Exploration of "pre-retirement bounce" in Quality of Working Life and Employee Engagement

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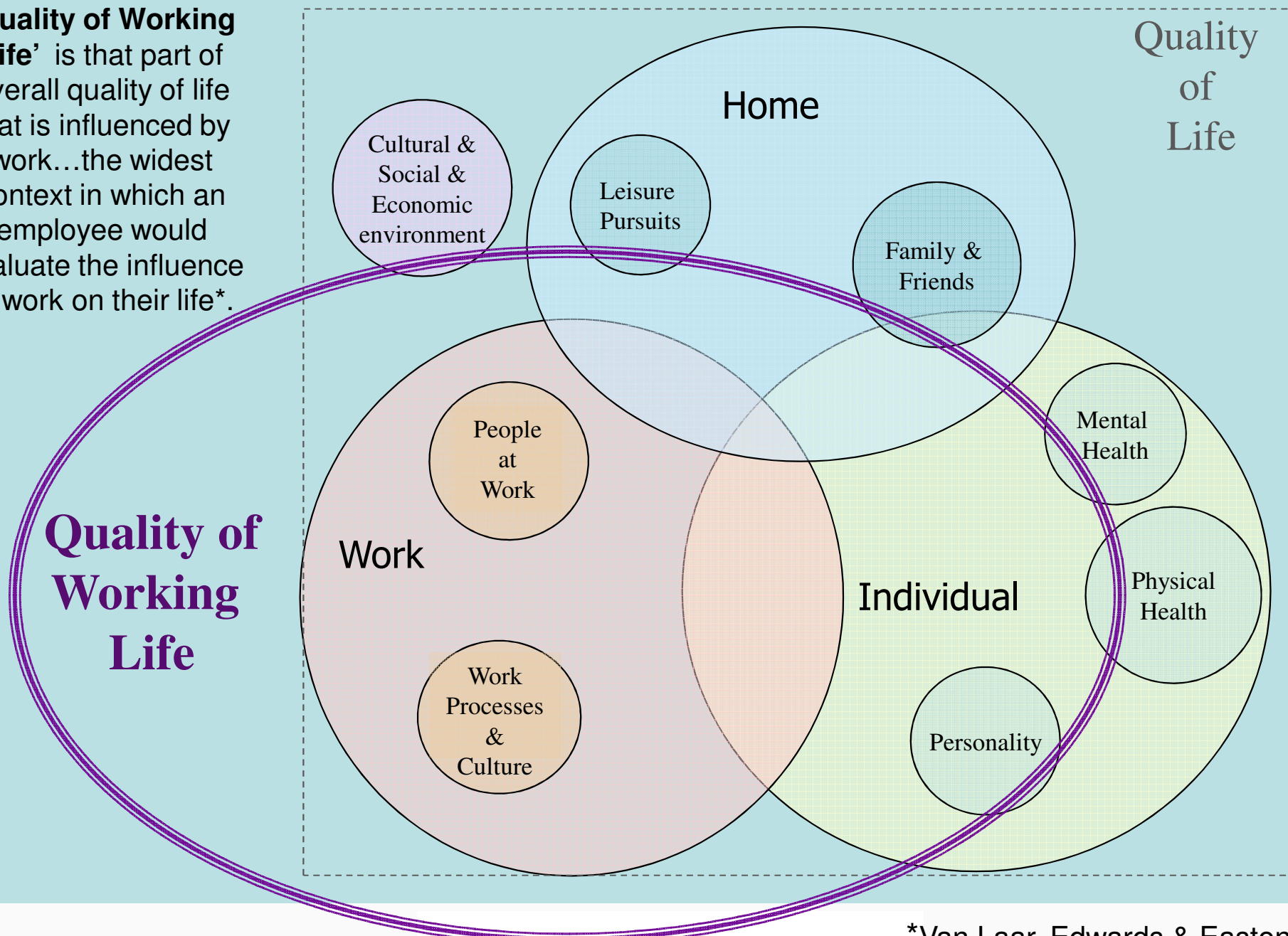
Work-Related Quality of Life

- What is Quality of Working Life?

- The WRQoL scale

- Pre-retirement bounce

- Employee Engagement

- Does Employee Engagement bounce?

- Conclusions & Policy Implications

What is QoWL?

- Quality of Working Life (QoWL) has a long history with many definitions and conceptualisations

