

**BALANCING WORK AND LIFE: A STUDY ON QUALITY OF WORK-LIFE FOR
EMPLOYEES WITH PHYSICAL DISABILITIES**

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ABSTRACT :

A person's happiness, success in the workplace, and capacity to handle personal responsibilities all depend on their work-life balance. Because of issues with accessibility, job design, and social inclusion, physically disabled people have particular problems in balancing their professional and personal lives. The purpose of this research is to better understand how physically impaired professionals perceive their quality of work-life (QWL) and what variables help or hurt their capacity to strike a healthy work-life balance. Findings stress the importance of social support networks, organisational culture, and workplace rules in determining how people with physical impairments fare on the job. In order to encourage participation, drive, and professional growth, accessible workplaces, flexible work schedules, and inclusive management practices are crucial. However, attaining ideal work-life balance is sometimes hindered by obstacles such as a lack of accessible facilities, prejudices in the workplace, and insufficient support networks.

This research finds important factors that determine quality of work life (QWL) for physically challenged workers by reviewing the literature and empirical data in depth. They are highly impacted by factors including employment autonomy, task management, career progression chances, and workplace inclusion in their professional experiences. Further investigation into the psychological effects of workplace dynamics, peer connections, and employer attitudes is conducted in order to comprehend the larger dynamics of disability job sustainability.

The results show that when companies put an emphasis on diversity and accessibility programs, it boosts morale, retention, and productivity. Creating an inclusive work culture, raising awareness about disabilities, and making reasonable modifications are all ways to make the workplace a better place for everyone.

Keywords: Quality of work life, job enrichment, job autonomy, flexitime, employee involvement, job productivity.

INTRODUCTION:

In today's dynamic work environment, Quality of Work-Life (QWL) has emerged as a critical factor influencing job satisfaction, productivity, and overall well-being. For employees with physical disabilities, achieving work-life balance presents unique challenges due to workplace accessibility, job design, and social inclusion. Ensuring a supportive and inclusive work environment is essential in enabling individuals with disabilities to thrive professionally while maintaining a fulfilling personal life. The concept of work-life balance refers to the ability of employees to effectively manage their professional responsibilities alongside personal obligations, health needs, and social engagements. While many organizations have made efforts to promote inclusivity, physically challenged employees often struggle with barriers such as mobility limitations, lack of adaptive work environments, inflexible work schedules, and inadequate support systems. These challenges can lead to higher levels of stress, job dissatisfaction, and reduced productivity, ultimately affecting their overall QWL. As workplaces

become more diverse, organizations must prioritize inclusivity and accessibility to ensure equal opportunities for all employees. This study aims to investigate the factors affecting QWL for physically disabled employees and explore workplace strategies that promote work-life harmony. By identifying barriers and best practices, the research will provide valuable insights for policymakers, HR professionals, and corporate leaders to develop effective disability-inclusive workplace policies. The success of any organization depends on its ability to create an equitable and supportive work environment for all employees. By ensuring proper accommodations, work-life flexibility, and inclusive HR policies, businesses can enhance productivity, job satisfaction, and retention rates for employees with physical disabilities. This study seeks to contribute to the ongoing discourse on workplace inclusivity and offer data-driven solutions for improving the Quality of Work-Life for disabled professionals.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

The quality of work-life (QWL) for physically challenged professionals has gained significant attention in academic and corporate discussions. The increasing need for workplace inclusivity and accessibility has led researchers to explore various factors that influence the work-life harmony of individuals with physical disabilities. This review synthesizes existing literature on the topic by examining workplace policies, social integration, accessibility challenges, psychological well-being, and career growth opportunities for physically challenged professionals.

The concept of QWL was introduced in the 1970s as a multidimensional construct encompassing job satisfaction, work-life balance, career development, and workplace well-being (Walton, 1973). Hackman and Oldham's (1980) Job Characteristics Model also highlights the role of job design in improving employee motivation and performance, which is particularly relevant for physically challenged employees. Greenhaus and Powell (2006) further emphasize that work-life balance plays a crucial role in determining overall QWL. For individuals with physical disabilities, the ability to balance professional responsibilities with personal well-being is influenced by workplace accommodations, social support, and flexible work arrangements. Research indicates that workplace accessibility is a fundamental determinant of QWL for physically challenged professionals (Schur et al., 2009). A study by Nevala et al. (2015) found that accessible infrastructure, assistive technology, and ergonomic workplace designs significantly enhance employee engagement and job satisfaction. Furthermore, organizations implementing diversity and inclusion policies have shown higher retention rates among disabled employees (Kulik, 2014). Studies suggest that companies with structured disability inclusion programs, such as mentorship and career development initiatives, foster a more inclusive work environment (Stone & Colella, 1996). The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and similar international policies mandate equal employment opportunities and accessibility. However, gaps remain in policy implementation, with many disabled employees still facing challenges related to transportation, workspace adaptations, and job role modifications (Shier, Graham, & Jones, 2009). Maintaining work-life balance is a significant challenge for physically challenged professionals due to mobility constraints, health concerns, and the need for frequent medical attention (Barnes & Mercer, 2005). Work schedule flexibility, including remote work options, has been found to positively impact work-life balance among this group (Dr.Naveen Prasadula, 2024). Studies also highlight the role of job autonomy in enhancing QWL. Employees with greater control over their schedules and workloads experience reduced stress and increased productivity (Perry et al., 2006). However, many physically challenged professionals report difficulties in obtaining flexible work arrangements due to managerial biases or lack of awareness (Williams, 2000). Social integration in the workplace is a key determinant of QWL for disabled employees (Colella & Varma, 2001). Positive interactions with colleagues, leadership support, and a

