

Institution: University of Surrey		
Unit of Assessment: UoA17 Business and Management Studies		
Title of case study: Improving International and UK policies on employee involvement and well-being		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2012-2020		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Dr Ying Zhou	Reader in Human Resources Management	March 2011 - present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2014-2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)		
<p>This issue of job quality has long been at the forefront of national and international policy agenda, but there is a shortage of empirical evidence on how to improve job quality. Drawing on large scale European labour market data, Dr Ying Zhou's research (co-authored with Professor Duncan Callie) highlights the impact of employee involvement on work motivation, skill development and subjective well-being. Her work provides strong support for the view that there are mutual benefits of high involvement for both employees and employers. This research influenced the OECD Job Quality Framework and the associated Guidelines to implement and monitor the Framework. The EU has used the research to build the argument for better member state national policies on well-being at work. The research is also used in English and Welsh policies to support improved job quality.</p>		
2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)		
<p>Over the last decade, there has been a resurgence of interest in the issue of job quality following the European Council's Lisbon Growth and Job Strategy that calls for the creation of 'more and better jobs' as a central policy goal for the European Union. Dr Ying Zhou's research focuses on job quality which lies at the interface of national and international policies to improve economic growth and competitiveness on the one hand and policies to reinforce employees' social rights and personal well-being on the other. There has been a long debate on whether these economic and social objectives are mutually reinforcing rather than requiring a trade-off of benefits. Over the last decade Dr Ying Zhou has published extensively on the impact of employee involvement on work motivation [3.1, 3.3, 3.4], skill development [3.2, 3.4, 3.5] and subjective well-being [3.1, 3.3, 3.4, 3.6], showing that there are benefits for both employees and employers when high involvement is encouraged.</p> <p>In 2012 and again in 2019, the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound) invited Dr Ying Zhou (with Professor Duncan Gallie from Oxford University) to provide research evidence on the forms of work organisation that encourage both labour productivity and employee well-being across the EU member states. Drawing on data in the 5th and 6th European Working Conditions Surveys, their reports <i>Work Organization and Employee Involvement in Europe</i> [3.3] and <i>Employee Involvement, Work Engagement and Skill Development</i> [3.4] show that employees in high involvement organisations, characterised by higher levels of job autonomy and wider organisational participation, experience a wide range of positive outcomes such as safer physical working conditions, stronger work motivation, greater learning and skill development opportunities and better physical and psychological well-</p>		

being. The main findings from the second report were published as an EU policy brief in English, French, German and Spanish in June 2020 [3.5].

Despite the wide range of benefits associated with high involvement organisations, the majority of employees in Europe were found to be employed in low involvement organisations where individuals lack discretion over their work tasks and have little say over broader organisational decisions that affect them [3.3, 3.4, 3.5]. Employees in the Nordic countries stand out as having the highest levels of involvement while those in southern and south-eastern European countries are subjected to particularly tight managerial control. These differences remain evident even after controlling for economic structure and workforce composition, which points to the role of national policies in promoting inclusiveness at work. Furthermore, the differences in job quality between countries appear impervious to the impact of the economic crisis. Drawing on the European Social Survey series, they compared job quality in nineteen European countries before and after the 2008-9 economic recession and found little change in the pattern by country or region [3.6]. These findings testify to the stability of institutional arrangements in the face of short-term economic shocks, reflecting their embeddedness in complex and interdependent formal rule systems.

In sum, the research shows that the twin objectives of economic growth and employee well-being can be achieved through the adoption of high involvement management. Encouraging employee involvement in workplace decision-making will not only satisfy individuals' inherent needs for self-determination but also increase work motivation and skill development, which will lead to smart, inclusive and sustainable economic growth.

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

3.1 Gallie D, **Zhou Y**, Felstead A, Green F, Henseke G (2017) 'The Implications of Direct Participation for Organizational Commitment, Job Satisfaction and Affective Psychological Well-Being: A Longitudinal Analysis'. *Industrial Relations Journal*, 48 (2): 174-191. <https://doi.org/10.1111/irj.12174>

3.2 Inanc H, **Zhou Y**, Gallie D, Felstead A, Green F (2015) 'Direct Participation and Employee Learning at Work'. *Work and Occupations*, 42 (4): 447-475. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0730888415580650>

3.3 Gallie D. and **Zhou, Y** (2013) *Work Organisation and Employee Involvement in Europe*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union (based on a 60% - 40% research contract with Eurofound).

