



EMPLOYEES' QUALITY OF WORK LIFE IN BANGKOK, THAILAND

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ABSTRACT

This research aimed to study the quality of work life of office employees working in Bangkok, classified by the demographic characteristics of employees to understand the various factors that affect the quality of work life of employees. These results can be used in the future to design proper activities or processes that would enhance the quality of work life of employees within the organization. The research used non-probability sampling that is an accidental sampling technique from 400 samples and analyses the results with analysis of variance: ANOVA. It was found that employees with different gender, marital status, educational level and average monthly revenue have different quality of work life. which were statistically significant while the quality of work life of employees with different ages and duration of employment are not different.

Keywords: quality management, quality of work life, Thailand office employee.

INTRODUCTION

Currently, various industries around the world have been forced into producing high quality products and services, therefore, organizations have had to improve the working process in various fields as well as applying modern technology to produce products and services. However, an important factor that has significantly affected organizations achieving their objectives, in terms of quality and leading the organization to be successful, are human resources because it is a key mechanism

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to drive the working processes practitioners including users of various technologies to efficiently produce products and services (Marimuthu, Arokiasamy & Ismail 2009; Swanson & Holton, 2009).

From the aforementioned issues, the organization must turn to considering the importance of building the “quality of work life” of employees within the organization, which means the process of developing employees to have knowledge and capacity, to perform their work properly and, to organize employees to work in a safe working place. This also means making sure employees work in the organization happily, have a balance between work life and personal life, build love in the organization and commit to working and sustainably developing the organization (Gurudatt & Gazal, 2015; Varghese & Jayan, 2015). However, many organizations in Thailand hardly focus on the quality of work life because this operation takes a long time to develop and does not show any immediate results. Therefore, this study is a survey of the quality of work life of employees that are classified by demographic characteristics in order to understand the various factors that cause better quality of work life of employees and can be applied to design appropriate activities or processes for a better quality of work life for employees within the organization.

Importance, as mentioned, is an issue in studying the quality of work life (QWL) of employees who work in offices in the Bangkok area because it is an important business area of Thailand and they are an important group in working and make a business move ahead efficiently. From the results of gross regional and provincial product in year 2013 of Office of National Economic and Social Development, it was found that most maximum gross provincial product per person is in Bangkok and its perimeter areas, east, central and south. In the regional economy in the year 2013, it was found that Bangkok and its perimeter areas have the highest expansion at 4.10%, secondly is the northeast at 3.00%, central, east, north and south are at 2.90%, 1.70%, 1.50% and 1.20% respectively.

OBJECTIVE

To study the quality of work life of office employees working in Bangkok, classified by the demographic.



HYPOTHESIS

Office workers in Bangkok area who have different demographic characteristics and quality of work life.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Demographic characteristics

Human resources are considered to be the most important resource of all industries. All organizations focus on personal development because personnel at all levels of the organization is a key mechanism in driving the organization to achieve its objectives. However, issues on the workforces' personal factors are different and varied according to social backgrounds and families. Therefore, many organizations attempt to understand its workforces' personal factors so that any policies or strategies can be implemented in accordance with the personnel of such organization. Therefore, the study of demographic characteristics factors can affect human resource management and implementation of strategies or policies of the organization (Urosevic & Milijic, 2012).

In a recent study, the demographic characteristics of employees is defined very similar and can be concluded that it is a study about any characteristic that is an identity of members in society and demographic characteristics usually consisting of various factors such as gender, age, ethnicity, education level, occupation, income and family status (Edgar & Geare, 2004). For this study, researchers have studied concepts and theories based on demographic characteristics and related research to conclude as the demographic characteristic factors that consist of gender, age, marital status, education level, period of employment and average monthly income.

2. Quality of work life

Quality of work life (QWL) is an extremely crucial part in making sure employees have the ability and happiness to work in the organization, therefore, the organization can retain skilled employees whilst also attracting employees from other organizations. This is different from traditional management where the organization frequently uses compensation, mainly in the form of money, to attract staff as this method is easy to imitate and can sustainably lose efficient organizational management power especially in the era of Knowledge-based economy (Sojka, 2014).



