A CASE-STUDY OF A TEXTILE FACTORY IN JOHORE

oleh

No. Matrik: 41964

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Latihan Ilmiah

Bagi Memenuhi sebahagian

Daripada Syarat-Syarat Untuk

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SINOPSIS

Fokus sebenar kajian yang berbentuk deskriptif ini ialah terhadap pekerja-pekerja wanita dalam bidang perindustrian tekstil. Disebabkan oleh kesuntukan masa, maka si pengkaji hanya berupaya menumpukan perhatiannya terhadap sebuah kilang secara khusus. Kilang yang dimaksudkan ini ialah sebuah kilang pemintal benang (spinning factory) di Johor. Pengumpulan data untuk kertaskerja ini telah dimulakan dari bulan Mei hinggalah ke Jun, 1985, termasuklah juga satu kajian soalselidik yang dijalankan di kalangan pekerja-pekerja kilang tersebut.

Isu yang diberi tumpuan khas dalam kajian penglibatan wanita dalam bidang perindustrian tekstil ini ialah dari segi kepuasan mereka terhadap kerja yang dilakukan itu. Memandangkan penglibatan teknologi yang tinggi dalam bidang perindustrial tekstil hari ini, apakah nilai kepuasan seseorang individu terhadap kerjanya telah merosot sebagaimana yang dipercayai ramai? Aspek inilah yang menjadi fokus utama kajian ini. Antara angkubah-angkubah yang disentuh dalam menjawab persoalan ini ialah skop pekerjaan pekerja itu sendiri (immediate job content), gaji, peluang kenaikan pangkat dll. Di samping itu, kajian ini juga meninjau akan masalah-masalah yang dihadapi oleh pekerja-pekerja wanita ini di dalam bidang pekerjaan mereka.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Since attaining Independence in 1957, Malaysia has stepped up its development efforts through four successive five-year plans to accelerate economic growth and to diversify the economy. Although the agricultural sector (includes forestry and fishing) continues to be the mainstay of the economy accounting for 22 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product of the country and about 40.6 per cent of its employment in 1980,[1] increasing emphasis is being placed on industrial development to diversify the economy as well as to provide employment to a growing labour force. This shift in emphasis in the Malaysian economy from one dependent on primary industries such as agriculture and mining to one increasingly dependent on secondary and tertiary industries was apparent especially during the 1970s. The fastest growing sectors are the services and manufacturing sectors. Over the last two decades, output in the manufacturing sector increased at an average of 12 per cent per annum. By 1980, the manufacturing and services sector contributed 68 per cent to the Gross Domestic Product as compared to 50.5 per cent in 1955 (see Table 1.1). As a result of these structural changes, it also brought about the change of manpower from subsistence agriculture to wage labour, thus increasing the proportion of population participating in wage labour.

However, the increase is attributable NOT only to the increase in the working age population but also in the participation

Table 1.1

Industrial Origin of Gross Domestic Product (GDP)

for selected years (Percentage)

Economic Sectors	1955	1965	1975*	1980*
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	40.2	31.5	27.6	22
Mining and quarrying	6.3	9.0	4.6	5
Manufacturing	8.2	10.4	16.4	21
Construction	3.0	4.5	3.8	5
Services	42.3	44.6	47.6	47
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100

Source:

Compiled from: Money and Banking in Malaysia, Bank Negara Malaysia, 1979, p. 7 Table 1.2;
and Fourth Malaysia Plan, 1981-85, 1981, p. 11.

*West and East Malaysia

rate in female employment, as a consequence of rapid socio-economic development.

In view of the rapid industrial development of Malaysia under the New Economic Policy,[2] one of the labour market phenomena of the seventies was the rapid growth of female employment particularly in the manufacturing sector.[3] The percentage of women working in the manufacturing sector has increased tremendously from 7.3 per cent in 1970 to 20.7 per cent in 1980 - while that in the agricultural sector decreased from 61.4 per cent to 40.2 per cent (see Table 1.2), showing a change in the structure of the female labour force. Among the explanations offered to account for the great increase in the proportion of women wage workers in the labour force are proletarianisation of the rural labour force, improved educational achievements of women (a consequence of the greater dependence of the cash economy on wages for survival) and the low level of wages commanded by male workers in the household.[4] These may all be important. However, they do not explain why most of the female workers were employed in the lower level occupations, particularly in the manufacturing sector. In the electronic industries in 1980 there was a total of 65,341 employees of which 90 per cent were females. In the textile industry alone, the employment rose from 15,332 in 1973 to 35,952 in 1980, of which over 60 per cent were females.[5] These industries were a contributory factor in increasing the female labour force participation rates in the country. Why? Too often overlooked is the fact that technology might

Table 1.2

Women in Employment by Sector.

Sector	Distribution of employed women	
	1980	1970
Agriculture	11.3	31.6
Agriculture products	28.9	29.6
Mining and quarrying	0.4	0.7
Manufacturing	20.7	7.3
Construction	1.0	0.5
Electricity, gas, water, etc.	0.2	0.1
Commerce	12.3	5.2
Transport, storage and communications	1.0	0.5
Services	24.2	14.8
Unknown	0.0	9.5
Total	100.0	99.8

Source: Report of the Labour Force Survey, 1980.
Population census of Malaysia, 1970.
Department of Statistics, KL, p. 431.

play a crucial part in determining the choice of labour force. As Marx puts it

> "In so far as machinery dispenses with muscular power, it becomes a means of employing labourers of slight muscular strength and those whose bodily development is incomplete, but whose limbs are all the more supple. The labour of women and children was, therefore, the first thing sought for by capitalists who used machinery".[6]

Taking another approach, industrialization has changed women's roles for with early industrial coercion, women's labour become important. They are employed in industries which require certain characteristics that are classified as "feminine", such as in textile, electronics and food-processing industries. This is based on the beliefs that women workers have naturally nimble fingers; they are docile and compliant; they don't get involved in trade union activity and are reluctant to go on strike. They are good workers, tolerant of routine, repetitive and monotenous tasks which men abhor and shun.

However, such a high level of female participation in the manufacturing sector also reflects certain characteristics of the manufacturing industries. Of importance is that they are mostly labour-intensive, they are particularly dependent on cheap labour. The common criticism is such that women's employment in such industries represents the exploitation of cheap labour. But on the other hand, mechanisation, which is responsible for the deskilling of jobs, is also a powerful instrument for depreciating the price of labour. Here, the concentration of women in low-paid job is placed within the context of the deskilling of the labour process. As such, they work mainly as operatives or semi-skilled workers who require no prior training and there-

fore are paid near-subsistence wages only.

In conclusion, given rapid strides made by the manufacturing sector in the 1970s and in contrast to the declining share of agriculture in the national economy, more of the female labour force are being transferred into the wage sector. However, evidence obtained strongly suggests that expansion of wage work associated with industrial development has by no means eliminated deprivations suffered by the poorer people especially the women of the working classes. Rather, economic transformations leading to high employment of women seem to have generated employment opportunities for women but only in a few limited sectors of the economy, of which, the manufacturing sector is one of them. But women's employment in such industries represents the exploitation of cheap labour. As such, this study will focus on the satisfaction of female wage workers in the process of carving out for themselves a niche in the industrial sector. This concentration on solely female workers is also due to the fact that female participation is a new phenomenon in this country. Moreover, there are very few studies on female participation in Malaysia, especially in the textile industry. Although there is still concentration of the three major ethnic groups at certain points in the Malaysian socio-economic structures,[7] this is more the result of historical development rather than because of racial characteristics per se.[8] Therefore, it is more fruitful especially in an exploratory exercise such as this, to discuss the issue of women within a socio-economic framework rather than along communal lines.

Nonetheless, cultural explanations, although relegated to secondary importance, will be considered wherever they prove to be of significance.

The researcher has chosen a textile factory in her study by virtue of the nature of the product and also because it is second to electronics in female employment (see Table 1.3). The textile industry has an exceptionally high reliance on female labour, about 80 per cent of the total labour force. Being a labour-intensive industry it is particularly dependent on cheap labour. In addition, the choice made was also due to the fact that electronic workers were well-studied[9] in our country but not on textile workers, even though it is second in female employment.

1.1 Research Problem

> **Machines alone do not give us mass production. Mass production is achieved by both machines AND men. And while we have gone a long way toward perfecting our mechanical operations, we have not successfully written into our equations whatever complex factors represent man, the human element.**
>
> **- Henry Ford II -**

Advancement in the field of technology has brought about an era of a machine-tending technology. This, in turn, enables us to undergo a process of rapid industrialization. On the one hand, mechanisation has enabled the growth of a mass production industry, a remarkable achievement in productive efficiency in the history of the modern industrial system. It is also accepted that it is mainly out of this revolution came the advantage in material well-being. But, on the other hand, "the excellence

Table 1.3

Selected Examples of Women Employment in the Non-agricultural Sector - 1979

Manufacturing	No. of Women	% of total employed
Electronics	52 886	84.9
Textiles	22 627	62.9
Clothing	15 198	88.44
Rubber Products	8 598	50.5
Plywood	5 606	41.6
Printing and Publishing	4 872	34.8
Biscuits and Confectionery	3 470	59.8
Tobacco	2 111	53.2
Tin cans & Metal boxes	2 057	57.2
Pineapple Canning and Miscellaneous food preparation	2 031	60.4
Chemical products	1 864	55.6
Brass, Copper, Pewter & Aluminium products	1 202	-

Source: Quarterly survey of Employment in Manufacturing Industries, Peninsular Malaysia, 1979, Department of Statistics.

of a civilization is to be gauged not by a material yardstick alone, but also by the opportunities which it provides for intellectual and emotional expression and development of the individual. There is little merit in a civilization which dulls the mind, wraps the emotions, destroys the will and reduces the individual to an automaton, even though it succeeds in providing an ever increasing supply of material goods for general distribution".[10]

For this reason, it is not possible to think of the human element in industry in terms of productive efficiency alone. We must also take full account of the possible consequences of our industrial order in mechanizing the mind, creating mental conflicts, diminishing creative power and setting the stage for individual dissatisfaction and maladjustment at work. In other words, we must be concerned with the satisfaction derived by the individual from the job.

Also, with mechanisation creating a new working environment for modern man, how well do modern man adapt themselves to this new environment? What are the problems which an "environment of machines" in a mass production work place pose for workers and management?

These are the questions which this exercise is going to explore. Thus, the machine will be surveyed less as a tool for production than as a part of the topography of a man's workplace, and mass production as a code of law governing his behaviour and way of life in the factory.

1.2 Scope of the Study

Taking a modern textile spinning plant as an example, first, the study will focus on the historical development of the factory as well as the capital and investment involved. A general description of the factory as well as its physical environment will also be given, followed by the power structure involved in the factory. Then, as a first requirement for this inquiry, a definition of the characteristics of the organisation of the labour process in this particular plant under study is required. This is done in order to explore the relation between the work environment of a spinning plant assembly line and the assembly man's satisfaction or dissatisfaction on the job. However, the contents of the workers immediate job experience alone do not apply to, nor have they told anything about many other important job characteristics. As such, other major elements of satisfaction and dissatisfaction such as working conditions, fringe benefits, pay and security, union, etc., will be studied too.

In each section, each of these elements mentioned above will be treated in its own right, following a simple presentation as such (i) facts of the elements, (ii) attitudes of the respondents toward these facts.

In conclusion, the researcher will then seek its evaluation with reference to all the other elements in the total job situation with the aim of putting each element into perspective. However, in the attitude survey, comparison will be made between

respondents obtained from the spinning plant and respondents (solely sewing-machine operators) obtained from a garment factory. The aim is to detect any differences in attitudes toward their jobs based on different job content.

Summary

The technological factors involved in assembly-line work have both direct and indirect effects on the worker's job satisfaction. They may affect her directly through the immediate job and indirectly through the social structure of the plant. But more important, is to know how the worker herself rates her immediate job content within the total picture of job elements.

1.3 Research Methodology

Due to the limitation of time, much to the regret of the researcher, this study cannot be carried out on a large-scale level. As this is only a graduation exercise with limited time frame, the researcher has to narrow down her study to one factory from which a sample of workers were chosen and a detailed study carried out. However, though initially the aim was to conduct the study based on only one factory, due to historical and cultural factors, the composition of the female production workers in that chosen factory is such that it will affect the researcher's intended sample of respondents. Therefore, the researcher was left with no choice but to get the other 50 per cent of her respondents from another factory.

To be specific, the researcher got her respondents from two factories; one, a spinning plant and the other, a garment factory, both being subsidiary companies of a fully vertically integrated textile manufacturing Group with operations from spinning to garment make-up.

However, discussion involving the management will be based mainly on the data obtained from the spinning plant. This is because information obtained from this factory is more complete since the researcher was able to obtain the management's permission to conduct a case-study of the factory. The role of the garment factory is minimal, only to the extent that 50 per cent of the respondents were derived from there but the actually interviewing of the respondents were done at their respective homes and not through any formal channels.

a) Choice of factory

The factory was chosen due to its accessibility. Its proximity to the researcher's home helps to save time, transport and accomodation problems. Moreover, it is the first textile factory that agreed to help materialize the researcher's aim even though her initial application to work as one of its production workers was rejected.

In addition, the factory is said to be one of the most modern spinning mills in Southeast Asia,[11] incorporating the latest in technology. This technological aspect is important for our inquiry. As such it is a suitable choice for this exercise.

b) Research Design

As mentioned above, few studies have been done on textile workers. In such circumstance of problems about which little knowledge is available, the purpose of the researcher is to gain familiarity with the phenomenon or to achieve new insights into it. Thus, the research design must be flexible enough to permit the consideration of many different aspects of a phenomenon. Taking this into account, it is therefore considered best to conduct an exploratory study. This is also done in the hope that the experience obtained will be helpful in formulating relevant hypotheses for more definitive investigation in future. As such, a case-study was chosen for this exercise. As this method is central to the insistence that the labour process be studied with a deep concern for all aspects of the workers' involvement in the productive system that is providing them with employment, it serves as an opportunity for indepth analysis of the problems that confront female textile workers.

Furthermore, case-study methodology has been the classic method employed in studying industrial organization since its earliest days. Even though there has been much debate about whether it is possible to generalize on the basis of data derived from one case, this can be categorized as an ideographic approach which uses insights gained from the study of a single case to generate understanding of the whole. The significance of the case-study is such that; for

a researcher to produce a general theory from a detailed case-study, she is required to understand the total pattern binding the data together. Theoretically, the same pattern of general principles would emerge whichever case was chosen. As such, be selecting the spinning plant as a case-study and by viewing it critically, one is actually viewing a mirror image of the general problems faced by workers in the textile industry.

c) Sampling

In the case of the spinning factory, the criteria of the chosen sample is that of non-probability sampling in the form of accidental sample. In such cases, one simply reaches out and takes the cases that are at hand, continuing the process until the sample reaches the designated size. This method was adopted because the researcher was not allowed to interview the workers during their working hours. For a better understanding, note that the choice of respondents was as stated below:

Table 1.4 Sample of Respondents

Sex	Race	Factory	Place of residence	No. of respondents
Females	Malay	Spinning	Hostelites	30
	Chinese	Garment	Locals	30

Since interviewing was not allowed during working hours in the case of the production workers, it was therefore agreed that the researcher should interview the hostelites. In this way, it is more convenient because the hostel provided for the workers was situated just behind the factory plant itself. Moreover, it provides a better, more pleasant and a more informal environment to carry out the interviews. Since there are three working shifts, at any time of the day, there will be workers in the hostels provided. But depending on their shift work, at certain hours of the day, some will be sleeping, cooking, sewing, washing etc. As such, the researcher was left with no choice but to get whoever was available during her visits. This accounts for the criteria of the chosen sample in the spinning plant.

As for the other 50 per cent of the respondents obtained from a garment factory, they were interviewed at their respective homes. The method of sampling used in order to get these respondents was the snowball method, generally considered a non-probability sampling technique. This method of sampling was conducted in stages. In the first stage, a few persons having the requisite characteristics were identified and interviewed. These respondents were then used as informants to identify others who qualify for inclusion in the sample. The second stage involves interviewing these respondents, who in turn lead to still more persons who can be interviewed in the third stage and so on. The term "snowball" itself stems from the analogy of a snowball, which begins small but becomes bigger and bigger as it rolls downhill.

However, in certain cases, for indepth interviews, purposive sampling was carried out whereby the researcher used her own judgement about which respondents to choose, and, picked only those who best meet the purpose of the study. Usually, the researcher will pick those who are sociable and show enthusiasm in helping the researcher with her work.

l) Methods of Collecting Data

The researcher concentrated on two main methods of data collecting. Of the more important is the questionaire interviews which could be easily coded and subject to analysis. These were administered solely to the production workers.

On the other hand, interviews were also used on the part of the Management. Interviews carried out were either formal or informal, depending on the situation. However, indepth informal interviews were also carried out among the respondents at their respective homes, especially for those from the garment factory. Other methods used were observations, especially in those few days that the researcher was allowed into the factory; informants and certain documents obtained from the Ministry of Trade and Industry, as well as the Group's Annual Report obtained from the University of Malaya's main library.

Table 1.5 Methods of Collecting Data

Methods of Data-collecting	Respondents (Target of study)	Types of information required
1. Questionaire Interviews	Production-line workers	Age, race, marital status, family background, educational level, monthly expenditure, work aspects and unionism.
2. Interviews a) Formal	Management staff	Workers' wages, factory rules, technology used in the production process, fringe benefits etc.
b) Informal	Production-line workers, management staff, union members	personal opinions, experiences and other issues related to the study.
3. Observations	Production process, physical environment of the factory, interaction among the workers.	worker's immediate job content, working conditions, working relations.
4. Informant	Workers, wage clerks, supervisors, plant engineer	production process; workers' behavior, attitudes etc; pay, working hours, etc.
5. Documents	Annual Reports; Company's Accounts (obtained from Registrar of Companies) Company's 21st Anniversary publication.	capital, shares; investments; histerical backgrounds; activities carried out.

1) Questionaire Interviews

Taking into consideration the educational level of factory workers in general, an interview with a questionaire was considered to be more effective in obtaining the required information. Also, it gives the researcher the chance to explain uncertainties about certain questions and also to assess the knowledge and interest of the respondents besides building up rapport with the respondents themselves.

Originally, the questionaires were prepared in Bahasa Malaysia. In cases where the respondents are Chinese, the researcher will have to translate them into a Chinese dialect understood by the respondent concerned or Mandarin. As for the Malay respondents, there are not much problems since the researcher is conversant in Bahasa Malaysia.

