



An Analysis of the Main Theories of Quality of Life at Work used in Brazil

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Abstract: *Quality of Life at Work (QWL) is an extension of professional development that aims to promote healthy physical and mental conditions for the individual in the work environment and is directly linked to worker satisfaction levels in relation to the activities carried out in the institution. The objective of this study was to carry out a review of the literature on the subject, with the purpose of better understanding some of the models used in Brazil, presenting their main characteristics considering the different views in the different eras in which they were built.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The topic Quality of Life at Work (QWL) has been increasingly discussed and is directly linked to the impacts that globalization brings to institutions. According to Andrade (2016), the work space plays an extremely important role in self-concept processes, enabling the legitimization of the individual's personal and social structure, and is where the importance of QWL in organizations is perceived.

To contribute to the growth and development of an organization, it is necessary to consider not only the actions carried out, but also the professional body that composes it. It is important to understand that its functioning occurs through people and it is through them that it is possible to achieve indicators that indicate the importance of the work environment being filled with energy, dynamism and other opportunities that will guarantee QWL (Ribeiro, Santana, 2015).

Within the scientific context there is no single concept on the subject, with several definitions being addressed that range from health care and worker safety to areas related to social activities and motivation of an organization's employees. Despite the broad scope of this topic, it can be said that the concept of QWL is summarized in well-being practices that meet and enable the desires and needs of employees in their field of work (Limongi-França, 2004).

QWL also appears with the purpose of mitigating the increase in occupational diseases, which can pose risks to the health of workers, even leading to their absence from work, which leads to a reduction in the number of employees on working days (Bolsonello et al., 2022).

Considering the relevance of the topic and how quality of life at work influences the work environment, this study aims to carry out a review of the literature on the subject, with the purpose of better understanding some of the models used in Brazil, presenting their main characteristics considering the different visions of the different periods in which they were built.

2. METHODOLOGY

This work was prepared based on a literature review consisting of books, scientific articles and doctoral theses. Points such as: understanding the term quality of life at work, historical trajectory and the characteristics of the main models developed were covered.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1. Quality of Life at Work: Evolution and Models

To understand the meaning of QWL, it is necessary, in the first instance, to identify the concept of quality of life. It is understood as “the perception of the individual and his insertion in life, in the context of the culture and value systems in which he lives and in relation to his objectives, expectations, standards and concerns” (Whoqol, 1998, p.551).

In order to achieve this quality of life, a set of aspects, such as physical, mental, psychological and emotional, as well as social relationships, which involve family, friends and work, are extremely important.

Quality of life is entirely associated with global/work life and therefore intensely affects the worker's social relationships. The context of social and work life can play a maladaptive role in work, significantly affecting behavioral aspects, adaptation to recommended models, breaking the idealization of the job market and other complaints that can formalize the sense of inadequacy and dissatisfaction on the part of a company's employees (Sampaio, 2009).

In a historical context, it is considered that the work carried out by man began to have its due changes, based on the teachings of Euclid of Alexandria (300 BC). These premises of the need to improve work began to be discussed more concretely following the Law of Levers, which made it possible to reduce the physical effort of many workers at the time (Vasconcelos, 2001).

New research regarding QWL is being developed and Ferreira, Alves and Tostes (2009) argue that this interest in QWL has been based mainly on three guidelines, being social, organizational development and academic guidelines.

Rocha Sobrinho and Porto (2012), when carrying out research on well-being at work, identified that this field has been studied more frequently and with the presence of inadequate concepts for quality of life, satisfaction and affection at work.

According to the authors, the work carried out proposes definitions that are close in conceptualization and, in other studies, they are distant. "This lack of clarity is also present in the indicators of these constructs, in different dimensions, physical, psychological and social. From a socio-technical point of view, quality of life at work derives from the satisfaction of employees' basic needs" (Rocha Sobrinho; Porto, 2012. p. 256).

Although there are these differentiations and uncertainties regarding the concepts presented, Dal Forno and Finger (2015, p. 110) mention that:

As it is a subjective and multidimensional concept, many elements are involved in QWL. Any attempt to enumerate and group them, however good and complete it may be, will be vain and relative to whoever makes it, as something will always escape them. In view of this, it appears that the experience of QoL (at work and outside of work) has something particular. People who often have the bare minimum to survive report a level of well-being that is not found in fortunate populations. What at first glance seems contradictory, from a more refined analysis, turns out to be understandable when accepting that the experience of well-being, or, if you prefer, QoL, is substantially private (DAL FORNO; FINGER, 2015, p. 110).

