

RESEARCH PROPOSAL FOR PHD

FIELD OF RESEARCH:

ENVIRONMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY

TOPIC OF RESEARCH:

***THE EFFECTS OF WORK ENVIRONMENT
ON SERVICE DELIVERY OF NURSES IN MALAYSIA***

PREPARED BY:

Mrs. Y

(770101-xx-xxxx)

***BAHAGIAN PENGURUSAN PSIKOLOGI
JABATAN PERKHIDMATAN AWAM MALYSIA***

1. TOPIC OF RESEARCH PROPOSAL

THE EFFECTS OF WORK ENVIRONMENT ON SERVICE DELIVERY OF NURSES IN MALAYSIA

2. BRIEF LITERATURE REVIEW

The Effects of work environment on attitudes

In recent years, scholars have become increasingly interested in the study of environmental effects on human behavior and their well-being. The reason behind this growing interest lies on the principles underlying the critical issues of work environment. The first one is that there is empirical evidence supporting the existence of a relationship between the work environment and human affective behavior such as attitude and well-being (Duvall- Early & Benedict, 1992; Carlopio & Gardner, 1992; Leather et al., 1998). Secondly, because we spend most of our time at the workplace, the work environment is very important as our behavior and well-being could be affected by it (Biner et al, 1991).

Research has found that the physical work environment such as office type, space, lighting, noise, view and air quality can affect human attitudes and well-being such as job satisfaction, commitment, motivation and stress levels. The relationship between the job satisfaction and the physical features of work environment depends both on general and specific features of the work environment (Sundstrom, 1991). For example, the type of office, equipment or level of noise in the office can affect job satisfaction. On the other hand, it can also be affected by the overall features of the office environment including the company's policies, relationships with other co-workers and even payment schemes (Sundstrom, 1991).

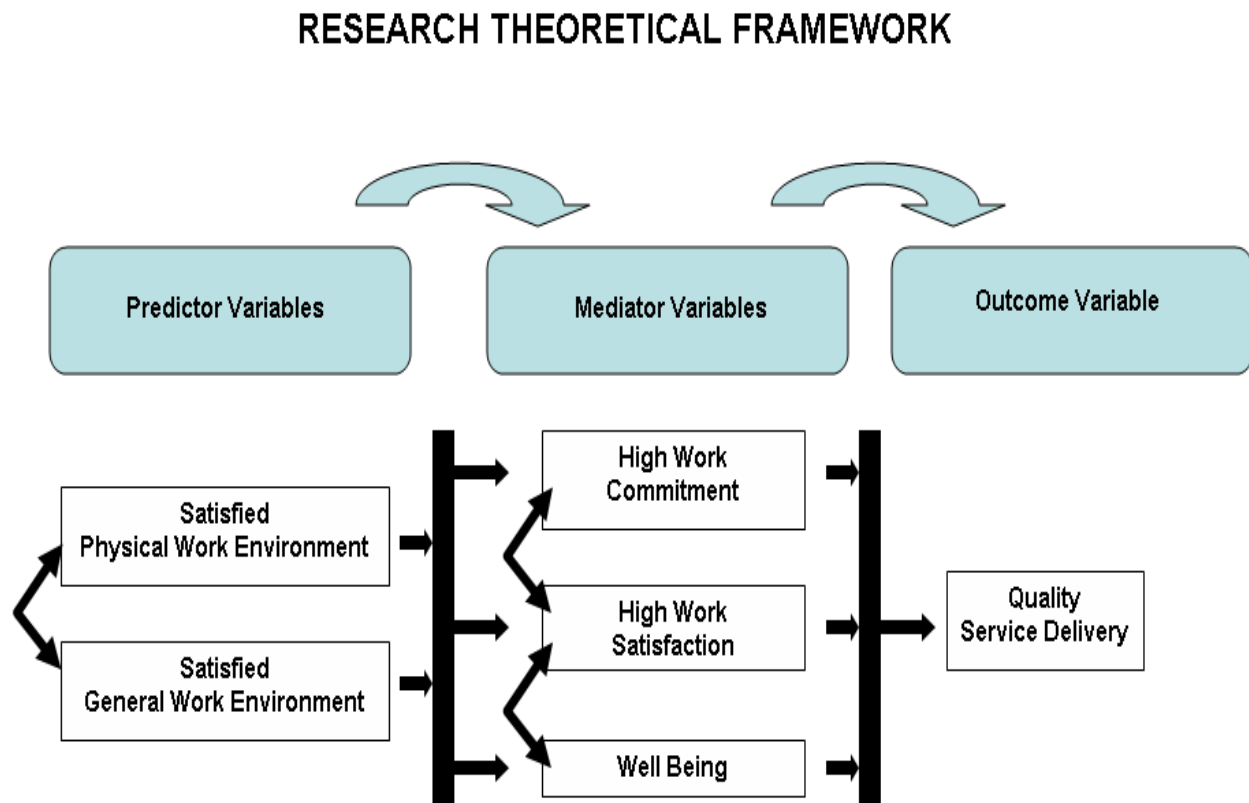
Quality of Malaysian Public Service Delivery

