

## Quality of Life in an International Academe: Correlates and Nurturance

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### Abstract:

**Background:** With the changes brought about by the Fourth Industrial Revolution, it is interesting to look into the quality of life of human resources in the academe. The research paper looked into the life and work satisfaction as domains of quality of life and the extent to which they are nurtured.

**Materials and Methods:** Mixed method employing descriptive-correlational research design was utilized. Purposive sampling was used in choosing the 152 participants. Data were gathered through the use of the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS), Work Satisfaction Questionnaire and a researcher-made questionnaire. Data gathered were statistically treated and thematically analyzed using the quality policy of St. Paul University Philippines. The test for significant relationships were done using 0.5 level of significance.

**Results:** The participants were generally satisfied with their life and with their work. Significant relationships were noted on age and work assignment. Further, there's a significant positive relationship between life satisfaction and work satisfaction. The quality policy of the University was evident with caring environment, education and quality emerged as the topmost nurturing factors.

**Conclusion:** The participants have good quality of life nurtured by the workforce's caring environment. Life and work satisfaction can define one's quality of life. Age and work assignment do relate to quality of life.

**Key Word:** quality of life, life satisfaction, work satisfaction, quality policy

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### I. INTRODUCTION

The Fourth Industrial Revolution will change the way people live, work, and relate with one another due to the adoption of cyber-physical systems, the Internet of Things and the Internet of Systems (Marr, 2018). It will surely impact the quality of life of professionals working in any organization / industry / institution. The most interesting would be the quality of life in the academe.

Life in the academe is not as leisurely as other working environment. The academe is a thought-provoking place where one cannot simply help but to work towards the expected standards and outcomes of the global educational market. As such, life can be simple yet complicated. Hence, it is a point of interest how life is in the educational sector or simply put the academe workforce's quality of life.

Quality of Life (QoL) has been a topic of discussion way back during the time of Plato and Aristotle (Hagerty, et al, as cited in Galloway, 2005). To this modern time, the discussion and focus of research is along health care field (Haas, as cited in Galloway, 2005). Galloway (2005) on the other hand mentioned that QoL has been a "subject of academic debate in economics, particularly in the related field of happiness studies, a research area shared with psychologists and sociologists." She added that "QoL has emerged as a desired outcome of service delivery in mainstream and special needs education, health care, social services – for economic and social reasons." On the other hand, QoL is a complex, multifaceted construct (Theofilou, 2013) in which one has to understand and contextualize it. It depends on an individual's "physical and mental health, the degree of independency, the social relationship with the environment and other factors (Dalia & Ruzevicius, 2007)."

In the academe, the QoL involves all the general feelings of satisfaction (Pedro, Leitão, & Alves, 2016) not only by students but by employees as well. If there is life satisfaction among employees, then there is better service accorded to students.

Measuring life satisfaction in the academe can be an avenue of knowing the quality of life of the work force. However, there is a claim that the "evaluation of the quality of life depends on one's value system (Dalia & Ruzevicius, 2007)" and "how one understands people's values (Theofilou, 2013)."

According to Kagan (2017), the factors affecting QoL vary depending on the personal preferences, which often include "financial security, job satisfaction, family life, health and safety." On top of this is the idea that the quality of working life involves "work place strategies, processes and environment combination, which

stimulate employees' job satisfaction" and at times it also depends on "work conditions and the organization's efficiency (Dalia & Ruzevicius, 2007)."

At St. Paul University Philippines, a study among resigned employees revealed that the sources of their greatest satisfaction while in the organization were related to the acquisition of skills/capabilities which are personal and which are related to their job, and the professional development that the University gives to its employees (Rivera, 2019). Of interest then is to know the varying reasons of those who opted to stay in the University for longer period of time. Does it have to do with their well-being as manifested in their quality of life? Hence, there is a need to look into the life and work satisfaction as essential elements of one's quality of life and how such are nurtured in the University. The results will hopefully help the institution and other organizations in their future plans and decisions for the well-being of their human resources to ascertain employee retention despite changes that may be brought by the industrial revolution.

## **II. MATERIAL AND METHODS**

This study utilized mixed methods. For the quantitative, descriptive-correlational research design was employed in determining the status of the participants in terms of the quality of their life as revealed in the Satisfaction with Life Scale and Work Satisfaction Questionnaire and for the qualitative, thematic analysis and interview were utilized. This design had tested for significant relationships of life and work satisfaction. Further, it revealed the emerging factors that nurtured the quality of life in the academe. It involved 152 tenured employees of St. Paul University Philippines during the academic year 2019-2020.