- No satisfactory measure of QoWL existed so we looked at the literature and the needs of the organisations we worked with and came up with:
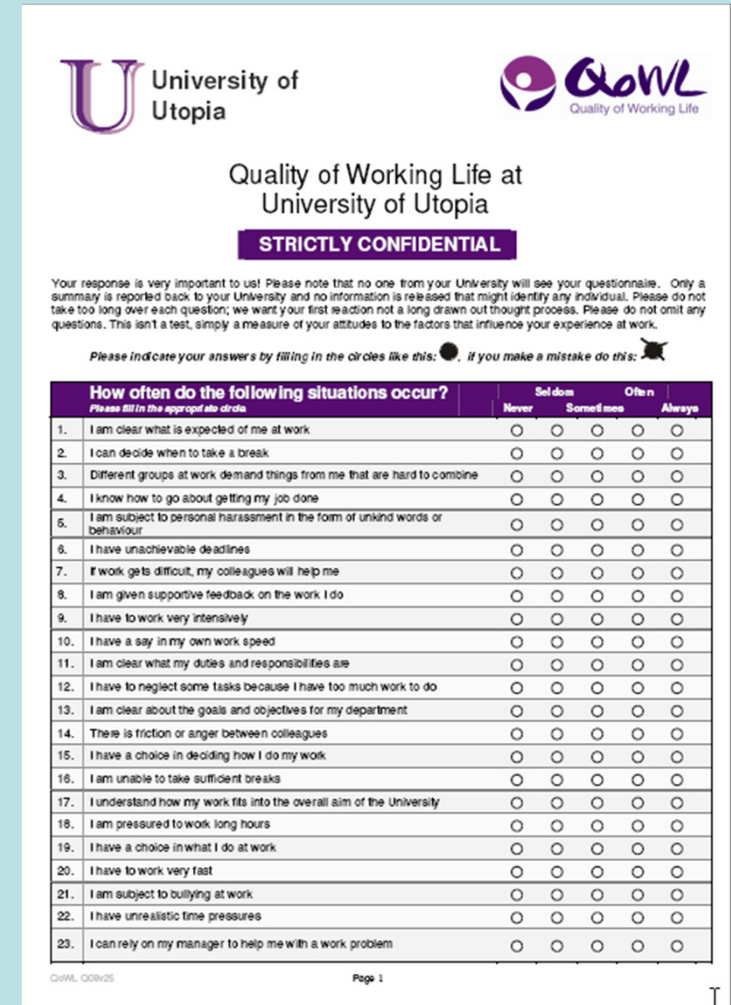
  '**Quality of Working Life** is that part of overall quality of life that is influenced by work… the widest context in which an employee would evaluate the influence of work on their life.'*

*Van Laar, Edwards & Easton (2007)   3

QoWL — Quality of Working Life

University of Portsmouth — Applied Psychology Unit

'**Quality of Working Life**' is that part of overall quality of life that is influenced by work…the widest context in which an employee would evaluate the influence of work on their life*.

Quality of Life

Home

Cultural & Social & Economic environment

Leisure Pursuits

Family & Friends

Mental Health

Physical Health

Quality of Working Life

Work

People at Work

Work Processes & Culture

Individual

Personality

*Van Laar, Edwards & Easton (2007) 4

The WRQoL scale

- The University of Portsmouth and QoWL Ltd sought to develop a valid and reliable scale to measure QoWL that organisations could use with confidence

- The Work Related Quality of Life scale has 23 items and 6 factors. WRQoL surveys report overall reliabilities (Cα) from .91 to .94 and CFAs have shown a generally strong, stable factor structure

*Van Laar, Edwards & Easton (2007); Van Laar, Easton & Bradshaw (2009)
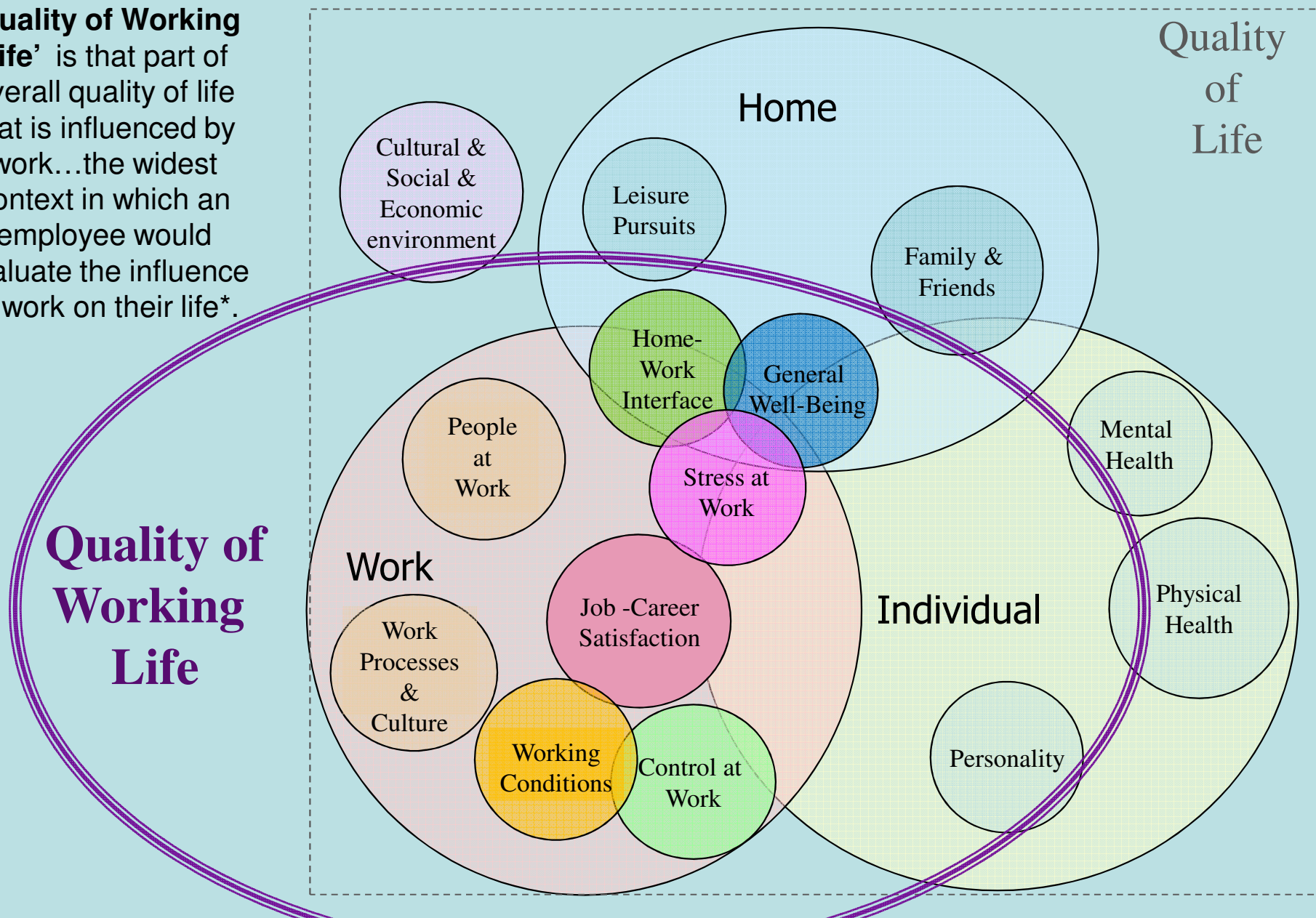
WRQoL Scale Factors*