Organizational culture and climate emphasize, in this sense, the relevance of studies on QWL that are directed both to the needs and desires of workers and to organizations that aim not only at results, but at the direct participation of their contributors in decision-making processes.

The execution of tasks and good interpersonal relationships to build more peaceful and humanized working relationships, which will consequently result in greater satisfaction for both parties. Due to covering research relating to the organizational climate, Moreira (2008, p. 103) states that:

[...] organizational climate research is an instrument through which it is possible to identify the needs of the organization and its employees. It can be said that organizational climate research is a systematic survey of information involved with professional satisfaction. As the level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction of the staff and organizational structure is identified, it becomes possible to propose targeted strategies to resolve the difficulties encountered.

Understanding the concept of quality of work life (QWL) began in 1950, with studies developed by Eric Trist and collaborators in which the organization of the labor market was determined by the product of two sets of factors, social and technical, giving rise to the sociotechnical approach (Fernandes, 1996).

As observed by Bonfim et al. (2017) discussions about QWL have gone through several historical contexts, among them, one of the most prominent is the direct influence of sciences such as Sociology and Psychology, which seek to recognize human needs as a right also in the context of work. More

targeted studies emerged from the perspective of Elton Mayo and his collaborators at a US factory, also known as *the Western Electric Company*, in Chicago, in Hawthorne, which became known as the Hawthorne Experiment.

In this regard, Cavalcante et al. (2018) highlight that from the Hawthorne experiment, Mayo found that workers were directly impacted by the activities that were carried out and that significant emotional and behavioral changes could be associated with the lifestyle led at work, which indicated a high level of fatigue, work accidents, *turnover* and a reduction in productivity among employees.

From a historical perspective, Moretti and Treichel (2003, p. 3) say that:

Total quality had a lot of influence on the development of quality of life at work, because of the practices announced by the total quality control system, there are some that should be highlighted for a better analysis of the influence, such as: greater participation of employees in work processes, that is, an attempt to eliminate the separation between planning and execution, promoted mainly by Taylorist and Fordist systems; decentralization of decisions; reduction of hierarchical levels; democratic oversight; safe and comfortable physical environment; in addition to working conditions capable of generating satisfaction; opportunity for personal growth and development.

The 1960s were marked by demands from North American workers and these demands were related to the functioning of organizations within society. Concern then arises with both productivity and worker satisfaction, continuing the development of studies involving QWL (Rodrigues, 2016).

In the 1970s, the first movements began to take place in organizations involving basic QWL programs and policies, influenced by the management models adopted by the Japanese. In the 1990s and 2000s, “constant political, economic, social and technological changes made the context highly dynamic and unstable” (Rodrigues, 2016, p. 28).

For Conte (2003), since then, there has been a continuous interest in the topic, which has undergone numerous discussions and modifications until the present day, addressing different views in the different eras in which it was constructed. QWL was created mainly based on the pace of work, easily adopted by companies in the public and private sector.

The rhythm seemed not to affect spheres of the family, physical or social area, however, it interfered with the professional's profile and this becomes increasingly clear when one observes that there is a productivity revolution within companies with a diversity of products being delivered in a short period of time, which consequently exhausted the physical and mental health of workers (Conte, 2003).

In the same sense, Paiva and Couto (2008) point out some definitions for QWL and suggest, initially, the perception of workers themselves in relation to the satisfaction of their individual needs. It then came to be perceived as an approach or method that uses specific techniques to organize work and finally, it suggests the definition of QWL as a movement and an ideology.

In general, QWL is understood as a tool supported by the following key elements: conflict resolution, restructuring of work organization; innovation in reward systems; improvement in the work environment (Veloso et al., 2007). These aspects are also emphasized by Sirgy et al. (2001) and Muindi and K'Obonyo (2015).

Sirgy et al. (2001) state that, in addition to promoting satisfaction, these elements aim to make positions more productive in addition to increasing workers' motivation and well-being. In the same sense, Fernandes (1996) highlights that the concept of QWL is comprehensive, since work is not only considered as a source of income, but also a way of satisfying your needs, directly reflecting on your quality of life. It can be seen that the lifestyle in which workers live is an essential factor for their personal and professional recognition, considering their needs and human rights.

Conte (2003) reports that it is necessary to understand the context in which the worker is inserted and how this impacts the performance of their functions. Research has shown that, despite appearing to be progress in the lives of workers as well as the population as a whole, administrative and service processes began to change, with the development of increasingly intense activities, with excessive working hours and increased pressure excess to be increasingly productive.