**Study Design:** Descriptive study; purposive sampling

**Study Location:** The study was conducted at St. Paul University Philippines, an ISO 9001:2015 certified higher educational institution in the Philippines located at Mabini St. Ugac Norte, Tuguegarao City, Philippines

**Study Duration:** July 2019 to November 2019

**Sample size:** 152 employees

**Sample size calculation:** The sample size for the participants was estimated based on the Slovin's formula. An expert on data analysis was consulted for the computation.

**Subjects & selection method:** Purposive sampling was employed in the selection of the 152 participants. The study involved the employees who served the University for at least three (3) years. Since one of the dimensions measured was work satisfaction, the researcher opined this three-year parameter as an indicator that the employee will be able to give an objective assessment of his/her work satisfaction in the organization. The participants were drawn from a population of 200 employees comprising of faculty, staff and maintenance personnel.

### **Inclusion criteria:**

1. Tenured and rehired employment status
2. Three (3) years of service and above
3. Regardless of sex, civil status, age, religion, and work assignment

### **Exclusion criteria:**

1. Probationary employment status
2. Tenured employees with less than three (3) years of service

### **Procedure / Methodology**

After written informed consent was obtained, the following tools were administered as primary sources of data for the study:

The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) was utilized to measure the participants' life satisfaction. This is a valid tool with 7-point Likert style response scale. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the scale ranges from 0.79 to 0.89 and the scale was also found to have good test-retest correlations (Pavot & Diener, 2008).

The other tool used to measure work satisfaction is the Work Satisfaction Questionnaire (WSQ) which was adopted from the Exit Interview Form utilized by the Human Resource Management Office of St. Paul University Philippines. The questionnaire was content-validated by experts in the University. The Item Content Validity Index (ICVS) ranges from 0.80 to 1.00 and the Scale Content Validity Index (SCVI) is 0.86 meaning the scale is a valid tool. The final form of twenty-three (23) items included an item on "fringe benefits" as per suggestion of the experts.

A researcher made questionnaire was used in gathering the information on the profile of the participants such as gender, civil status, age, employment status, years of service, religion and work assignment, and the factors that nurture their quality of life in the University.

**Statistical analysis**

The data were treated using SPSS version 20. The SWLS results were interpreted using a 7-point Likert scale while 4-point Likert scale for the WSQ results. Tests for significant differences and relationships were determined with the use of independent samples t-test, One-way ANOVA and Pearson *r*. The results were interpreted at 0.05 level of significance. Likewise, thematic analysis was employed using the Quality Policy of the University.

**III. RESULTS**

**Profile of the participants.** The profile variables were classified as follows: gender (male and female), civil status (single, married, widowed/separated), age (below 25 years old, 25-29, 30-34, 35-39, 40-44, 45-49, 50-54, 55-59, and 60 and above), employment status (regular and rehired), years of service (below 5 years, 5-9, 10-14, 15-19, 20-24, 25-29, and 30 and above), religion (Roman Catholic and others) and work assignment (faculty, staff and maintenance). The results show that the participants were female dominated (100 or 65.79%). Majority were married (102 or 67.10%). Most of them were within the age ranges of 25 – 29 and 35-39 with the same percentage of 17.11% followed by the age ranges of 40-44 and 55-59 with corresponding percentages of 15.79% and 14.47%. The least frequency is from the age range below 25 years old (5 or 3.29%). In terms of employment status, majority are regular (128 or 84.21%) and most of them have served the University for almost 5 years (31 or 20.40%). It is worthy to note that there are more than 30 who have been in the University for 25 years and above. Lastly, the faculty members dominated the research participants with a percentage of 53.30%.

**Life Satisfaction of the participants.** The participants were satisfied in all the scale items with the highest mean (5.89) on “I am satisfied with my life.” This means that the participants have fulfilling and happy life.

