

QUALITY OF WORK LIFE AND ITS IMPACT ON QUALITY AND PRODUCTIVITY IN THE HANDICRAFT SECTOR IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: The economy across the globe is under a terrible slump due to the recent COVID-19 and Russia-Ukraine war and needs to take rigorous measures to boost employment opportunities and standard of living. The handicraft sector is one of the several top solutions for achieving this objective.

Methods: Various qualitative and statistical tools are used to analyze the data collected from 97 handicraft personnel during the period between October to December 2022 in British Columbia's handicraft sector.

Results: The quality of products and productivity of employees are highly influenced by their Quality of Work Life (QWL). This study considered different dimensions of QWL, such as nature of the job, experience in the handicraft sector, work-life balance, job security, growth opportunity, and employee relations with reference to the variables like gender, age group, religion, family size, and education level.

Research limitations/implications: This study proposes a model solely based on the study on craft workers only in British Columbia, Canada due to limited resources such as time, effort, and funds.

Conclusion: The study suggests that improving the Quality of Work Life of employees can enhance their and Organizations' productivity and product quality. This study has practical implications for policymakers in handicraft sector to promote employment opportunities and improve the standard of living. This study also offers a unique model by concentrating on the handicraft units in British Columbia by examining the impact of various dimensions of Quality of Work Life (QWL) and certain variables of individual employees. This is an original work based on primary data collected from handicraft units' employees in British Columbia.

Keywords: Handicraft, Totem poles, Productivity, Quality of work life

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The crafts or handicrafts industry has long existed since the dawn of civilization. There is no denying that Canada owns a lot of its identity to its rich craft heritage. It is an integral part of Canadian legacy, culture, and economy, as it provides a way of earning and a symbol of tourist attractions. The craft sector takes awesomely varied forms under the artisan's brush, hand tools, and hammer at some point of time in the distant past and present, being mere everyday activities and commonplace products in any typical countryside in any part of the country. The colorful tapestry of paintings, pottery, totem poles (wood being carved into the intricate statues and products), fine glass, musical instruments, furniture, unique textiles, ceramics, and sculpted objects represent the cultural history of Canada. In addition, the increasing demand for craft products is acting as a boosting element for the economy as the craft industry is environmentally friendly and low on energy consumption, making it a potential key player in the country's economic growth and a sustainable way for the empowerment of craftsmen and artisans.

According to a Report of Development Commissioner Handicraft Board, (2001), the term handicraft refers to handmade goods manufactured by craftsmen using or without tools, rudimentary instruments, or utensils operated primarily by hand [8]. Within the category of handcrafted goods, some products, such as handicrafts, frequently have an additional identifying feature, such as a traditional or artistic feature derived from the geographical region or country of production, or the production by craftsmen, generally on a cottage industry basis [8]. However, several issues need consideration, such as financial security, health and safety, skill up-gradation, and the introduction of new technology and innovations in designs. Walton (1975) proposed eight major conceptual categories relating to Quality of Work Life as (1) Adequate and fair compensation, (2) safe and healthy working conditions, (3) immediate opportunity to use and develop human capacities, (4) opportunity for continued growth and security, (5) social integration in the work organization, (6) constitutionalism in the work Organization, (7) work and total life space and (8) social relevance of work life. From the perspective of handicraft workers, it is important to recognize the increasing importance of Quality of Work Life (QWL) in mitigating the negative effects of technological advancements and economic growth on human and environmental values. As per Levine et al (1984), Walton (1975) stated the significance of QWL and its potential to balance out these negative impacts. QWL involves finding a common ground between the interests of individuals and organizations [11]. This means that by improving worker satisfaction, QWL can also lead to increased productivity for the company [4]. Walton's model is particularly relevant in this context because it includes eight criteria that cover basic aspects of work situations and is widely recognized as a useful tool for assessing QWL [11]. Several published works have addressed the constructs that comprise the Quality of Work Life domain and key elements of the Quality of Work-Life programs.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

The World Health Organization (2012) defines Quality of Life as "individuals' perceptions of their position in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live and in

relation to their goals, expectations, standards, and concerns." [16]. An individual's quality of life is identified by objectively measuring the living conditions that the individual has encountered, analogous to the Quality of Work Life that the individual may have encountered at work [16]. Similarly, according to Swamy et al. (2015), the extent to which an employee's personal and working requirements are met while participating in the workplace and attaining the organization's goals is referred to as Quality of Work Life (QWL) [14]. Also, a favourable working environment for employees arises when it supports and encourages employee satisfaction by offering rewards, job stability, and career advancement opportunities [14]. In some instances, individuals may not be satisfied with the rewards provided by the organization; however, they may be satisfied with job stability and the organization's career opportunities for personal and professional development [14]. Kshirsagar mentioned in her research study about the Hawthorne experiments, carried out by Elton Mayo and his colleagues at Harvard in 1953, showed that different aspects of work are interconnected [10]. These experiments demonstrated that modifying physical work conditions, such as working hours, rest breaks, monotony, fatigue, incentives, and the formal and informal organization, can lead to increased morale, productivity, and job satisfaction among employees [10]. In a study conducted by Blum in 1956, he observed the importance of the connection between job satisfaction and overall satisfaction in life [1]. Blum suggested that job satisfaction is partly influenced by a person's general satisfaction or attitude towards life [1]. Walton (1975) mentioned in his article that Quality of Work Life is a multifaceted concept that is explained by several characteristics related to job stability and satisfaction. Several published works have addressed the constructs that comprise the Quality of Work Life domain and key elements of the Quality of Work Life programs. The theoretical framework proposed by Walton is used to measure the Quality of Work Life and its effect on productivity in the Canadian craft sector in British Columbia.