For the author, “The professional side, therefore, became the predominant facet of the human being, who felt forced to be a super professional and, to this end, spares no effort in working hours of more than 12 hours a day” (Conte , 2003, p. 32).

With the gradual growth of QWL, the characteristics that were previously essentially operational and regulatory were transformed into strategic corporate actions, requiring new skills from professionals involved with the topic, conducted by internal staff and third parties, which could also be shared (Limongi-França, 2004).

To understand the historical scenario in which interest in QWL arose, it is also important to highlight how this topic influenced the actions of working managers and researchers, highlighting some changes that occurred in the corporate world, such as legal norms; changes in the profile of the organizations themselves, high investment in technologies and organizational management (Fernandes, 1996).

Over the years, several researchers have dedicated themselves to studying and developing models that seek to evaluate QWL from different aspects, and some of them are part of a select group of references related to QWL. Its models and theories are widely cited in scientific literature and are considered, at the same time, classic and modern models. Among these, authors from international and national literature stand out, such as: Walton (1973); Hackman and Oldham (1975); Westley (1979); Nadler and Lawler (1983); Huse and Cummings (1985); Limongi France (1996).

Regarding the various existing models to approach and characterize QWL, Limongi-França and Kanikadan (2006), when carrying out a comparative analysis, observe that there is a certain complementarity between them and this becomes clear when elements are presented, such as the culture of organization, mission, and QWL policies will be focused on this. These models are shaped in response to the demands of the external environment, which is why there is construction and deconstruction within the aforementioned work organizations.

Considering the discussions held up to this point, we understand the importance of the historical processes of QWL as an element that arises from the needs and rights of workers. This movement, as described by Almeida (2019), aims for a balance between the individual and the organization, and this balance arises from interrelationships, need and adaptation in the face of these changes.

3.1.1. The Walton Model (1973)

One of the most influential authors in international literature, widely used in Brazil, is Richard Walton (1973). For him, the emergence of QWL arose from the neglect of environmental and human values by industrial societies to the detriment of economic growth, technological evolution and productivity. The author states that satisfaction related to QWL is linked to the needs and aspirations of human beings, highlighting the humanization of work and the company's social responsibility.

Walton (1973) associates productivity with worker satisfaction and motivation, proposing a model composed of eight dimensions:

- 1) Fair and adequate compensation: related to equalization of salaries and benefits;
- 2) Working conditions: assesses conditions within the workplace, working hours and safe physical environment;
- 3) Use and development of capabilities: highlights the concern with employee skills such as autonomy in decision-making and active voice in the process;
- 4) Opportunity for growth and security: measures the employee's capacity for growth in the company, career, job security;
- 5) Social integration in the company: seeks to measure the degree of relationships in the company, equality, absence of prejudice;
- 6) Constitutionalism: seeks to assess whether rights, norms and rules for workers are being complied with;
- 7) Work and total life space: evaluates the relationship between work and the employee's personal life; and
- 8) Social relevance of work: assesses the worker's perception regarding social responsibility and the organization's role in the environment.

The previously mentioned aspects are used and evaluated so that organizations can get to know their employees and discover whether they are satisfied and motivated in relation to their work environment (Walton, 1973).

One of the biggest differences between this model and the others, as observed by Pedroso and Pilatti (2010), is the scope of work-related dimensions, so that it is possible to include those that directly or indirectly affect the worker's life, which is one of the biggest advantages to be used. In other words, it is possible to understand that these influences are not caused by the work itself, but by the way it is carried out.

As highlighted by the authors, even after almost four decades since its publication, this model continues to be one of the most widely used to support quantitative and qualitative research in the area of QWL. In Brazil, in particular, it is the most used on a large scale, surpassing other available models, being considered the most complete and used mainly by scholars in human resources and organizational psychology (Pedroso; Pilatti, 2010).

From this perspective, Walton's model highlights the importance of prioritizing not only the physical and material conditions of the work environment, but also the psychological, social and cultural aspects that can impact employees' quality of life. Using this model, it is possible to broadly and completely assess employee satisfaction, motivation and well-being.

3.1.2. *The Hackman and Oldham Model (1975)*

Hackman and Oldham's (1975, apud Rodrigues, 1994) quality of life model points out that positivity, satisfaction and high performance will be produced when three psychological states become present at work. They are: Perceived significance; Perceived responsibility; Knowledge of work results.

