

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Quality of work life(QWL) is a very new concept in evaluating both the working quality of the workers as well it's relation with the organization's productivity.

#### 2.1. Theoretical background

What is QWL? Quality of work life(QWL) refers to the favorableness or unfavorableness of a job environment for people.[11] The basic purpose is to develop work environment that are excellent for people as well as for the economic health of the organization. Many QWL efforts focus on job enrichment. In addition to programs for improving the sociotechnical work system, QWL usually emphasizes employees skill development, the reduction of occupational stress, and the development of more cooperative labor-management relations.[3]

QWL produces a more humanized work environment. The basic assumption of humanized work is that work is most advantageous when it provides a "best fit" among workers, jobs, technology, and the environment. Accordingly, the best design will be different to fit different current situations. It is not a one-time thing to be established and retained indefinitely. Rather, there needs to be a regular readjustment

indefinitely. Rather, there needs to be a regular readjustment among the factors just mentioned in order to maintain the best fit.

The modern interest in quality of work life developed through an emphasis on job enrichment. Job enrichment brings many benefits. The general result is a role enrichment that encourages growth and self-actualization. The job is built in such a way of intrinsic motivation is encouraged. Because motivation is increased, performance should improve, thus providing both a more human and a more productive job. Negative effects also tend to be reduced, such as turnover, absence, grievance, and idle time. In this manner both the worker and society benefit. The worker performs better, has more job satisfaction, and is more self-actualized, thus being able to participate in all life roles more effectively. Society benefits from the more effectively functioning person as well as better job performance.

In trying to build motivational factors, management also gives attention to maintenance factors. It attempts to keep maintenance factors constant or high. If maintenance factors are allowed to decline during an enrichment program, then employees may be less responsive to that program because they are distracted by inadequate maintenance. The need for a systems approach to job enrichment is attained by gainsharing, in which employees receive a substantial portion of the cost saving produced when their job are improved.

Since job enrichment must occur from each employee's personal viewpoint not all employees will choose enriched jobs if they have an option. A contingency relationship exists in terms of different job needs, and some employees may prefer to simplicity and security of more routine jobs.

Hackman and Oldman[12] have identified five core dimensions that specifically provide enrichment for job. It is desirable for job to have all five of these dimensions. If one is perceived to be missing, workers are psychologically deprived and motivation tends to be reduced. The core dimensions tend to improve motivation, satisfaction, and quality of work and to reduce turnover and absenteeism. Their effect on the quality of work is less dependable. Many of material and white-collar jobs, as well as blue-collar jobs, often are deficient in such core dimensions. Admittedly there are large individual difference in those employees reacting to core dimensions, but the typical employee finds them true basic for internal motivation.

**TASK VARIETY** One core dimension is variety in the job. Variety allows employees to perform different operations that often require different skills illustrated. Jobs that are high in variety are seen by employees as more challenging because of the range of skills involved. These jobs also relieve monotony that develops from any repetitive activity. If the work is physical, different muscles are used, so that

one muscular area is not so overworked and tired at the end of the day. Variety give employee a greater sense of competence, because they can perform different kinds of work in different ways.

**TASK IDENTITY** A second core job dimension is task identity, which allows employees to perform a complete piece of the work. Many job enrichment efforts have been focused on this dimension. Because in the part the scientific management led to overspecialized, routine jobs. Individual employees worked on such a small part of the whole that were unable to identify any product with their efforts. They could not feel any sense of completion or responsibility for the whole product. When tasks are broadened to produce a whole product or an identifiable part of it, then task identity has been established.

**TASK SIGNIFICANCE** A third core dimension is task significance. It refers to the amount of impact, as perceived by the worker, that the work has on the other people. The impact can be on others in the organization, as when the worker performs a key step in the work process, or it may be on those outside the firm, as when the workers believe they are doing something important in their organization.

**AUTONOMY** A fourth core dimension is autonomy. It is the job characteristic that gives employees some discretion and control over job-related decisions and it appears to be fundamental in building a sense of responsibility in workers. Although they are willing to work within the broad constraints of an organization, they also insist on degree of freedom. Autonomy was mentioned as a possible additional step on the need scale since it is so important to many people.

