



The Role of Quality of Work in Achieving Sustainable Development Goals: A Review

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Abstract

Interest in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which includes 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), has increased in 2030. The SDGs provide the construction industry with a new perspective through which global needs and desires can be translated into business solutions. This paper explores the role of good work in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Working in a decent environment is critical in a knowledge-based economy and competition. The urgent need for good action in the midst of rapid developments is evident as the world's vision for a sustainable future for all has been defined by the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Based on these SDGs, qualified decent work is mentioned in the SDGs which is the 8th Goal.

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1. Introduction

Working in a decent environment is extremely important in today's knowledge and competition-based economy (Ozbekler and Ozturkoglu 2020) ^[66]. When business success is increasingly focused on being able to attract the best human resources and motivate them to give their best at work (Holbeche, 2022) ^[33]. In the global search for a sustainable future for all, the world has adopted what is called the Sustainable Development Goals, which, in addition to the usual category of the three Pillars of Sustainable Development, also has the very important category of Peace, leading to a total of four categories and 17 sub-categories or 169 targets (Mustajoki *et al.*2022) ^[58]. The urgency of quality work in the midst of rapid developments is evident (Neil-Sztramko *et al.*2021) ^[59]. The world's vision of a sustainable future for all has been determined by adopting the Sustainable Development Goals (Kopnina, 2020) ^[40] (Obaideen *et al.*2022) ^[61] (ElAlfy *et al.*, 2020) ^[23]. Based on these Sustainable Development Goals, qualified decent work is stated in Goal 8 Targets. Thus, the role of creating and managing the attitude of business entities to carry out the quality of their work is very interesting to learn, discuss, and write about in this discussion (Bianchi & de Man, 2021) ^[12] (Rydzik & Kissoon, 2024) ^[70] (Obaideen *et al.*2022) ^[61]. The purpose of this discussion is to explore the role of entrepreneurial management in preparing quality decent work for the Sustainable Development Goals. In order not to divert the essence and discussion, the objective of this essay is to discuss the role of Quality Decent Work in realizing the Sustainable Development Goals and, more specifically, the role of entrepreneurial management in realizing Quality Decent Work for the Sustainable Development Goals. The paper was designed as a concept paper containing arguments explaining that Decent Quality Work is not a "business charity" towards workers, but rather an important category of Economy and Entrepreneurship.

2. Conceptual Framework

Quality work is defined as the existence of fair labor practices and procedures within countries or enterprises that result in opportunities for all and freedom for employees. It includes but is not limited to, decent work (Myhill *et al.*, 2023) (Graham *et al.*, 2020). Decent work outlines the interest in activities that can create a world of valuable job opportunities, equitable treatment, economic liberty, and security (Ioannides *et al.*, 2021) ^[35]. It remains a central part of the Declaration and, over time, has been developed within the structure of the Development Goals (Olabi *et al.* 2022) ^[61]. The components of decent work include job opportunities that refer to the ability of women and men to find not only meaningful work but also good jobs, decent employment,

and hard work, democracy in the workplace, and regular hours as set out by international labor initiatives and agreements (Reinecke and Donaghey 2021) ^[69]. Working conditions explain the skills for a respectful occupational setting and the rights of jobs for men and women at the workplace (Williams, 2023) ^[88]. Civil rights explain, basically, in any society, education reasonable to expertise and lack of discrimination (Yoshitoshi *et al.*, 2024) ^[90]. Free speech refers to the right to inspect revelations of beleaguered employees in the workplace, the soundness of participation in employees' resolutions, and the independence of the connection between education and work (Hosansky, 2023) ^[34].