As per the article by Fernández Bellver et al (2023), rural development plays a crucial role in addressing the issue of depopulation caused by migration from rural to urban areas [3]. One of the main challenges of rural development is to provide rural residents, particularly rural handicraft workers, with economic resources that can compete with those available in urban areas. This involves providing them with sustainable income opportunities and access to essential technologies and resources such as electricity, internet, water, and efficient transportation that will improve their Quality of Work Life. Improving the standard of living in rural areas will help in mitigating the well-known phenomenon of "rural exodus." By providing rural residents with access to essential resources, training, and support for entrepreneurship, we can help to build vibrant, sustainable rural communities and preserve the rich cultural heritage of rural handicraft traditions [3]. Nguyen et al. (2021) conducted research on craft villages in Vietnam and found that they are a distinct feature of rural areas and an important factor in industrial and secondary manufacturing zones and subzones [13]. A craft village is essentially a guild within a village that earns its living through non-agricultural activities, and has been long preserved and developed with various characteristics. In their article, the authors provide an insight into environmental protection policies applied to craft villages in Hanoi, with the aim of understanding the situation of executing environmental protection policies for craft villages in Hanoi, pointing out challenges in formulating and implementing the policies, and proposing measures to develop the policies and enhance the implementation effectiveness [13]. On the other hand, Väänänen et al. (2017) suggest that concerns regarding the presence and future of craft in a sustainability context increase the need to define the concept of 'sustainable craft' [15]. Their qualitative study, based on interviews

with sixteen craft practitioners in Finland, describes and analyses craft practitioners' conceptions of their craft practices and products through the lens of sustainability as implemented in their actions [15]. Using Grounded Theory, the analysis of interview data reveals a holistic system of sustainable craft, comprising three elements: sustainable practice, product, and immaterial craft [15]. Through their interaction, these intertwined elements were found to motivate and affect the practitioners and their products. The findings offer a novel perspective on the concept of sustainable craft and a systemic model of sustainability for use by practitioners [15]. Fillis (2008) found that most craft firms are microenterprises, and qualitative analysis enabled the profiling of four orientations: the entrepreneur, the idealist, the lifestyle, and the latecomer [5]. Finally, Einstein et al. (1935) examined the current state of the craft sector and how artisans and craft workers are dealing with issues related to sustainability and craft [2]. They discuss the work of AVANI in the Himalayas and Khamir Craft Resource Centre in Bhuj, Gujarat, to illustrate how the growing interest in ethical and sustainable materials, processes, and objects is impacting the craft sector [2]. Productivity is a key concept in economics and refers to the amount of output produced per unit of input, including labor, capital, investments, or other resources. The success of an organization's productivity depends on employing the right individuals fit for the job. They are vital in attaining the company's goals; therefore, the organization's obligation is to ensure their well-being [9]. Gamage (2021) has shown that improving Quality of Work Life (QWL) can lead to increased productivity among workers [6]. He suggests that it is important to provide employees with excellent human care practices, including a good living environment, access to healthcare and proper nutrition, safety measures, opportunities for capacity building, education and development, and youth empowerment [6]. Similarly, Shahab (2019) has suggested that an organization's productivity, profitability, and sustainability can be improved by providing better infrastructure and improving employees' well-being [12]. By providing safe and comfortable environment, the organizations cannot only increase the QWL of their workers but also enhance their productive outputs [12]. The research emphasizes the critical factors that contribute to the sustainability and expansion of the repair industry as a form of paid "good work." George V Haythorne (1963) conducted a study to explore the ways in which employers, government, and workers can collaborate to enhance productivity [7]. Haythorne believed that productivity improvements were most effectively achieved within the framework of economic growth. His study highlighted that numerous workers encountered challenges related to change and job insecurity [7]. To address these issues, Haythorne recommended implementing training and retraining programs and ensuring sufficient opportunities for workers to transition to other roles within their respective industries. He believes that improved productivity could only be achieved via effective teamwork, and that the benefits of increased production should have been distributed evenly among businesses, workers, and the general public [7].

2.1 Previous work's gap identification:

The literature review discusses various aspects related to Quality of Work Life (QWL), rural development, sustainability, and productivity in the craft industry. There may be a lack of empirical evidence linking QWL and productivity, particularly in the context of different gender, age groups, religions, family sizes, and intellect levels for the craft sector of British Columbia. Although some studies suggest that improving QWL can lead to increased Quality and Productivity in the Handicraft sector, there is a need for more empirical evidence to support this claim.