- **Job Career Satisfaction (JCS)** : α = .86

  How far you agree that you are generally happy with your ability to do your work

- **General Well Being (GWB)** : α = .89

  How much you agree you feel generally content with life as a whole

- **Home-Work Interface (HWI)** : α = .82

  How far you agree that the organisation understands and tries to help you with pressures outside of work

- **Stress at Work (SAW)** : α = .81

  How far you feel agree you experience stress at work

- **Control at Work (CAW)** : α = .81

  How far you agree you feel you are involved in decisions that affect you at work

- **Working Conditions (WCS)** : α = .75

  The extent you agree that you are happy with conditions in which you work

'Quality of Working Life' is that part of overall quality of life that is influenced by work…the widest context in which an employee would evaluate the influence of work on their life*.

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Job -Career Satisfaction

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Work Processes & Culture

Working Conditions

Control at Work

Personality

Quality of Working Life

*Van Laar, Edwards & Easton (2007)   7

WRQoL Applications

- Since 2003 the scale has been used by over 10% of UK Universities, the 4 largest HE Unions, Parts of large charitable organisations (BBC, RNLI), NHS Trusts, Schools & Others

- Large-sample norms are available for University and Healthcare workers

- Used by researchers in 20+ countries

- Translated into: American English, Chinese, Farsi, Turkish & Welsh

Pre-retirement Bounce

- In our latest research using a sample of 9 Universities (4 Pre '92, 3 Post '92, 2 post '95) we analysed the average 23-item WRQoL scores by age and gender

Gender	Age in years				
	under 25	25-44	45-59	60 or over	Total
Male	35	663	608	126	1432
Female	104	1320	855	86	2365
Total	139	1983	1463	212	3797

- Average of 33% response rate, 3797 responses with data for all questions.
- Cronbach's Alpha for all 23 items = .94

QoWL
Quality of Working Life

University of
Portsmouth

Applied
Psychology
Unit

The Pre-retirement bounce

Average Work Related Quality of Life Scale scores by Age group (2SE bars)

