



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

**QUALITY OF WORK LIFE AND JOB PERFORMANCE AMONG
MALAYSIAN EXECUTIVES IN THE ELECTRICAL AND
ELECTRONICS INDUSTRY IN SELANGOR**

BEH LOO SEE.

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AMONG MALAYSIAN EXECUTIVES IN THE
ELECTRICAL AND ELECTRONICS INDUSTRY IN SELANGOR**

By

BEH LOO SEE

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia,
in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy**

August 2005



Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia
in fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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August 2005

Chairman: Associate Professor Jegak Uli, PhD

Faculty: Educational Studies

This study was to determine the relationships of selected variables, namely career satisfaction, career achievement, career balance, organizational climate and organizational constraint in predicting the quality of work life (QWL) and their relationships to job performance.

The survey research provided a method of empirical verification utilizing stratified random sampling to determine the relationships between variables at the time of study. The sample consisted of 475 executives from the electrical and electronics industry. The selection of respondents involves a complete list of electrical and electronics companies registered with Malaysian Industrial Development Authority (MIDA). The quantitative data were subjected to various descriptive-correlation



statistical analyses, multiple regression, mediation analyses, and structural equation modeling.

In this study, the findings support the relationship between the independent variables and QWL. All the variables explained 79.1% of QWL, thus presenting a good model of the significant exogenous variables and fairly accurate. QWL is a significant predictor in determining Job Performance. However, the effect of the QWL as a mediator between the exogenous variables and Job Performance is not found. The results show that the executives are satisfied with their level of quality of work life, career achievement, career satisfaction, and organizational climate but not in terms of career balance and the organizational constraints they faced in the organization.

Future research suggestions were advocated, in particular, the replication of this study to other population. Further work is also needed to develop and identify avenues and constructs for quality of work life and career related development within the organization as a relatively young field.



Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah

**KUALITI HIDUP KERJA DAN PRESTASI KERJA
DI KALANGAN EKSEKUTIF MALAYSIA
DI INDUSTRI ELEKTRIK DAN ELEKTRONIK DI SELANGOR**

Oleh

BEH LOO SEE

Ogos 2005

Pengerusi: Profesor Madya Jegak Uli, PhD

Fakulti: Pengajian Pendidikan

Kajian ini dijalankan untuk mengkaji hubungan antara kepuasan kerjaya, pencapaian dalam kerjaya, keseimbangan kerja, iklim organisasi dan kekangan dalam organisasi dalam menentukan kualiti hidup kerja dan hubungannya dengan prestasi kerja.

Kajian soalselidik ini merupakan satu kaedah empirikal untuk menentukan hubungan antara pembolehubah-pembolehubah dalam masa kajian dengan menggunakan teknik persampelan rawak stratifikasi. Sampel kajian merangkumi 475 para eksekutif dalam industri elektrik dan elektronik. Pemilihan responden adalah berdasarkan

senarai syarikat yang berdaftar dengan Perbadanan Kemajuan Industri Malaysia (MIDA). Data yang diperoleh dalam soalselidik dianalisa dengan menggunakan pelbagai kaedah statistik descriptif kuantitatif, analisa perantaraan, dan model persamaan berstruktur.

Dalam kajian ini, keputusan kajian menyokong hubungan antara pembolehubah-pembolehubah bebas dan kualiti hidup kerja. Kesemua pembolehubah bebas menerangkan 79.1% daripada kualiti hidup kerja, justeru merupakan satu model yang baik. Kualiti hidup kerja merupakan satu pembolehubah yang signifikan dalam menentukan prestasi kerja. Namun demikian, kajian ini tidak menonjolkan pembolehubah kualiti hidup kerja sebagai kesan perantaraan antara pembolehubah-pembolehubah bebas dengan pembolehubah prestasi kerja. Hasil kajian menonjolkan bahawa para eksekutif berpuashati dengan kualiti hidup kerja, pencapaian dalam kerjaya, kepuasan kerjaya, dan persekitaran kerja mereka tetapi kurang dalam keseimbangan kerjaya dan kekangan yang dihadapi dalam organisasi.

Cadangan-cadangan untuk kajian masa hadapan dikemukakan, khususnya dalam penyelidikan ke atas populasi yang lain. Kajian yang lebih adalah perlu dalam memperkembangkan lagi dan mengidentifikasi konstruk dan kaedah untuk kualiti hidup kerja dan pembangunan kerjaya yang berkaitan dalam organisasi dalam bidang penyelidikan ini yang masih baru dan sedang berkembang.