2.2 Filling the existing gap:

To fill the existing gap in the literature, the proposed study aims to investigate the relationship between Quality of Work Life (QWL) and productivity in the craft units of British Columbia, with a specific focus on the perceptions of different employee groups in terms of the different gender, age groups, religions, family sizes, and intellect levels. The research questions and objectives of the study are summarized in Table 1 and 2. To achieve the research objectives, the study will employ a quantitative research design. Using a survey questionnaire to collect data from employees working in the craft industry in British Columbia.

Table I: Research questions based on different categories of employees.

Research Questions	Objectives
RQ1: Is there any significant differences among the male and female employees working in handicraft industry with respect to their perception about different dimensions of quality of work life?	Organizations in the handicraft industry should be able to gain insights into gender-based disparities that may be impacting employee satisfaction, retention, and overall organizational performance.
RQ2: Is there any significant differences among the employees of different age groups working in handicraft industry with respect to their perception about different dimensions of quality of work life?	Organizations should be able to identify areas where younger or older employees may have different needs or expectations in terms of their work environment and job satisfaction.
RQ 3: Is there any significant differences among the employees of different religions working in handicraft industry with respect to their perception about different dimensions of quality of work life?	Organisations should be able to identify potential areas of improvement in the work environment and policies that can benefit all employees regardless of their religious affiliation.
RQ 4: Is there any significant differences among the employees working with handicraft industry with a different number of dependents with respect to their perception about different dimensions of quality of work life?	Organisations should be able to find whether employees with variable family size have different perceptions of the various dimensions of quality of work life.
RQ 5: Is there any significant differences among the employees working in the handicraft industry with different level of education with respect to their perception of different dimensions of quality of work life?	Organizations should be able to identify any disparities in the varying perceptions of work environment and overall job satisfaction among the employees with reference to their level of education.

This questionnaire focuses on items that measure different dimensions of QWL, such as job satisfaction, work-life balance, job security, and employee relations with reference to the variables like gender, age groups, religions, family sizes, and intellect levels.

Table 2: Research questions based on various factors of Quality of Work-Life.

Research Questions	Objectives

Do you get sufficient salary on-time?	The organizations would be able to find out the satisfaction level of the employees based on getting sufficient salary on time.
Are there safe and healthy working conditions in your organization?	The organizations would be able to find out the satisfaction level of employees based on safe and healthy working condition.
Are you treated equally without any discrimination?	The organizations would be able to find out the satisfaction level of employees based on getting equally treated at the workplace.
Do you have ample opportunities to improve your skills?	The organizations would be able to find out the satisfaction level of employees based on improving their skills to get ample opportunities.
Do you have sufficient opportunity to grow?	The organizations would be able to find out the satisfaction level of employees based on getting growth opportunity.
Are you recognized and get your salary based on your skills?	The organizations would be able to find out the satisfaction level of employees based on getting recognized and getting salary based on the skills
Is your work group setting appropriate?	The organizations would be able to find out the satisfaction level of employees based on getting an appropriate work group setting.
Are your personal and private information kept confidential?	The organizations would be able to find out the satisfaction level of employees based on keeping personal information confidential.
Do you find the conflict resolution procedure in your organization is in-place and efficient?	The organizations would be able to find out the satisfaction level of employees based on getting efficient resolution of conflicts.
Are you conscious and aware of the effects of their profession/work on their health?	The organizations would be able to find out the satisfaction level of employees based on knowing effects of their profession/work on their health.
Are you satisfied with the outcome of your time and efforts spent at workplace?	The organizations would be able to find out the satisfaction level of employees based on putting efforts and getting outcomes at workplace.
Do you find the quality of product or service you produce is very important to remain competitive and profitable?	The organizations would be able to find out the satisfaction level of employees based on producing competitive and profitable products or service
Do you feel that the job in your organization is secured?	The organizations would be able to find out the satisfaction level of employees based on their job security.

2.3 Objectives of the study

By considering the above-mentioned facts, an empirical study was undertaken to determine the factors affecting the 'Quality of Work life' of the artisans engaged in the craft sector. The major

objective of this study is to analyze the 'Quality of Work life' in the major craft sectors in British Columbia, Canada. The study was conducted in the light of the following objectives:

- To identify the different parameters influencing the Quality of Work Life of artisans in the craft sector.
- To identify the most important factor/ factors of Quality of Work Life.
- To analyze and compare the Quality of Work Life of different groups of employees, grouped based on the nature of the job.
- To suggest a conceptual framework based on the findings of the study.

2.4 Hypotheses

In line with the objectives of the study, the following hypotheses were formulated and tested, where H₀ represents the null hypothesis and H_a is an alternative hypothesis.

H₀₁: The eight factors given by Walton for the measurement of Quality of Work Life viz, adequate and fair compensation, safe and healthy working conditions, immediate opportunity to use and develop human capacities, an opportunity for career growth, social integration in the work organization, constitutionalism in the work organization, work and total living space, and the social relevance of work life, do not significantly differ when employees are classified on the basis of their demographic profiles like gender and age.

