

‘Saya akui bahawa telah membaca karya ini dan pada pandangan saya karya ini adalah memadai dari segi skop dan kualiti untuk tujuan penganugerahan Ijazah Sarjana Muda Pengurusan Teknologi (Inovasi Teknologi)

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STUDY ON FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO QUALITY WORK LIFE (QWL)
IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN MALACCA

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“Saya akui laporan ini adalah hasil kerja saya sendiri kecuali ringkasan dan petikan yang tiap-tiap satunya saya telah jelaskan sumbernya”

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“For my beloved parents, family and friends”

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ABSTRACT

In Malaysia “Quality of Work Life (QWL)” is still a new concept to emerge, though four decades have passed since the phrase was first introduced. The present study attempted to determine the factors of quality work life (QWL) among public universities in the context area of Malacca, Malaysia. A survey instrument was used to measure the perception of academic staff and supportive staff concerning their level of quality of work life and its dominant factors that contributed. A total of 200 sets of questionnaire were distributed to academic staff and supportive staff in selected university in 3 public universities (UTeM, UiTM City Campus and UiTM Lendu). The rates of return were 100 only which means 50 percent from was distributed. The data collected were analysed quantitatively by using of SPSS 20. The outcome of this research is beneficial for policymakers, planners and development economists to formulate effective strategy of human resource development in Malaysia and other similar countries.

ABSTRAK

Di Malaysia "Kualiti Hidup Kerja" masih satu konsep baru muncul, walaupun empat dekad telah berlalu sejak frasa itu mula-mula diperkenalkan. Kajian ini bertujuan untuk menentukan faktor-faktor kehidupan kerja kualiti (KKK) di kalangan universiti-universiti awam di Melaka, Malaysia. Instrumen kajian yang digunakan adalah untuk mengukur persepsi kakitangan akademik dan kakitangan sokongan mengenai tahap kualiti kehidupan kerja dan faktor-faktor yang dominan yang menyumbang ke arahnya. Sebanyak 200 set soal selidik telah diedarkan kepada kakitangan akademik dan kakitangan sokongan di universiti terpilih di 3 universiti awam (UTeM, UiTM Kampus Kota dan UiTM Lendu). Kadar pulangan adalah 100 sahaja yang bermakna 50 peratus daripada yang telah diedarkan. Data yang dikumpul telah dianalisa secara kuantitatif dengan menggunakan SPSS 20. Hasil kajian ini memberi manfaat kepada pembuat dasar, perancang dan ahli ekonomi pembangunan untuk merumuskan strategi yang berkesan pembangunan sumber manusia di Malaysia dan negara-negara lain yang serupa.

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NOMENCLATURE

QWL : Quality Work Life

SPSS : Statistical Package for Social Science

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Background

The holistic and eco-systemic conception views the world as an open, living system and emphasizes the interaction and interdependence of all phenomena, which implies that the individual organism always interacts with its physical and social environment (Capra, 1982). In a study of quality of work life, one could adopt an eco-systemic approach and try to list all possible variables, catalysts and influences with which someone could interact and which could contribute to his/her general state of being. One could also try to find and elaborate on a quality, which researchers have not yet exhausted, as a possible variable.

However, perhaps it is as important to acknowledge that there are certain concerns that all people have in common, at least to some degree. Campbell (1981) considers twelve domains: marriage; family life; friendship; standard of living; work; neighbourhood; city, town or place of residence; the nation; housing; education; health; and the self.

Nordenfelt (1993) describes a human being's life as life in an environment with many parts. He enumerates the following:

- a) a physical environment - a habitat with its natural resources and its climate;
- b) a cultural environment - a society with its constitutions and codes of conduct, with its political system, its traditions and other cultural expressions;

- c) a psychological, close environment - consisting of relatives, friend and co-workers.

The different domains are not independent of each other; they tend to form clusters or subsystems within a bigger system.

According to Campbell (1981), the satisfaction people experience in the domains - self, standard of living, family life, marriage, friends and work – have the greatest influence in accounting for the level of satisfaction people feel with their lives in general. Occupation, for example, will affect standard of living; it guarantees financial security; to a great extent it will have something to do with how satisfied people are with themselves in terms of their achievements, which, in turn, influences their self-esteem. Many friendships and associations are formed with colleagues and through contact with people with common interests while at work. These domains or subsystems are, therefore, interdependent.

