

Takhiansok, & Sawangwong, 2020

Volume 6 Issue 1, pp. 827-839

Date of Publication: 1<sup>st</sup> July 2020

DOI- <https://doi.org/10.20319/pijss.2020.61.827839>

This paper can be cited as: Takhiansok, T., & Sawangwong, B., (2020). *The Quality of Work Life in Migrant Workers in Thailand: A Case Study of Sri-Khema Market, Bangsue District, Bangkok.*

PEOPLE: International Journal of Social Sciences, 6(1), 827-839.

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## **THE QUALITY OF WORK LIFE IN MIGRANT WORKERS IN THAILAND: A CASE STUDY OF SRI-KHEMA MARKET, BANGSUE DISTRICT, BANGKOK**

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### **Abstract**

*The objective of this study 1) study the level of quality of work-life in migrant workers 2) compare the level of quality of work-life in migrant workers differentiated by personal factors. The research uses a quantitative method to study 232 participants in Sri-khema Market in Bangsue district of Bangkok. It used surveys for data collection. Statistical analysis was done using frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, t-test, and one-way ANOVA. If the overall ANOVA resulted in a P value less than 0.05, the Least Significant Method would be used to produce a pairwise comparison. The result found;*

*1. The level of quality of life overall is at a high level with a mean of 3.60. Once studied by aspect, it was found that 'work benefiting the society' was rated the highest at 4.17, followed by 'fair wages' at 4.16 and 'safe and healthy working condition' at 4.09 consecutively.*

*2. The comparison of the level of quality of life in migrant workers in Sri-khema differentiated by personal factors found: gender, marital status, education level, and income level do not*

*induce a different level of quality of life whereas age, nationality and length of employment induce differences in the levels of quality of life.*

## **Keywords**

Quality of Work Life in Thailand, Migrant Workers, Sri-Khema Community

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## **1. Introduction**

Thailand had continuously encountered unlawful entries by illegal migrant workers for some time. Governments after governments attempted to solve the issue but had been unsuccessful. Ever since 1996, the amount of unlawful entries by these workers increased significantly due to business and industrial growth which demanded a greater number of workers. Thai workers were seen as incapable of working labour or risky jobs whereas the workers from the neighboring countries with slower economic growth are not put off by it (International Labour Organization (ILO), 2012)

Thailand has need for migrant workers due to the lack of labour in particularly in the area of fishery, downstream industry, agricultural, construction, and maiden services. Therefore, importing migrant workers can chiefly benefit the country. Thai borders are connected to countries like Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia, and Malaysia making them easily commutable and accessible, subsequently, it is also the reason why migrant workers chose to work in Thailand. The higher number of migrant workers does not lower employments in Thai people (Foreign workers administration office, 2015). Therefore, the country should aim to promote human rights and human dignity allowing everyone to freely choose their jobs, to have basic awareness of work rights, and obtain enough income to provide basic economic, social, and social protection to themselves and families (Prachathai, 2007)

Having a quality work life is a fundamental basic to survival. Having a quality life is dependable on 4 main factors which are physical factor, mental factor, social factor and economical factor. These are the basic requirements which will enable migrant workers in Sri-khema market, Bangsue district of Bangkok to work effectively according to goal as well as promoting organisational development and quality employees.

## **2. Research Objectives**

1. To study the level of quality of life in migrant workers in Sri-khema market, Bangsue district, Bangkok.
2. To compare the level of quality of life in migrant workers in Sri-khema district, differentiated by personal factors.

### **3. Literature Review**

The Quality of Life in Migrant Workers in Thailand: A Case Study of Sri-khema Market, Bangsue District, Bangkok, is developed from the studies of concepts, theories, research and dissertation on migrant workers. The following review can be summarized as follow;

#### **1) The Concept of Quality Work Life**

Walton (Thongsamsri, 2016) stressed that quality work life is the life that responds to each individual's needs and characterized by personal and social influences.

#### **2) The Theory of Quality Work Life**

Walton (1973, 12-18) claimed the eight main factors contributed to a quality work life are (Noiwong, 1998):

1. Fair wages
2. Safe and healthy working condition
3. Career growth and job stability
4. Social integration
5. Personal development
6. Workplace democracy
7. Work-life balance
8. Benefit to the society

Maslow (1943) stated that people are motivated to achieve certain needs and that some needs take precedence over others.

1. Physiological Needs - these are biological requirements for human survival, e.g. air, food, drink, shelter, clothing, warmth, sex, sleep.

