CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Hypotheses

This research looks into the effects high-involvement work systems on employee satisfaction in 10 healthcare centers throughout Malaysia. HIWS has been associated with increased job satisfaction and employee commitment as well as better efficiency and effectiveness. This in return would enable healthcare centres employing HIWS to keep employees happy and retain quality care-providers. The hypothesis would be that HIWS would lead to satisfied employees in the selected 10 healthcare centers throughout Malaysia.

Other than that, this research looks to discover other factors in HIWS such as innovation, empowerment and development which can affect employee satisfaction in these centres.

The hypothesis that will be tested and analyzed in order to achieve the objectives of the study is:

Hypothesis:

Null Hypothesis : *HIWS would NOT lead to more satisfied employees at healthcare centres.*

Alternative Hypothesis : HIWS would lead to more satisfied employees at healthcare centres.

3.2. Selection of Measures

Based on the Harmon et al. 2003, the questionnaire (attached in Appendix 1) was customized to better suit the research needs in the Malaysian scenario.

The questionnaire consists of 2 parts. The first part containing 74 questions asks the respondents to describe overall conditions in their organizations as well as their own attitudes, opinions and personal experiences related to their particular job. The second part containing 8 questions requires respondents to describe their background and employment status.

The population for this study was randomly selected employees of the ten healthcare centers in Malaysia. For the purpose of this study, only 70

employees were sampled. The demographics of the samples were not controlled for this study. As this is a preliminary study, a broad scope of the samples would give a big picture of the correlations between HIWS and employee satisfaction levels in Malaysia.

The proportionate stratified random sampling method was considered however, was not implemented because it was found that the number of employees at different levels of employment scale in different healthcare centers differs in a small proportion and the number sampled may not be suitable in testing the causal relationships. Thus a disproportionate stratified random sampling method was selected instead.

3.3. Sampling Design

3.3.1. Dependent Variable: Employee Satisfaction

According to Harmon et al. 2003, employee satisfaction was measured by averaging into a single-scale the employee responses to two questions in the 1997 survey. The two questions were: (1) "Considering everything, how satisfied are you with your job?" and (2) "Considering everything, how would you rate your satisfaction with the organization at the present time?" A five-point Likert scale (fixed at 1=strongly disagree and 5=strongly agree) was used to classify the responses. In this study, responses to the

two items were significantly correlated at the facility level (r = 0.796), and together they produced a highly reliable scale (Cronbach's alpha r = 0.883). This result is comparable to Harmon et al, 2003 where the two items correlated significantly at the facility level (r = 0.81) and a Cronbach's alpha score of 0.86).

3.3.2. Independent Variable: HIWS

Still based on Harmon et al. 2003, HIWS was measured using ten items from the survey (with responses made on a Likert-type scale, with 1 as strongly disagree and 5 as strongly agree). These items asked the employees the degree to which they believed that their workplace exhibited the various characteristics that appeared to closely match the content of the HIWS construct – that is, performance-based rewards, alignment, information, involvement, empowerment, teamwork, development, trust, creativity and performance enablers. A confirmatory factor analyses indicated that these ten questions represent a single factor construct and are more reliable when used together than independently. (Cronbach's alpha r = 0.85 at the facility level). Table 3.1. lists these ten items together with their facility means and standard deviations. These ten questions would represent a single factor construct and are reliable used together (Cronbach's alpha r = 0.969) compared to independently (pair-

wise correlation of r = 0.850). This analyses was comparable to the original study of Harmon et al, 2003 where the Cronbach's alpha was at r = 0.96 and the pair-wise correlation was at r = 0.73.

Table 3.1.
High-Involvement Work System Construct Items

Item	Mean	S.D.
1. Employees are rewarded for providing high quality products and services to customers	3.23	0.84
2. Managers let employees know how their work contributes to the organization's mission and goals	3.61	0.80
3. Employees are kept informed on issues affecting their jobs	3.13	0.90
4. Sufficient effort is made to get the opinions and thinking of people who work here	3.61	0.80
5. Employees have a feeling of personal empowerment and ownership of work processes	3.67	0.91
6. A spirit of cooperation and teamwork exists	3.90	0.66
7. There is trust between employees and their supervisors/ team leaders	3.74	0.70
8. I am given a real opportunity to improve my skills in the organization	3.90	0.66
9. I feel encouraged to come up with new and better ways of doing things	3.90	0.66
10. Conditions in my job allow me to be about as productive as I could be	3.90	0.66

3.4. Data Collection Procedure

This study was conducted using the self-administered questionnaire (SAQ) method where the sampled students were required to fill the questionnaire forms as shown in Appendix 1. Participation was voluntary and all questionnaires were filled up anonymously. The response rate was at 70.0%.

3.5. Data Analysis Techniques

The data collected was checked for errors before proceeding with the analyses. Data was analyzed using the SPSS 12.0 software package and the hypothesis was also tested using the same software package.