Over the years, Malaysian public service sector facing numerous complains of not able to deliver quality services. Even though, the Chief to the government, Tan Sri Mohd Sidek Hasan always reminded that all the civil servants to work hard and always in the interest of public, the issues of poor services, unfriendly officers as well as lack of integrity still become the newspaper main news. For the past 2 years, because of service reformed and good governance policy we have received good comments from the publics. However, the issues still exist and there are lots more to be done to further improve the public service delivery.

Among the issues of poor service delivery occurred in hospital settings and from the Newspapers reports we have heard about negligent cases among hospital staff including the nurses. Nurses are one of the largest groups of public servants in Malaysia and their service is considered very important. Any mistakes or poor judgments from the nurses could lead to serious illness, injuries or even fatality. This study will focus on the effects of overall work environment on service delivery of the nurses in Malaysia. I believe that the work environment in hospital plays as important role in determining the quality services provided by the nurses. We have heard the nurses' complaint about their heavy workload, long working hours as well as poor physical work environment, this may lead to dissatisfaction and low commitment with their job. On top of that, poor work environment might also effect the well being of the nurses and increase their level of stress. What could you expect from a dissatisfied, low commitment and stressed nurse? Of course part of the answer can be seen through negative comments in newspapers public complaint column. This study intends to explore the relationship between the work environment and the service quality of the nurses.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Theory in ergonomic studies explained that satisfied physical and general work environment will lead to high commitment, high work satisfaction and well being of the employees (Biner et al, 1991; Duvall- Early & Benedict, 1992; Carlopio & Gardner, 1992; Leather et al., 1998). Job satisfaction theory and job commitment theories explained that satisfied employees will have high commitment towards their work and if combined with well being will results in good attitude (Vecchio,1995; Williams, 1998; Kreitner dan Kinicki, 2004). Normally an employee with good attitude will present high quality performance and service delivery. The framework shows that the mediator variables act as a vehicle in which the effects of predictor variables are transported to affect the outcome variable.



4. OBJECTIVE OF STUDY

- 1) To study the effects of overall work environment on service delivery of the nurses in Malaysia.
- 2) To assess whether nurses who are satisfied with the work environment also satisfied with their job which in turn will present a quality service delivery
- 3) To assess whether nurses who are satisfied with the work environment also express high commitment with their job which in turn will present quality service delivery
- 4) To assess whether nurses who are satisfied with the work environment also have good stress level and well being which in turn will present quality service delivery

5. METHODOLOGY OF STUDY

Participants and Locations

This study will use both quantitative and qualitative method. Selected participants from 3 General Hospital will be asked to answer a set of questionnaires and a few of them will be interviewed. I am intended to select the participants from the Maternity ward nurses, patients and family member of patients. Maternity ward is chosen because of high turnover rate that make it possible to have more participants. Only discharged patients and family members will be selected. At the same time, if possible I would like to compare the results with participants from one of the public hospitals in Canada. However, this will depends on the availability and policy of the health sector in Canada.