In the given questionaire, there are both "closed" and "open-ended" questions. The "close-ended" questions are applied to questions meant for securing factual information (age, education, membership) and for eliciting expressions of opinion about issues on which people hold clear opinions. This is because they are considered more efficient where the possible alternative replies are known, limited in number and clear cut and therefore are more appropriate to use. However, for questions that merely raise an issue, when the relevant dimensions are not known or when the interest of the research lies in the exploration of a process or of the individual's formulation of an issue, "open-ended" questions that do not

provide or suggest any structure for the respondent's reply were used. The aim is to give the respondents the opportunity to answer in their own terms and in their own frames of reference. As such, a combination of "open" and "closed-ended" questions were administered in the questionaire.

On the questionaire interview approach itself, in the case of the spinning plant, the Management fixed the date for the researcher to interview the workers (hostelites) at the hostel. The researcher was given three days to complete her interviewing. Usually, the researcher can only manage about ten workers a day (from morning 10.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. - minus (lunch hours). It was time-consuming because the workers were interviewed individually and also the researcher would first like to build rapport with the respondents. As such, initially, the researcher will reveal her true identify and purpose of being there. This is to ease away whatever tension they might have felt when they were "summoned" by the hostel warden to the rest room where the researcher was allowed to conduct her interviews. In the process of interviewing, indepth interviews were also carried out especially among the senior workers, who generally, are more knowledgeable about their work and of the factory. Generally, the respondents were very helpful. A total of 30 respondents were interviewed from this spinning factory.

For respondents obtained from the garment factory, they were interviewed at their respective homes or during lunch hours, outside their factory. By this, the researcher hoped to create

a more relaxed atmosphere which was important in order for the respondents to talk freely. Moreover, indepth interviews could easily be carried out at the same time.

Questionaires were administered to 60 respondents altogether. It took about one and a half month to achieve the target, beginning from April the first. The work took some time to finish because 50 per cent of the respondents were interviewed at home and this could be done only after working hours. The major advantage of using structured questionaire is that it produces systematic data obtained from observations and indepth interviews.

2) Interviews

According to Denzin (1970, p. 195), "an interview is only face to face conversational exchange where one person elicits information from another".

Two types of interview were conducted; formal and informal interview. Formal interviews were conducted among the Management staff such as Plant Engineer, Personnel Officer, Plant Manager etc. The researcher took the opportunity to ask them a few questions which had been pre-determined. Normally, in the process of formal interviewing, personal opinions were sought too.

Informal interviews were conducted among workers as well as management staff like Clerks, Supervisors etc. Most of these informal interviews were conducted outside the factory, either at their respective homes or at a meeting place which

had been pre-determined.

Apart from gathering factual information through formal interviews, indepth informal interviews were used especially for revealing information about complex, emotionally laden subjects or for probing the sentiments that may underlie an expressed opinion. Taking advantage of the fact that people enjoy talking to others who are friendly and who are interested in what they think, the researcher usually carried out indepth interviews among workers interviewed at home. Specifically, the interview method has an additional advantage whereby it gives the initiator a far better opportunity to gauge the truthfulness or other qualities of his informant or respondent than when she has to rely on other sources. However, if a verbal report is to be accepted at face value, it must be elicited in circumstances that encourage the greatest possible freedom and honesty of expression. This is one reason why indepth interviews were always carried out outside the factory gate.

The limitation of this method is that not only might people be reluctant to report openly their beliefs, beelings, motivations, plans and so on, but some might be unable to do so. As psycho-analysts have pointed out, we are not aware of many of our important beliefs and motivations and hence cannot report them.

3) Observations

Observational technique was used as another source of information. It was used as an attempt to summarize, systematize and simplify the representation of an event or situation rather than to provide an exact reproduction of it. As such, it was used especially in understanding the production process as the researcher was brought around the Plant. Explanations were given and questions asked in the process of observing. The researcher also got to observe the condition of the factory, the work done by the workers in each section, their positioning etc. Random observation was used to describe the physical environment within the factory premises as well as the condition around the hostel ground. This technique was also used to describe the interaction pattern among the workers as well as between workers and Management. The advantage of this method is that you get to see the fact of the elements instead of relying on verbal reports alone.

4) Informants

Frank and Ruth Young found that the use of key informants were most reliable and effective "when the information concerns directly observable phenomena such as physical properties or stable institutions in the community and in matters requiring little evaluation or inference". (Young & Young, 1961 : 148).

Based on such findings, the researcher took up this method

in her research survey to inquire informations such as "Is there a clinic in the factory premise?" or "Do you have a trade union in your factory?" etc. The researcher's informants were mostly persons who occupy specialized positions in the factory, such as the Plant Engineer, the Personnel Officer and the "penyelia asrama". However, this method was also used to gether additional information about certain topics which only persons in specialized positions knew - such as Labour Day celebrations, union activities, etc. This method is advantageous in the sense that more data can be gathered from the informants to supplement those obtained through other various channels.

5) Secondary sources

For high reliability, the researcher made use of selected governmental data such as census reports, economic reports and reports of labour force survey obtained from Department of Statistics; also, reports submitted to Ministry of Trade and Industry such as Annual Reports, Accounts Reports etc., for quantifiable information. Other secondary sources used were newsletters, company's anniversary publication, information booklets from MIDA etc.

The major advantage of secondary analysis is the enormous saving in time and money. Also, it is useful to verify findings already obtained from primary research by the researcher. By turning to sources already containing relevant informa-

tion, the verification process is more rapidly enhanced.

1.4 Problems and Limitations of Research

Having decided to study one factory in depth, the researcher's first problem was to find a suitable factory and secure permission from the Management. It has been noted that big companies are particularly sensitive, unwelcoming the investigation by outsiders. The researcher personally has few experience with top management firms, but given the nature of business, the sensitivity of issues such as special technology, financing, profits and labour, it is not surprising that most firms are sensitive to observation by outsiders. Moreover, the identification of the researcher with the university does not necessarily provide a blanket guarantee of "objectivity". In the final instance, results will be published and available to most people.

Talking from previous experience, the researcher is doubtful that an outsider can gain admission into any established organization requesting help and co-operation without some kind of introduction from someone already inside the organization. However, even though the researcher has such means, she decided to use her own effort first. With luck, she got her first choice factory on her first attempt after negotiating with the Management. Though acceptance by the Company was a smooth process, information concerning the Management, especially where

statistics were concerned, were hard to come by. However, information concerning the production process and facilities provided were immediately entertained. Anyway, the Company was well-established in Malaysia and by accepting this study, the Management would gain an indepth report of the Company since the researcher is obliged to submit a copy of her graduation exercise to the Company on completion. Apart from this, there were no other conditions except that the researcher should not reveal the name of the Company in her writing.

The researcher was faced with the dilemma when it comes to choosing an appropriate method of data collection. On the one hand, the researcher was tempted to work "in cognito" in the factory, using the participant observation method. But by using such method, the researcher might not be able to gain access to information concerning the Management. In one sense, there is no better way to get to know the operations of a factory and the feelings of its employees than by participating as one of them.[12] But this method prevents interaction on non-hierarchical terms, with the Management. Either way, a wealth of data in one area is gained at the expense of data in another.

From the researcher's literature review, it was found that in the year 1981, an undergraduate did her graduation exercise based on a textile factory in Penang. The method used was incognito participation observation. As such, she did not get the Management's co-operation. Therefore, for this study, the researcher decided to get the help of the management in order

to supplement the data obtained from the previous study mentioned above. This is one of the reasons why participant observations was not chosen. Moreover, the researcher's request to work in the factory was turned down. Then, there is the question of the ethics involved if the researcher were to work incognito without telling the Management about it.

However, gaining admission through the Management does not exactly solve the ethical dilemmas either. The common accusation is that the researcher is some sort of a management spy. In this case, the researcher had to explain her research topic and the fact that she was a third year student from a local university to all concerned. To a certain extent, my "student" identify may have given me claim to neutrality. But the potential for suspicion was heightened by the fact that I had come into the factory by a management channel and did not request "permission" from the workers, as represented by the union.

On the other hand, it might be true that the researcher can never be a neutral agent in this context. In her own conscience, she reflects that she could perhaps have been classified as a management spy in the sense that, although she was not taking money from the Company nor carrying out research directed to any specific aim of theirs, the underlying reason why the Management has accepted her in the first place was probably with the very pragmatic aim of finding out more about the workforce as only an outsider could view it. Moreover, the researcher was obligated to give a copy of her research findings to

the Management, who could have made use of the findings to get more out of the workforce. To balance this state of fairness and neutrality, maybe the researcher should give a copy to the union for the workers to have access as well. But because of the unequal power dimension inherent in the management-labour relationship, the mere provision of the same information to both parties would not achieve a stage of equality in terms of the way in which that information maybe handled.[13]

The researcher also feels a deep obligation to the workers (her respondents) not only because of their co-operation but more in the sense that they provided the research data, which is her academic "capital", without which it is impossible for her to get her degree and which, despite her promises to protect their anonymity, they have no subsequent control over. In other words, they had no guarantee as to how the researcher would ultimately use that information or how it may be used by others. This, also explained why there were times when the researcher encountered some difficulties extracting information or the truth from her respondents. Not surprisingly, there were even those who refused to be interviewed at all. Having been aware of this, hence, to claim absolute objectivity and neutrality simply because one is conducting an academic research is unrealistic.

On the other hand, the researcher is also obligated to the Management in the sense that they consented to the research and allowed to be interviewed during working hours, which may

have disrupted their work. The researcher is also grateful to the amount of freedom which the Management granted her. However, the Management, unlike the workers, were much more able to protect their interest vis-a-vis the type of information the researcher had access too. For example, the researcher had no access to documents relating to financial matters, not even the Company's Annual Report to shareholders. Even though the latter information was peripheral to her study but whenever the researcher posed the questions, the confidential atmosphere heightened.

Throughout the duration when the researcher was inside the factory ground, all sorts of practical dilemmas arose and were compounded by the fact that we are living in a multi-racial society. Being of a different race than the majority of the workers, especially in the spinning factory, the researcher cannot pretend that all her respondents trusted her and were open with her entirely. On the other hand, being able to speak fluent Bahasa Malaysia was an advantage in establishing rapport with them. Also, because of the halal-haram issue, the factory canteen was segregated with different caterers attending to the needs of the different races, mainly the Chinese and the Malays. Often than not, the researcher finds herself in a dilemma as to where to lunch. Either way, she can gather information informally while eating. Also, there would be times when the researcher was seen talking to members of the Management in the canteen when some workers she had interviewed would pass by and greeted

her. The researcher would not be surprised if the workers were wondering what she was talking about with members from the Management. Therefore, the researcher does not pretend that all people at all levels of the organization trusted her and were open with her entirely. But, on the surface, they all made a good show of ignoring the ambiguities of the researcher's position. However, the researcher has no doubts that handling the class dimension of workers versus Management was easier than coping with rivalries between the ethnic groupings, Malay, Chinese and Indians.

The methods used in this study has its problem and limitations too. The observational method employed depends to a great extent on the subjective judgements of the observers. Therefore, the problem of reliability is still questionable. Moreover, the researcher has no co-observers to help her assess the reliability of her observations. For example, when the researcher has to assess the conditions inside the factory - whether it is too hot or too noisy - there is no way she can make a comparison of the conditions in this particular factory with others since this is the first time the researcher has been inside a spinning factory. As such, her idea that the place is too hot and too noisy is quite relative in the sense that she might base her comparison with the conditions, e.g., inside an office or home, since she has no other previous experience in similar factories. Thus, the reliability of her assessment is still questionable. Due to the fact that ours is a multi-racial society, most

researchers tend to study only one race. However, due to unforeseen circumstances such as the concentration of one particular race in a particular type of factory,[14] the researcher having summed up the whole situation is more interested to take the middle path of carrying out a comparative study between the two main races obtainable in this vertically integrated textile company, noticing any similarities or differences.

Therefore, the initial plan to study only one race was abandoned.

Where interviews were concerned, the researcher did not fact any communication problems when the repondent knew how to converse in Bahasa Malaysia, English or anyone of the more popular local dialect in the south, i.e., Hokkien or Teochew. But in cases whereby the respondent knows only Mandarin or any other dialect other than the two mentioned above, the researcher was faced with communication problems. As such, there is no guarantee that the actual meaning of the question could not be slightly changed.

Also based on the respondent's level of education and interests, ignorance on the part of the respondents concerning certain issues posed as a limiting factor to the study too. For example, some of the respondents do not know for sure, the role of a trade union.

The sample obtained by the researcher also left much to be desired. Due to circumstances that cannot be avoided, the researcher has to make do with the use of accidental sample where one simply reaches out and takes the cases that are at

hand, continuing the process until the sample reaches the designated size. This is especially so in the case of the respondents obtained from the spinning factory. The possibility of being picked depends on whether they are free from duties such as shift work, cooking, washing, etc., at the time when the researcher conducts her interviews. On the other hand, those respondents interviewed at home were those that the researcher obtained through snowball sampling, that is, by a variety of channels contact. As such, it cannot be considered as a probability sample either. Therefore, there is no way of evaluating the biases introduced in such samples and the researcher can only hope that she is not being too grossly misled.

Moreover, the sample which consists of 60 respondents altogether, was too small a sample to be considered a good and accurate representation of the population of production-line workers. In addition, the study was limited to just one area. As such, one cannot safely generalize from these findings. Moreover, this is an exploratory study, since not much has been done in this area. Thus, one cannot make comparisons with previous studies.

Chapter Notes

1. Fourth Malaysia Plan (1981-85). The following discussion is based mainly on the Fourth Malaysia Plan (1981-85).
2. The main objective of the New Economic Policy adopted in 1971 and is designed to span across two decades until 1990, is to achieve national unity through a two-pronged development strategy:

   (i) eradicating poverty by raising income levels and increasing employment opportunities for all Malaysians

   and (ii) restructuring society so as to reduce the economic imbalances that exist among the various races and eventually eliminate the identification of race with economic function.

   This process involves the modernization of rural life, a rapid and balanced growth of urban activities and the creation of a Malay commercial and industrial community in all categories and at all levels of operation, so that Malays and other indegeneous people will become full partners in all aspects of the economic life of the nation.
3. The beginning of the decade of the 70's coincided with the launching of the New Economic Policy (NEP). With the New Economic Policy the manufacturing sector was accorded a more significant role and was seen as a major means of achieving the twin objectives of the NEP. In line with this objective the industrial development policies formulated

and adopted since the early 70's apart from emphasizing the growth of the manufacturing sector also called for more active participation in industrial activities by the Bumiputra community and a more equitable regional distribution of income and employment. (Labour & Manpower Report, 1980, p. 75-76).

4. See Hing Ai Yun, "Women and Work in West Malaysia", Journal of Contemporary Asia, pp. 209-210.
5. Labour and Manpower Report 1980, (1981), Ministry of Labour and Manpower, Kuala Lumpur, pp. 77.
6. Marx, K., Capital I, Everyman's Library, London, 1930, p. 1305.
7. In 1981, the composition of the population was 54 per cent Malay, 35 per cent Chinese, 10 per cent Indian and 1 per cent Others; whereas in 1957 the figures were 50 per cent, 37 per cent, 11 per cent and 2 per cent Others. Where in 1957, 47 per cent of Malays were found in subsistence agriculture and fishing sector, 38 per cent in the plantations and only 13 per cent were in the services (mainly government sector); by 1979, 46 per cent of them were in agricultural activities (including fishing and plantations), 24 per cent were in industries and 30 per cent were in the services. The Chinese on the other hand were concentrated in commerce (17 per cent), manufacturing (12 per cent), the plantations (27 per cent) and services (14 per cent) in 1957. By 1979, 21 per cent of them were found in the agricultural sector (including fishing and plantations), 41 per cent in industries and 39 per

cent in the services. (1957 Population of Census, Report No. 14; Economic Report 1982/83 (1982) KL; and Report of the Labour Force Survey, 1979).

8. See Cham, B.N.,"Colonialism and Communalism in Malaysia", Journal of Contemporary Asia, Vol. 1-7, No. 2, 1977.
9. See the studies by Fatimah Daud (1979); Lim Pin Loon (1981).
10. Viteles, M.S., "The Role of Industrial Psychology in Defending the Future of America", Ann. Amer. Anad. Pol. Soc. Science, 1941 (July) 216, 156-62.
11. "Jewel of Johore" in Textile Asia, August 1977.
12. See Studies by Fatimah Daud (1979); Lim Pin Loon (1981); Lim Kah Cheng (1979).
13. See the general discussion on the protection of subjects in fieldwork by Bond (1978) and Cassel (1978). In research specifically directed towards industry, the workers' interest may be threatened on two accounts: firstly, relating to the conditions of their labour, management may learn from the study of areas where the organization of production can be changed to increase productivity or profitability. It is unlikely that these changes would be viewed by the workers as being in their interest. Secondly, relating to the individual career interests of workers, although data may be written up to preserve the anonymity of individuals to outsiders by the mere fact of changing names. Hence promotions and other benefits maybe affected.
14. The researcher found that the composition of the production

workers in this vertically integrated textile company is such that the Malays were concentrated in the spinning factory whereas majority of the Chinese workers were found in the garment factory. When opinions were sought as to why such a pattern exists, the researcher obtained answers such as it depends on the location of the factory (most of the Malays are staying in rural areas); the Chinese women are basically more interested in the pay since those who work in factories are really those who need to work in order to supplement the family's income and as such, are prone to look for jobs with higher opportunity for increase pay (in the garment section, wages are paid based on piece-rate system), unlike their Malay counterparts who are mostly singles and work in order to pass away their time.

CHAPTER TWO: THE FACTORY

Introduction

In order to understand the present existence of SFX,[1] a brief account of its historical set-up will first be presented. This will then be followed by a general description of the factory, its physical environment, capital and ownership as well as the power structure involved. However, the focus of interest in this chapter is the production process described through the sociological point of view. This is to enable us to define the characteristics of the Plant operations in SFX and later, to relate the kind of technology used to the attitude of the workers towards their immediate job in the subsequent chapter. The information obtained for this chapter was derived from the Group's Annual Reports obtained from the University of Malaya's main library, the Group's 21st Anniversary Report, SFX's Accounts Report submitted to the Registrar of Companies, interviews conducted among Management's staff and the researcher's own observations.

