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HEALTH-RELATED QUALITY OF LIFE (HRQoL) OF LECTURERS IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES, MALAYSIA

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PURPOSE

The focus of education nowadays is no longer teaching-oriented but has been shifted to research-oriented with the aim of producing more studies of high quality on behalf of the institutions (Toker, 2012). Paired with the increasing cost of living in Malaysia and workloads, this phenomenon is believed to affect the Health-Related Quality of Life (HRQoL) of lecturers (Naslina, et. al., 2012). Given the important role played by lecturers in the higher institutions, it is essential to evaluate their Health-Related Quality of Life (HRQoL) to find doors for improvement. This is an empirical paper aims at presenting findings from a study conducted to determine the Health-Related Quality of Life (HRQoL) of lecturers in selected public universities in Malaysia. The primary objective of the study was to compare the Health-Related Quality of Life (HRQoL) index of the lecturers with the key indicators recommended for general Malaysian population norms taken from Azman, et al. (2003).

METHODOLOGY

The study was designed as a descriptive and cross-sectional study. A structured e-mail survey was created and sent to all respondents of randomly selected public universities using formal organizational e-mail. Ethically, the e-mail included a statement of consent to be the respondents of the study and a link to the validated Short Form (SF-36) items, a type of survey that commonly used to gather information related to Health-Related Quality of Life (HRQoL). The survey has been indicated as reliable, valid, and responsive for multiple types of populations and fields (Wuemei, et al., 2003). There are eight health domains that aggregated into two clusters designed in the survey. The first cluster is the Physical Health that include Physical Functioning (10 items), Role-Physical (4 items), Bodily Pain (2 items), and General Health (5 items). While the second cluster is Mental Health that include Vitality (4 items), Social Functioning (2 items), Role-Emotional (3 items) and Mental Health (5 items.)

FINDINGS

The analysis of findings indicated that, the response rate was 34.55%. Only 1235 respondents voluntarily involved in the study while, the remaining 65.45% were either refused to do so, cannot be reached, or ignored the e-mail. The overall mean score of the Health-Related Quality of Life (HRQoL) in the study was compared with the overall mean score of the recommended Malaysian general population norms of 65.0. The accumulated score was 50.60, which is lower than the recommended value. Mean scores of all eight-health domain were also lower than recommended mean scores of the general Malaysian population for each health domain. These findings suggested that, the lecturers experienced insufficient Health-Related Quality of Life (HRQoL). Moreover, gender analysis indicated that male academicians had higher Health-Related Quality of Life (HRQoL) for all the health domains except for Role-Physical (RP) and Social Functioning (SF).

CONCLUSION

It is very crucial to retain a good quality of life among academician. The findings call upon the intervention from the government to formulate strategies in handling the strains and pressures at work among academicians, specifically the lecturers. This is important to ensure that both

physical and mental states of the lecturers can be improved for the benefits of education in the future.

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