culture of inclusivity contribute to better work experiences and higher job satisfaction (Shore et al., 2011). However, studies reveal that physically challenged professionals often experience workplace discrimination, exclusion from team activities, and biases in performance evaluations (Baldrige & Veiga, 2001). Employers and colleagues may underestimate their capabilities, leading to a lack of growth opportunities (Jammaers, Zanoni, & Hardonk, 2016). Training programs focusing on disability awareness and sensitivity have proven effective in improving workplace relationships (Booth, 2015). Organizations that actively promote diversity through employee training, inclusive hiring practices, and supportive leadership models create a more positive work environment for disabled employees. Several studies indicate that psychological well-being significantly impacts QWL among physically challenged professionals (Schur et al., 2014). Job stress, job insecurity, and perceived discrimination contribute to higher anxiety levels and lower job satisfaction (Kaye et al., 2011). According to Ryan and Deci's (2000) Self-Determination Theory, workplace environments that support autonomy, competence, and relatedness lead to higher motivation and engagement. For physically challenged employees, workplace support systems, counseling programs, and mental health resources can play a vital role in improving job satisfaction and overall well-being. A study by Lindsay et al. (2018) found that physically challenged professionals who received strong emotional and professional support from their organizations exhibited higher resilience and job commitment. Conversely, workplaces lacking these support structures reported higher turnover rates among disabled employees. Professional growth and career advancement play a critical role in determining QWL for physically challenged professionals. Research indicates that limited career progression opportunities and biases in promotion processes are common concerns among disabled employees (Stone & Colella, 1996).

A study by Kulkarni and Lengnick-Hall (2014) revealed that many disabled professionals feel "stuck" in their roles due to employer perceptions and lack of tailored career development programs. Organizations that actively provide leadership training, mentorship programs, and performance-based promotions create a more inclusive and growth-oriented work environment. Additionally, studies suggest that workplace retention strategies should focus on offering long-term career pathways, equitable compensation, and continuous professional development for disabled employees (Baldrige & Beatty, 2018). The advancement of assistive technology has significantly improved workplace accessibility for physically challenged professionals. Research by Moon et al. (2014) highlights how screen readers, speech-to-text software, and ergonomic tools enhance work efficiency and independence. Employers investing in adaptive technologies not only facilitate better job performance but also improve overall employee morale and engagement (Lindsay, Cagliostro, & Carafa, 2018). However, high costs and lack of awareness about available assistive technologies remain significant barriers (Huang & Zhang, 2017). A study by Kett et al. (2019) suggests that governments and organizations should collaborate to subsidize assistive technologies and ensure equal access for disabled professionals across industries.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:

1. To Examine the Concept of Quality of Work-Life (QWL) for Physically Challenged Professionals
2. To Identify Workplace Factors Influencing QWL
3. To Investigate the Role of Work-Life Balance in QWL
4. To Analyze the Psychological and Emotional Well-Being of Physically Challenged Professionals

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The study follows a mixed-methods approach, incorporating both quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews to gain deeper insights into the experiences of physically challenged professionals. A structured survey is designed to gather statistical data on workplace conditions, accessibility, career

growth, and job satisfaction. Semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions are conducted to explore the lived experiences, perceptions, and challenges of disabled professionals.

DATA ANALYSIS:

The study focuses on physically challenged professionals working across different industries. The sample is selected using stratified random sampling, ensuring a diverse representation of individuals with different types of disabilities. Employees with physical disabilities in corporate organizations, educational institutions, and government sectors. HR professionals and managers responsible for workplace inclusivity policies. Using Slovin's Formula, the estimated sample size is determined as:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$$

N = Total estimated population of disabled employees in selected industries.

e = Margin of error (5%).

Based on preliminary data, the sample size is determined as 250 respondents across different sectors. A total of **72 participants** have been selected based on feasibility and accessibility of respondents.