UK University Sample; N = 3797

(Age = p <.001)
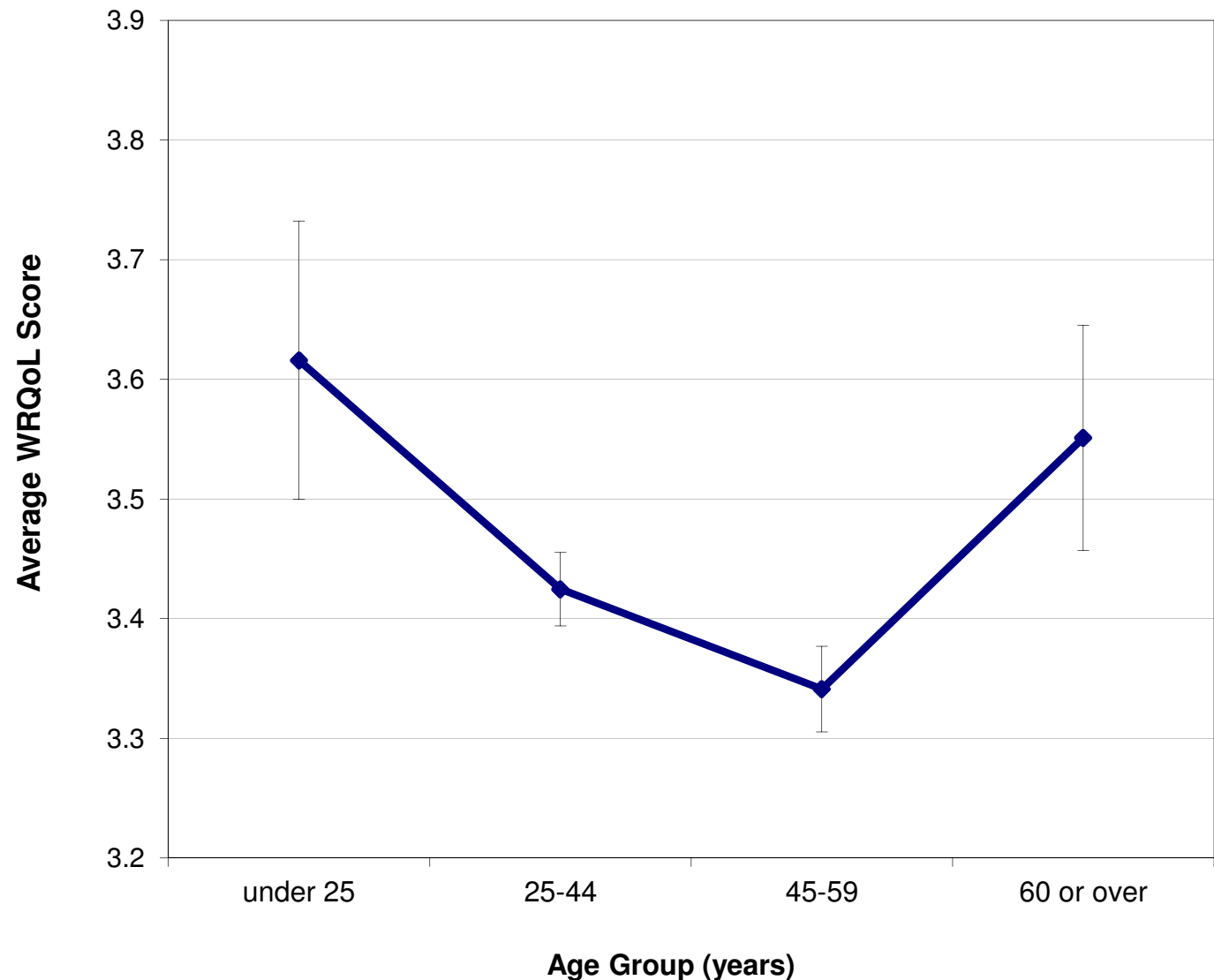
The Pre-retirement bounce

Work Related Quality of Life Scale scores by gender and age group (2SE bars)

UK University Sample; N = 3797

(Gender = ns; Age = p <.001; Interaction p = .013)
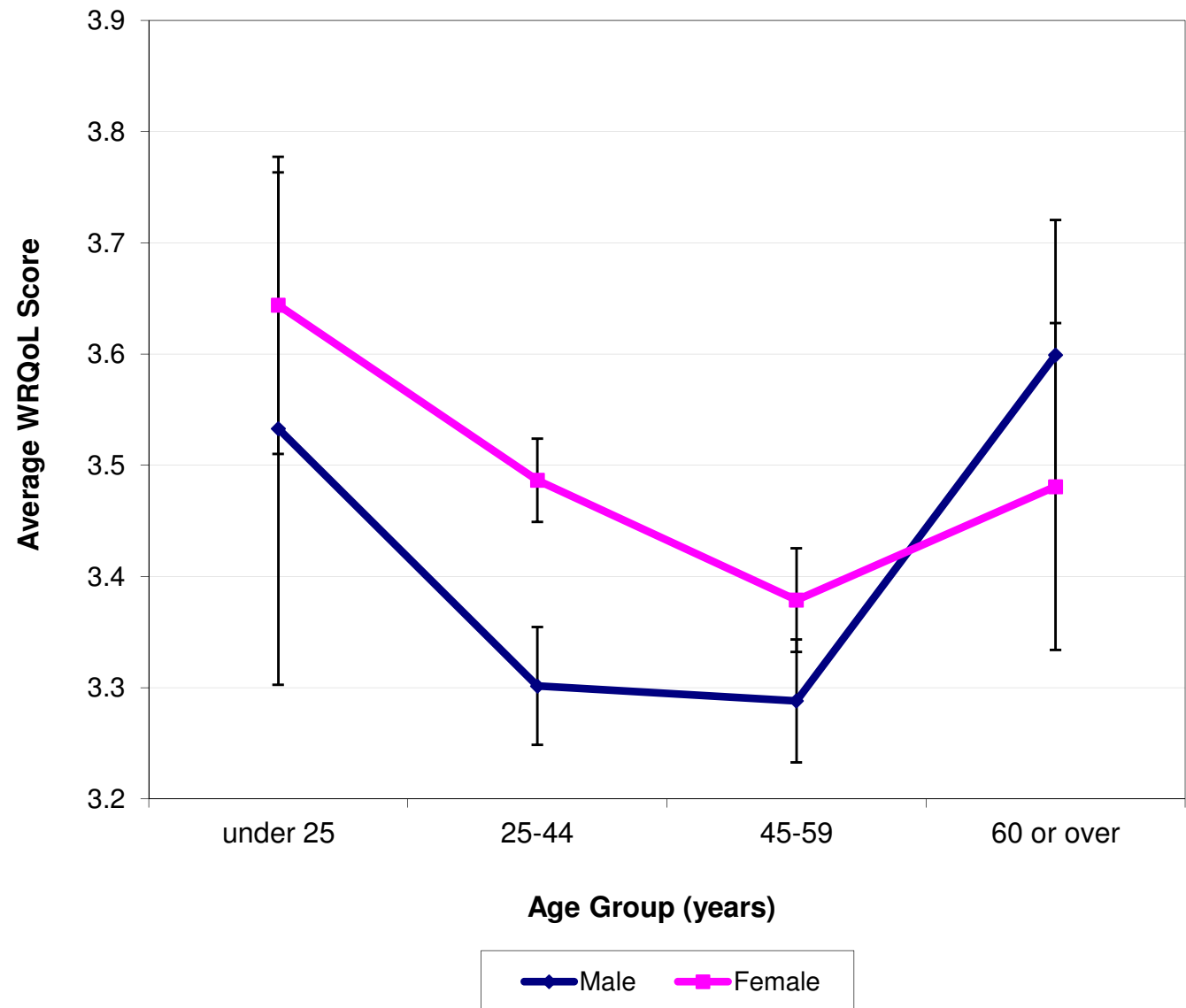
Employee Engagement (EE)

