

Executive Summary

The new approach by the government for human resource management is aimed towards the development of human capital which is the most essential strategy in improving the quality of life among the Thai civil servants to meet the need of better job satisfaction. According to Section 72 of the Civil Service Act B.E. 2008, it is the responsibility of governmental sector to strengthen the inspiration and capacity building among the civil servants in order to have moral principle, ethics, a good quality of life and a good working spirit leading to a more efficient outcome. The Office of Civil Service Commission has set up a project to develop the quality of life indicators and the tools of measurement the quality of working life indicators of Thai civil servants. In addition, this project aims to establish a benchmark to gauge the quality of life of civil servants so that any appropriate measures can be taken accordingly in order for an improved quality of life.

This study is based on the Office of Civil Service Commission's quality of working life framework. The four components in the measurement of quality of life of civil servants are as follows:

1. Personal Dimension consists of physical and mental health components, emotional development component and the balance between working life and personal life component.
2. Working Life Dimension consists of working conditions components, psychical environmental components, human resource management component, rules and regulations of the organization and implicit value of organization.
3. Social Dimension consists of the relationship and participation and the communication within the organization components.
4. Economical Dimension consists of working benefits, standard of living, and money management.

The following steps are taken during this investigation. First, a meeting was set up between the steering committees followed by documentary research. Next, focus group discussion was carried out together with a brainstorming session with the experts. Data collection involved mailed questionnaires which were taken by 1108 civil servants where stratified random sampling was used to select the participants. Finally, the results were analyzed based on the frequency distributions, percentage average and standard deviation.

Results

1. The Indicators of the Quality of Life of Thai Civil Servants

In total 78 indicators were used. These indicators consist of 23 Personal Dimension Indicators, 28 Working Life Dimension Indicators, 12 Social Dimension Indicators, 13 Economical Dimension Indicators and 2 indicators of Happiness and Quality Of Life Level.

2. The Benchmark of the Quality of Life of Thai Civil Servants

The Benchmark in this study refers to the basic minimum requirement of quality of life that Thai civil servants would like to meet. It is used as a reference and is categorized into three levels namely, higher level than the benchmark, the same level as the benchmark or below level of the benchmark.

Having a higher score than the benchmark indicates that the level of quality of life of those Thai civil servants is better than the basic minimum requirement that they are satisfied with. This suggests that the executive management of the organization should continuously maintain and concern what they are doing to sustain this higher level of quality of life of those Thai civil servants.

Having a lower score than the benchmark reflects that the level of quality of life of those Thai civil servants is unqualified. This suggests that the executive management of the organization must ensure that they improve on the quality of life to be at least the basic minimum requirement and should also aim to make it higher than the benchmark for the benefit of the Thai civil servants.

Some indicators have been grouped together to create a combined indicator such as 4 eating habits indicators have been averaged out to form a combined nutrition indicator. In addition, moral principle and ethics indicators have been combined to form a moral ethics indicator. After forming some combined indicators, 62 indicators are used in this investigation.

3. Analysis of the quality of life of the Thai civil servants under investigation when compared with the benchmark is as follows:

3.1 Personal Dimension: The indicators have shown that the results are mostly good especially the health care of Thai civil servants aged 40 and above for both male and female. This is because there is annual health check-up and also blood sample is taken to check for diabetes. With regards to the risk of being diagnosed with other diseases such as smoking behaviour, it was found that most Thai civil servants are non-smokers. The ability to sort out problems and complications is an indicator to gauge the level of mental health satisfaction, which has a major impact on the quality of life of Thai civil servants. It has been reported that most Thai civil servants are able to deal with their personal problems that they have come across in their way of life. The calculations have revealed that the value of mental health indicator is above the benchmark. However, there are some concerns over the quality of life of Thai civil servants in the personal dimension. Some officers do not go for their annual check-up and some do not exercises regularly even though the annual health check-up is provided free of charge and many governmental organizations encourage their staff to exercise by providing gym and sporting facilities. Moreover, it was found that the time management skills between work and personal life of some Thai civil servants is below the benchmark

3.2 Working Dimension: This is a very important aspect which helps to improve the quality of life. It has been found that, in general, the working dimension is at a good level. Although more than half of the Thai civil servants under investigation are at the benchmark level or higher for every indicators in this dimension, those that are below the benchmark belong to

very interesting indicators. These are fair promotion, impartial praising, satisfaction with their career path, human resources is handled fairly, the right to express one's opinion and a good working relationship between colleagues. It was found that the mentioned indicators are approximately 20% below the benchmark. In terms of the workload and having adequate personnel are still an issue for the Thai civil servants as it was found that more than half are having problems with their assigned duties and 1 in 3 think that their organization do not have sufficient personnel to handle the workload. These two indicators are two of the lowest indicators below the benchmark.

3.3 Social Dimension: Examination of social work indicators found that the relationship between government officers is at a satisfactory level. The only indicator, participation in activities at work or around the community, was found to be at level lower than the benchmark with only 1 out of 5 participating.

3.4 Economical Dimension: There were two indicators which were found to be lower than the benchmark: the contentment of compensation in life and the absence of debt installments. It was found that 62.8% and 84.7% of government officers respectively, are not at the benchmark which is consistent with the surveys of the NSO and the results from group discussions, which have found that economic conditions are problems for the government. The majority of Thai civil servants have problems with the liability and compensation, which is not adequate to the current economic conditions.

