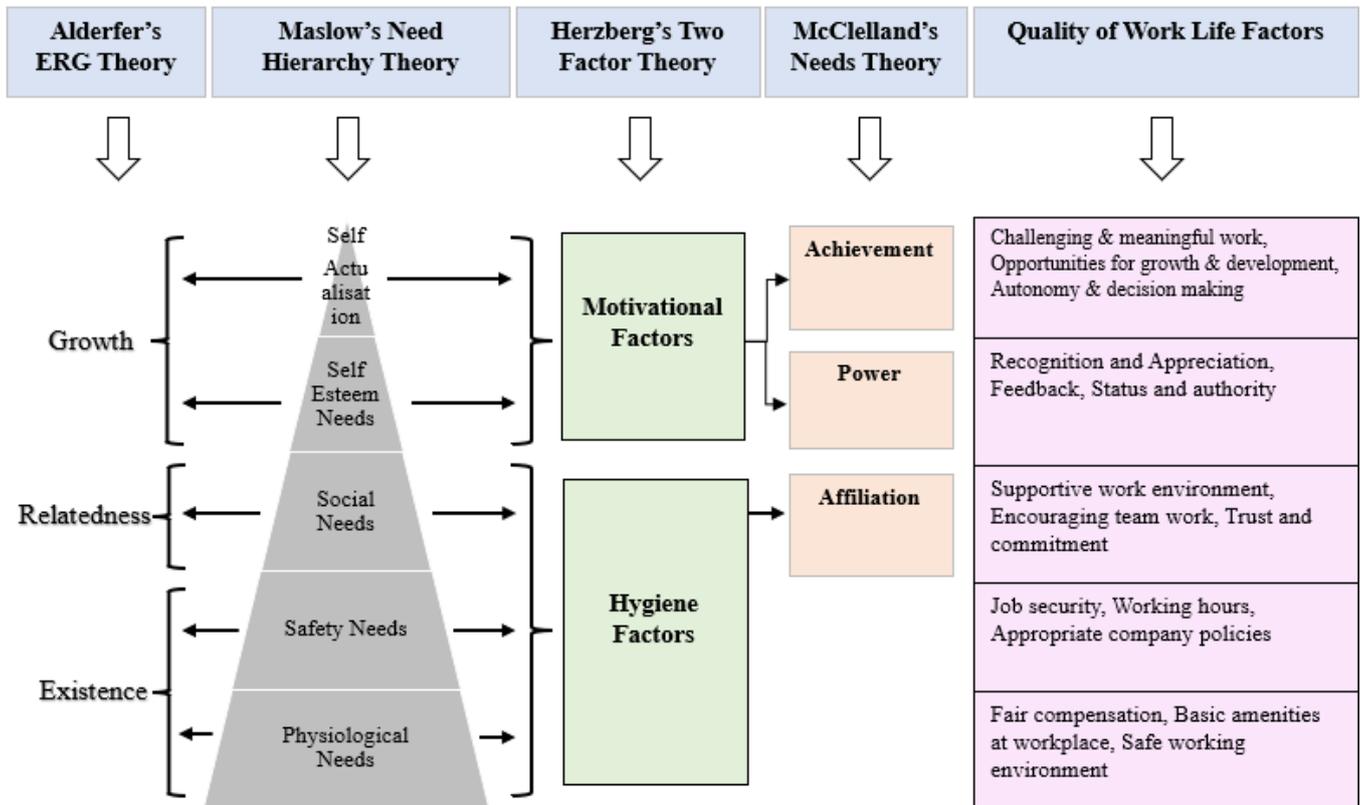
**Srivastava and Kanpur (2014)**, in their study examined the main components of work environment quality, such as work stability, job performance, employee satisfaction, etc. They come to the conclusion that describing the indicators of high-quality working life is undoubtedly a challenging task; there are elements related to workplace framework, such as structural and physical design and intermediate policy considerations that affect employees' work development. Also, they draw the conclusion that the force of QWL leads to job satisfaction, which consequently produces competent and productive performance.

**Verma and Sharma (2018)**, observed that employees in the academic sector were discovered to be particularly concerned about financial considerations, advancements and evaluations, developmental concerns, balanced personal life, creativity, work environment, decision making autonomy, stability of employment, working hours, recognition & appreciation. Classifying these important factors is made possible by the motivational theories, which further aids in the creation of employee beneficial policies.

According to **Ray & Pana-Cryan (2021)**, although there is no one precise definition for QWL, academics often refer to it as "employee well-being." Working from home options, flexible working schedules, and taking time off as needed are all included in QWL. These actions have an impact on workers' well-being.

