

**THE LEVEL OF WORK ENGAGEMENT ON THE QUALITY OF LIFE AMONG
ACADEMICIANS IN PRIVATE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS (PHEI) IN
KLANG VALLEY**

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ABSTRACT

This study determines the level of work engagement and work life balance on quality of life among academicians in PHEI in Klang Valley. Total of 270 questionnaires were distributed to 4 PHEIs in Klang Valley and returned was only 217 respondents. Statistical analysis describes the demographic of respondents and descriptive analysis determines the level of work engagement and work life balance on quality of life among academicians in PHEI in Klang Valley. The findings showed that there was a good level of work engagement with the results of which 120 academician respondents rating between 7 to 10 towards quality of life. However, an organizations still have room to support their academicians towards having a good remuneration package, organizational support, safety and security, personal health and work environments in order for academicians to fully engage with their work.

Keywords: Quality of life (QOL); Work Engagement (WE); Work-Life Balance (WLB).

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1. INTRODUCTION

Mentally and physically attached, a feeling of ownership of own task is part of work engagement [2]. With this work engagement, they do not even care about how long they actually work, as long as they feel the satisfaction and indirectly boost their work performance [16].

Not only that, in order to make sure the academicians is performed up to their best level of performance, the organization needs to have work-life balance in their arrangement of work [23]. Work life balance can be defined as the balance between times, involvement in work and non-work, satisfying balance of work and non-work roles, balance with life and work [10].

1.1. Work Engagement and Work-Life Balance and Quality of life

Work Engagement (WE) was referring to work related mind that characterized by vigor, dedication and absorption. It is also can be defined as unique positive and fulfilling and work related mind of the individual [17]. Penetrate the culture of WE towards the individual in an organization was something new nowadays, this is due to make them feel as if they part of the big puzzle in the organization.

Work-life balance is so much inter-related to work engagement. Based on [24] mentioned in his research that work-life balance is a concept that prioritizing between work and lifestyle such as pleasure, family, health, meditation and spiritual development. On the other hand, work-life balance is also something related to an individual which consist of self-management, time management, change management, stress management, technology management and leisure management [21]. Work-life balance is where the needed of the good balance of your work and non-work. Manage and plan well of the day to day of your work will promise you a work life balance [3].

How well work-life balance can determine the quality of life of academicians in an organization is subject to the individual itself. How they defined the quality of life and how they actually adopt it [11]. According to [14], quality of life measurements consist of nine dimensions which is focused on benefits and remunerations, job characteristics, interpersonal relationships, work environment, organizational support and facilities, organizational policies, individual and family life, safety and security assurance and the final dimension is personal

health and well-being. These nine dimensions have been adopted and adapted for this study to explore on academicians field.

1.2. Objectives of the Study

The main purpose of this particular study is to explore the effect of work engagement and work-life balance on the quality of life of academicians in private higher education institutions in Klang Valley. The needs are arisen to further explore on the topic because the study related to it is not many, especially on work engagement and worklife balance that associated with quality of life. The research objectives of the study are:

- a) To examine the level of quality of life and level of independent variables.
- b) To examine the level of work engagement and work life balance towards quality of life.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Quality of Life (QOL)

Quality of life has been defined in a multitude of ways and limited consensus on which elements that should be measured. Some works are aimed at assessing the QOL of individuals [7], whereas others intend to capture the QOL of groups, communities or countries [12]. Scholars from various disciplines recognize the need for subjective and objective indicators for measuring the QOL [6]. Quality of life concepts vary from each different scholar from various disciplines.

The quality of life (QOL) field is tremendously dissimilar with relevant disciplines ranging from health, economics, HRD, politics, marketing and with even more specific study areas including health and disease, social policy, leisure and recreation, services for disabled persons, planning and development [20]. While, in [7] focused on how good and bad the conditions of life are at a specific time and place. The measurement can be done at individual or social levels using objective indicators. Quality of life (QOL) is not merely about equally dividing the time spent on one's work and personal life, but establishing a harmony that reflects an individual's priorities [22]. How to measure the quality of life? "How can we measure or evaluate work-life balance? The best indicator would be that it should feel right," she said.