**Work Satisfaction of the participants.** Of the 23 items, the participants were satisfied along six (6) areas and these are as follows: Opportunity to perform tasks that are of social significance and yield intrinsic satisfaction; Time for travel and holidays (especially in summer); Salary / Remuneration; Time schedule (class hours/office hours); Time to pursue own interest after office/class hours; and Fringe Benefits. They were very satisfied in terms of: Respect from others; Relationship with fellow employees; Enjoyment of teaching/work experience and use of skills; Unit head regards subordinates as competent independent professionals; Knowing that I have “reached” students and they have learned/profited from their encounter; and Relationship with superior and administrators. The overall work satisfaction was very satisfied. This means that the participants were pleased and are fulfilled in their work.

Table 1 shows the analysis of variance on the test for significant difference of the participants’ life satisfaction when grouped according to profile variables. The results show that among the seven profile variables, the p-values of the six (6) profile variables such as gender (0.603), civil status (0.645), employment status (0.127), years of service (0.168), religion (0.882), and work assignment (0.301) were not statistically significant. Hence, the null hypotheses along these variables were accepted. It ascertains that there is no relationship of life satisfaction with the aforesaid variables. On the other hand, the only variable where there is a statistically significant difference was on age with a p-value of 0.014. The null hypothesis related to age was then rejected. There is a significant association of life satisfaction and age.

**Table 1:** Analysis of variance on the test for significant difference of the participants’ life satisfaction when grouped according to profile variables

Profile Variables	Mean	F-Ratio	P- Value	Decision at .05 level
<b>Gender</b>				
Male	5.62	0.271	0.603	Not Significant
Female	5.67			
<b>Civil Status</b>				
Single	5.59	0.440	0.645	Not Significant
Married	5.69			
Widowed/Separated	5.53			
<b>Age</b>				
Below 25 years old	5.00	2.519	0.014	Significant
25 - 29	5.34			
30-34	5.55			
35-39	5.82			
40-44	5.93			

45-49	5.69			
50-54	5.62			
55-59	5.64			
60 and above	5.94			
<b>Employment Status</b>				
Regular	5.62	2.350	0.127	Not Significant
Rehired	5.84			
<b>Years of Service</b>				
Below 5 years	5.40			
5-9	5.59	1.544	0.168	Not Significant
10-14	5.72			
15-19	5.96			
20-24	5.73			
25-29	5.65			
30 and above	5.71			
<b>Religion</b>				
Roman Catholic	5.66	0.022	0.882	Not Significant
Others	5.62			
<b>Work Assignment</b>				
Faculty	5.67	1.211	0.301	Not Significant
Staff	5.53			
Maintenance	5.77			

Table 2 presents the analysis of variance on the test for significant difference of the participants' work satisfaction when grouped according to profile variables. It shows that the p-values of the following variables were not statistically significant: gender (0.395), civil status (0.090), employment status (0.088), years of service (0.590), and religion (0.831). This connotes that the null hypotheses along these variables were accepted. There is no significant relationship of the participants' work satisfaction and the aforementioned variables. However, there is a statistically significant relationship between work satisfaction and age as well as work assignment with p-values of 0.047 and 0.022, respectively. This means that the participants' life satisfaction differs when they are grouped according to age and work assignment. The older the participants, the higher are their life satisfaction. The null hypotheses along these variables were rejected. Age and work assignment are associated with work satisfaction.

**Table 2:** Analysis of variance on the test for significant difference of the participants' work satisfaction when grouped according to profile variables

Profile Variables	Mean	F-Ratio	P- Value	Decision at .05 level
<b>Gender</b>				
Male	3.32	0.728	0.395	Not Significant
Female	3.26			
<b>Civil Status</b>				
Single	3.23	2.449	0.090	Not Significant
Married	3.31			
Widowed/Separated	2.97			
<b>Age</b>				
Below 25 years old	3.37	2.032	0.047	Significant
25 - 29	3.11			
30-34	3.08			
35-39	3.36			
40-44	3.18			
45-49	3.39			
50-54	3.33			
55-59	3.41			
60 and above	3.46			
<b>Employment Status</b>				
Regular	3.25	2.940	0.088	Not Significant

Rehired	3.41			
<b>Years of Service</b>				
Below 5 years	3.24	2.082	0.590	Not Significant
5-9	3.09			
10-14	3.19			
15-19	3.45			
20-24	3.38			
25-29	3.29			
30 and above	3.37			
<b>Religion</b>				
Roman Catholic	3.28	0.046	0.831	Not Significant
Others	3.25			
<b>Work Assignment</b>				
Faculty	3.29	3.914	0.022	Significant
Staff	3.15			
Maintenance	3.42			

Table 3 presents the correlational analysis on the participants’ life satisfaction and work satisfaction. It shows that the p-value is 0.00 which signifies that there is a statistically significant positive relationship between life satisfaction and work satisfaction. This denotes that the null hypothesis is rejected. The two (2) variables were interconnected.

