A Study of Quality of Working Life amongst Managers in Malaysian Industrial Companies

Rusinah Siron, Mohd Amin Tasripan, Mohd Yunus Majid
(Universiti Tenaga Nasional, Putrajaya, Malaysia)

Abstract: The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of QWL amongst managers in five of the Malaysian Industrial companies in Klang Valley, Kuala Lumpur that consists of 75 managers. A validated questionnaire was used to collect data from managers. The seven scales was used in the survey namely by the Scale A for job satisfaction, challenge, use of skills and autonomy. Scale B for communication, decision making and job security, Scale C for support from superior, Scale D for freedom from work related stress, Scale E focused on salary and additional benefits, Scale F is related with the relationships with work colleagues and Scale G for involvement and responsibility at work. The findings of the research showed that managers have average job satisfaction and job commitment. Managers experience job security and average satisfied with their communication among colleagues. The managers also perceived that they are moderately getting the support from top management and have an average satisfaction working relationship with colleagues and subordinates. Managers are average satisfied with their salaries and report more stress at the work place. They want the responsibility given match with the benefits and incentives given by the employer.

Key words: quality of work life; job satisfaction; job commitment; job involvement; job security

JEL codes: D23

1. Introduction

Quality of work life (QWL) refers to the level of happiness or dissatisfaction with one's career. Those who enjoy their careers are said to have a high quality of work life while those who are unhappy or whose needs are otherwise unfilled are said to have a low quality of work life (Indumathy and Kalamraj, 2012). Today, the QWL is viewed as an essential dimension of the quality of life and for organizations as to attract and retain workers. The quality of work life approach considers people as an "asset" to the organization rather than as "costs" as it believes that people perform better when they are allowed to participate in managing their work and make decisions (Indumathy and Kalamraj, 2012). The QWL affects quality of life in four areas: Competency, Health, Time and Wealth (Macstravic, 2006). QWL is comprehensive and program designated to improve worker's satisfaction, strengthen workplace learning and help workers better manager change and transition the Dissatisfaction with quality of work life is a problem, which affects almost all workers regardless of position or status (Saraji and

Rusinah Siron, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Universiti Tenaga Nasional; research areas: organizational behavior, education administration. E-mail: rusinah@uniten.edu.my.

Mohd Amin Tasripan, Universiti Tenaga Nasional; research areas: education administration. E-mail: amin@uniten.edu.my.

Mohd Yunus Majid, Universiti Tenaga Nasional; research areas: organizational behavior. E-mail: Yunus@uniten.edu.my.

Dargahi, 2006). In the service industries, many managers seek to reduce dissatisfaction in all organizational levels, inclu3ding their own. This is a complex problem, however, because it is difficult to isolate and identify all of attributes, which affect the quality of work life (Walton, 1973). Service organizations especially, service provision often unfolds within the constraints of limited fiscal resources and increasing demands for service accountability (Wallach & Mueller, 2006). Kosny and Eakin (2008) added that despite some of the intrinsic rewards the work offers, jobs in these organizations can be difficult and demanding, characterized by high demands, long working hours, low pay, exposure to violence and infectious disease, conditions which may be deleterious to worker health and safety (Baines, 2004; Holness, Somerville, Kosny, Gadeski, Mastandrea & Sinclair, 2004). Unfortunately, according to Grant (2008) managers face considerable challenges in motivating employees in service organizations, which are riddled with high levels of burnout and emotional exhaustion (Halbesleben & Buckley, 2004; Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001). Employees in service organizations are often exposed to extensive negative feedback and overloaded with responsibility for helping (Marshall, Barnett & Sayer, 1997). According to Niels (2003), the satisfaction of employees was originally achieved by ensuring that work experience satisfied a common set of needs. These strategies amount to improving employees' quality of work life. Given the importance of the function, both in terms of its activity and the volume of assets and people involved, the question need to be asked if the function is undervalues, and how manufacturing and industrial managers feel about their jobs (Vic Gilgeous, 1998).

