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FLEXIBLE WORKING ARRANGEMENTS, JOB DESIGN AND JOB SATISFACTION AMONG MANUFACTURING EMPLOYEES

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Abstract

Nowadays, the necessity to have a well-designed job and flexible working arrangement has been as very crucial among employees in promoting a better job environment and increasing employee satisfactions. This paper aims to examine the effects between job design and flexible working arrangement towards job satisfaction among manufacturing employees in Melaka. The questionnaires were distributed only to manufacturing employees in Melaka. A total of 165 respondents answered the questionnaire. The descriptive analysis reported the demographic profiles of respondents. Furthermore, correlation analysis show that job design and flexible working arrangement have positive relationship with job satisfaction. The results show that the manufacturing employees in Melaka realized the importance of both job design and flexible working arrangement towards their job satisfaction. This research would act as a guidance to organizations and relevant authorities in Malaysia to enhance employee's job design and adapting flexible working arrangement to make it relevant in today's environment.

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1. Introduction

In recent year, the rapid change in business world has created high competition among players in manufacturing sector (Hee & Jing, 2018). Retaining employees is crucial to run effectively in this competitive environment (Mabaso & Dlamini, 2017). According to Wheatley (2017), providing flexible working arrangement to employees is part of ways to keep employees to stay in the company, in which one of the ways is to provide a quality work life for them. The transformation on how companies work by offering flexible working arrangement not only beneficial to employees but also create a competitive advantage to organizations (Jayabalan, 2018). Furthermore, an attractive job design is also one of the attraction to retain employees. Based on Belias and Sklikas (2013), an effective job design will maximize the employee's talent and increase their efficiency. This purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between flexible working arrangement and job design towards job satisfaction among manufacturing employees in Melaka.

According to article by Focus Malaysia (2018), there are 8 out of 10 employees around the world who preferred to have a maximum flexibility in their working environment as it will permits employees to sustain a balance between work and life. Furthermore, McLaren (2018) stated that employees will be more satisfied and engaged with flexible working arrangement. Not only that, employees are also keen to stay in their role longer if their company is flexible on working hours and work location. By comparing to Hong Kong, Singapore, and China, Malaysian employees aged between 55 and 67 years old prefer to have this flexible working environment as it can enhance their overall job satisfaction and play a crucial role in refining better lifestyle. Chia (2018) also revealed a research done by LinkedIn, where it was found that almost half of the Asia Pacific population look for flexibility in working environment which promotes a balance between work and life as their critical element of their job aspiration. Additionally, this flexible work arrangement also will empower employees to control their schedules which will reduce the level of stress (Diab, 2016).

According to Belias and Sklikas (2013), job design is defined as a systematic work arrangement and duties in an organization. They also mentioned that job design can be applied through many techniques such as job rotation, job simplification and job enrichment. According to Wood and Menezes (2011) the joy of working for employees are highly influenced by how the jobs are designed. Additionally, it is also mentioned that job design has an impact towards employee's well-being. An effective job design will boost employee's efficiency and improve employee's health which concurrently will create a good attachment with workplace (Kossek et al., 2013). Moreover, workplaces that provide a quality of work life program generally are equipped with structured and efficient job design which will increase loyalty among employees (Yirik & Babur, 2014).

2. Problem Statement

The primary aim for this study is to examine the correlation between flexible working arrangement and job design towards job satisfaction. The importance of having employee job satisfaction has been widely discussed in previous literatures. However, even though there are substantial literatures on job design and flexible working arrangements, very limited studies have been done on job satisfaction among

manufacturing industries in Malaysia (Groen et al., 2018). This study explores the manufacturing industries, as different industries might have different practices that employees satisfied with (Ahmad & Scott, 2015).

The importance of job design in this competitive world became challenging for human resource management. Tufail et al. (2017) defined job design as duties and responsibilities of employees to be completed. Moreover, according to Abid et al. (2013) job design is vital as one of the instruments to measure the employee's job satisfaction. Organizations need to well design job for employees as it will influence their behavioural and psychological outcomes such as their performance and satisfaction (Panatik, 2012). However, in manufacturing sector, changes in job design will give a challenge to the employer as they have to work within limitations in this sustainable environment (Sinclair et al., 2015). Job design is important as a tool to motivate, reduce employee's problem, and increase their satisfaction (Hassan et al., 2015).

