



## CHAPTER 1

### BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

#### 1.1. Concept of Quality of Work Life(QWL)

Quality of work life(QWL) analysis became popular in the 1960s and has been around ever since. It is not a specific technique, rather, more of philosophy of the condition of work. Improvement of QWL means different things to different employees. In 1985 Pave et.al[1] defined it as favorableness or unfavorableness of a job environment for people. It attempts to develop the individual while increasing productivity so that all partners benefit[2]. The basic purpose is to provide work environment that are appropriate for people as well as for the economic health of the organization. QWL usually emphasize employee skill development, the reduction of occupational stress, and the development of more cooperative employee-management relations. QWL is a large step forward from the traditional job design to scientific management, which is mostly on specialization and efficiency for the performance of narrow tasks. As it evolved, it used full division of labor, rigid hierarchy, and standardization of labor to reach its objective of efficiency. For example, for "Turnover and absenteeism of employees in an organization" management's response to this situation was to tighten controls, to increase supervision, and to organize

more rigidly. These actions were intended to improve the situation, but they only made it worse, because they further dehumanized the work. Many made a common error by treating the symptoms rather than causes of the problems. The real cause was that in many instances the job itself simply was not satisfying. The odd condition developed for some employee that more they worked, the less they were satisfied. Hence, the desire to work declined[3].

Human Resource Management(HRM) is a growing science accepted by both the social scientists, management people and other disciplines. HRM is linking productivity with QWL[4,5]. The basic purpose of QWL is to develop work environments that are excellent for people as well as for the economic health of the organization. It is clear that QWL program can help thrive favorable environment in organizational behavior and could lead to organization development. There are numerous examples of the successful organization which involved QWL analysis such as IBM, Kodak, AT&T, GM, Weyerhouse, Mary Kay Cosmetics etc[5]. These organization used QWL analysis program to reduce occupational stress, to emphasize employee skill development, and also to increase cooperation between labor and management relationship[5,6].

## 1.2. Factors related to QWL

A). Several factors have been linked to QWL so far. One of the most important that contributing to the problem was that the worker themselves were changing. They become more educated and more independent. They began reaching for higher order needs, something more than merely earning their bread[3,7]. Improvement of QWL produces a more humanized work environment. It attempts to serve the workers felt needs, as well as basic needs. It seeks to provide an environment that encourages them to improve their skills. The idea is that workers are human resources that are to be developed rather than simply used. Further, the work should not have extreme negative conditions. It should not damage or degrade their humanness. Finally, work should contribute to general social advancement, and improvement of life roles such as being citizen, spouse, or parent.

B). Herzberg[7], in his research with motivator and maintenance found that employees name different types of conditions for good and bad feeling. Herzberg turn to the work environment to identify the things that arouse in people a positive or negative response toward work. People seek to avoid anything painful or unpleasant. Thus, unpleasant factors that cannot be avoided produce degree of increasing job dissatisfaction, while the opposite happens if they have positive feeling toward their jobs.



C). The other major components of QWL were job satisfaction and related needs. Job satisfaction again can be divided into two groups: intrinsic factors and extrinsic factors. Most investigators working in this field agreed that professional nurses paid more attention or importance on intrinsic factors like task autonomy, task significance, task involvement. Although certain other extrinsic factors, like social rewards, pay equity, fringe benefits and work value or certain demographic variables had some effect on job satisfaction, but attention was paid on task related factors. Recent researchers, suggest that job satisfaction in the various occupational groups was based essentially on the same set of determinants through effects of these determinants may vary in intensity[4].

D). The perceptions of health care employees are extremely important. Whatever they believe to be true is true for them. If they feel they are part of a "team," they are indeed a part of a team. Individuals can respond to appreciate of work done only in terms of their perceptions. Therefore, the result of communication between supervisor and subordinate will be what the subordinate perceives it to be (supervisory assistance)[8].

E). Additionally, work must be source of personal enrichment, and professional nurses must feel that they have an opportunity to grow and become the professionals, they are capable of becoming the participating in on job training

programs, attending conventions, and belonging to professional organizations help the professional nurses fulfill the needs of self-actualization. Quality care depends upon internal growth within a hospital, but this growth is dependent in turn upon the personal growth of the hospital employees (Promotional opportunity)[8].

### 1.3. QWL and nurses' profession

Quality of work life plays a very important role on the quality of nursing work as well as on efficiency of the organization or in this case hospital. It has two basic components, one is job satisfaction and other is professional nurses's needs in the organization. Both these two again are determined by several other factors.

Turnover from job is a major effect of job dissatisfaction. Turnover has many adverse effect on nursing job as well as on organization. Turnover result in costs for recruitment, selection and training. It may adversely affect the quality of care given to patient[9]. More over it may have a demoralizing effect both on professional nurses and the organization[10]. Specially, in this decade, with rapidly growing private sector of health services more and more importance is given on the quality of service given rather than technology alone, while high turnover is affecting the quality of services in these hospitals and one of the major cause of turnover was found to be job dissatisfaction. In

United States of America, the National league for nursing(NLN) reported in 1976 that only 69.7 percent of the nation's nurses remain in the field ten years after graduation. Some sources reported that figure could be more high and estimate that most professional nurses stay in the field from one and one-half to three years. Each year, in Thailand, a number of professional nurses transfer from public to private hospital and from private hospital to another job[8].

Hospitals are now a days big business and like any successful business, they must meet the needs of their employees[8]. Every year, more and more hospitals are developing on experimental primary nursing systems. This approach allows the nurses to care totally for six to seven patients every day. The professional nurses have a need to know their patients as people, a need to talk with them about how they feel. The professional nurses feel that the work being done is important and appreciated (task significance).

QWL has many components and many aspects to consider. So the related problems are multifaced. To appraise and improve QWL one can start considering at any aspects or at any point. As human needs and perception of work are dynamic process, so the definition of QWL changes with time. To track the changing needs we should assess the QWL continuously. Health care and professional nurses' role in it changing rapidly in this century. An advanced society responses to these changes by assessing the condition and by altering their



policies in this regard. Like in United States as there is a growing number of geriatric population and also the altered disease pattern in this age group. The expectation from health care has also changed tremendously during last decade. So in some states they have introduced a joint practice of nurses plus doctors. In some neurotic and psychiatric patients the requirement is more understanding and caring than therapy. A joint approach could only be the best approach in this regard. And a joint practice was one of the means of improving the QWL in nurses as advocated in literature.

In Thailand with the advancement of health technology and more urbanized life pattern soon we are going to face problems in health sector as faced by other developed countries now. And if to improve health care, to render our society more healthy should be our goal, then it is high time to assess our present state and improve it. Improved QWL in professional nurses could provide effective and valuable participation in this regard.

Considering nursing's critical importance and the serious consequences of work satisfaction and professional nurses needs may have for both the organization and the individual, it is a topic warranting further investigation. Thus, the understanding of QWL of the professional nurses is essential in developing appropriate intervention to solve the turnover problem in the future. Therefore, this study attempt to evaluate QWL of professional nurses in modernized private

hospitals, to identify the variables affecting the QWL, level of QWL of professional nurses and hope to recommend the way how to improve QWL of this target population. It is expected that the findings from this study will be benefit to hospital managers in providing appropriate QWL aiming at achieving better hospital services and at the same time could fulfil professional nurses needs and thereby providing better patient care.



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