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# The role of various forms of subjective well-being with quality of work life in the aviation industry

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#### Abstract

**Aim/purpose** – This study explores the crucial link between the quality of work life (QWL) and subjective well-being (SWB) among aviation industry employees. By delving into the current state of QWL and its relationship with key aspects of SWB, such as life satisfaction, positive affect, and negative affect, this research aims to offer valuable insights that can help employee well-being and job satisfaction in the aviation industry. **Design/methodology/approach** – A sample of 350 employees, including front-line executives such as cabin crew, airport staff, cargo handlers, and administrative personnel from the aviation industry, was selected for the study. The path analysis method was employed to develop and evaluate a model that links QWL with SWB and its dimensions, using SEM through AMOS version 20.0.

**Findings** – The study found that six aspects of QWL, namely: (1) support from manager/supervisor, (2) freedom from work-related stress, (3) salary and additional benefits, (4) job satisfaction, challenge, use of skills, and autonomy, (5) relationships with colleagues, and (6) communication, decision-making, and job security, are positively correlated with SWB. However, one aspect – involvement and responsibility at work – was found to have a negative association with SWB. The results demonstrated that most of the model's indicators were appropriate, confirming the model's fitness. It was concluded that QWL is a significant antecedent that affects SWB.

**Research implications/limitations** – There is a dearth of links between the concepts of QWL and SWB in the aviation industry. The sample is related to NCR (India), and it is recommended that the relationship between QWL and SWB in these findings be extended to other professionals and non-professionals employed in different industries.

**Originality/value/contribution** – The study has formed a comprehensive model connecting QWL and SWB. This study offers a fresh perspective on best management practices to encourage the implementation of QWL, which further affects SWB in the aviation industry.

**Keywords:** subjective well-being, life satisfaction, positive affect, negative affect, quality of work life, aviation industry.

**JEL Classification:** I3, L2, M1, Z3.

### 1. Introduction

Organizations increasingly emphasize technological advancement and operational efficiency in the contemporary era, characterized by rapid artificial intelligence and machine learning developments. However, this emphasis often comes at the cost of employee well-being and the integration of positive psychology into the workplace. The competitive landscape, fast-paced lifestyles, and digital transformation have significantly influenced and altered organizational dynamics (Godenzi, 2012). Regrettably, the pursuit of success often disregards the well-being of employees. Nevertheless, the success of any industry fundamentally depends on the well-being and satisfaction of its employees (Reddy & Reddy, 2010). Consequently, prioritizing employee well-being and integrating positive psychology into organizational operations are essential for sustainable growth (Teryima et al., 2016).

The aviation sector, in particular, is a highly demanding industry where employees play a vital role in shaping an organization's reputation, extending across airlines, airports, and ground services companies. Employees are pivotal in delivering an organization's products and services, prioritizing their well-being (Coelho et al., 2011). Over the past decade, from FY2014 to FY2024, the Indian aviation industry has experienced an impressive 10% compounded annual growth rate (CAGR) in domestic passenger traffic, driven by a strong economy,

improved infrastructure, and enhanced regional connectivity. The number of operational airports has doubled from 74 in 2014 to 148 in April 2023 (Khan, 2024).

The nature of work in the aviation industry involves high job demands, constant pressure, and a perfectionist approach, which often blurs the lines between work and personal life, impacting employee well-being. The adage "a happy employee is a productive employee" underscores the importance of employee contentment for industry productivity and employee loyalty (Sirgy et al., 2001). Given that employees spend a significant amount of time at work, it is imperative for organizations to ensure their contentment with their work lives. The concept of quality of work life (QWL) revolves around ensuring employees' overall well-being and satisfaction in the workplace, encompassing factors such as working conditions and the physical and psychological aspects of labor (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2012).

Investing in QWL yields significant benefits for both individuals and organizations. Aviation industry employees handle numerous responsibilities, including check-in, boarding, special passenger care, and in-flight services. This heavy workload significantly impacts their well-being, affecting their professional and personal lives (Efraty & Sirgy, 1990; Lee et al., 2007; Requena, 2003). The changing work dynamics, technological advancements, demographic shifts, societal influences, and individual desires have made balancing work and personal life increasingly challenging (Vyas & Butakhieo, 2020). The pervasive use of technology has created an expectation for employees to be constantly available for work-related communication outside regular office hours, leading to heightened pressure and exhaustion, negatively affecting their overall well-being and productivity (Law et al., 2017; Wepfer et al., 2017). While government policies promoting work-life balance represent a step in the right direction, their non--mandatory nature limits their effectiveness. Achieving work-life balance is crucial for the well-being and productivity of the workforce (Chou & Cheung, 2013; Le et al., 2020).

Organizations must prioritize QWL to synchronize their employees' hearts, souls, and minds (Agarwal et al., 2019b). QWL enhances employee satisfaction, productivity, learning and development, adaptability to changes, employer branding, and employees' physical and psychological health (Reddy & Reddy, 2010). Mental health is increasingly gaining attention in organizations, with leaders emphasizing employees' subjective well-being (SWB) for organizational growth (Bryson et al., 2017). This study aims to assess the connection between QWL and different aspects of SWB. Previous research has indicated that work-life balance profoundly impacts individual well-being and overall satisfaction (Gröpel & Kuhl, 2009). As mental health garners increasing focus, leaders recognize the importance of SWB among employees for sustained organizational

growth. Enhancing overall employee well-being should be a central theme in policy discussions aimed at improving productivity and growth (Bryson et al., 2017). The link between QWL and SWB is critical, as achieving this balance has been associated with higher job and life satisfaction, improved well-being, and enhanced quality of life (Schwingshackl, 2014).

The literature on QWL is expanding, highlighting several positive outcomes, including increased productivity, higher employee engagement, decreased turnover rates, and improved job satisfaction (Suyantiningsih et al., 2018). Studies have demonstrated the positive impact of the QWL initiatives on various aspects of employee well-being and organizational performance. Studies have shown that when employees are treated fairly, they experience a sense of attachment, belongingness, pride in their work, involvement in decision-making processes, good relationships with colleagues, satisfaction with the work environment, and a good work-life balance. These factors enhance their motivation and job satisfaction (Drnovšek et al., 2024). Adhering to these factors significantly improves QWL and employee well-being (Hunker, 2014). However, there is a scarcity of research explicitly focusing on QWL in the aviation industry (Cahill et al., 2023).