2.2. Work Engagement (WE)

The independent variables for this study are Work Engagement (WE) and Work-life Balance (WLB). The quality of life factors in this study is to measure life satisfaction, work-related and non-work related. The work engagement measured was adopted by [17] looking at nine items. The nine items mentioned consist of feeling with energy, strong and vigorous, enthusiastic about the job, inspires, the feeling of going to work, feel happy, proud, immersed about the job and carried away when working. In [18] defined work engagement as an effective cognitive state of mind characterized by vigor (example, energetic), dedication (example, sense of significance and challenge at work) and absorption (example, being deeply engrossed in one's work). In [4] defined work engagement as "a relatively enduring state of mind referring to the simultaneous investment of personal energies in the experience or performance of work".

Work engagement is divided into three *Vigor* is characterized by high levels of energy and mental resilience while working, the willingness to invest effort in one's work and persistence even in the face of difficulties. *Dedication* is characterized by a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride and challenge. *Absorption* is characterized by being fully concentrated and deeply engrossed in one's work, whereby time passes quickly and one has difficulties with detaching oneself from work [18]. In recent years, there has been an increasing interest in work engagement as it has been conceptualized by many [8] in numerous other ways [4, 25]. According to Labor Force Survey 2014 [5], the number of employed employees in 2014 is 13.9 million person in Malaysia. Based on that population of employees, only 11% are engaged employees in their workplace [1]. More than 80% of Malaysian employees are not engaged.

2.3. Measurement and Instrumentation

The instrument adopted by the recent study conducted by [23] from University Putra Malaysia. The instrument was taken from [14] who has developed the questionnaires for her research on quality of life. Now, the instrument was used to explore the effect of work engagement, work-life balance on the quality of life. The nine dimensions has been used to measure the quality of life while another nine items for work engagement has been adopted from [17]. The content validity and construct validity test has been conducted since the

instruments were adopted and adapted. Each item adopted has been a test for content validity. The purpose of conducted the validity test is because to help to determine the appropriateness of the instrument. The content and construct validity have been validated by the expert from the four universities identified through focus group discussion among the academicians. In the focus group discussion, there were inputs and comments to improve the questionnaires for better understanding. Approximately, 10 respondents from each university for a focus group discussion (FGD) being identified. The 10-Likert scale has been designed to be used in the instrument to measure the work engagement, work-life balance and quality of life of academicians in PHEI in Klang Valley.

2.4. Population and Sample of Study

The overall population for academicians in a private university in Malaysia is 24,276 academicians from 53 private higher education institutions [15]. Out of 24,276 academicians throughout Malaysian population, this study focused only on private higher education institutions in Klang Valley who have practice flexible work arrangement (FWAs) as one of many ways to achieve their quality of life in an organization. After the screening from 53 to 41 private higher education institutions in the Klang Valley. Out of 41 universities in Klang Valley being identified, only 4 confirmed universities who have practice flexible working arrangements (FWAs), offer distance learning program, on-line teaching and assessment and the total of academicians are above one hundred. Thus, the total academicians for Klang Valley is approximately 500 academicians. According to [13], based on the actual population for four selected universities is only 500 academicians and that leads to the sample size of 217 academicians, rounded figure for 217 is 220 respondents. The four universities have been identified for data collections, but only 207 returned.

A two stage cluster sampling has been chosen for this study. The first stage of cluster sampling has been determined earlier by divided the targeted population into four groups [19]. The targeted respondents in this study were the lecturer, senior lecturer, assistant prof, associate prof and professor. The second stage of cluster sampling was to select 55 of lecturer and above from each university to be given the questionnaires to be distributed. A decision on the study can be made based on 100 to 220 sampling or respondents. Due to that reason, 220 respondents have been given the survey instruments to be answered. This study utilized a

questionnaire as the instrument to collect data from respondents. A drop-off and pick-up method were adopted to collect data from the respondents.

