

ENHANCEMENT OF QUALITY OF WORKING LIFE AMONG
SITE OFFICERS AT JABATAN KERJA RAYA MALAYSIA

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*To my beloved family, especially to my lovely wife
& my children Izzaryl Ashriq
and my lovely parents and in law
Thanks for your never ending love and support.*

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ABSTRACT

In the Ninth Malaysia Plan which ended in 2010; JKR implement more than 7000 projects for government agencies. Not all of these projects were delivered on time and in some cases, JKR was not getting positive feedback on the finished products from the clients and users. Therefore, the department has put an initiative to investigate the offices performance at construction site by considering the QWL dimensions and factors towards the performances of the project. This study aims to devise and develop the QWL framework among JKR's officers at construction sites and to achieve the following objectives; (1) to determine the perception of JKR's officers towards their QWL, (2) to measure the significant of QWL dimensions and related factors that influence project performance and (3) to propose and develop QWL framework for site officers in JKR. Results from the survey and interview sessions reported that all site staffs in JKR were satisfied with their quality of working life at site. The fact was justified from the actual scores obtained for each QWL dimensions more than the overall average index. All four (4) QWL dimensions have significant relationship with the project performance; however work context was identified is most influence to project performance. The QWL framework for site staffs has successfully developed accordingly based on the findings from objectives (1), (2) and qualitative results on required skills set for site staffs.

ABSTRAK

Dalam Rancangan Malaysia Kesembilan yang berakhir pada tahun 2010; JKR telah melaksanakan lebih daripada 7000 projek untuk agensi-agensi kerajaan. Tidak semua projek-projek ini telah diserahkan pada masa yang ditetapkan dan terdapat beberapa kes, produk akhir JKR tidak mendapat maklum balas positif dari pihak pelanggan dan pengguna. Oleh itu, JKR telah meletakkan satu inisiatif untuk menyiasat prestasi pekerjaannya di tapak bina dengan mempertimbangkan dimensi Kualiti Kehidupan Kerja (KKK) dan faktor-faktor berkaitan KKK terhadap prestasi projek di JKR. Kajian ini bertujuan untuk membangunkan rangka kerja KKK di kalangan pegawai-pegawai JKR di tapak pembinaan dan untuk mencapai objektif seperti berikut; (1) untuk menentukan persepsi pegawai JKR terhadap KKK mereka, (2) untuk mengukur signifikasi dimensi KKK dan faktor-faktor yang berkaitan yang mempengaruhi prestasi projek dan (3) untuk mencadangkan dan membangunkan rangka kerja KKK bagi pegawai tapak JKR. Hasil kaji selidik dan sesi temuduga melaporkan bahawa semua kakitangan tapak di JKR berpuas hati dengan kualiti hidup mereka yang bekerja di tapak. Hakikat ini adalah wajar dari perbandingan markah sebenar yang diperolehi bagi setiap dimensi KKK lebih daripada indeks purata keseluruhan KKK. Kesemua empat (4) dimensi KKK mempunyai hubungan yang signifikan dengan prestasi projek; Walaubagaimanapun dimensi konteks telah dikenalpasti adalah dimensi yang paling signifikan terhadap prestasi projek. Rangka kerja KKK untuk kakitangan tapak telah berjaya dibangunkan berdasarkan kepada hasil keputusan daripada objektif (1), (2) dan hasil daripada keputusan pengumpulan data kualitatif berkaitan dengan kemahiran yang diperlukan untuk kakitangan tapak.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BKK	Corporate Communication Department
DV	Dependent Variable
HRD	Human Resource Department
HOPT	Head of Project Team
IV	Independent Variable
JKR	Jabatan Kerja Raya
KKK	Kualiti Kehidupan Kerja
QWL	Quality of Working Life
RMK-10	Rancangan Malaysia ke-10
SO	Superintending Officer
SPSS	Statistic Package for Social Sciences

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Public Works Department (PWD) Malaysia being the main technical agency of the government has successfully developed and implemented numerous projects, mainly on road infrastructure and government buildings. “Jasa Kepada Rakyat” is the tagline for PWD which can be found on the signboards of government projects managed by PWD. This tagline reflects the department’s commitments to best serve the people. Despite the many success stories of PWD, the department has come under a lot of criticism and scrutiny from plenty stakeholders especially on the services and projects quality.