Nowadays, it is common for organizations to have a flexibility at workplace which has become a basic need for employees (Jayabalan, 2018). The flexible working arrangement can be varied, such as imposing flexible working hours, telecommuting or any arrangements to accommodate employee's needs (Hornung et al., 2008; Pyne & Llc, 2004). However, Hornung et al. (2008) argued that even though flexible working arrangement promotes positive employee's well-being, employees might be seen as lacking in commitment towards their jobs and would be a challenge for superordinate to control employee's actions (Groen et al., 2018). In Malaysia, there are 75% women who has quit their job because of lack of flexibility in their workplace (Rakin, 2018). Furthermore, Kotey and Sharma (2019) agreed that flexible work hours did not increase job satisfaction but it helps to decrease the number of employee turnover.

Lee (2019) reported that the deindustrialization economy of Malaysia has been seen in the decline of GDP in manufacturing sectors and the total employment. Moreover, according to Perumal et al. (2018), due to competitiveness and non-fixed production time, it leads to longer and non-flexible working hour time of manufacturing employees, plus it prohibits employees to have quality time with family. The researchers also mentioned that the results of this non-flexi hours led to high turnover intention.

On the other hand, according to Employee Job Happiness Index 2017 done by Jobstreet (2015), it is reported that 74% of total respondents has informed that they are not satisfied with their existing jobs. Job satisfaction is defined as an inclination feeling of employees due to individual's experience at work place (Yusof et al., 2014). Conversely, employees with low satisfaction will lead to poorer job performance (Ohtsuka et al., 2014). Moreover, according to Perumal et al. (2018), an independent worker who handles many tasks beyond their capacity contributed to employees dissatisfaction in manufacturing industry in Malaysia.

3. Research Questions

3.1. What is the relationship between job design and employee job satisfaction?

Organizations start to practice flexible working arrangement many years ago, as the demand to have a balance between work and life is increasing (McNall et al., 2010). Based on research done by Wheatley (2017), organizations need to provide flexible working arrangement as it will lead to employee job satisfaction. This flexible working arrangement policy is also crucial to avoid work-life conflict among employees and to increase their satisfaction (Čiarnienė et al., 2018)).

3.2. What is the relationship between flexible working arrangement and job satisfaction

Parker et al. (2019) indicate that poor work design would lead to burnout, low engagement and dissatisfaction. Additionally, well-designed jobs also encourage employees to be more creative and innovative. However, Abid et al. (2013) mentioned that job design and employee job satisfaction has been debated since many years ago. They also found that a good job design would optimize employee performance and satisfaction (Tsuma & Omondi, 2015).

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to look on the relationship between job design and flexible working arrangements towards employee's job satisfaction.

5. Research Methods

In order to examine the relationship between job design and flexible working arrangement towards employees job satisfaction among manufacturing workers in Melaka, this study has adapted a quantitative study done by (Mutheu et al. 2017). A survey consists of questions related to demographic profiles, job design, flexible working arrangement and employee's job satisfaction were distributed to administrative staffs among manufacturing companies in Melaka. Convenience sampling method has been employed in collecting the data. Based on Etikan et al. (2016), a convenience sampling method serves when respondents are easy to reach, available at the period of time and their willingness to answer the questionnaire. Hence, this study is focusing on administrative staffs that are available at the period of questionnaire distribution. 165 administrative staffs from manufacturing companies in Melaka have answered this self-administered questionnaire. Moreover, after collection, the data were turned into descriptive analysis and Pearson correlation analysis.