H_{a1}: The eight factors given by Walton for the measurement of Quality of Work Life viz, adequate and fair compensation, safe and healthy working conditions, immediate opportunity to use and develop human capacities, an opportunity for career growth, social integration in the work organization, constitutionalism in the work organization, work and total living space, and the social relevance of work life, significantly differ when employees are classified on the basis of their demographic profiles like gender and age.

H₀₂: There is no such relationship between factors of Quality of Work Life and employees' job-related profiles, such as the nature of the job, i.e., these factors are independent.

H_{a2}: There is a relationship between factors of Quality of Work Life and employees' job-related profiles, such as the nature of the job, i.e., these factors are dependent.

H₀₃: Job-related profiles do not have any significant influence on the Quality of Work Life of employees.

H_{a3}: Job-related profiles have a significant influence on the Quality of Work Life of employees.

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The current study is exploratory as much is not known about the perception of handicraft employees regarding the Quality of Work Life, and no information is accessible on how similar

problems or research issues have been addressed in the past. As a result, considerable preliminary work was carried out in this case, and a model was developed to suggest a unique design for comprehensive research. In essence, this study is based on an experimental research design to understand better the nature of work-life problems in the handicraft industries, as there have been few studies in this field.

A structured questionnaire was administered to gather data, followed by an extensive interview conducted with 97 craftsmen of various groups of people in the craft industry. It was believed to encompass factors such as enriched jobs, healthy work environments, stress-free work relationships, job satisfaction, work role environment, and other work-related factors. However, the current impression is that the concept of Quality of Work Life is too narrow and limited to be useful for research.

2.5 Secondary Data

The literature review here is collected from various research journals, studies, and publications. Sources from which secondary data have been drawn are the British Columbia craft council, the Canadian Craft federation, the Craft circle, and the Gallery of BC ceramics.

2.6 Primary Data

The study is mainly based on primary data, obtained from a well-designed questionnaire covering all aspects of Quality of Work Life. This questionnaire is designed to cover people with different natures of jobs within an organization. Therefore, two different sections are included in the questionnaire-one section is for freelancers and another for employees of different sections. Name of the respondents have been kept anonymous to maintain their confidentiality.

2.7 Tools of Data Collection

For data collection, a structured interview schedule was prepared in accordance with the objectives of the study. This was pre-tested on a small group of artisans divided into different variables. A five-point rating scale was used to draw information from the respondents. In the rating scale, 5 points were assigned for strongly agree, 1 for strongly disagree, and for in-between ratings, points 4, 3, and 2 were given.

2.8 Sampling Procedure

Convenience sampling was used to gather the information for the purpose of the study. The population for this study is all the artisans and associated employees of British Columbia, Canada. Various variables are adequate & fair compensation, safe and healthy working conditions, an immediate chance to develop human capacities, a chance for continued growth and security, social integration in the work organization, constitutionalism in the organization, work and living space, and social relevance of working life. For this study, artisans & employees are classified into different categories based on job profile, hierarchy level, and type of profession. The detailed questionnaire can be found in Appendix A.

4.0 RESULTS AND FINDINGS

While analyzing different factors influencing the Quality of Work-Life, it has been observed that employees with higher job profiles have more favorable opinions than employees with lower job profiles. In addition, it has been observed that artisans, employees, and freelancers, irrespective of their work experience and product type, and field, all have their own opinions regarding the Quality of Work-Life. Finally, it has also been observed that artisans, employees, and freelancers agree that productivity rises as the Quality of Work-Life rises regardless of their field of work.

Table 3: Classification on the field of profession

Sr. No.	Profession	Number	Percent
1	Paintings	13	13.63
2	Pottery	12	12.52
3	Totem Poles	18	18.18
4	Furniture	20	20.45
5	Unique Textiles	18	18.18
6	Sculpture	16	17.04
		Total=97	Total=100

Table 3 shows the classification of the field of the respondent's profession. It revealed that the largest is in the furniture industry out of the total sample, having 20 respondents accounting for 20.45%. Totem poles and unique textiles profession follow it; both have 18 respondents, or 18.18% of the sample. 16 respondents accounting for 17.04%, belong to the sculpture profession, and 13 respondents accounting for 13.63%, are in the painting profession. The smallest is in the pottery profession, with 12 respondents accounting for 12.52% of the overall sample.

Table 4: Classification on the nature of the job

Sr.No	Nature of the job	Number	Percent
1	Freelancer	37	38.63
2	Supervisor	20	20.45
3	Artisan	40	40.90
		Total= 97	Total= 100

Table 4 represents the classification of the nature of the respondent's job. The largest percentage is 40.90 or 40 respondents, who are all artisans. 37 of the respondents are freelancers accounting for 38.63%. And the smallest group is supervisors, with 20 respondents, accounting for 20.45%.