2.1 A Brief Historical Set-up of SFX

The factory in which this case-study was conducted is at present, actually part of a vertically integrated textile Company in Malaysia. The textile interests of this particular Group of Textile Industries comprise the parent company and three other subsidiary companies of which SFX, the spinning factory under study, is one of them. Together, they make-up a fully integrated

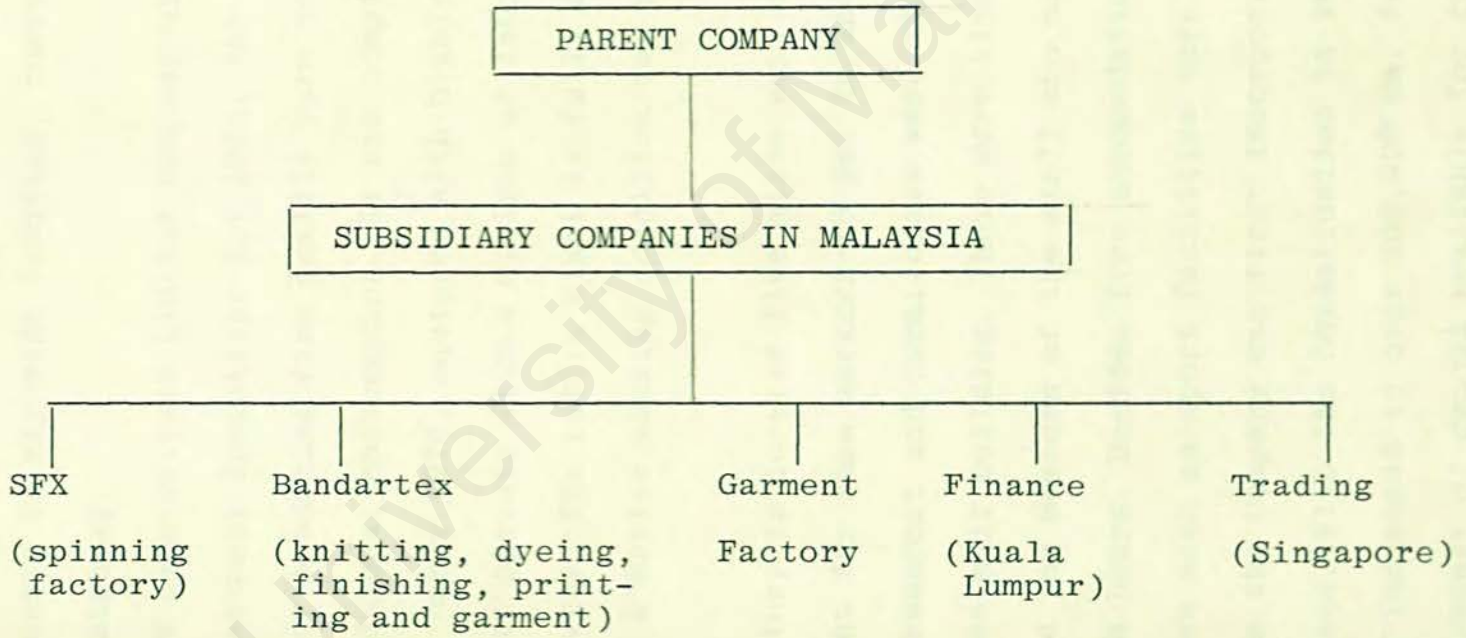
textile manufacturing complex with operations in spinning, knitting, dyeing, finishing, printing and garment make-up. (see Figure 2.1).

There are actually two phases in the historical set-up of SFX. Initially, the first phase, conveniently called SFX (1) was set up in 1970 at the third milestone on Jalan Kluang, Batu Pahat. Due to increasing demand, a phase two expansion, SFX(II) was launched in 1976 at the fifth milestone, also on Jalan Kluang, Batu Pahat. However, in 1979, considering the advantages of consolidating the spinning activities of the Group into one Company, the spinning operations at the SFX(I) and SFX(II) were consolidated under one factory, i.e. SFX, the present consolidated spinning factory under study. Thus, at the time the researcher embarked on her research, the consolidation of the two spinning plants belonging to the Group had already taken place. As such, unless states, all other information given on SFX, such as the description of the Plant, the power structure and the production process were based solely on the present consolidated SFX except on the topic on capitalization and ownership discussed in this chapter.

2.1 General Description of SFX

The factory is located on a site outside Batu Pahat, Southwest of Johore, at the fifth milestone on Jalan Kluang, Batu Pahat. It lies on the left side of the highway as one leaves town, bound for Johor Bahru.

Figure 2.1: The Structure of SFX in Relation with Other Branches in the Group



The single storey spinning mill was built on a 15 acre-site with an initial built-up area of over 100,000 sq. feet. The 15 acre-site has a fairly wide frontage, running back a long way from the highway.

Set up in 1976 as a Private Limited Company with pioneer status under the Investment Incentives Act 1968, the spinning Plant was planned for producing fine quality yarn and sewing thread for export and local consumption. It was completed for full production in early 1976, equipped with highly automated facilities aimed to operate with a minimum of labour and to enjoy high productivity. The entire Plant is fully air-conditioned which creates a better working condition for production-line workers.

Since the factory is located five miles away from town, making it inconvenient for some workers to get to and from their homes, free transport and dormitories were also provided at the rear of the mill building. There were also four living units provided for members of the staff who might have to be on hand at odd hours. Besides free accomodation and transport, other amenities such as sport facilities were also provided.

Since the time the Company was first incorporated, changes have taken place. With the consolidation in 1979, the built-up area has been increased to over 200,000 sq. feet with still a considerable amount of ground available for future development. However, it is interesting to note that the site has so far been utilised with a care for local susceptibilities - a tree con-

sidered sacred by local residents is still growing sturdy by one wall of the building and has a small joss temple at its foot for interested passing worshippers.

Today, the Group sells 45 per cent and 30 per cent of its total yarn production to the domestic and export markets respectively, with the balance taken up by its own knitting factory. The types of yarn manufactured include

1. 100% combed cotton
2. Spun Rayon
3. Blended Polynosic Cotton
4. Blended Polyester Cotton
5. Blended Polyester Rayon
6. Spun Polyester
7. Open End Yarn.

On the other hand, sewing threads marketed are of two types, 100 per cent polyester, in packings ranging from 100 m to 5 000 m depending on the application.

2.3 Physical Environment and Facilities provided in SFX

Viewed from the main road, outside the factory gate, (refer to Table 2.2), one gets the impression that SFX is a nice place to work in. The factory site has a fairly wide frontage, running back a long way from the main road, leaving a wide space before the main buildings of the factory were constructed. It is how this space was built up into a beautiful park that attracts the attention of passer-by. Tarred roads in good conditions lead

the way from the main gate to various blocks of buildings which constitute the various departments, Plants, canteen, etc.

The space in front of the main building of the factory is beautified by a row of planted pine trees and immediately in front and below it, lies a basketball court, a beautifully erected park, a "surau" and a bird park as well as an orchid garden at the far end to the right of the building. A staircase leads the way down to footpath leading to these places. Seats were built around the basketball court. The park was beautified by a artificial fountain and a pond with a small bridge built over it. Plants, trees and shrubs were planted around the park. The "surau" is a small, clean-looking "pondok" built to the left of the main building, near the bird park. The bird park actually consists of a row of cages with birds of different species in them. A gardener is in-charge of keeping the park in good condition. In fact, the whole scene in front of the factory is so pleasing to the eye besides creating a healthy environment for the workers. This is a striking difference compared to some of the other factories nearby.

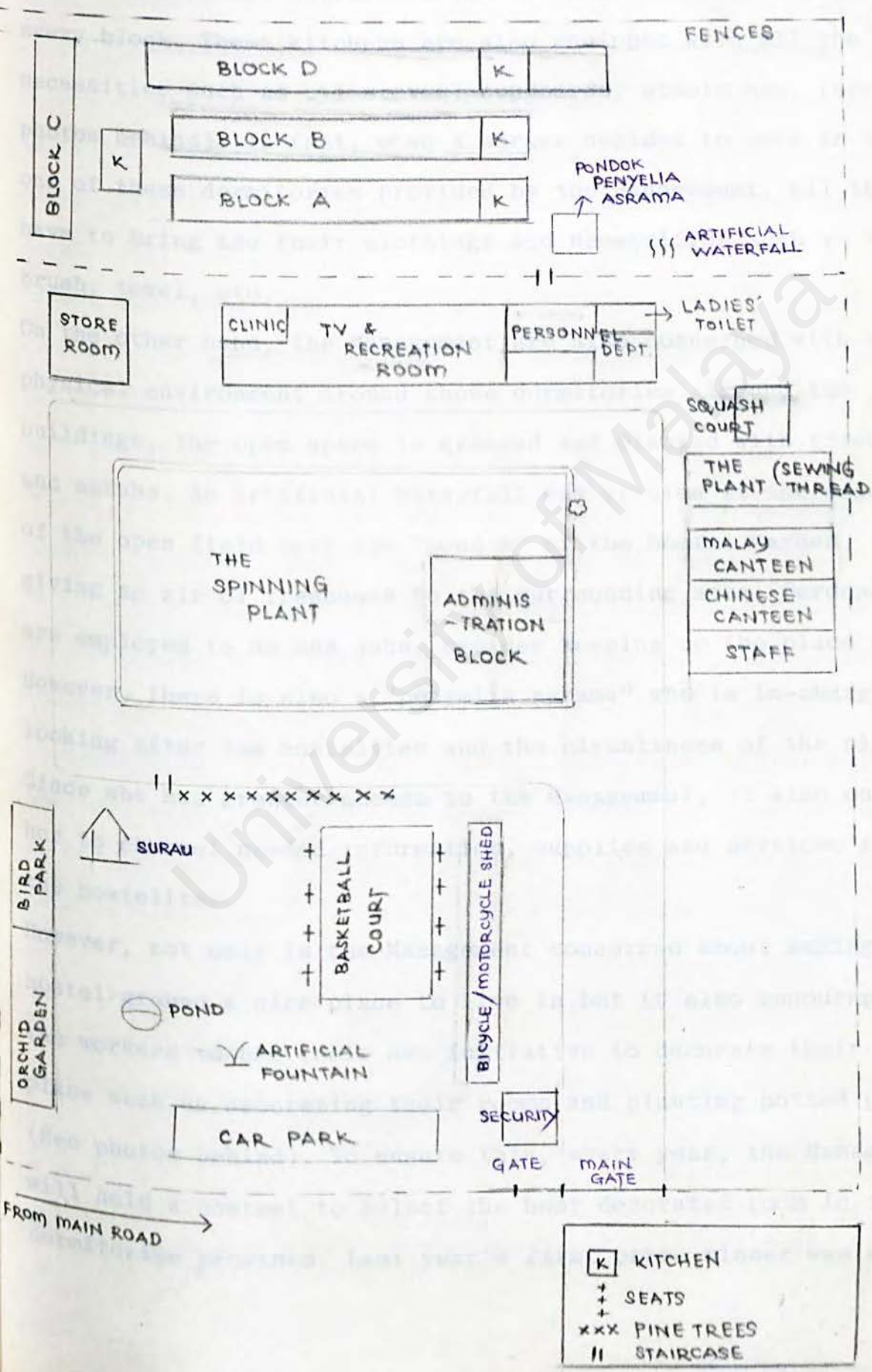
As the tarred road leads in from the main gate, the main building of the factory which constitute the administration block as well as the spinning plant, can be seen on its right and the canteen on its left. The canteen in this factory is regregated to take account of dietary rules (multi-racial workers). Just behind the canteen is the sewing thread Plant, opposite which

is a big tree considered sacred by local residents with a small joss temple at its foot for passing worshippers. At the end of the tarred road there is another block of building consisting of the Personnel Department office, a co-operative sundry shop and a sports and TV room, as well as a clinic right at the left corner of the building. There is also a storeroom at the far end to the left of the spinning plant. Therefore living at the mill is rather like being located in a park. Around the buildings, the open space is grassed and around the fence is the natural forest cover, giving an air of freshness to the surrounding environment. The whole place is clean-looking and the buildings nicely painted.

Not only is the physical environment around the factory nice and clean-looking but the dormitories which have been provided at the rear of the mill building are well-taken care of too. There are altogether four blocks (A, B, C, D) of buildings, each block accomodating different number of rooms. There are 9 rooms in Block A; 11 rooms in Block B, 12 rooms in Block C and 18 rooms in Block D, excluding the kitchen. Altogether, there are 50 rooms provided. Each room can accomodate a maximum of six persons, which is made possible because of shift work. As such, altogether, the dormitories provided can accomodate a maximum of 300 workers. At the time when the researcher carried out her survey, there were only about 280 workers staying at the dormitories provided.

The rooms provided in these dormitories are furnished with basic necessities such as cupboards and mattresses. As for cooking,

FIG.2.2 A ROUGH PLAN OF SFX



the hostelites are allowed to use the kitchens provided for every block. These kitchens are also equipped with all the necessities such as oil stoves, cupboards, stools etc. (see photos behind). In fact, when a worker decided to move in into one of these dormitories provided by the Management, all they have to bring are their clothings and necessities such as tooth-brush, towel, etc.

On the other hand, the Management are also concerned with the physical environment around these dormitories. Around the buildings, the open space is grassed and planted with trees and shrubs. An artificial waterfall was erected at the edge of the open field near the "pondok" of the hostel warden, giving an air of freshness to the surrounding area. Gardeners are employed to do odd jobs, besides keeping up the place clean. However, there is also a "penyelia asrama" who is in-charge of looking after the hostelites and the cleanliness of the place. Since she has greater access to the Management, it also enables her to channel needed information, supplies and services to the hostelites.

However, not only is the Management concerned about making the hostel ground a nice place to live in but it also encourages the workers to use their own initiative to decorate their own place such as decorating their rooms and planting potted plants. (See photos behind). To ensure this, every year, the Management will hold a contest to select the best decorated room in the dormitories provided. Last year's first prize winner was shown

in Photo No. 5. On the whole, the initiative of the hostelites is good. Some are even creative enough to use cut-out calender papers to make bead-like paper rolls to decorate the entrance to their room. And, in an effort to economize, they make use of empty tins cut into half, painted them and turned them into a flower pot.

A rest room-cum-library is also provided in Block A. The room is furnished with a set of sofa, a sewing machine, and a small library consisting of magazines like Wanita, URTV (Utusan Radio dan Talivisyen), etc. and newspapers. Every one a week they have a teacher from KEMAS hired by the Management to give sewing classes, cooking classes or even dancing classes.

In an effort to keep the place clean, cleanliness campaign posters were put up at various places such as in the kitchens and around the "pondok penyelia asrama".

In conclusion, as can be seen from the physical environment and the facilities provided, the Management has put in a lot of effort in order to provide a healthy working environment for its workers.

2.4 Capitalization and Ownership

This section aims to trace the general growth of the factory in terms of capitalization and ownership from its initial set-up until its present existence.

The data gathered for this section was derived from the Group's

Annual Report from 1976-1982, obtained from the University of Malaya main library and SFX's Accounts Reports (1978-80) submitted to the Registrar of Companies.

Incorporated on 12th March, 1970, production began in its first phase factory, SFX (I), on the 1st of February, 1974, with an initial paid-up capital of M$2 million and 98 employees. In its first year of working, it showed sales of M$2.9 million, contributing a profit of M$553,000 to the Group. In 1975, sales rose to M$5.6 million and in 1976 to M$10.7 million. With increasing demand, a phase two expansion was launched.

On the new Plant, SFX (II), over M$13 million has been spent on capital expenditure and fixed assets for the expansion. Set up as a Private Limited Company with pioneer status under the Investment Incentives Act 1968, the spinning mill was completed and ready for full production in early 1976. By the end of the year 1976 itself, the Company produced a creditable profit of M$1,234,498 and provides employment to more than 300 people who work on a 3 shifts week day despite the highly competitive and difficult year in 1976. In this particular year, raw cotton prices went up by 50 to 80 per cent over the 1975 prices. For example, East African cotton of medium length fibre which was US 53 cents per lb. in 1975 went up to US 92 cents in 1976, while Sudanese Barakat Cotton from US 65 cents to US 115 cents. But due to the recruitment of qualified and experienced personnel at all levels of management, the Company has the foresight to cover cotton requirement before the substantial price increase.

This forward coverage was really beneficial since yarn price increases cannot catch up with cotton price increases in the short run.

The fact that SFX (II) is performing well leads to the decision of the Group to invest a further M$1.5 million into the Plant, thereby increasing its paid-up capital to M$10 million. This decision was stated in the Chairman's statement in the Group's Annual Report 1976. With this decision implemented in 1977, the Group owned 66.5 per cent of the issued share capital of the Company as compared to 64.1 per cent in 1976.

However, in 1978, the Board resolved to consolidate and combine the spinning activities of the Group of Companies under one factory, based at SFX (II), at the expiration of SFX (II) pioneer status on 31st January, 1979. This decision was taken because of the obvious advantages of consolidating the spinning activities under one factory. To implement this consolidation, the paid-up capital of SFX (II) has been increased to M$16 million in 1979, with the parent company acquiring all the minority shareholdings in SFX (II), thereby converting it into a wholly-owned subsidiary. This acquisition was effected by the issue of 4,016,500 new ordinary shares of $1.00 each of the parent company at par in exchange for an equal number of shares previously held by the minority shareholders of SFX (II). Therefore, it was at this present consolidated spinning factory (SFX), wholly-owned by the Group since 1979, that the researcher carried out her study for this exercise.

With the consolidation, the built-in-area, the Plant, the machinery as well as the production capacity of the spinning factory was increased considerably. Initially, the consolidation of the spinning operations was faced with a slight delay in implementation due largely to a delay in the construction of the new factory building owing generally to the shortage of the building materials in the country. Since then, SFX, the consolidated spinning plant, continue to be an important source of profitability to the Group. This can be seen by referring to the Profit and Loss Accounts for three consecutive years, ended 30th Sept. Notice that the net profit has increased considerably over the three years, 1978, 1979, 1980 respectively. This

Year	Net Profit
1978	M$1,565,269
1979	M$3,262,195
1980	M$3,775,303

is a great improvement compared to the initial profit of $1,234,498 in 1976, its first year of working.

The fact that SFX is performing well even during the general recession in 1976 in the textile industry was attributed, by the Chairman of the Group in his statement to the Group's Annual Report 1977, "to its capable and devoted Management and the fact that the factory has extremely modern and sophisticated machinery which enables the factory to product a very high quality yarn".