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I certify that an Examination Committee met on 12th of August, 2005 to conduct the final examination of Beh Loo See on her Doctor of Philosophy thesis entitled “Quality of Work Life and Job Performance among Malaysian Executives in the Electrical and Electronics Industry in Selangor” in accordance with Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (Higher Degree) Act 1980 and Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (Higher Degree) Regulations 1981. The Committee recommends that the candidate be awarded the relevant degree. Members of the Examination Committee are as follows:

Mazanah Muhamad, PhD

Professor
Faculty of Educational Studies
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Chairman)

Aminah Ahmad, PhD

Professor
Faculty of Educational Studies
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Internal Examiner)

Turiman Suandi, PhD

Professor
Faculty of Educational Studies
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Internal Examiner)

Rahmah Ismail, PhD

Professor
Faculty of Economics & Business
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia
(External Examiner)


ZAKARIAH ABD. RASHID, PhD
Professor/Deputy Dean
School of Graduate Studies
Universiti Putra Malaysia

Date: 25 OCT 2005



This thesis submitted to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia and has been accepted as fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The members of the Supervisory Committee are as follows:

Jegak Uli, PhD

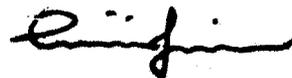
Associate Professor
Faculty of Educational Studies
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Chairman)

Abu Daud Silong, PhD

Professor
Faculty of Educational Studies
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Member)

Khairuddin Idris, PhD

Lecturer
Faculty of Educational Studies
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Member)



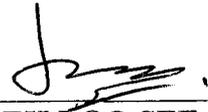
AINI IDERIS, PhD
Professor/Dean
School of Graduate Studies
Universiti Putra Malaysia

Date: 17 NOV 2005



DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the thesis is based on my original work except for quotations and citations which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted for any other degree at UPM or other institutions.



BEH LOO SEE

Date: 12 SEP 2005

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This study is an attempt to describe and determine the level of quality of work life among Malaysian executives in the electrical and electronics industry in the state of Selangor. It also examines the relationship between career related and organizational factors with quality of work life and job performance. The introductory chapter of the study explains the research project of the study and is divided into seven sections: (1) Background to the research, (2) Statement of the Problem, (3) Objectives of the Study, (4) Significance of the Study, (5) Scope and Limitation of the Study, (6) Definitions of Terms, and (7) Summary.

Background to the research

Quality of Work Life

The phrase “quality of work life” has been used to evoke a broad range of working conditions and the related aspirations and expectations of workers. It also encompasses a wide range of programmes, techniques, and theories that have been developed in an endeavour to reconcile the twin goals of efficiency and an improved social environment in modern workplaces.

The notion “quality of work life” (hereinafter referred to as QWL) is closely related to the “quality of life” concept. Both emerged relatively recently in the industrialized nations where English was the primary language. Parallel concept such as “humanization of work” is also used. In France and other French-speaking countries, the usual expression is “improvement of working conditions”, while in the socialist countries the established term is “workers protection”. In Scandinavia, the central concepts are “working environment” and “democratization of the workplace”(företagsdemokrati in Swedish). In the case of Japan, the concepts of *hatarakigai* and *ikigai* are similarly used (Walton, 1975).

In its broadest usage, QWL simply means the sum total of “values”, material and non-material, attained by a worker through his life as a salary earner. Thus it includes aspects of work-related life such as wages and hours, work environment, benefits and services, career prospects and human relations, which could possibly be relevant to worker satisfaction and motivation. In the narrowest sense, the QWL may refer to the positive “value” level of a given job as it affects the worker. Such interpretation carries with it an implied claim that improvements in work organization and job content in particular should receive special consideration for enhancing the “value” level of the individual’s working life. Hence, QWL may be considered as a set of new labour problems and have gained recognition as important determinants of worker satisfaction and productivity in many societies during the period of their sustained economic growth (Delamotte & Takezawa, 1984).



QWL implies a nice and safe work environment. But people want to feel respected at work for what they do and who they are. They want good communications with superiors, fellow workers, and customers, other than being part of a team. Above all, people need to feel valued for their skills, knowledge and their participation in the creative improvement process. Without this, people can be comparatively well paid and still be dissatisfied with the quality of their work life (Ronchi, 1981).

The major catalyst for research on quality of work life has been the influx of women, including those with young children and other family obligations into the labour force. This trend began to escalate in the 1960s where new technology was predicted to transform people's lives and produce a leisure age of shorter working weeks. Women were beginning to enter male-dominated careers, resulting in phenomena such as dual-career couples and the equity of gender roles. However, the predicted reduction in working hours did not come about. Instead, a period of industrial strife, conflict, and retrenchment ensued in the 1970s (Lewis & Cooper, 1999).

During the 1970s, women's dual roles and the growing recognition that many men could no longer expect the support of a full time at home led to a focus on the interdependence of work and family. The focus was on role conflicts, identity dilemmas, attitudes to traditional role expectations, and ambivalence about gendered roles, particularly among middle-class couples and their multiple roles they play.



