

# An Investigation of The Quality of Work Life Among Fast Food Restaurant Employees

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## Abstract

The study investigates the quality of working life among fast food restaurant employees, highlighting the stress and chaos of the work environment and the perceived irrationality and arrogance of managers. The literature review identifies factors influencing quality working life, such as fair wages, recognition, promotions, and overall employee well-being. An initial survey of twenty fast food employees in Kajang Town assessed satisfaction based on salary, position, time, and environment. Results indicated that the work environment significantly impacts job satisfaction. The research is limited to fast food employees in Kajang Town, focusing on major chains like KFC, McDonald's, Pizza Hut, Burger King, and Subway. The study found that time, salary, position, and environment are critical variables affecting employees' quality of working life. Recommendations for improvement are based on Total Quality Management (TQM) principles, emphasizing employee benefits and the relationship between time and salary, and position and responsibility. The study suggests a need for more comprehensive research and emphasizes the importance of addressing employees' needs and well-being to enhance productivity and job satisfaction in fast food restaurants

**Key Words:** Fast food, employees, quality working life, life style, satisfaction

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## Introduction

Quality of working life is a crucial measure in assessing living standards. Hackman and Oldham (2008) identified key factors like skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback, which must be met for employees to have a quality working life. Edwards (2009) operationalized quality of working life variables into extrinsic job dimensions (wages, working hours, and working conditions) and intrinsic job notion (content and meaning of the work). The quality of working life is influenced by various factors like individual power, employee participation, fairness, and social support. Researchers primarily focus on aspects directly impacting work, emphasizing factors like satisfaction with wages, hours, and working conditions. Mirvis and Lawler (2007) highlight key elements including a safe environment, equitable wages, equal opportunities, and chances for advancement.

Different terms made by (Mark, 2010) is quality of working life is not a unitary concept, but has been seen as incorporating a hierarchy of perspectives that not only include work-based factors such as job satisfaction, satisfaction with pay and relationships with work colleagues, but also factors that broadly reflect life satisfaction and general feelings of well-being. However, this research will investigate into the quality working life among fast food restaurant staff in Kajang Town as pilot study.

Kajang, a suburb of Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, with a population exceeding 230,000, offers a peaceful living environment. Enhanced by the Sg. Buloh - Kajang MRT, it has experienced rapid development, attracting residents with diverse careers including government employees, private sector workers, businessmen, and retirees. Globalization has significantly impacted the town, influencing residents' consumption habits, particularly the increased demand for fast food, leading to the rapid emergence of popular chains like McDonald's, KFC, Burger King, and Subway. This trend has also created numerous employment opportunities. The brief literature reviewed above lined up several factors influencing quality working life such as working time, position, wages, working environment, task, employee participation in management and overall job satisfaction.

## Literature Review

The concept of time is familiar yet elusive, encompassing past, present, and future, and at times predictable. Dixon and Sagas (2007) highlight that non-work experiences significantly impact an individual's leisure time and family relationships, influencing their non-working life positively or negatively. Time management, as defined by Claessens (2004), involves organizing tasks or events by estimating the time required for completion, scheduling accordingly, and adjusting conflicting activities to ensure timely completion. Additionally, time management reflects an employee's ability to effectively utilize time to perform activities and engage in tasks, involving goal setting, task prioritization, and monitoring outcomes. De Vos and Soens (2008) describe time management as a self-regulation tool that enhances performance, intelligence, and career success. Effective time management contributes to success by reducing stress, promoting a balanced lifestyle, boosting productivity, and facilitating goal achievement.

A salary is a regular payment from an employer to an employee, specified in an employment contract, different from piece wages based on each job or unit. It represents the cost of acquiring and retaining human resources, recorded in payroll accounts. Grady and McCarthy (2008) suggest that meaningful work extends beyond paid employment, leading to a sense of integrated wholeness. A salary, typically paid monthly, is a fixed compensation, providing stability and enabling effective expense management. Fixed pay, including rewards for service or performance bonuses, can enhance job satisfaction. Christen, Iyer, and Soberman (2006) note that a fixed wage positively affects job satisfaction, regardless of an employee's risk preference.