Paula et al. (2022) mentions that the Hackman and Oldham (1975) model is based on the characteristics of the activities that are carried out within organizations and that directly support QWL. Faced with the need to relate and understand how these characteristics relate to QWL, the authors formulated the Basic Task Dimensions Model.

The dimensions of the task, according to the authors Hackman and Oldham (1975), influence the critical psychological states of the worker and these influence personal and work results. In the end, the individual need for growth influences the entire chain of factors that will determine QWL (Paula et al., 2022).

In the same sense, Pedroso and Pilatti (2010) note that Hackman and Oldham developed a score, called Work Motivational Potential, which measures the motivational properties of work based on five dimensions: Task Variety, Task Identity, Task Meaning, Autonomy and *Feedback*. This score indicates how meaningful the work is, encourages responsibility and provides knowledge about the results.

The instrument to determine Work Motivating Potential has 15 multiple-choice questions, with answers on a seven-alternative Likert scale. The Work Motivating Potential score is calculated using the following formula: The Work Motivating Potential score can range from 1 to 343, and the authors recommend that scores above 125 be considered satisfactory, while scores below 125 are considered insufficient (Pedroso; Pilatti, 2010).

Thus, QWL can be assessed by task dimensions that will influence critical psychological states and personal and work results, as shown in Figure 1.

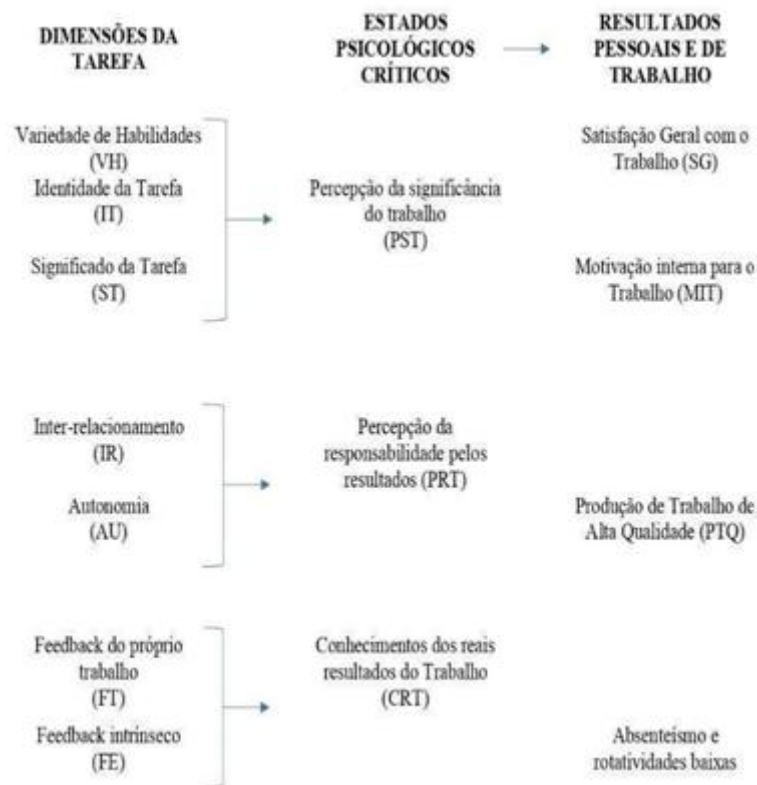


Figure1. Assessment by Hackman and Oldham dimensions

Source: Fernandes (1996, p. 56).

It is noted that the dimensions of the task consider aspects such as the variety of skills that are related to creativity and the use of skill tools to perform the indicated tasks, identity of the task in which it is associated with the objectives and characteristics of the activity, as well as the identification of its results, significance of the task, that is, identification of the impacts of the action, the interrelationship, the worker's autonomy and the *feedback process*, essential for identifying possible problems occurring during the development of a function.

3.1.3. The Westley Model (1979)

Westley's QWL Model, published in 1979 in the United States, emphasizes the sociotechnical approach to reflecting on the work environment throughout history. This model integrates the different dimensions of work and relates them to QWL (Pedroso; Pilatti, 2010).

According to Westley (1979), problems generated and experienced in the work environment that directly affect QWL may be related to political, economic, social and psychological factors. These problems can be classified into four categories: injustice, insecurity, alienation and anomie.