Furthermore, Bagtasos (2011) noted that QWL had been examined less in Asian countries as against European and North American countries. SWB is affected by various factors, including socio-demographic characteristics, personality, economic status, life events, and cultural differences (Agarwal et al., 2019a; Agarwal & Mewafarosh, 2021). Despite the growing research in positive psychology, policymakers still prioritize employee well-being, but the domain of SWB remains relatively underexplored (Sweet & Kanaroglou, 2016). Researchers have typically focused on QWL and SWB separately, and there is insufficient research on the connection between these two constructs and their components. This study seeks to address this gap by examining the relationship between QWL and SWB and exploring how different dimensions of SWB – life satisfaction, positive affect, and negative affect – are linked to QWL. Additionally, there is a lack of empirical research using AMOS to investigate the relationship between QWL and SWB in the Indian aviation industry. This study aims to review the existing literature and establish a comprehensive connection between QWL and SWB.

Given the challenges posed by globalization, diversification, technological advancements, and evolving employee attitudes, organizations need to establish a distinct position and thrive in the constantly changing business environment. In this context, an organization's human capital is its most crucial resource, capable of providing a competitive advantage through dedicated and engaged employees.

Job designs that offer flexibility to employees are crucial for enhancing QWL. According to Drobnič et al. (2010), employees in such roles experience greater workplace comfort, positively impacting their quality of life. Poor QWL can significantly affect employees' well-being, satisfaction, and overall organizational commitment. Various studies have recognized the importance of QWL (Martel & Dupuis, 2006), as it substantially influences an employee's well-being and satisfaction. Human resources play a critical role in achieving organizational objectives, and employers should take a strategic approach to help employees achieve a work-life balance (Allui & Sahni, 2016). Previous research has indicated a positive association between satisfaction and QWL (Koonmee et al., 2010). However, as there is insufficient research on QWL in the aviation industry (Alola & Alafeshat, 2020), this study aims to address the following objectives:

- 1. Evaluate the QWL among aviation industry employees.
- 2. Investigate the relationship between different forms of SWB (life satisfaction, positive affect, and negative affect) and QWL.

The study seeks to answer the following research questions:

- 1. What is the current state of QWL among employees in the Indian aviation industry?
- 2. How do different aspects of SWB relate to the QWL of aviation employees?

This study is structured as follows: Section 2 presents a comprehensive literature review focusing on QWL and SWB. It outlines the theoretical framework underpinning this study. Section 3 includes the hypothesis derivation and theories supporting the development of theories. Section 4 includes the research methodology, data collection, and analysis methods. Section 5 discusses the results and provides an in-depth discussion of the findings. Finally, Section 6 concludes the study, offering implications for practice, limitations, and future research directions.

#### 2. Literature review

In the past two decades, there have been substantial global changes in politics, society, and the economy (Godenzi, 2012). These changes have significantly impacted on the work environment, making QWL an increasingly crucial concept in fast-paced workplaces. The existing literature examines the QWL and SWB, highlighting the relationship between SWB and QWL.

### 2.1. Quality of work life

Fostering a high level of employee performance requires organizations to prioritize various aspects, such as service and human resource quality, delivery, and marketing efficiency (Thakur & Sharma, 2019). QWL encompasses several crucial work elements, including the physical work environment, fair compensation, reasonable working hours, opportunities for career progression, employee benefits, and welfare services (Lestari & Margaretha, 2021). Ensuring employee satisfaction and motivation is vital for efficient resource utilization and strategic decision-making, ultimately providing organizations with a competitive edge. A comprehensive approach to QWL considers work's physical, mental, social, and economic aspects, aiming to benefit employees and the organization by fostering higher job satisfaction and performance (Gayathiri et al., 2013). QWL underscores the importance of the relationship between the employee and the work environment, providing a framework for creating a supportive and fulfilling workplace (Rose et al., 2006). In conclusion, QWL plays a pivotal role in attracting and retaining qualified employees, ultimately contributing to the organization's overall success (Mazlan et al., 2018). Research consistently demonstrates that employees with high QWL enjoy greater job satisfaction and higher job performance and are less likely to leave their positions (Chan & Wyatt, 2007).

## 2.2. Subjective well-being

In today's workplace, employee well-being is paramount. It encompasses improving working conditions to enhance employee satisfaction in psychological, social, and physical-economic aspects as work paradigms evolve. Work-life balance involves finding satisfaction and good functioning at work and home with minimal role conflict (Clark, 2000). Factors contributing to QWL include job satisfaction, achieving work-life balance, optimizing the physical work environment, ensuring job security, and fostering effective team communication for overall employee well-being (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2012). Huges and Bozionelos (2007) emphasized that work-life balance allows individuals, regardless of gender or age, to effectively manage their work, responsibilities, and goals. In the era of globalization, the aviation sector has emerged as the preferred mode of long-distance travel due to its speed, efficiency, and economic viability. The aviation sector, in particular, highlights the importance of SWB due to its significant contribution to the global economy and the demanding nature of the work involved (Ganiyu et al., 2017).

### 2.3. Quality of work-life and subjective well-being

The aviation industry significantly contributes to the global economy, with substantial growth in recent years. It plays a crucial role in driving economic development, global trade, and tourism while attracting international investments (Ganiyu et al., 2017). Prioritizing the QWL leads to enhanced employee well-being in the workplace (Grote & Guest, 2017). Organizations that promote a better work-life balance can reduce conflicts between work and personal life, resulting in improved employee performance, increased confidence, and higher satisfaction levels (Eberman et al., 2019). It is evident from the existing literature that a positive work-life balance impacts organizational working conditions and employee performance and significantly influences overall employee well-being and satisfaction (Beauregard & Henry, 2009). Research in other industries has shown a direct link between the QWL and SWB.