6. Findings

6.1. Descriptive Analysis

Referring to Table 01 below, it is reported that 115 female with 69.7% and 50 male with 30.3% have answered the questionnaire given among the manufacturing employees in Melaka. Based on the respondents profile below, from 165 respondents, 72 respondents are aged between 18 – 29 years old (43.6%), followed by 30 to 39 years old with 57 respondents (34.5%), 40 to 49 years old with 26 respondents (15.8%) and the minority are respondents aged 50 years old with total of 10 respondents (6.1% only). Moreover, there are 86 respondents who are married (52.1%), followed by single status with 60 respondents (36.4%) and 19 of them are divorced, which covered 11.5% respondents. In addition to respondents profile, it is reported that majority of respondents, which made up of 59 respondents have between 2 to 5 years working experience, followed by 50 respondents that have less than 2 years working experiences, while there are only 36 respondents with 6 to 10 years working experience and the minority are 20 respondents with more than 10 years working experiences. Furthermore, it is reported that a

significant number of 58.8% respondents were paid between RM1,000 to RM2,999, 40.0% with income between RM3,000 to RM4,999 and only 2 respondents (1.2%) with income more than RM5,000.

Table 01. Respondents Profile

Criteria	Category	Number	Percentage
Gender	Male	50	30.3%
	Female	115	69.7%
Age Group	18 – 29 years old	72	43.6%
	30 – 39 years old	57	34.5%
	40 – 49 years old	26	15.8%
	50 years old and above	10	6.1%
Marital Status	Single	60	36.4%
	Married	86	52.1%
	Divorced	19	11.5%
Working Experiences	Less than 2 years	50	30.3%
	2-5 years	59	35.8%
	6-10 years	36	21.8%
	More than 10 years	20	12.1%
Level of Income	RM1000 – RM2,999	97	58.8%
	RM 3,000 – RM4,999	66	40.0%
	RM 5,000 and above	2	1.2%

6.2. Correlation Analysis

The correlation analysis between job design and flexible working arrangement towards employee job satisfaction are shown in Table 02. This study resulted that job design has a positive relationship towards job satisfaction ($r=0.613$). This result is also found by Abid et al. (2013) which depicted that a good job design will lead to job satisfaction. While a bad job design by companies will lead to job dissatisfaction. The results in Table 2 also depicted the positive relationship between flexible working arrangements towards employee job satisfaction. ($r=0.283$). According to Altindag and Siller (2014), flexible working arrangement not only led to employee job satisfaction but also contribute to organization's loyalty.

Table 02. Correlation Analysis

	Employee Job Satisfaction (p-value)	Job Design (p-value)	Flexible Working Arrangement (p-value)	Fringe Benefits (p-value)
Employee Job Satisfaction	-	0.613**	0.283**	0.744**
Job Design	0.613**	-	0.669**	0.531**
Flexible Working Arrangement	0.283**	0.669**	-	0.328**
Fringe Benefits	0.744**	0.531**	0.328**	-

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

7. Conclusion

Result on job design shows the significant relationship with job satisfaction. In contrast, Patel (2015) suggested for employer to give empowerment to employees to design their own job. This would increase more satisfaction among employees. Moreover, referring to TalentCorp Malaysia website, the technological changes has pushed companies to offer more flexible work. Since there are 115 female respondents, it shows that this flexible work arrangement has given them a balance between work and life especially to those with kids in order to have balance between the role of a mother and the role of employee. Moreover, due to industrial revolution, Čiarnienė et al. (2018) suggested that organizations need to offer flexible working arrangement accordingly by adapting to changing environment. Schooley (2019) proposed that employees need to assess their own needs in identifying factors that will give them a work-life wellbeing which works differently with other individuals.

It is important for organizations to enhance the practices of job design and flexible working arrangement. This era is different in which it is crucial for organizations to adapt with the demands of talent instead of employees adapting to the organizations (Ahmad, 2016). Hence, organizations are advised to fulfill the employee's demand in making the talent in the organizations relevant with today's labour market. Furthermore, this result also will enlighten the employers the importance of job design and flexible working arrangement in satisfying employees. However, this study can be improved by increasing the number of respondents that is not limited only to the administrative staffs in order to have in-depth results on the manufacturing industry.

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