Table 1   The Summary of the Relationship between Factors that Affect QWL and QWL

Dimensions	Research	Statement
Job satisfaction:	Niel O. Pors (2003). "Job satisfaction among library managers: A cross-cultural study of stress, freedom and job conditions", *Pro-Quest Education Journal*, Vol. 11/12, pp.104. Camman C. (1984). "Productivity of management through QWL programs", in: Frombun (Ed.), *Strategic Human Resource Management*, New York: Wiley.	Related with quality of work life
Communication:	Eaton A. E., Gordon M. E., and Keefe J. H., (1992). "The impact of quality of work life programs and grievances system effectiveness on union commitment", *International and Labor Relations Review*, Vol. 45, No. 3, pp. 591-603.	Related with Quality of work
Support: Support from management and colleagues	Laura Pekkarinen, Timo Sinervo, Marja Leena Perala and Marko Elovainio (2004). "Work stressor and the quality of work life in long-term care units: The gerontologist", *Pro-Quest Education Journals*, Oct. 2004, Vol. 5. Havlovic S. J. (1991). "Quality of work life and human resource outcomes", *Industrial Relations*, Vol. 30, No. 3, pp. 469-479.	Related with quality of work life
Freedom: Freedom from work related stress	Laura Pekkarinen, Timo Sinervo, Marja Leena Perala and Marko Elovainio (2004). "Work stressor and the quality of work life in long-term care units: The gerontologist, *Pro-Quest Education Journals,* No. 5. Lowe G. S. (2001). "Quality of work-quality of life", Canadian Policy Research Network, Conference Key Note Paper, 14 May, 2001.	Related with quality of work life
Salary:. Salary and additional benefits	Jos Benders and Frank Van de Looj (1994). "Not just money: Quality of working life as employment strategy", *International Journal of Health Care Quality Assurance*, Vol. 7, No. 6, pp. 9-15. Havlovic S. J. (1991). "Quality of work life and human resource outcomes", *Industrial Relations*, Vol. 30, No. 3, pp. 469-479.	Related with quality of work life
Relationships: Relationships with work colleagues	Vic Gilgeous (1998). "Manufacturing managers: Their quality of working life", *Integrated Manufacturing Systems*, Vol.9, No.3, pp.173-181. Nadler D. A. and Lawler E. E. (1983). "Quality of work life: Perspectives and directions", *Organizational Dynamics*, No. 11, pp. 20-30.	Related with quality of work life
Involvement Involvement and responsibility at work	Hans Pruijit (2000). "Performance and quality of working life", *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, Vol. 13, No. 4, pp. 389-400. Maks M. I., Mirvis P. H., hackett E. J. and Grady J. F. Jr. (1986), "Employee participation in quality circle program: Impact on quality of work life, productivity, and absenteeism", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 71, No. 2, pp. 61-69.	Related with quality of work life

The relationship between the job satisfaction, communication, support, freedom, salary, relationships and involvement with quality of working were summarized in Table 1.

1.1 Research Objective

The research objectives of this study are to uncover:

(1) The status of managers' perceptions on the aspects of job satisfaction, communication, support, freedom, salary, relationships, involvement and the Quality of Work Life.

(2) The relationship between job satisfaction, communication, support, freedom, salary, relationships and involvement with the Quality of Work Life.

1.2 Research Questions

The research questions of the study are as follows:

(1) What is the status of managers' in the aspects of job satisfaction?

(2) What is the status of managers' perceptions on the aspects of communication?

(3) What is the status of managers' perceptions on the aspects of support?

(4) What is the status of managers' perceptions on the aspects of freedom from stress?

(5) What is the status of managers' perceptions on the aspects of salary?

(6) What is the status of managers' perceptions on the aspects of relationships?

(7) What is the status of managers' perceptions on the aspects of involvement?

(8) What is the status of managers' perceptions on the aspects of Quality of Work Life?

(9) Is there any relationship between job satisfaction, communication, support, freedom, salary, relationships and involvement with the Quality of Work Life?