Table 2.1

SHARE CAPITAL OF SFX FOR THE YEARS

1978, 1979 AND 1980

(End of year being 30th September of each year)

SHARE CAPITAL	1980	1979	1978
a. Authorized:			
Ordinary shares of $1 each	20,000,000	20,000,000	20,000,000
b. Issued and paid up:			
Ordinary shares of $1 each as 1st Oct.	10,000,000	9,533,500	9,533,500
Issue at par and for cash	-	466,500	466,500
Issue other than for cash	1,200,000	-	-
Bonus issue out of:			
Capital reserve	2,519,013	-	-
Profit unappropriated	280,987		
	2,800,000		
Balance 30th September	14,000,000	10,000,000	10,000,000

Table 2.2 BALANCE SHEET - 30th September, 1980

	1980	1979	1978
SHARE CAPITAL	14,000,000	10,000,000	9,533,500
CAPITAL RESERVE	809,082	-	-
REVENUE RESERVE	6,658,627	4,634,311	2,572,116
TOTAL CAPITAL AND RESERVES	21,467,709	14,634,311	12,105,616
DEFERRED LIABILITIES	2,846,576	1,101,437	2,174,563
	24,314,285	15,735,748	14,280,179
Represented by:			
FIXED ASSETS	19,832,338	12,268,680	13,197,103
TRADE MARK, at cost less amounts written off	5,124	10,248	15,372
CAPITAL WORK-IN-PROGRESS	254,649	1,419,789	-
CURRENT ASSETS			
Stocks	10,543,854	3,350,732	2,777,420
Trade debtors less provision for doubtful debts $196,749 (1979 - $308,827)	5,831,838	4,008,977	3,917,648
Other debtors and prepayments	195,850	218,850	121,434
Amount owing by holding company	-	200,868	1,601,939
Amount owing by a related company	16,411	-	-
Cash and bank balances	112,763	338,474	20,522
Balance carried forward	16,700,716	8,117,355	8,438,963

BALANCE SHEET - Continued

	1980	1979	1978
Balance brought forward	16,700,716	8,117,355	8,438,963
Less:			
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Trade creditors	926,902	914,957	681,819
Trust receipts	1,085,487	183,100	-
Other creditors and accrued liabilities	673,020	389,444	324,428
Amount owing to holding company	2,797,703	-	5,000
Amount owing to a related company	5,463	22,608	115,568
Fixed term loans (secured)	1,255,404	1,073,126	1,011,945
Short term loans (unsecured)	3,404,403	3,012,035	2,878,477
Short term loans (secured)	135,419	-	-
Bank overdrafts (secured)	1,803,312	119,275	1,928,274
Bank overdraft (unsecured)	68,273	-	-
Proposed dividend	350,000	500,000	667,345
	12,505,386	6,214,545	7,612,856
NET CURRENT ASSETS	4,195,330	1,902,810	826,107
EXPENDITURE CARRIED FORWARD, at cost less amounts written off			
Preproduction expenses	26,844	134,221	241,597
	24,314,285	15,735,748	14,280,179

Table 2.3

PROFIT AND LOSS ACCOUNT for the year ended 30th September, 1980

	1980	1979	1978
	$	$	$
TURNOVER	26,488,473	19,782,980	-
OPERATING PROFIT	3,882,679	3,369,571	1,690,035
EXTRAORDINARY ITEM	107,376	107,376	124,766
NET PROFIT	3,775,303	3,262,195	1,565,269
PROFIT UNAPPROPRIATED BROUGHT FORWARD	4,634,311	2,572,116	2,124,192
ADJUSTMENT	(280,987)	-	-
PROFIT AVAILABLE FOR DISTRIBUTION	8,128,627	5,834,311	3,689,461
DIVIDENDS	1,470,000	1,200,000	1,117,345
PROFIT UNAPPROPRIATED	6,658,627	4,634,311	2,572,116

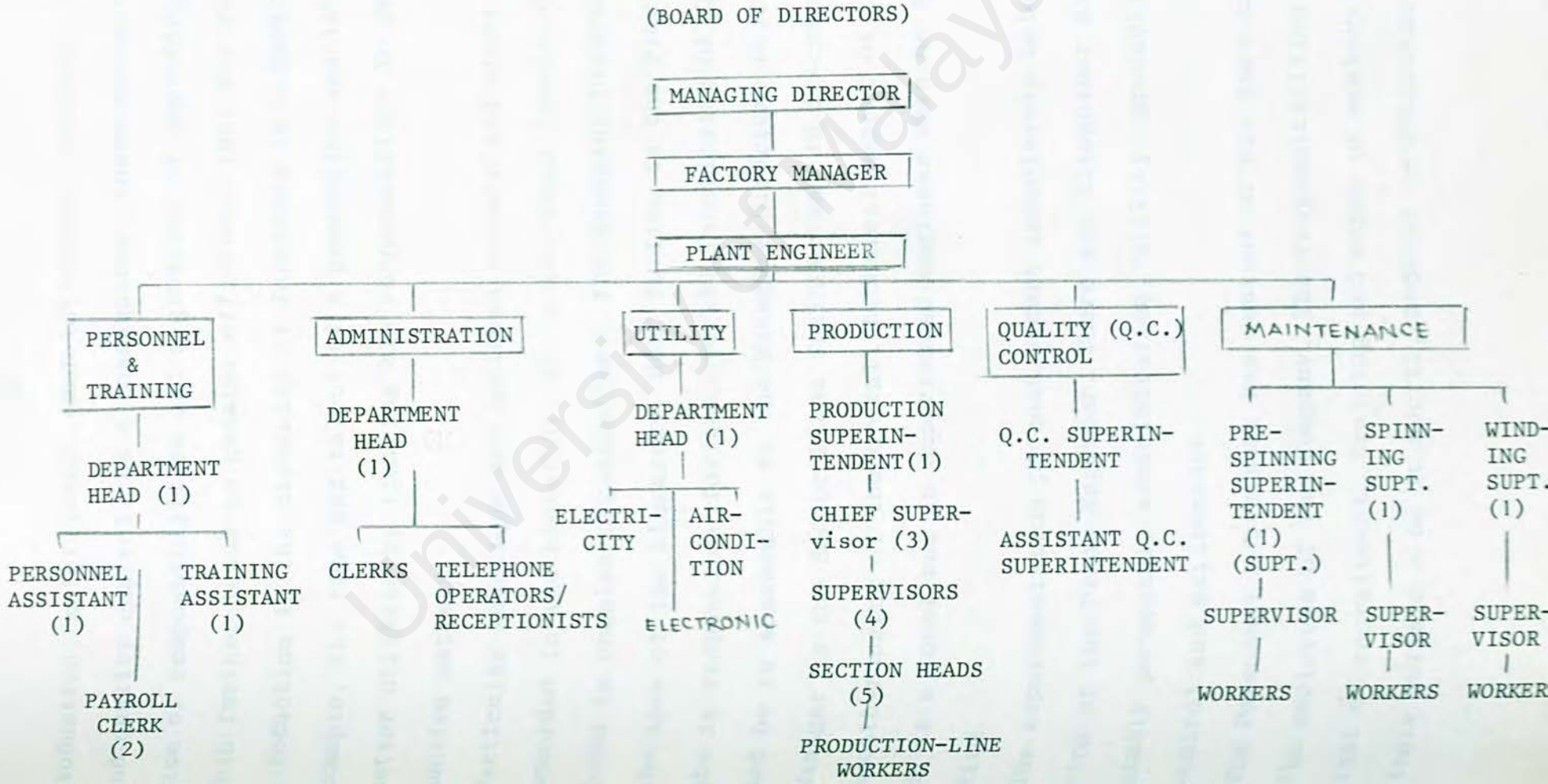
2.5 The Organizational Structure of SFX

This section aims to provide a general picture of the power structure involved in SFX. The data obtained were from interviews carried out among various people in specialized position in the organizational structure of SFX. This information was supplemented by the researcher's library research.

Most organized endeavor is managed by a group ranging in size from a few persons to several thousands. Such groups are generally structured in the form of a hierarchy as a result of formal planning. In SFX, the Management ranks and relates positions and persons in the manner indicated in Figure 2.3. Given a brief overall look, the power structure simultaneously represents a decentralization and centralization in the sense that they are dispersed among the number of assistants necessary to do the job. Proceeding from the bottom to the top of the hierarchy, they are centralized in fewer and fewer numbers of heads until the apex, where the Managing Director is, is reached. All persons in the organization, managerial and non-managerial are required to respond to decisions from this point.

On the other hand, notice that every level in the hierarchy below the apex is departmentalized and each succeeding lower level involves further departmental differentiation. In other words, there is a departmentation process involved in this organizational structure whereby the work of the organization is divided into semi autonomous units or departments. In this case, departmentation is based on primary functions such as

Table 2.3 The Organizational Structure of SFX



production, maintenance, administration, personnel, utility and quality control. As a consequence, there emerged a delineation of responsibilities and a grouping of operating activities. This further leads to greater efficiency that may result from a reduction in the diversity of functions in a department. For example, the time and talent of a production specialist may be better utilized by limiting his responsibility to purely production matters.

Particular functions are assigned to each and every status accorded in the hierarchy. As in the usual levels of authority found in complex organizations, the Managing Director occupies the apex of the hierarchy. Next in line is the Plant Manager, who is responsible for the overall functioning of the factory and he is answerable to the Managing Director. Below the Plant Manager is the Senior Plant Engineer who is in-charge of the smooth-running of the overall technical aspect of the Plant. He is a local and an experienced engineer when he joined the Firm.

The departmentation process occurs immediately below the position of the Plant Engineer. There are altogether six departments, namely personnel, administration, utility, production, quality control and maintenance.

The Personnel Department has control of all that has to do with the employees of the Company. The responsibilities included that of recruitment, training and wages of workers as well as their welfare - be it social, medical or otherwise. The Head

of the Personnel Department is a lady. An obvious reason for this is that majority of the workers are women and as such a lady is considered to be more competent in dealing with their problems. Under the Head of the Personnel Department, there is a Personnel Assistant, a Training Officer and two Payroll Clerks. The Training Officer is in charge of training the new workers with the help of video-viewing as well as explaining the work regulations.

In the Administration Department, there is also a Head of Department, assisted by Clerks and Telephone Operators as well as Receptionists. Their responsibilities cover the overall administration aspect of the factory.

Next, is the Utility Department, with a Department Head in-charge. This department is subdivided into three sections, namely the Electricity, Air-condition and the Electronic section, each with their own responsibilities.

Then there is the Production Department. This department is taken care of by a Production Superintendent, helped by three Chief Supervisor (each in one shift), followed by four Supervisors and five Section Heads. Immediately after these Section Heads are the production-line workers. In each shift, there are about hundred and sixty production-line workers. The Supervisors are responsible for training and advising the workers. They can also facilitate the workers' work for example, by getting tools or materials in short supply or quickly locating a repairman when a machine breaks down. He may also back his own

work group in interdepartmental conflicts and represent them and their cause to the Administration and he may perform special favours such as adjusting the vacation schedule to fit the personal preferences of workers. Since he has greater access to the Management, it also enables him to channel needed information, supplies and services to his subordinates. In addition, they also direct operations by giving instructions and orders and by checking on workers. In order to become a Supervisor, one must have at least an M.C.E. qualification or having enough experience with spinning plant operations.

There is also a Quality Control Department in SFX. The Quality Control Superintendent is in-charge of this department, helped by an Assistant. Below him are a few workers whose work is to ensure that high quality standards are maintained. However, the main aim is not to achieve the highest possible quality but to meet the quality criteria implied by market forces.

Lastly, we have the Maintenance Department in which it is subdivided into three sections, that is, the Pre-Spinning, Spinning, and Winding. Each section is taken care of by a Superintendent, helped by their Supervisors. The main job in this department is that of maintaining the running of the machines in various sections of the Plant.

2.6 The Manufacturing Processes

The purpose of this section is to present an account of the

manufacturing process required by converting raw materials into finished products. However, the aim here is to stress not on the technical aspects but more important, is to define the characteristics in the organization of labour process in SFX. As such, the production process is viewed through the sociological point of view. This is done in order to explore the relation between the work environment of SFX and the production-line workers' satisfaction or dissatisfaction on the jobs in the subsequent chapter.

The data obtained for this section are mainly derived from the researcher's observations when she was brought around the Spinning Plant, supplemented by information provided by the Plant Engineer as well as the researcher's own library research.

Introduction

In SFX, cotton and two types of man-made fibres, polyester and Viscose rayon are used as the basic raw material.[2] The textile products manufactured in this factory are from one single type of fibre or a blend of two or more types of fibres. The four main types of yarns produced are, 100 per cent fully-combed yarn (FC yarn), 100 per cent polyester yarn, polyester-cotton yarn (T/C yarn) and polyester-rayon yarn (T/R yarn). (see Fig. 2.21).

Figure 2.21 Final Products Produced in SFX

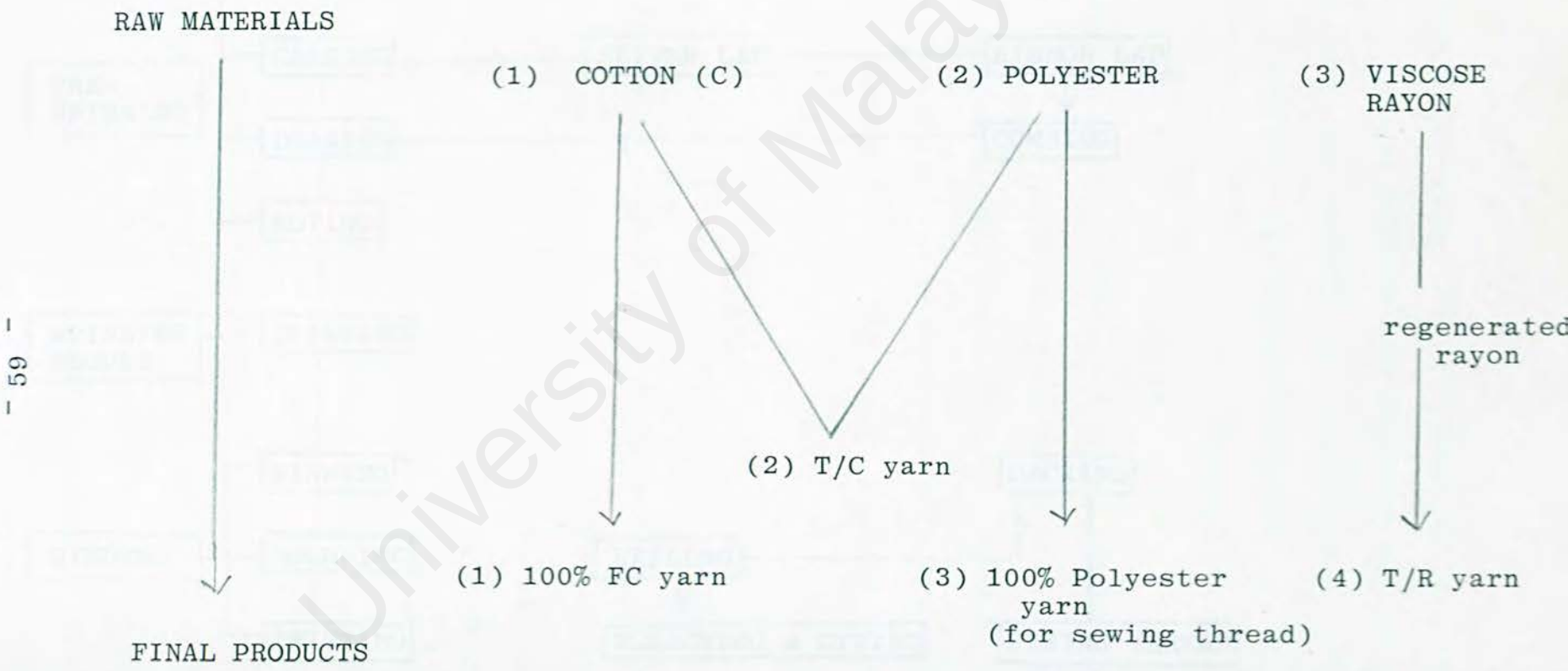
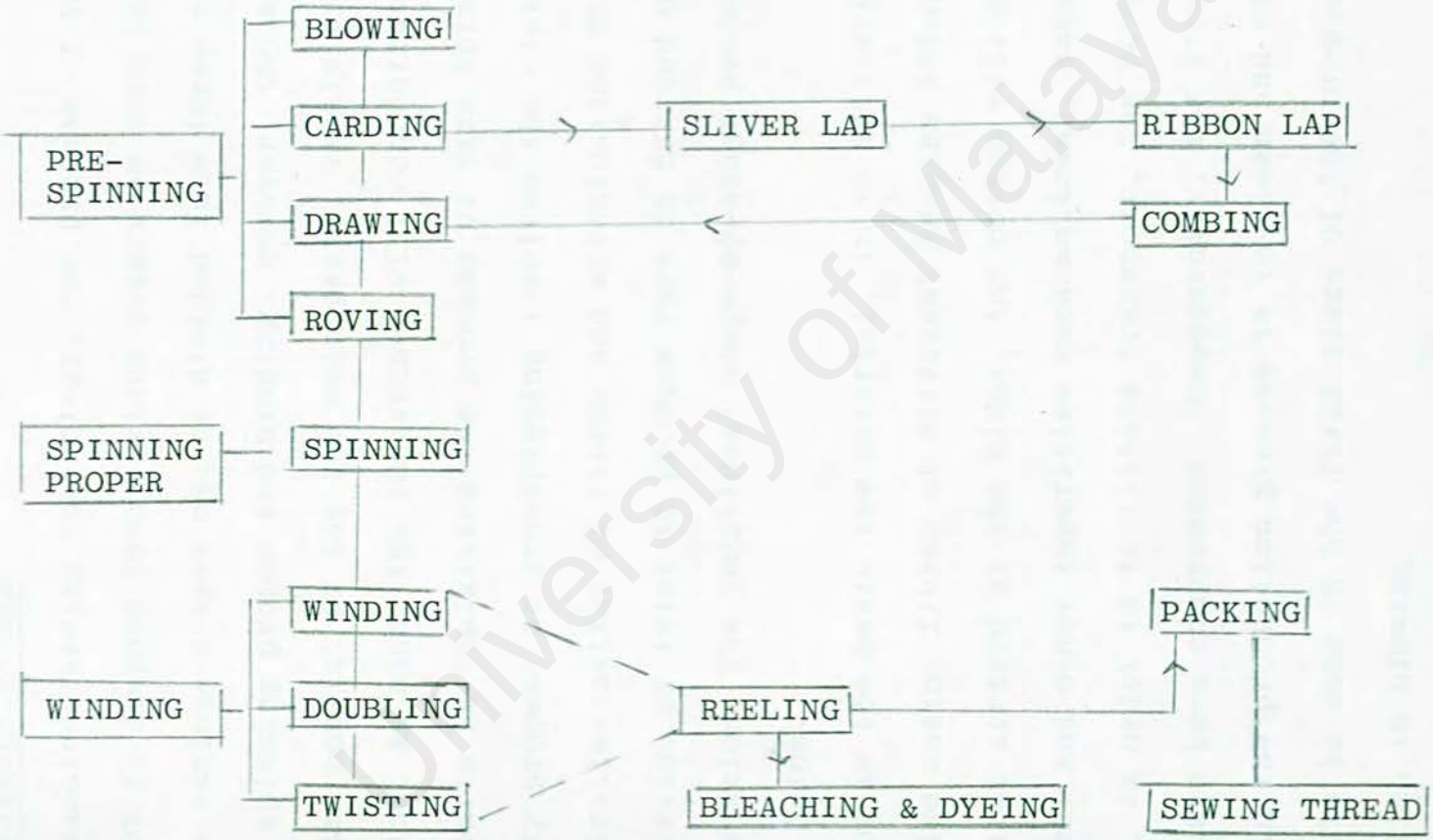


Figure 2.5 The Manufacturing Process



Plant Operations in SFX

Based on machine-tending technology, the process of yarn spinning in SFX is divided into various stages as seen in Figure 2.5. These various stages can be divided into three parts, preparatory, spinning proper and winding. However, the actual spinning of yarn consist of the two main parts, namely preparatory and spinning. As such, the researcher will concentrate on these two main parts in explaining the process of yarn spinning. Preparatory process or pre-spinning involves the cleaning of cotton, parallelization of fibres and attentuation whereas the final insertion of twist to produce yarn is carried out in the spinning section. The individual stage-by-stage process will be explained below.