Table 5: Classification on the duration of the profession

Sr. No	Length of service	Number	Percent
1	Less than 3 years	26	27.27
2	3 to 5 years	29	29.54
3	5 to 10 years	23	23.86
4	10 years or above 10 years	19	19.31
		Total = 97	Total = 100

Table 5 illustrates the number and percent of the total respondents based on duration in their present profession. 26 out of 97 respondents have worked in the same profession for less than 3 years, accounting for 27.27%. The greatest number of respondents falls in the category of 3 to 5 years, i.e., 29, representing 29.54% of the total respondents. 23 respondents have worked in the same profession for 5 to 10 years accounting for 23.86%. There are 19 respondents who have worked in their current profession for 10 years or above, which comes out to be 19.31% of the total respondents.

Table 6: Number of respondents for various dimensions

		Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Series/Facets number	Scale	5	4	3	2	1
1	There is no significant difference among the male and female employees working in the handicraft industry with respect to their perception about different dimensions of quality of work life	46	36	8	4	3
2	There is no significant difference among the employees of different age groups working in handicraft industry with respect to their perception about different dimensions of quality of work life	47	38	6	4	2
3	There is no significant difference among the employees of different religions working in handicraft industry with respect to their perception about different dimensions of quality of work life	50	32	6	5	4
4	There is no significant difference among the employees working with handicraft industry with a different number of dependents with respect to their perception about different dimensions of quality of work life.	44	39	3	4	7
5	There is no significant difference among the employees working in the handicraft industry with different levels of education with respect to their perception of different dimensions of quality of work life.	41	29	10	8	9

Table 6 displays the number of respondents for different factors, such as gender, age, religion, dependents, and education levels. These dimensions maybe perceived to be the variables for QWL in the organizations in the handicraft sector of British Columbia. According to the data, most respondents strongly agree that there is no significant difference among employees of different religions, followed by those who agree that there is no significant difference among

employees of different age groups in the handicraft industry. On the other hand, there were fewer responses indicating agreement that there is no significant difference among employees of different education levels in the handicraft industry.

Table 7: Relative importance Index and Ranking of the responses.

Facets/Series	Relative importance value	Importance Ranking
There is no significant difference among the male and female employees working in handicraft industry with respect to their perception about different dimensions of quality of work life	0.844	3
There is no significant difference among the employees of different age groups working in handicraft industry with respect to their perception about different dimensions of quality of work life	0.856	1
There is no significant difference among the employees of different religions working in handicraft industry with respect to their perception about different dimensions of quality of work life	0.845	2
There is no significant difference among the employees working with handicraft industry with different number of dependents with respect to their perception about different dimensions of quality of work life.	0.825	4
There is no significant difference among the employees working with handicraft industry with different level of education with respect to their perception about different dimensions of quality of work life.	0.775	5

Table 7 shows the responses according to the relative importance index for the selected factors in relation to the organizations' profiles. The Relative Importance Index (RII) calculations for the ranking have been extensively demonstrated in Appendix A and B. The RII provides a way to assess the relative importance of different factors based on their weighted scores. The calculations illustrate the detailed computation of RII scores, which are used to rank the factors based on their relative importance in the analysis.

Based on the importance ranking, the highest rank (Rank 1) is given to the notion that there is no significant difference among employees of different age groups in the handicraft industry regarding their perception of different dimensions of quality of work life. The second rank (Rank 2) is given to the idea that there is no significant difference among employees of different religions in the industry regarding their perception of these dimensions. The third rank (Rank 3) considers the perception of male and female employees working in the handicraft industry, while the fourth rank (Rank 4) pertains to employees with different numbers of dependents. The fifth and final rank (Rank 5) is awarded to the perception of employees with different levels of education working in the industry regarding various dimensions of quality of work.

4.1 Analyses of Various factors related to the Quality of Work Life in Handicraft Organization in British Columbia

This analysis is based on a survey of employees in the craft sector, which aimed to evaluate the quality of work-life according to the conceptual categories proposed by Walton (1975). The study examined eight categories, including Adequate and Fair Compensation, Safe and Healthy Working Conditions, Immediate Opportunity to Use and Develop Human Capacities, Opportunity for Career Growth, Social Integration in the Work Organizations, Constitutionalism in the Work Organizations, Work and Total Life Awareness, and Social Relevance of the Working Life. The detailed questionnaire 3.0 in Appendix A is designed to reveal important insights into each of these categories, indicating areas of strength and areas for improvement in the craft sector's approach to employee well-being.

4.1.1 Adequate and Fair Compensation

The findings show that fast payment of salary and overtime earnings is sufficiently fair, indicating that most respondents in the survey were satisfied with their salaries and agreed that they were paid promptly.

4.1.2 Safe and Healthy Working Conditions

The safe and healthy working conditions have been provided reasonably by the workplace place. As a result, costs associated with employee injuries, medical care, sick leave, and disability benefits may be reduced. For Safe and Healthy Working Conditions, descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, and distribution statistics) were employed and calculated.

4.1.3 Immediate Opportunity to Use and Develop Human Capacities

The results indicate that the employees in the craft sector are provided equitable treatment to use and develop human capital. However, the provision for employee self-improvement is insufficient, indicating that the craft sector units are not as concerned as they should be to keep themselves motivated to develop their capacities.

