

Quality of Work Life of Officers in Local Administrative Organizations in Khao Kho District, Thailand

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Abstract

Human is considered to be the crucial resource of organizations. The driving of the organizations in their full potentials depends on how well officers are managed to have a happy and better life as well as a good quality of work life. This research aims to study 1) the extent of officers' satisfaction in quality of work life and 2) the difficulties and needs in developing officers' quality of work life in local administrative organizations. The participants were 216 officers. The questionnaire was employed to gather the data. For the qualitative study, 7 officers in Nong Mae Na subdistrict administration organization participated in the interview. The quantitative data was computed by using percentage, means, and standard deviations while the qualitative data was analyzed by the descriptive methods. The research findings revealed that officers in the local administrative organizations considerably rated their high satisfaction on the following aspects: 1) safe and healthy working condition; 2) opportunity to growth and security; 3) opportunity to use and develop human capacities; 4) social integration in the work organization; 5) constitution in the work organization; 6) work and total life span; and 7) social relevance of work life, and another aspect that was rated as moderate was an adequate and fair compensation. The results also indicated that the local administrative organizations should be improved their promotion evaluation procedures, and promoted the unity activities as well as to encourage the officers to participate in the training which could lead to the career growth and progress.

Keywords: Quality of Work Life, Local Administrative Organizations, Officers

Introduction

The quality of work life of officers is essentially important as it demonstrates a close connection between job satisfaction and work-life quality. Each work is different, for example, in terms of a job variety, the freedom in decision-making, the opportunities to know the results of performance, and the readiness of office tools and equipment which would be variably provided according to the provided funds and the implemented policies of each organization. (Office of the Civil Service Commission, 2007) In addition, the quality of work life also indicates the features of relationship between co-workers at work such as assistance provision, a group consultation, intimacy, and a unity. Working as a team would bring about a success in operation, and is considered as one factor necessarily affecting the job satisfaction and the quality of work life both in terms of job advancement, knowledge and skill enhancement, and individual rights.

The government recently provides a great priority to the human resource management which aims at developing a human capital, as one significant factor enriching official and provincial departments. This has been influenced by Civil Service Act B.E. 2551 on section 34; stated that "The organization of civil officials shall be undertaken with a view to the result-based outcome, efficiency and good value in the discharge of State functions, and to make officials perform their

duties with quality and virtuously and have a good quality of life". According to the previous rationale, it advances the researcher's intention to examine the quality of work life of local administrative organization officers in Khao Kho district, Phetchabun province. The organizations in the particular district carry different responsibilities: to develop, to sustain, and to cope with populations' problems. Moreover, the organizations play a critical role of fostering numerous amounts of entrepreneurs and tourists. Khao Kho district, an integral tourist attraction, is located in an area of economic importance where the diversity of people's needs could probably more or less impact on their quality of work life. Given this fact, there has been a consideration on the ways to improve the officers' quality of work life and present the resolution to the related party in later stages.

Research Objectives

- 1) To examine the satisfaction of quality of work life among personnel in the local administrative organizations in Khao Kho district, Phetchabun province.
- 2) To explore obstacles and needs in improvement of quality of work life of personnel in the local administrative organizations in Khao Kho district, Phetchabun province.

Review Literature

Theoretical concepts and previous research on quality of work life used are shown in the followings: Office of the Thai Civil Service Commission (2007) has established a conceptual framework, the development of quality of work life for civil servants, concerning on four dimensions: 1) working dimension referring to the way employees are expected to receive the following benefits: good workplace; safety; appropriate work equipment; effective and principle executives; systematic administration; proper delegation; flexibility of work, regulations, shared values, and organizational cultures enhanced working system; work performance administration; a consistency between civil servants' proficiencies and their jobs, consecutive development on skills as well as acceptance and dignity, 2) privacy dimension covering the equivalence between the civil servants' livings and working, having good physical and mental health, and even mental development, 3) society dimension focusing on positive relationship between the civil servants and organizations, effective communication, collaborating in entertaining activities, public charities, and building relationship among official parties, and 4) social dimension involving with the appropriateness of employees' salary and fringe benefits, relatively fair subsistence, and financial management.