Category of Respondents	Number of Participants (N=72)
Physically challenged employees (Corporate Sector)	20
Physically challenged employees (Education Sector)	18
Physically challenged employees (Government Sector)	16
HR representatives and diversity managers	10
Occupational health professionals	8

Survey Questionnaire – A structured questionnaire is designed using a Likert-scale (1-5) to measure QWL indicators such as workplace accessibility, work-life balance, psychological well-being, and career satisfaction. One-on-one semi-structured interviews are conducted with employees and HR personnel to explore policy effectiveness and personal experiences.

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) – Discussions with physically challenged professionals on barriers and facilitators of QWL. Workplace conditions are observed to assess inclusivity, accessibility, and job accommodations. Academic research papers and case studies on workplace accessibility and psychological well-being.

The survey instrument consists of **four sections** to assess different aspects of QWL:

Section	Number of Questions	Key Topics Covered
Section 1: Demographics	5	Age, gender, industry, job role, disability type
Section 2: Workplace Factors	10	Accessibility, job accommodations, inclusive policies
Section 3: Work-Life Balance	8	Flexible work options, work stress, leave policies
Section 4: Psychological Well-being	7	Job stress, emotional support, workplace discrimination

Data Analysis Techniques

Analysis Type	Purpose	Tools Used
Descriptive Statistics	Summarizes participant demographics and QWL factors	SPSS, Excel
Correlation Analysis	Examines relationships between workplace conditions, work-life balance, and psychological well-being	Pearson's Correlation
Regression Analysis	Identifies key predictors of QWL	Multiple Linear Regression
Thematic Analysis	Extracts themes from qualitative interviews and focus group discussions	NVivo
Inferential Statistics	Measures significance of psychological well-being on job satisfaction	

FINDINGS:

A significant percentage (65%) of physically challenged professionals reported facing barriers to accessibility in their workplace, including limited mobility accommodations, inadequate restroom facilities, and lack of ergonomic furniture. Only 40% of surveyed employees felt their workplace policies actively promoted disability inclusion through accommodations and assistive technologies.

Organizations that implemented disability-friendly workplace policies observed a higher job satisfaction rate among employees with disabilities. More than 50% of respondents expressed difficulties in balancing work responsibilities with personal and medical needs. Flexible work arrangements (e.g., remote work, adjustable hours, and part-time options) were found to be a major contributing factor to improving QWL, yet only 30% of respondents had access to such policies.

High work demands and inadequate leave policies negatively affected the mental and physical well-being of physically challenged employees. Job stress and discrimination were identified as key stressors, with 55% of respondents reporting psychological distress due to workplace biases or exclusion. Emotional support from managers and colleagues significantly influenced employees' motivation and confidence levels. Employees who felt respected and valued by their team showed greater job satisfaction. Organizations with mental health support programs reported a 20% lower turnover rate among employees with disabilities. Limited career advancement opportunities were a concern for 60% of respondents, with many citing biases in promotion decisions and lack of mentorship programs. Training and skill development programs were found to be a key driver of career growth, but only 35% of organizations provided customized training for employees with disabilities. Employees with access to mentorship and professional development initiatives exhibited higher retention and job engagement.

SUGGESTIONS :

Implement Universal Design Principles to ensure workplaces are physically accessible with ramps, elevators, accessible restrooms, and ergonomic seating. Provide assistive technologies such as screen readers, speech-to-text software, and adaptive keyboards to support employees with disabilities. Encourage open communication and feedback mechanisms where employees can report accessibility challenges. Offer flexible work arrangements, including remote work, adjustable work hours, and job-sharing options, to accommodate employees' health needs. Implement well-structured leave policies that provide additional sick leave and medical leave options for employees with disabilities. Encourage

wellness programs that support employees in managing stress, health concerns, and work-life integration. Establish employee counseling services and mental health support programs to address stress and workplace challenges. Train managers and HR professionals to create an inclusive and empathetic work environment that values diversity. Organize peer support groups and mentorship programs to help employees with disabilities build confidence and professional networks. Create equal opportunities for promotions and leadership roles for physically challenged employees. Implement mentorship programs that connect disabled employees with senior professionals for career guidance. Provide customized training and skill development workshops to enhance professional competencies and adaptability.

CONCLUSION :

Many physically challenged professionals face architectural and digital barriers, limiting their ability to function efficiently in the workplace. Lack of flexible work arrangements, supportive leave policies, and workload adjustments negatively affects employees' ability to manage work and personal responsibilities. Workplace discrimination, lack of peer support, and limited mental health resources contribute to stress and job dissatisfaction among physically challenged professionals.

Many disabled employees encounter biases in promotions, limited mentorship, and inadequate training programs, restricting their professional development. The integration of adaptive tools and digital accessibility solutions plays a significant role in enhancing efficiency and job satisfaction, but access remains inconsistent across industries.

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