Measures

A set of questionnaires measuring Job satisfaction and human factor satisfaction (physical setting, equipment, work system) will be used. The questions will be gathered from several existing sources such as, Carlopio's Physical Work Environment Satisfaction Questionnaires (PWESQ), general job satisfaction questionnaires from Camman et al., physical environment satisfaction questionnaires based on Stokols and Scharf (1990) and organisational commitment adapted from Ross, (1999) in Veitch, Farley, & Newsham (2002). The questionnaires will be given only to the nurses.

Another set of questionnaire measuring customer satisfaction on the service delivery will be given to patients and family members. The questionnaires will be adapted from existing sources such as Customer Satisfaction Survey from Bahagian Pengurusan Psikologi, JPA (2008) and Dr Sana Qamar Patient Satisfaction Survey (2008).

Participants were also asked to report their biographical details; gender, age, duration of working/admitting to hospital and indicate their status (nurses, patients or family members). Assessment and measures will be made primarily by self-report questionnaires using a mixture of YES/No questions, Likert rating scales and fill-in-the-blank questions. A number of issues regarding work environment and employees' attitudes will be assessed. A few participants from all categories will be interview for further data collection. Annual performance report will be gathered from the management office to measure performance of the nurses according to their superior. Below are the variables of the research.

i. Physical Work Environment

- *Office Type and Access To View (Window)*

Participants then categorized their office type as open plan/pooled, cubicle or own room/traditional. Definition for each type of office will be given and the access to a view outside.

- *Privacy*
Participants will be asked about their level of satisfaction on work area privacy, including the level of distraction, conversation privacy and visual privacy by using the seven-point scale of satisfaction (questions adapted from Stokols and Scharf (1990) in Veitch, Farley, & Newsham (2002)). In addition to that, the participants will also need to report their distance from co-worker and supervisor and the number of people they have to share the work area.
- *Work Area*
Participants will report their level of satisfaction on the size of workspace, distance from their co-worker and enclosure of the work space using the seven-point likert scales (questions adapted from Stokols and Scharf (1990) in Veitch, Farley, & Newsham (2002)).
- *Control Over Workspace*
Control over workspace and social interaction will be measured using seven-point scales with two questions asking about the frequency of distraction from other people and the participants' ability to alter the physical conditions in the work area (questions adapted from Carlopio's Physical Work (PWESQ), 1996; Stokols and Scharf, 1990).
- *Equipment and Facilities*
Participants will report about their satisfaction level of the effectiveness of the tools/machines provided and the facilities provided such as restroom and lunch area (questions adapted from Carlopio's Physical Work (PWESQ), 1996). They will also ask to list down all the necessary equipment provided to help them do their job such as medical equipment (stethoscope), computer and telephone.

- Noise, Lighting and Air Quality

The participants' satisfaction level on the amount of noise, the quality of light in their work area and the overall air quality will also be assessed. The items will use seven-point scales (questions adapted from Carlopio's Physical Work (PWESQ), 1996).

ii. General Work Environment

- *Work System Design*

Their level of satisfaction on work system design will be measured on seven-point scales with questions referring to the amount of work they have to do, the duration of hours they have to work, the movement required to do their job, the general design of work system, as well as the quality and amount of information received to do their job (questions adapted from Carlopio's Physical Work (PWESQ), 1996).