3.4 Gallie D, **Zhou Y**. (2020). *Employee Involvement, Work Engagement and Skill Development*. Dublin: European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (based on a 50%-50% research contract with Eurofound).

3.5 Parent-Thirion A, Biletta I, Demetriades S, Gallie D, **Zhou Y** (2020). [Published in English, French, German and Spanish]. How Employee Involvement Benefits Organisations. European Working Conditions Survey 2015 Series, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

3.6 Gallie D. and **Zhou, Y** (2013) 'Job Control, Work Intensity and Work Stress'. In Gallie D (ed.) *Economic Crisis and the Quality of Work*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

In 2019, Dr Ying Zhou was awarded a research grant by the ESRC (£170,000) to further her research on job quality and employee well-being in the UK.

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

Dr Ying Zhou's cross-national comparative research on job quality has informed national and international policies designed to improve job quality through the OECD, the European Commission and in England and Wales.

OECD policy

In 2013, Dr Ying Zhou and Professor Duncan Gallie were invited to present their research on job autonomy and work intensity [3.6] at the OECD in Paris, in preparation for the development of the OECD Job Quality Framework. This workshop was attended by Jean-Paul Tricart (Head of Unit for Social Dialogue and Industrial Relations, European Commission), Marco Mira D'Ercole (Head of Household Statistics and Progress Measurement Division, OECD) and Mark Keese (Head of Directorate for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs). Mark Keese oversaw the subsequent development of the OECD Job Quality Framework [5.1], while Alexander Hijzen, who moderated the Q&A at the workshop, drafted the Framework. The Framework identified three broad dimensions of job quality: earnings, labour market security and quality of the working environment. Job autonomy, as identified in Dr Zhou's presentation, was recognised as a key aspect of a good working environment [5.1, p18-19] [5.2]. The OECD Job Quality Framework was officially adopted in the G20 Labour and Employment Ministers' Ankara Declaration in 2015 [5.3]. At the Heads of States Summit, Ministers of Labour and Employment from G20 members and invited countries accepted the importance of job quality as a policy goal, acknowledging that '*quality jobs are important as a key driver of greater well-being for individuals and society*' [5.3 Clause 23 Annex IV].

To facilitate the implementation of the policy recommendations from the Job Quality Framework, the OECD was asked by the G20 members to create Guidelines on *Measuring the Quality of the Working Environment* [5.4]. The Guidelines were launched at the EU's Social Summit for Fair Jobs and Growth in Gothenburg in 2017 which gathered heads of state and social partners to work on well-functioning and fair European labour markets, effective and sustainable social protection systems and the promotion of social dialogue at all levels. Dr Ying Zhou's research on the distribution and trends in employee involvement in Europe was cited five times in the Guidelines document [5.4, Chapter 3]. The research is cited in support of the fact that 'reliable data available for monitoring the quality of the working environment is essential for policy [...] to improve working conditions' [5.4 p58]. In particular, knowledge of the sectors of the workforce which are particularly vulnerable to poor working environment is essential for developing effective policy interventions to improve employee well-being.

European policy

Dr Ying Zhou was invited to present her research at Eurofound (European Union's main research agency on working conditions) at a series of meetings held in Dublin and Brussels [5.5]. In 2014 her research [3.3] was presented at a joint workshop by the European Commission and OECD in Brussels and cited in the subsequently published 2015 European Commission policy document *Employment and Social Developments in Europe* [5.6] 'which informed EU policies to improve organisational effectiveness and employee welfare.' [5.5]. The research was used to indicate that work intensity can be beneficial when combined with choice, and to recognise that job autonomy is embedded in wider institutional structures.

In 2019 Dr Ying Zhou presented her research in Dublin to Eurofound's Senior Advisory Committee which consists of representatives from governments, employers and trade unions from EU member states. The research was later presented to the Dutch Prime Minister's Scientific Council and the European Council's Working Party on Social Questions during the Finnish Presidency. In June 2020, the EU released Council Conclusions on Enhancing Well-being at Work which used the research [3.3] to support the call for enhanced employee involvement [5.7] and more broadly called on member states to develop policies to support the well-being at work agenda. This is acknowledged by Eurofound as "a significant achievement, in particular, as work organisation issue traditionally falls under the concept of subsidiarity, highlighting thus the original and ground-breaking contributions that the report is making." [5.5]. The Conclusions are supported by a policy brief [5.8] published by Eurofound and co-authored by Dr Ying Zhou, which is used to 'inform EU labour market policies' [5.5].