The four dimensions of the framework, be objective to improve civil servants' quality of work life, are consistent with Walton's theory (1973), which explores the generality on basic elements for quality of work life. The theory comprises 8 indicators: 1) adequate and fair compensation; 2) safe and healthy working condition; 3) opportunity to growth and security; 4) opportunity to use and develop human capacities; 5) social integration in the work organization; 6) constitution in the work organization; 7) work and total life span; and 8) social relevance of work life. With the reference of this theory, it initiates a large number of previous studies on the quality of work life of officers in different administrative organizations; and the overall results of the previous studies summarized that the civil servants received inadequate quality of work life as compared to employees of private companies in terms of salary, numbers of working hours as well as rented habitations the research conducted (Kim & Cho, 2003; Sudjit & Chairatana, 2013; Bunphet & Klinkeson, 2014; Jakthong & Klinkeson, 2014; Sepetch & Banchuen, 2014; Kanaphantu & Ratchattranon, 2015). Additionally in Denmark, the study of developing an

assessment of quality of work life reaching the standard criteria highlighted that self-adjustment toward a particular organization culture plays a significant role in quality of work life. Ventegodt (2003) also stated that adjusting to culture values could indicate better livings; especially, healthy employees would be able to coexist with others harmoniously.

This research applied the theory regarding the quality of work life proposed by Walton (1973) as the conceptual framework since it covered the fundamental elements concerning the quality of work life as mentioned earlier. Moreover, the notion concerning the methods to study and implement the policies proposed by Sombat Thamrongthanyawong (2006) was also used as the framework. The theory deals with a bottom-up approach of consideration to reflect the hindrances and needs in improving the quality of work life of officers in local administrative organizations in Khao Kho district, Phetchabun province.

Research Methodology

This current research conveys a mixed method design in which quantitative and qualitative method are integrated. On the process of data collection, questionnaires (as quantitative data) and in-depth interview (as qualitative data) were employed as research instruments.

Research Participants

For quantitative data, the population includes 216 officers working for the local administrative organizations in Khao Kho district, Phetchabun province, with exclusion of executives and government officers. The participants were drawn from different subdistricts including Nong mae na (26); Khao Kho (37); Thung sa mo (42); Khek noi (68) and Camp son municipality (43). 7 officers of Nongmaena local administrative organization, who are not executives or government officers, were selected by using a stratified sampling method in qualitative data collection.

Research Instrument

The research instrument used to collect quantitative data was Likert-Scale questionnaires concerning on officers' satisfaction towards quality of work life. The questionnaires composed of two main sections as follows:

- 1) a checklist containing questions related to participants' general information.
- 2) a group of questions on participants' satisfaction towards quality of work life in terms of the following indicators: 1) adequate and fair compensation; 2) safe and healthy working condition; 3) opportunity to growth and security; 4) opportunity to use and develop human capacities; 5) social integration in the work organization; 6) constitution in the work organization; 7) work and total life span; and 8) social relevance of work life.

On the other hand, an in-depth interview with main points specified was employed to gather qualitative data. During the interview, the participants were required to explore their needs towards quality of work life development and any circumstances of quality of work life.

Assessment of Research Instruments

The designed questionnaires were analyzed its content validity and reliability by trialing 30 sets of questionnaires with homogeneous population to assess the following values:

- 1) applying an item analysis to evaluate the correlation of each question item with total scores by selecting any question item carrying the highest correlation value
- 2) analyzing the reliability of each aspect specified in questionnaires using Cronbach's Alpha ($\alpha = 0.82$)

Data Analysis and Statistics

As for quantitative data analysis, the researcher employed Likert-Scale questionnaires to collect the data regarding 8 indicators of the quality of work life, which consists of: 1) adequate and fair compensation; 2) safe and healthy working condition; 3) opportunity to growth and security; 4) opportunity to use and develop human capacities; 5) social integration in the work organization; 6) constitution in the work organization; 7) work and total life span; and 8) social relevance of work life based on Walton's theoretical concept. The statistic tools for analysis are Percentage, Mean, Standard Deviation. As for qualitative data analysis, the researcher decided to conduct interviews and established the questions which concern the needs and problems to enhance quality of work life of officers. In the interviews with 7 officers in local administrative organizations with the lowest average satisfaction level, it could reflect the needs and problems in bottom-up way. The data is illustrated in forms of summary and descriptive information.