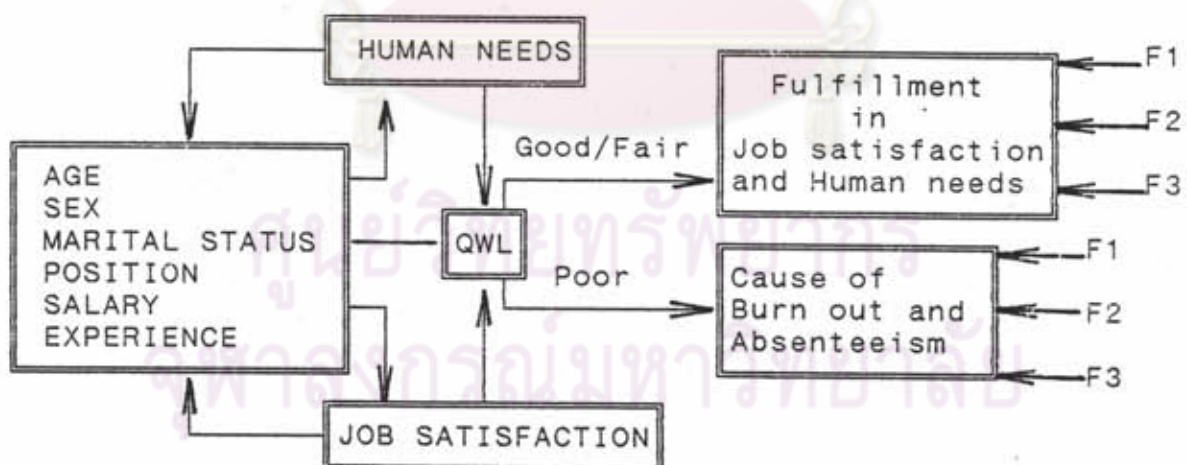
**FEEDBACK** A fifth core dimension is feedback. Feedback refers to information that tells workers how well they are performing. It comes from the job itself management, and other employees. The idea of feedback is a simple one, but it is of much significance to people at work. Further, they need to know rather often because they recognize that performance does vary, and the only way they can make adjustments is to know how they are performing now.

The idea of QWL actually originated in big corporations where they felt the need to evaluate the worker's that part of life which is engaged with the everyday normal function of the industry. They felt that with improvement of QWL of worker, the productivity and profitability of the industry can be increased.

On this theoretical background the QWL of professional nurses may be composed of two components. One is the job satisfaction and other is professional nurses needs [5,6,7].

A schematic presentation of the concepts behind the QWL was given in figure 1. The interrelationship between factors affecting it and the major components as well as the consequences of their affection were shown in it. Hopefully this would provide a quick understanding of the concepts of this study. At the same time a short glossary of operational definition was given at this part of paper instead of measurement portion because during study period and development of this thesis the author was advised that some of the terms could be new or unfamiliar to many persons. So an early reference could be helpful at this stage.

FIGURE 1  
Conceptual Framework



F = Factor

### 2.3. OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

1. Professional nurse is defined as the person who graduated from the nursing school/ nursing college with at least bachelor degree and received license for work as a professional in nursing.

2. Quality of work life the of professional nurse was to what extent the professional nurses are satisfied with their work life and to what extent their needs are served[7].

3. Job satisfaction is defined as a pleasurable or positive emotional state of professional nurses resulting from the appraisal of job experience[7,11].

4. Professional nurses needs is needs that are indicators of growth in job relatedness and autonomy or individuality in the work life of professional nurses.

5. Big private hospital is defined as the hospital size which has the bed capacity, at least 500 beds and sufficiently advanced in modern technology and treatment methods.

After reviewing the existing literature, it was found that this might be the first study in Thailand of QWL of professional nurses. A large number of paper studied about job satisfaction of professional nurses in United States of America which did not involve professional nurses needs properly and tend to be inconsistent and confusing. Although the majority of studies on job satisfaction have been

conducted in business and industry, some works have also been done in the field of nursing does contain satisfaction research. Most of their studies done on the nursing profession have attempted to identify the correlated of work satisfaction. McCloskey[13] for example, found that intrinsic rewards, such as achievement, were more strongly related to work satisfaction than extrinsic factors, such as pay. Everly and Falcione[14] found that interpersonal relations followed by intrinsic rewards were the best predictors of satisfaction. A study by Godfrey[15], revealed that lack of appreciation, poor communication, and conflict with superiors all contribute to dissatisfaction. Perry[16] on the other hand, found supervisory support, responsibility and promotion strongly related to work satisfaction. Wandelt et. al[17] argued that the quality of care given to patients most importance and challenge of work followed by work conditions were the most important determinants of work satisfaction. Finally, Neumann[18] reported that social service(patient care), intrinsic job factors, and supervision were the best predictors of satisfaction. As a result, it is not possible to draw any definite conclusions about quality of work life but these can be imply that QWL of professional nurses may be appropriate for them and resulting in dissatisfaction.

The major weakness of these studies can be summarized as follows:



1. Models used in these studies were more or less incomplete and different; a key research variable in one study may be not even be considered in another study[15,16].

2. Most studies used bivariate analysis to present their result, so in almost all studies confounders were not controlled [16,17,18,19].

3. Another difficult faced by major number of studies was the absence of a proper comparable group from other occupation, which made all the results very tentative and questionable.

In short QWL is a very difficult but important aspect of professional nurses, and with the change of time and advent of modern era it necessary to undertake such a study, so that it will create necessary baseline reference for future researcher and may help associated groups to determine policy and programs not only to improve the QWL of professional nurses, but also to improve the quality of hospital service and patient care.

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