

The Relationship between Quality Of Life and Psychological Capital in Faculty Members of Islamic Azad University in Iran

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Abstract: *The aim of the present research is to examine the relationship between psychological capital and the quality of life of the faculty members of Islamic Azad University. The research method is applied with regard to its objective and is an integrated method. The population included 5715 individuals who were members of the faculty in Islamic Azad University in districts 8 and 12 (3349 individuals were from district 8 and 2366 individuals were from district 12). 400 of them were determined as the sample through stratified sampling. The qualitative data of the research were collected through structured interviews and the quantitative data were gathered through the use of the World Health Organization quality of life questionnaire (2009) and psychological capital questionnaire (Luthans, 2007). The content validity of the questionnaire was determined based on the opinion of the specialists and the face validity of the questionnaires was approved through executing a test. The reliability was calculated by Cronbach's alpha which was equal to 0.85 and 0.91 respectively. The research data were analyzed through using the indexes of descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, and ...) and inferential statistics (Chi-Squared, multivariable regression, Pearson correlation, and ...) by LISREL software after being collected. The results indicated that psychological capital had a relationship with "quality of life" with an impact factor of ($\beta = 0.54$). Therefore psychological capital increases the quality of life of the members of the faculty in Islamic Azad University.*

Key words: *quality of life, psychological capital, the faculty members of Islamic Azad University.*

I. Introduction

The organizations of the present era consider the human resources as an intelligent and valuable asset from a strategic perspective. Universities are amongst these organizations which are the turning point of promoting the science level of the country. The mission of the universities is to train and educate generations for the future. A future which is much more advanced, complex, and complete in comparison with the current conditions. The faculty members are the people responsible for this great matter. As a social class working as professors in the universities, the faculty members are responsible for training the students since their quality of life has a great and critical effect on the efficiency of this group which is responsible for producing knowledge and science and training the specialized force. If the quality of life of the faculty members is desirable and if this group is satisfied with its career and life, it could focus more on training and educating and therefore be more successful in producing knowledge and training specialized forces. Also not being aware of the main factors related to promoting the quality of life has prepared the groups for neglecting the modern topics on this matter. This research has attempted to fill up the void of attending to this issue (Dana, 2014).

Quality of life program includes any sort of improvement in organizational culture which leads to the growth and advancement of individuals. Therefore the value system of quality of life concentrates on investing in individuals as the most important variable in the strategic management equation. The findings of studies indicate that executing these plans decrease the individuals' complaints, decrease the rate of absence from work, decrease the degree to which disciplinary regulations are applied, increase optimism in individuals, and increase their cooperation it also improves life expectancy and the performance of the individuals. On the other hand, meeting the needs of individuals improves the organization and leads to long-term efficiency of the organization (Weber et al. 2015).

Every person has a specific definition and concept of the quality of life and each person defines it with regard to his experiences, interests, and personality. The World Health Organization's quality of life group

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(1996) defines quality of life as the beliefs the individual hold about his life with regard to the value system and the culture of where he lives and the relationship between these interpretations and the person's intended priorities, norms, expectations, and objectives. Weber et al. (2015) consider quality of life as being satisfied or dissatisfied with the aspects of personal life which are important to the individual.

Different factors affect the quality of life of the faculty members gaining more importance, factors such as change in social, economic, and cultural conditions and growing competition which demands for the accountability of the university more than before and this requires higher levels of change and learning on the part of the faculty members; the upheavals resulting from the accelerated appearance of information and communication and these sorts of factors have caused the quality of life of the faculty members to become the center of attention of the university management of higher education (Tamer, 2014).

Psychological capital is one of the factors which affect the quality of life of the faculty members. Numerous factors are involved in this matter. Quality of life and psychological capital could be pointed out from amongst these matters. The quality of life theory states that a large part of happiness originates from complete realization of needs, desires, and goals in areas of life which are of importance to us. On the other hand, psychological capital is one of the indexes of positive psychology which is defined through properties such as the person believing in his abilities to succeed, persistently following the goals, creating positive beliefs about him, and tolerating hardships. Also enjoying psychological capital gives the individuals the ability to better fight stressful situations and become less anxious in addition to being more tolerant of problems. It helps them attain a clearer image of themselves and to be less affected by daily events and so these types of people are psychologically healthier. Psychological capital is an integrative and collective structure which includes four perceptual- cognitive indexes, hope, self- efficiency, tolerance, and optimism. These indexes give meaning to the individual's life through an interactive and assessment process, they sustain the individual's efforts in changing the stressful situations, and prepare the person for entering the scene of action and guarantee his/ her stability and toughness in accomplishing his/ her objectives (Bayrami, 2015).

It could be concluded with regard to the conducted studies that the quality of life of the faculty members is affected by the psychological capital. Therefore based in these research and theoretical findings, the aim of this study is to examine the relationship between psychological capital and the quality of life of the faculty members of the Islamic Azad University. The following questions are posed based on that:

What are the different aspects and indexes of quality of life of the faculty members? Is there a significant relationship between the psychological capital and the quality of life of the faculty members of the Islamic Azad University?

