

A Demographic Study and Satisfaction towards Working Conditions of Thai Factory Workers Working in Japanese Factories Located in Thailand

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1. Introduction

Thailand started the policy for “Human Resource Development” in the Third Five-Year National Economic and Social Development Plan (1972-1976). The Eight Plan (1997-2001) focuses on people-centered which means to develop the potential of the people in terms of physical, being mentality, wisdom and skills to be healthy moral and actively participate in community development. The accessibility to the basic services and social and labour welfare is included. From the last survey in 1995, 7,281,000 population were private employees in non-agriculture sector. And also from the report of the labour force survey of the whole kingdom by the National Statistical Office, it was found that most of the workers in many establishments were migrants. In 1994 it was reported that there were labour disputes, strikes and lockouts in 24 establishments but 26 time with 43,420 workers involved. From the statistics collected by the Ministry of Labour and Social welfare it was found that the main reason of having labour dispute and strikes was the dissatisfaction with working conditions.

In the previous studies, there was no attempt to relate demographic factors such as migrant or no to the workers satisfaction as migrants and their living conditions could have effects to their satisfaction towards work which possibly

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caused labour disputes and strikes afterward. So this study had the objectives to describe demographic characteristics of workers, to explain labour welfare in medium-sized and large-sized of Japanese factories, to measure level of satisfaction of workers and to find out the association between demographic factors, working conditions and satisfaction of the workers.

2. Methods and Materials

A cross-sectional explanatory study was conducted in three medium-sized and three large-sized factories by random in Pathumthani province. Those six factories were Fujitsu, Fujikura, JVC, Nitsuko, KDK and Carton-optical Siam Companies. A multistage stratified sampling was applied which made sample size to be 500 cases. Three interviewers were trained for data collecting method. Structured questionnaires were tried out with 30 workers in Nakornpathom province which the Cronbach's coefficient of reliability was 0.79. Actually 525 workers were interviewed by accidental random at the cafeteria during lunch break but only 500 questionnaires were completed. Data were collected during August-October, 1997. Out of 500 workers, 317 workers were from large-sized factories and 189 workers were from medium-sized factories. Questionnaire consisted of three parts; demographic factors with focus on migration, working conditions, welfare and environment and satisfaction of workers towards working conditions.

3. Research Results

Most of the workers were female (82.4%) age between 21-30 years (76.4%), Buddhist (97.8%), married (67.6%), educational level from high school and higher (78%) with average income 5,968 baht per month. The majority of the workers had no saving (55%) but had debt 100 percent at the average of 6,255 baht. All married workers had children and 100 percent of them were being reared. Workers were migrants 91.8 percent. Migrants who had ever migrated were 36.6 percent with main reason was "to seek for job." Out of all migrants 87.4 percent intended to live temporarily in Pathumthani province and 61.3 percent of

temporary Living workers intended to go back to the place of origin. Most of the workers (68.8%) rent the house at the average rate of house rental 1,315 baht. Among the workers 68.8 percent had no problem about housing and 81.8 percent had no problem about transportation. For working experiences 72.8 percent had been working with the factory for 3 years and over, 60 percent work 8 hours a day with 60 minutes break (30 minutes for lunch break, 15 minutes for morning and afternoon breaks). Most of the workers (71.8%) had training before working and 78.8 percent had retraining after working for sometimes (table 1).

The results of level of satisfaction towards working conditions in both medium-sized and large-sized factories, it was found that 80.8 percent rated general working conditions i.e., work hours, time for break, shift work, training before working and retraining satisfied to the most satisfied. For welfare provided to the workers i.e. uniform, medical care, maternity leave, vacation, recreation, rest area, bonus and cafeteria and food, 74.2 percent rated satisfied to the most satisfied. But for the emergency loan fund workers (66%) felt that they were less satisfied and dissatisfied. Environment in terms of safety measurement, toilet facility, motivation, light at the workplace, ventilation, odorless and cleanliness, workers rated satisfied to the most satisfied 84.2 percent (table 2).