The publication of the Development Goals represents the global agenda for delivering prosperity (Sweileh, 2020) ^[79]. Although the 17 Goals focus on eradicating poverty, protecting global resources, and seeking peace, prosperity refers to promoting sustainable development (Tremblay *et al.* 2020) ^[80]. Classically, sustainable development referred to a balance between economic growth, environmental conservation, and local community benefits (Edwards, 2021) ^[22]. The policy context views this idea as broader, encompassing human well-being as a core value (Betley *et al.* 2023) ^[10]. Achieving these goals requires examining quality work and how they are interconnected, quality workers can obtain a decent standard of living, organize work arrangements that fit their lives, and install a working policy that includes favorable remuneration, the prospect of access, and functional rewards (Zhang & Chen, 2024) ^[92]. They have a right to manageable working hours and the freedom not to join long work hours. They have the autonomy to protect themselves from verbal and sexual harassment, exploitation, and contagious diseases (Chung, 2022) ^[20]. The areas of action range from generating decent work and transforming the types of work performed by people to stay alive, as well as lowering the number of deadly labor periods and lost income at work (Winchenbach *et al.* 2021) ^[89]. Promoting long-lasting, versatile, and economic growth increases labor productivity, as well as access to banking and financial services (Challoumis and Eriotis 2024) ^[17]. The most extensive uses of labor productivity might include the appropriate project providing information about the possible efforts to increase healthcare spending (Raghupathi & Raghupathi, 2020) ^[67]. Controlling production opportunities must be considered when selecting economic plans and practices (Suchek *et al.* 2021). It also helps to identify business prospects by providing information on the price of existing goods (Bharadiya, 2023) ^[11]. To increase the demand for enterprises, job apprentices are dispersed better, this is to increase and diversify the face function in addition to developing influential partnerships (Marra, 2022) ^[49].

2.1 Quality Work

This sub-section aims to outline the definition and significance of quality work as it operates in modern-day society. It delves into the criteria that are used to define quality work and why such work is significant. For holders, the definition of quality work is related to rights, fairness, security, trust, equity, and other aspects of social welfare. Scholars use broadly four criteria to characterize quality work: fairness and social equity in work conditions (Karunaratna *et al.*, 2024) ^[38] (Diamond & Adam, 2023) ^[21]. First, quality work offers fairness and dignity for the worker. Second, the work offers protection of human rights, including

contractual rights, duties, and entitlements, free from coercion, humiliation, or threat of retaliation. Third, quality work is just and equitable in arrangements for training and access to work (Gibson *et al.* 2023) ^[23]. Fourth, quality work minimizes occupational risks and provides systems of compensation and monetary help for those injured or ill at work and in recovery (Abraham & Liebman, 2021) ^[1].

Quality work is important for individual workers and workers collectively, and it is also essential for good and productive organizations and national economic development. It is important because decent work empowers employees through participation in decision-making and enhances productivity (Chen *et al.*, 2021) ^[19] (Zizic *et al.*, 2022) ^[94]. We must also focus on employee satisfaction because when employees are satisfied with their job or have high satisfaction, they demonstrate a higher commitment to the goals and values of the organization, feel proud of working at the organization, and are less likely to leave the organization (Mahmood *et al.* 2021) ^[47] (Massoud and Jameel 2020) ^[50]. There are also models and frameworks that focus on examining the aspects that deal with workforce development that could be considered a strategy for achieving economic growth. It is relevant to mention the value of the recent arrangement of the Decent Work for Sustainable Development Agreements, including the importance of having national criteria or multi stakeholder involvement through social dialogue to have effective practical standards in carrying out workforce development (Basco-Carrera *et al.*, 2021) ^[9] (Serna & Chaparro, 2021) ^[76]. Social capital, i.e., social cohesion, social insurance, degree of shared norms, collective confidence, and networks through moral responsibility are needed in an organization as workforce development as a method for increasing competitiveness. Quality work is an important means of achieving the SDGs through workforce development (Fei *et al.* 2021) ^[24]. However, the implementation of quality work is not entirely easy. Some barriers exist; for example, firms' management styles are the main problem in human resources in the organization; employers are primarily attached to employees as a source of income only and not as human beings with broad potential; and employees do not see the job as fate and are not confined to carrying out work (Salas-Vallina *et al.* 2021) ^[72].