A position in a job context is defined by Dixon and Sagas (2007) as the duties and tasks that define it, impacting both the individual and the organization. Workers today demand more than just pay, seeking social security and welfare benefits as rights. Ugglar (2006) suggests that positioning involves a brand differentiating itself from competitors and communicating uniquely to its target segment. Job enrichment, turnover rates, and promotion opportunities are factors workers negotiate for, with optimistic workers seeking better positions and moving to other employers if necessary. Ugglar (2006) also emphasizes that segmenting, targeting, and positioning are interconnected, each relying on the others to function optimally.

(Hackman & Oldham, 2008) explain the environmental factors dictate supervisors' behavior to optimize worker outcomes, while workers' characteristics shape their interpretation of these factors. Job security and a safe working environment are crucial for intrinsic job motivation and Quality of Work Life (QWL). Recognizing and rewarding good performance sustains motivation. Haynes (2008) agreed, on office layout and comfort, along with interaction and distraction, impact productivity. A safe environment, intrinsic motivation, and proper appraisal are key for a productive workplace.

## Research Issue

The Problems faced by employers in fast food restaurant such as staff turnover and customers complain will drop sales and reputation of the restaurant. Why these problems exist? What factors influencing them? Thus, this research will determine an investigation into quality working life in selected fast-food restaurant.

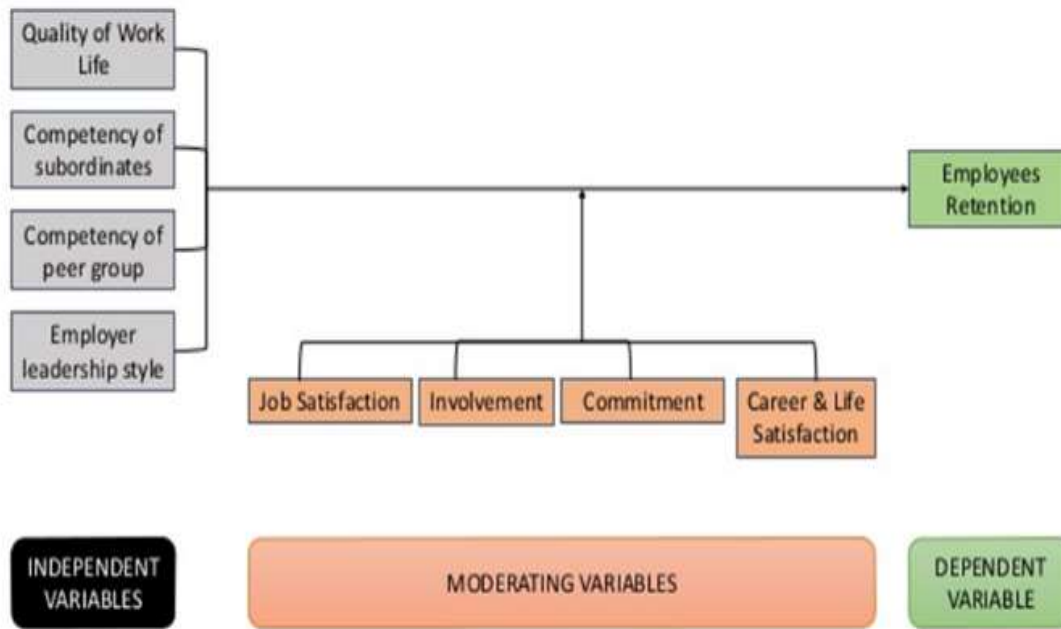
Quality represents such role in life which has been designated to it by the person itself. It could be a self-realization providing enjoyment and satisfaction of food and activities. We often heard sighs and complain among people in fast food restaurant that freshness of the food and not comfortable place at some area, in Malaysia. Environment is often stressful and not safe side at some place, land slide and unnecessary amount food waste was existed. The people just don't care of surrounding at some of the place because of its public area. These negative perceptions have to be attended as the balance between quality and demand are essential in order to accomplish superiority in great experience in service quality development in Kajang Town. It is significant that employees need and wellbeing integrated in many ways to reach the desire for higher productivity in an organization.

*Aim of Study*

This study aims to investigate, factors that affecting into quality working life among fast food restaurant staff. There are four (4) investigation factors will be considered in the design of survey questionnaire that include salary, position, time and environment. These investigation factors are to be assessed qualitatively. On the objective aim in this study is to investigate factors that influencing, job satisfaction analyses and identify the components of the duty task affect the quality working life among staffs in a fast-food restaurant.