- *Leadership*

Leadership is also an important determinant of satisfaction in the working environment. For some employees, inspiring leaders will help in motivating and instilling their commitment to their job. Therefore, the nurses will be assessed on their satisfaction of their superior leading style. Questionnaires will be designed and test for reliability by researcher.

iii. Job Satisfaction

The participants' job satisfaction will be assessed using seven questions adapted from Camman et al., with seven-point scales of agreeableness.

iv. Job Commitment

Job commitment will be assessed using four questions asking about their feelings of the workplace (adapted from a survey question of Canadian Federal Public Service (Ross, (1999) in Veitch, Farley, & Newsham (2002), whether they like to change jobs altogether, do different types of jobs within the hospital or do the same job in other organization. The items were measured using five-point scales ranging from Very True to Not True.

v. Well Being

Well being will be measured using an amended version of Cox and Gotts (1987) General well being questionnaires. The items loaded onto one of two factors: ‘up-tight’ and ‘worn-out’. Up-tight measures symptoms related to fear, worry and physical signs of anxiety. Worn-out measures symptoms related to tiredness, emotional liability and cognitive confusion.

vi. Service Delivery

- *Customer(Patient) Satisfaction*

Customer satisfaction questionnaires will be adapted from existing sources such as Customer Satisfaction Survey from Bahagian Pengurusan Psikologi, JPA (2008) and Dr Sana Qamar Patient Satisfaction Survey (2008).

- *Performance*

Performance of the nurses will be measured using existing records; Yearly Performance Appraisal Report (Laporan Nilaiian Prestasi Tahunan) and Punch Card.