Worrying that the possibility of this situation might worsen, PWD has taken the action to examine and investigate the factors that lead to this unhealthy state of affairs. The measurement of employee’s satisfaction has been conducted and it was found that the satisfaction index was in average score. The result shows that a handful numbers of employees failed to demonstrate good performances in terms of delivering their own tasks.

This situation could reflect the organization performance and commitment towards clients in managing and delivery projects. Thus, in despite of employees possessing sufficient skills and qualifications in project management fields, the department should consider empowering the Quality of Working Life (QWL) among their employees

QWL has become an increasingly important consideration for both employees and employers. Ng, Feldman & Sorensen (2005) stated that an employee's career success is not only the concern of individual but also the concern of the organization because employees' personal success can eventually contribute to organizational success. This concept of QWL is able to guide the department in reducing the dissatisfaction gaps among the employees in order to excel as organization.

In the situation where employees are working in a conducive environment and are satisfied with their quality of working life, the department will enjoy great benefits such as enhanced productivity and improved efficiency. To this date, there is neither survey nor any approach that has been conducted to assess the perception of employees towards their Quality of Work life in Public Works Department (PWD) Malaysia

1.2 Problem statement

PWD has conducted a survey of Employee Satisfaction Index (ESI) to evaluate the satisfaction index among employees in the department. The main objective of the survey is to assess the level of satisfaction among all officers in PWD. There are several satisfaction elements that have been assessed such as management practice, teamwork, work environment, training and career

opportunities, management and leadership, organisation mission, communication, task complexity and workload, reward and recognition, morale and motivation.

The survey conducted in year 2011 found that there are elements that fall short of the department's expectation, with scores less than 70%. The results portray that officers carrying out daily works are mostly stressed out; non-effective communication among work team; non-conducive working environment and lack of reward and recognition for a job well done. These results may as well contribute to the inferior performance level among the employees. Nonetheless, there is no analysis done in terms of correlation between the satisfaction elements and employees' performances. Thus, there is a need to assess and adopt the Quality of Working Life (QWL) concept among employees in the department.

Hsu & Kernohan (2006) stated that QWL is a complex entity influenced by and interacting with many aspects of work and personal life. Edwards *et al.* (2009) stated QWL as 'the degree to which members of work organization are able to satisfy important personal needs through their experiences in the organisation'. Therefore, the concept of employee satisfaction is more than simply providing people with a job and salary. It is too about providing people with a place where they feel accepted, wanted and appreciated.

According to the *Laporan Analisis dan Kesan Kelewatan Dalam Projek Pembinaan Jabatan Kerja Raya* (2014), the total number of delayed projects in year 2011 until 2013 are 1,020 (83%) out of 1,235 projects, valued at RM23.65 billion whilst only 215 (17%) out of 1,235 projects managed to be completed on time. According to the report, there are many factors affecting the delay of projects completion. Some of the factors that contribute to the delays as listed in the report are human factors, job contents and work environments. However, report findings are limited to the statistic of project delays grouped by branches. But there is no detailed or further analysis being done on how these factors may have contributed to the delays in project execution.

Mohanraj and Ramesh (2010) have described QWL as an innovation which not only targets employee satisfaction, but also enhances organizational effectiveness and productivity. Seema & Maryam (2013) has stated that a better performance and productivity among employees can be achieved with the conducive and congenial environment created at the workplace. Therefore, this study will measure the significant of the QWL dimensions that influence the performance of the project.