2. Safety Needs - protection from elements, security, order, law, stability, freedom from fear.

3. Love and belongingness needs - after physiological and safety needs have been fulfilled; the third level of human needs is social and involves feelings of belongingness. The need for interpersonal relationships motivates behavior.

4. Esteem needs - which Maslow classified into two categories: (i) esteem for oneself (dignity, achievement, mastery, independence) and (ii) the desire for reputation or respect from others (e.g., status, prestige).

5. Self-actualization needs - realizing personal potential, self-fulfillment, seeking personal growth and peak experiences. A desire "to become everything one is capable of becoming" (Maslow, 1943)

The following theory placed emphasis on fair wages, safe and healthy working condition, stability and career advancement, personal development, social integration, workplace democracy, work-life balance and work benefiting the society. These are the basics to work efficiency and effectiveness, as well as the key to increasing productivity (Walton, 1973).

### **3) The Concept of Migrant Workers**

Migrant workers refer to migration of labour from one country to another. The people that belong to the original community interact with the new one through the basis of employment. Migrant workers exist throughout countries especially in the era where transportation is easily accessible and commuting in long distance is no longer an obstacle as in the past. Moreover, the rapid change in economic, social, political, and cultural factor are what contributed to global capitalism (Santiwong, 1994).

### **4) Relevant Research**

Tatsanee Charttai (2017) studied the quality of work life of Dhurakij Pundit University's personnel and found that the staffs have high work life quality on the overall and different personal factors do not create difference in work life quality. Employees with different personal factors do not placed the importance of work life quality differently. They were particularly pleased with the 'fair wages' (Charttai, 2017).

Attaphong Limkanchanawat (2015) studied The Employment of Migrant Workers in Suratthani. Entrepreneur and found the employment on the overall is at high level. When considered by aspect, from most to least, the means were in the following order: work benefiting the society, personal development, social integration, workplace democracy, career advancement and stability, follow by safe and healthy working condition (Limkanchanawat, 2015)

The following documentary review concluded that the quality of work life of migrant workers in different places is at different levels. The framework of the research can, therefore, be established as follow:

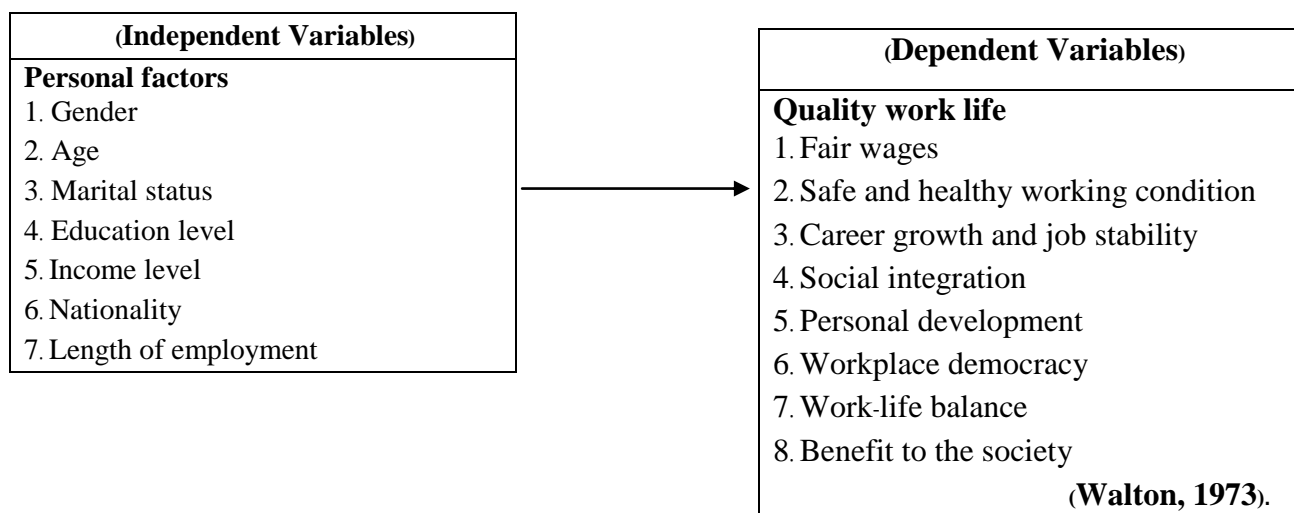


Figure 1: Thinking Framework

#### 4. Methodology

The research is a quantitative research. It used survey as data collection instrument examining data from 232 people representing the total population of 550 migrant workers (Foreign workers administration office, 2016) in Sri-khema market, Bangsue district, Bangkok. The population sample is calculated using Taro Yamane's theory (Yamane, 1970) and stratified random sampling method is performed to obtain information from 232 key informants