With cotton as the basic raw material, it is initially a mass of entangled cotton fibres of different lengths and qualities. When it first arrived at the Plant, the cotton will still contain natural and other impurities such as trash, sand, leaves, etc. Also, in order to facilitate transport, the cotton will normally have been compressed. Consequently, the first step involved in the production process is to clean and mix the fibres. This is done in the first stage of the preparatory process which is blowing.

Pre-Spinning: 1. Blowing (opening and cleaning)

The function in this stage is to clean and open the raw cotton. The object of the cleaning and opening process is to

(i) clean it, by removing leaf, dirt and trash;

(ii) open up the compressed fibres into small fluffy open tufts;

(iii) to blend the cotton so as to get a uniform raw material.

The blowroom is extremely spacious since the preparatory line machine is ranged closely around two walls. There are about five workers in this section, mostly males. The job of the worker in this section consists of arranging the cotton bales arrived at the blowroom which is spacious and act as a storeroom. A 24-hour supply of raw cotton is always held on the blowroom floor. To start the operation in the blowroom, the worker must first choose the type of cotton needed (this depends on the quality requirements as stated by their buyers) and feed them into a Bale Opener Machine. Once inside the machine, the cotton is mechanically beaten up in such a way that loosened extraneous matter is disposed of through a suitably located grid. The tufts are then passed to a cleaning line made up of a condenser, a feeding unit and a cleaner, each of them (except for the feeding unit) using a different cleaning technique. Intimate blending is then assured by passage through a multimixer machine, followed by further cleaning again in a unit made up of a condenser, a feeding unit and a cleaner. These small, fluffy open tufts are then transported to the second stage through a chute feeder to the carding machines.

In fact in this section, the line normally works without human intervention since input quantities are automatically regulated. Therefore few workers are required on these machines. However,

their work in handling the bales is heavy, dirty and unskilled.

2. Carding

In this stage, the carding machine in SFX makes use of the tandem card principle whereby the first card removes most of the impurities from the cotton as well as relatively short fibres left from the previous stage. It also breaks up any hard tufts which have survived the earlier opening and cleaning operations. Then, a second card collects the web from the first card and intensifies the cleaning and straightening processes to produce a fine web which is then folded in from the two edges towards the centre unit. It is then coiled into tall narrow cans, arranged around the machines. Only a few operators are needed to attend many carding machines. There are altogether about ten workers in this section. Now and then the operator will piece together a new sliver to the sliver in the can. When the can is full, she "doffs" the filled cans. She must also patrol all the machines assigned to her, watching for malfunction. If something goes wrong with the mechanism for gathering and coiling the delicate veil-like sheet of cotton, it spills off the card like a heavy snowfall. The operator is then required to inform his supervisor about it.

3. Sliver Lap/Ribbon Lap

From the carding machines the cans of sliver are then brought by workers to two sets of Sliver Lap Machines. Through these machines, 24 slivers are then drawn out from the cans and combined to form a thick layer rather like a narrow blanket called

a Lap, which is then automatically doffed by the Autolap Changer. The Laps are then removed by operators to two sets of Ribbon Lap Machines to obtain very good alignment of fibres and uniformity of the Lap. The Ribbon Lap Machines are also fitted with Autolap Changer and thus enables automatic doffing to be carried out. In this section, only two operators are needed to attend to these machines.

4. Combing

Although the carding process produces sliver which is suitable for most requirements of yarn spinning, for high quality yarns, the short fibres which are detrimental to the spinning of good quality yarns have to be eliminated. Thus, the combing process is used for removing short fibres. The process also achieves a high degree of parallelization.

There are about three to four operators in this section. Laps were brought over by these operators from the Ribbon Lap Machines and placed on the combing machines called Combers, which then combed the Lap at very high speed by the metal combs to make the fibres lie parallel and to remove short fibres or any remaining particles of dirt or seed. The combed fibres then emerge as combed sliver, which contain a greater portion of the long staple fibres than the sliver coming from the carding machine. The outfeed is in the form of two slivers which are then coiled into tall narrow cans.

5. Drawing

From the Combers, the cans are removed to Drawing Frames Machines. The operator in this section will then draw out a total of 64

slivers which are then passed through two drawing machines one after the other. Slivers are drawn at each stage to give uniform evenness and close blending as well as parallel arrangement of fibres. There are altogether ten operators in this section and their jobs consist of joining up the slivers before it is exhausted.

6. Roving

Cans of sliver brought over from the previous stage were arranged in such a way that it is to be easily accessible to the operators in this section. The operators connect these slivers to the roving machines which then draw out the sliver by using rollers of differing speeds, reduces the cross-sectional diameter of the sliver and with the help of the thumb and index finger of the right hand, the operator then fixed the roving to the 'flyer' while the left hand insert the roving into the twisting machine, which imparts a slight twist, more compact fibre card into large bobbins to be fed to the spinning frames in in the next stage.

Proper Spinning

After passing through the processes enumerated above, the cotton is now fully cleaned, thoroughly blended and having its individual fibres aligned parallel to each other. It is thus made suitable for spinning into yarn.

In the spinning room, the spinner starts the process by attaching the roving (obtained from the previous section) between rollers

which then attenuate it to a narrow flimly sliver and deliver it to the fast-turning spindle. The spindle twists the sliver into yarn and winds the yarn into a bobbin.

When this automatic process fails, slivers of cotton accumulate on a waste roll and are visible up and down the alleys between the spinning frames. Reacting to this signal, that an "end is down", the spinner hurries to the troubled spot, unwinds a bit of yarn from the bobbin and "pieces it up", touching the yarn to the sliver to restore the twisting. She then clears the accumulated cotton from the waste roll. Other than this, a spinner or an operator must also patrol several long alleys of spinning spindles looking for breaks and stoppages. Therefore, she must be on the move most of the time.

However, the work is light and requires only a quick, fragile movement in the piecing-up which is readily learned. When the bobbins are full, the frames automatically and a doffer, exchanges empty bobbins for the full ones and starts up the machine again or if the operator is aware of it, control the brake using the right knee and then only put the bobbin into the spindle. The spinning itself is done exclusively by women.

Winding

The Winding section is rated second in the number of operators employed, the first being the spinning section. There are about thirty-four operators employed in this section to tend to machines. Initially, the operator will insert empty cones into spindles while the leg controls the brake. From bobbins of yarn

brought over from the spinning frames, now placed on the winding machines, the operator will wind about four inches of the thread on to the cone. When this is ready, the operator will push the starting handle, thus starting the winding operation of the thread into larger cone-shaped packages. Sometimes, a red and green light will be seen flashing from the machines. This phenomena indicates that the thread is disjointed. In such cases, the operator should step on the brake, off the lights and join back the thread before releasing the leg from the brake, thus starting the whole operation again.

As such, in this section, the bobbins from the spinning frames are rewound into larger cone-shaped packages on automatic winding machines. Some of the cones are used within the Group and some are sold to other knitters.

(These are the main processes involved in yarn spinning. The subsequent stages is shown in the figure are for the production of sewing thread which will not be discussed for this exercise.)

Summary

From the production process stated above, it can be concluded that in SFX, yarn spinning is a machine industry. Its products are standardized and the hardwork which once existed has long been eliminated. Highly mechanized power machinery, particularly, semi-automatic spinning frames, carry out the basic production process. As such, the job of the typical operator in this Plant is to mind or tend a large number of spinning frames or similar

machines. She may only have to insert bobbins into spinning frames or remove them when necessary. Or, she may watch out for, and repair breaks in the yarn when they occur. Such are the characteristics of their jobs - tending dozens of identical machines lined up in rows in the carding, spinning or winding sections in the Plant.

Such characteristics are actually typical of mass-production industries.[3] In most part, a man's work is brought to him rather than the man going to his work. In other words, with the work mainly done by machines, the worker cannot apply his own work rhythm but must adapt to the rhythm of the machine.

Also, with mechanization, most of the work has been broken down into a series of simplified motions. As such, only a limited number of work is assigned to any one individual, making repetition inevitable. On the other hand, with most work done by machines, leaving only a few operations to the individual workers, it follows that only a minimum amount of skill is required, which can be learned adequately in a few days or a few weeks.

Taking another approach, the fact that little skill is demanded can actually be explained by yet another phenomenon in a machine-tending technology: the worker has no choice in the selection of tools or methods on the job since they are already pre-determined for him through being a part of the fixed equipment of the Plant.

From these job characteristics too, it follows logically that, in most mass production Plants, the worker also has little con-

tact with the whole production which the Plant manufactures. In fact, he may never see it. Often than not, he works on only one part of that product and often on a small fraction of the one part.

Thus, it can be summarized that, from the standpoint of the worker, the job in a mass-production industry has the following characteristics:

(i) mechanical placing of work
(ii) repetitiveness
(iii) minimum skill requirement
(iv) predetermination in the use of tools and techniques
(v) minute subdivision of product worked on,

and viewed from its production process, the spinning plant in SFX is no exception.

But, more important is the common charge that modern industry has made work dull and spiritless. Through the coming of the Machine Age, it is said the workman has lost his job in production.

To what extent is this true in SFX? This will be discussed in the subsequent chapter.

Chapter Notes

1. In order to preserve the anonymity of the spinning factory as requested by the Management as well as those who supplied information, the spinning factory is named as SFX - (Spinning Factory X).

2. Raw cotton are imported from Turkey, Egypt, USA, Sudan, India and Thailand whereas polyester and rayon are imported from Japan and Korea.

3. In the article on "Mass Production" by Henry Ford in the Encyclopedia Britannica, XV, 14th edn., Ford's phrasing of the three principles of mass production is as follows:

"1. The planned orderly progression of the commodity through the shop.

2. The delivery of work instead of leaving it to the workmen's initiative to find it.

3. An analysis of operations into their constituent parts".

CHAPTER THREE: LABOUR FORCE

Introduction

In this chapter, we will examine the Companies' policies with regards to the recruitment of labour force. The background of the sample of workers interviewed will also be analysed in order to provide a general picture of their personal characteristics such as age, educational level, pattern of occupation, etc. When necessary, these aspects will be referred to in the study of the respondents' attitude towards their jobs in the subsequent chapter.

The data presented below is derived from interviews and questionaire survey.

3.1 Company Policies and Recruitment

From the analysis on the sample of labour force interviewed, it was found that most of these workers are young, single, inexperienced females with low educational level. These general characteristics of the labour force can be attributed partly to the Companies' Policies with regards to the recruitment of labour force.[1]

One of the outstanding features in a textile industry assembly line jobs is that, more females are employed than males. From the employer's point of view, the general preference for female workers is based on the fact that these jobs are more suited for female workers who are generally considered to have naturally nimble fingers. Also, they are generally thought as good

workers, tolerant of routine, repetitive and monotenous tasks which men abhor and shun. Another factor given is that women's labour is basically cheaper than men's. When asked whether this employment of women workers in factories represents the exploitation of cheap labour as women are paid subsistence wages only - this was denied in an interview with a member of the Management. His denial is based on the fact that, since most of the work can be done by machines, these women workers are employed mainly as operatives or semi-skilled workers. Therefore, the job does not demand for high qualifications nor is there much need for speaking, reading and writing ability.

Another characteristics of the work force in textile industry which became apparent to the researcher soon after she began her study was age. The average age of the overall sample interviewed was 20.9 years old, all singles and mostly without previous job experiences. But this heavy weighting in the direction of youth is not explained by chance in both factories. It was also as a result of an unwritten policy on the part of the Management who generally prefers to hire people who are single and in their youths. Generally, they do not like to employ older married workers as there might be more medical leave or frequent absenteeism due to family problems or pregnancy which is definitely not desirable. Also, the kind of tasks required might be too tedious for these older workers. On the other hand, young workers are also more easily satisfied and flexible. Being young with no previous job experience, they probably exhibit

more initial enthusiasm than older, more experienced workers. Normally, they are also quick to learn but lack confidence and not aggressive in seeking to change their condition. Thus, this could contribute to maintaining a higher level of satisfaction among the workers in general. However, this does not mean that the Management do not accept married workers at all. If there is such an applicant, the Management will take into consideration such factors as who will be looking after her children when she is working, etc., before they make a commitment. These factories also face difficulties in recruiting permanent workers.[2] The rate of turnover in both factories are high especially during festive seasons or after any major government schools examinations. In SFX (the Spinning factory), the rate of turnover varies as high as 10 to 11 per cent during festive seasons and after major schools examinations to as low as 4 to 5 per cent during normal months. Normally, after a major school examination, especially after the Malaysian Certificate of Education (MCE), a lot of school leavers comprising school drop-outs and those waiting for examination results will come and apply for jobs in these factories. If there are vacancies, there is a possibility that they might be employed. Otherwise, the Management are not too keen to employ them since it appears that many such applicants are aware that the future prospects in these factories are not too bright and, therefore, they tend to regard their job as only temporary. On the other hand, the local residents of Johore are also found to be more choosy and

have a higher tendency of job-hopping from one job to another. This is because, being local, they have a wider channel to access other better job opportunities through contacts with friends and relatives. Also, they can afford to adopt a "wait-and-see" attitude as they can always fall back on their families while waiting for a better-paid job. In fact, 80 per cent of the respondents interviewed regard their jobs as temporary while on the look-out for better job opportunities.

Based on these problems, the Management of the Group has adopted various policies with regards to the recruitment of the labour force.

In SFX, the Company overcomes the problems in recruiting an adequate labour supply from the local residents by resorting to recruiting workers from other towns in Peninsular Malaysia, sometimes as far as Kuantan or from economically depressed states like Kelantan or Trengganu. In the state of Johore itself, the Company also sends its recruitment staff to small towns and kampungs such as Muar, Senggarang, Rengit, Semerah, Kulai, etc, to recruit workers from these areas. Most of the residents in these rural areas are Malays and therefore, it is not surprising that this ethnic group makes up 70-80 per cent of the factory's labour force. The Chinese generally do not like to work in factories and even if they do, usually they are not prepared to migrate unless the pay is really good. Responses derived from interviews indicate that to most of these workers, work is a necessity. They regard their jobs not only as a source of supple-

mentary incomes to their families but also as a duty towards supporting them. Being awate that factory jobs are lowly-paid, they cannot afford to spend money on transport and accomodation. So, unless the pay is good or they are assured of free accomodation, they are not prepared to migrate. Another reason given for seeking nearby jobs especially for those with working parents is that they are indispensable for getting household chores done at home. As such, normally the parents will not permit them to migrate to other places.

These migrant workers are then housed in special dormitories provided by the Management near the factory. Facilities such as bedding, cooking utensils, electricity and water supplies are provided free. Therefore, it is rather difficult and inconvenient for these workers to switch jobs because being outstation, they will then face with accomodation problems. Moreover, there is a lesser tendency for these workers to have a higher turnover rate due to personal reasons such as preference for social activities instead of shift work as compared to the local workers. As for those workers from nearby areas like Senggarang, Rengit and Semerah, free transport is provided.

As a matter of fact, it was due to the problems of recruitment of workers that the garment factory was set up in Pontian, a small town, 45 miles away from Batu Pahat. This is to enable the Company to make use of the labour force available in this area. However, this is just a small factory, employing about 100-150 workers, situated in a 3-storey high shophouse. As such,

there is no necessity to provide free accomodation facilities. Most of the workers recruited were staying within a radius of two or three miles from the town and they are mainly Chinese. This is because most of the Malays are staying in rural areas (and concentrated mainly in the two Japanese-owned electronic factories found in this area). Being locals, most of the workers cycled to work even though a minority do take the free transport provided by the factory.

3.2 Background of Respondents

There are altogether sixth respondents interviewed. The composition is such that 50 per cent of them are from the spinning factory (SFX) while the other 50 per cent are from a garment factory.

Respondents obtained from SFX are all hostelites, accomodation being provided by the Management. Those workers from the garment factory are all locals and are staying with their families. These are the basic differences of the two samples interviewed to enable comparative study to be made.

a) Race, Sex and Marital Status

Referring to Table 3.1, from the total of 60 respondents, 50 per cent are Malays and the others, Chinese. Note that all the Malay respondents are from the spinning factory whereas the Chinese workers are from the garment factory. This characteristic is actually not determined by choice but due to the imbalance in the composition of the races employed by both

Table 3.1 Race, Sex and Marital Status of Respondents

Race / Sex	CHINESE No.	%	Work Place	Dwelling Status	Malay No.	%	Work Place	Dwelling Status	Total No.	%
Female (single)	30	50	GARMENT FACTORY	LOCAL (ONE'S HOME)	30	50	SPINNING FACTORY	HOSTELITES	60	100.0

factories.[3] All the respondents chosen are single, female workers. Therefore, in terms of race, sex and marital status, they are controlled variables.

b) Age

Soon after this study began, it became apparent to the researcher that the work force of these textile factory workers had one common characteristic that is youth. This is especially so among the Malay workers. From the sample of Malay workers obtained by the researcher; none of them exceeded the age of 24 (see Table 3.2). In fact, the average age of this sample of Malay workers is only 20.7 years old as compared to the Chinese workers, which is 21.1 years old. Taken together, from the overall sample of 60 respondents, only four (6.6 per cent) of them were above 25 years of age while 28 (46.6 per cent) were below 21 years old. The youngest in the sample being 17 (5 per cent) and the oldest, 28 years old (1.6 per cent).

