JOB DESIGN FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE EMPLOYEES' ENGAGEMENT AND INTENTION TO QUIT: A STUDY AT PRIVATE HIGHER LEARNING INSTITUTION IN KOTA KINABALU, SABAH

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JUDUL: REKABENTUK KERJA FAKTOR MEMPENGARUHI KESUNGGUHAN PEKERJA DAN KEINGINAN UNTUK BERHENTI: SATU KAJIAN DI INSTITUSI PENGAJIAN TINGGI SWASTA DI KOTA KINABALU, SABAH.

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DECLARATION

The materials in this dissertation are original except for quotations, excerpts, summaries and references which have been duly acknowledged.

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to determine whether the job design factors influence the employees’ engagement and intention to quit. Primary data was collected using a questionnaire. About 113 respondents from Private Higher Learning Institution in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah participated in this study. The respondents chosen for this study are private higher learning institution’s employees from nine universities namely Institut Pengurusan Dinamik Sabah (IPDS), Eastern College, Kolej Yayasan Sabah (KYS), Asian Tourism Institute (ATI), Stamford College, Kinabalu Commercial College, Cosmo Point College, International University College Technology Twintech (IUCTT) and INTI College. Data collected was analyzed by utilizing the SPSS computer software program. Through this study design, we can see the results of the hypotheses testing which involved the relationship between those three variables; ‘Independent Variable’ (Job design), Intervening Variable (Employees’ engagement) and ‘Dependent Variable’ (Intention to Quit). The analysis of available data indicated that there is a significant relationship between the job design and intention to quit, there is a significant relationship between the job design and employees’ engagement, there is a significant relationship between the employees’ engagement and intention to quit and the employees’ engagement has significance to mediate the relationship between job design and intention to quit. The study recommends that the employers need to ensure the job design is clear and well design. They should pay more attention to some factors such as task significance and employees’ engagement to keep employees’ retention in the organizations.
Tujuan utama bagi kajian ini adalah untuk menentukan sama ada reka bentuk kerja "job design" mempengaruhi kesungguhan pekerja "employees' engagement" dan keinginan untuk berhenti "intention to quit". Data primari dikumpul dengan menggunakan kajian soal selidik. Bilangan sampel seramai 113 orang dari 9 buah Institusi Pengajian Tinggi Swasta di Kota Kinabalu, Sabah telah mengambil bahagian dalam kajian soal selidik ini. Sampel yang dipilih untuk kajian ini ialah pekerja-kerja yang berkhidmat di institusi pengajian tinggi swasta di Sabah seperti Institut Pengurusan Dinamik Sabah (IPDS), Kolej Eastern, Kolej Yayasan Sabah, Institusi Pelancongan Asia (ATI), Kolej Stamford, Kolej Perdagangan Kinabalu (KCC), Kolej Cosmopoint, Kolej Universiti Teknologi Twintech (IUCCT) dan Kolej INTI. Data yang dikumpul kemudian dianalisis dengan menggunakan program SPSS. Melalui kajian ini, keputusan daripada percubaan hyphotesis yang mengandungi hubung kait di antara tiga 'variables' iaitu 'Independent Variable' rekabentuk kerja (Job design), 'Intervening Variable' Kesungguhan pekerja (employees' engagement) dan 'Dependent Variable' keinginan untuk berhenti (intention to quit) dapat di lihat. Keputusan menunjukkan bahawa hubungkait di antara rekabentuk kerja (Job design) dan keinginan untuk berhenti (intention to quit) adalah positif, hubungkait di antara rekabentuk kerja (Job design) dan kesungguhan pekerja (employees' engagement) adalah positif, hubungkait di antara kesungguhan pekerja (employees' engagement) dan keinginan untuk berhenti (intention to quit) adalah positif manakala kesungguhan pekerja (employees' engagement) sebagai faktor penengah kepada hubungkait di antara rekabentuk pekerja (job design) dan keinginan untuk berhenti (intention to quit) juga positif. Kajian ini mencadangkan bahawa majikan perlu memastikan reka bentuk kerja adalah jelas dan sempurna. Majikan juga perlu menumpukan perhatian kepada beberapa faktor seperti kesungguhan pekerja (employees' engagement) dan signifikasi kerja (task significance) supaya dapat mengelakkan pekerja daripada keinginan untuk berhenti.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

The purpose of this research is to find out the impact of job design towards employees’ engagement and intention to quit at ten private higher learning institutions in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah which includes Institut Pengurusan Dinamik Sabah (IPDS), Eastern College, Kolej Yayasan Sabah (KYS), Cosmopoint College, PTPL College, Asian Tourism Institute (ATI), Stamford College, Kinabalu Commercial College (KCC), International University College Technology Twintech (IUCTT) and INTI College.