Health professionals in Nigeria and other African countries have reported poor QWL, significantly impacting their well-being compared with international health professionals (Matlala et al., 2021). A quantitative study conducted in Lithuania with 1,851 educators in April 2020 found a positive impact of work-life balance on well-being (Kumpikaitė et al., 2021). The study supports that the QWL practices in the banking sector impacts employees' SWB directly and indirectly (Roy et al., 2023). A high-quality work-life balance has been shown to contribute to an individual's overall life satisfaction, thus influencing their firm's growth (Drnovšek et al., 2024).

The studies confirm that employees with a better family-work-life balance exhibit higher job performance, including increased productivity and improved relationships with colleagues (Beauregard & Henry, 2009). The tourism sector has also shown a direct relationship between the QWL and employees' SWB (Yang, 2020). The aviation sector alone accounts for over 4% of the global GDP and employs more than 65 million individuals worldwide. Its economic influence is comparable to that of countries like Argentina or Switzerland if considered independently. The aviation sector experienced impressive revenue generation of \$328 billion in 2020 alone – an astonishing increase of 40% compared to the previous year. Given these substantial contributions to the economy and extensive employment opportunities provided by the aviation industry, prioritizing the QWL balance and well-being of employees is of utmost importance. The fulfillment of human needs in the workplace is closely tied to SWB, or life satisfaction, which reflects a person's overall contentment with their life (Diener, 2009; Sirgy, 2012). Satisfaction with working conditions is strongly linked to life satisfaction (Ryu, 2016).

The aviation sector's economic influence is comparable to that of entire countries, emphasizing the need to invest in improving employee work-life quality. It is worth noting that the quality of service provided by frontline staff significantly impacts customer satisfaction in the aviation industry (Monkevičius, 2014). This underscores the importance of enhancing the work-life quality of frontline employees to improve overall customer satisfaction and organizational performance. Studies have also revealed the significant impact of HR practices on employee well-being, loyalty, and dedication within the airline industry (Alola & Alafeshat, 2020). According to these findings, effective HR practices can increase job satisfaction, decrease absenteeism rates, and improve organizational performance. Policymakers and HR managers must recognize the importance of prioritizing employee QWL to attract and retain competent and productive employees. In conclusion, the aviation industry's continuing growth and substantial economic contributions necessitate focusing on enhancing the QWL for employees. The aviation industry is a complex ecosystem with various aspects that can impact customer satisfaction, including pre-flight experiences, in-flight services, digital experiences during the flight, and post-flight experiences (Archana & Subha, 2012). By addressing work-life balance concerns and prioritizing employee well-being, organizations can improve performance, productivity, and overall customer satisfaction (Okan & Bayraktar, 2021). This approach not only benefits employees but also contributes to the industry's sustained success and growth.

The concepts of QWL and SWB are multifaceted and have significant implications in the professional realm. It has been demonstrated that an improved work-life balance positively influences employee attitudes and performance (Sari et al., 2019), prompting organizations to recognize the importance of QWL as a critical corporate strategy for maintaining a competitive edge in the global market (Alown et al., 2021). QWL encompasses an individual's perception and attitude towards their work environment and broader aspects, including personal happiness and SWB influenced by their job (David et al., 2001; Nickson, 2009).

The groundwork for understanding QWL is laid by initial research focusing on employee happiness, which is associated with satisfaction regarding working conditions, non-work-related factors, overall life circumstances, and subjective feelings of well-being attributable to one's workplace experience (Sirgy et al., 2021b). During a flight, the workload experienced by employees can fluctuate, particularly when they encounter challenges such as communication breakdowns and adverse weather conditions. Notably, employees are more susceptible to making errors during periods of high workload, which can have adverse psychological effects on them. Recent research conducted by Wiegmann and Shappell

(2017) has highlighted the role of cockpit complexity in contributing to pilot errors and airline accidents. Moreover, the demanding nature of their work, combined with a lack of effective work-life balance schemes, may lead to mental health issues for employees, including stress, depression, and even thoughts of suicide. Despite its substantial economic contribution, the aviation industry has received limited attention from researchers regarding QWL among hotel employees or determining factors influencing it. Additionally, the concept of QWL encompasses opportunities for participative decision-making as well.

The aviation industry has not received adequate attention regarding the QWL among hotel employees and the factors that influence it. Several studies have highlighted a need for improvement in employees' QWL (Hunker, 2014). Therefore, it is crucial to identify the factors influencing individuals' QWL and understand how they impact their working lives within the aviation industry. A comprehensive literature review emphasizes three critical theories related to the dynamics of this relationship: social exchange theory, spillover theory, and need satisfaction theory. The social exchange theory emphasizes the impact of social exchanges on human behavior. Enhanced interaction among knowledgeable employees fosters improved job performance and positions them as experts in their organization. Trust and interpersonal relationships contribute to feelings of psychological safety and meaningfulness (Kahn, 1990).

Applying social exchange theory in the aviation industry suggests that promoting positive social exchanges and reciprocal relationships among aviation employees can significantly improve psychological safety and job satisfaction. QWL includes crucial work elements such as the work environment, fair compensation, reasonable and flexible working hours, opportunities for career progression, employee benefits, and welfare services (Lestari & Margaretha, 2021). Organizations are seen as promoting a better QWL to enhance the well-being of their employees (Salas-Vallina & Alegre, 2021). Previous studies have consistently shown a strong connection between QWL and positive effects on employees (Kara et al., 2013).

The need satisfaction theory suggests that social connections among employees are linked to their needs, such as knowledge, esteem, and social interaction, leading to an improved QWL. It emphasizes the importance of fostering social relationships in the workplace through trust, a sense of belongingness, and adherence to ethical values to meet various human needs (Requena, 2003) consistently. Singhapakdi et al. (2015) argued that the values upheld by the organization and its employees are interconnected with fulfilling the needs of organizational personnel. Utilizing the need satisfaction theory in the aviation industry, we can understand the significance of meeting various employee needs to en-

hance QWL. This could involve addressing employees' needs for esteem, social interaction, and knowledge, particularly in the face of fluctuating workloads and high-stress environments. Providing continuous training, professional growth opportunities, and a supportive work environment can significantly boost morale and mental well-being, reducing stress-related issues and enhancing overall performance.