From this study, the research used survey questionnaire that is built on the realm of theory and concepts studied from documentary research. Data collection is divided into information obtained from primary data (232 people) and secondary data. The researcher used SPSS to analyses personal factors such as gender, age, marital status, education level, income, nationality and employment duration. Statistics used are descriptive statistic such as frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation. The hypotheses were tested using inferential statistics. T-test was used to compare the mean between the two independent groups and F-test as well as one-way analysis of variance were used for comparison of mean calculated from more than two groups. If the P value is less than 0.05, Least Significant Method were used to produce pairwise comparison.

#### 5. Research Finding

Part 1: Result analysis of personal information of migrant workers in Sri-khema market, Bangsue district of Thailand found the majority of migrant workers amounted to 148 people are male (63.8%) age between 30-39 years (76.3%) and are married (79.3%). 127 finished high school education (54.7%) and have monthly income between 15,001-20,000 Baht (59.1%).

Most of them or 131 people are Cambodian (56.5%) and 43.5% have worked between 6 to 10 years.

Part 2: The result analysis for the level of work life quality of migrant workers in Thailand from the area is found to be on a high level ( $\bar{x} = 3.60$ ,  $SD = .270$ ). When consider by aspect, 'benefit to the society' is at the highest level ( $\bar{x} = 4.17$ ,  $SD = .302$ ), follow by 'fair wages' ( $\bar{x} = 4.16$ ,  $SD = .495$ ), 'safe and healthy working condition' ( $\bar{x} = 4.09$ ,  $SD = .384$ ), and 'relationship in workplace' ( $\bar{x} = 3.73$ ,  $SD = .393$ ). Additionally, 'democracy in workplace' ( $\bar{x} = 3.28$ ,  $SD = .406$ ), 'stability and career advancement' ( $\bar{x} = 3.25$ ,  $SD = .566$ ), 'work-life balance' ( $\bar{x} = 3.08$ ,  $SD = .320$ ), and 'personal development' ( $\bar{x} = 3.06$ ,  $SD = .615$ ) are rated at a moderate level as shown on Table 1.

**Table 1:** Mean and Standard Deviation of the Qsuality of Work Life in Migrant Workers in Sri-Kheme Market, Bangsue, Bangkok

(n=232)

Quality Work Life	Quality Work Life Level			Sequence
	Mean	S.D.	Satisfaction	
1. Fair wages	4.16	.495	High	2
2. Safe and healthy working condition	4.09	.384	High	3
3. Career growth and job stability	3.25	.566	Medium	6
4. Social integration	3.06	.615	Medium	8
5. Personal development	3.73	.393	High	4
6. Workplace democracy	3.28	.406	Medium	5
7. Work-life balance	3.08	.320	Medium	7
8. Benefit to the society	4.17	.302	High	1
<b>Total</b>	3.60	.270	High	-

**Part 3:** The result analysis showing comparison of level of quality of life in migrant workers in Sri-khema Market in Bangsue district of Bangkok differentiated by personal factors found:

1) Gender: the p-value of gender is at .645 which is more than 0.05 therefore, migrant workers with different genders do not have significant difference in the level of work life quality. The result accepts the null hypothesis and can be display as shown on Table 2.

**Table 2:** *The Analysis of Result Comparison on the Work Life Quality of Migrant Workers in Sri-Khema District, Bangsue, Bangkok by Gender*

(n=232)

Quality Work Life	Gender	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	t	df	P value
Total	Male	3.61	.286	.462	198	.645
	Female	3.59	.240			

\*Statistical Significance .05

2) Age: the p-value is 0.04 which is smaller than 0.05 therefore it rejects the null hypothesis stating that migrant workers of different age has different level of work life quality. The data is shown on Table 3.

**Table 3:** *The Analysis of Result Comparison on the Work Life Quality of Migrant Workers in Sri-Khema District, Bangsue, Bangkok by Age*

(n=232)

Source of Variance	df	SS	MS	F	P value
Between-Group variance	2	.799	.399	5.701	.004*
Within-Group variance	229	16.045	.070		
<b>Total</b>	231	16.844			

\*Statistical Significance .05

3) Marital Status: the p-value is at .094 which is larger than 0.05 meaning different marital status does not necessary foster significant difference in the level of work life quality, hence, the result accepts the null hypothesis as shown on Table 4.