Goodale *et al.*, (1975) conducted interviews in which they asked the respondents how they would define the phrase ‘quality of life’. The most frequently mentioned components defining quality of life were psychological well-being, the work environment, realizing or working towards one’s aim in life and the social environment provided by other people. It is safe to conclude that the work environment is not only one of the most important domains in people’s lives, but also contains many of the components of quality of life. Therefore, this domain plays an important part in the individual’s general quality of life and sense of well-being.

Various elements of our lives are tied to the actions of organisations. Indeed, most adults organize their lives around work. Most individuals spend a good deal of their waking hours in work or job activities; it prescribes how their days are spent and places certain restrictions on them; it determines their living standards and affects their friendship patterns.

Work goes beyond just influencing behaviour, however. It plays a major role in the adult’s sense of self. Work can embody a number of stressors, but it can also provide satisfaction. Successfully managing or lacking the ability and resources to manage work stressors affects the self-esteem and impacts on health. When meeting a person, one of the first questions that come to mind is “What do you do for a

living?” To a large extent, people define themselves and others in terms of their work (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Thus quality of work life in organisations is a major component of quality of life in general (Lawler, Nadler & Cammann, 1980).

An individual's work experience can have positive or negative effects on other spheres of his or her life. The more direct relevance of work to the total life space is perhaps best expressed by Walton (1975) by the concept of balance. A balanced approach to work should incorporate work schedules, career demands and travel requirements which do not intrude on leisure and family time on a regular basis. Even advancement in the work place should not require repeated geographical moves. The reciprocal nature of work and family-life balance is debatable as far as cause-and-effect or symptoms are concerned. Sometimes, the employing organisation imposes demands that seriously affect the employee's ability to perform other life roles, such as that of spouse or parent. In other cases, however, work demands are used as an excuse to escape the responsibilities and anxieties of family roles (Walton, 1975). It is, therefore, not always certain which is a cause and which is a symptom.

Quality of work life is, however, not only the concern of the individual and of psychological researchers. This concern was demonstrated globally by the United Nations sponsored International Labour Organisation (ILO). At the core of the ILO's social agenda is the creation of more and better job opportunities. As far back as 1944, the ILO adopted the Philadelphia Declaration's principles, which made improving the quality of work life a priority, and committed all its member nations to achieving this goal through public policies and programmes. Among its aims were the following:

“full employment and rising living standards; employment in occupations that enable workers to enjoy the satisfaction of utilizing their skills and make a contribution to the common well-being; a just distribution of wages, hours and other benefits, including training opportunities; decent working conditions and the minimum living wage for all employed; recognition of the right to collective bargaining and to co-operation between management and labour; and safe and healthy work environments” (Lowe, 2000).

According to Lowe (2000), these may be old themes, but they are even more relevant in today's global economic context. He expressed the concern that quantity may have become more important since the 1990s and that the preoccupation with it may blind managers and policy makers to underlying problems, which can only be addressed by looking deeper than productivity. Lowe (2000) concludes that "high quality work" is work that is respectable, meaningful and life-enhancing, and, therefore, worker-centred. It, however, still offers benefits to employers and national economic prosperity. Indeed, quality of work affects the quality of life in families and communities, as well as the economic vitality of the nation.

1.2 Problem Statement

Quality of work life (QWL) is one of the most important issues in every organization. When organization offers quality of work life to their employees, it is a good indicator to boost its image in attracting and retaining employees. This is important as it indicates firms are able to offer appropriate working environment to employees. Eventually employees will have high commitment and ultimately reduce costs that incur due to high level of stress. Hence, by having quality of work life, the firms can enjoy increased organizational productivity and higher opportunity for growth with better participation from employees (Beauregard, 2007).