The researches which have been conducted in this filed include: Nguyen (2012) carried out a study entitled "the relationship between psychological capital and the quality of life (case study: the professors of the Islamic Azad University of District four of the Country)". The research results indicated that the key factors playing their roles in explaining assessing organizational improvement include: self- efficiency/ self- confidence, optimism, hope, and flexibility. Psychological capital has a direct relationship with the quality of life. Albert (2010) carried out a research aiming at examining the relationship between psychological capital and quality of life of the employees of ZobAhan Isfahan Company. The results obtained from the correlation analysis showed that from amongst the aspects of psychological capital, self- efficiency and optimism have the closest relationship with the quality of life. Weber et al. (2015) carried out a research entitled "assessing the quality of life of children, adolescence, adults, and the elderly". The results indicated that the properties of positive psychology improve the qualities of life which require professional goals in practice (for instance: clinical screening, supervising the group and the treatment group). This study recommends measuring the quality of life in different levels of the United Nations, culture, tribal groups, gender and age groups. Also to take measures in making policies with regard to the importance of the quality of life.

Research purposes

- 1- Identifying the current condition of the quality of life of the faculty members of the Islamic Azad University
- 2- Identifying the current conditions of the psychological capital of the faculty members of the Islamic Azad University
- 3- Examining the relationship between the psychological capital and the quality of life of the faculty members of the Islamic Azad University
- 4- Examining the relationship between the indexes of psychological capital (self- efficiency, optimism, hopefulness, and flexibility) and the quality of life of the faculty members of the Islamic Azad University

Research questions

- 1- What is the current condition of quality of life of the faculty members of the Islamic Azad University?
- 2- What is the current condition of psychological capital of the faculty members of the Islamic Azad University?
- 3- Is there a significant relationship between psychological capital and the quality of life of the faculty members of Islamic Azad University?
- 4- Is there a significant relationship between the indexes of psychological capital (self- efficiency, optimism, hopefulness, and flexibility) and the quality of life of the faculty members of the Islamic Azad University?

II. Methodology

The population includes 5715 faculty members of the Islamic Azad University in districts 8 and 12 (3349 of the individuals from district 8 and 2366 individuals from district 12). 400 of the people were selected as the sample through stratified sampling. The qualitative data of the research were collected through structured interviews and the quantitative data were gathered through the use of the World Health Organization quality of life questionnaire (2009) and psychological capital questionnaire (Luthans, 2007). The content validity of the questionnaire was determined based on the opinion of the specialists and the face validity of the questionnaires was approved through executing a test. The reliability was calculated by Cronbach's alpha which was equal to 0.85 and 0.91 respectively. The research data were analyzed through using the indexes of descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, and ...) and inferential statistics (Chi- Squared, multivariable regression, Pearson correlation, and ...) by LISREL software after being collected.

Research findings

The findings related to the demographic properties:

The results of the research indicate that 41.2 percent of the individuals of the research sample are between 30 and 39 years old, 31.5 percent are between 40 and 48 years old, 14 percent are 49 to 57 years old, 65 percent are 58 to 66 years old and, 6.8 percent are 67 to 75 years old. 37.8 percent are female and 62.2 percent are male. 39.8 percent are single and 60.2 percent are married. 17.8 percent of the total faculty members of districts 8 and 12 of the Islamic Azad University are instructors, 42 percent are assistant professors, 34.5 percent are associate professors, and 5.8 percent are professors. This research examined 4 majors which included a total of 5.4 percent basic sciences, 41.8 percent technical engineering, 29.8 percent humanities, and 24 percent art. The distribution of the faculty members regarding their years of service includes: 8.5 percent less than 5 years, 25 percent between 6 and 10 years, 44 percent 11 to 15 years, 16.2 percent 16 to 20 percent, and 6.2 percent more than 20 years.

First question: How is the quality of life of the faculty members of the Islamic Azad University?

The findings showed that 65.2 percent of the faculty members have assessed their quality of life as moderate, 31.5 percent have assessed it as high and only 3.2 percent evaluated their quality of life as being low.

Second question: How is the psychological capital of the faculty members of the Islamic Azad University perceived?

Based on the findings, approximately 82 percent of the faculty members have evaluated their psychological capital as moderate, almost 12 percent of them have expressed that their psychological capital is high, and only nearly 5 percent of them claimed that their psychological capital is low.

The following findings have also been obtained from assessing the indexes of psychological capital of the faculty members: The "optimism" index had the highest mean (3.88) among the indexes of psychological capital and "self- efficiency" index had the minimum mean (2.99).

Third question: is there a significant relationship between the indexes of psychological capital (self- efficiency, optimism, hopefulness, and flexibility) and quality of life?

Stepwise regression analysis was used to examine the role of the quality of life and that of the indexes of psychological capital. The correlation table of quality of life and indexes of psychological capital will first be presented before attending to the results of this statistical test. As it could be seen in table 1, the quality of life, psychological capital, optimism, and self- efficiency has a significant relationship and positive correlation with perceiving disease in the faculty members but this relationship is not significant with hopefulness and tolerance.