2. Research Methodology

This research is conducted by survey, focusing on the status of quality of working life among managers in five of Malaysian Industrial Company in Klang Valley. The industrial companies related are automotive, textiles and electronics. The research design chosen is descriptive in nature.

2.1 The Research Conceptual Framework

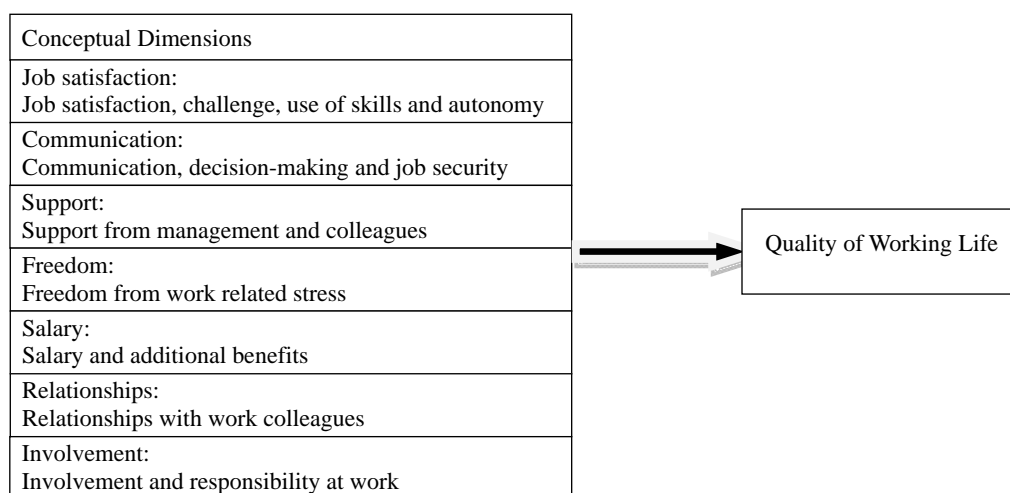The conceptual framework of the study is as presented in Figure 1.

Conceptual Dimensions
Job satisfaction: Job satisfaction, challenge, use of skills and autonomy
Communication: Communication, decision-making and job security
Support: Support from management and colleagues
Freedom: Freedom from work related stress
Salary: Salary and additional benefits
Relationships: Relationships with work colleagues
Involvement: Involvement and responsibility at work

Quality of Working Life

Figure 1   The Conceptual Framework

2.2 Research Population

The research population consists of 75 managers at middle and higher level in five Malaysian Industrial Companies in Klang Valley, Kuala Lumpur.

2.3 Research Instrument

A questionnaire is the research instrument based on Mc Donald (2001) "*Quality of Working Life Questionnaire*" which was modified to meet the need and requirement of this research. The quality of working life statements were shown in Table 2.

Table 2   The Summary of QWL Instrument Scale

Scale	Summary Descriptor	Number of Statements
Job satisfaction, challenge, use of skills and autonomy	Job Satisfaction	12
Communication, decision-making and job security	Communication	10
Support from manager/supervisor	Support	10
Freedom from work related stress	Freedom from Stress	8
Salary and additional benefits	Salary	5
Relationships with work colleagues	Relationships	5
Involvement and responsibility at work	Involvement	3

2.4 Pre-Test Research

The pre-test research was conducted by taking sample of 30 respondents consisting of a group of employees from various organizations. From the statistical analysis using SPSS Window, the acceptance index for this instrument is Alpha Cronbach 0.800.

2.5 Procedures of Data Analysis

Two types of statistics used in analyzing the data are descriptive statistics. The interpretation for the mean scores will be based on the table below:

Mean Score	Interpretation
1.00–1.80	Completely Dissatisfied
1.81–2.60	Dissatisfied
2.61–3.40	Average Satisfaction
3.41–4.20	Good/Satisfied
4.21–5.00	Very Satisfied

3. Research Findings

The research findings were presented as follows:

(1) Research Question 1: What is the status of managers' perceptions in the aspects of job satisfaction?