2.5. Data Analysis

In this study, descriptive statistics were utilized to describe the demographic profile of respondents and analysis have been done using descriptive analysis as well due to the objective of the study is to determine the level of QOL of an academicians. Pearson Product Moment used to test the relationship between variables.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Demographic Profile

The demographic profile provides an overall view of the characteristics of the academicians. There were 40.2% males as compared to 59.8% females in the overall sample. The gender bias in this study is noted to be quite collective, where females are generally more heavily represented. In the PHEI, many of the academicians comprise of males as compared to females who are represented mainly in Malaysian PHEI which females is 6,555 while for males is 17,921 with total of all was 24,276 academicians [15]. The majority of the respondents were distributed in the age group of 31 to 41 years (30.7%) as compared to 65.3% for the age group of 41-50 years and 4.0% for above 50 years old of age. The ethnic components comprised 86.9% Malays and 13.1% Chinese. These percentages were quite consistent with the proportions obtained by the national census to reflect the population of the country [26].

The majority of respondents had post graduate qualification (51.3%) and (48.7%) have bachelor degrees. Having 51.3% postgraduate level of an academician is in line with the expansion of knowledge enhancement to have more postgraduate level for an academician. Based on the analysis, the majority of 64.3% had 15 years and above experience, followed by 26.6% by 9-14 years of employment, and 9.0% to 3-8 years of work experience represented only about 18 of them.

3.2. Level of QOL

Based on the 10 point scale used, the minimum QOL rating was 3.57 while the maximum was 8.06, and this gave a range of 4.49. The median QOL rating value was 5.58 with a standard

deviation of 1.15. The mean QOL rating was 5.49, implying that overall the level of QOL was moderate. The 25th percentile of the QOL was 5.05 and the 75th percentile was 6.00 and thus the interquartile range (IQR) was 0.95. The values obtained for the 25th and 75th percentile suggested that 50% of the respondents had a QOL rating between 5.05 and 6.00. The 90th percentile of the QOL was 7.34, which means that 90% of the respondents had a QOL reading of 7.34 or less. In other words, only 10% of respondents obtained a QOL reading of above 7.34. With this, it answered the first research objective.

3.3. Level of Work Engagement and Work Life Balance

Level of work engagement and work life balance, which refers to the mean ratings for the independent variables in descending order. The highest was the rating for work engagement (M = 7.2619, SD = 1.5230), followed by work life balance (M = 5.9816, SD = 0.8433) and quality of life (M = 5.499, SD = 1.1588). From the findings, the level of work engagement (M = 7.2619, SD = 1.5230) was the most important variable in QOL. This was because work engagement was the extent to which mechanism such of feeling with energy, strong and vigorous, enthusiastic about the job, inspires, the feeling of going to work, feel happy, proud, immersed about the job and carried away when working. Among the scholar who are the experts of work engagement was [18], he defined work engagement as an effective cognitive state of mind characterized by vigor (example, high levels of energy), dedication (example, sense of significance and challenge at work) and absorption (example, being deeply engrossed in one's work). With work engagement, the academicians can have a good quality of life, more time with their family, having a good personal health, safety and security and at the same time where they engage to their work and be happy. With this, it answered the second research objective. Based on the findings, the rating below 3.99 was low, 4-6.99 was moderate and 7-10 was good. These ratings were an indication of satisfaction and the academicians appeared to be rather satisfied with their level of QOL. As mentioned, the first objective of the study was to examine the level of quality of life and the level of the independent variables, work engagement and work life balance. Generally, the academicians felt that their satisfaction level of QOL was good (12%), moderate (66.8%) and low (17.1%).

4. CONCLUSION

The findings of the research would definitely contribute to the body of knowledge regarding work engagement, work life balance and quality of life of academicians in PHEI in Klang Valley. It is believe that the findings of this study will be useful for academicians and policy maker in Malaysian higher education institutions for their future plan or new policy. It will be more useful for other researchers to study and explore other variables such as working environment, management style, organizational culture and other dimension of job characteristics. Having work engagement and work life balance will lead an academicians to have a quality of life [9]. An employee satisfied with their job means they will performance and love what they are doing. Same goes to quality of life [27], an employee's happy in their job, that's means they will performance and engage in their task or work given. Thus, at the end of the day, having work engagement, quality of life will make an employee's perform and gives their best in doing their task. Quality of life, work engagement and work life balance is inter-related variables. They need each other in order to produce academicians who are committed and hard work towards achieving organizational goals. This will be a new knowledge in research and development for community and individual level to consider it for the organizational performance. There is no doubt that the work engagement and work life balance are very important to the academicians in order for them to gain or have their quality of life [23].

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