2.2 Sustainable development goals (SDGs)

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. At its heart are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are an urgent call for action by all countries – developed and developing – in a global partnership (Weiland *et al.*, 2021) ^[85]. They recognize that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand in hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth – all while protecting the climate (Banerjee *et al.*, 2021) ^[8]. The Sustainable Development Goals are as follows: 1. No Poverty, 2. Zero Hunger, 3. Good Health and Well-being, 4. Quality Education, 5. Gender Equality, 6. Clean Water and Sanitation, 7. Affordable and Clean Energy, 8. Decent Work and Economic Growth, 9. Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure, 10. Reduced Inequality, 11. Sustainable Cities and Communities, 12. Responsible Consumption and Production, 13. Climate Action, 14. Life below Water, 15. Life on Land, 16. Peace and Justice: Strong Institutions, and

17. Partnerships for the Goals (Omer & Noguchi, 2020) [65]. The 17 Goals are all connected, and in order to leave no one behind, it is important to achieve each Goal and Target by 2030. The principle of “leaving no one behind” is reflected in each of the SDGs. In the 2030 Agenda, achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women is an end in itself, and realizing the rights of women, men, girls, and boys is a matter of common justice. It is also a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous, and sustainable world (Odera and Mulusa2020) [62]. The SDGs aim at promoting sustainable economic growth, shared economic prosperity, social inclusion, and environmental protection. SDGs guide the international official development assistance (Van and van2021) [82]. Monitoring SDGs at national, regional, and global levels will require participatory processes involving governments, civil society, and the private sector, using disaggregated data for various groups and sub-national localities, especially for groups of marginalized and vulnerable people (Saner *et al.*, 2020) [73]. The United Nations has recognized that national statistical capacity is stretched, and that it will be necessary to develop a broad alliance to support monitoring of the 2030 Agenda. Monitoring will logically involve the public sector, the private sector, and civil society (Health Organization, 2021) [30]. Monitoring and evaluation are necessary to derive lessons for practical improvement. Relying only on monitoring by central government is shortsighted. Monitoring and evaluating progress on the SDGs will require a multisectoral and multi-stakeholder approach (Trowbridge *et al.* 2022) [81].

3. The interconnection between quality work and sustainable development goals

This chapter examines the relationships between quality work and the SDGs. It suggests that, with stronger attention by medium and large companies to some of the quality work SDGs, and implementing relevant quality work actions, the state of quality work can be monitored to show adherence to the human rights and sustainability frames enshrined in international human rights and labor standards (Health Organization, 2022) [31]. The state of quality work in terms of working conditions would assist in developing inclusive incentive or disincentive frames to assist companies and governments in realizing the quality work SDGs. Our work is informed by many other studies that have established a connection between work and one or more SDGs (Saini *et al.*2023) [71]. Because of our shorter time span focus, we are not attempting to claim systemic impacts on every current or future dimension of the SDGs. Instead, we suggest that some of the impacts from the SDGs of relevance to companies and effective systems would be enhanced by focusing on the broad dimension of quality work (Van and van 2021) [83].

Quality work is recognized in the SDG planetary version, through the Decent Work and Economic Growth target 1: “Sustain per capita economic growth in accordance with national circumstances and, in particular, at least 7% per annum gross domestic product growth per annum in the least developed countries,” and target 2: “Achieve higher levels of productivity of economies through diversification, technological upgrading and innovation, including through a focus on high-value added and labor-intensive sectors, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and the micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises into a green economy in terms of its job creation acceleration and social equity, product quality, and eco-health effects for inclusion.”