- We were interested in whether Employee Engagement contributed to QoWL. Where EE: 'a positive attitude held by the employee towards the organisation and its values*'

- In our UK University survey we had also asked a number of other questions. E.g. '*I am proud to tell others I am part of this organisation*'; '*I am motivated to do my best in my job*'

- 5 of these questions loaded together to form a stable Employment Engagement factor (Cα = 0.853)

- The Employee Engagement factor was found to be correlated .792 with the overall average of the other 6 WRQoL factors (23 + 5 item WRQoL, Cα = 0.951)

*Robinson et al (2004) 12

Does Employee Engagement bounce?

- Our Employee Engagement survey also provided data to investigate pre-retirement bounce

- Would Employee Engagement also be expected to start high, dip down mid career and then 'bounce' just before retirement?

Pre-retirement bounce exists for Employee Engagement

Employee Engagement scores by age group (2SE bars)

UK University Sample; N = 3797

(Age is sig., p = .001)
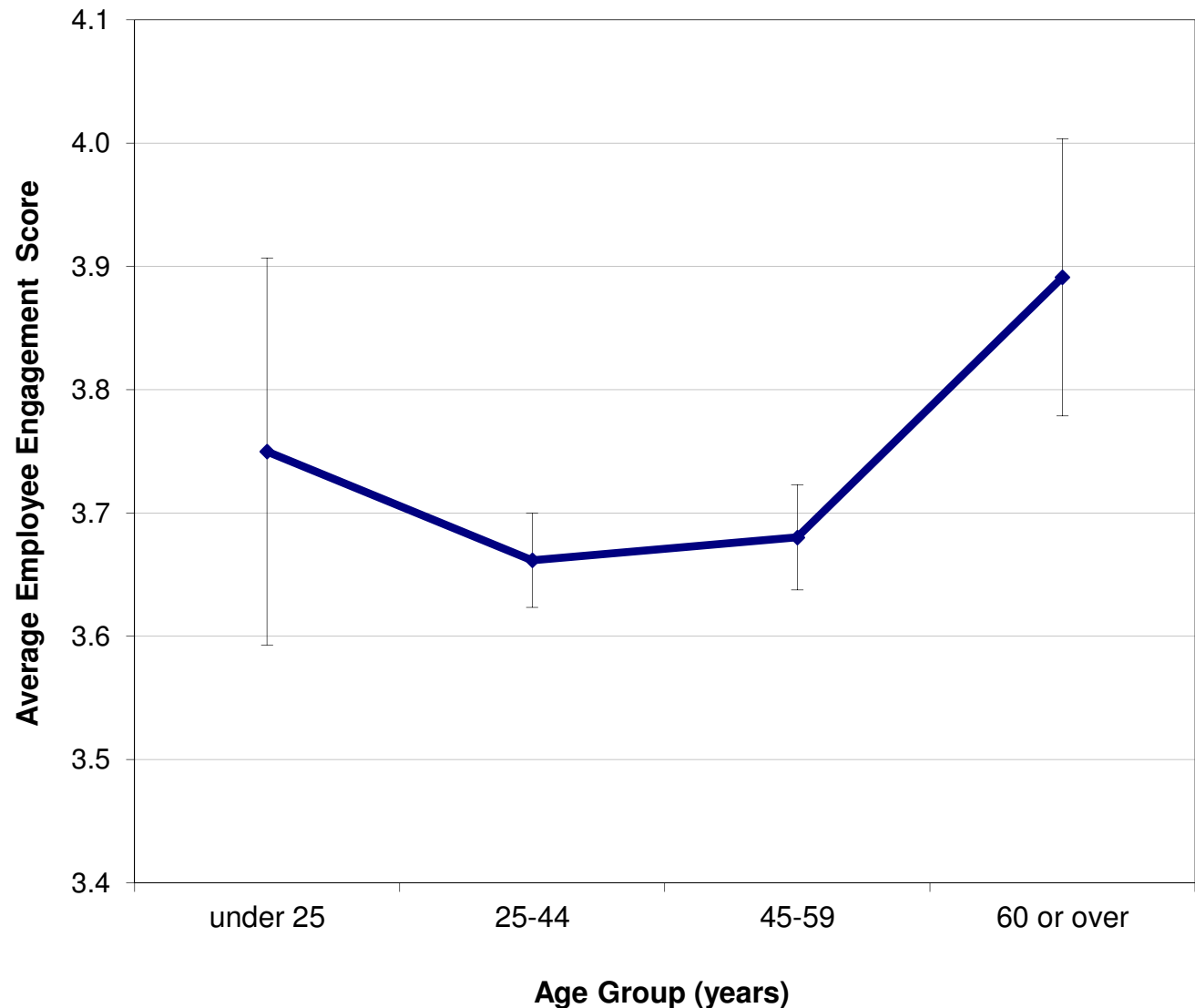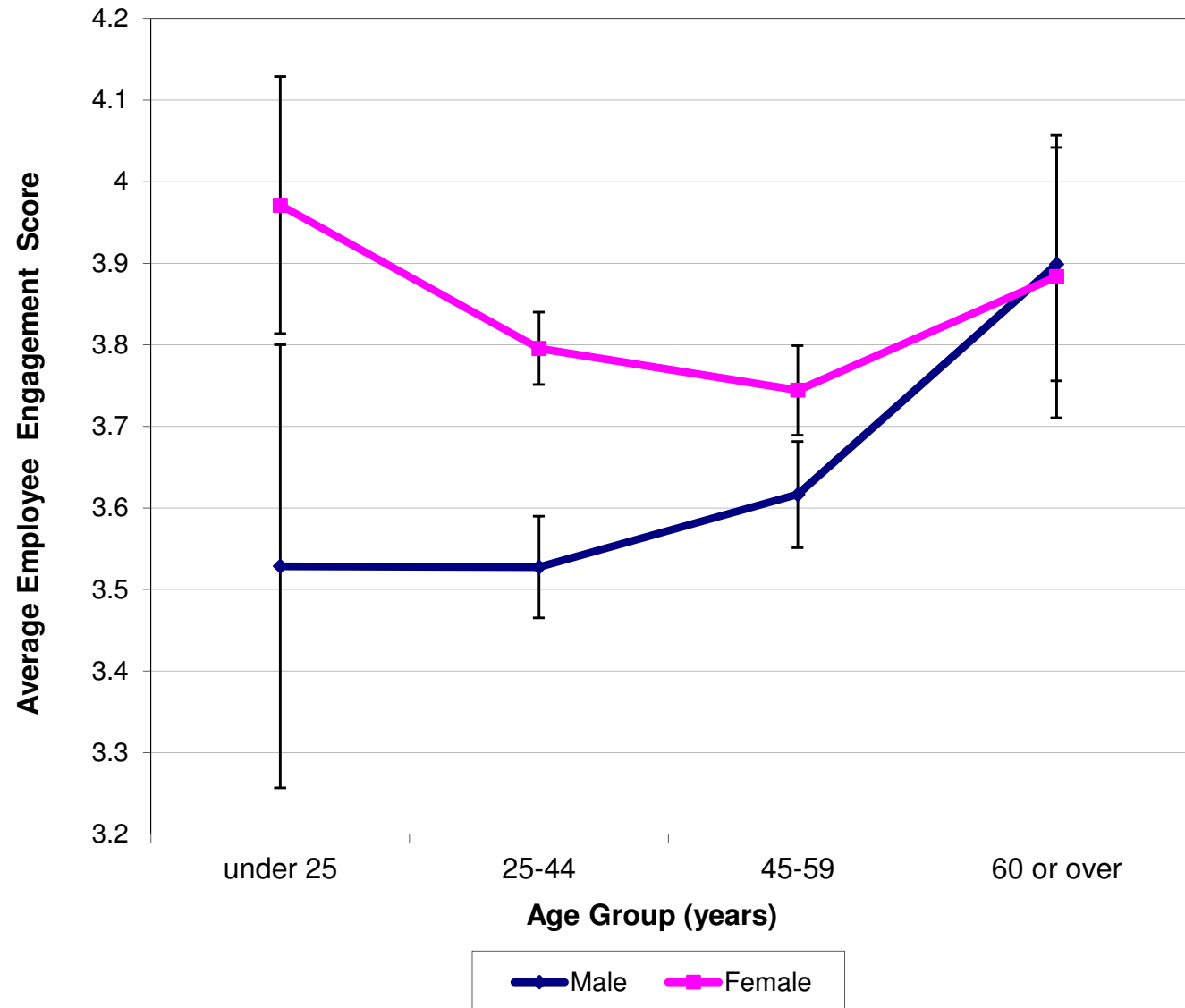
Women bounce, Men jump

Employee Engagement scores by gender and age group (2SE bars)

UK University Sample; N = 3797

(Gender, Age & Interaction all sig. p< .01)