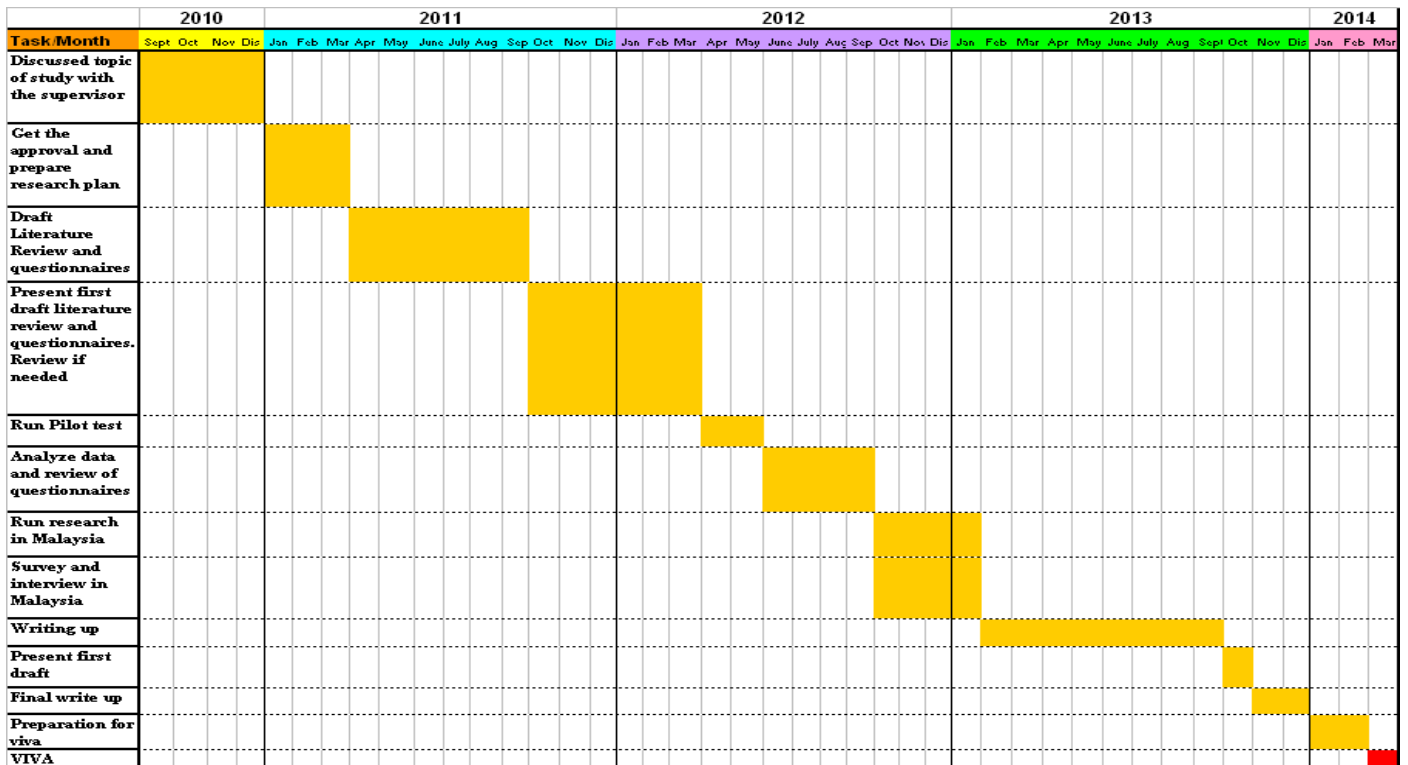
Analysis

The data will be analyzed using statistical techniques in SPSS such as correlation, multiple regression and mixed ANOVA. The techniques will be used to see the strength and direction as well as exploring the relationship and interaction effects of the variables. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) will also be used to test and estimate causal relationships. SEM will help in confirming the results obtained from SPSS as well as the theoretical framework.

6. WORK SCHEDULE

I am planning to finish my PhD in three and half years as shown in the work schedule below. However, the exact schedule will be done according to university and supervisor because some universities required graduate students to attend post graduate courses for about 1 year before doing their research.

Work Schedule Using Gantt Chart



Work Schedule Using Table

No.	Date	Work	Notes
1.	September 2010 – September 2011	Discussed topic of study with the supervisor Get the approval and prepare research plan Draft Literature Review and questionnaires	Duration : 1 year
2.	October 2011 – Mac 2012	Present First Draft Literature Review and questionnaires (review if needed)	Duration : 6 Months
3.	April – September 2012	Pilot test Analyze data and review of questionnaires	Duration : 6 Months
4.	October 2012 – January 2013	Run research in Malaysia Survey and interview	Duration : 4 months
5.	February – September 2013	Writing up	Duration : 8 months
6.	October – December 2013	Present first draft Final write up	Duration : 3 months
7.	January – Mac 2014	Preparation for viva VIVA	Duration : 3 months

7. BRIEF BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abd, Aziz, Y. (2006). *Pengurusan Sumber Manusia : Konsep, Isu dan Pelaksanaan*, Pearson Prentice Hall, Kuala Lumpur.
- Allen, T., & Gerstberger, P. (1973). A field experiment to improve communications in a product engineering department: the non-territorial office. *Human Factors*, 15, 487- 498.
- Bell, P., Greene, T.C., Fisher, J.D., & Baum, A. (2001). Work, learning and leisure environment In *Environmental Psychology* (5th Ed.), Orlando : Harcourt College Publishers, 433-447.
- Biner, P.M., Butler, D.L., & Winstead, D.E. (1991). Inside windows : an alternative to conventional windows in offices and other settings. *Environment and Behavior*, 23(3), 205-227.
- Blokes, L.K., & Stokes, G.S. (1989). Performance and satisfaction in private versus nonprivate work settings. *Environment and Behavior*, 21, 277-297.
- Bryman, A. & Cramer, D. (2005). *Quantitative data analysis with SPSS 12 and 13: a guide for social scientists*. London: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group.
- Budaya Kerja Kelas Pertama : Penggerak Misi Nasional, 2007, Putrajaya : Bahagian Perkhidmatan Psikologi, Jabatan Perkhidmatan Awam.
- Budaya Kerja Kelas Pertama : Satu Perspektif Psikologi, 2007, Putrajaya : Bahagian Perkhidmatan Psikologi, Jabatan Perkhidmatan Awam.
- Burke, R. J. (1993). Organizational level interventions to reduce occupational stressors. *Work & Stress*, 7, 77-87.

Carlopio, J.R., & Gardner, D. (1992). Direct and interactive effects of the physical work environment on attitudes. *Environment and Behavior*, 24(5), 579-601.

Carlopio, J. R. (1996). Construct validity of a physical work environment satisfaction questionnaires. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 1(3), 330-344.