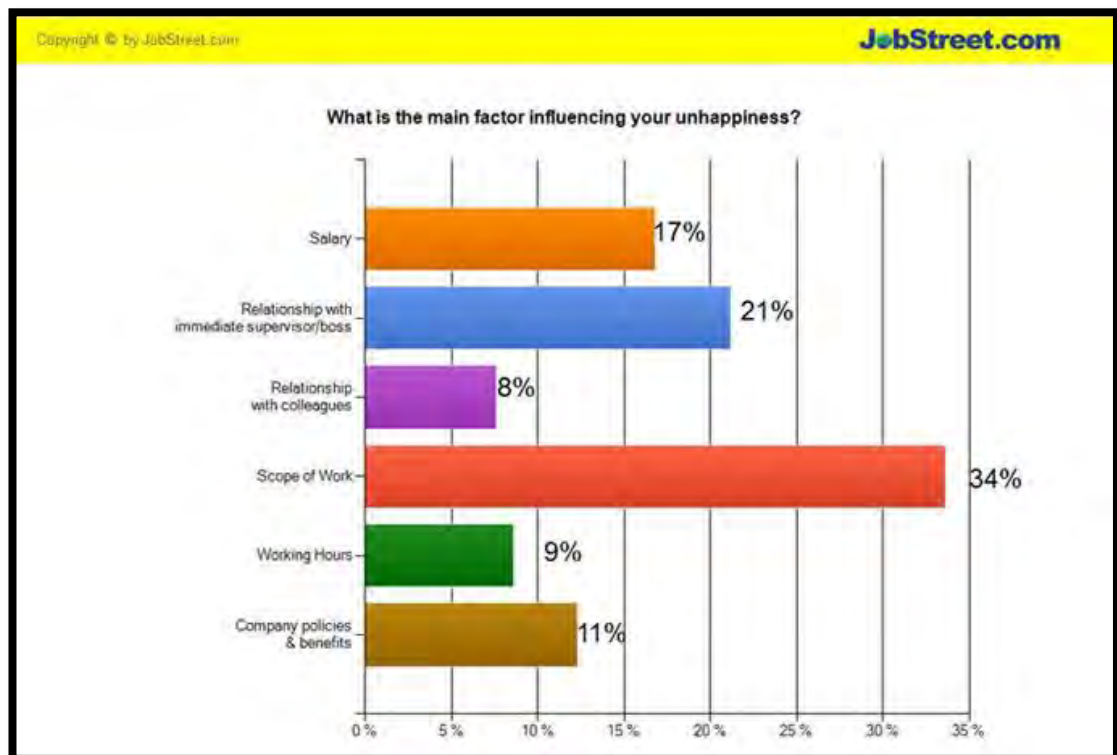


Figure 1.1: Percentage of Malaysians are Not Happy at Work

(Source: JobStreet.com in September 2012)

According to Figure 1.1, a recent JobStreet.com survey was collected from 78% of the Malaysia respondents claimed that they were unhappy with their current job. While it is often perceived that the main reason many young talent leave a company is due to the low salary, only 17% out of the 1,145 respondents quoted salary as the main reason for influencing their unhappiness at their current job.

Dissatisfaction with their scope of work was the top reason many felt unhappy at work. Most of these unhappy employees said they felt that they have too much work or that their work is predictable and boring. Another factor was also their poor relationship with their immediate supervisor or boss.

The remaining 22% of the respondents who are currently happy at work revealed the top 3 factors which influenced their happiness:

- 50% are enjoying their working experiences and working challenges
- 21% are happy with their bosses who appreciate and value their input
- 19% are enjoying their work because of their friendship with their colleagues

Overall, the employees agreed that the ultimate change in order to determine their wellbeing at work would need to include opportunities for career development and also quality work life in the company.

1.3 Research Questions

- 1) What are the key factors affecting the QWL in public universities?
- 2) How the dominant are the key factors can influence the QWL among public universities' staff?
- 3) What improvements are required to be made to enhance QWL in public university?

1.4 Research Objectives

- a) To identify key factors affecting the QWL among public universities' staff.
- b) To determine the dominant factors contributing to QWL in public universities in the state of Malacca.
- c) To offer recommendations to enhance the QWL in public universities.

1.5 Scope of Study

This research focussed on QWL of the staff in selected public University in Malacca. The respondents are from full-time staffs with one or more years' continuous work experience was hired. Students and outsider manpower such as contractors were excluded. The study is limited to UTeM and UiTM (City Campus & Lendu).

1.6 Limitation of Study

The researcher has only 4 months to complete this research. It is hard for the researcher to complete this research within a specific period, because it takes time to gather enough data and information. For the research to identify QWL issues, the focus is only on the selected public universities. The researcher also distributes questionnaire only to the staff in UTeM and UiTM organisation.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses about theories of previous research. It helps researcher to understand and internalize the research with all the resources used such as books, journals and articles. This part will discuss about QWL concept in general terms by referring these resources. Besides that, it also includes the importance and a few dimensions that will be a dominant factors contributing to QWL.