Why men <u>do</u> jump

- Women appear to start highly engaged, dip, then bounce just before retirement

- Men start very low, slowly build in engagement then make a large jump in engagement just before retirement

- It could be that the longer you are with an organisation the more you come to identify with it and its values

- Perhaps men tend to avoid early commitment, whereas women like to commit early, become disillusioned, but then come to value the organisation just as they consider leaving it

Conclusions & Policy Implications

- The WRQoL scale measures a broad range of QoWL factors across work and non-work life domains. When compared across age groups, WRQoL score profiles show a clear pre-retirement bounce

- A new 5–item Employee Engagement factor has been developed which appears to complement the existing WRQoL scale

- Overall the Employee Engagement factor shows a clear pre-retirement bounce, but the bounce 'trajectory' differs by gender

- Expecting workers to stay in their jobs past the current statutory retirement age may well delay pre-retirement bounce in overall WRQoL, but may further increase levels of employee engagement

- That Employee Engagement is so low for early-career men needs further investigation and organisations may want to encourage more early engagement to get the best from all their employees
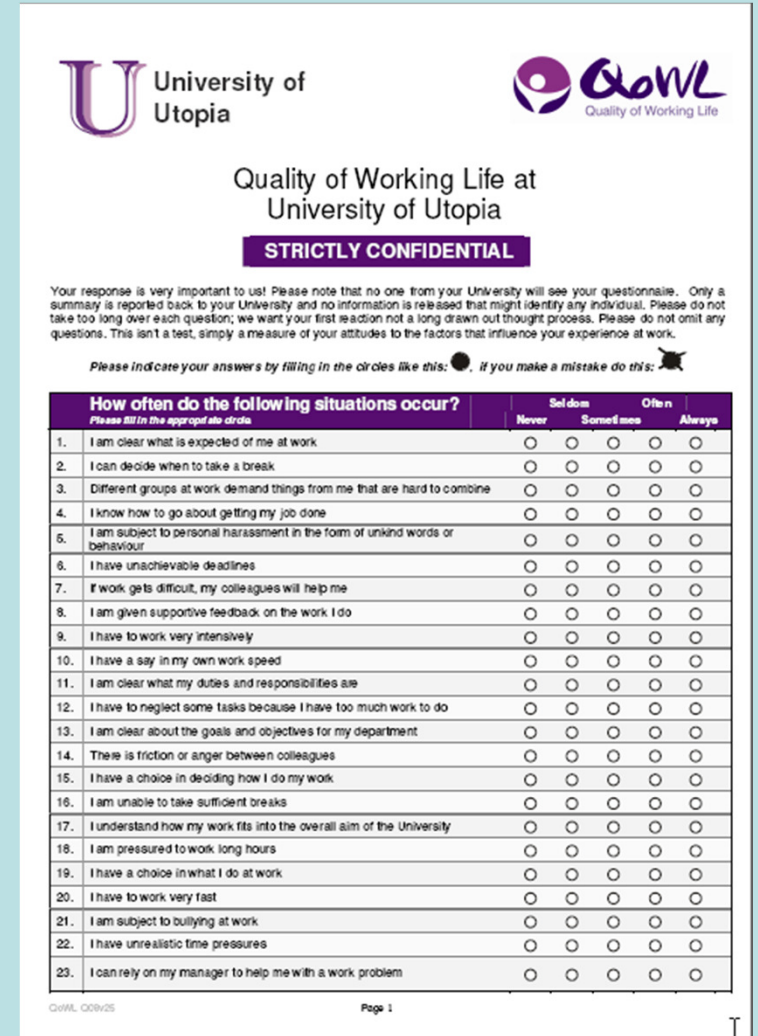
Future Research

We continue to work on the validity of the WRQoL scale and to determine whether the profiles stay the same across a wide range of ages, organisations and nations by:

- Pairing it with other scales (e.g. UK HSE Stress scale, Workability scale) and outcome variables (productivity, illness, sleep quality, etc.)

- Collecting large scale data for norm groups in other areas (e.g. Schools, Government, Police, Business)

- Researching the questionnaire to ensure it remains valid with key staff groups (Older workers, younger workers, disabled workers)

WRQoL Availability

- QoWL Ltd provide staff surveys and organisational development advice based around the WRQoL core question set and license the scale and the analysed results to consultants

- The WRQoL scale is freely available to researchers in return for using the data collected to develop norm groups and benchmarks

- See www.qowl.co.uk for more information

References

⚫ Edwards, J. A., Webster, S., Van Laar, D. And Easton, S. (2008). Psychometric analysis of the UK Health and Safety Executive's Management Standards work-related stress Indicator Tool, *Work & Stress*, 22(2), 96 - 107.

⚫ Edwards, J., Van Laar, D.L., Easton, S. & Kinman, G. (2009). The Work-Related Quality of Life (WRQoL) scale for Higher Education Employees. *Quality in Higher Education*. 15: 3, 207-219.

⚫ Robinson, D., Perryman, S. and Hayday, S. (2004). *The Drivers of Employee Engagement*. Institute of Employments Studies, Report 408.

⚫ Van Laar, D. L., Edwards, J. A. & Easton, S. (2007). The Work-Related Quality of Life (QoWL) scale for Healthcare Workers. *Journal of Advanced Nursing.* 60(3), 325-333.