This research aims importantly to the area of Hospitality and specific to human resource management to investigate the quality working life among service staff in fast food restaurant. Finding from this research will hopefully assist, human resource managers to determine the welfare, job satisfaction and benefit among their staff. An investigation into the quality working life among fast food restaurant staff will be survey and get to know their perceptions and preferences, this information will be taken into consideration in this research. This research will assist, local people that living in the area, people or personnel included family members and opinion taken from international tourist at Kajang Town, Hulu Langat to determine the service quality and satisfaction experience. This will benefit both parties, the employer and employees and customer, will be happy with efficient service to what they pay and upgrade the reputation of that small Kajang town, Hulu Langat at one of the popular destinations and good based on food consuming experience.

*Conceptual Framework*



Source: Khatri, A, (2016) Factors Mediating Relationship between Quality of work life and employee’s retention, Published in: Education

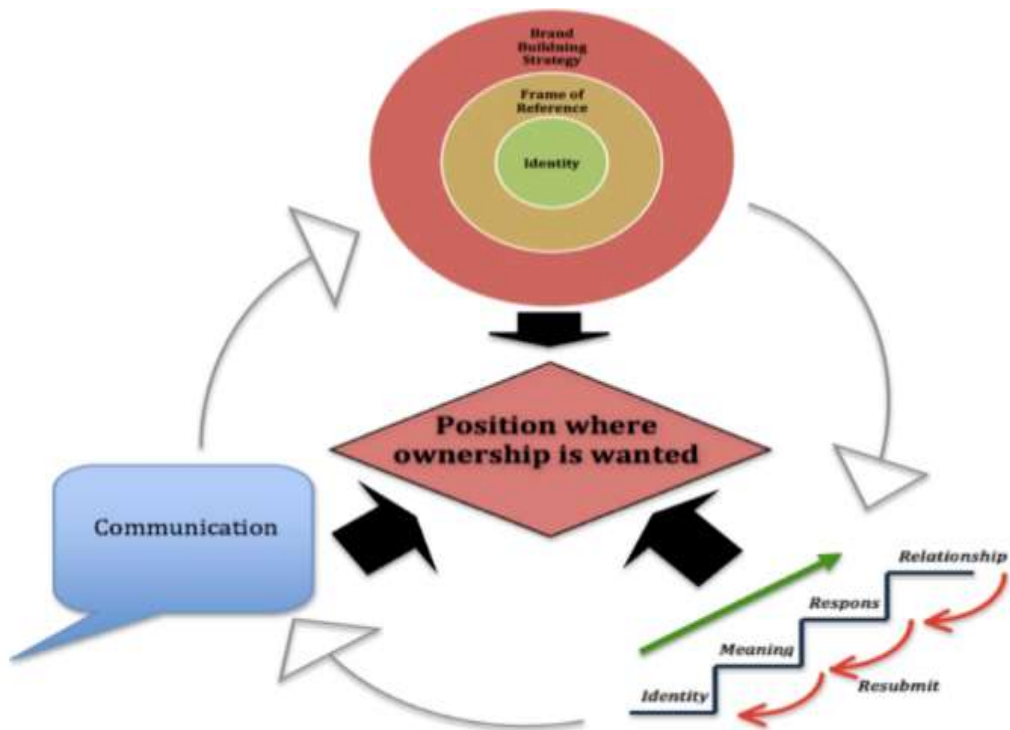
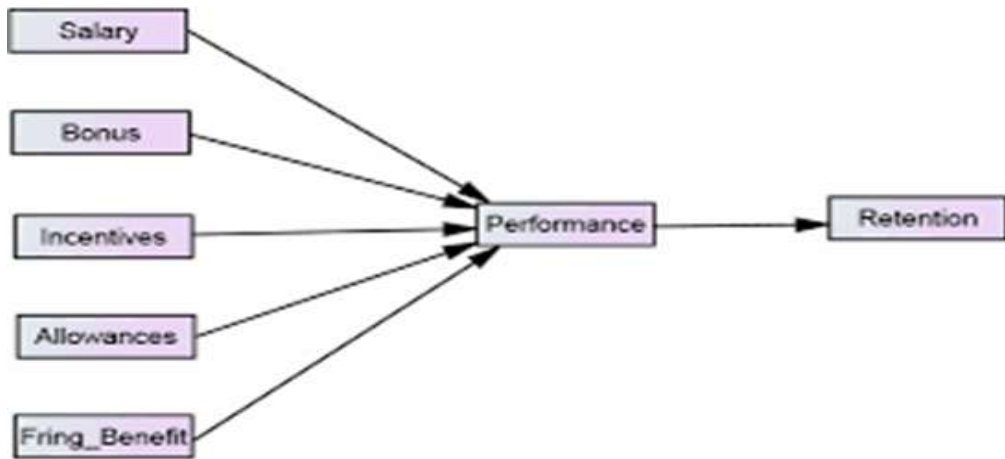