There are few elements contained in job design process such as Job enlargement, job enrichment, job range, job depth, job rotation, working arrangement, flextime, job sharing and job characteristics. In order to reduce the turnover in the organization, the employers have to be concerned about the issue of quality of work life when designing job for their employees. As for the job design, it is the process on how job is being made to be adapting in any organizations. It is also the purpose of improving the employee performance. “Job design is to increase both employee motivation and productivity” (Rush, 1971). Increased productivity can manifest itself in various forms. For example, the focus can be that of improving quality and quantity of goods and services, reduce operation costs, and/or reduce turnover and training costs” (Encarnacion, 1995).

From the definition stated by Encarnacion (1995), we can see that job design shows the purpose of increasing employee’s motivation and productivity to be adapted in terms of organizations development, services towards the customer and quality of the provided product. Having a job design in the organizations shows the
benefits of a better management of how the employees do their job and increase the progression of the organizations, themselves and towards the customer. "Service job design is usually discussed in terms of behavioural and technical skill requirements and how they differ, given the presence or absence of a customer during service delivery. In low customer contact service jobs, technical skills are the primary concern (Chase & Tansik, 1983)". While, "In high customer contact jobs, the issues of service job design have focused on the behavioural skills required to produce and deliver services. These include interpersonal, co-production (training the customer), and non-verbal communication and self monitoring skills (Tansik, 1990)".

The above statement is another definition that can be seen in the job design. As we can see, job design also shows its purpose in terms of service matter. It is not the only purpose of improving the employee's skills in performing their services but it is also for the satisfaction of the customer.

In recent years, there has been a great deal of interest in job employee engagement. Many have claimed that employee engagements predict employee outcomes, organizational success, and financial performance (e.g. total shareholder return) (Bates, 2004; Baumruk, 2004; Harter et al., 2002; Richman, 2006). Employee engagement, "it has been defined in many different ways and the definitions and measures often sound like other better known and established constructs like organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behavior (Robinson et al., 2004)". Employee engagement is a concept that is generally viewed as managing discretionary effort, that is, when employees have choices, they will act in a way that furthers their organization's interests. Engaged employees feel a strong emotional bond to the organization that employs them (Robinson et al., 2004). This is associated with people demonstrating willingness to recommend the organization to others and commit time and effort to help the organization succeed (Harter et al.,
It is suggests that people are motivated by intrinsic factors (e.g. personal growth, working to a common purpose, being part of a larger process) rather than simply focusing on extrinsic factors (e.g. pay / reward). The concept has gained popularity as various studies have demonstrated links with productivity. Other definition state that "most often it has been defined as emotional and intellectual commitment to the organization (Baumruk, 2004; Richman, 2006; Shaw, 2005) or the amount of discretionary effort exhibited by employees in their jobs (Frank et al., 2004)". While according to the academic literature, a number of definitions have been provided. Kahn (1990: 694) defines personal engagement as "the harnessing of organization members’ selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances".

In terms of Kahn’s (1990) definition of engagement, employees feel obliged to bring themselves more deeply into their role performances as repayment for the resources they receive from their organization. Another definition of employee engagement can be seen as below. It has been listed the view of behavior that engaged employee should practice: The first step in our research was to investigate what human resource professionals understood or meant when they used the term ‘engagement’. A clear view of the behaviours demonstrated by the engaged employee emerged:

- Belief in the organization.
- Desire to work to make things better.
- Understanding of business context and the ‘bigger picture’.
- Respectful of, and helpful to, colleagues.
- Willingness to ‘go the extra mile’.
- Keeping up to date with developments in the field.
Engagement has clear overlaps with the more exhaustively research concepts of commitment and organizational citizenship behaviour, but there are also some differences. In particular, engagement is a two-way relationship: organizations must work to engage the employee, who in turn has a choice about the level of engagement to offer the employer (Robinson et al., 2004).

"A positive attitude held by the employee towards the organization and its values. An engaged employee is aware of business context, and works with colleagues to improve performance within the job for the benefit of the organization. The organization must work to develop and nurture engagement, which requires a two-way relationship between employer and employee" (IES, 2004).

Moving on to the job characteristic, it is basically the relation of the employees and the work or task which they are responsible of and towards their self improvement. According to Williams (2000):

"The job characteristic model (JCM) is an approach to job redesign that seeks to formulate jobs in ways that motivate workers and leads to positive work outcomes. Internal motivation is motivation that comes from the jobs itself rather than from rewards such as raise and praise from boss. If workers feel that performing the job well is itself rewarding, then the job has internal motivation. Statement such as "I get a nice sense of accomplishment" or "I feel good about myself and what I'm producing" are example of internal motivation" (Williams, 2000).