⚫ Van Laar, D. L., Easton, S. & Bradshaw, A. (2009). Pre-retirement bounce. http://www.pressdispensary.co.uk/releases/992493.php

That's it - Thanks for listening!

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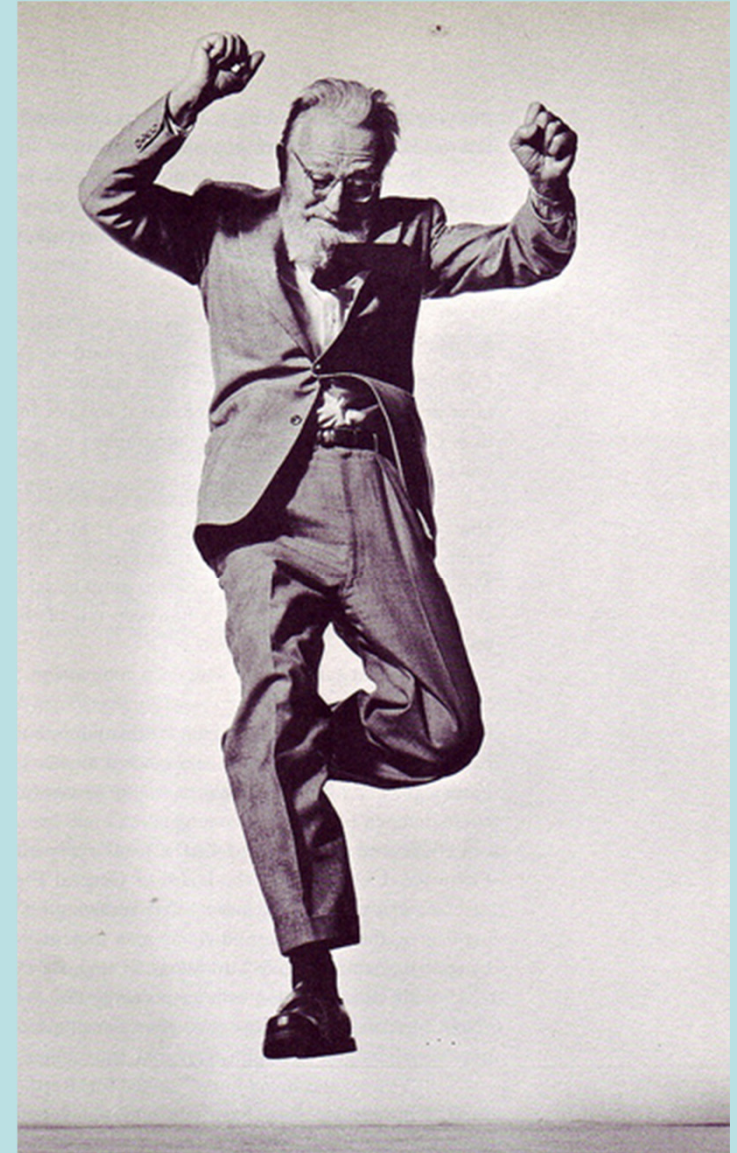
Dr Darren Van Laar,
Applied Psychology Unit, Department of Psychology, University of Portsmouth, UK

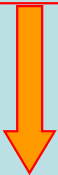Mr Simon Easton, Consultant Psychologist, QoWL Ltd.

Influences on Quality of Working Life

The Individual

Personality   Attitudes
IQ   Needs
Age   Well-being
Gender   Coping styles…
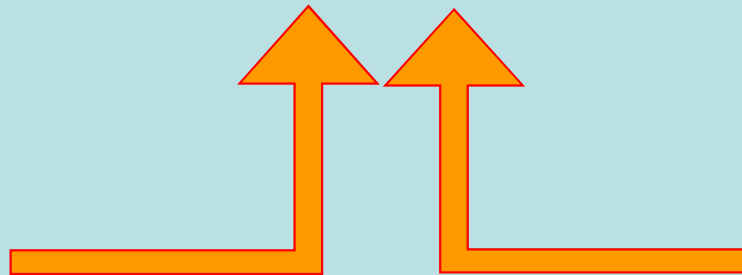
The Home

Accommodation   Finances
Family   Lifestyle
Friends   Culture…

The Job

Training   Opportunity
Job-person fit   Resources
Control   Task
Motivation   Demands
Perceived Equity   Stress

International Context

Terrorism, World economy…

National Context

Interest rates ,Transport
Government action
Environmental issues...

The Organisation

Culture   Turnover
Job security   Reward
Trust   Shift work…

The Workplace

Colleagues   Job satisfaction
Manager   Sick absence
Job design   Work environment...

Development of the WRQoL scale

- The healthcare data set (N = 953) produced a 6 factor structure with the 23 items (Overall C's α = .91) with a final 'good' model fit of:

  χ^2 (216, N = 953) = 866.46 p < 0.01, CFI = .943, GFI = .93, NFI = .92 and RMSEA = .05

- The 6 factor, 23-item 'Work-Related Quality of Life' (WRQoL) scale appeared to be a valid and reliable scale with good psychometric properties