(Kreinin & Aigner, 2022) [41] Systematic studies demonstrating the system-wide impacts of quality work are scarce, very site-specific, and country-focused. Nonetheless, quality work can assist in maximizing the impacts or development assets of the working populations for families, communities, and indeed nations. These assets, in return, can enhance the viability of companies anywhere along the globe, not least through the workers’ contribution to innovation (Zhan and Santos-Paulino 2021) [91].

4. Key indicators of quality work

Quality of employment or work refers to employment that prioritizes the principle of fair work. Indicators of fair work include at least a pay item that constitutes a living for employees and fair time, as well as job security. Poor-quality indicators are workers' low wages, long hours, and lack of job security and safe working conditions (Gibb & Ishaq, 2020) [26] (Santos, 2023) [74]. Good work is the definition of fair pay or reward, participation in decision-making processes, job security through an ongoing relationship with the employment setting, the opportunity for meaningful work, and physical comfort (Ali and Anwar 2021) [3]. An aspect to consider from the standard work is fair wages. Jobs are said to have fair wages if the pay received by the worker is based on the work done, the condition of the workplace, and market demands (Mindell & Reynolds, 2023) [54].

Given the multi stakeholder approach of fair work, the numerical ratio of income and employment level is the key indicator for assessing quality work. A comparison has been made between the three well-being measures at work: level of living, duration, and obtained income (Bilan *et al.*, 2020) [13]. These popular household survey indicators are useful tools for researchers and policymakers to see the socio-political, legal, and economic aspects of workplace-related fair wages (İpşirli and Namal 2023) [36]. Politically, the determination of the basic needs of workers to live helps to describe the standard of living that society must fulfill. Meanwhile, from a legal point of view, the indicator of household surveys can be used by the courts as additional references in deciding the minimum wage limit in a region. Socio-economically, fair wages can create work that can give back harmony and peace in life. Alternatively, a housewife or child worker must share the double burden to help fulfill the economic needs of a poor family (Chakraborty and Biswas 2021) [16].

5. Alignment of quality work with SDGs

Alignment of efforts and initiatives for quality work with Sustainable Development Goals (Bilderback, 2024) [14]. The spirit of quality work initiatives is in alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals; whether it is in achieving No poverty; Good health and well-being; Quality education; or Decent work and economic growth, which focuses on promoting sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth; full and productive employment; and decent work for all (Bilderback, 2024) [14]. Achieving quality work will help in achieving these goals and vice versa. "Dignified and quality work" for all is a direct expression of decent work (Chandrasekaran, 2022) [18]. In this context, partnerships can be created, and these initiatives can include: focusing on men and women, nation and planet; policy frameworks; responsible business practices; creation of jobs and investment; equal remuneration for work of equal value; making sure young people are well-equipped to enter the

workforce; and so on (Werhane *et al.*, 2020) ^[86]. However, care must be taken in these partnerships that there is no forceful strategy and that many workers are forced to switch to inferior working conditions. Within your organization, it is important that you work as a responsible corporate citizen by contributing to society and the world (Newlands 2024) ^[60]. In addition to looking after the interests of your customers and community, your organization has a role to play in developing a strategy to contribute to sustainability initiatives. You will need to work with other stakeholders to understand what you can do to contribute to sustainability (Mio *et al.* 2020) ^[55]. Your organization may want to adopt a position on quality work and become involved in the development of laws, regulations, and policies to improve the job environment around the world by promoting policies that view growth, decent work, and jobs as integrated. Engaging with organizations that actively promote responsible buying practices is essential (Bianchi & de Man, 2021) ^[12]. Working with suppliers and their communities in developing countries is an approach that helps improve infrastructure in remote areas and enables villagers to transfer their agricultural skills to light industry and thus provide for their families. One step encompasses training staff in ethical procurement practices and encouraging members to make long-term commitments in the countries in which they operate (Joshi and Sharma 2022) ^[37]. This enables the local community to develop a sense of ownership of the project to improve work, health, and welfare, and access income and other work opportunities in their area. As a result of this kind of corporate community-based engagement, local companies have grown and employed thousands of individuals in a field of work ranging from unskilled to professional (Keenan & Holcombe, 2021) ^[39]. Agricultural industries producing certifications have increased the number of workers with contracts. Organic farms that are certified have to adhere to certain rules that make their employees and working conditions valued as well as focusing on the well-being of the environment. Practices may even be highlighted in annual or bi-annual reporting (Miśniakiewicz *et al.*, 2021) ^[56].