### **CORRELATION BETWEEN QUALITY OF WORK LIFE AND MOTIVATIONAL THEORIES-**

Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, Herzberg's two factor theory, Alderfer's ERG theory, McClelland's needs theory and QWL are associated since they each identifies different elements that affect employee motivation, job satisfaction, and general well-being.



**Quality of work life vis-à-vis motivational theories**  
(Source: Compiled by Author)

**1. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory-**

- a) **Physiological needs:** Maslow ranked physiological necessities such as food, clothing, housing at the bottom of his hierarchy. This translates into equitable pay, access to basic amenities at the work, and a safe working environment in terms of QWL.
- b) **Safety needs:** The next level consists of requirements for safety, such as steady working conditions, health insurance and job security. Ensuring job stability, clear safety procedures and a supportive work culture might be beneficial in meeting these needs.
- c) **Social needs:** Maslow theory identifies social needs, including love and an appreciation of belonging. Building supportive work environment, encouraging teamwork and cultivating healthy connections among coworkers are all critical elements of improving the QWL.
- d) **Esteem needs:** Esteem needs include accomplishment, respect and acknowledgment. These demands can be met by giving employees the chance to take on difficult assignments, giving them feedback and acknowledgment for their achievements and offering prospects for career growth.
- e) **Self -Actualization needs:** In the uppermost of Maslow's Hierarchy is self- actualization, which entails reaching one's full potential and pursuing personal development. By giving opportunities for autonomy and decision making, fostering creativity and innovation, and offering training and development programs, organization can help their employees realize their greatest potential.

**2. Herzberg' Two Factor Theory-**

- a) **Hygiene Factors-** According to Herzberg's theory for the purpose of preventing dissatisfaction hygiene factors like job stability, salary and working circumstances are crucial. Improving the QWL

requires maintaining a favorable work environment, offering job stability, and ensuring fair compensation.

- b) **Motivators-** Motivational elements that contribute to job satisfaction and QWL include achievement, acknowledgement and prospects for growth. Enhancing motivation and satisfaction can be achieved by recognizing employee’s achievements, offering them challenging and meaningful job tasks and creating opportunities for career progression.

### 3. Alderfer’s ERG Theory-

- a) **Existence needs:** According to Alderfer’s view, there are requirements for food, shelter and safety that are connected to material well-being. Companies can enhance the QWL by providing benefits packages, competitive pay and a safe and healthy workplace.
- b) **Relatedness needs:** Social interactions and interpersonal relationships are aspects of relatedness needs. Encouraging open communication, teamwork and a supportive work environment can satisfy employees relatedness needs and enhance their QWL.
- c) **Growth needs:** Self- improvement and personal development are included in workplace for growth and improve the QWL balance by providing chances for skill development, career promotion and decision autonomy.

### 4. McClelland’s Needs Theory-

- a) **Need for Achievement:** The achievement need drives employees to seek out challenging tasks and feedback on their performance. Enhancing employees’ QWL can be achieved by giving them the chance to define goals, recognizing employee’s accomplishments, and providing feedback and assistance.
- b) **Need for Affiliation:** Interpersonal relationships and a feeling of belonging are crucial for those people who have a strong need for affiliation. Employers can meet their workplace’s requirements for affiliation and improve their QWL by providing a supportive work environment, encouraging teamwork, and organizing team- building activities.
- c) **Need for Power:** Employees motivated by the necessity of power seek influence and control over their work environment. Presenting chances for leadership positions, recognizing their contributions and empowering employees to make decisions can satiate their need for power and boost their QWL.

### FACTORS INFLUENCING THE QUALITY OF WORK LIFE-

| Basis                    | Definition  | Example   | Relationship between factors of motivation and QWL                |
|--------------------------|---|---|---|
| <b>Fair Compensation</b> | Offering competitive and fair compensation and benefits to employees. | An engineer at a tech company gets paid a salary that matches industry standards, along with benefits and bonuses like retirement plans and health insurance. | Acknowledgment for work in financial terms leads to satisfaction. |
| <b>Basic Amenities</b>   | Resources and amenities that promote the comfort and                  | An instance of an amenity in a workplace might include clean restrooms,   | The work experience is improved by basic amenities that are both  |