**Table 4:** *The Analysis of Result Comparison on the Work Life Quality of Migrant Workers in Sri-Khema District, Bangsue, Bangkok by Marital Status*

(n=232)

Source of Variance	df	SS	MS	F	P value
Between-Group variance	2	.344	.172	2.386	0.94
Within-Group variance	229	16.500	.072		
<b>Total</b>	231	16.844			

\*Statistical Significance .05

4) Education: the p-value is at .338 and is larger than 0.05, thus, it accepts the null hypothesis stating different education level do not induce significant difference in the work life quality of migrant workers.

**Table 5:** *The Analysis of Result Comparison on the Work Life Quality of Migrant Workers in Sri-Khema District, Bangsue, Bangkok by Education Level*

(n=232)

Source of Variance	df	SS	MS	F	P value
Between-Group variance	2	.159	.079	1.091	.338
Within-Group variance	229	16.685	.073		
<b>Total</b>	231	16.844			

\*Statistical Significance .05

5) Income: p-value is at .398 which is larger than 0.05, thus, it accepts the hypothesis stating migrant workers with different level of income do not have different work life quality as shown on Table 6.

**Table 6:** *The Analysis of Result Comparison on the Work Life Quality of Migrant Workers in Sri-Khema District, Bangsue, Bangkok by Income Level*

(n=232)

Source of variance	df	SS	MS	F	P value
Between-Group variance	2	.135	.067	.924	.398
Within-Group variance	229	16.709	.073		
<b>Total</b>	231	16.884			

\*statistical significance .05

6) Nationality: the p-value is at .002 which is smaller than 0.05, therefore, it rejects the null hypothesis stating migrant workers with different nationality have different level of work life quality.

**Table 7:** *The Analysis of Result Comparison on the Work Life Quality of Migrant Workers in Sri-Khema District, Bangsue, Bangkok by Nationality*

(n=232)

Source of Variance	df	SS	MS	F	P value
Between-Group variance	2	.902	.451	6.475	.002*
Within-Group variance	229	15.942	.070		
<b>Total</b>	231	16.844			

\*Statistical Significance .05

7) Length of employment: p-value is at .000 which is smaller than 0.05, which means migrant workers with different length of employment have significant difference in work life quality. The result rejects the null hypothesis as shown on Table 8.



**Table 8:** *The Analysis of Result Comparison on the Work Life Quality of Migrant Workers in Sri-Khema District, Bangsue, Bangkok by Length of Employment*

(n=232)

Source of variance	df	SS	MS	F	P value
Between-Group variance	2	1.806	.903	13.752	.000*
Within-Group variance	229	15.038	.066		
<b>Total</b>	231	16.844			

\*Statistical Significance .05

Using t-test the result concludes that migrant workers of different gender do not have significant difference in work life quality and accepts the hypothesis. From One-way ANOVA test, it was found that migrant workers with different marital status, education level, and income do not have significant difference in work life quality, therefore also accepts the null hypothesis. On the other hand, the results shown significant difference exists in the work life quality level in migrant workers with different age, nationality, and length of employment which subsequently rejects the null hypothesis.

## 6. Conclusion

From the results of research on quality of working life of migrants' workers in Thailand, The case study of Sri-khema market, Bangsue district of Thailand total of 8 aspects is at a high level. And each level at a high level in 4 aspects, which are benefit to the society, fair wages, safe and healthy working condition and personal development at a moderate level in 4 aspects, which are work-life balance, career growth and job stability, workplace democracy and social integration.

## 7. Results Discussion

The level of quality of work life in migrant workers working in Sri-khema market in Bangsue district of Bangkok is at a high level on the overall. The result corresponds to (Limkanchanawat, 2015) study on The Employment of Migrant Workers in Suratthani Entrepreneur which also revealed the quality of work life at a high level. This could be because employers had paid attention to their employees' well beings in terms of social integration and safe and healthy working condition in which the two factors directly contributed to a high quality of work life. Moreover, the company also provided adequate and fair wages to the employees. They received incentive for working over-time and were satisfied with the pay. Relatively, Maslow's theory stated life satisfaction came from the fulfillment of; physiological needs that are the basis for survival; security and safety needs, therefore, the employees are