Table 3 shows the status of managers' perceptions in the aspect of job satisfaction.

Job Satisfaction: The overall managers agreed that the job satisfaction dimension of QWL is only average satisfaction with a mean score of 3.08. The mean score of extrinsic rewards 2.89, intrinsic rewards 3.01, working challenge 3.21, use the variety of skills 3.10, work autonomy 3.00, freedom of ideas 3.42 and work place culture 2.98. The overall mean score value for job satisfaction is just average satisfaction with the mean value of 3.08.

Table 3   Mean Score of Job Satisfaction

Scale	Mean Score	Status of Perception
Scale A: Job Satisfaction		
Extrinsic rewards	2.89	Average Satisfaction
Intrinsic rewards	3.01	Average Satisfaction
Work challenge	3.21	Average Satisfaction
Use variety of skills	3.10	Average Satisfaction
Work autonomy	3.00	Average Satisfaction
Freedom of ideas	3.42	Satisfied
Work place culture	2.98	Dissatisfied
Overall	3.08	Average Satisfaction

(2) Research Question 2: What is the status of managers' perceptions in the aspects of communication?

Table 4 shows the status of managers' perceptions in the aspect of communication.

Communication: The overall score for dimension of communication shows only the average satisfaction with the mean score of 3.24. The score for chain of command is only 2.75, flow of communication 3.12, discussion over decisions 3.11, job security 3.50, job safety 3.60 and job autonomy 3.39.

Table 4   Mean Score of Communication

Scale	Mean Score	Status of Perception
Scale B: Communication		
Chain of command	2.75	Average Satisfaction
Flow of information	3.12	Average Satisfaction
Discussion over decisions	3.11	Average Satisfaction
Job security	3.50	Satisfied
Job safety	3.60	Satisfied
Job autonomy	3.39	Average Satisfaction
Overall	3.24	Average Satisfaction

(3) Research Question 3: What is the status of Malaysian Industrial Companies managers' perceptions in the aspects of support?

Table 5 shows the status of managers' perceptions in the aspect of support.

Support: The overall score for dimension of support shows only the average satisfaction with the mean score 3.20. The score for supervisory support is 3.33, teamwork 3.87, goal focus 3.10, moral support 2.89, professional support 3.00, peers support 3.45, the financial support from colleagues 3.11 and social support is 2.90.

Table 5   Mean Score of Support

Scale	Mean Score	Status of Perception
Scale C: Support		
Supervisory Support	3.33	Average Satisfaction
Teamwork	3.87	Satisfied
Goal Focus	3.10	Average Satisfaction
Moral Support	2.89	Average Satisfaction
Professional Support	3.00	Average Satisfaction
Peers Support	3.45	Satisfied
Financial Support	3.11	Average Satisfaction
Social Support	2.90	Average Satisfaction
Overall	3.20	Average Satisfaction

(4) Research Question 4: What is the status of managers' perceptions in the aspects of freedom?

Table 6 shows the status of managers' perceptions in the freedom.

Freedom of stress: The overall score for dimension of freedom from work related stress also shows the average satisfaction with mean score 2.90. The score for job burnout is 2.44, managing emotions 2.89, training for employees 3.00, workload 3.00, interpersonal relations 2.98, job conditions 3.21 and disturbance handling 2.78.

Table 6   Mean Score of Freedom

Scale	Mean Score	Status of Perception
Scale D: Freedom from Stress		
Job burnout	2.44	Dissatisfied
Managing emotion	2.89	Average Satisfaction
Training for employees	3.00	Average Satisfaction
Workload	3.00	Average Satisfaction
Interpersonal relations	2.98	Average Satisfaction
Job condition	3.21	Average Satisfaction
Disturbance Handling	2.78	Average Satisfaction
Overall	2.90	Average Satisfaction

(5) Research Question 5: What is the status of managers' perceptions in the aspects of salary?