This heavy weightage in the direction of youth is not explained by chance in both factories. It is a result of an unwritten policy on the part of these Companies to hire younger workers so as to avoid frequent absenteeism due to family problems or pregnancy.[4]

Regardless of the reasons for the Companies' accent on youth, the fact is obviously important to this study. The degree to which a workers adjusts to her new technological environment, her feelings towards her immediate job, her attitudes towards

Table 3.2 Age Distribution of Respondents

Years	Malay No.	Chinese No.	Total No.	Total %
16				
17	(1)	(2)	3	5.0
18	(3)	(5)	8	13.3
19	(5)	(3)	8	13.3
20	(4)	(5)	9	15
21	(4)	(4)	8	13.3
22	(6)	(3)	9	15
23	(3)	(3)	6	10
24	(4)	(1)	5	8.3
25				
26		(2)	2	3.3
27		(1)	1	1.7
28		(1)	1	1.7
29				
30	(30)	(30)	60	100.0

Table 3.3 Education Level of Respondents and Respondent's Father with Reference to Race and Medium of Education

		FATHER		TOTAL		RESPONDENT		TOTAL	
		SPINNING	GARMENT	NO.	%	SPINNING	GARMENT	NO.	%
		No.	No.			No.	No.		
NIL	NIL	2	6	8	13.3	-	-	-	-
PRIMARY	Std. 1-6	23	15	38	63.3	3	10	13	21.7
	Pass primary 6	3	2	5	8.3	1	3	4	6.7
LOWER SECONDARY	Form 1-3	1	-	1	1.7	8	14	22	36.7
	Pass SRP	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
UPPER SECONDARY	Form 4-5	-	1	1	1.7	13	2	15	25
	Pass SPM	-	-	-	-	3	1	4	6.7
POST-SEC	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	2	3.3
DON'T KNOW	-	1	6	7	11.7	-	-	-	-
TOTAL		30	30	60	100	30	30	60	100

education or previous training. The average worker does not have to use mathematical calculations nor is there much need for speaking, reading or writing ability. In view of this condition, one is expected to find an average or perhaps below average level of formal education among the workers as in the case of this sample of workers.

d) Parents' Occupation and Number of Children in Respondent's Family.

An analysis of this aspect shows that most of the respondents came from big families, irrespective of race.

The average number of children in each family, excluding the respondent is seven for both the Malay and Chinese respondents. One of the Malay respondents even has as many as sixteen siblings whereas the highest number recorded among the Chinese respondents is twelve. Only two of the Malay respondents have one sibling in their family and the least recorded among the Chinese respondents is three siblings.

This characteristic may have an impact on the respondents' level of education discussed in the previous section. Moreover, when asked about their parents' occupation, most of the Malay respondents responded that their mothers are housewives and their fathers, usually are labourers in coconut plantations (30 per cent), oil palm plantations (16 per cent) or rubber tappers (16 per cent) and are earning about $200-$300 per month. Only one of the respondent's father is a government servant. For those respondents whose father has

Table 3.4 Number of Children in Respondent's Family (excluding The Respondent

NO.	SPINNING FACTORY		GARMENT FACTORY	
	No.	%	No.	%
1	2	6.7		
2	-	-		
3	-	-	2	6.7
4	3	10.0	1	3.3
5	2	6.7	4	13.3
6	3	10.0	5	16.7
7	5	16.7	4	13.3
8	5	16.7	7	23.3
9	4	13.3	5	16.7
10	3	10.0		
10	3	10.0	2	6.7
TOTAL	30	100	30	100

passed away (10 per cent), their families are being supported by their brothers and sisters who are working.

20 per cent of the Chinese respondents' fathers have passed away. In such cases, the position of the breadwinner is usually being taken over by the eldest brother in the family. Others gave responses such as construction workers (10 per cent), fishmongers (6.6 per cent), rubber-tappers (6.6 per cent), fishermen (6.6 per cent), farmers (6.6 per cent) and even driving instructors (3.3 per cent).

It can be concluded that most of the respondents are from the low income group and this might be one of the reasons why they have to come out and work in order to support themselves as well as to supplement their families' income.

e) Respondents Contributions to Family Income

Analysis of this element showed that most of the respondents interviewed contributed a certain amount of income to their families.

Among the two races, the Chinese respondents showed a higher rate of contribution. Only 13.3 per cent of them did not contribute to family income whereas a large percentage of them did contribute and the amount ranged from $100-119 (see Table 3.5). There is also one respondent who contributes $160 a month to her family, the highest amount recorded. When interviewed, she said that her father has passed away and there are three younger siblings still studying. As such, she and her elder brothers have to work in order to help

Table 3.5 Respondents' Contributions to Family Income

PROPORTION OF CONTRIBUTION	SPINNING FACTORY	GARMENT FACTORY	TOTAL	
	NO.	NO.	NO.	%
NIL	6	4	10	16.7
Below $20	1	-	1	1.7
$20 - 39	7	2	9	15.0
$40 - 59	14	7	21	35.0
$60 - 79	1	2	3	5.0
$80 - 99	1	3	4	6.7
$100 - 119	-	10	10	16.7
$120 - 139	-	-	-	-
$140 - 149	-	1	1	1.7
$150 and above	-	1	1	1.7
Total	30	30	60	100

support the family.

On the other hand, the Malay respondents contributed a smaller amount to supplement their family income compared to the sample of Chinese workers. Most of them contributed between the range of $40 - 59 (46.7 per cent) and $20 - 39 (23.3 per cent). Only 20 per cent of them did not contribute anything to their families. Most of them responded that their parents did not expect them to contribute to the family as they can still manage on their own. One of the respondents said that even though she did not contribute to her family income but on every pay day she would spend about $20 - 30 on her younger siblings either through the purchase of goods or pocket money. However, none of the Malay respondent's contribution to their family exceeded $100. The highest contribution was between $80 - 99 (3.3%).

As such, it can be concluded that most of the respondents do contribute a certain amount of money to their families but the amount of contribution is higher among the Chinese workers.

f) Respondent's Income Level

Generally, the job of a production-line worker is unskilled and as such, they are lowly paid.

In this sample, all the Malay respondents (from the spinning plant) are production-line operators. This is different from the Chinese respondents who are machinists or sew-machine operators and as such are piece-rated workers. However,

Table 3.6 Respondent's Average Income Per Month

INCOME	SPINNING FACTORY	GARMENT FACTORY	TOTAL	
	NO.	NO.	NO.	%
$100 - $149	-	7	7	11.7
$150 - $199	17	10	27	45.0
$200 - $249	12	11	23	38.3
$250 - $299	1	-	1	1.7
$300 - $349	-	2	2	3.3
$350 & above	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	30	30	60	100.0

there is not much difference in the level of income between these two categories of factory workers.

Most of the Malay workers received a monthly income ranging between $150 - 199 (56.7%) and $200 - 249 (40%). Only one of them exceeded the $250 range (3.3%).

Among the Chinese respondents, a larger percentage of them received an income between the range of $200 - 249 (36.7%) and $150 - 199 (33.3%). Only two of the respondents (6.7%) did manage to exceed the $300 level. When interviewed, it was found that they were actually senior workers who by now were quite fast in their work. Since they were piece-rated workers, their ability to speed-up their work enabled them to enjoy a higher income compared to their slower counterparts.

Generally, they are lowly-paid workers and this may explain their megre contribution to their family income especially among the Malay respondents working at the spinning factory who are categorised as daily-paid workers.

g) Pattern of Occupation of Respondents

Among the respondents, one distinct characteristic found in the sample of workers is that for most of them, this is their first job. Especially among the Malay respondents interviewed, most of them admitted that they are fresh from school and have had no previous working experience before.

In Table 3.7, it can be seen that for 70 per cent of the Malay workers this was their first job while for the remaining 30 per cent this was their second job. However, in the latter, most

Table 3.7 Pattern of Occupation of Respondents

	SPINNING FACTORY	GARMENT FACTORY	TOTAL	
	NO.	NO.	NO.	%
1st job	21	8	29	48.3
2nd job	9	20	29	48.3
3rd job	-	2	2	3.3
Total	30	30	60	100.0

of their previous jobs were that of paid plantation work such as rubber tappers, cocoa pluckers or doing odd jobs in a pepper plantation. From the sample of 30 Malay workers, only two (6.7 per cent) responded that they have had previous job experience working in a mass production industry and in this case, the electronic factories.

However, this characteristic was found less among the Chinese workers. Most of the Chinese respondents interviewed have had other job experiences before joining the garment factory. For 26.7 per cent, it was their first job while for a total of 66.7 per cent, this was their second job and the third job for the remaining 6.6 per cent. This difference may be related to the fact that the Chinese workers were out from school at a younger age compared to their Malay counterparts. As such, they started work at an earlier age than the sample of Malay workers interviewed. Usually, their first job was that of a full-time baby-sitter with a working couple or a domestic servant. These jobs were introduced to them by relatives or neighbors. Others, gave responses such as electronic workers, salesgirls, clinic assistants or doing odd jobs in a hair salon.

Being young and without previous job experience especially in a mass production industry, generally, these workers were quick to learn and not aggressive in seeking to change her condition but lack confidence.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we can conclude that generally these factory

workers are young females in the lower level of education. The low levels of education among the workers can be explained by their failure to pass the government exams to qualify for higher education. Therefore, their chances of employment especially in administrative positions are slim. Even now, most administrative jobs require the basic education of at least five years in secondary school besides other qualifications. The low levels of education received could also be attributed to the low incomes of parents with many children. To some, the reason for working at a very young age is an economic necessity. Therefore, there is a possible relationship between low level of education and the socio-economic status.

The survey also shows that most of these workers had been previously unemployed. Following which they have no other job experiences.

Another factor is that female production-line workers in textile factories constitute cheap labour. In this case, the low wages are not related to low wages per se but also to the very nature of the workforce that has been created as a consequence of the specific demands of the textile industry such as low level of education and unskilled jobs.

Also, some of the girls send home a part of their wages every month despite it being so minimal. Some of the workers tend to regard their jobs as merely a means of supplementing their parents' income. However, there are also those workers whose fathers have passed away. In such cases, the workers seem to

regard their jobs not only as a source of supplementary incomes to the families but also as a duty towards supporting their families. However, they themselves are not the breadwinners since there are other brothers and sisters who are working. For a minority, their incomes do not supplement their families' budget. Rather it is used to support themselves. In such cases, they are independent and have directly reduced the burden of their parents, at least where their financial needs are concerned.

Notes

1. Bear in mind that both the spinning factory and the garment factory from which the respondents were obtained, are subsidiaries under the same Group of Textile Industries. As such, the Company's policies apply to both with differences arising mainly from the difference in the worker's dwelling status. Therefore, the researcher will delve on similar factors first and later, their differences.
2. The following information was obtained from an interview with the Personnel Training Officer in SFX.
3. Almost all the production workers in the spinning factory are Malays and more than half of the workers in the garment factory are Chinese.
4. Information obtained from interviews with the Management.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE MOTIVATIONAL ASPECTS

Introduction

The main aim of this chapter is to gauge the extent of job satisfactions and dissatisfactions of the workers in a textile machine-tending technology factory. Comparisons will be made between workers from a spinning plant and a garment factory. More specifically, the aim is to explore the relation between the work environment of the production-line in SFX and the production worker's satisfaction or dissatisfaction on the job. Since the production process has been dealt with in Chapter Two, here, the worker's feelings towards her immediate job content will be analyzed. Besides this, other major elements influencing job satisfactions such as working conditions, fringe benefits, pay and security as well as the worker's relation to the union will be studied in this chapter as well. The data presented in this chapter was based on the responses obtained from questionaire interviews done by the researcher herself as well as formal and informal interviews carried out among the workers and especially the two personnel officers in the Personnel Department in SFX.

4.1 Attitude towards Immediate Job Content

In the previous chapter, the production process in SFX was studied and it was concluded that the machine-tending operations in SFX has certain characteristics typical in a mass production industry. Among the characteristic listed were mechanical pacing

of work, repetitiveness, minimum skill requirement, predetermination in the use of tools and techniques and minute subdivision of product worked on.

This can be attributed to the highly mechanized power machinery employed in SFX to carry out the basic production processes. The hand work which once existed in textiles has long since been eliminated. With mechanizations, the job of the typical operator in SFX is to mind of tend a number of machines (normally 2-4 machines). Her work may only consist of piecing the sliver or remove bobbins of yarn from the machines when it is full or necessary and watch out for and repair breaks in the yarn when they occur.

However, not all production jobs in a textile industry exemplifies these characteristics. For example, sewing machine operators in the garment factory gets to operate an individual machine. Another important difference is that their end product is countable. As a source of motivation towards better work performance, they are categorized under piece-rated workers. As such, pay may act as a motivation in their work.

Often, in describing their jobs, a large number of the workers interviewed made these relational distinctions and described how they felt about their jobs.

Naturally, each worker's reaction to her immediate job differed somewhat of that of every other worker both because of the nature of the particular job[1] and also because of personality differences. As such, analysis of their judgement and attitude towards their immediate job will be done quantitatively and

qualitatively.

Below is an analysis of the responses given to questions related to their aspects of work

Table 4.1 Chance to Make Decisions At Work

	Spinning Plant	Garment Factory
1. No chance at all	23	1
2. Limited chances	7	4
3. Plenty of chances	-	25
Total	30	30

The responses given to the question in Table 4.1 obviously showed a difference in the job characteristics of the spinning plant operators and the sewing machine operators.

Among the sample of spinning plant operators interviewed, twenty-three of them said that they were not given any chance to make decisions while at work. A minority (seven) replied that they have limited chances of making their own decisions. When probed further, the latter category replied that whenever there is a minor breakdown in the machines assigned to them; they can use their own judgement whether to repair it themselves or call the Supervisor. However, a large percentage replied that their work was mostly decided by the mechanical pacing of the machines. Such response is usually obtained from the respondents working in the spinning section.

On the other hand, twenty-five of the garment workers replied that they have plenty of chances to make their own decisions in the process of their work. A senior worker said that even though the cut-out materials sent to them were standard in size but it was for them to decide the best way to sew it into a garment (even though it can't be denied that there were certain basic steps to follow). Being piece-rated workers, the amount of garments sewed can make a difference in the amount of pay they will receive. Therefore, the workers are free to use their own judgement to do it in their own fastest way.

To a question which concerns their mobility at the work place, 100 per cent (30) of the sewing machinists replied that they have no mobility at their workplace whereas 76 per cent (23) of the spinning plant operators replied that they have limited mobility at their workplace. The indication is that the workers at the spinning factory has more mobility than the garment workers. But qualitative analysis of their answers showed that such is due more to the nature of their work. The job of most operators at the spinning plant consists of patrolling a line of machines looking for breaks and repairs especially for those working in the spinning and winding section. As such, the nature of their work requires them to walk up and down the line. This is different from the machinists in the garment factory. Since they operate an individual machine each, they are required to stay put at their respective places.

Another question which has a bearing on the nature of their

immediate job concerns the pace of the job, that is, can they decide the pace of their job?

The answers obtained from both groups were almost entirely opposite to each other. With highly mechanized technology employed in the spinning plant, 100 per cent (30) of the workers interviewed gave a definite "No" in their answers. Now and then, a few of those interviewed complained that their jobs are mechanically brought to them and therefore the pace of their job is determined largely by machines. Such views are in contrast with those given by the sewing machinists. About 95 per cent of the garment workers replied that they can determine the pace of their work while a few others were not sure about their answers. Most of the machinists replied that the pace of their work depends on their skill or familiarity with the job. To quote one respondent,

> **"When I first came in, I can only manage two or three dozens in a day. But as I got familiar with the work, the speed of my work increases. So, whether you are fast or slow, depends on your ability and familiarization with the job."**

In other words, we can conclude that most jobs in the spinning factory are mechanically paced but in the sewing section, due to the nature of the work, the pacing is largely determined by the skill of the individual worker.

The amount of interaction allowed during working hours also has an important bearing on the worker's job satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

Comparison of the responses given indicates that there are

conflicting views in this question. Among the spinning plant operators, only 16.6 per cent of them replied that they can interact among themselves during working hours but within a limited circle of co-workers. Even then, they can only shout across to each other or when they crossed path while working. These responses were given mainly by respondents from sections other than the spinning section. According to the respondents from the spinning section, talking is impossible in the spinning section as it is the noisiest section among the various departments in the Plant. This is true even from the researcher's own experience when she entered the spinning department. Rows of spinning frames containing thousands of spindles move incessantly up and down, filling the air with a droning him. This made talking impossible in this section. The rest of the respondents (33.3%) gave negative answers. Some of them replied that even though they have the opportunity to talk, they did not do so because their work needs concentration. Otherwise, they might easily get hurt. However, an interview with a member of the Management confirmed that, officially, the workers are not allowed to talk during their working hours. Moreover, except for the spinning section (75 workers) and the winding section (34 workers), generally, there are only about 5 - 10 workers in each section. But even in these two large sections, opportunities to talk during working hours are limited due to the noise and the nature of their work which needs concentration. Among the sewing machinists, most of them replied that they can

talk among themselves because the factory space is small and the sewing machines were placed near to each other. Therefore, there are more opportunities to talk but within limits. Otherwise, they will be reprimanded by their Supervisors.

In short, the garment workers have more chances of interaction than their counterparts in the spinning factory.

With these facts presented, the preceding analysis will gauge the respondent's attitude towards their overall immediate job content. A simple question asked, "Is the job boring?" elicited the following responses:

Table 4.2 Respondent's Attitude Towards Their Immediate Job Content

		Spinning Plant	Garment Factory
"Is the job boring?"	1. Yes	30	4
	2. No	-	26
	Total	30	30

When asked why, the typical comments of the spinning plant operators include "repetitiveness", "staring into rows and rows of machines everyday", "the work does not need any thinking" etc. However, there is one comment made by one of the respondents which attracted the researcher's attention.

"It is boring. You're surrounded by machines everywhere. Then, there is no sense of achievement."