4.1.4 Opportunity for Career Growth

The findings indicate that craft employees have ample options for professional advancement. They were given several opportunities to improve and upgrade their job-related abilities, as well as training in this area.

4.1.5 Social Integration in the Work Organizations

The results suggest that identifying employees was solely based on their skills. The findings also show that most employees were satisfied with the organization's simple workgroup settings.

4.1.6 Constitutionalism in the Work Organizations

The results show that personal information is kept private to a high degree and that their privacy has been respected. Employers in craft units are also aware of the importance of protecting employees' privacy. On the other hand, employees have a low degree of satisfaction with any system for resolving conflicts.

4.1.7 Work and Total Life Awareness

The findings show that health awareness is very high, irrespective of the nature of the employment, indicating that most respondents believed that they were aware of the effects of their profession on their health. On the other hand, employees are highly dissatisfied with the outcome of their efforts and time spent at work.

4.1.8 Social Relevance of the Working Life

The results indicate that the craft units and employees placed a high value on product and service quality. In fact, this variable is still significant because the rejection rate is high if the product does not fulfill the customers' demands. Regarding job and social security, the level of satisfaction of the employees was very low.

4.2 Analyses of perceptions about QWL of different Demographic factors

4.2.1 Male and female employees working in handicraft industry

Table 8 analyses the impact of gender differentiation maybe perceived as the variables of QWL in the organizations operating in the handicraft sector. This examines the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference among male and female employees in terms of their perceptions of various dimensions of quality of work life. The table reports mean and standard deviation values for each gender group, as well as the whether the null hypothesis was rejected or not.

Table 8: Null hypothesis concerning male and female employees

Null Hypothesis	Mean	Standard Deviation	Significance (2-tailed)	Not Rejected / REJECTED
There is no significant difference among the male and female employees working in handicraft industry w.r.t their perception of different dimensions of quality of work life	3.85	0.937	0.000	Rejected

Table 8 demonstrates that the Z test significance calculation outcome is 0.000, which is smaller than the p-value of 0.05. This result leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis. Therefore, the perceptions of both male and female employees in the handicraft industry regarding the different dimensions of the quality of work life are influenced.

4.2.2 The employees of different age groups working in the handicraft industry

The presented analysis in Table 9 aims to investigate the relationship between age groups and their perceptions regarding the quality of work life in the handicraft industry. The null

hypothesis states that there is no significant difference among employees of different age groups.

Table 9: Null hypothesis concerning employees of different age groups

Null Hypothesis	Mean	Standard Deviation	Significance (2-tailed)	Not Rejected/ Rejected
There is no significant difference among the employees of different age groups working in the handicraft industry w.r.t their perception about different dimensions of quality of work life	3.175	1.358	0.063	Not rejected

Table 9 indicates that the p-value is higher than alpha, which means that the hypothesis cannot be rejected. The result of the Z-test of significance, with a computed value of 0.063, is greater than the p-value of 0.05. This interpretation suggests that the null hypothesis cannot be rejected, indicating that age groups in the handicraft industry do not affect their perceptions regarding the various aspects of the quality of work life.

4.2.3 The employees of different religions working in the handicraft industry

Table 10 provides an analysis of the impact of religious diversity on the quality of work life in the handicraft industry. The null hypothesis in this regard was that there is no significant difference among employees of different religions working in the handicraft industry regarding their perceptions of different dimensions of quality of work life.

Table 10: Null hypothesis concerning employees of different religions

Null Hypothesis	Mean	Standard Deviation	Significance (2-tailed)	Not Rejected/ Rejected
There is no significant difference among the employees of different religions working in the handicraft industry w.r.t their perception about different dimensions of quality of work life	3.175	1.394	0.000	Rejected

Table 10 reveals that the computed Z-test of significance is 0.000, which is lower than the p-value of 0.05. This interpretation leads to the conclusion that the null hypothesis is rejected. Thus, it can be deduced that among employees of different religions in the handicraft industry, there is an impact on their perceptions regarding the various aspects of the quality of work life.

4.2.4 The employees working with handicraft industry with different number of dependents

The impact of an employee's family status on their perception of quality of work life is a topic of interest in organizational research. Table 11 provides empirical evidence on this matter, examining the null hypothesis concerning employees with different numbers of dependents in

the handicraft industry. The table reports the mean and standard deviation of responses as well as the significance level and the decision to reject or not reject the null hypothesis.

Table 11: Null hypothesis concerning employees with different numbers of dependents.

Null Hypothesis	Mean	Standard Deviation	Significance (2-tailed)	Not Rejected / REJECTED
There is no significant difference among the employees working with handicraft industry with different number of dependents w.r.t their perception about different dimensions of quality of work life.	3.425	1.069	0.004	Rejected

Table 11 indicates that the computed Z-test of significance is 0.004, which is lower than the p-value of 0.05. Based on this interpretation, it can be concluded that the null hypothesis is rejected. This suggests that there is a difference among employees working in the handicraft industry with varying numbers of dependents with respect to their perceptions regarding the various aspects of the quality of work life.