Research Results

1) According to 216 officers who completed the questionnaires, it shows that the majority of them were female as accounted for 52.8%. The participants were in the age group of 31-40 years which is accounted for 48.6%, most of whom received a Bachelor's degree from the universities which is 53.2% of all subjects. In addition, 56% of all subjects were found to have been married and 50.0% have an income between 15,001-25,000 THB

2) The satisfaction level of quality of work life of officers in local administrative organizations in Khao Kho district, Phetchabun province, consists of 8 aspects. In overall picture of satisfaction level, 7 aspects were rated by participating subjects as high. These aspects include: social integration in the work organization ($\bar{x} = 3.67$), safe and healthy working condition ($\bar{x} = 3.74$), social relevance of work life ($\bar{x} = 3.68$), 4) opportunity to use and develop human capacities ($\bar{x} = 3.59$), constitution in the work organization ($\bar{x} = 3.57$), work and total life span ($\bar{x} = 3.48$), 7) opportunity to growth and security ($\bar{x} = 3.43$). The another aspect was rated as moderate, which contributes to an adequate and fair compensation ($\bar{x} = 3.07$). The data is presented in table 1.

Table 1 The overall satisfaction level of quality of work life of officers in local administrative organizations in Khao Kho district, Phetchabun province

Satisfaction towards quality of work life of officers	\bar{x}	S.D.	Satisfaction level
Adequate and Fair Compensation	3.07	.82	moderate
Safe and Healthy Working Condition	3.74	.66	high
Opportunity to Growth and Security	3.43	.77	high
Opportunity to use and Develop Human Capacities	3.59	.65	high
Social Integration in the Work Organization	3.67	.68	high
Constitution in the Work Organization	3.57	.68	high
Work and Total Life Span	3.48	.56	high
Social Relevance of Work Life	3.68	.73	high
Total	3.52	.87	high

The satisfaction of the quality of working life of officers in local administrative organizations in Khao Kho district, Phetchabun province was separately analyzed for each organization. It was found out that the satisfaction of officers in 4 local administrative organizations was at a high level, which include Khaem Son subdistrict administration organization ($\bar{x} = 3.46$), Khek Noi

subdistrict administration organization ($\bar{x} = 3.42$), Khao Kho subdistrict administration organization ($\bar{x} = 3.58$), Thung Samo subdistrict administration organization ($\bar{x} = 3.82$), and Nong Mae Na subdistrict administration organization was at a moderate ($\bar{x} = 3.32$) as shown in table 2.

Table 2 The analysis results of the satisfaction of quality of work life of officers in 5 local administrative organizations in Khao Kho district, Phetchabun province

Satisfaction of quality of work life of officers	\bar{x}	S.D.	Satisfaction level
1. Khaem Son	3.46	.31	high
2. Khek Noi	3.42	.76	high
3. Khao Kho	3.58	.66	high
4. Thung Samo	3.82	.68	high
5. Nong Mae Na	3.32	.30	moderate
Total	3.52	.87	high

Discussion

According to the analysis of officers' quality of work life in Khao Kho local administrative organizations, Phetchabun province, the discussion between quantitative data and qualitative data; gathering from the interview, were as follows:

The officers, working for Khao Kho local administrative organizations in Phetchabun, rated their satisfaction on the adequate and fair compensation as the lowest among the eight indicators. This finding is consistent with the research of Jaktong and Klinkeson (2014), who studied the quality of work life of provincial administrative organization officers in Nonthaburi. Regarding to their study, the extra jobs ordering by the superior shaped the officers' to realize that they gained less payment as compared to the main work they should do. The officers also spend much time to accomplish the extra work that they were not proficient. This When they were not proficient in some work, they spend much time to accomplish. This frequently impacted their time spending on the main duties. Moreover, insufficient welfare influenced the officers to pay renting houses or on traveling to work; as a result, they would have less savings for the future. The finding is in accordance with the study of Kanjana Bonperng (2009), who studied quality of working life and organizational commitment of sub-district municipality officials in Samutsakorn province, found that the satisfaction towards a sufficient and fair income was as well rated as fair. Among many indicators, one with the lowest average rating was the indicator which deals with an adequate income for monthly expenses. Regarding safe and healthy working environment, the officers could very well adjust themselves to work with their colleagues, thus resulting in a good relationship within organizations. The finding is consistent with the research of Narichaya Kanaphantu (2015) who carried out a study on quality of work life of officers in Khlong 4th sub-district administrative organization. The result of this previous study showed that the officers treated each other as siblings and supported each other in the workplace, and could also make use of the provided equipment to facilitate their work. Additionally, the local administrative organizations were found to intensively promote an unpolluted, safe, and positive environment for the tourists and officials in the organizations due to Khao Kho district's reputation. In terms of opportunity to growth and security, the majority of officers are government officials with high stability of work; however, their confidence on performance evaluation decreased. The superiors are required to be unambiguous, to explain the requirements for pay raise or promotion