When asked to elaborate on her last comment, she said that,

"... my work consists mainly of looking after the machines. Whenever there is a break in the spinning of yarn, all I have to do is to join it back. The rest of the job are done mostly by machines. Unlike when you crochet, you can see your end product and derived satisfaction from your work. But not so in this case. The work will be passed on to another stage and so on ..."

Such an answer was indeed "rare" among the typical comments given. On inquiry, it seems that she is from the spinning section and has attained an education level quite high (after Form 6) compared to the rest.

However, there were also a minority who although gave negative answers to the question but qualitatively, their answers showed that they were indifferent to it. Among the comments obtained from this category were,

"It is boring when you have to do the same thing over and over again. But I am used to it already."

"It is boring. But at least I am familiar with the job already and I know exactly what to do when I report for work. Initially, I was quite scared ..."

We can therefore conclude from the various qualitative comments given, that generally, the unfavorable features of the immediate job content in a spinning plant were mechanical pacing, repetitiveness and minimum skill qualification. Analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively, it can be concluded that the sample

of operators obtained from the spinning plant were generally dissatisfied with their immediate job content. But the degree of satisfaction varies from respondents to respondents depending on their educational level. Generally, those who were lowly-educated were more easily satisfied with their job or indifferent to it. But those with higher education seems disgusted with their job but was left with no choice since administration jobs are hard to come by unless one have qualifications.

With regards the garment sewing machinists, 86.7 (26) per cent of them replied that their immediate job is boring but most of them do not seem to mind this as it is compensated by other factors such as having friends around them and with increase familiarity, they have more chances to get more pay with increase in work speed. Only 13.3% (4) of the total respondent interviewed replied that their immediate job is not boring. On further questioning, majority of these workers replied that even though repetition makes the job boring but it is repetition that breeds familiarity and this further leads to increase in work speed. Being categorised as piece-rated employees, with increased speed, it also means a bigger pay package and this, gives them a sense of achievement as well as satisfaction.

Therefore, the general conclusion is that the spinning plant operators are less satisfied with their immediate job content when compared to the machinist in the garment factory. However, satisfaction and dissatisfaction of a job cannot be gauged from the immediate job content alone. As such, other factors

will be looked into in the following section.

4.3 General Working Conditions, Fringe Benefits and Pay

In this section, the aim is to rate the impact of general working conditions and fringe benefits on job satisfaction. First, the researcher will deal with the general working conditions and later, the fringe benefits offered. For the sake of economy of discussion, working hours and pay are also included in this section. Again, the focus is mainly on the spinning plant. In the previous section in Chapter Two, the researcher has already disucssed the physical environment of the spinning factory in detailed. Therefore, the focus now is mainly on the general working conditions inside the factory and the fringe benefits offered.

A. Working Conditions

First, we will look into the general working conditions in SFX and then the garment factory. The items to be dealt with under this section are:

a. Working hours

b. Working conditions

c. Pay.

a. Working hours

As to working hours, the spinning plant operated on a non-stop three shifts per day. Shifts change over are at 3.00 p.m., 11 p.m. and 7 a.m., with the workers rotating to new shifts every two weeks.

Morning shift 7.00 a.m. - 3.00 p.m.

Afternoon shift 3.00 p.m. - 11.00 p.m.

Night shift 11.00 p.m. - 7.00 a.m.

There are also normal non-shift working hours which starts at 8.00 a.m. and ends at 5.00 p.m.

In the case of the garment factory, it operated on a normal non-shift working hours starting from 8.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. Officially, the workers work on a six-day week. Occasionally, they will have to work overtime.

Most of the respondents obtained from the spinning plant work on a shift basis. When interviewed, most of them preferred the regular hours and the daylight shift which prevailed at SFX. Some of them who worked on two-rotating shifts complained about isruption of customary sleep patterns. Especially for those who work on a night-shift and an afternoon shift, the next day, the usually complained about not getting enough sleep which can be dangerous when their jobs need concentration. Other than shift work, they have not much complaint about working hours. Generally, it can be said that most of the respondents are satisfied with their working hours. This is especially so among the garment workers who work on a normal non-shift basis even though there are some who complained about being burdened with overtime work at certain time of the month.

b. Working conditions

Turning now to working conditions proper, the spinning plant is well-equipped with modern facilities and installations. The

Plant is divided into various different sections such as blowing, carding, spinning, etc. On the whole, these sections are very spacious especially the blowroom with high ceiling for better ventilation. The Plant was fully air-conditioned, with three separate stations, each handling a particular section of the Plant. This is to give flexibility so that different sections can have different temperatures or humidities as required by operating circumstances. The aim is to provide the correct environment for the material being handled and also a better, more pleasant working environment for the operators.

However, due to the nature of this industry, some minor discomfort such as dust and noise is unavoidable. The main problems encountered by the workers in general are the heat, dust and noise in varying degrees in the different sections, depending on the type of processes involved in the section concerned. For example, in the blowroom, cotton fibres in the air is the problem due to the storage of cotton bales in this section. In the spinning section, rows of spinning frames containing thousands of spindles move incessantly up and down, filling the air with a droning hum. As such, among the various stages in yarn spinning process, the spinning section is the noisiest of all. Others, dust and heat are the common problems endured by the workers in various sections.

Caps, aprons, safety shoes and other precautions are taken to ensure the safety of the workers. In fact, the Supervisors were trained in first-aid in order to ensure immediate help in case

of accident and also to look after the safety needs of the workers. However, some workers were not too keen on using them as they find them inconvenient and troublesome to use. The researcher also noticed that in various sections of the spinning plant, safety campaign posters were being put up at strategic places showing the correct and the wrong way of carrying out a job in that section.

From the responses obtained from the respondents, it can be concluded that the major problem seems to be the noise, dust and heat in the spinning and winding sections. Other than this complaint, workers from other sections seem to take the noise, heat, and dust in their stride as part of their working condition that they have to accept. Therefore, to them, it can be said that undesirable working conditions do not determine morale per se but rather, the morale of a worker is the result of the worker's perception of her working conditions and her job. Since it has been shown that this group of workers in this factory appear to accept the problems of dust, noise and heat as part and parcel of their job, these elements do not particularly influence job satisfaction attitudes of the worker. Anyway, these problems of heat, dust and noise are actually unavoidable due to the type of technology and processes involved in the manufacture of yarn in SFX.

For the garment factory, generally the workers seem to be quite satisfied with their working conditions as there did not appear to have much complaints in this quarter. Only one or two com-

plained about the place being a bit cramped and cotton fibres flying in the air. Since this factory is dealing with fabrics, the latter complaint is unavoidable.

B. Fringe Benefits

In SFX, fringe benefits are provided as incentives to the workers. These fringe benefits include free uniforms, including caps and aprons; free transportation with buses catering for nearby places such as Senggarang, Semerah, Parit Raja and Rengit as well as the town area; free accomodation for those from out-station as well as locals who find it inconvenient to get to and from their homes; recreational facilities such as T.V., carom board, netball and basketball courts; a surau to cater to the social and religious needs of the workers; allowances, leave days, etc.

As for the hostel facilities, these have been dealt with in the previous chapter. In addition to those mentioned, an instructor from KEMAS, hired by the Management will go to the factory to give sewing, cooking and dancing classes once a week.

There is also a clinic in the factory vicinity catering to the needs of the workers in case of accident. This clinic opens everyday from 2.00 p.m. to 4.00 p.m. with a part-time nurse in-charge. In case of severe accident, whereby the worker needs to be hospitalized, the medical fee will be subsidized by the Company. However, every once a fortnight, a first-aid course for Supervisors will be conducted by an external nurse and at the end of the course, a test will be given to these Supervisors.

The Management also arranged for regular talks on productivity or safety campaign given by one of the staff members or an invited external speaker.

In addition to these benefits, the Management also sets up a cooperative shop selling necessities such as rice, milk, sugar etc., at a subsidized price. This is especially beneficial for the hostelites since there are no nearby shops around the factory. Another benefit enjoyed by the workers in this factory is that every twice a month, usually on the first half and the second half of a month, a cafeteria is held for the employees of the factory including the production line workers, whereby they have subsidized meals, with each person paying only an amount of 30 cents for the main meal plus syrup and fruits. On Labour Day, usually they have games, telematch and Annual Dinner for all.

The factory also offers attendance allowance, overtime allowance, yearly bonus and paid leave which include annual leave, sick leave, maternity leave, public holidays as well as casual leave on occasions such as marriage, birth of child and death of members of immediate family. (Refer to Appendix for full details regarding leave day allowed under the different situations mentioned above).

Since almost all the sewing machinists from the garment factory were staying within three miles radius from the factory, no accomodation is provided by the Management. However, free transportation is provided even though most of them who live within

the town area, cycled to work.

Based on the nature of their work, the size of the factory and the distance from work, generally, these garment workers do not enjoy as much benefits as their counterparts in the spinning factory since there is no canteen in the factory, most of the workers brought their own food to work or at times, eat at the nearby eating-stalls opposite the factory. But, for those who live nearby, they cycled home for lunch. When interviewed, most of them preferred to have lunch at home or brought from home since it is cheaper. However, as with the spinning factory, there is also a cooperative sundry shop selling necessities such as sugar, beverages, rice, etc. at a subsidized price. Once a while, the Management also arranged for talks on productivity, given by a member of the staff employed by the Group. Other benefits include subsidized medical fee in case of accident or illness; allowances for overtime work and attendance; yearly bonus; paid Public Holidays and Rest Days, Annual Leave, Sick Leave, Maternity Leave and Casual Leave due to death of members of immediate family, birth of child or marriage.[2]

c. Pay

In this section, the researcher will examine the monetary incentives employed by the Company. Since both the spinning factory and the garment factory are subsidiaries under the same Company, the data presented below are applicable to both unless stated otherwise.

In the spinning factory, the production line operators are paid

on the basis of time they work. They can be classified under two categories of pay, namely the daily-rated and the monthly-rated employees. Initially, all the production line operators will be assigned to daily-rated wage rates. With hard work and better work performance, they are then privileged to be promoted to monthly-rated employees when the Supervisors recommended them. With such promotions, they might have an advantage of about 20 cents increased in their monthly salary as compared to the daily-rated employees. Among the thirty respondents interviewed from the spinning factory only one respondent (3.3 per cent) has been promoted to the monthly-rated category and even then, she has been working for the Company for almost three years before she was promoted. At the time of the interview, she has worked for three and a half years for the Company.

On the other hand, the sewing machinists employed in the garment factory are paid under the piece-rate system, that is, they are paid by the amount they produce. However, under this system, the employer also expects a certain minimum output.

For the daily-rated workers in the spinning factory, the basic pay for all production line operators is $5.50. Workers who work on shifts are given shift allowances besides their normal wage rate. The shift allowances are as follows:

Morning shift 7.00 a.m. - 3.00 p.m. - (normal wage rate) -

Afternoon shift 3.00 p.m. - 11.00 p.m. - $1.50

Night shift 11.00 p.m. - 7.00 a.m. - $2.50

Another category is the non-shift category, from 8.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. These workers are also paid their normal wage rate. As for the garment workers, their basic pay is $4.50. Since there is no shift work, they are paid their normal wage rate only except when they work overtime. Officially, theirs is non-shift work, starting from 8.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m.

The wages for the daily-rated workers in both factories are paid twice a month, normally on the fifth and the twentieth of the month.

As for overtime, which means number of hours work carried out in excess of the normal hours of work per day, the employees will be paid two times their hourly-rate of pay. For each of the occasion where overtime is done, the Management provides free transport or transport allowances. In the spinning factory, most of the workers are provided free transport but for the garment factory, usually, when workers work overtime; they are given food and transport allowances which amount to $2.00.

As for holidays, each and every worker in both factories is entitled to one Rest Day per week and also a paid holiday at his ordinary rate of pay on ten gazetted public holidays in a year as required by the Malaysian law under the Employment Ordinance, 1955. Among the compulsory public holidays required under this Ordinance are:

(a) the National Day (31st August)

(b) the Birthday of the Yang Di Pertuan Agong (King's Birthday)

(c) Birthday of the State Ruler or Federal Territory as applicable

(d) the May Day Celebration

In the spinning factory, where an employee may be required to work on any paid holiday, in addition to the holiday pay, she is also entitled to be paid two days' wages at the ordinary rate of pay (applied to both daily and monthly-rated employees). On the other hand, in the case of the garment workers employed on piece-rate basis, an employee who works on a paid holiday is paid twice the normal rate per piece, regardless that the period of work done on that day is less than the normal hours of work. As for overtime work carried out on paid public holidays, the monthly-rated and the daily-rated employee of the spinning factory will be paid five time her hourly rate of pay and three times the ordinary rate per piece for the sewing machinists in the garment factory.

As mentioned in the previous section, other than public holidays, paid leave include annual leave, sick leave as well as casual leave on occasions such as marriage, birth of child or death of immediate family members. For paid annual leave and sick leave, please refer to Appendix since the Company's policies on this aspect is in accordance to the laws as stated by the Malaysian government. As for maternity leave, the female employees of both factories are entitled to a period of 60 consecutive days in respect of each confinement. During this period, they will be paid maternity allowance at their normal rate of pay. (for more details, refer to Appendix).

In addition to these, the factories offer attendance allowance

which is 25 per cent of their basic pay to supplement the workers' wages and also to promote better attendance performance among the workers. Before this incentive was implemented, it was said that the rate of absenteeism was higher. In fact, during the interviews, some of the workers said that if possible they try not to absent themselves from work with the aim of achieving this incentive. As such, generally, it can be said that this incentive seems to be getting a good response from the workers by motivating them to avaoid absenteeism. Usually, an employee's service will be terminated if she is absent from work on more than two consecutive days without any valid reasons. But, this extreme action is not carried out unless it is a really serious case of frequent absenteeism. Normally, a worker will be given verbal warning, followed by a written one in case her attendance does not improve. But such cases are seldom encountered.

4.4 Attitude of Workers Towards Their Total Job Situation

Since we have dealt with the immediate job content, the general working conditions, pay as well as fringe benefits offered by both factories, we will now analyse the worker's attitude towards these elements in order to evaluate their total job satisfaction.

Refering to Table 4.3, it can be seen that among the respondents from the spinning factory, they rate their chances of promotion

as the most dissatisfied element among the various job characteristics listed. Such an attitude is also reflected among the Chinese workers in the garment factory. This kind of attitude is actually a common phenomena among factory workers since they work mainly as operatives or semi-skilled workers and are given either very little training or virtually no training. Moreover, for those with education level below five years in a secondary school, chances of promotion are almost non-existent since that is the normal requirement for the post of a Supervisor. Furthermore, in SFX, Supervisors are invariably male. As such these workers are aware that their future prospects in their present jobs are not too bright and often, this factor was quoted as one of the reasons why they tend to regard their present job as only temporary. In fact, most of the workers interviewed, 86.7 per cent and 73.3 per cent of the respondents from the spinning and the garment factories, respectively, had expressed a desire to get better jobs and regarded their current jobs as temporary only.

Especially among the Malay workers in the spinning factory whom mostly have attained five years of secondary education (53.3 per cent), their aspirations included employment as clerks (23.3 per cent), polis (16.7 per cent), nurses (10 per cent), teachers (10 per cent), actresses (3.3 per cent), singers (3.3 per cent) and Supervisors (3.3 %). However, for those with low educational level, some were quite realistic in realizing that with their low educational qualifications, the hope of obtaining

Table 4.3 Attitude of Respondents Towards Job Characteristics

	SPINNING FACTORY (SFX)		GARMENT FACTORY			
	Satisfied	Not satisfied	Satisfied	Not satisfied	TOTAL	
	NO.	NO.	NO.	NO.	NO.	%
Pay	10	20	19	11	60	100
Job security	28	2	28	2	60	100
Chances of promotion	4	26	1	29	60	100
Working conditions	8	22	30	-	60	100
Interaction with others	26	4	40	-	60	100
Freedom of movement	21	9	29	1	60	100
Work done	15	15	28	2	60	100
Supervisors	27	3	30	-	60	100
Safety (during working hours)	24	6	30	-	60	100
Discipline (strict?)	25	5	30	-	60	100
Rate of Work (too fast?)	27	3	30	-	60	100

a better job is quite remote and as such are quite resigned to their present job. Others are just satisfied in remaining in their present employment until marriage. In fact to some, it is just a way of passing the time with comments such as, having a job even as low as a factory job, is better than doing nothing or staying at home.

However, for the Chinese garment workers who were mostly school dropouts after three years of secondary education (46.7 per cent), their aspirations were mainly self-employment oriented. 23.3 per cent of them aspired to set up their own tailor shop and 3.3 per cent, her own hair dressing salon, 16.6 per cent aimed to be teachers (most of them quickly added 'kindergarten teacher', showing that they were aware of their low educational levels); 6.6 per cent aimed for clerical job (which to some of them are better, more prestigious job than factory work) and various other job such as nurse, secretary and only one aimed for the post of a Supervisor.

Thus, among the Chinese workers, it can be said that they regarded their present job as stepping stones to better ones especially for those aiming to set up a tailor shop of their own. There were also those who were resigned to their present job until marriage quoting low educational qualifications as the reason for their low aspirations.

As such, it can be concluded from the responses given that the workers are aware that their present jobs do not have a bright future and especially for those with higher qualifications, tend to regard it as only a temporary job.

Working conditions was rated second in the list of undesirable job characteristics among the respondents from the spinning factory. In fact, 73.3 per cent of them were not satisfied with the working conditions in the factory. However, as mentioned, most of these complaints were voiced by those from the spinning and winding section. Out of the above percentage, 53.3 per cent were from the spinning and winding section.[3] The major problem seems to be the heat and noise, especially the noise in the spinning section, which according to the respondents makes talking impossible.[4] When asked whether this has any effect on their health, some complained that, occasionally, they do suffer from headaches and asthma (which may be due to the cotton dust). But, generally none complained about the health hazards commonly found in garment and textile factories such as chronic back problems, conjuntivities, bronchities and brown lung.[5] But workers in other sections, seem to be able to take the dust, heat and noise in their strides. This is because the problems of heat, dust and noise in these sections were reported to be less serious when compared, to the spinning section.