likely to be satisfied if the company provides safe and healthy working condition. The next three levels of needs are 'mental'. These needs are love and belongingness needs, esteem needs and self actualisation needs. The workers did not have career advancement, thus, self-actualisation needs is not fulfilled. They did not have adequate skills development; therefore, their esteem needs are not fulfilled. However, they had a good relationship with co-workers and were well accepted in the community and were treated with kindness by their employers, their love and belonging needs are fulfilled. As for democracy in the organisation; because work responsibility was fixated and straight forward, migrant workers did not have the opportunities to reject work that is not bounded by their duties. The migrant workers were satisfied with their tasks. They were entitled for holidays and assigned resting period in between the day. They were allowed day-off and taken appropriate leaves. They had no issue managing a work-life balance lifestyle. They could spend time with family and friends outside work and most of the time not limited by their duties at work. In terms of work that is beneficial to the society, it was found migrant workers happily took part in giving back to their community and their environment. All these factors enabled migrant workers in Sri-khema market to feel they have high quality of work life. In terms of personal factors, the result discovered (Maslow, 1943):

1) Migrant workers with different gender do not have significant difference in work life quality and accepts the null hypothesis. This is because both genders were able to equally access services necessary for good work life quality. The discovery coincides with the result found by (Charttai,2017)'s on the quality of work life of Dhurakij Pundit University's personnel in which both genders also did not contribute to significant difference in work life quality.

2) Migrant workers with different age have significant difference in work life quality and rejects the null hypothesis. This is because migrant workers age between 30-39 years old have higher work life quality than those from other age ranges. (Ungsriwong, 2004)'s work discovered Myanmar migrant workers age between 21-30 years old displayed significant difference in the work life quality.

3) Migrant workers with different marital status do not have significant difference in work life quality and accepts the null hypothesis. This is because migrant workers, regardless of their marital statuses, were able to equally access services necessary for a quality work life. The result from this research also corresponds to (Charttai,2017)'s work on the quality of work life of Dhurakij Pundit University's personnel in which both marital status did not contribute to significant difference in work life quality.

4) Migrant workers with different education level do not have significant difference in work life quality, therefore, the result accepts the null hypothesis. Part of the reason could be because the nature of their work did not demand highly developed skills that come from school education. And also because migrant workers, regardless of their education levels, were able to equally access services necessary for a quality work life. The result from this research also corresponds to (Mechamran, 2010)'s study on the quality of work life of Nakornchaisri people, Nakornpathom, that found people of different genders, educational level and marital status that had different types of illness did not have significant difference in work life quality.

5) Migrant workers with different level of income do not have significant difference in work life quality and the result accepts the null hypothesis. This is because migrant workers with different level of income were still able to respond to their personal needs and satisfaction. They were content at work. The result coincide with (Charttai, 2017)'s work on the quality of work life of Dhurakij Pundit University's personnel in which income did not contribute to significant difference in work life quality.

6) Migrant workers with different nationality have significant difference in work life quality and it rejects the null hypothesis. Part of the reason may come from the fact that Cambodian migrant workers had higher work life quality than other nationalities, therefore, they feel they have high quality work life. The result supports (Phuripanig, 2003)'s work on the Quality of Life of Lawful Migrant Workers in Chonburi which found different nationalities may have different abilities in adapting to the new environment, therefore, the factor contributed to significant difference in work life quality.

7) Migrant workers with different employment length have significant difference in the quality of work life and accepts the null hypothesis. This is because migrant workers who were employed more than ten years have significantly higher work life quality than migrant workers in other employment period. Migrant workers with employment of more than ten years feel they have high work life quality which coincides with (Phuripanig, 2003)'s study work on the Quality of Life of Lawful Migrant Workers in Chonburi that found different employment length contributed to significant difference in work life quality. The author speculated that migrant workers with longer employment period were able to come to terms with issues and obstacles they faced, they subsequently had less stress, and have higher satisfaction toward their work life quality.

## **8. Research Limitations**

The researcher used only one sample group- Scope of research because the researcher was unable to conduct a complete study of all aspects of that problem. Therefore the definite

scope of the study must be determined. What is covered this may be done by narrowing the scope of the subject specifically to demographic groups, research sites or time periods.

## **9. Recommendations**

1. From the questionnaires they commented the government should formulate appropriate income policy that they should adjust pay wages of similar organisations type and size to have similar wages. In terms of democracy in organisation, they should arrange trainings and meetings for migrant workers in the organisation in order to find out existing issues, provide solutions, and improve work efficiency.

2. There should be comparative study with other organisation of the same type and size to find out whether the results on migrant workers' work life quality of these organisations complement each other.

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