4.2.5 The employees working in the handicraft industry with different levels of education

The table 12 explores the impact of educational qualifications on the perceptions of employees in the handicraft industry regarding different dimensions of quality of work life. The null hypothesis states that there is no significant difference among the employees with varying levels of education.

Table 12: Null hypothesis concerning employees with different levels of education

Null Hypothesis	Mean	Standard Deviation	Significance (2-tailed)	Not Rejected / REJECTED
There is no significant difference among the employees working in the handicraft industry with different levels of education w.r.t their perception of different dimensions of quality of work life.	4.2	0.979	0.004	Rejected

Table 12 indicates that the calculated Z-test significance value is 0.004, which is lower than the p-value of 0.05. This implies that the null hypothesis is not accepted. Hence, there is a relationship between the level of education of employees in the handicraft industry and how it affects their perceptions of various aspects of the quality of their work life.

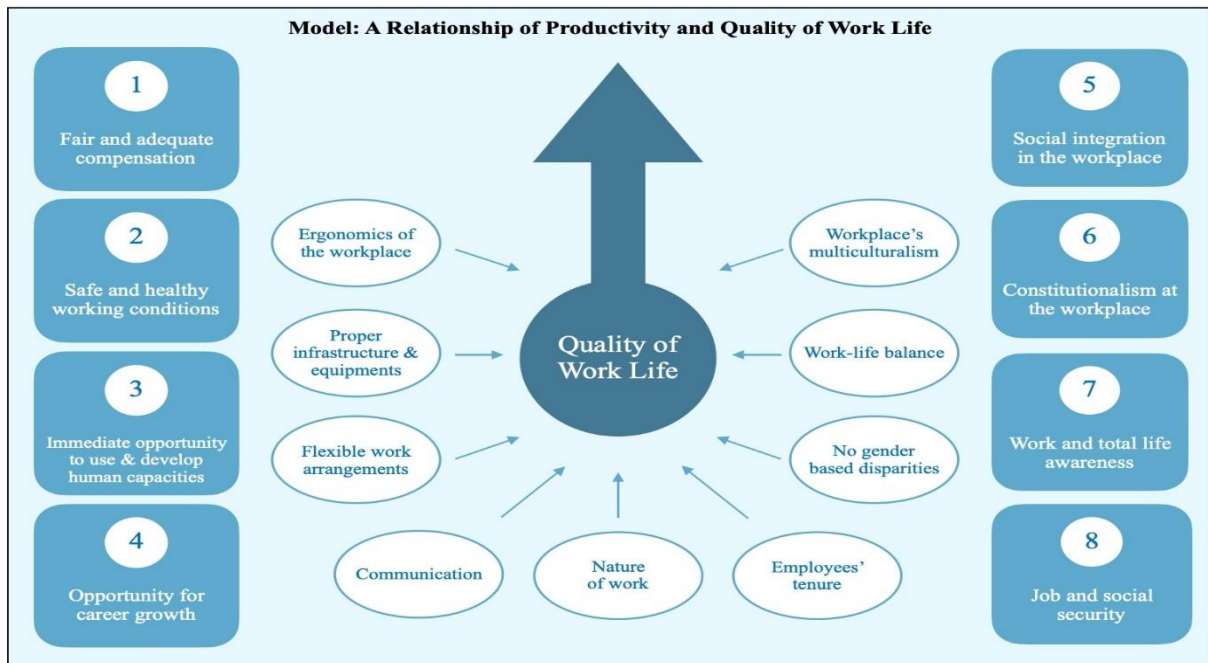
5.0 CONCLUSION

The handicraft sector plays a significant role in Canada's cultural heritage, economy, and tourism industry. This study highlights the importance of Quality of Work Life in the handicraft sector and its impact on productivity and product quality. The findings suggest that improving QWL can lead to enhanced productivity and better product quality. By adopting Walton's eight-

point factors as an effective framework for measuring QWL, the study provides a solid foundation for understanding and improving the work environment in the handicraft industry.

A key inference after analyzing the data is the significant financial and social challenges faced by employees in major conventional handicraft units. This highlights the need for measures to enhance compensation packages and establish robust social support systems. Additionally, the study sheds light on the low educational attainment among handicraft workers, signaling a crucial opportunity for targeted investment in educational and skill development programs to empower and uplift the workforce. Moreover, the analysis exposes the inadequacies in social security and healthcare provisions within handicraft units, underscoring the importance of prioritizing and strengthening these essential support mechanisms. A positive work environment and improved QWL are integral to fostering employee satisfaction, boosting productivity, and driving organizational success. The study also proposes a new model for investigating QWL from various perspectives, as well as a standard method for putting the model as shown in Fig. 1.0 into practice. It is vital for decision-makers to understand the impact of the work environment on employee satisfaction, productivity, and organizational success. If the models' recommendations proposed in this research is applied correctly, and in their true spirit, they can lead to substantial improvements in Quality of Work Life. However, it is important to note that the study is limited to handicraft workers in British Columbia and further research can be conducted to expand the scope of the study.