Table 7 shows the status of managers' perceptions in the salary.

Salary: The overall score for dimension of salary shows the average satisfaction with mean score of 3.00. The score for salary increment is 3.12, incentives and benefits 3.00, opportunity for development 3.00, financial support from management 2.89 and other supporting incomes 3.00.

Table 7   Mean Score of Salary

Scale	Mean Score	Status of Perception
Scale E: Salary		
Salary increment	3.12	Average Satisfaction
Incentives and benefits	3.00	Average Satisfaction
Opportunity for development	3.00	Average Satisfaction
Financial support	2.89	Average Satisfaction
Other supporting incomes	3.00	Average Satisfaction
Overall	3.00	Average Satisfaction

(6) Research Question 6: What is the status of managers' perceptions on the aspects of relationship?

Table 8 shows the status of managers' perceptions in relationships.

Relationships: The overall score for dimension of relationships shows the average satisfaction with the mean score of 3.22. The score for relationships with co-workers is 3.12, relationships with superiors 2.97, relationships with clients 3.56 and relationships with friends and families 3.25.

Table 8   Mean Score of Relationships

Scale	Mean Score	Status of Perception
Scale F: Relationships		
Relationships with co-workers	3.12	Average Satisfaction
Relationships with superiors	2.97	Average Satisfaction
Relationships with clients	3.56	Satisfied
Relationships with friends and families	3.25	Average Satisfaction
Overall	3.22	Average Satisfaction

(7) Research Question 7: What is the status of managers' perceptions on the aspects of involvement?

Table 9 shows the status of managers' perceptions in involvement.

Involvement: The overall score for dimension of involvement shows the average satisfaction with the mean score of 3.34. The score for job involvement is 3.22, job responsibility 3.77, task identity 3.05, task significance 3.15 and job value 3.75.

Table 9   Mean Score of Involvement

Scale	Mean Score	Status of Perception
Scale G: Involvement		
Job involvement	3.22	Average Satisfaction
Job responsibility	3.77	Satisfied
Task Identity	3.05	Average Satisfaction
Task Significant	3.15	Average Satisfaction
Job value	3.75	Satisfied
Overall	3.34	Average Satisfaction

(8) Research Question 8: What are the statuses of managers' perceptions on the aspects of Quality of Working Life?

Table 10 shows the highest mean values is reduce job demands with 3.34 and the lowest is work schedule autonomy with mean values of 2.90 and the overall mean value for QWL is 3.14 that is an average satisfaction for managers in Malaysian Industrial companies as affected with the study.

Table 10   Mean Score of Quality of Working Life

Scale	Mean Score	Status of Perception
Items		
Communication and information sharing	3.30	Average Satisfaction
Employee involvement	3.00	Average Satisfaction
Goals and role descriptions	3.00	Average Satisfaction
Performance evaluation and feedback	3.22	Average Satisfaction
Job autonomy	3.32	Average Satisfaction
Physical changes	3.22	Average Satisfaction
Work schedule autonomy	2.90	Average Satisfaction
Management style changes	3.10	Average Satisfaction
Social interactions	3.21	Average Satisfaction
Work redesign	3.14	Average Satisfaction
Career development	3.03	Average Satisfaction
Stress management training	3.14	Average Satisfaction
Reduce job demands	3.34	Average Satisfaction
Workplace health and fitness program	3.22	Average Satisfaction
Overall	3.14	Average Satisfaction

(9) Research Question 9: Is there any relationship between job satisfaction, communication, support, freedom, salary, relationships and involvement with the Quality of Work Life?

The correlations of QWL are shown in Table 11. The findings in Table 11 on the relationship between job

satisfaction, communication, support, freedom, salary, relationships and involvement with QWL indicate that QWL is positively related to job satisfaction ($r = 0.331$, $p = 0.001$), communication ($r = 0.695$, $p < 0.001$), support ($r = 0.640$, $p < 0.001$), freedom ($r = 0.694$, $p < 0.001$), salary ($r = 0.723$, $p < 0.001$), relationships ($r = 0.560$, $p < 0.001$) and involvement ($r = 0.561$, $p < 0.001$).