As observed by Pedroso and Pilatti (2010), QWL, from Westley's perspective, can only be achieved when there are humanized aspects that can minimize the impacts resulting from the factors mentioned above, thus, this and other models aim to understand and mitigate four problems, being insecurity (job instability), injustice (wage inequality), alienation (low self-esteem) and anomie (lack of labor legislation).

According to Westley's QWL Model, quality of life at work cannot be measured solely by analyzing objective factors, such as remuneration or the safety of the work environment. It is necessary to consider subjective factors, such as personal satisfaction and professional fulfillment, to understand a worker's QWL.

It is understood in this way that the model also highlights the importance of workers' participation in managing the work environment and making decisions related to their activities, in addition to emphasizing the role of technology in ensuring improvements in QWL. For Westley, the work environment must be planned in a way that integrates technologies and employee activities.

The following table (Table 1) points out the analysis model proposed by the author, aiming at the humanization of work.

Table1. *QVT Westely model (1979)*

Nature of the Problem	Symptom of the problem	Action to solve problems	Indicators	Proposals
Economic Factors (1850)	Injustice	Workers' Union	Dissatisfaction Strikes	Cooperation; Division of profits; Participation in decisions.
Political Factors (1850-1950)	Insecurity	Political Positions	Dissatisfaction Strikes	Self-supervised work; Works Council; Participation in decisions
Psychological Factors (1950)	Alienation	Change agents	Lack of interest Absenteeism Turnover	Valuing tasks; Self-realization at work.
Sociological Factors	Anomie	Self-development groups	Lack of interest in work Absenteeism Turnover	Socio-technically methods applied to work groups: Valuing interpersonal relationships, distribution of responsibility in the team, etc.)

Source: *Adapted from Westley (1979).*

Westley's model (1979) was proposed based on internal and external aspects of the organization, emphasizing the existence of four groups that harm QWL, all of which result in dissatisfaction on the part of the worker. The author reports that symptoms of dissatisfaction are based on feelings of deprivation of equality and insecurity and that signs of alienation and anomie can be identified based on indifference with the task, that is, productivity and direct involvement with the task to be executed (Dal Forno; Finger, 2015).

3.1.4 The Nadler and Lawler Model (1983)

To implement an effective and potentially significant QWL program for an organization, it is first necessary to understand the real needs of employees. It is important that managers and supervisors have a clear understanding of the challenges the team faces, so that they can create solutions that meet their demands. The involvement of employees in this process is fundamental to the success of the program and model that will be used.

With this in mind, Nadler and Lawler (1983) created a model where one of the highlights is the participation of the team to provide feedback and suggestions on the development of actions. The authors state that some factors may be responsible for the success of QWL projects, including:

- 1) Perception of need: It is essential to understand which problem or problems are actually affecting workers and not just implement a quality of life program on the initiative of the manager, without knowing the real needs of individuals;
- 2) Focus on the problem that is important to the organization: Action from various parts of the organization and that is willing to make a significant commitment involving resources, consultative help, time and effort;
- 3) Structure for identifying and solving problems: Theory and project model - model and participants: A roadmap is needed to assess quality of life. This roadmap can be a diagnostic model for organizations, to be used in the treatment and analysis of the issues they will consider;

- 4) Rewards received for both processes and results: Rewards can be internal, when people can participate and have their ideas heard, as well as a distribution of gains when a project developed by the company is successful;
- 5) Multiple systems affected: Perception that the development of activities requires investment in time, effort, energy, money and losses and loss of social benefits can often occur;
- 6) Involvement of the entire organization: It is important that QWL activities are not limited to specific groups, thus avoiding rivalry between groups at different levels, showing that everyone is part of the organization's success.

It is worth highlighting that the implementation of QWL actions must be an ongoing initiative and not just a one-off event. The company must always be attentive to needs and expectations and willing to invest in new possibilities to achieve the desired results.

3.1.5. The Huse and Cummings (1985) Model

Huse and Cummings (1985) define QWL as a model of thinking that involves people, work and organization, being operationalized in four aspects: worker participation in organizational problems and decisions; the job project; innovation in the reward system and improvement in the work environment. For the authors, the actions proposed in a QWL program involving these aspects positively influenced communication and coordination, thus increasing worker performance and productivity.