UK policy

Dr Ying Zhou's research has also influenced UK government policy on job quality and employee well-being. In 2013, Professor Duncan Gallie presented their joint research [3.3, 3.6] on the impact of economic recession on job quality in Europe to the Cabinet Office at No 10 Downing Street, with a particular focus on employee involvement. Their research was cited in the subsequently published *2014 UK Wellbeing and Policy Report* authored by the former Cabinet Secretary Lord Gus O'Donnell and other prominent social scientists [5.9]. More recently Dr Ying Zhou drafted the Good Work Index Report [5.10] for the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) which uses it to support its 150,000 members in HR to improve the quality of working lives.

Finally, Dr Ying Zhou's research [3.3, 3.6] has also influenced Welsh Government policy. Recognising the importance of fair work for achieving a modernised and inclusive economy, the First Minister commissioned Professor Linda Dickens MBE to Chair the Fair Work Commission and make recommendations to improve job quality. 'Fair Work Wales' was published in May 2019 on the Welsh Government website [5.11]. Ying Zhou's work was cited, and her contribution acknowledged in the report. Since the publication of the report, the Welsh government has set up the Social Partnership and Fair Work Directorate and secured a Social Partnership Act in Wales through the parliament to take forward the recommendations of the Fair Work Commission [5.12].

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

5.1 Cazes, S., A. Hijzen and A. Saint-Martin (2015). 'Measuring and Assessing Job Quality: The OECD Job Quality Framework', OECD Social, Employment and Migration Working Papers, No. 174, OECD Publishing, Paris.

https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/social-issues-migration-health/measuring-and-assessing-job-quality_5jrp02kqw1mr-en

5.2 Evidence of link to the OECD Framework

– <https://www.oecd.org/statistics/Provisional%20Workshop%20programme.pdf>

5.3 G20 Labour and Employment Ministerial declaration Ankara, 03-04 September 2015 (Clause 15, 23 Annex IV).

https://www.mhlw.go.jp/file/06-Seisakujouhou-10500000-Daijinkanboukokusaika/2015_6th.pdf
<http://www.g20.utoronto.ca/2015/G20-Framework-on-Promoting-Quality-Jobs.pdf>

5.4 OECD (2017). OECD Guidelines on Measuring the Quality of Working Environment, OECD Publishing, Paris.

<https://www.oecd.org/social/oecd-guidelines-on-measuring-the-quality-of-the-working-environment-9789264278240-en.htm>

5.5 Testimonial from Agnes Parent-Thirion, Senior Research Manager of the Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound)

5.6 European Commission (2015) *Employment and Social Developments in Europe 2014*.

Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. p145 &

p146. <https://publications.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/bc35c135-a0ca-4aae-8404-e3777f69a0b3/language-en>

5.7 *Enhancing Well-Being at Work*, Council Conclusions, General Secretariat of the Council, 8 June 2020.

<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/44350/st08688-en20.pdf>

5.8 Eurofound (2020). *How does employee involvement in decision-making benefit organisations?* European Working Conditions Survey 2015 series, Publications Office of the

European Union,
Luxembourg https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/sites/default/files/ef_publication/field_ef_document/ef19006en.pdf

5.9 O'Donnell, G., Deaton, A. Durand, M. Halpern, D. and Layard, R. (2014) *Well-being and Policy Report 2014*. London: Legatum Institute.
<https://li.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/commission-on-wellbeing-and-policy-report-march-2014-pdf.pdf>

5.10 CIPD Good Work Index 2020: UK Working Lives Survey.
https://www.cipd.co.uk/Images/good-work-index-full-report-2020-2_tcm18-79210.pdf

5.11 Fair Work Commission (2019). *Fair work Wales: Report of the Fair Work Commission*. <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-05/fair-work-wales.pdf>

5.12 Welsh Government White Paper WG39086 -*A More Equal Wales: Strengthening Social Partnership*.
<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/consultations/2019-12/strengthening-social-partnership-consultation-document.pdf>