Table 11   The Relationship between Job Satisfaction, Communication, Support, Freedom, Salary,
Relationships and Involvement with the Quality of Work Life

Scale	Correlations (r)
Job satisfaction	0.331
Communication	0.695
Support	0.640
Freedom	0.694
Salary	0.723
Relationships	0.560
Involvement	0.561

According to the correlation result, all seven variables are positively related to Quality of Work Life. The highest correlation is salary and additional benefits with $r = 0.723$ followed by communication, decision making and autonomy with $r = 695$ and freedom from work stress with $r = 0.694$.

4. Suggestions and Conclusions

Specifically the result shows the average satisfaction of each factor that affect the quality of working life for managers in industrial companies. The management should look over the issues of each factor carefully and specifically in order to have an efficient of work force at the managerial level. The insight gained from this study are that the quality of working life for industrial managers should improve and they would perform their jobs even more effectively if the following recommendations were adopted:

(1) Job Satisfaction—Improve the job satisfaction elements as follows:

● Extrinsic rewards of the companies must be at par with the other industrial companies as to build the satisfaction amongst managers

● Intrinsic rewards should be related with the roles and responsibilities of managers

● Work challenge should be enhanced as to increase the feeling of importance in the job

● Use variety of skills can be enhanced as to improve the quality of work

● Work autonomy must be related with the responsibility as a manager

● Freedom of ideas must be encouraged amongst managers

● Work place culture must be positive and productive

(2) Communication—Increase levels of communication effectively like the flow of communication and the communication about job safety, security and autonomy as it can make the managers feel more appreciated in dealing with their work.

(3) Support—the majority of managers that work within teams, believing support from management and colleagues is good for both the company and employees morale. The support needed by the managers must be positive and productive from the following:

● Supervisory Support of the work and guidance

- Teamwork that support to hard and easy life altogether in the companies
- Goal Focus must be related to the work orientation
- Moral Support from peers, subordinates and management
- Professional Support from management and team work
- Peers Support that can enhanced a good work environment
- Financial Support and social support as needed

(4) Freedom from stress—Management needs to consider the stress level of managers that can affect the quality of working life. Training and awareness raising programs, changes in organizational policies and procedures to reduce sources of stress and counseling will undoubtedly help to create a better work environment for managers. The management should pay an attention of the following aspect as to manage stress amongst managers:

- Job burnout should be avoided by proper work planning
- Managing emotion like sad, angry, suffer, unhappy through emotion training
- Training for employees should be enhanced especially related with stress
- Workload is reasonable according to the standard level of managers
- Interpersonal relations must be positive and productive
- Job condition must be conducive and reliable
- Disturbance Handling should be shared amongst managers

(5) Salary—salary and benefits have both surface and symbolic value that need the management to pay highly concerned on this matter as it can be called as rewards for managers. Rewards take the form of money, benefits, awards, and incentives. Factors such as motivational impact, cost, and fit with the organizational system must be considered when the management designing or analyzing a reward or salary system.

(6) Relationships—increase the harmony of relationships and friendship at the work place will help managers increase their self motivation for QWL. Feeling respect of each others, feeling complicity in relationships between managers and colleagues and superiors, feeling compassion and affective support, sharing good times, laughing, playing and teasing with peers can help to build up the happiness at the workplace and gives impact towards QWL.

(7) Involvement—promote new learning experiences among staff and managers as to let get more involvement with their job and organization, actively participate in organizational committees and groups, promote change as constructive, engage staff in the change process and reward positive involvement in behavior and practices.

5. Conclusions

Managers in industrial companies are more susceptible to high and low QWL because of intense daily demands. Effectively dealing with low QWL by helping to increase hardiness may better equip managers to prevent or reduce physical and psychological illness. The managers should have knowledge and skills with the help of management and the work environment to build up a better quality of working life.

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