**Table 3:** Correlational analysis on the participants’ life satisfaction and work satisfaction

Indices	r-value	P-Value	Decision at .05 level
Life Satisfaction	0.489	0.000	Significant Positive Relationship
Work Satisfaction			

Table 4 presents the factors revealed by the participants related to how the University nurtured the employees’ quality of life grouped by themes. Using thematic analysis focusing on the quality policy of the University which states that “St. Paul University provides Quality Catholic Paulinian Education in a Caring Environment,” the participants have enumerated a lot of subthemes which were related to the key words of the aforementioned quality policy. The subthemes were tallied and presented as frequencies in parenthesis. The italicized or the words in italics added to the main idea were related to verbatim description given by the participants. Among the four key words that define the quality policy, the Work Environment emerged as the topmost major theme of the nurturing factors followed by Education, Quality, Paulinian, and Catholic. Looking at all the factors that the participants mentioned, it is worthy to note that the quality policy was indeed manifested by the University and felt by the employees.

**Table 4:** Factors revealed by the participants related to how the University nurtured the employees’ quality of life grouped by themes

Codes (frequency)	Themes
High value placed on quality and excellence in work (13) Good facilities of the University; excellent ambience Holistic formation Passion for work Holistic approach education Job satisfaction Quality of supervision Prestige of the school Balance life	Quality
Spiritual activities (13) / exercises / sessions Catholic belief (2) Christian morality Faith	Catholic

<p>Values (14) – <i>spiritual, honest and good, Christ-centered; 5Cs; commitment</i>                  Spiritual /spirituality (10) –<i>close relationship with Jesus Christ; Christ-centered person, God-centeredness</i>                  Spiritual growth/development (8)                  Community service                  Paulinian policies and standards</p>	<p>Paulinian</p>
<p>Professional development/growth (18) / <i>career growth</i>                  Seminars/trainings attended (11)                  Personal development (7) –<i>work, explore and learn</i>                  Students (3) – <i>disciplined and respectful; successful; quality of relationship</i>                  Learning growth (2)                  Faculty development sessions (2)                  Trainings for personal and professional development                  Employee development through seminars/trainings                  Academic development                  Travel opportunities                  Opportunities for learning</p>	<p>Education</p>
<p>Work environment (46) –<i>friendly, good, physical condition, caring, happy, cooperative, family treatment, prayerful life, compassionate; respect; peaceful, safety, pleasant, conducive, concern, “homey” atmosphere, healthy, spiritual, bedrock of love, esprit de corps</i>                  Working relationship with my co-employees (46) – <i>camaraderie, good, close relationship, favorable human relations, trusting colleagues, supportive, healthy, good interpersonal relationship, team work, cooperation, happy, attitude, good leader, sharing, approachable co-teachers, respectful</i>                  Supportive administrators (13) –<i>open-minded, kind, concerned</i>                  Salary (6) / just remuneration                  Educational benefits for children (5) –<i>financial/economic</i>                  Supportive administration (5)                  Nature of work (3) – <i>stress-free</i>                  Administration’s trust (3)                  Peer factor (2)                  Team building activity (2) – <i>recreational activities</i>                  Benefits (2) -<i>health</i>                  Extra income (extra load)                  Management                  Security                  Enjoyment in teaching                  Freedom and choice</p>	<p>Caring Environment</p>

#### IV. DISCUSSION

The quality of life of the participants when viewed based on the Satisfaction with Life Scale is described as something that is generally good, enjoyable and major domains of life are going well particularly with their work, school, family, friends, leisure, etc. (Diener, 2016). Further, it means that currently they feel happy (Tay, L., Kuykendall, L., & Diener, E., 2015; Liao, 2014), elated and contented with their quality of life (Theofilou, 2013).

On work satisfaction, the participants were happy working with the organization. This is related to the findings of Liao (2014). Accordingly, one of the specific domains of one’s quality of life is happiness in one’s work and other related aspects of life such as interpersonal relationships, leisure activities, etc.