The department has difficulties to place the right person at the right place. Human Resources Department (HRD) has a right to locate their employees at any position or place based on the needs of the projects or workload. In addition, the staff's placements also are based on certain criteria such as qualification, competencies, and experiences. There are situation where skillful officers failed to manage projects even though they met all the criteria sets by HRD. It can be seen through the increasing number of project delays. Thus department should realize that the successfulness of a project did not only depend on the qualification and competencies of the employees but should also consider the whole QWL factors.

There is a need for the department to be aware of the factors affecting the quality of work life especially for those employees who are stationed at construction sites fulltime. Thus, this study is done to propose and develop the QWL framework for site officers by considering QWL factors and skills sets required.

1.3 Research Questions

This research will provide answers to the following questions:

- i. What is the perception of PWD's officers towards their QWL?
- ii. What are the dimensions and related factors are most related to the officers' performance at construction project?
- iii. How does the QWL dimension may give an impact to the successful of the project?
- iv. What is the QWL framework that suitable for officers at site?

1.4 Aim and Objectives

The aim of this study is to propose and develop the QWL framework among PWD's officers at construction site. The objectives for this study are:

- i. To determine the perception of PWD's officers towards their QWL
- ii. To measure the significant of QWL dimensions and related factors that influences project performance.
- iii. To propose and develop QWL framework for site officers in PWD

1.5 Scope of Study

This study will focus on the respondents that are currently stationed and working at project sites in central and southern zones. In those two zones, there are currently five branches that are involved in monitoring and supervising project sites. However, in this study, only two branches will be considered which are Health and Infrastructure branches. The reason of having these two branches is because they are currently managing and supervising a number of projects in Tenth Malaysia Plan (10th MP). The target respondents will be members of project teams and also appointed site officers for dedicated projects. The sites officers are from various disciplines include project manager, engineers, architects, quantity surveyor, technicians and site administrator. The expecting numbers of target respondents for this study are 160 respondents.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The Human Resource Department (HRD) will benefits from this research, as they will become aware of the factors affecting the QWL of their officers at construction sites. Moreover, they will be conversant about the work satisfaction of their officers at site. This information will help the department to design and put into practice the strategies to improve the QWL among their site officers such as general condition of officers, increase their job satisfaction and in turn, improve their performance. Accordingly, the organizational productivity and quality of project delivery may well be improved. Otherwise, this study may also proof the QWL theories and related framework that has been developed by past researchers.

1.7 Limitation of the Study

The focus group of this study are limited to the respondents who are working and stationed in central and southern zones for Health and Infrastructure projects. The roles and responsibilities of this target respondents are solely in managing the projects during construction phase, ensuring the construction activities of the projects (i.e. monitoring and control, site supervision, documentation, etc.) meets the dateline and fulfill the client needs and expectations.

1.8 Summary

This study had been divided into five (5) chapters. The first chapter, Chapter One explains the introduction of the study, background of the study, problem statement, aim and objectives, scope of the study and a brief research methodology that being implemented throughout the study.

The second chapter, Chapter Two elaborates on the overview of Quality of Working Life (QWL) that includes concept and definitions, theories, dimensions and the related factors of QWL. It followed by the importance of QWL towards the organizational project performance in the organisation. The compilation of study with regards to QWL conceptual framework was also discussed in this chapter. Next, based on the comprehensive literature review of the QWL, the research framework of this study will be developed and describes in the end of this chapter.

Chapter Three explains in detail the methodology used in implementing the study. Generally, it consists of three (3) phases, which are Phase 1; preliminary study, Phase 2; collection of data and Phase 3; recommendation and conclusion.

Chapter Four describes the details on the analysis of QWL. QWL dimensions and related factors will be identified and grouped in a manner in the context of site officers and construction environment through the literature review. Next, based on the statistical analysis, the QWL dimensions and related factors that influence the project delivery performance in PWD can be identified. The data were analysed by using SPSS Version 19. Finally, Chapter Five concludes the overall study and suggest recommendations for future work.

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