REVIEW ARTICLE

Quality of Work-Life among Lecturers during Online Learning in COVID-19 Pandemic Period: A Scoping Review

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to determine the quality of work-life among lecturers during the COVID-19 pandemic. The process involved in reviewing relevant literature from the PubMed and Google Scholar databases were based on the criteria that they are written in English, published in 2020, and peer-reviewed. This was achieved using Boolean search with “lecturer or academic or nurse lecturer AND e-learning or online learning or web-based learning or remote learning or distance learning related with the quality of work-life”. The electronic searches identified 53 citations and 5 retained citations. The results showed online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic caused a decline in the quality of work-life among lecturers and the causative factors were found to include poor psychological well-being, stress on IT usage, and reduced work-life balance.

Keywords: COVID-19, Distance, Education, Lecturers, Work-life balance

INTRODUCTION

Social restrictions were imposed globally to reduce the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Such arrangements are necessary considering the controllable nature of the disease which has the ability to cause mild to severe symptoms (1). This pandemic has affected educational institutions as is evident from the change from face-to-face learning to online learning methods (2). The intention was to reduce the spread of the virus. But the adoption of this online method has the potential to create several obstacles associated with a decrease in learning quality for both educators and students. Oducado and Estoque (3) reported that there was an increase in stress for students due to online learning methods which also affect their academic performance. The work-life balance of the lecturers was also observed to be affected as indicated by stress which indirectly reduced the quality of learning for the students.

Several studies have indicated the influence of online learning adaptations on work-life balance (WLB). A case study of Peking University showed that the adoption of online learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic caused several challenges for the lecturers based on the lack of experience in online learning management as well as insufficient preparation and support from the IT team (4). Several cases in Indonesia where distance learning has been implemented, in 98% of the universities also showed a similar trend (5-6). The “Work from Home (WFH)” policy implemented by the government also affected the teaching staff of higher educational institutions and this further influences their job satisfaction and their involvement in their work and families. This also has the potential to reduce their quality of work-life (QWL).

QWL is defined as the situation where individuals feel satisfied with their personal and work needs through their involvement in their working environment (7). Improved quality of worklife has the ability to ensure a balance between professional, personal, and social life and this further enhances job satisfaction and work commitment. It is, therefore, necessary to assess the quality of work-life of educators in adapting online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. This study is expected to serve as the foundation for further research to improve the QWL of lecturers in higher institutions of learning.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

Review method adopted in this research was done using keywords adapted to the MeSH terms such as “faculty member” OR “lecturer” OR “Staff” AND “online learning” OR “e-learning” OR “work-life balance” OR “QWL” OR “Quality of working life”. The articles used were qualitative and quantitative research with full text, peer-reviewed, and from the PubMed and Google Scholar databases. They are also expected to be relevant to the 2020-2021 PEO (Population, Exposure, and Outcome) framework as indicated in Table I. The
articles were extracted manually and analyzed using a descriptive approach.

### Table I: PEO framework related to QWL among college lecturers while implementing online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PEO Framework</th>
<th>Inclusion</th>
<th>Exclusion</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>The population of lecturers in university</td>
<td>The population of educators at elementary school, junior high school, and non-formal education or outside educators in tertiary institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exposure</td>
<td>Studies that review online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic</td>
<td>Studies that review face-to-face learning and review online learning outside of the COVID-19 pandemic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome</td>
<td>Studies that review the quality of work-life</td>
<td>Studies that do not review the quality of work-life</td>
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### RESULTS

The search results showed 53 articles based on the keywords and 5 were retained, 3 articles were also observed to be related to QWL descriptions, and 5 on factors affecting QWL during the COVID-19 pandemic (Figure 1). The studies were found to be conducted using literature review, qualitative descriptive analysis, and case studies and the participants were lecturers. They were found to be conducted mostly in Jamaica, United States, and India with the publication year ranging between 2020 and 2021. The analysis of these articles showed that the online learning that was implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic reduced the QWL among educators at higher levels of education (6–8). The details of the search results are, however, presented in Table II.

### DISCUSSION

To the best of knowledge of the author, this study is the first to review the QWL of lecturers due to the online learning adopted during the COVID-19 pandemic. The main findings showed that (i) online learning during the COVID-19 outbreak reduced the quality of work-life of lecturers, (ii) the causative factors include poor psychological well-being, frustration on the IT use, and reduced work-life balance, and (iii) a cyclical approach to disaster emergencies needs to be implemented through preparation, response, coping, and restoration.

The quality of work-life (QWL) (Figure 2) of lecturers was observed to be poor during the COVID-19 pandemic due to valiant learning adaptations (8–10). QWL is defined as the environmental conditions required to support satisfaction (10). It has, however, been reported that individuals feel satisfied with their personal and work needs through the interactions in appropriate working environment (7). Moreover, Sahu et al. (10) showed that lecturers are not sure of what they are doing during the learning process. The distrust in the work due to reduced quality of worklife was also reported to have caused a reduction in productivity such as publications with the women gender found to be most affected (9).

Another study showed that the poor QWL was caused by the stress associated with studying from home (8), psychological factors, and unpreparedness towards the use of technology.
The coping aspect is highly dependent on previous steps such that proper preparation has the ability to reduce crises such as QWL problems. The coping, in this case, is not only to ensure a smooth learning process but also to have psychological well-being through the provision of mental health counseling and sessions. Meanwhile, the restoration aspect focuses on implementing policies and actions to make up for the lagging hours and experiences to ensure timely and effective responses.

This research was limited to some identifiable literature due to its focus on the QWL during the pandemic. Kanten and Sadullah (15) also showed that literature on QWL is currently limited and this is considered to be the limitation of this study. However, an overview of the lecturers’ QWL during the pandemic is provided in the present study and these findings can be used as the foundation for the efforts directed towards improving the QWL of lecturers to achieve a quality and sustainable education or teaching system, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

CONCLUSION

The quality of work-life for lecturers was observed to be reduced during the pandemic due to the adaptation of online learning systems and this led to the reduction of their productivity. Some of the causative factors include psychological stress, increased work flexibility which affects work-life balance, and lack of preparation for IT required to implement online learning from home. Therefore, a cyclical approach to disaster emergencies is recommended to be implemented at the university and ministerial levels. It was also discovered that studies related to QWL and its intervention among lecturers are very limited and this means further research needs to be conducted to improve QWL among lecturers, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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