On management aspect, related to manpower allocation, equipment, maintenance of the equipment, friendliness of the supervisor and opportunity to meet with the administrative personnels, 73.0 percent rated from satisfied to the most satisfied. For the association between workers satisfaction and working conditions, it was found that environment ($p<.001$), welfare ($p<.001$), friends ($p<.05$) and marital status of married workers ($p<.05$) were statistically significant variables which made the power of explanation of the equation to be 25 percent (table 3).

4. Discussion

It was observable that the standard of working with Japanese factory was rather high. Using modern technology might need more educated workers as the workers who graduated from secondary school and higher was 93.6 percent, the average income was at moderate level ($\bar{X} = 5,968$ baht) compare to the salary scheme of the government. No doubt that why 100 percent of the workers had debt as 100 percent of married workers had children being reared and some of them had dependant from 1-3 persons apart from their children which they had to pay and additional amount of money to look after them. Migration became a common phenomena as 91.8 percent of the workers were migrants and all these migrants had to adjusted their way of life according to the urbanization life style of Pathumthani province. For workers satisfaction toward working conditions, it was found that most of the workers had positive feeling towards working conditions. This could be confirmed by there were no labour disputes or strikes in these six factories. Although the salary was not so attractive but working conditions were rather good. Compare to the previous studies (Moolwong, 1993; Pisukul, 1994; Phoungchum, 1996) workers working in Japanese Factories had better working conditions and satisfaction was considerably high. Only in some area which were needed to be improved i.e. emergency loan fund, rest area, incentive and cafeteria and food.

5. Recommendation

The emergency loan fund should be provided by the administrative officer but must be reasonable and under some criteria. Rest area in the factory was important as it affected mental health of the workers during their morning, lunch and afternoon breaks as they could have some relaxation activities among friends. Motivation, in particular incentive should be provided to encourage worker to do better than in the past and it could be a strategy to maintain the good workers to keep up their good works. Eventually, cafeteria should be spacious enough as it

was too crowded and people rushed to the place because lunch break was short and food price could be controlled by the administrator in relation to the quality of food.

Table 1 Demographic Characteristics of Workers Concerning Migration percentage

Characteristics	Factory		Total (n = 500)
	Medium (n = 183)	Large (n = 317)	
Migrant			
No	7.7 (14)	8.5 (927)	8.2 (41)
Yes	92.3 (169)	91.5 (290)	91.8 (459)
from BKK	4.2 (7)	4.8 (14)	4.6 (21)
North	16.6 (28)	18.6 (54)	17.9 (82)
South	6.5 (11)	3.8 (11)	4.8 (22)
Central	33.7 (57)	33.4 (97)	33.6 (154)
Northeast	39.0 (66)	39.4 (114)	39.1 (180)
Reason to Migrate to	(n = 169)	(n = 290)	(n = 459)
Pathumthani			
- Seek for job	88.7 (150)	87.2 (253)	87.8 (403)
- Relocation without Return to the Origin	4.2 (7)	1.4 (4)	2.4 (11)
- others	7.1 (12)	11.4 (33)	9.8 (45)
Ever Migrate	(n = 169)	(n = 290)	n = 459
No	59.2 (100)	65.9 (191)	63.44 (291)
Yes	40.8 (69)	34.1 (99)	36.6 (168)
from BKK	37.7 (26)	40.4 (40)	39.3 (66)
North	1.8 (3)	7.1 (7)	6.0 (10)
South	1.2 (2)	3.0 (36)	3.0 (5)
Central	39.1 (27)	36.4 (36)	37.5 (63)
Northeast	20.2 (11)	13.1 (13)	14.2 (24)
Reason for Previous	(n = 169)	(n = 290)	(n = 459)
Migration			
Seek for job	73.9 (51)	78.8 (78)	76.8 (129)
Relocation without	4.4 (3)	5.1 (5)	4.8 (8)
Return to the origin Others	21.7 (15)	16.1 (16)	18.4 (31)
Living in Pathumthani			
Temporary	80.3 (147)	91.5 (290)	87.4 (437)
Permanent	19.7 (36)	8.5 (27)	12.6 (63)
Temporary Living in	(n = 147)	(n = 290)	(n = 437)
Pathumthani Trend to			
migrate to BKK	0.7 (1)	4.5 (13)	3.2 (14)
Origin	70.1 (103)	56.9 (165)	61.3 (258)
Central	25.8 (38)	24.1 (70)	24.7 (108)
Others	3.4 (5)	14.5 (42)	10.8 (47)