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|                                     | productivity of employees.  | break area with snacks and coffee and comfortable workstations with adjustable chairs.   | comfortable and essential.   |
| <b>Safe Working Environment</b>     | Conditions that reduce the possibility of accidents or physical harms for employees.  | To protect worker welfare and prevent accidents, construction sites use safety precautions such as safety harnesses, hard hats and frequent safety sessions.   | Having security in the workplace lowers stress and fosters well-being.   |
| <b>Job Security</b>                 | Assurance that one will keep their employment and do not be concerned about getting fired or laid off.  | Civil service protections guarantee employment stability for government worker despite shifts in political power or fluctuations in the economy.   | Stability lowers worry and builds confidence.                            |
| <b>Appropriate Company Policies</b> | Clearly stated policies and procedures put in place by the business to control conduct of employees, maintain equity, and foster a happy workplace. | A company offers flexible work schedules that enable workers to select their own hours and when required, work from home, encouraging work-life balance and meeting a range of needs.                                | Having clear policies guarantees transparency and fair treatment.        |
| <b>Working Hours</b>                | Working hours is the length of time and the schedule for which work-related tasks are completed.  | To maintain a healthy work-life balance and provide a consistent work schedule, customer support representatives work regular weekday shifts with set hours.   | It is more satisfying to have a balance between job and individual life. |
| <b>Supportive Work Environment</b>  | An environment at work that promotes cooperation, respect, and support between coworkers.   | To foster a supportive work atmosphere where employees feel appreciated and empowered to succeed, an advertising agency offers mentorship programs, frequent feedback sessions, and chances for professional growth. | Good relationships and collaboration boosts morale.                      |

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| <p><b>Encouraging Teamwork</b></p>         | <p>Promoting teamwork and cooperation among members to accomplish shared aims and objectives.</p>                                 | <p>To build a culture of teamwork that boosts productivity and innovation, a team of programmers regularly organizes brainstorming sessions, fosters information sharing and celebrates group accomplishments.</p>  | <p>Cooperation is an excellent means of fostering a feeling of achievement and belonging.</p> |
| <p><b>Trust and Commitment</b></p>         | <p>Establishing a relationship of mutual trust and demonstrating a dedication to the success and well-being of staff members.</p> | <p>A manufacturing company builds trust and commitment among its staff by including workers in decision-making processes, communicating transparently, and keeping its word about benefits and career progress.</p> | <p>Loyalty and mutual respect enhance workplace relationship.</p>                             |
| <p><b>Recognition and Appreciation</b></p> | <p>Expressing appreciation and acknowledgment for the efforts and accomplishments of employees.</p>                               | <p>A business runs a “Employee of the Month” program in which staff members who do outstanding work are honored in public and given a certificate and a gift card.</p>  | <p>Giving thanks and recognition raises spirits and motivates people.</p>                     |
| <p><b>Feedback</b></p>                     | <p>Helpful critique given to company’s workers about their work, behavior or results.</p>   | <p>A manager meets one-on-one with team members on a regular basis to discuss work, identify areas of strength and need for progress and establish goals for professional growth.</p>                               | <p>Promotes possibilities for development and progress.</p>                                   |
| <p><b>Authority and status</b></p>         | <p>A position or rank that gives authority, influence and the ability to make decisions within an organizational structure.</p>   | <p>A department head has position and power within the company, giving them the ability to select strategy, assign resources and give team members guidance.</p>  | <p>Recognition and empowerment contribute to job satisfaction.</p>                            |

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| <p><b>Challenging and Meaningful Work</b></p>          | <p>Providing intellectually stimulating work and initiatives that complement employees' interests and skills.</p>    | <p>A software developer might be working on a new software application that addresses a crucial business need. This project presents chances for innovation moreover, difficult technical problems.</p>          | <p>Intriguing projects increase motivation and feelings of fulfillment.</p>          |
| <p><b>Opportunities for Development and Growth</b></p> | <p>Initiatives and programs that help workers learn, grow as professionals and progress in their careers.</p>        | <p>A company provides internal training courses, mentorship opportunities, and tuition reimbursement programs to staff members who are interested in continuing their education or developing new abilities.</p> | <p>Possibilities for advancement increase job satisfaction.</p>                      |
| <p><b>Autonomy and Decision-Making</b></p>             | <p>Allowing workers the autonomy and judgment to decide for themselves and accept responsibility for their work.</p> | <p>A marketing manager is free to create and implement marketing programs, choose target groups and messaging strategically, and allot financial resources based on their judgment and area of expertise.</p>    | <p>Taking on responsibilities with authority promotes fulfillment and ownership.</p> |

**CONCLUSION**

To sum up, this study has investigated the intricate relationship between QWL and motivational theories. Key elements influencing employee satisfaction have been found through an analysis of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, Herzberg's Two Factor theory, Alderfer's ERG theory and McClelland's Needs Theory. Employers are more likely to improve their workers' QWL when they successfully incorporate motivational concepts into their operations and provide fair compensation, growth opportunities and supportive work environment. Understanding the dynamic interplay between motivational theories and QWL is essential for modern organizations looking to promote employee productivity and well-being. As we see the complexity of today's workplace, it becomes clear that creating an environment that not only satisfies basic needs but also inspires people to realize their full potential requires a holistic approach that takes both intrinsic and extrinsic motivators into account. In future research, a deeper investigation into particular industry contexts could provide significant insights for improving approaches that align with both motivational theories and QWL.

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