Out of the social and economic turmoil of the 1970s, came the enterprise culture of the 1980s with mergers and acquisitions, strategic alliances, joint ventures, process engineering. Questions about stress and conflict among those with dual responsibilities in work and family domains became a particular area of research interest and concern. The impact of women's dual roles on themselves and their families continued to be examined and their impacts on well-being. The nature of the links between experiences of stress and satisfaction across work-family led some researchers to call for organizations to change in recognition of employees' complex lives (e.g. Lewis & Cooper, 1987; Sekaran, 1986). There was an emphasis on flexibility at work and greater permeability of work-family boundaries.

In fact, the genesis of work/life balance was in 1986 which is construed as a state of equilibrium in which the demands of both a person's job and personal life are equal (Work-life balance, 2002). Interestingly, work/life programs existed as early as the 1930s. Before World War II, the W.K. Kellogg Company created four six-hour shifts, and the new shifts resulted in increased employee morale and efficiency. Rosabeth Moss Kanter's seminal book (1977), *Work and Family in the United States: A Critical Review and Agenda for Research and Policy*, brought the issue of work/life balance to the forefront of research and organizations. In the 1980s and 1990s, companies in U.S. began to offer work/life programs. While the first wave of these programs were primarily to support women with children, today's work/life programs are less gender-specific and recognize other commitments as well as those of the family (Lockwood, 2003).



The call for workplaces to change intensified in the late 1980s and early 1990s. A recruitment and retention program known as family-friendly employment policies was developed and supported in Europe. The argument was that not only were more and more women entering and remaining in the labour market, but also that their skills were essential to success of organizations. Other demographic changes such as the aging population and the growing recognition that eldercare and childcare was affecting more and more employees. Others examined the impact on productivity and related organizational outcomes (e.g. Kossek & Ozeki, 1999). Research explored antecedents and consequences of work-family conflict and stress, recognizing the multiplicity of variables affecting individual well-being (Greenhaus & Parasuraman, 1999). Increasingly, experiences in work and family not only spill over between domains but also cross over to affect other family members.

Therefore, quality of work experience rather than work per se became the focus of attention (Lewis & Cooper, 1999). Research questions of the 1970s and 1980s on the impact of maternal employment on children, initially based on assumptions about women's roles and young children's needs, were being replaced by concern about the impact on children and other family members of parents' experiences of pressurized work. Most work-family research has taken place with the Baby Boomer generation, but interest in younger generations, including Generation X is developing.

The period from the mid 1990s see the context of globalization and increasingly sophisticated technology, restructuring of organizations and non-permanent work in most advanced industrialized societies towards flexible workforces. The consequences of this changing workplace are the anxieties and other problems that accompany feelings of job insecurity. Many workers are spending more time in the workplace in response to job insecurity, workplace demands, perceived career needs, financial pressures, and so forth. Without job security, employees are less committed to their organizations and may feel freer to move to other jobs. To a large extent, they reflect increased workloads and unrealistic deadlines as a consequence of downsizing. The rise in working hours has been greatest among members of dual-earner and especially professional dual-career families, and time pressures from work are particularly intense during the life-cycle stage including the childrearing years which suggest pressurized family lives. In addition, boundaries between work and non-work time have become more blurred as organizations become increasingly virtual and more people work at or from home for all or part of the week using information and communication technologies (Lewis & Cooper, 1999).

Without doubt there are situations where there exists opportunities for flexibility and autonomy. For example, self-employment can increase flexibility to reconcile work and family, but it can also be precarious for those with intense family demands. Other workplace trends, such as the growth of work in project teams, can increase opportunities for flexibility and innovation under certain circumstances but

can make it more difficult to be flexible in lean organizations in which one team member's absence could put greater strain on colleagues (Lewis & Cooper, 1999). In reality, it is mainly the employee who must take responsibility for managing multiple demands.

The question is why is there concern for QWL? Firstly, newly acquired economic maturity appears to be one of the principal causes of the increased concern for improving the QWL. The new awareness is generally attributed to the heightened aspirations of workers with regard to their working life, aspirations which in turn have been affected by improved living standards and higher educational levels of the workforce in general (Hartenstein & Huddleston, 1984).

Secondly, many of the current problems are not the result of deteriorating social and working conditions, but, rather, a consequence of heightened worker expectations and aspirations. Moreover, a number of aspects traditionally considered to be important are gradually giving way to new concerns (Hartenstein & Huddleston, 1994).

Thirdly, new problems affecting the QWL fall into several categories. Some have surfaced as a result of new technological and social developments and others represent changing and accelerating concerns with regard to their compatibility. Fourthly, even though attention tends to be focused on a few cases of obvious