These two domains of quality of life did not reveal any relationship with some profile variables. Life satisfaction is not influenced by gender. However, the study of Joshanloo & Jovanovic (2019) on the relationship between gender and life satisfaction contradicts this finding. Their findings showed that gender differences were found to be significant yet small – women tend to have higher scores than males across all income, education,

and employment groups. Regardless of civil status, one can be happy. However, the study on the association between marital status and reported life satisfaction in South Africa (Botha & Booysen, 2013) revealed that life satisfaction is significantly higher for married compared to widowed individuals. Likewise, a tenured employee can be as happy as an employee who served the organization for more than 30 years. Further, one's religious belief/practices and work assignment do not significantly affect one's life satisfaction. On the other hand, according to the study on religion and life satisfaction, it showed that religious behavior tends to correlate positively with life satisfaction (Habib, Donald & Hutchinson, 2018). Accordingly, the predictive power of this relationship is associated with age, gender and religious affiliation.

In contrast, age has a significant influence on one's life satisfaction. This means that as one grows in age, it affects how he/she perceives his/her life. A person who matures with the organization has imbibed life experiences as part of life. A study found that life satisfaction is *U* shaped in age (Ree & Alessie, 2011). It is assumed that life satisfaction may decline in midlife and increases towards retirement. In other words, people may become more satisfied in retirement age or as one matures, life satisfaction is also evident. This is supported by the study on the employment and life satisfaction among middle and old-aged adults in China. It revealed that employment and certain work characteristics were positively related to life satisfaction (Tang, Chen & Zhang, 2018).

Work satisfaction in the academe has no significant association with gender, civil status, employment status, years of service, and religion. This implies that irrespective of these variables, one can be satisfied in his/her work. On the contrary, age and work assignment do relate significantly with one's work satisfaction. This finding (on age) is supported by the study of Dobrow Riza, Ganzach, & Liu (2016). Their study has found that there is a correlation on age and tenure that as one grows older, he/she becomes increasingly satisfied with his/her job. In addition, as one matures in age, life satisfaction is increasingly evident (Ree & Alessie, 2011). On the other hand, work assignment as a faculty, staff and maintenance has something to do with work satisfaction. This entails that the nature of the work of one's assignment contribute to the attainment of one's satisfaction in his/her work.

A study on gender differences in job quality and job satisfaction among doctors in rural western China showed contradicting results and that is the existence of gender differences in job quality and job satisfaction among doctors in rural western China - the participating female doctors have better job quality and greater job satisfaction (Miao, Li & Bian, 2017). Perhaps, this has something to do with the locale, the current study is an academic institution while the other is health related.

The current research findings are related to the study on gender, marital status and job satisfaction among employees in Bangladesh. It revealed that Bangladeshi employees, irrespective of gender and marital status, are 'moderately satisfied' (Azim, Hague & Chowdhury, 2013). A related study on faith and job satisfaction among employees and managers from Southern California organizations and firms revealed that religious commitment does positively impact job satisfaction (Ghazzawi, Smith, & Cao, 2016). However, in the present study it is not the case.

The significant positive relationship between the participants' life satisfaction and work satisfaction connotes that as one's life satisfaction increases, so is one's work satisfaction. Hence, the quality of life of an employee depends on his/her level of life and work satisfaction. This is supported by the research conducted by a team of economists at the University of Aberdeen (Theodossiou, McCausland, and Pouliakas, 2006) which highlighted job satisfaction as the most critical factor for life satisfaction and well-being. This finding is likewise supported by the study of Unanue, et.al (2017) wherein they mentioned that "higher job satisfaction predicted higher life satisfaction both contemporaneously and longitudinally, and vice versa."

Quality of life in the academe is nurtured by a caring environment. The results substantiate that human resources do value most the internal environment with all its positive characteristics as a factor that binds them to the organization. In addition, the findings are related to a study on the impact of working environment on job satisfaction which revealed a positive relationship between working environment and employee job satisfaction (Rasiq & Maulabakhsh, 2014). This aforesaid study has concluded that businesses have to realize the significance of good working environment to boost level of job satisfaction.

## **V. CONCLUSION**

Life and work satisfaction can define one's quality of life. Age and work assignment do relate to quality of life. In addition, quality policy anchored on a caring environment can possibly sustain employee satisfaction and motivate human resources to stay longer in the organization until retirement age and beyond.

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