Table 2 Level of Satisfaction towards Working Conditions in Both Medium-sized and Large-sized Factories

Working Conditions	Level of Satisfaction (n = 500)				
	5	4	3	2	1
General working condition					
- Work hours	20.6	32.0	42.2	4.4	0.8
- Time for break	12.2	26.0	41.6	16.8	3.4
- Shift work	13.0	23.6	42.0	9.6	11.8
- Training before working	12.6	21.4	40.8	17.6	7.6
- Retraining	15.2	21.8	39.2	16.4	7.4
Welfare					
- Uniform	19.8	35.6	34.0	7.4	3.2
- Medical care	15.2	25.6	36.0	10.2	3.0
- Maternity leave	22.0	29.8	38.4	7.4	2.4
- Emergency loan fund	5.0	9.4	19.6	13.8	52.2
- Vacation	15.4	29.6	37.4	12.6	5.0
- Recreation	10.6	20.4	42.0	18.2	8.8
- Common Room	7.6	11.0	30.6	24.0	26.8
- Bonus	10.0	18.4	45.0	18.8	7.8
- Cafeteria and Food	3.6	9.6	35.8	28.8	22.2
Environment					
- Safety Measurement	8.4	26.8	53.0	9.8	2.0
- Toilet Facility	4.8	17.2	48.2	21.4	8.4
- Motivation	4.2	13.0	41.0	28.6	13.2
- Light at the Workplace	13.6	38.2	39.0	6.6	2.6
- Ventilation	6.4	23.6	41.6	21.6	6.8
- Odorless	6.0	16.4	43.0	23.6	11.0
- Cleanliness	8.0	25.4	50.8	12.0	3.8
Management					
- Manpower	10.4	22.4	50.6	13.0	3.6
- Equipment	6.2	20.4	44.6	23.0	5.8
- Maintenance of the Equipment	6.4	16.8	48.2	21.2	7.4
- Friendliness of Supervisor	9.2	24.8	40.8	16.0	9.2
- Meeting with Administration	8.8	18.2	37.4	20.0	15.6

Table 3 Stepwise Regression of Workers Satisfaction towards Working Conditions (Y)

(n = 500)

Variables/Step	Coefficients			
	1	2	3	4
ENV	4.68*** (11.16)	4.01*** (9.31)	3.91*** (9.04)	3.97*** (9.20)
WEL		3.86** (5.01)	3.95** (5.12)	3.86*** (5.02)
FRIE			-3.75* (-2.12)	-3.79* (-2.16)
SEX				-2.76* (-2.07)
Constant	44.83	24.39	25.23	26.62
Multiple R	0.45	0.49	0.49	0.50
R Square	0.20	0.24	0.25	0.25
Adjusted R Square	0.20	0.23	0.24	0.25
S.E.F.	5.27	4.91	4.86	4.81
F	124.57***	77.83***	53.76***	41.65***

*p<.05

**<.01

***p<.001

$$Y = 26.62 + 3.97 \text{ ENV} + 3.86 \text{ WEL} - 3.79 \text{ FRIE} - 2.76 \text{ SEX.}$$

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