

# **Assessing the Quality of Working Life and Levels of Depression in Athletes and Non-Athlete Staff in National Olympic and Paralympics Academy of Iran**

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## **Abstract**

The purpose of the present study was to Assess the quality of working life and levels of depression in athletes and non-athlete staff in National Olympic and Paralympics Academy of Iran. This research method was descriptive – analytical. Data were collected through questionnaires. Statistical population included all employees of the National Olympic and Paralympics Academy (n = 56). Due to the limited population, the entire population was considered as a statistical sample and 46 questionnaires were acceptable. It should be mentioned that employees who exercised two or more days a week for half an hour were considered athletes group and those who had less time to exercise were considered as non-athlete group. The research tool consisted of quality of work life questionnaire (Walton 1974) and the Beck depression questionnaire. Validity of the questionnaires was approved by 10 members of academic staff. Through Cronbach's alpha test, reliability of the questionnaires were calculated (76%) for Depression questionnaire and (84%) for quality of work life questionnaire .we used T-test to test our hypotheses.

**Keywords:** Depression, National Olympic and Paralympics Academy , Iran

## **Introduction**

Nowadays, the most important asset of any organization is efficient and committed workforce. At present the quality of work life is an organizational philosophy that wants to enhance the dignity of employees, change the organizational culture, and increase employees' physical and mental well-being. In some organizations, quality of work life programs are intended to

increase employees' confidence and ability to solve problems and ultimately increase employee satisfaction and organizational commitment.

Thus, understanding the effective factors of health for human resources of any organization is important. One of these effective factors is exercise and physical activity with the goal of human evolution through physical and motor activity. In today's Organizational community that a great reduction has been occurred in the frequency and intensity of motor activity and human positive existence is made difficult throughout life, deficiency of motor activity will affect individuals and communities significantly. Quality of work life (QWL) has been considered as a global concept in the field of human resources management and organizational development and providing it is the success key of any organization. In general, it can be said that the definition of «QWL» is the perception of an organization's staff about physical and psychological desirability in work environment and their working conditions.

QWL is a new sign of development in cooperation that greatly depends on the opportunities for individuals or groups to work in any levels to influence organization. Finally, to operationalize the concept of work life quality (finding a practical interpretation), it can be said that this concept will be best understood when we consider it as a goal, as a process that will accomplish that goal, and as a philosophy that determines employee management method. Employees mental needs will be met with the use of working life quality techniques. In fact, working life quality improvement in any organization enhances mental relaxation and achievement motivation among the employees.

Depression is the emotional state that reduces positive reinforcement of certain behaviors or it is a temperament that is defined with a sense of inadequacy, hopelessness, decreased activity or reactivity, pessimism, sadness and associated symptoms.

Assadi in his research suggests that there is a significant difference between athletes and non-athlete students in mental health factors including 'physical symptoms,' anxiety and sleep disorder, "" social function "and" depression" ( $P \leq 0.5$ ) and in all these cases, the athlete students are better than non-athlete students.

Ahmadi stated that prior to applying dependent variable (physical activity), there was no significant difference between the four groups in terms of mental health and its areas. After 12 weeks applying independent variables and 2 sessions per week, one-way ANOVA indicated significant differences among the four groups in terms of mental health and its areas. Sydamry study found that other than depression component (love and affection), significant differences was seen in other components of depression (verification and validation, success, completion oriented, competence, absolute power and independence) among athletes and non-athletes students. American Academy of Physical Education (1984) stated that from long ago, psychiatrists believe that mental health is associated with physical comfort and that short-term physical activity is effective in discharging stress.

## **Research Objectives**

- 1) Describing the work life quality of National Olympic and Paralympics Academy's athletes and non-athletes employees.
- 2) Describing the work life quality of Olympic and Paralympics National Academy's athletes and non-athletes employees.
- 3) Describing the depression status of the Olympic and Paralympics National Academy's athletes and non-athletes personnel.
- 4) Describing the relationship between work life quality and depression of National Olympic and Paralympics Academy's employees.
- 5) Comparing the depression levels of National Olympic and Paralympics Academy's athletes and non-athletes Staff.
- 6) Comparing the working life quality of National Olympic and Paralympics Academy's athletes and non-athletes employees.