Among the Chinese garment sewing machinists, all the thirty respondents interviewed were unanimous in their response, stating satisfaction in their working conditions. Although one or two of the respondents complained about cotton dust and the place being a bit cramped, but they are generally satisfied with their working conditions. Instead, the second

element in their list of undersirable job characteristics is their pay envelope. A percentage of 36.7 per cent of the respondents interviewed stated that they are not satisfied with the amount of pay they receive. The average wage package received by them is $188. However, a larger percentage of them (36.7 per cent) actually received an income between the range $200 - 249. In fact, there are two respondents (6-7 per cent) who manage to exceed the $300 level. When compared to the Malay respondents from the spinning factory, the Chinese sewing machinists were actually receiving a bigger pay package than their Malay counterparts. The average amount received by the Malay respondents was $186. But a bigger percentage (56.7 per cent) actually received between $150 - 199 and only one (3.3%) actually exceed the $250 range. But, from the responses given, the Malay workers are actually more satisfied with their pay (pay was quoted as the third undesirable job aspect) than their Chinese counterparts from the garment factory. This phenomena may be explained by the fact that to most of the Malay workers (70%) from the spinning factory, this is their first job, being fresh from school. Such a phenomena is different from the majority of the Chinese sewing machinists who have had previous job experiences (73.3%). Having had other previous job experiences beforehand, they might have been more demanding especially for those whose previous jobs were better paid than their present one (20%), and this may account for their dissatisfaction. In fact, there are two respondents who stated that

before working in their present job, they were previously employed in an electronic factory in Singapore which pays $15 a day and as such the average amount of pay they received each month amounts to about $300-450 per month compared to their present $200. When asked why they did not stay on their previous job, both quoted accomodation problems, work permits and higher cost of living in Singapore. Another example is a former salesgirl who worked in Singapore, earning about $300 compared to her present $135 (she has worked for only two months in her present job). In fact, one respondent stated that even an amah in Singapore can earn a minimum of $250 per month easily (she was formerly one before joining this garment factory) compared to their basic pay of $4.50 per day, amounting to only approximately $150 per month. Therefore, these may account for their dissatisfaction with their pay package. Even those whose previous job do not pay as much, but very often they will quote those working in Singapore (either relatives or friends) earning bigger pay packages than them, quoting mostly jobs in the electronic line or garments factory.[6] When asked why they have no intention to work in Singapore, they quote family problems, (having to help mothers at home or to some, being orphans, they have to cook for the brothers at home) work permits, accomodation problems and higher cost of living.

Another factor which may be worth mentioning is that the sewing machinists earnings are calculated on a piece-rate

basis and piece-rates usually bring workers higher earnings. In fact, this accounts for the senior workers who can earn as high as $300 and above. When asked their opinions about this, most of them confirmed that it is indeed a motivation for them to work harder and in fact, they always look forward to increase their output so as to make them eligible for increase pay.

However, even among the Malay workers from the spinning factory, not everybody were satisfied with their pay. Their degree of job satisfactions varies with work experience and education level.[7] One particular respondent interviewed stated that she is not happy with the pay envelope because, according to her, it is not at par with the job done. In fact, she was formerly employed in an electronic factory in Singapore earning about $400 a month and she said, the working condition here is much better than her present one. However, she quit the job because she had a disagreement with relatives whom she was staying with in Singapore and due to high cost of living there, she can't afford to live on her own. Thus, she is now back with her family. In fact, she stated that she is not happy with her job because it is not at par with her educational achievement and pay is quoted as one of the undesirable job characteristics which account for this dissatisfaction. However, it can be concluded that the Malay workers from the spinning factory are generally more satisfied with their pay envelope than the Chinese sewing machinists from the garment factory.

Except for those already mentioned, the Chinese workers are unanimous about their satisfactions regarding other job characteristics, namely, interaction with others, work done, freedom of movement, supervisors etc. However, the Malay workers in the spinning factory are not happy with yet another two job characteristics, namely work done and freedom of movement. This has already been elaborated in the section on attitude towards immediate job content. However, among these Malay respondents, even though they have more complaints about their job characteristics compared to the Chinese sewing machinists, most of them are quick to add that these dissatisfactions are compensated by the enjoyment they derive from staying together in the hostel provided by the Management. By staying together with members of their peer groups with generally similar interests, they were able to share a lot of things and were never short of companions. Especially for those who previously work individually in their former jobs such as rubber tappers and plantation workers, they tend to stress that they prefer their present jobs better than their former ones because in their former jobs, they were isolated from their friends and peer group which eventually make their work dull and uninteresting. In fact, one respondent said that her previous job as an estate worker with Dunlop was much better paid than her present one but she preferred this present job because there is the opportunity to mix around with co-workers. They like doing their cooking together, going to town together and even

gossiping about their boyfriends. Moreover, the Management has provided them with a T.V. room, a magazine library and even cooking, sewing and dancing classes conducted by a teacher hired specially from KEMAS. As such, they are very happy with these facilities provided by the Management.

The job characteristic which derived the most satisfaction among the Malay workers is job security. This is because they believe that their Management is fair and would not sack their workers unnecessarily or without valid reasons.

Therefore, since those job characteristics listed as undesirable consist only of approximately 36 per cent from the total characteristics listed, it can be concluded that generally, the workers from both factories are quite satisfied with their total job situation.

Notes

1. The nature of the operator's job is different in each section of the spinning plant. However, more important for this exercise is the general characteristics already defined in the section on the production process in Chapter 2.
2. Being in the same Group of Companies, benefits on leave days are the same for the employees in both the spinning and garment factories.
3. To be specific, from the 53.3 per cent of those who complained, 20 per cent are from the spinning section whereas the other 33.3 per cent are from the winding section. But the researcher

would hereby like to point out that from the amount of 30 respondents from the spinning factory,

46.7 per cent are from the Winding Section;

23.3 per cent are from the Spinning Section;

20 per cent are from the Roving Section.

and 10 per cent - others.

Therefore, there is an imbalance in section compositions. Even though the researcher admitted that this is not a good sample but due to the unavoidable circumstances in which the researcher was not given the chance to select her own respondents, accidental sampling has to be used and as such accounts for the imbalances in section compositions. Moreover, only the spinning and the winding section employed the largest number of workers (more than 30 workers). In other sections, the number of workers ranged between 4-10 workers. As such the choice is definitely limited.

4. In fact the researcher herself experienced this kind of phenomenon when she was brought around the Plant.
5. See Wendy Chapkis and Cynthia Enloe, (eds.), Of Common Cloth: Women in the Global Textile Industry (The Transnational Institute, Amsterdam, 1983).
6. The garment factory is located in Pontian, which is only about 35 miles to the Causeway leading to Singapore. Most of the workers in the factory are locals. Since most of the residents in Pontian work in Singapore, the local workers tend to compare their working conditions with that of their

friends who are working in Singapore.

7. The researcher noticed that the Malay workers tend to compare their educational level with the nature of their job and those with higher educational level were generally less satisfied than their counterparts who were low-educated and therefore, quite resigned to their present job. Such phenomena is found less among the Chinese workers. Normally, when it comes to job satisfaction, they almost never mention its relation to their educational level. This may be due to the fact that generally, they were less educated than their Malay counterparts from the spinning factory.

CHAPTER FIVE: ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE UNION

Introduction

Since both factories are subsidries of the same Group of Companies, only one union is registered under the name of the Group of Companies as required by the Malaysian law. The Union is registered as an In-House Union and is not affiliated to "Persatuan Pekerja-pekerja Tekstil dan Pakaian Johor" as with the other textile unions in the state. With regards to this, the researcher finds difficulties in obtaining information especially those regarding its set-up, the content of its Collective Agreement with the Management as well as its operations and activities. Also, the researcher did not get much co-operation from the Management regarding this issue since it is considered to be a sensitive one. Furthermore, the researcher could not get to talk to any of the Committee Members. The researcher was told that most of the Committee Members are at the parent company. Unfortunately, none of the respondents interviewed in both factories are Committee Members or able to recommend nor recognize their Committee Members. Therefore, the information that the researcher obtained about the Union were mainly derived from the respondents interviewed. The fact that they are non-committee members accounts for their lack of informative responses. As such, the researcher will not delve into the details of its set-up nor its operations. On the other hand, more important for this exercise is to find out to what extent are the workers aware of the existence and aims of the

Union and what are their attitudes towards it.

5.1 General Information about the Union and Its Relation To The Company

It is believed that the Union was set-up in the 60s. The whole House Union is made up of

a. the main House Committee comprising the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, Vice-Secretary and the Treasurer.
b. the sub-Committee, which consists of representatives from different sections in each factory.

Membership is voluntary and is open to all employees except for those not covered in their Collective Agreement. All employees of the Company who have been confirmed after a probation period of three months will be eligible to become members of the Union. In order to become a member, the worker must fill in a form which normally will be distributed by the representatives of the sub-committee.

The subscription fee for members is $1.00 per month, which will be deducted from their pay. For the daily-rated workers who usually receive their pay on the fifth and the twentieth of the month, the subscription fee will be deducted from their pay-packet on the second fortnight of the month.

The researcher was also told that among the activities carried out by the Union besides fighting for the workers' welfare are, social activities such as games, organizing Quran reading con-

tests and organizing the workers' procession during Prophet Muhammad's Birthday. Especially on Labour Day which falls on the first of May, the Union will organize games or telematch competitions between workers and staff of the Management as well as their yearly Annual Dinner held on every year to celebrate Labour Day.

Other than information derived from interviews, the researcher also tried to gather information from other means such as written documents.

From the Group's Annual Report 1977, it was stated that retirement benefits would be payable by the Company and its subsidiaries only when the employees attain the age of 55 years and on completion of at least 10 years of service.

Concerning the channels of communication between committee and ordinary members, in the spinning factory, the members are informed either through their Committee Members or being told by their "hostel warden" in the case of the hostelites. Notices are also pinned-up on notice boards available in the canteen and in the hostel warden's office. As for the garment factory, they are either informed by the Supervisors in each floor or through pinned-up notices.

The researcher was told by a member of the Management that there is a good relationship between the Union and the Management in their effort to upgrade the welfare of the workers.

5.2 Awareness of the Workers About the Existence and Aims Of the Union

Referring to Table 6.1, from a total of 30 respondents interviewed from each factory, only 20 per cent of the total sample from each factory was registered as ordinary union members while the other 80 per cent were non-members.

In the spinning factory, while most of the union members recognized the role of a Union as looking after the workers' welfare, many do not know who their Union Head is nor who their Committee Members are. A few who replied that they know, can only give the answer that he is "Pak X" but do not really know his actual name nor where he lives. Among the members interviewed, many are of the opinion that the role of a Union is to organize social activities on Labour Day and to negotiate for higher pay for its workers. However, two of the respondents replied that their reasons for participation is because, in cases where they have problems with the Management or family problems such as death of immediate family members, the Union will help them either in terms of psychological support or in monetary terms. Following which, they replied that the role of a Union is to look after the workers' welfare and to organize social activities for the workers, not forgetting to mention negotiation for higher pay. Other admitted that they join the Union because they were given the application forms to fill and on persuasion by friends. On the other hand, the reasons given for not being a member were either they are not interested or

Table 5.1 Percentage of Respondents who are Members of the Union

	SPINNING FACTORY	GARMENT FACTORY	TOTAL	
	NO.	NO.	NO.	%
Members	6	6	12	20
Non-members	24	24	48	80
Total	30	30	60	100

Table 5.2 Percentage of Respondents Satisfied with the Union

	SPINNING FACTORY	GARMENT FACTORY	TOTAL	
	NO.	NO.	NO.	%
Satisfied	3	5	8	13.3
Not satisfied	16	9	25	41.7
No opinion	11	16	27	45.0
Total	30	30	60	100.0

they have yet to be approached by the Union's Committee Members to fill in application forms. One mentioned that she did not join because any advantages won by the Union for its members will not only benefit its members but also non-members who are workers of the factory. In other words, she is implying that why waste a dollar every month on subscription fee when you can enjoy the same benefits gained by the Union even though you are not a member.

Among the sewing machinists in the garment factory, all the sample of Union members interviewed responded that the role of a Union is to organize social activities and to look after the workers' welfare in which the only example they can quote is to negotiate for higher pay. On elaboration, it is found that the workers in this factory are only conscious of activities organized for Labour Day such as games and annual dinner whereas the other only social activity known offered to them is handicraft lesson which is taught by a member of the Staff fortnightly, quoting the reason for their participation as having an opportunity to learn handicraft. However, none of them seems to know who their Union Head is (some replied that he is the Senior Assistant to the factory Manager) nor their Committee Members (some replied that she is the staff member who teaches them handicraft fortnightly). As for non-members the reasons quoted for not being a member are either they feel that the Union is not active (30 per cent), they are not interested (20 per cent), they have yet to be approached by Committee Members to participate (10 per cent), they do not know a Union

exists in their factory (3.3 per cent) or merely because they are not interested in the handicraft classes which is the only activity known offered to them by the Union (16.7 per cent).

In general, it can be said that in both factories, the ordinary Union members are ignorant of the other aims and purposes of a Union such as to voice her dissatisfactions or grievances in certain areas like working conditions, too much of overtime work etc. Most of them do not realize that they are not only at the receiving end but also have the right to voice opinions ranging from suggestions to complaints. Many joined the Union without knowing the actual role of a Union nor their rights as members. In fact, it can be said that none of the members in this sample have the interest to participate as active, dedicated members but merely for their own self-interest or following their friends' footsteps. For the latter, as far as they are concerned, a dollar will be deducted from their pay every month as subscription fee for the Union.

Some of the non-members are of the opinion that the only role the Union is capable of doing is to fight for higher wages. Following which, they feel that there is no necessity to join as members since this benefit will be equally shared by all, members and non-members. In conclusion, these factory workers are generally ignorant of the role of a Union nor their rights as members. As such, they do not play an active role in this Organization and this may render the Union ineffective in its aims and purposes.

5.3 Attitude of Respondents Towards the Union

From the survey done in the spinning factory, 10 per cent were satisfied with the Union (all were Union members); 53.3 per cent expressed dissatisfaction (three of whom were Union members) while 36.7 per cent have no opinions at all.

Those who expressed satisfactions replied that the reason for this positive attitude lies in their conviction that the Union is capable of supporting their cause for "better working conditions" - which the workers, always take it to mean increase in wage rates and welfare services in terms of monetary contributions in events of death or sickness of immediate family members. The reasons given for dissatisfactions were either the workers were not well-informed of the Union's activities except on occasions like Labour Day and Prophet Muhammad's Birthday; they were never approached by the Union for membership or they were of the opinion that the Union is not active.

In the garment factory, 16.7 per cent were satisfied with the Union, 30 per cent were not satisfied and the remaining 53.3 per cent were not able to form any opinions at all. However, those who replied that they were satisfied were not able to give other reasons except they were satisfied with their handicraft classes. On the other hand, dissatisfied members gave reasons such as the Union is not active, they were not well-informed about the activities carried out by the Union or the Union in their factory does not serve any purpose other than

their handicraft classes. A number of them were not able to form any opinion because of their ignorance either of its existence or of the functions of a Union.

None of the respondents in this sample were ever involved in strikes.

In conclusion, it can be said that generally, the workers in both factories were dissatisfied with their Union. This might be due to poor communications between workers and leaders of the Union. On the other hand, poor response from the workers might be due to lack of awareness and negative attitude about the effectiveness of the Union. Many do not know their rights and other aims and purposes of the Union. Another factor which might account for this inefficiency may lie in the decentralized state of the Union, especially when these two factories were only subsidiaries whereas the operating center and committee members holding top posts were located at the parent company. Also, the researcher was told that most of these committee members were males while the bulk of the workers in both factories under study were females. Therefore, it might be due to these reasons and the inefficiency on the part of the Union which leads to the ineffectiveness of the Union as a strong representative of the workers in both these factories.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

6.1 Findings of Research

Based on a case-study carried out in a spinning factory in Johore on a comparative study in the attitude survey between respondents from the spinning factory and a garment factory, it was found that most of these textile workers are young, single, inexperienced female workers with low educational level. They are generally more easily satisfied, lack confidence and not aggressive in seeking to change their conditions. On the other hand, these female textile workers also constitute cheap labour. However, the low wages are not only related to low wages per se but also due to the very nature of their work which, with mechanisation, do not require much skill nor a high level of education.

Also, most of the textile workers, especially from the spinning factory, are generally dissatisfied with their immediate job content. But, it was also found that satisfaction with social relationships (at the work place for the garment sewing machinists and at the hostel for the workers in the spinning factory) acted as a compensation for dissatisfaction in areas like boredom and monotony of their immediate job content and poor working conditions.

The workers are also generally ignorant of other aims and purposes of a Union other than to fight for higher pay for the workers. Many joined the Union without knowing the actual role of a Union nor their rights as members. On the other hand, their lack of initiative and enthusiasm in finding these out

themselves also indicate that they themselves are not interested to participate as active, dedicated members. However, the inefficiency on the part of the Union might also account for this lack of awareness among the workers. These factors further leads to the ineffectiveness of the Union as a strong representative of the workers.

6.2 Research Weaknesses

In Chapter One, the researcher has dealt with the problems and limitations of this research. However, the researcher would like to stress again the fact that the sample obtained for this research left much to be desired. In both factories, the method of sampling used cannot be considered as a probability sample. Therefore, there is no way of evaluating the biases introduced in such samples and the researcher can only hope that she is not being too grossly misled. Also, the size of the sample is too small to be considered a good and accurate representation of the population of textile production-line workers. In addition, the findings of this research is only based on one factory and therefore one cannot safely generalize from these findings.

6.3 Suggestions and Recommendations

From the researcher's fieldwork experience, the researcher would like to suggest that Management should take pains to upgrade the welfare of their workers. This suggestion is made,

based on the fact that responses obtained qualitatively indicates that most workers appreciate any moves made by the Management towards improving their welfare. This does not necessarily be in monetary terms. In fact, it has been found that pay envelope alone do not account for the worker's job satisfaction but other factors such as social relationships, job security and working conditions also contribute towards the job satisfaction of a worker. When workers are satisfied with their total job situation, this, in turn, will help to reduce their rate of turnover which when left unchecked will affect the aim towards higher productivity.

On the other hand, the Union should try to educate the workers on the roles and aims of a Union in order to create awareness among them. They should also ensure that their communication channels with the workers are effective. Poor communication channels and lack of interest on the part of the workers can marred the effectiveness of a Union as the strong representative of the workers.

In view of the weaknesses of this research, the researcher would also like to suggest that more studies be done on textile industry especially regarding the workers' work satisfaction which indirectly affects work productivity. If possible, the research should be carried out on a larger basis using participant observation as a method for collecting data. This will contribute towards a better understanding of the worker's position and her attitude towards her job.

Lastly, the researcher hopes that this study will be of help to future research in this field.

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