6. Challenges and barriers to achieving quality work and SDGs

The purpose of advancing SDG 8 is to create employment opportunities and ensure inclusive and quality work for everyone, thanks to social protection policies and progressive steps. Although profound knowledge has been achieved on the fundamentals of this agenda, workplaces still face challenges in improving workers' quality of life and achieving the SDGs (Kreinin & Aigner, 2022) ^[41]. Markets are complicated by a lack of consideration for the health and rights of vulnerable workers, which is compounded by a race to the bottom and informal labor markets. Issues are exacerbated by the social and political tensions that contribute to the broader narratives about the role of business in society (Sarker) ^[75] (González *et al.* 2021) ^[28]. The global economy has also resulted in unprecedented levels of global wealth, but structural and policy-related obstacles to development still plague resources (Zhang *et al.* 2023) ^[93]. Developed countries need to provide policy mix guidance to national governments at all levels, but the policy discourse that developed countries do not produce leads to the ongoing exclusion of partnerships and multi stakeholder discussions. SDG 8 can have a significant impact on the lives of millions

of people with disabilities, but stakeholders still do not recognize them (Mei, 2020) ^[52] (Li & Taeihagh, 2020) ^[43]. Indeed, traditional disability organizations and the vast majority of organizations working on adult employment do not have data showing the employment of people with disabilities in SDG 8. The informal economy accounts for up to 90 percent of the labor force in the least developed countries, where 2 out of 5 workers are poor. Furthermore, formalization in itself is not an automatic process, and research in Brazil highlights the serious violations and exploitation against formal workers who can get paid on the black market (Leyva & Urrutia, 2023) ^[42] (Gerard & Gonzaga, 2021) ^[25].

7. Best practices and case studies

As part of the Conference on Quality Work, various case studies and best practices have been researched at the international level, showcasing the case studies and best practices of various organizations, private sector, public sector, international organizations, and others that integrated quality work with SDGs (Heras-Saizarbitoria *et al.* 2022) ^[32] (Shulla *et al.* 2021) ^[77]. The case studies were drawn from diverse sectors of activity and geographical regions, as shown below. Integrated companies include various organizations; representative countries include Somalia, the Philippines, Bulgaria, and Ireland (Mikac and Wahdyudin 2021) ^[53]. Spanning the course of diverse sectors that include private/public sectors, international organizations, and other such institutions, these case studies will inform and inspire policymakers, practitioners, civil society actors, and all other relevant parties interested in the enterprise of quality work policies and practices (Blake *et al.* 2021) ^[15]. These cases illustrate the innovative work that is being done, offering insights into processes, procedures, barriers, and motivators, and delineating a balance of employee concerns and organizational health. All of these bring us to the point where improvement is the goal and is tackled in a high direction if supported by leadership, involves the community, and achieves sets of clear results. Clearly, all of these components are essential in achieving the adoption and integration of quality work and the penurious aspects of those who engage in the process (Liu *et al.* 2022) ^[45] (Hajjali *et al.* 2022) ^[29]. More responsive policies would help, but to achieve this, the problem needs to be acknowledged and become part of the legacy of this work for future planning. The Control Value Network has already proven permanent in how it engages, and conferences like this certainly provide plenty of food for thought on how to entrench a focus on well-being at both the policy and organizational levels (Bali and Yang-Wallentin 2020) ^[7]. These cases of best practice are drawn from the systems internationally, in part because there seems to be a 'right moment' in the process of many countries which might increase interest in these issues. But it should not be forgotten that the support of the case organizations and partners, as well as the people who generously offered their perspectives, is much appreciated (Montiel *et al.* 2021) ^[57]. They acknowledge that these stories told them far more than the research alone could ever do. It is their sharing that provides the in-depth insight into the realities of today's working arrangements and the potential for taking quality work to the next level. We hope also that the strategic commitment of resources through the National Advisory Group will make it possible to develop the complement to these case studies, a series of policy and practice 'action