Overall, it may be concluded that the quality of life of Thai civil servants is mostly at the benchmark, with some categories coming higher than the benchmark and also some that are lower than the benchmark. In order to improve the quality of life for these Thai civil servants, indicators such as annual health checks, lack of exercise, and the inability to manage time between working and everyday life to a satisfactory level, lack of rest, high workload, not enough staff to cover work units, not enough compensation and owing financial debt to the government, will need to be addressed.

Recommendations

1. Recommendations for quality of life aspect

1.1 Personal Dimensions

1) The annual health check found that 1 in 4 officials fail to attend the annual health check. The annual health check is essential to health because it helps prevent diseases from occurring or stop them from worsening. Government agencies should encourage their officers to attend and receive their full health check. This may include distributing mobile health services to the work units or workplaces or timely distribution of Thai civil servants to attend and receive health examinations. Also, it was found that low amount of female officers aged 35 years or above take tests for breast and cervical cancer detection. The remaining percentage should be encouraged to take these tests in order to prevent these problems from actually occurring or worsening.

2) A study of the exercise habits found that nearly 1 in 3 of officials do not exercise citing a lack of free time and no appropriate site of exercise as their main reasons. The general feedback from focus group discussions is for the organizations to include or provide facilities. However, exercise habits depend on the individual and their priorities therefore, other than providing the officials with an appropriate site of exercise, encouragement to exercise should be offered. This may include organizing a time for group exercise for example.

3) Regarding time management between work and life in general, it was found that 1 in 4 officers are lower than the benchmark of time management. It was also found that about 1 in 5 of government officials have insufficient leisure to meet the minimum criteria. Part of the reason may be that the burden of too much work and not enough time, thus leading to a lack of balance between life and general and work. Government agencies should give priority to the amount of rest afforded to their officials because an insufficient amount of rest may have a long term effect on the personal lives of government officials.

1.2 Working Dimension

1) Issues about being treated fairly at workplace which include getting promoted fairly, getting impartial praised and awards and good human resource management. It was found that quite a high proportion of Thai civil servants have a lower score for such indicators than the benchmark which suggests that they tend to feel that they have not been treated fairly in their workplace. This is in line with the focus group discussion held between the Thai civil servants where they have mentioned about the fairness of job assignment, the progress of their career path and job relocation. The management level should take this into account and adjust the system accordingly in order for everyone to be treated equally and fairly.

2) It was found that some Thai civil servants are having difficulties in progressing through their career path. Focus group discussions have revealed that it was not possible to move up the ranks at all in some organizations due to the structure of the organizations. They felt that their career path should have been made clearer at the beginning in order for them to be motivated to go up the ranks. This would mean that the officers would be able to put more effort and work more effectively as they can see what they can achieve at the end of their hard work.

3) The results have shown that almost half of the civil servants under consideration are below the benchmark in terms of the workload and having adequate number personnel for the job. This is also true for the ratio of staff per workload where this was the case for 1 in 3 Thai civil servants. The issue of having too much workload is also evident in almost all of the focus group discussions where the participants felt that the work has not been distributed equally leading to some officers have significantly more work than others. Hence, it is essential that the workload is divided up equally and distributed appropriately and the management level should provide extra help to those that are in need.

1.3 Social Dimension

With regards to social dimension, it was found that most of the Thai civil servants are either at the same level or higher than the benchmark. Only in taking part in the activities within organization that Thai civil servants with lower score than benchmark are found which is reported to be approximately 20%. More encouragement from the organization is required in order to get the officers to take part in the activities which will lead to a better quality of life especially the mental component.

1.4 Economical Dimension

1) 62.8% of Thai civil servants feel that they are not earning what they deserve which is consistent with the focus group discussion where it was found that this is a very important evidences. The Thai civil servants feel that their salary should be adjusted as the living expenses increase. This issue is directly related to the government sector and this needs to be taken into consideration.

2) Studies have shown that 85.7% of Thai civil servants are in debt. This issue is likely to be caused by the fact that Thai civil servants are not getting sufficient salary. It is essential that this issue is resolved as better economical status means a better quality of life.

3) It was found that 1 in 4 Thai civil servants are having difficulties managing their debts and repayment. Hence, some helps from the government sector is required. However, help from organization level can be implemented such as offering a low interest loan for Thai civil servants.

4) The results have shown that more than 1 in 3 Thai civil servants regularly spend their money on lottery and gambling. Hence, some measures should be put in place to reduce this number to an appropriate level.

5) 66.8% of Thai civil servants are below the benchmark in terms of having household expenses account. This implies that most Thai civil servants do not take a note of their household expenses or exercise the household expenses account. The concept of having a household expenses account can help people plan for income and expenditure which will help people to spend money effectively. Encouraging Thai civil servants to have a household expenses account can help them solve their economic problems.

2. Recommendation on the Benchmark of Quality of Life aspect

The benchmark used in this study can be applied to other organizations. Appropriate adjustments may be required for certain indicators depending on the organizations without affecting the overall framework of this benchmark. The level of benchmark can be higher or lower than 3 but any adjustment to this must be verified accordingly.

3. Recommendations on Using the Tool of Measuring Thai Civil Servants' Quality of Life

3.1 The quality of life of Thai civil servants should be measured on a regular basis so that any changes can be ascertained and observed. This can be done every 6 months or a year depending on the purpose of study, budget and personnel.

3.2 In order for other organizations to utilize this indicator as well as performing data analysis, appropriate training must be given to the relevant personnel.