



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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By

BEH LOO SEE

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia,
in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of
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August 2005



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in fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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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 deskriptif 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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TABLE OF CONTENTS

		Page
ABSTRACT		ii
ABSTRAK		iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS		vi
APPROVAL		viii
DECLARATION		x
LIST OF TABLES		xv
LIST OF FIGURES		xvii
CHAPTER		
I	INTRODUCTION	1
	Background to the research	
	Quality of Work Life	
	Statement of the Problem	10
	Objectives of the Study	14
	General Objective	
	Specific Objectives	
	Significance of the Study	15
	Scope and Limitation of the Study	21
	Definition of Terms	22
	Summary	24
II	REVIEW OF LITERATURE	25
	Introduction	
	The Concept of Quality of Work Life	
	Definition	
	Evolution of QWL	27
	Criteria for the Quality of Work Life	35
	Stress and Satisfaction Model in Quality of Work	
	Life (QWL) – Quality of Teacher Work Life	53
	Quality of Work Life for Academicians	56
	Organizational Climate and Quality of Work Life	58
	The Competing Values Framework	60
	Human Relations Approach	65
	Models of Job Design - Operationalizing	
	Human Relations	68
	Job Characteristics Model	74
	Hackman and Oldham’s Job Characteristic Model	76



Job enrichment	79
Model of person-environment fit	81
Income-Leisure Theory	83
Family Systems Theory	87
Concept of Workaholism and QWL	88
Meaning of work	89
Model of Interdependence of work and non-work	91
Influences on the Quality of Non-work Life	93
Business Process Reengineering (BRP) and QWL	96
Theories and Research on Career	97
Traditional Model- Developmental Career Stage Theories	99
Super's Theory	
Levinson's Theory	101
Erikson's Stage Theory	102
Driver's Theory	103
Schein's Model	104
Nicholson's Theory	105
Models in the 1990s	107
Expansion of Traditional Models	
Boundaryless Career Theory	109
Relationship between age and number of children with QWL and Career achievement	112
Relationship between total career tenure and tenure with current employer with QWL and career achievement	114
Career Satisfaction	116
Satisfaction with Pay	118
Satisfaction with Supervision	121
Career Achievement/Success	123
Career Balance	127
Career Balance and QWL: Human resource management literature on work and family policies	128
Gender Differences in Career Balance	141
Organizational Climate and Constraint	148
Job Performance	157
QWL and Job Performance	163
Theoretical Framework of the Study	169
Summary	182



III	RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	184
	Introduction	
	Research Design	
	Descriptive-Correlational Research	185
	Research Framework	189
	Dependent Model for QWL and Job Performance of Conceptual Framework	190
	QWL as Mediator for Job Performance	196
	Target Population	198
	Sample Size & Sampling Technique	204
	Measurement and Instrumentation	213
	Developing the Instrument	
	Instrument Validity	218
	Response Scale	224
	Pilot Testing Procedure	225
	Instrument Reliability	226
	Data Collection Procedures	229
	Questionnaire Response Rate	233
	Data Analysis Procedures	234
	Level of Significance	251
	Summary	252
IV	RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	255
	Respondents' Profile	256
	Demographic Profile of Respondents	
	Professional Profile of Respondents	258
	Level of QWL, Job Performance, Career Satisfaction, Career Achievement, Career Balance, Organizational Climate, and Organizational Constraint	261
	Level of QWL	264
	Level of Job Performance	
	Level of Independent (Exogenous) Variables	265
	Relationship between age, years in career tenure, and years with current employer, number of children, with QWL, career satisfaction, and career achievement	269
	Relationship between the independent (exogenous) variables and QWL and Job Performance	274
	Relationship between the independent (exogenous) variables and QWL	



Relationship between the independent (exogenous) variables and Job Performance	280
Predictors of QWL and Job Performance	283
Predictors of QWL	
Predictors of Job Performance	291
Mediating Effect of QWL on Job Performance	295
Association between independent variables and dependent variables	296
Association between independent variables and mediator	297
Association between mediator and dependent Variable (Model 1)	298
Association between independent variables and mediator predicting dependent variable (Model 2)	299
Partial Mediation	300
Direct Effects, Indirect Effects, and Total Effects of variables on QWL and Job Performance	303
Discussion of Results on Theoretical Framework	306
Career-related antecedents	307
Job-Related outcome	309
QWL as a mediator	312
Summary	313
V	
SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS	316
Summary	
Dependent Model for QWL of Conceptual Framework	322
Dependent Model for Job Performance of Conceptual Framework	328
QWL as Mediator for Job Performance	330
Implications	331
Recommendations	338
REFERENCES	342
APPENDICES	374
BIODATA OF THE AUTHOR	385



LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
3.1	Stratification of sample according to areas	213
3.2	Correlation Analysis of QWL on Independent Variables	223
3.3	Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Pre- Test Results	228
3.4	Stratification of sample and response list	233
4.1	Distribution of Respondents by Demographic Variables	257
4.2	Professional Profile of Respondents	259
4.3	Family Profile Activities of Respondents	260
4.4	Descriptive Statistics for the overall sample	262
4.5	Satisfaction levels of the dependent variables (QWL, Job Performance) and independent (exogenous) variables (Career satisfaction, career achievement, career balance, organizational climate, and organizational constraint)	265
4.6	Pearson Correlation Coefficient between demographic variables, independent variables and QWL	270
4.7	Descriptive Statistics, zero-order correlations and Cronbach's alpha of QWL and Job Performance and the predictor variables	275
4.8	Estimates of coefficients for the QWL (Y_1) model (Enter Method)	284
4.9	Estimates of coefficients for the QWL (Y_1) model (Stepwise Method)	285
4.10	The multicollinearity diagnostic for the final model	287



4.11	Casewise Diagnostics	288
4.12	Estimates of Coefficients of Job Performance	291
4.13	Coefficients between Independent Variables and Dependent variable, Job Performance (Y_2)	297
4.14	Coefficients between Independent Variables and Mediator (QWL) (Y_1)	298
4.15	Coefficients between Model 1 (QWL and Job Performance) and Model 2 (IVs + QWL and Job Performance)	300
4.16	Direct Effect of Latent Variables on QWL	305
4.17	Direct, Indirect, and Total Effects of Latent Exogenous Variables on Job Performance	



LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
2.1 Quality of Teacher Work Life Profile	55
2.2 Quality of Academic Work Life Model	58
2.3 The Competing Values Framework	61
2.4 Conceptual Models of the Motivational Properties of Tasks	70
2.5 The Job Characteristics Model	78
2.6 A simple dynamic model of the interaction of work and non-work	92
2.7 Effects of HR Work Family Policies	134
2.8 Theoretical Framework of the Study	170
3.1 Conceptual Framework of the Study	189
3.2 Mediation Analysis	249
4.1 Scatterplot Matrix of the Independent Variables	279
4.2 Histogram for QWL(Regression Standardized Residual)	289
4.3 Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residual	
4.4 Scatterplot of Standardized Residuals against Standardized Predicted Values	290
4.5 Mediator Model (Sobel's Test)	302
4.6 Direct Effects on QWL and Job Performance	306



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