plans.' If we are lucky, these may be available as soon after the Conference on Quality Work as possible. In the meantime, the development of this suite is already underway (McDaniel and Einstein 2020) ^[51] (Maki, 2023) ^[48]. For now, though, the CVN hopes that these visions of best practice can inspire others in the years to come. It is an inspiration to the CVN and a credit to the high quality of the work done by the researchers to be able to take its inspirations to the rest of the research community via this touching (Liao, 2020) ^[44].

8. Policy Recommendations

The significance ascribed to mobility, labor migration, international labor standards, skills supply and demand, and social issues by SDG leaders also underlines the need for a mix of quality work strategies. Accordingly, this section provides suggestions for nationally contextualized policies and programs to realize selected positive labor elements enshrined in the SDGs, policies and programs that could be adapted for any territory, whether or not the 'stand-alone' quality work agenda is espoused (Rant, 2020) ^[68] (Westerman *et al.*, 2021) ^[87].

A precondition for achieving SDGs based on the common CfOW is appreciation of 'triple convenience' systems. Myriad available policy documents simultaneously advocate improvements to infrastructure, information, and institutions to engender progress. Progress as purpose should therefore be reliant on committing to the aforementioned comprehensive infrastructural trifecta induction also required to meet the quality work development target (Aref, 2024) ^[5] (Ajaj *et al.*, 2024) ^[2]. Committee member explained that the approach of embedding the SDGs into national development is the main priority of the 2030 Agenda. Businesses have a large vested interest in boosting overall cooperation across all key outcome domains (Allen *et al.* 2021) ^[4] (Okitasari & Katramiz, 2022) ^[63]. We encourage the private sector to work with associations and governments to accelerate progress in advancing policies that encourage and enable liaison between blocks, strengthening the worlds of business and development, and putting the SDGs to work. Businesses should collaborate in the context of creating policy in this vein with national progress programs, digital or non-digital-based platforms or alliances that provide strategic direction on global goals – drawing up roadmaps and translating grand numbers into local priorities and individual and joint actions (Awasthy *et al.* 2020) ^[6] (Luthra *et al.* 2022) ^[46]. More public sector participation is needed in endeavors like sustainability reports, mills, and rankings. Policy refinements can assist the uptake and effective realization of beneficial solutions (Vogel *et al.* 2024) ^[84].

9. Conclusion

In practice, the report provides various dimensions of the central theme – the need for policy, practices, and monitoring and assessment to be founded in strategies explicitly designed to foster proactive and mutually reinforcing connections between decent work and sustainable development agendas. It sees quality work as necessary to achieving certain of the Sustainable Development Goals and, at the same time, argues that it is these goals, rather than the future of decent work, that should be the focus of policy. 'Concurrent, synergistic achievement of the two sets of goals is desirable not just for the future of work but for the future of sustainable social and economic development.

The conclusion emphasizes the external focus – on

transforming societies – as well as the focus on the content of work of reports elsewhere in the report. Nearly all of the papers and presentations concern, either directly or indirectly, themselves with the sustainable development goals. The centerpiece will be addressing SDG 8 – the need for policy to focus, in this decisive decade, with a sense of urgency, on the creation of quality and sustainable rather than just numbers of jobs. Any more marginal references will be on the agenda to the need in MERA for their work and skills description also to be explicitly linked with the various frameworks and reports. In any case, much work remains to be done – not least in the field of scenario building - to explore the potentials of even those SDGs that are addressed.

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