On the other hand, Hackman and Oldham (1975) define job characteristic as: Dimensions of employees’ jobs have also been related to organizational commitment. Dunham et al. (1994) used Hackman and Oldham’s (1975) job diagnostic survey to measure the job characteristics of task identity, task significance, skill variety, autonomy, and feedback. All of these job characteristics were found to be positively
related to organizational commitment. However, other studies have found only a partial relationship between job characteristics and organizational commitment. Steers (1977) examined the relationship between organizational commitment and four core job dimensions.

The job characteristic model highlights several key job elements that enrich an employment situation and some of these characteristics include job autonomy, variety, significance and feedback (Hackman & Oldham, 1976).

The job characteristics is the psychological meaningfulness involves a sense of return on investments of the self-in-role performances (Kahn, 1992). According to Kahn (1990, 1992), psychological meaningfulness can be achieved from task characteristics that provides challenging work, variety, allow the use different skills, personal discretion, and the opportunity to make important contributions. This is based on Hackman and Oldham's (1980) job characteristics model and in particular, the five core job characteristics (i.e. skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback). Jobs that are high on the core job characteristics provide individuals with the room and incentive to bring more of themselves into their work or to be more engaged (Kahn, 1992).

While the turnover literature has identified extensive retention predictors, the best predictor of actual turnover behavior is turnover intention (Griffeth et al., 2000). Consistent with the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991), employees who indicate they intend to quit are actually more likely to eventually leave the organizations. Intention to quit is the fact where it is one of the problems that affect an organization. This relate to the turnover of the employees towards the organizations. This might be due to the conflict occurring inside the organizations, the attitude of the employees and so on. Intention to quit represents an attitudinal orientation or a cognitive manifestation of the behavioral decision to quit (Elangovan,
Intention to quit has been described by researchers in many ways. Intention to quit (leave) according to Iverson and Roy, (1994) has a behavioural implication as it involves one’s attachment to the organization.

Intention to quit can be regarded as the degree of likelihood of an employee forfeiting membership in an organization (Currivan, 1999). Intention to quit is the strength of an individual’s view to stay or to leave his/her current employer (Boshoff et al., 2002).

1.2 Problem Statement

Intention to quit is something that we often see during this era of globalization. Whether it is caused by the organization itself or by the individual itself, why do these situations happen? Firstly, the capabilities of the organization to be concerned about the quality of work life when designing the job for their employees. Nowadays, employee demand for their work and life balance but not all organizations are concerned about the needs of employees which may leads to better or worse performance in the organizations. For example, the employees may need some space to spend with their families but the employers do not understand their needs.

Secondly, the lack of commitment to the organization whereby the employee are faced with ambiguity of job responsibilities designed by the employers. This would also happen because they cannot see the clear picture about their job design in the organization.

Thirdly, work overload. For example, they have to do too many different tasks which may lead to workload problem.

Fourthly, it is apparent; however that manager must cope with the significance problem in matching employees’ needs with organizational needs.
(Ivancevich et al., 2005). The job designed by the organization does not suit with the employees' capabilities or requirement.

Fifthly, unless lower level needs are satisfied, people will not respond to opportunities to satisfy upper level needs. And even though our society has been rather successful in providing food and shelter, these needs regain importance when the economy moves through periods of recession and high inflations (Ivancevich et al., 2005).

Lastly, job design programs are intended to satisfy needs typically not satisfied in the work place. As workers are told to expect higher order need satisfaction, they may raise their expectations beyond what is possible. Dissatisfaction with the program's unachievable aims may displace dissatisfaction with the jobs (Ivancevich et al., 2005).

The major questions that will be addressed in this study are the impact of task significance to employees' engagement and the impact of task significance to intention to quit among the employees.

1.2.1 Research Questions

By conducting the study, the following questions shall be answered:-

a) What is the effect of job design on intention to quit?

b) What is the effect of job design to employees' engagement?

c) What is the effect of employees' engagement on intention to quit?

d) Will employees' engagements mediate the relationship between job design and intention to quit?
1.3 Objective of study

The main objective of this study is to look into the relationship between task significance and intention to quit in organization. Secondly, to examine the relationship between task significance and employees’ engagement.

Thirdly, to examine the relationship between employees’ engagement and intention to quit and finally, to examine whether employees’ engagement can be mediated between task significance and intention to quit. Provide suggestions on how to improve employees’ engagement.

As a whole, this study was concerned with how job design will influence the employees’ engagement and intention to quit. It also attempt to look on how to improve employees’ engagement from the employee perspectives.

1.4 Scope of Study

This research will focus on the factors of job design that influence the employees’ engagement and intention to quit at Private Higher Learning Institution in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah.