## **Materials and Methods**

This research method was descriptive – analytical. Data were collected through questionnaires. Statistical population included all employees of the National Olympic and Paralympics Academy (n = 56). Due to the limited population, the entire population was considered as a statistical sample and 46 questionnaires were acceptable. It should be mentioned that employees who exercised two or more days a week for half an hour were considered athletes group and those who had less time to exercise were considered as non-athlete group.

The research tool consisted of quality of work life questionnaire (Walton 1974) and the Beck depression questionnaire. Validity of the questionnaires was approved by 10 members of academic staff. Through Cronbach's alpha test, reliability of the questionnaires were calculated (76%) for Depression questionnaire and (84%) for quality of work life questionnaire. Walton quality of work life questionnaire consists of eight components as follows:

- 1) Fairly and adequate payment
- 2) Safe and healthy working environment
- 3) Providing opportunities for continued growth and Security
- 4) Being law-oriented in the organization
- 5) Social dependence of working life
- 6) The overall space of working life
- 7) Social integration and cohesion
- 8) Development of human capabilities

The questionnaire was scored according to Likert five options scale. Number one and five was given to the least and highest options, respectively. Since the questionnaire had 29-item, the mean score was 87. Depression questionnaire was analyzed based on Beck guideline.

In this study, descriptive statistics were used to describe the study variables, Test KS (Kolmogorov - Smirnov test) was used to determine the normal distribution of the data, Pearson correlation coefficient was used to determine the relationship between two variables and independent t-test (Independent T-test) was used to compare means of two groups. Statistical calculation performed by the software SPSS 17.0 and alpha (error coefficient) was equal 0.05.

### Findings

Table 1 shows quality of work life, its dimensions, and depression mean score for National Olympic and Paralympics Academy’s athletes and non-athletes employees. In terms of work life quality, as can be seen both groups gained scores lower than average. Of working life quality’s eight dimensions, only safe and healthy work environment scored higher than average. Beck Depression questionnaire analysis showed that in terms of depression level, both athletes and non-athletes staff were normal.

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation of variables in the staff of the National Olympic and

Development of human capabilities	Integration and social cohesion	Whole space	Social dependency	Law Orientation	Providing the opportunities for continued growth	healthy and safe Work environment	Fairly payment	Depression	QWL	Number	
±3.24 13.32	±2.62 9.22	±1.88 9.68	±1.51 5.92	±2.34 6.32	±2.87 9.25	±2.09 9.53	±2.12 7	±11.37 11.82	71±16.5	28	Athlete
±4.25 12.5	±3.23 8.66	±2.47 9.33	±1.82 5.66	±2.72 6.66	±2.85 8.61	±1.75 8.83	±2.52 7.5	±8.68 11.77	±14.77 68.28	18	Non athlete

Paralympics Academy

As can be seen in Table 2, the significance level of independent T-test for depression and work life quality variables is more than 0.05. Thus the null hypothesis of difference lack between averages of the two groups was confirmed.

Table 2: Results of t-test for comparison of two groups of athletes and non-athletes

Null hypothesis	Significance level	Error rate	Number	Variable
confirmation	0.137	0.05	46	noisserpeD
confirmation	0.263	0.05	46	efil gnikroW ytilauq

At assessing relationships between quality of work life and depression, Pearson correlation test results showed that there did not exist significant relationship between variables at error 0.05 ( $P = 0.765$ ).

### Discussion and Conclusion

The findings showed that there was not any relationship between quality of work life and depression in Academy employees. Also, there was not observed any difference between athletes and non-athletes depression which was consistent with the following results.

Yachmn et al (1991) did not find any correlation between physical activity and depression. After long reviewing, Lisa and Cooper (1997) did not find any evidence concerning the correlation between exercise and depression (2). Matynsn (1993) stated that increased aerobic fitness would not have psychological effects. Kaglr et al (1990) did not observe a close relationship between depression and aerobic fitness (8). In terms of depression, workers were in normal conditions; but other than safe and healthy conditions, quality of work life was lower than average. It was possible that exposure to dynamic and athletic environment and being in touch with athletes had positive effect on the mental condition of Academy athletes and non-athletes staff and put them in good condition. Other reasons for lack of depression may be mean age of 33 that lead to creation of young and lively environment.

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