Almeida et. al (2019), highlight that from the perspective of the QWL model as an improvement approach for the scope of work, this model presents some characteristics that are based on four aspects or programs, namely:

- 1) Worker participation: According to the authors, Huse and Cummings (1985), it is important that workers are inserted at different organizational levels, in order to allow the employee to have more direct contact with the decision-making process that they are told respect. When there is this participation, individuals feel more secure and committed to achieving the results presented to them.
- 2) Job Design: in this topic, it is highlighted that jobs must be designed according to the worker's needs. That is, the operationalization of this aspect from different perspectives giving autonomy to individuals;
- 3) Innovation in the Reward System: according to Huse and Cummings (1985), it is difficult to achieve a level of QWL without salary equity and for this to be possible, it is important that job and salary systems are redesigned, with the purpose of reduce salary differences and hierarchical differences between workers;
- 4) Improvement in the Work Environment: This topic is considered fundamental by the authors, considering that all elements that involve physical aspects and conditions for improving salaries are directly related to employee satisfaction. Here, working hours, the place where activities are carried out and equipment used stand out, which will directly impact productivity and worker motivation and capacity.

3.1.6. The Limongi France Model (1996)

The Limongi-France model was selected to examine the practices implemented in the institution due to its comprehensiveness in relation to the holistic view of the human being. For Limongi-França (2004, p. 28), the implementation of QWL occurs when the human being is seen as a whole, called biopsychosocial aspects. The author states that the human being is a biopsychosocial complex and has biological, psychological and social potential that respond simultaneously to the conditions of their way of living.

From this vision, the so-called specific domains must be worked on, as highlighted by Limongi-França (2010). For the author, the biological domain includes physical characteristics acquired at birth and maintained throughout life, such as the functioning of organs and systems. The psychological domain refers to the processes that form the human being's personality and that determine the way they position themselves in the face of the circumstances of the environment in which they live.

The social domain reveals the values, beliefs, role in the family, at work and in all groups and communities to which each person belongs and participates. The organizational domain was developed with the aim of integrating the concept with work elements, and includes organizational culture, company size, technology, economic segment in which it operates and competitiveness standards (Limongi-França, 2010).

Seeking to meet the particularities related to organizational environments, the author creates the organizational dimension that is made up of specific issues related to companies. The organizational dimension is related to corporate image, innovation and technology, control systems and training and development programs. (Limongi-França, 2010).

Albuquerque and Limongi-França state:

Quality of life at work is a set of actions by a company that involves diagnosis and implementation of managerial, technological and structural improvements and innovations inside and outside the work environment, aiming to provide full conditions for human development for and during work (ALBUQUERQUE; LIMONGI-FRANÇA, 1998, p.

Individual differences are responsible for the meaning that human beings give to their work. General well-being or illness and stress can result in great experiences or the adoption of defense mechanisms, thus reflecting a general state that can be considered as QWL (Vilas Boas; Morin, 2017).

In this context, attention to QWL appears as an effective possibility of producing positive results for the health of workers. Attention to QWL needs to be understood as a field for promoting well-being at work and much more than an administrative tool or strategy to improve productivity in an institution, good QWL conditions have a positive impact on the well-being of employees. professionals, resulting in a healthier life (Ferreira; Brusique, 2014).

Although QWL and personal quality of life are terms that have distinct characteristics, they influence each other. Dissatisfaction related to work can impact family life and relationships outside of work, in the same way that dissatisfaction with social life can negatively impact work (Sampaio, 2004).

To assess QWL, Limongi-França (1996) created the BPSO-96 research instrument. This model is based on the analysis of biological, psychological, social and organizational indicators so that it is possible to structure management actions related to QWL and thus seek to guarantee worker satisfaction if these actions are implemented (Macario et al., 2018).

Considering the relevance and justification of this model, it is noteworthy that the divisions of biopsychosocial and organizational aspects were researched and tested in several other studies, being validated in Psychosomatic Medicine studies in the seventies (Limongi-França; Kanikadan, 2006).

4. CONCLUSION

QWL is a broad concept that refers to the general well-being of a person in their work environment, and this includes physical, mental, emotional and social aspects, such as health, safety, financial stability, healthy relationships between workers who do part of an institution, balance between personal and professional life, as well as leisure and fun.

Several aspects can influence and provide a healthy, safe work environment that is satisfactory from a quality perspective. Achieving these results is as important as understanding the perception of those who perform the work, therefore, the promotion of a positive organizational climate, the appreciation and recognition of the work performed, among other factors that contribute to well-being and happiness must be implemented in order to facilitate the achievement of goals set by organizations.

Regardless of the model chosen to analyze worker satisfaction, a continuous assessment of the quality of work life within the institution is necessary. This will enable organizations to identify areas for improvement and implement policies and practices that promote a healthy and positive work environment.

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