The survey will be done through distributing the questionnaires among the employees in the organization that has been selected.

The respondents are all employees in the organization such as manager, supervisor, lecturer, officers, executives, clerk, technician, receptionist, and so on.

1.5 Significance of the Study

In the past, various studies had been conducted on job design and employment engagement and the relationship towards intention to quit among the employees in organizations and various works are being conducted.
The intentions of this study is to further clarify and to find out whether task significance is the main factor that caused the intentions to quit among the employees and particularly this study is concentrated mainly in private higher learning institution in Sabah.

At the end of the study, the result would be useful for the organization especially to find out the factors behind employees' intention to quit. Secondly, to solve any problems that are related to intention to quit and finally to find any elements that need to be added in task significance to make sure that the employees would participate actively in their job.

Besides that, this study could provide a valuable piece of information for the researcher or other organizations as an additional references to solve, if any, related or similar situations that are closely related in this study.

1.6 Key Variables

The definitions of key variables used in this study are explained as below:

1.6.1 Job Design

Job design is defined as an outgrowth of job analyze that is concerned with structuring jobs in order to improve organization efficiency and employee job satisfaction. (Bohlander & Snell, 2004) also stated that job design is a combination of four basic consideration which includes (1) the organizational objectives the job was created to fulfill; (2) industrial engineering considerations, including ways to make the job technologically efficient; (3) ergonomics concerns, including workers' physical and mental capabilities; and (4) behavioural concerns that influence an employee's job satisfaction.
1.6.2 Employees' Engagement

Many have claimed that employees' engagement predicts employees outcomes, organizational success, and financial performance (e.g. total shareholders return) (Bates, 2004; Baumruk, 2004; Harter et al., 2002; Richman, 2006) at the same time, it has been reported that employees' engagement is on the decline and there is a deepening disengagement among employees today (Bartes, 2004; Richman, 2006).

1.6.3 Job Characteristics

Hackman and Oldham (1980) proposed that job characteristics model consists of three psychological states of a jobholder which result in improved work performance, internal motivation, and lower absenteeism and turnover. The motivated, satisfied and productive employee is one who (1) experience meaningfulness of the work formed; (2) experiences responsibility for work outcomes; and (3) has knowledge of the result of the work performed. The five core job characteristics (i.e. skill variety, task identity, task significant, autonomy and feedback).

1.6.4 Intention to Quit

Elangovan (2001) stated that “Intention to quit represent an attitudinal orientation or a cognitive manifestation of the behavioural decision to quit.

1.7 Organization of Thesis

This study was organized into five chapters. Chapter one discussed the outline of the introduction of the study, problem statement, objectives of the study, the limitations, the assumptions, the significance of the study and organization of the thesis.
In Chapter two the literature reviews contains three main sections. The first section gives the introduction, theoretical framework on job characteristics, employee engagement and intention to quit. The second section provides the reader with the relationship between job characteristics and employee engagement, employee engagement and intention to quit and job characteristics and intention to quit and conclude with the summary.

Chapter three outlines on the research methodology and framework that were used in collecting and analyzing the data. It was further divided into few sections. The first one is on the introduction. The second section is on research framework, followed by the hypotheses, research design, unit of analysis, sampling design, instruments design, data collection method, data analysis methods and conclude with the summary.

Chapter four, concentrated on the analysis of the results. These are divided into few sections. The introduction would be the first one, followed by the profile of the respondents, reliability test analysis, and descriptive analysis of the variables, inferential analysis, hypotheses testing and the summary of the findings.

Final chapter mainly discussed and conclude the finding of this study. A brief introduction followed by a recapitulation, discussion and its implication, the limitations of the study, suggestion for future research and a final conclusion.
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction
Job design is a fundamental issue in every organization nowadays. Moreover, the first step in organization design is job design; the process by which the task being group into job. This chapter consists of two parts that is part 1 and part 2. Part 1 discussed about the definition of job design and employee engagement, job characteristics and intention to quit. While in part 2, discussed about the relationships between job characteristic and employee engagement, relationship between employee engagement and intention to quit and relationship between job characteristic and intention to quit.

2.2 Definition of Concepts
Each of the concepts defined is to show the relationship of job design and the variables of employee engagement and intention to quit.

2.2.1 Job Design
There are many definitions of the key concepts with a different perspective by the different people of Job Design.

The first definition is by Louis Davis in the 1950s. Criteria applied when making decision about jobs and work organization were criticized by Louis Davis, in the 1950s, for more or less ignoring the social and psychological needs of job holders. Whilst there is now a much greater awareness of these aspects, those responsible for designing system often are forced to operate within narrow parameters. Decisions made earlier by designers of manufacturing equipment often
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