Table 1. Matrix of the correlation coefficient of the variables related to the quality of life and psychological capital

Variables	quality of life	psychological capital	hopefulness	Optimism	Flexibility	self- efficiency
quality of life	1					
psychological capital	0.421	1				
Hopefulness	0.433	0.239	1			
Optimism	0.257	0.017	0.592	1		
Flexibility	0.262	0.138	0.113	0.069	1	
self- efficiency	0.251	0.158	0.281	0.131	0.112	1

Table 2. Summary of regression model of variance analysis and the statistical specifications of regression

Model	Collection of squares	Df	Average of squares	F	Sig.	R	R2	SE
Summary of regression	970.89 3502.72	1 231	971.91 33.21	29.25	0.001	0.46	0.22	5.75
Summary of regression	1130.9 3372.59	2 230	560.06 32.12	17.45	0.001	0.49	0.25	5.63
Summary of regression	1293.43 3201.23	3 229	430.16 30.79	13.86	0.001	0.55	0.29	5.53
Summary of regression	1458.28 3034.37	4 228	364.59 29.46	12.35	0.001	0.57	0.33	5.42

As it could be seen in table 2 the results of the stepwise regression shows that the indexes of quality of life, psychological capital, hopefulness, and happiness have the ability to predict among the predictor variables. The F value seen in the quality of life variable is significant ($P < 0.001$).

Table 3. Impact factor, beta and t stepwise regression of the variables

Indicator	B	Beta	SEB	T	Sig
quality of life	0.43	0.41	0.11	3.64	0.001
psychological capital	0.29	0.23	0.57	3.92	0.004
Optimism	0.13	0.31	0.79	2.76	0.005
self- efficiency	2.58	0.22	12.1	2.36	0.018

III. Discussion and conclusion

The results indicated that more than half of the faculty members have assessed their quality of life as moderate and are not completely satisfied with it. These findings are consistent with Yung's (2008) results. Also the physical health of the faculty members was in the minimum level which shows they do not attend to their physical health. The results showed that physical health has the strongest correlation with social relationships and the health of the environment. It could be deduced that the more the faculty members have personal interactions, social support, and security in the environment the more their working capacity and their energy levels. These results are consistent with the results of Mensah (2014).

The greatest mean was that of the field of social relationships which shows that personal relations and social support of the faculty members are at a proper level. On the other hand, the results indicate that the health of the environment has the greatest correlation with psychological health. This shows that financial resources, physical security of the environment, and residence can decrease negative emotions, increase self- confidence, positive thinking, memory, and improve the psychological state. These findings are consistent with the findings of Smirnoff et al. (2015).

Other variables which their relationships with quality of life have been examined in the present research are the demographic (age, gender, education, and ...) variables. The results indicated that the quality of life of the faculty members of the university is not affected by these variables that much. Age and education do not affect the quality of life while the quality of life is better when individuals have longer work experience. Age and education do not have a relationship with quality of life in this research and these findings are consistent with the findings of Bergheim (2015) and they are inconsistent with the results of Mortazavi (2014).

The results indicate that: "The individual will not enjoy a better quality of life if his/ her work experience period is longer". It seems like the absence of relationship between these two variables stems from the job becoming monotonous and the faculty members losing their motivation. Also the results of the study show that observing the quality of life is not different in men and women. These findings are consistent with the results of Dana (2014). This could be due to the rich culture of Iran's organizations.

The findings obtained from personal factors indicate that the psychological capital, which means the set of positive abilities and properties of the faculty members, could play a role in the growth and improvement of their quality of life. These results are consistent with that of Weber (2015).

The mission of the universities is to train and educate generations for the future. A future which is much more advanced, complex, and complete in comparison with the current conditions. The faculty members are the people responsible for this great matter. As a social class working as professors in the universities, the faculty members are responsible for training the students since their quality of life has a great and critical effect on the efficiency of this group which is responsible for producing knowledge and science and training the specialized force. If the quality of life of the faculty members is desirable and if this group is satisfied with its career and life, it could focus more on training and educating and therefore be more successful in producing knowledge and training specialized forces. Also not being aware of the main factors related to promoting the quality of life has prepared the groups for neglecting the modern topics on this matter.

Regarding the aspect of psychological capital, having great objectives and motivation, being hopeful and happy and improving these factors in the faculty members could result in having a desirable life. It must be noted that any sort of problem in their quality of life could affect their job performance and be transferred to the society and naturally to the future of the country. The aim of higher education is to promote knowledge in order to create a better society. In line with that, attending to the quality of life of the faculty members as the people responsible for fulfilling the great duty of training the youths of the society, is of utmost importance. The universities are therefore expected to take effective steps in line with improving the quality of the life of faculty members. A university which is not capable of improving the quality of the life of its faculty members will without a doubt be unable to improve the lives of the students and eventually the lives of the society members and so the university will lose the support of the people and the society which provides its expenses. It seems like the quality of life could be discussed as a key element in policy making and examining the policies of the universities. The quality of life could therefore be considered as an index of the development of the university.

Resources

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