

**Institute of International Management
College of Management
National Cheng Kung University**

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODS

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**THE MEANING OF WORK: IDENTIFYING THE
CAUSES OF DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES
AMONG FILIPINO BLUE-COLLAR WORKERS**

A RESEARCH PROJECT PROPOSAL

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Ok, don't forget
date, too

THE MEANING OF WORK: IDENTIFYING THE CAUSES OF DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES AMONG FILIPINO BLUE-COLLAR WORKERS

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I. Introduction and Objectives

Work has been a dominant, if not the central, part of our everyday lives. Several academic researchers have acknowledged the social phenomenon of the changing nature of work amidst a growing environmental uncertainty (Griffin, et al., 2007; Hecht and Allen, 2009; Juillerat, 2010; Messias, et al., 1997; Orrange, 2003). Most of the observations regarding work have moved to the practical day-to-day activities over the last decade or so that they have blurred the boundaries set by theory (Barley and Kunda, 2001; Jullierat, 2010; Nicholson, 2010).

what characterizes this uncertainty?

what are these?

Indeed, with this changing environment, work has taken on multiple meanings and contexts (Messias, et al. 1997; Nicholson, 2010), making it harder for both the firm and its workers to define their roles within the firm's operations (Edwards, et al., 2000; Morgeson and Campion, 2002; Jullierat, 2010). As such, there is a need for re-examine the perceptions and attitudes that influence individuals on how they define what work is.

Also, since there is much concern regarding theories not being able to keep up with the pace of changes (Barley and Kunda, 2001; Juillerat, 2010) and ending up lacking an organizing and directing theme (Nicholson, 2010), there is a need to re-examine the theoretical and practical perspectives on searching for the meaning of work. Getting insights from working individuals will help facilitate this re-examination of perspectives.

This research project, to address the aforementioned practical and theoretical problems, is concerned with the deep meanings individuals attribute to work. While there have been previous researches on work performance (e.g. Griffin, et al. 2007), work design (e.g. Juillerat, 2010), work transitions (e.g. Ali and Avison, 1997), and work roles (e.g. Hecht and Allen, 2009), little has been said on what work really means. Most researches have also focused much attention on the firm's point of view and not on the individual workers' point of view when defining what work is. This is where this research will come in.

Yes!

slang... This work will contribute to...

The cultural part is missing. This is relevant to introduction of this topic don't forget that!

II. Research Questions

The following general research questions, specifically focused on the point of view of individual workers, are posed as guidelines throughout the rest of the project. There are several expectations on individual workers to forge careers and be highly flexible and adaptable in an uncertain

environment (Orrange, 2003), which leads to different meanings and variations of what work is (Ali and Avison, 1997; Hecht and Allen, 2009; Messias, et al. 1997; Nicholson, 2010). These questions point to the very issue of defining what work is, which is lacking in existing research given the changing environment.

Specifically for the target respondents' point of view (in this case Filipino blue-collar workers' perspective), the following research questions are:

- What is work?
- What are the elements that constitute work?

These questions are oriented towards the content rather than the meaning of work

III. Research Scope

Interestingly, culture can take a defining role in providing specific and logically coherent explanations. Furthermore, even within a particular culture, there can be some significant differences in perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes that can provide some more explanations as well (Ali and Avison, 1997). These depend on a number of factors such as life patterns, demographics, and exposures to urbanization, technology, and globalization that interact with social, economic, political, geographical factors (Ali and Avison, 1997; Kahn-Hut, et al, 1982; Kessler-Harris, 1981; Messias, et al. 1997). With such interactions, there is a need to identify which of them contribute the most to individuals defining what work is.

Therefore, this research project shall focus on the Filipino workers living and working in Tainan City, Taiwan. It is important to consider the variety of the relative importance of different behavior types to fully understand the changing views regarding work (Cummings, and Blumberg, 1987; Griffin, et al. 2007; Katz and Kahn, 1978; Murphy and Jackson, 1999).

IV. Research Methodology and Expected Output

Much of the more recent researches regarding this issue have been qualitative discussions. Recent discussions on re-examining work design have combined current observations on work design, organizational theory, and cognitive perspectives to develop a new model, but it has yet been fully tested (Juillerat, 2010). Some discussions on defining and redefining work design reviewed past theories, literature, observations, and policies to come up with theoretical propositions and policy implications (Messias, et al., 1997). There have also been commentaries and observations regarding the evolution of work design that have noted phenomena that have significantly changed the perspectives on work (Nicholson, 2010).

Erik, there is much evidence of you thinking about the topic. In the expression, here in the paper, you need to work to avoid undefined statements - see the start, too. These intrigue the reader but leave them wondering what you actually mean.

of the way individuals think and behave.

Getting off topic - focus on the Filipino group

quantitative

Depending on time constraints, this research shall strive to conduct at least blue-collar Filipino employees to learn about their insights regarding the definition and the phenomena that surrounds all of these changes regarding this issue.

If depth this may be enough - how many is enough? We'll discuss this under the 'sampling' topic.

The data attained from these interviews will be used to determine and extract the variables that define what work is to Filipino blue-collar workers. Furthermore, these variables will be analyzed if there are still consistent with existing theories or they provide new insights that can contribute to existing theories. Furthermore, these will complement the observations, propositions, and findings from these previous studies.

variables that dimensions

V. Next Steps

The next immediate steps for this research project will revolve around the following activities.

- 1) Conduct a more thorough literature review to come up with the appropriate theoretical foundation for this research project.
- 2) Design the interview guidelines and broad question items based on the literature review.

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Time frame
Costs
etc.?

Edu came up with a 2010 literature review article on the meaning of work.

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Orange, R.M. (2003). The emerging mutable self: Gender dynamics and creative adaptations in defining work, family, and the future. *Social Forces*, 82 (1), 1-34.

FEEDBACK ON YOUR PRESENTATION

QUICK PRESENTATION FEEDBACK			
GROUP:	ERIK		
A	B	C	D
Are ideas presented connected with the aim of the presentation?	Are the ideas presented clear supported with evidence and logical argument?	Is it easy to follow & to understand? (Are the slides clear and easy to follow e.g. use of new pictures, words, graphs)	Overall impression (is it a group presentation etc.?)
40%	30%	20%	10%
<p>Comments</p> <p>Presentation</p> <p>The start makes a positive attempt to motive the need for a study. The gap in your argument is – change in the environment, yes, but in what way is the current understanding inadequate. This may come later – but could bring it earlier.</p> <p>Literature – take a look at On the meaning of work... Rosso et al., Research in Organizational Behavior, 30 (2010) pp91-127- See my comments in the references.</p> <p>Research questions – let's re-evaluate these.</p> <p>Identify relevant variables. – dimensions is more appropriate.</p> <p>Report</p> <p>The flow is emerging and drawing out some of the key ideas e.g., we lack clear insight into the meaning of work. You need to add culture into the starting flow i.e., what is the meaning of work in different cultures? This motivates your attention to a Pilipino group.</p> <p>Take another look at the research questions – these can be framed to address the content of work <i>not</i> the meaning of work. They should be used, too, to frame your attention on the Pilipino group.</p> <p>See comments to on timescales, costs etc.</p>			
Grade: 85%			