A study on commuters in Hong Kong revealed that an imbalance in the QWL significantly affects their well-being (He et al., 2023). Implementing quality work-life HR practices has the potential to enhance employee well-being at work and in other aspects of life (Grote & Guest, 2017). QWL refers to an employee's contentment with various resources, participation in activities, and outcomes resulting from their involvement in the workplace (Sirgy et al., 2001a, p. 242).

The theory of spillover suggests that experiences in the workplace can spill over beyond personal lives as well. Positive work experiences, such as achieving a good work-life balance through flexible scheduling or receiving support during high-stress situations, can positively influence employees' overall well-being. On the contrary, negative experiences can lead to mental health issues, negative-ly impacting personal lives and overall life satisfaction. Research consistently shows a strong positive correlation between QWL and various outcomes, such as job commitment, job satisfaction, reduced turnover rates, improved work performance, organizational citizenship behavior, decreased absenteeism levels, and increased overall profitability. This aligns with the study's findings, demonstrating how the enhanced QWL positively impacts aviation employees' work and personal life satisfaction (Ariza-Montes et al., 2018).

Many companies in the aviation industry recognize the vital role of QWL in their HR department. QWL is essential for creating a balanced work and personal life environment, resulting in improved performance, productivity, and employee satisfaction (Ilkhanizadeh & Karatepe, 2017). To achieve this, organizations should provide attractive measures such as flexible hours, competitive compensation packages, and health benefits (Srivastava & Kanpur, 2014).

## 3. Hypothesis derivation

The extensive literature review and underpinning theories support the development of a hypothesis for the study.

The social exchange theory suggests that employees assess their interactions based on the perceived advantages and disadvantages, which can impact

their job satisfaction and performance (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). This theory forms the basis for hypotheses about how improved QWL through positive social interactions can enhance job satisfaction and performance. In our study, we have incorporated the social exchange theory into the model to propose that promoting positive social exchanges among aviation employees will enhance psychological safety and job satisfaction, ultimately leading to decreased errors and improved overall performance.

The need satisfaction theory proposes that meeting employees' needs for knowledge, esteem, and social interaction can improve their QWL and overall well-being (Requena, 2003). This theory suggests that addressing these needs through continuous training, career development, and a supportive work environment can positively impact employee morale and performance. In alignment with the model, the need satisfaction theory hypothesizes that addressing employees' needs, especially in high-stress environments, will result in enhanced QWL, reduced stress, and improved job performance.

The spillover theory suggests that work experiences can affect personal life and vice versa. According to this theory, positive work experiences can improve overall life satisfaction (Sirgy, 2012). This theory forms the basis for hypotheses about how work-life balance impacts overall well-being and life satisfaction. The model in this study utilizes the spillover theory to propose that positive work experiences, facilitated by improved QWL, will result in increased overall life satisfaction and reduced negative spillover into personal life.

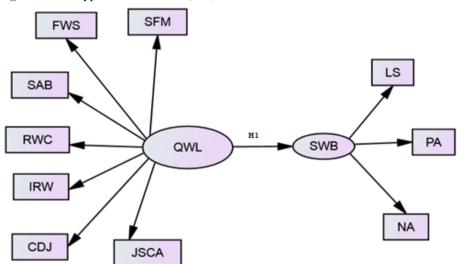
The economic importance of the aviation industry is well-recognized, but there is a lack of research on QWL among aviation employees. This emphasizes the need for focused research on the factors influencing QWL and how they impact employee performance. This study seeks to address this gap by using established theories to investigate how enhancing QWL through effective HR practices affects employee well-being, job satisfaction, and organizational performance. By linking these theories with the proposed hypotheses, the study offers a comprehensive framework for understanding the connections between QWL, employee performance, and overall satisfaction. This theoretical alignment supports the study's approach and underscores the significance of addressing QWL to improve employee and organizational outcomes.

The literature review and theoretical background support the development of the following hypotheses: The hypothesized models (M1 and M2) are presented in Figures 1 and 2, illustrating the relationships between QWL and SWB, including life satisfaction, positive affect, and negative affect.

In the aviation industry, the QWL is used to attract and keep skilled employees, and it directly affects employees' motivation and productivity (Amornpipat, 2019). The demanding nature of work in aviation can lead to mental health issues such as distress, depression, anxiety, and anger. Otto and Webber (2013) highlighted that employees in this industry are at risk of clinical depression and distress due to the highly stressful nature of their work. QWL programs are essential in mitigating workplace errors and incidents (Jayakumar & Kalaiselvi, 2012). Work plays a central role in people's lives, and their QWL considerably impacts their total SWB (Ko, 2021). Thus, it is postulated that QWL significantly influences the overall well-being of employees. Accordingly, the following hypothesis has been formulated:

**H1:** Quality of work life is significantly linked with subjective well-being.

The conceptual model (M1) illustrating this relationship is depicted in Figure 1.



**Figure 1.** The hypothesized model (M1)

Notes: SFM – support from manager/supervisor, FWS – freedom from work-related stress, SAB – salary and additional benefits; JSCA – job satisfaction, challenge, use of skills and autonomy, RWC – relationship with work colleague, IRW – involvement and responsibility at work and communication, CDJ – decision making and job security, LS – life satisfaction, PA – positive affect, NA – negative affect.

Source: Authors' own elaboration.