Quality of work life means people's lives and covers feelings about work in every dimension such as compensation, operational condition, safety at work and interpersonal relationships (Jayakumar & Kalaiselvi, 2012). Therefore, this can be concluded that the quality of work life relates not only the improvement of quality of work life at the workplace but also the quality of life apart from work. The aims in various fields of a quality work life of employees in the organization are as follows: (1) to increase responsibility, commitment of individual and productivity from operations, (2) to have efficient team work and communication, (3) to encourage employees in work, (4) to reduce stress within the organization, (5) to develop employee relationships both during and after work, (6) to improve and develop safety conditions at work, (7) to increase employee satisfaction, (8) to enhance learning in the workplace, and (9) to manage changes (Selvaraj, 2014; Srivastava & Kanpur, 2014).

Currently, studies on the quality of work life are widespread. Researchers have concluded elements of quality of work life in various fields as studied before as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Element of quality of work life

Name of researcher (Year)	Element of quality of work life
Walton (1974)	Adequate and fair compensation / safe work environment and health promotion / opportunity to use and develop individual skills / growth opportunities in career / social integration in the organization / charter of the organization / balance between work life and personal life / working society.
Stein (1983)	Self-control (Freedom in an operation) / recognition / progress and development / external return (compensation, promotion and awards) / participation / good work condition / honour and respect.
Subhashini & Gopal (2013)	Relationships with colleagues / comments on work load / measures on health and sanitation and safety / satisfaction on feedback / comments on working hours / training program from the organization / respect in workplace / procedures for conflict management.



Table 1. (continued)

Name of researcher (Year)	Element of quality of work life
Selvaraj (2014)	Occupational health in workplace / appropriate work period / proper salary / good work environment / facilities and welfare / frustration management / good financial benefit / efficient communication.

According to the review of the relevant researches as mentioned above it was found that the significant factors of quality of work life and could be summarized in to 8 variables as follow: (1) Organization pride, (2) Job satisfaction, (3) Growth and stability of employment, (4) Human capacity development, (5) Fair compensation, (6) Safe and healthy environment, (7) Relation and co-operation, and (8) Work-life balance.

METHODOLOGY

1. Sample and data collection

The population of this study were all office workers in the Bangkok area with an uncertain exact number of people. Therefore, the size of the sample is defined by the formula of W.G. Cochran (1953) at 95% of confidence level that is equal to 385 samples. However, real data was collected from 400 samples by using Likert's scales questioner and non-probability sampling that is an accidental sampling and the results are analyzed by analysis of variance (ANOVA).

2. Measuring variables

The purpose of this study is to examine and compare the quality of work life of office workers in the Bangkok area classified by demographic characteristics. From the purposes as mentioned and the literature review, it can be concluded as the assumption and conceptual framework for the research as shown in Figure 1.

The assumption of this research is:

H_1 Office workers in the Bangkok area who have different demographic characteristics and quality of work life.

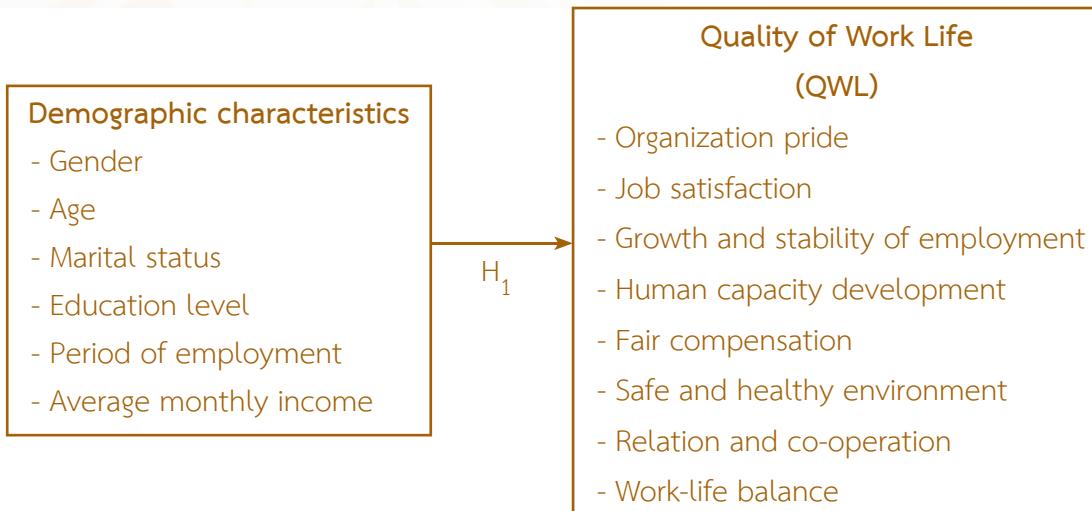


Figure 1. Conceptual framework

RESULTS

1. Demographic characteristics of respondents

The results on demographic characteristics of respondents found that most are between 25 - 30 years old, single, hold a bachelor's degree or equivalent, have over 15 years of period of employment and have an average income between 10,001 - 20,000 Baht per month

2. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) comparing the level of quality of work life of office workers in Bangkok area classified by demographic characteristics

This part is an analysis to compare the quality of work life of respondents classified by gender, age, marital status, graduation level, period of employment and average monthly income by using t-test Independent to test the independent average of 2 groups and one-way ANOVA to test the difference of the average of 2 or more groups. This is the test of hypothesis H_1 which stated that office workers in the Bangkok area, who have different demographic characteristics, will have different qualities of work life as shown in Table 2.



Table 2. The variance analysis of demographic characteristics to compare level of quality of work life of employees

Variable	t	p
Gender	-2.951**	.003
Age	1.416	.218
Marital status	11.827**	.000
Graduation level	2.917*	.034
Period of employment	1.702	.133
Average monthly income	3.745**	.003

* Statistically significant level at .05 ** Statistically significant level at .01

From Table 2, the results of the analysis of variance of level of quality of work life of office staff classified by demographic characteristic variables consisting of gender, age, marital status, graduation level, period of employment and average monthly income found 4 demographic characteristic variables that are statistically significant to the quality of work life of office staff such as gender, marital status, graduation level and average monthly income while age and period of employment are not statistically significant to the quality of work life of office staff.

Therefore, the differences were tested to compare demographic characteristic variables that affect the quality of work life including gender, marital status, graduation level and average monthly income as the pair by the Least Significant Different (LSD) method as shown in Table 3 - 6.

Table 3. Average of quality of work life of office workers in Bangkok area as a pair classified by gender with LSD method

Gender	\bar{X}	1	2
Male (1)	3.71	-	0.003**
Female (2)	3.87	-	-

** $p < .01$

From Table 3, respondents who have different genders have different levels of overall quality of work life statistically significant level at .01 and it was found that female employees have higher averages of quality of work life than male employees.



Table 4. Average of quality of work life of office workers in the Bangkok area as a pair classified by marital status with LSD method

Marital status	\bar{X}	1	2	3
Single (1)	3.848	-		
Married (2)	3.801	0.352	-	
Divorced/Widowed/Separated (3)	3.192	0.000**	0.000**	-

** $p < .01$

From Table 4, office workers who have different marital status have different overall qualities of work life statistically significant level at .01. The 2 different pairs are single employees who have higher a quality of work life than divorced/widowed or separated employees and married employees who have higher a quality of work life than divorced/widowed or separated employees as well.

Table 5. Average of quality of work life of office workers in Bangkok area as a pair classified by graduation level with LSD method

Graduation level	\bar{X}	1	2	3	4
Lower than Bachelor's degree (1)	3.875	-			
Bachelor's degree or equivalent (2)	3.781	0.621	-		
Master's degree (3)	4.039	0.424	0.004**	-	
Doctorate's degree (4)	4.052	0.605	0.347	0.967	-

** $p < .01$

From Table 5, office workers who have different graduation levels have different overall qualities of work life statistically significant at .01. The different pairs are master's degree employees who have higher quality of work life than Bachelor's degree or equivalent employees.



Table 6. Average of quality of work life of office workers in Bangkok area as a pair classified by average monthly income with LSD method

Average monthly income	\bar{X}	1	2	3	4	5	6
Less than 10,000 Baht (1)	3.526	-					
10,001 - 20,000 Baht (2)	3.844	0.123	-				
20,001 - 30,000 Baht (3)	3.950	0.041	0.119	-			
30,001 - 40,000 Baht (4)	3.735	0.315	0.125	0.003**	-		
40,001 - 50,000 Baht (5)	3.741	0.309	0.199	0.010**	0.006	-	
More than 50,000 Baht (6)	3.640	0.598	0.024	0.001**	0.309	0.315	-

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

From Table 6, office workers who have different average monthly incomes have different overall qualities of work life statistically significant at .05 and .01. The different pairs are employees who have average monthly income at 20,001 - 30,001 Baht have higher quality work life than employees who have an average monthly income at 30,001 - 40,000 Baht, 40,001 - 50,000 Baht and over 50,000 Baht.

DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

From the analysis results of the quality of work life of office workers classified by demographic characteristic variables it was found that 4 statistically significant variables to quality of work life of office workers were gender, marital status, graduation level and average monthly income while the period of employment is not statistically significant to quality of work life of office workers. The results can be discussed for each variable as follows:

Gender Office workers with different genders will have different quality of work life. Female employees will have a higher quality work life than male employees because most female employees will pay attention to living details more than male employees regarding both daily life and working life so they plan their living to achieve their defined objectives. However, although male employees will have a lower average quality of work life than female employees, it does not mean that male employees



will not attend to make their quality of lives better. This can be considered from high average quality work life of male employees. This means both male and female employees require having the same basic quality of life such as safety and sanitation at the workplace and having a balance between work life and personal life. The attention of male employees to other fields of quality of life such as relationships in the organization or interpersonal relationships with colleagues, exchanging stories with colleagues especially female alike including pride and engagement to the organization is less than female employees (Daskalova, Online, 2009; Jyothi & Neelakantan, 2014).

Age Respondents with different ages have no difference of quality of work life. Although samples will have different ages, all of them are at a working age, especially as it is office work, which means they do not do much labor and most items of equipment in work are similar, the environment of workplace is normally conducive to being able to work safely. The results, as mentioned above, may be different with samples who work in industrial factories that requires lots of labor and uses many more machines. Therefore, working in industrial factories requires managing operational duties to suit with the age of workers. In addition, considering the form of working on working hours, most workers will work in normal hours that are different from some industries that require overtime hours or running machines for 24 hours so office staff have a balance to spend time on both personal life and work life (Gupta, 2015; Nanjundeswaraswamy & Swamy, 2014).

Marital status Respondents with different marital status have different qualities of work life. Employees who are single and married have a higher quality work life than employees who are divorced, widowed or separated because they have different family responsibilities. These single employees have less burden on their personal life or expenses than employees who are divorced, widowed or separated whose burdens may include single child care, higher costs of living, no one to alleviate expenses or pay for debts during creating a family so they have to work harder while the employees who are married will have spouses to lighten the load more than divorced, widowed or separated employees. The same cause of results found that employees who are single and married will have no difference on their quality



of work life that is even single employees will undertake only their own burdens and married employees will have to absorb the whole family but they still have their own spouses to help relieve such burdens. (Amin, 2013; Swapna, 2015).

Graduation level Respondents with different graduation levels will have different qualities of work life. The study found that office staff who graduated with a master's degree will have a higher quality of work life than those with bachelor's degree because higher levels of education make them have the opportunity to work in higher positions and gain higher returns. However, considering the quality of work life of master's degree and doctorate's degree, it was found that there is no difference because, in most private sectors, both groups will be equally higher than those with a bachelor's degree. Private organizations will consider the work and abilities in promoting the position or providing greater rewards more than education qualification. Bachelor's degree holders have similar qualities of work as there are not many staff who graduated with less than that in most offices in Thailand and their goals in work life are different from higher than bachelor's degree so the results cannot explain the difference of these groups (Behzad, Arezo & Mohammadi, 2014; Nanjundeswaraswamy & Swamy, 2015).

Period of employment Quality of work life of respondents who have different periods of employment are not different. The period of employment indicates years of work in the organization, experience including expertise in various works of the employees that may directly relate to quality of work life on job security regarded as a part of various fields of quality of work life. Therefore, having a good quality work life, that person has to gain other things from working as well such as the appropriate returns, good relationships with others in the organization, a balance between work life and personal life and the opportunity to develop his/her potential. Therefore the factors that affect the quality of work life requires other factors more than the period of work.

Average monthly income Respondents who have different average monthly incomes have a different quality of work life. Employees who have an average monthly income between 20,001 - 30,000 Baht have higher quality of work life than employees with below 10,000 Baht, between 30,001 - 40,000 Baht, 40,001 - 50,000 Baht and over



50,000 Baht because most office workers in Thailand earn incomes between 20,001 - 30,000 Baht and this group has a greater number than other groups. When comparing on the returns, employees do not feel the difference. Since they are the majority within the organisation, policies on raising the quality of work life of employees are often designed for this group. This is especially the case with designing work and means they can grow much more when comparing to top executives with high incomes or having activities in the organization to promote knowledge through staff training or activities for good relationship building between staff. Moreover, the results found that most employees who have high incomes will be responsible for administration, therefore, they have to undertake more burdens as well (Murugan, 2012).

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