Fig 1: Model: A relationship of Productivity and Quality of Work Life



6.0 SCOPE FOR FUTURE STUDY

The present study was conducted solely in the province of British Columbia, Canada due to the limitations of resources such as time and funding. However, with additional resources, there

are several future opportunities for expanding the scope of this research to multi-country, religion, and communities. The following is the scope in this field of study:

- Firstly, a wider study covering more craft clusters could be conducted to yield more comprehensive and authentic results.
- Secondly, a longitudinal study could be conducted to further explore the temporal dynamics of the quality of work life in the handicraft industry.
- Thirdly, incorporating a larger study area such as North America would be possible with increased investment of resources. Additionally, cross-country comparisons could provide further value to the research on the quality of work life for Canadian craft industry and artisans.

Ultimately, given that a quality work environment can lead to a more satisfied and productive workforce and have a positive impact on organizational success and profitability, decision-makers should pay close attention to the findings of this study and consider the results in their decision-making processes.

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Appendix A

Questionnaire 1.0

- a. Name of the Organization:
- b. Address:
- c. Designation:
- d. Type of Industry/Product:
- e. Duration of the profession:
- f. Contact Number:

g. Email Id:

Table 13: Questionnaire 2.0 (Perceptions about Quality of Work Life among employees based on different demographic groups in the Handicraft Industry)

		Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Series/Facets number	Scale					
1	There is no significant difference among the male and female employees working in the handicraft industry with respect to their perception about different dimensions of quality of work life					
2	There is no significant difference among the employees of different age groups working in handicraft industry with respect to their perception about different dimensions of quality of work life					
3	There is no significant difference among the employees of different religions working in handicraft industry with respect to their perception about different dimensions of quality of work life.					
4	There is no significant difference among the employees working with handicraft industry with a different number of dependents with respect to their perception about different dimensions of quality of work life.					
5	There is no significant difference among the employees working in the handicraft industry with different levels of education with respect to their perception of different dimensions of quality of work life.					

Table 14: Questionnaire 3.0 (Employees' satisfaction level for different Quality of Work Life factors)

		Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Series/Facets number	Scale					
1	You get sufficient salary on-time					

2	There are safe and healthy working conditions in your organization.					
3	You are treated equally without any discrimination.					
4	You have ample opportunities to improve your skills.					
5	You have sufficient opportunity to grow.					
6	You are recognized and get your salary based on your skills.					
7	The work group setting is appropriate.					
8	Your personal and private information is kept confidential.					
9	The conflict resolution procedure is in-place and efficient.					
10	You are conscious and aware of the effects of their profession/work on their health.					
11	You are satisfied with the outcome of your time and efforts spent at workplace.					
12	The quality of product or service you produce is very important to remain competitive and profitable.					
13	You feel that the job in your organization is secured.					

Appendix B

Relative Importance Index Method:

To perform statistical analysis, the relative importance index method was used.

$$\text{Relative important index} = (5N_5 + 4N_4 + 3N_3 + 2N_2 + 1N_1) / A * N$$

N5 = Number of respondents who strongly agree

N4 = Number of respondents who agree

N3 = Number of respondents who were neutral

N2 = Number of respondents who disagreed

N1 = Number of respondents who strongly disagreed

A (highest weight) = 5

Number of respondents = 97

Table 15

Organizational profile		Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total (n)	A=5 and N = 97	Relative Importance Value = Total (n)/A*N
Sr no	Scale	5	4	3	2	1		A*N	
1	There is no significant difference among the male and female employees working in handicraft industry w.r.t their perception about different dimensions of quality of work life	230	144	24	8	3	409	485	0.844
2	There is no significant difference among the employees of different age groups working in handicraft industry w.r.t their perception about different dimensions of quality of work life	235	152	18	8	2	415	485	0.856
3	There is no significant difference among the employees of different religions working in handicraft industry w.r.t their perception about different dimensions of quality of work life	250	128	18	10	4	410	485	0.845
4	There is no significant difference among the employees working with handicraft industry with different number of	220	156	9	8	7	400	485	0.825

	dependents w.r.t their perception about different dimensions of quality of work life.								
5	There is no significant difference among the employees working with handicraft industry with different level of education w.r.t their perception about different dimensions of quality of work life.	205	116	30	16	9	376	485	0.775

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Not applicable.

Abbreviations

QWL: Quality of Work Life

Authors' contributions

All authors contributed to the study conception and design. Material preparation, data collection and analysis were performed by Ajay K. Garg, Amit Kohli, Smrutisree Mohapatra. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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Availability of data and materials

To ensure full anonymity for the participants the transcribed interviews are not possible to share publicly.

Competing interests

The authors have no relevant financial or non-financial interests to disclose.

Ethics approval and consent to participate

Ethical rules and recommendations were followed throughout the process so as to minimize the strain on the participants and to ensure that their participation was a pleasant experience. The participants were treated respectfully and were ensured full anonymity.