Source: VanLaar, Edwards and Easton. 2007. 325- 333.

Source: Vanlaar, Edwards and Easton, 2007. (325-333)



Research model (Source: Posted in Human Resources Terms, Total reads: 46179)



Research model (Source: Linander, 2012)



Research model (Source: M. K. & Puczkó, L. (2008))

**Research Methodology**

The This study uses qualitative research, as per Kemppilä and Lönnqvist (2003), to explore beliefs, knowledge, attitudes, values, and behaviour. It challenges the concept of social reality as an "objective truth," focusing on "why" rather than "how many?" The study examines factors affecting the quality of working life of staff in six fast food restaurants in Kajang Town through interviews, note-taking, audio recording, photography, and observation, analysed via thematic manual analysis.

**Findings**

The The invitation for the questionnaire interview was distributed at fast food outlets and via Facebook groups targeting McDonald's Kajang, KFC Kajang, and other local chains. Participants included various staff roles. Out of the goal to interview twelve (12) staff members, nine participated, providing comprehensive responses. Additionally, data from Subway, Burger King, and Domino's Pizza near the researcher's residence yielded one valid response. In total, nine usable responses were obtained, including eight face-to-face interviews and one written due to a hearing impairment.

Table 1.1: Data Collection Method

Data collection method	Respondents Targeted	Response	Response rate	Useable response
Interviewed face to face	10	8	8.8%	8
By Instrment forms in writing format and Interviewed due to (hearing impairment)	2	1	0.2%	1
Total Usable Responses:				9

The demographic data analysis of the sample target provides an understanding of each participant's thinking, articulation, and personality in the study on quality working life among fast food restaurant employees in Kajang Town. The findings include gender, years with the organization, education background, age, position held, and ethnicity, presented in a table (Table 1.5.2) for clarity, showing total numbers and percentages.

Table 1.2: Demographic Profile of the respondents

Characteristic	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	5	56
Female	4	44
<b>Age</b>		
16-25	5	56
26-30	2	22
36 above	2	22
<b>Ethnic:</b>		
Malay	7	78
Chinese	1	11
Indian	1	11
<b>Organization</b>		
Less than 1 years	7	78
2-5 years	2	22
<b>Education:</b>		
SLDN	5	56
Diploma	2	22
Bachelor degree	2	22
<b>Job</b>		
Restaurant manager	1	11
Asst.manager	1	11
Supervisor	1	11
Service staff	6	67
<b>Department</b>		
Cashier/overall	3	33
Kitchen	6	67

A demographic analysis using a questionnaire and interviews with nine participants revealed insights into fast food restaurant employees in Kajang Town, showing a majority of male workers (56%) aged 16-30, mostly Malays (78%), with short job tenure (78% less than 1 year). The majority of employees have SLDN education (56%) and work in the kitchen (67%).

First of all, preliminary data analysed were performed by using normality and manually as been taught in order to ensure no violation of the assumptions. From the pilot test in chapter three (3), the observation shows that, all variables are met normal distribution. Therefore, manual data collected technique using qualitative method (interview) has been used and self-analysed the relationship among the variables has been investigated and identified. The following extended brief is explained below.

The self-analysis was used to examine the relationship more relevant to investigate the study between TIME, SALARY, POSITION, and ENVIRONMENT. The aim is to determine whether there are any linear relationships amongst these independent variables with the dependent variables which is intended to use among QUALITY WORKING LIFE. According to data collected show that most respondents said position influence quality working life which define *'depends on salary and job task responsibility'* [P3-Male], followed by salary and time which most respondents said *'the job is easy to get, the salary is fix and less, because of long working hours'* [P2-Male]. Naturally respondents had stated from the environment which is most important segment *'when the environment is good and make it smooth to control, able to help each other, making us to stay work well'* [P1-Male].