Walton (1973) highlighted the significance of QWL in preserving human and environmental values that are often overlooked due to technological advancements. Research by Sirgy et al. (2001) indicated that QWL significantly impacts life satisfaction. QWL, defined by Shamir and Solomon (1985), encom-

passes an individual's job-related well-being, rewarding work experiences, and stress reduction, leading to overall life satisfaction. There is a lower emphasis on QWL in Asia than in North America and Europe due to limited implementation and research. Work-life balance has significantly impacted individual well-being and satisfaction (Gröpel & Kuhl, 2009). Fair treatment, involvement in decisionmaking, a good work environment, and work-life balance have been found to enhance motivation and job satisfaction. Studies by Burchell and Robin (2011) and Hunker (2014) suggested that following these points can significantly improve QWL and employee well-being. The correlation between QWL and job satisfaction is essential in sustaining and retaining a skilled workforce, thus fostering productivity in the oil and gas industry. This study delves into the impact of work-life quality on job satisfaction among employees in a gas processing plant. The results show a significant positive correlation between employee satisfaction and four key components of QWL: safe working conditions, work-life balance, personal growth opportunities, and overall well-being of employees (Hammond et al., 2023).

It is essential for employees to feel appreciated and valued by their organizations. Research has shown that satisfied employees are more likely to provide outstanding service to external customers, ultimately increasing customer satisfaction in hotel companies where employees consistently interact directly with guests. A study on hotel employees found a positive relationship between QWL and satisfaction (Lee et al., 2015), So it has been hypothesized as H1a:

H1a: QWL will be significantly linked with life satisfaction.

Employees with a high QWL tend to have positive feelings toward their organization, which is expected to lead to favorable organizational attitudes. Previous studies have consistently shown a strong connection between QWL and positive effects on employees (Huang et al., 2007; Kara et al., 2013). In today's global organizational trends, the retention of human talent is prioritized. It is crucial to recognize employees as internal customers and place significance on their perceptions. Organizations are promoting a better QWL to enhance the SWB of their employees (Salas-Vallina & Alegre, 2021). So, it has been hypothesized as H1b:

H1b: QWL will be significantly linked with positive affect.

Subpar working conditions fail to meet employees' basic needs and limit their ability to enjoy leisure and social activities, which has a negative link with SWB (Chan & Wyatt, 2007). Conversely, the inability to achieve a quality work-

life balance has been linked to lower job and life satisfaction (Allen et al., 2000) and decreased well-being (Grant-Vallone & Donaldson, 2001). The difficulty in balancing work and personal obligations contributes to high turnover rates in various industries (Liang & Hsieh, 2007). The healthcare sector experiences work demands and emotional disturbance challenges, affecting the nursing staff's well-being (Thorne et al., 2023). The moderating influence of work-life balance on the relationship between well-being and job satisfaction is confirmed. QWL will be significantly linked with negative affect. So, it has been hypothesized as H1c:

**H1c:** QWL will be significantly linked with negative affect.

Furthermore, Figure 2 visually represents the conceptual model, specifically supporting hypotheses H1a, H1b, and H1c. This figure describes the hypotheses and their connections in a more explicit way, emphasizing both the positive and negative elements such as H1a (overall satisfaction from life), H1b (positive affect), and H1c (negative affect).

SAB
RWC
QWL
HID
PA
IRW
NA

Figure 2. The hypothesized model (M2)

Notes: As in Figure 1.

Source: Authors' own elaboration.

### 4. Research methodology

#### 4.1. Measures

The study explores the linkage of various forms of SWB with QWL, and it was conducted using three scales, which are attached in Appendix A.

#### **4.1.1. OWL scale**

For the OWL, a seven-dimensional scale developed by McDonald (2017) was employed, namely: support from manager/supervisor (SFM) (Item no. 4, 13, 18, 20, 24, 25, 28, 39, 47, 49), freedom from work-related stress (FWS) (Item no. 12, 17, 23, 32, 36, 40, 44); salary and additional benefits (SAB) (Item no. 3, 22, 35, 41, 52); job satisfaction, challenge, use of skills and autonomy (JSCA) (Item no. 2, 8, 16, 26, 29, 33, 38, 42, 43, 45, 50, 51), relationship with a work colleague (RWC) (Item no. 6, 10, 14, 30, 46), involvement and responsibility at work (IRW) (Item no. 5, 11, 27) and communication, decision making and job security (CDJ) (Item no. 1, 7, 9, 15, 19, 21, 31, 34, 37, 48) measured on a 5-point scale and having 53 items. This scale evaluates employees' perception of their work and working environment. The value of Cronbach alpha (α) was 0.94.

#### **4.1.2. SWB scale**

Two different scales that evaluated SWB were intended to identify the three dimensions which are as follows:

- 1. Life satisfaction (LS): It was measured with the satisfaction with life scale, developed by Diener et al. (1985). This 5-item scale is assessed on a score ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree, and the reliability coefficient of the scale is 0.89.
- 2. Positive affect (PA) and negative affect (NA): Affective disposition was measured utilizing the positive affect and negative affect scale (PANAS) (Watson et al., 1988). The scale comprises two orthogonal dimensions of PA (.84) and NA (.90). Each scale consists of ten items on a 5-point scale.

#### 4.2. Collection of data

Data were collected from front-line executives (cabin crew, airport staff, cargo handlers, and administrative staff) working in the Aviation industry. Initially, umpteen emails were sent to various HR departments. The mail was sent with information relevant to the study's aim, and the attached questionnaire is in Appendix A. The author has solicited the assistance of the HR department to perform a study to analyze the correlation between QWL and SWB in the aviation business. With the assistance of the HR department, the author managed to obtain a sample of approximately 289 employees. However, to gather additional data, the author employed snowball sampling by requesting the present sample to distribute the questionnaire among their colleagues. A total of 398 questionnaires were received from the respondents. After all, 48 were excluded due to repetitive answers and missing information. Therefore, the 350 questionnaires obtained were used for the final study. The demographic variable is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographical details

Demographic (N = 350)	No. of respondents	Percentage (%)
Age (in years)		
young (18-23)	255	72.85
middle age (23-28)	95	27.15
Gender		
male	180	51.25
female	170	48.57
Education		
graduate	274	78.28
postgraduate and above	76	21.72
Work experience (in years)		
less than 1	265	75.71
1-5	65	18.57
above 5	20	5.71
Marital status		
Single	274	78.29
Married	76	21.71

Source: Authors' own elaboration.