According to Davenport (1983), the evolution of QWL began in the late 1960s emphasizing the human dimensions of work that was focused on the quality of the relationship between the worker and the working environment. QWL as a discipline began in the U.S. in September 1972 when the phrase was coined at “democratization of work” conference held at Columbia University’s Arden House to discuss two movements. The first was a political movement in Western Europe called ‘Industrial Democracy’. Militant, socialist labour unions were lobbying the parliaments and assemblies of England, France, West Germany, Sweden and Italy to legislate worker participation in corporate decision-making. The second movement was the emergence in the U.S. of a number of social science theories about “humanizing the workplace”.

This shows that the model that evolved during the early years called for formalizing labour-management cooperation at the workplace by establishing joint committees at various levels to define, diagnose and devise solutions to day-to-day

work problems. For instance, participation programs emerged from contract bargaining between General Motors Corporation and United Auto Workers Union was called Quality of Work Life in 1973 which was aimed at increasing workers' satisfaction with their jobs by giving them more information and a voice in decision making (Smith, 1983).

2.2 Quality Work Life (QWL)

Robbins (1989, p.90) defined QWL as “a process by which an organization responds to employee needs by developing mechanisms to allow them to share fully in making the decisions that design their lives at work”. According to Feuer (1989) QWL can be described as the way an individual perceives and evaluates the characteristics intrinsic to his/ her past experience, education, race and culture. Lau and Bruce (1998) defined QWL as the workplace strategies, operations and environment that promote and maintain employee satisfaction with an aim to improving working conditions for employees and organizational effectiveness for employers.

Indeed, it is difficult to best conceptualize the quality of work life elements (Seashore, 1975). Walton (1975) proposed eight major conceptual categories relating to QWL as (i) adequate and fair compensation, (ii) safe and healthy working conditions, (iii) immediate opportunity to use and develop human capacities, (iv) opportunity for continued growth and security, (v) social integration in the work organization, (vi) constitutionalism in the work organization, (vii) work and total life space and (viii) social relevance of work life.

Several published works have addressed the constructs that make up the QWL domain and key elements of QWL programs (Loscocco & Roschelle, 1991). According to Loscocco and Roschelle (1991), the most common assessment of QWL is the individual attitudes. This is because individual work attitudes are important indicators of QWL. The ways that people respond to their jobs have consequences

for their personal happiness, the effectiveness of their work organizations and even the stability of society. Individuals selectively perceive and make attributions about their jobs in accordance with the expectations they bring to the workplace. While the characteristics of the jobs have long been considered to be important influences on work attitudes, the past decades of 1970s and 1980s have witnessed much greater attention to aspects of the organizational context in which the job is performed. Thus, we must also look at how organizational characteristics exert both direct and indirect effect on the QWL.

Past studies indicate that family roles reflect needs, opportunities and constraints have influence on individuals' reactions to work. After all, two important focal points of adult life are family and work. The role expectations of these two domains are not always compatible thus creating conflicts (Netemeyer *et al.* 1996). These conflicts are related to outcomes such as job dissatisfaction, job burnout and turnover (Burke, 1988) as well as to outcomes related to psychological distress e.g. depression and life and marital dissatisfaction (Pleck *et al.* 1980). Work-family conflict studies have contributed to a better understanding of role conflict and its impact on mental health and the quality of work life (Higgins, 1992).

Work and life are intertwined in such a way that work elements like daily tasks, the physical environment, social context, and the administration system all have an impact on life within and outside of work. If employees are stressed out at work, the stress can spill over to their personal life affecting the way they view work and life, which could disrupt work-life balance (Judge *et al.*, 2006). Studies on quality of work life (Che Rose *et al.*, 2006) investigated several approaches to enhancing employees' quality of work life by focusing on job-related wellbeing, reward systems, and performance management.

According to G Nasl Saraji, and H Dargahi (2006) survey QWL is a comprehensive, department wide program designated to improve employee satisfaction, strengthening workplace learning and helping employees had better manage change and transition by conducting descriptive and analytical study they showed that the majority of employees were dissatisfied with occupational health and safety, intermediate and senior managers , their income, balance between the time