thoroughly, and to adapt evaluation means for a promotion be more effective and fair. The finding is convergent to the study of Kanjana Bonperng (2009) who undertook a study on quality of working life and organizational commitment of sub-district municipality officials in Samutsakorn province, and found that the officers considered their careers and organizations as secure and stable, which highlights a chance to get promoted. In regard to develop human capacities, the superior and colleagues allowed the officers to freely express ideas in a constructive way and provided funds as well as opportunities to enhance their potential, for example, via trainings, conferences, seminars, and studying abroad. Some officers, however, denied those opportunities because many events have generally established in Bangkok, and there might be a limitation in fund provision and officers' rotation affecting in potential development. The finding could be supported by the research by R. Mohan Kumar Madhu (2015). They conducted a study on "Factors Affecting Quality of Work Life: A Study of Bank Employees in Tirunelveli District, South India, and found that the common factors that influenced quality of working life contributed to reasonable compensation, good working conditions, and prospect for career growth. This part concerns on social integration in the work organization. Due to the small size of five local administrative organizations in Khao Kho district, the results indicated that the officers could build a closer and good relationship, exchange opinions, offer regular assistance and recommendations to cope any difficulties their colleagues have been suffered. The finding could be supported by the study of Paemica Pothisakul (2013) who conducted a study "Quality of Working Life in Chonprathan Medical Centre, Srinakharinwirot University". This previous study revealed that a supportive, warm, and trustworthy environment mainly caused good quality of work life. Forgiveness and encouragement were given whenever mistakes occurred. This is also relevant to the study of Preeti Nair (2015) who conducted a study on quality of work life: a proactive empowerment approach by organizations, and a study of quality of work life in government and private organizations. It was found that quality of work life was critical and was influenced by many factors. Those referred to motivation, job satisfaction, decision making process, work environment, interpersonal relationship, and organizational culture and hygiene factors. The results of the research also showed that organizations should focus more on culture and interpersonal relationship encouraging a good quality of work life for their officers. With respect to constitution in the work organization, the officers highly satisfied with the organizational culture which emphasizes the importance of respect for others' rights; and individual's rights shall not as well be infringed on. In addition, officers in organizations could also freely exchange viewpoints and opinions, for example, on rules, regulations, or requirements at work. The finding is convergent to the study by Chanida Jittarutta (2017). She noted that besides the organizational culture, a proper individualistic culture, social value, and officials' characteristics being in accordance with organizational value and behavior play an essential factor in promoting the efficiency of local organizations. The officers have to carry out responsibilities in ways that fully conform to the established rules and regulations. Concerning work and total life span, the findings demonstrated the officers' great extent of their satisfaction: they could probably allocate their time with family. The officers could take a rest or relax themselves when they got depressed from working. Although the officers sometimes were assigned urgent works when they were out of duty which somehow affected their personal time and time for family, there was no big trouble in time management. The finding is consistent with the research proposed by Boontan Dockthaisong (2008). The research was conducted to describe about KSM (Knowledge + skill + management), which is the human resource management model. Prior to the process of

human resource management, the humans (as a leader) must first well be aware of the responsibility for the family and organizations they are working for. Regarding social relevance of work life, the research findings illustrated the greater relationship between the local administrative organizations and communities since different missions were transferred to the organizations. If miscommunication happened, the superior, community leaders, and local politicians would work collaboratively to associate with their residences. Then the work accomplishment enriched the officers a greater pride in their own organizations, thanks to an acceptance of competences and skills from the society and other associated organizations. This finding is consistent with the study by Songchai Nakjakhe (2014) who studied organizational commitment of military officers in engineer department, Bhanurangsi fort, Ratchaburi province, and found the great extent of relationship to the organizations. That is to say, the relationship to the organizations was resulted from the commitment of the officers to complete the assigned tasks, and from the potential of the organizations to achieve reputation and recognition from the society.

Recommendations

Considering the officers' obstacles and requirements working in the local administrative organization, it was shown that administrators should establish the policy, that deliberately boost up their officers' encouragement in the following issues:

- 1) The officers should receive wages and fringe benefits appropriately to the amount of work and responsibilities as specified in a particular position.
- 2) The officers should regularly participate in a variety of trainings in which they could develop their potentials to be consistent with the change of laws and regulations as well as society, economy, and technology in the upcoming world.
- 3) The officers should be promoted equitably and properly with explicit evaluation procedures.

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