### 4.3. Convergent validity

This study evaluated the convergent validity by analyzing the factor loadings, composite reliability, Cronbach's alpha (mentioned in 3.1), and average variance extracted (Chin, 1998). The scores are displayed according to their respective constructs in Table 2. The loadings with values greater than 0.6 were kept, as Chin (1998) said. In addition, composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha exceeded the minimum threshold of 0.7, and the average variance extracted for all constructs was over 0.5. Hence, the findings substantiated the dependability and convergence validity of the conceptions (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Table 2. Results of convergent validity

Constructs	Composite reliability	Average variance extracted		
QWL	0.975	0.607		
SWB	0.902	0.607		

Source: Authors' own elaboration.

### 4.4. Data analysis

For testing and analyzing the hypothesized models, the first normality of data was checked, and it was observed and shown in Table 3 that the scores of Skewness and Kurtosis remain within the assumed range of  $\pm$  1 standard deviation. However, Path analysis is used to assess the causal models in structural equation modeling (SEM) using the AMOS 20.0 version (Arbuckle, 2005).

Kline (2005) mentioned that the value of NFI, CFI, and GFI < 0.90 suggests that the model is fit. Moreover, all the indices, namely chi-square goodness-of-fit statistic, NFI, CFI, GFI, and RMSEA> 0.06, are acceptable.

Table 3. Normality coefficient

Variables	Skev	vness	Kurtosis				
(N = 350)	Statistic	SE	Statistic	SE			
SWB	-0.63	0.125	-0.825	0.24			
QWL	-0.73	0.125	-0.781	0.24			

Source: Authors' own elaboration.

#### 5. Results and discussions

The study findings have been represented in Table 4, which contains the study variables' standard deviations, correlations, and means. The correlation matrix of the variables shows that the connections are in the desired path. A significant relationship has been seen between QWL and SWB overall with the calculated r = .53 (significant at .01 level). This summarizes that in the organization, an elevated level of QWL is linked with a higher level of SWB. Further, there are positive and significant correlations between dimensions of SWB (life satisfaction, positive affect, negative affect) and the six dimensions of QWL, i.e., (1) SFM, (2) FWS, (3) SAB, (4) JSCA, (5) RWC, (6) CDJ. Surprisingly, a negative correlation has been observed between involvement and responsibility at work (QWL dimension) and positive affect (dimensions of SWB).

**Table 4.** Descriptive statistics and correlations of key variables (N = 350)

Constructs	Mean	S.D	SFM	FWS	SAB	RWC	IRW	CDJ	JSCA	QWL	LS	PA	NA	SWB
SFM	38.19	5.69	1											
FWS	31.81	4.63	.57**	1										
SAB	18.04	4.34	.63**	.49**	1									
RWC	20.71	2.90	.65**	.48**	.52**	1								
IRW	5.55	1.68	24**	10	30**	32**	1							
CDJ	39.13	5.71	.66**	.64**	.74**		28**	1						
JSCA	44.96	6.71	.73**	.61**	.61**	.62**	18**	.77**	1					
QWL	198.36	23.81	.87**			.62**	21**	.89**	.89**	1				
LS	26.15	5.04	.39**	.41**	.45**	.31**	.06	.37**	.39**	.48**	1			
PA	40.97	5.75	.35**	.12*	.16**	.19**	11*	.24**	.34**	.29**	.09	1		
NA	15.95	4.71	33**	43**	25**	12**	01	24**	27**	34**	31**	.27**	1	
SWB	51.16	6.73	.51**	.44**	.41**	.30**	028	.41**	.49**	.53**	.65**	.70**	72**	1

<sup>\*</sup>  $p \le .05$ ; \*\*  $p \le .01$ ; \*\* Significant at .01 level, \* Significant at .05 level.

Notes: As in Figure 1.

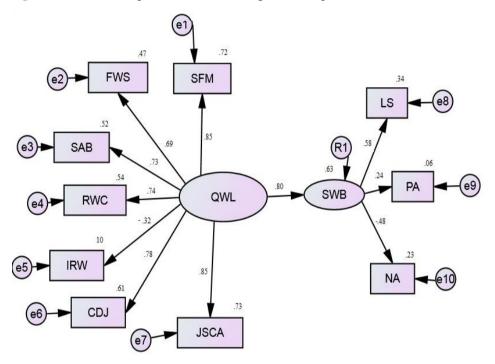
Source: Authors' own elaboration.

### 5.1. Structural model (M1)

The hypothesized model (M1) found that the data fit well with the value of  $\chi^2$  (18), n (350) = 30.039, p = .037, and Cmin/df = 1.669 which is acceptable as the value is less than 2. The other criteria were also inspected, and it found that TLI .982, RMSEA .044, GFI .983, CFI .993, p < 0.06; these indexes also met the suggested criteria. The hypothesized paths are significant, with standardized

values between -.48 and .58. The path coefficients for the model M1 are represented in Figure 3, as all the indexes fit the data. Figure 3 below shows the path from QWL to SWB, which was .80, which suggests a positive linkage and significant influence of QWL on SWB. This finding endorses H1.

Figure 3. Standardized path coefficients are significant at p < 001



Notes: As in Figure 1.

Source: Authors' own elaboration.

**Table 5.** Fit indices of the structural path model for (M1) and (M2)

Model	Normed χ <sup>2</sup>	p	GFI	AGFI	NFI	TLI	CFI	RMSEA
M1	1.669	.073	.983	.949	.983	.982	.993	.044
M2	2.194	.061	.980	.934	.978	.968	.988	.035

Source: Authors' own elaboration.

### 5.2. Structural model (M2)

For the structural model (M2), results present a satisfactory fit to the data. The hypothesized model (M2) found that the data fit well with the value of  $\chi^2$  (17), n (350) = 37.305, p = .061, and Cmin/df = 2.194, which is acceptable as the value is less than 2. The other criteria were also inspected, and it found that TLI .968, RMSEA .035, GFI .980, CFI .988, p < 0.06; these indices also met the suggested criteria. Table 5 shows the fit index of the structural path model for (M1) and (M2).