Respondents highly value the environment, believing it significantly influences staff's quality of working life. Position and time are also deemed important, while salary satisfaction remains notably low across all levels.

## Discussion and Recommendation for Future Research

The This study reveals that most respondents work in Kajang Town's fast-food restaurants and are aware of four independent variables crucial for questionnaire responses. The findings offer insights for employers to understand and potentially retain staff. Environment emerges as the most influential factor on quality of working life, affecting satisfaction levels significantly.

*Time* - Time sensitivity impacts employee satisfaction and turnover, particularly for new hires. Flexible work arrangements like flexi time and telecommuting can boost motivation and efficiency, yet may also increase time pressure in the long term (Hill, Ferris, & Martinson, 2003; Peters & van der Lippe, 2007).

*Salary* - Salary, a key work motivation, correlates with responsibility but not solely. Fast food restaurant employees in Kajang earn based on qualifications, fulfilling basic needs like food and shelter. Company wages should sustain living standards, considering inflation and economic factors (Kanzunnudin, 2007; Iqbal, 2013).

*Position* - The findings indicate that job position is not the primary factor in employee job satisfaction, with salary being the main concern. However, employees still carry out assigned responsibilities, despite issues such as being blamed for tasks done incorrectly. Keller, Sternthal, and Aybout (2002) emphasize the importance of considering a brand's frame of reference and common features with competitors in brand positioning, highlighting distinctive features to attract customers and grow in the market, as noted by Kapferer (2004).

*Environment* - The environment is the biggest factors variable agreed by most of the respondents during the interviewed. Environment has commenced a lot by adapting employee's satisfaction, this is including location, management, work load and over all employees especially managers and supervisor. Environment according to the findings may contribute less turn over employees and this most likely related to the term "quality of work life".

### Recommendation for Future Research

This study examines objectives, research questions, data collection, and analysis in investigating "Quality Working Life among Fast Food Restaurant Employees." Recommendations include further investigation into employees' understanding of quality, considering the impact of time on salary and position status on responsibility. The recommendations are based on Total Quality Management (TQM) principles, aiming to enhance service quality in fast food restaurants.

*Time towards Salary* - Recommend establishing a fixed time for salary disbursement, ensuring fair treatment and job satisfaction. Emphasize trustworthiness and job clarity to enhance employee well-being and reduce turnover.

*Status of position towards responsibility* - The recommendation includes creating distinct job categories such as normal employees, part-timers, managers, cleaners, and riders to ensure responsibilities are clearly defined. This approach aims to prevent overburdening of managerial employees and reduce turnover among normal employees. Future research could further explore factors affecting quality of working life, such as salary, status, and responsibility, particularly in fast food restaurants. Factors influencing job satisfaction and turnover rates, such as technological advancements, job demands, and employee motivations, were also noted during the researcher's visits to fast food restaurants in the area.

According to the employment act 1956, has been defined in their contract letter. In this respective, they have been promised to work as contained in the agreement. If the contract does not mention it should be explained (if necessary). This is because, it involves a quality working life among employees, where include the time that is not specifically given in the job schedule, the position was not given to it all in detail, the salary was not subjected to who is longer (over-time) and the environment were indiscriminate to some individual (forced).



Table 1.3: Factorial Design on Quality Working Life towards Total Quality Management

	TIME	SALARY	POSITION	ENVIRONMENT
HIGH QWL	Standard hours (8 Hours)	Highly paid job based on position	Position job based on good paid	Positive environment
LOW QWL	Split shift (12 Hours)	Low paid job based on position	Position job based on low paid	Negative environment
REGULAR QWL	Long hours (up to 12 hours)	Regular paid job based on position (Part Timers)	Depending on availability	Environment depends on suitable working hours
DESPRATION QWL	Full day (More than 20 hours)	One off job paid based on position	Agreed to do underpaid jobs	Agreed to any working environment regards its condition

However, this factorial design is a guide for those who wish to continue in study quality working life especially in the fast-food restaurant to employee's job satisfaction.

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