Cartey, R. (2000). High Impact Leadership: Make and Impact on Your Team, Your Company, Your Career, Kuala Lumpur: Goldern Books Centre, 9-54.

Dancey, C.P., & Reidy, J. (1999). *Statistics without maths for psychology: using SPSS for windows*. London: Prentice Hall.

Davis, D.D. (1986). *Managing technological innovation*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Duval-Early, K., & Benedict, J.O. (1992). The relationships between privacy and different components of job satisfaction. *Environment and Behavior*, 24(5), 670-679.

Ellen, K., Sundstrom, E., Brady, C., Mandel, D., & Rice, R.W. (1982). Status demarcation in the office. *Environment and Behavior*, 14(5), 561-580.

Field, A. (2003) *Discovering statistics using SPSS for windows*. London: Sage Publication.

Hedge, A. (1982). The Open-Plan Office: A systematic investigation of employee reaction to their work environment. *Environment and Behavior*, 14(5), 519-542.

Ismail, A.(2007). Enhancing Workforce Excellence in The Public Service, *Jurnal Pengurusan Awam*, Putrajaya : Jabatan Perkhidmatan Awam, 1-16.

Jupp, V. & M. Younger. (2004). A Value Model for the Public Sector. Paris: OECD Outlook 2004, No.1, 18.

Kendall, M., & Stuart, A. (1958). *The advanced theory of statistics*. New York: Hafner.

Kreitner R. & Kinicki A. (2004). *Organizational Behaviour*. (6th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.

Leather, P., Phrgas, M., Beale, D., & Lawrence, C. (1998) Windows in the workplace: sunlight, view and occupational stress. *Environmental and Behavior*, 30(6), 739-762.

Malek Syah, M.Y. & Muhamad, H. (2005). Strengthening Public Service Delivery : Forging Ahead Together, *Proceeding of The Ninth Civil Service Conference* 24-26 June 2004. Bukit Kiara : INTAN, 11-45.

Meniti Kejayaan Satu Perspektif Psikologi : Kecemerlangan, Kegemilangan, Keterbilangan (2007), Putrajaya : Bahagian Perkhidmatan Psikologi, Jabatan Perkhidmatan Awam.

Mohmad Yazam, S. (2001), *Asas Pengurusan Sumber Manusia*, Kuala Lumpur ; Utusan Publications & Distributors, 8-53.

Parson, H. (1976). Work environment In I. Alman & Wohlwill (Eds.). *Human Behaviour and Environment, Volume I*. New York : Plenum.

Rancangan Malaysia Kesembilan, 2006, Unit Perancang Ekonomi, Jabatan Perdana Menteri

Statistik dan Pemantauan Pegawai Bermasalah dan Berprestasi Rendah (2007), Putrajaya: Bahagian Perkhidmatan Psikologi, Jabatan Perkhidmatan Awam.

- Sundstrom, E., Herbert. R.K., & Brown, D.W. (1982). Privacy and communication in open plan office: a case study. *Environment and Behavior*, 14(3), 379-392.
- Sundstrom, E., Town, J., Brown, D., Forman, A. & McGee, C. (1982a). Physical enclosure, type of job and privacy in the office. *Environment and Behavior*, 14(5), 543-559.
- Sundstrom E. & Sundstrom M.G. (1989). Work places: the psychology of the physical environment in offices and factories. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press.
- Sundstrom, E. (1991). Work environments: offices and factories In D. Stokols & I. Altman (Eds.) *Handbook of Environmental Psychology, Volume I.* Florida : Krieger Publishing Company, 733 – 771.
- Ulrich, R.S. (1984). View through a window may influence recovery from surgery. *Science*, 224, 420-421.
- Vecchio R. P. (1995). *Organizational Behavior*. (3rd ed.). USA: Harcourt Brace College Publishers.
- Veitch, J. A., Farley, K. M. J. & Newsham, G. R. (2002). Environmental satisfaction in open plan environments. Canada : Institute For Research in Construction, 5-29.
- Williams, R. S. (1998). *Performance Management*. Boston: International Thomson Business Press.