It was expected that QWL positively linked to and significantly predicted all three factors of SWB, which is consistent with previous studies (Javdan et al., 2015).

In Figure 4, the structural analysis discloses that QWL is positively linked to all the components of SWB. Also, QWL provides significance to life satisfaction with  $\beta$  = .42, p < .001, to the second dimension, namely, positive affect with  $\beta$  = .17, p < .001, and to the third dimension of SWB, namely, negative affect  $\beta$  = .01, p < .001. The study's findings demonstrate that QWL reliably estimates all three SWB factors: life satisfaction, positive affect, and negative affect. Consequently, results confirm H1a, H1b, and H1c.

Figure 4. Standardized path coefficients of the QWL on the factors of SWB

Notes: Figure represent the standardized path coefficient of QWL on the factors of SWB (significant at p < .001). Source: Authors' own elaboration.

Moreover, in table 6, QWL is linked with SWB with computed R as 0.53  $(F = 237.36**, \beta = 0.80, p < 0.01)$  and accounts for 45% of the variance of Aviation industry personnel. Probable justification is social exchanges at the workplace, fulfillment of needs starting with the basic needs till actualization needs have spilled over effect on the employees at their workplace and home. It has been seen in various studies that if employees are provided with good QWL, it will be reflected in their well-being. Moreover, employees' perceived satisfaction in the workplace from the relationship with the boss, colleagues, and juniors will provide overall satisfaction in life, positive affect, and reduced negative affect in the lifespan of humans, which was supported by the theory of considering human beings as social animals. To maintain peace and harmony in the life of humans at the workplace, it is also apparent to provide rewards and salaries that will satisfy employees' basic needs. Consequently, it will impact the SWB of employees in the organization and improve the organization's productivity. All the discussion mentioned above can be supported by Spillover theory, Social exchange theory, and Need hierarchy theory. Furthermore, the findings also show the prominent significance of life satisfaction, positive affect, and reduced negative affect, as well as the factors of QWL.

**Table 6.** Regression analysis for the prediction of SWB with the independent variable as QWL

Variables	R	$\mathbb{R}^2$	$\Delta \mathbf{R}^2$	S.E.m	F-value	Beta
D.V: QWL SWB	.53	.45	.45	9.24	237.36**	.80

<sup>\*</sup> Significant at .01 level. QWL – quality of work life, SWB – subjective well-being.

Source: Authors' own elaboration.

#### 6. Conclusions

The research study makes a significant contribution to existing knowledge by establishing a direct relationship between QWL and SWB within the aviation industry with the calculated r=.53 (significant at .01 level). This relationship has not been explicitly studied in previous research. The findings suggest that QWL positively influences SWB, which aligns with similar studies in other sectors (Javdan et al., 2015). This study specifically focuses on the aviation industry. It demonstrates that factors related to QWL, such as supervisor support, salary and benefits, job satisfaction, challenges, skill utilization, and autonomy, significantly impact employee well-being (Javdan et al., 2015).

The empirical findings confirm the proposed hypotheses, reinforcing the significant positive relationship between QWL and SWB within the aviation industry. This supports the study's primary aim of understanding how QWL influences SWB among aviation employees. The study underscores the importance of strategic HR practices tailored to enhance QWL, which can improve employee well-being (Javdan et al., 2015). Additionally, the study sheds light on specific factors within the aviation industry that impact QWL and SWB, providing valuable insights for aviation companies seeking to enhance employee well-being. The findings recommend strategic measures such as flexible work schedules and reduced workloads to promote better work-life balance, which can be instrumental for human resource management practices (Javdan et al., 2015).

Unlike past studies that have focused on the correlation between QWL, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment, this research directly addresses the connection between QWL and SWB in the aviation sector (Okan & Bayraktar, 2021; Seung-Lee & Young-Shin, 2016). Furthermore, the study's conclusions align with existing research in healthcare and hospitality, where improved QWL correlates with enhanced employee well-being and job satisfaction (Thorne et al., 2023).

The study explores the robust link between QWL and SWB in the aviation industry, yielding valuable insights for HR practices to enhance employee well-being. These findings are pertinent to aviation and other high-stress industries such as healthcare and hospitality. Organizations prioritizing QWL can cultivate a more content, productive, and well-balanced workforce, culminating in sustainable organizational success.

The practical implication of the study is significant for formulating HR strategies that place emphasis on employee well-being for HR managers and policymakers in the aviation industry. Such strategies encompass the implementation of flexible work schedules, the provision of career development opportunities, and the creation of supportive work environments. These measures are associated with increased job satisfaction, decreased absenteeism, and enhanced organizational performance (Beauregard & Henry, 2009; Deery and Jago, 2015).

The limitation of the study is its small sample size, confined to the Delhi-NCR region. Furthermore, the cross-sectional design restricts the ability to establish causal inferences. Future research should strive to address these limitations by broadening the geographical scope and adopting longitudinal and experimental designs.

Future research studies should investigate QWL and SWB in other metropolitan areas, such as Bangalore and Hyderabad, which are recognized hubs of the aviation industry. Additionally, research should consider multicultural organizational contexts to comprehend the influence of cultural factors on QWL and SWB. Exploring the correlation between front-line executives' perceptions of QWL and factors such as happiness, organizational commitment, and accident rates could provide further insights.

#### Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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# Appendix A

Instructions for filling up the questionnaire:

- 1. Please go through the questionnaire and answer appropriately in the blank space provided.
- 2. All the information provided by you will be kept strictly confidential and used only for research.

### **Personal information**

Name:	Organization:
Age:	Designation:
Gender:	Work Experience (in months)
Marital Status:	Highest Edu. Qual.

### Quality of work life

Below are the statements that you may agree or disagree with. To the right of each, you will find six numbers, ranging from "1" (Strongly Agree) on the left to "5" (Strongly Disagree) and "6" (Not Applicable) on the right. Circle the number that best indicates your feelings about that statement.

- 6 not applicable,
- 5 strongly disagree,
- 4 disagree,
- 3 neither agree nor disagree,
- 2 agree,
- 1 strongly agree.

No.	Circle the number in the appropriate column		Answers				
1	2			j	3		
1	My organization is good at making decisions	1	2	3	4	5	6
2	Overall, I find my work enjoyable	1	2	3	4	5	6
3	Considering my educational qualifications and/or skills, my salary is lower than it should be	1	2	3	4	5	6
4	The feedback I receive from my manager/supervisor on my work is constructive	1	2	3	4	5	6
5	I would like to be able to take more responsibility for my work	1	2	3	4	5	6
6	Relationships with work colleagues are frequently a source of stress	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	I am well-informed about the work of my organization as a whole	1	2	3	4	5	6
8	My work offers me little chance to learn new skills	1	2	3	4	5	6
9	I feel that my job provides me with a secure future	1	2	3	4	5	6
10	My colleagues support me at work	1	2	3	4	5	6
11	I would like more opportunities to contribute to decisions at work	1	2	3	4	5	6
12	My work is often a source of stress to me	1	2	3	4	5	6
13	I would like to receive more credit for the work I do well	1	2	3	4	5	6
14	There is generally a good feeling of cooperation among my colleagues	1	2	3	4	5	6
15	The communication within my organization is poor	1	2	3	4	5	6

1	2			į	}		
16	My work does not allow me to use my skills and abilities fully	1	2	3	4	5	6
17	My workload is generally reasonable	1	2	3	4	5	6
18	My manager/supervisor has adequate knowledge to guide and advise me	1	2	3	4	5	6
19	I believe that my job is secure	1	2	3	4	5	6
20	When I am under pressure, my manager/supervisor usually recognizes and deals with this	1	2	3	4	5	6
21	I could be better informed about the decisions my organization makes	1	2	3	4	5	6
22	My salary is reasonable given my previous work experience	1	2	3	4	5	6
23	I always feel tired at work	1	2	3	4	5	6
24	I feel that I do not receive enough feedback on my work	1	2	3	4	5	6
25	Target for me to work towards should be set more regularly	1	2	3	4	5	6
26	My work allows me to do what I am best at	1	2	3	4	5	6
27	I would like more chances to become involved in different aspects of my organization's work	1	2	3	4	5	6
28	I find it difficult to talk to my manager/supervisor	1	2	3	4	5	6
29	I can pursue areas that are of personal interest to me through my work	1	2	3	4	5	6
30	I have good working relationships with my colleagues	1	2	3	4	5	6
31	My organization often makes decisions that concern or puzzle me	1	2	3	4	5	6
32	I often feel stressed when at work	1	2	3	4	5	6
33	My work offers me little scope to develop my skills and abilities	1	2	3	4	5	6
34	My organization's policies generally benefit its employees	1	2	3	4	5	6
35	My salary is reasonable for the type of work I do	1	2	3	4	5	6
36	Sometimes I feel that my physical health may suffer because of my working environment	1	2	3	4	5	6
37	I feel I know about the goals of my organization	1	2	3	4	5	6
38	My work offers me a positive challenge	1	2	3	4	5	6
39	My senior deals fairly with all employees	1	2	3	4	5	6
40	I often take work home to finish it on time	1	2	3	4	5	6
41	Apart from my salary, the benefits I get (e.g., pension, healthcare) are adequate	1	2	3	4	5	6
42	There is little variety in my work	1	2	3	4	5	6
43	I am always told what to do at work	1	2	3	4	5	6
44	I do not have trouble getting to sleep due to worry about work	1	2	3	4	5	6
45	Overall, I would be happier in another job	1	2	3	4	5	6
46	There are few opportunities to develop good relationships with my work colleagues	1	2	3	4	5	6
47	My manager/supervisor offers me all the supervision I want	1	2	3	4	5	6
48	I feel that changes in my organization mean I will soon have to look for another job	1	2	3	4	5	6

1	2	3					
49	My manager/supervisor is open to different ways of working	1	2	3	4	5	6
50	I have the freedom to try out some of my own ideas at work	1	2	3	4	5	6
51	I would like my work to be more stimulating	1	2	3	4	5	6
52	My salary is appropriate for my responsibilities	1	2	3	4	5	6
53	I often wake up at night worrying about work	1	2	3	4	5	6

#### SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING

#### 1. Life satisfaction

Below are the statements that you may agree or disagree with. To the right of each, you will find seven numbers, ranging from "1" (strongly disagree) on the left to "7" (strongly agree) on the right. Circle the number that best indicates your feelings about that statement.

- 7 strongly agree,
- 6 agree,
- 5 slightly agree,
- 4 neither agree nor disagree,
- 3 slightly disagree,
- 2 disagree,
- 1 strongly disagree.

No.	Circle the number in the appropriate column	Answers						
1	In most ways, my life is close to my ideal	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2	The conditions of my life are excellent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3	I am satisfied with my life	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4	So far, I have gotten the important things I want in life	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5	If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

### 2. Positive affect and negative affect

Following are a number of words and phrases that describe different feelings and emotions. Read each item and then write the appropriate number in the space first to that word. Indicate to what extent you have felt this way during the past six months.

- 5 extremely,
- 4 quite a bit,
- 3 moderately,
- 2 a little,
- 1 very slightly or not at all.

No.	Circle the number in the appropriate column	Answers					
1	2	3					
1	strong	1	2	3	4	5	
2	afraid	1	2	3	4	5	
3	scared	1	2	3	4	5	
4	nervous	1	2	3	4	5	
5	jittery	1	2	3	4	5	
6	irritable	1	2	3	4	5	
7	hostile	1	2	3	4	5	
8	guilty	1	2	3	4	5	
9	ashamed	1	2	3	4	5	
10	upset	1	2	3	4	5	
11	active	1	2	3	4	5	
12	distressed	1	2	3	4	5	
13	alert	1	2	3	4	5	
14	attentive	1	2	3	4	5	
15	determined	1	2	3	4	5	
16	enthusiastic	1	2	3	4	5	
17	excited	1	2	3	4	5	
18	inspired	1	2	3	4	5	
19	interested	1	2	3	4	5	
20	proud	1	2	3	4	5	