FACTOR AFFECTING THE EMPLOYEE'S AWARENESS TOWARDS STATUTORY EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS IN THE CONTEXT OF HOTEL INDUSTRY IN KOTA KINABALU SABAH.

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2014



DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the thesis entitle 'Factors Affecting Employee's Awareness towards Statutory Employment Rights in the Context of Hotel Industry in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah' is the result of my own research except for quotation, citation, excerpts as cited in the references.

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ABSTRACT

Sabah Labor Ordinance – Chap 67 (SLO) is important piece of legislation for employees in Sabah. The purpose of this ordinance is provide a number of minimum benefit for those employee covered by the act. Therefore, the purpose for conducting this study is to identify factors (organizational size, demographic factors and employee participation in trade union) that affect employee awareness pertaining to statutory employment right among employee under the Sabah Labor Ordinance – Chap 67. This study also identified the level of employees' awareness towards Sabah Labor Ordinance in general. The target respondent for this study is non-executive employees that are employed full-time in service sectors from star-rated hotel industry in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah. The research design in this study using questionnaire that adapt from literature as major data collection method.



ABSTRAK

FAKTOR-FAKTOR YANG MEMPENGARUHI KESEDARAN PEKERJA TERHADAP HAK-HAK MINIMUM KERJA DALAM KONTEKS HOTEL INDUSTRI DI KOTA KINABALU, SABAH

Ordinan Buruh Sabah - Chap 67 (SLO) adalah merupakan undang-undang yang penting untuk pekerja di Sabah. Tujuan ordinan ini adalah menyediakan beberapa manfaat minimum bagi mana-mana pekerja yang dilindungi bawah akta tersebut. Oleh itu, tujuan bagi menjalankan kajian ini adalah untuk mengenal pasti faktor-faktor (saiz organisasi, faktor-faktor demografi dan penyertaan pekerja dalam kesatuan sekerja) yang memberi kesan kepada kesedaran pekerja mengenai hak pekerjaan berkanun di kalangan pekerja di bawah Ordinan Buruh Sabah-Chap 67. Disamping itu, tujuan kajian ini juga adalah untuk mengenal pasti tahap kesedaran pekerja terhadap Ordinan Buruh Sabah secara amnya. Responden sasaran kajian ini adalah pekerja bukan eksekutif yang bekerja sepenuh masa dalam sektor-sektor perkhidmatan dari industri hotel bertaraf tiga ke lima bintang di Kota Kinabalu, Sabah. Reka bentuk penyelidikan dalam kajian ini akan menggunakan borang soal selidik yang telah diubah suai dari kajian lepas sebagai kaedah utama pengumpulan data.



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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Factor Affecting the Employee's Awareness towards Statutory Employment Rights in the Context of Hotel Industry in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah

1.0 Introduction

The legal relationship between employer and employee is one of contract, based on common law principles. A contract of employment exists when an employer and an employee agree upon the terms and conditions of employment. Yet, the applicability of the contract is legal when the employee's starting joins the workforce on the terms offer by the employer. Both are bound by the agreed terms. Furthermore, an employment contract provides the basic foundation of an employment relationship. Through this instrument the nature of employer and employee rights and obligations are establish. Statutory employment rights are minimum terms. Employer and employee are free to agree better terms between themselves in a contract of employment or collective agreement. When the terms of contract of employment are not adhered to, either the employee or the employer may have grounds to make a complaint of breach of contract.

1.1 Background of Study

Basically, in Malaysia, employee rights at work are protected by three main laws namely the Employment Act (1955), the Industrial Relation Act (1967) and the Trade Unions Act (1996). The EA is the main legislation covering the relationship between employer and employee. The Act is applicable to all manual workers and other workers earning less than RM 1500.00. The Industrial Act covers the relationship between unionized workers and employers. Section 20 of the Act also allows for workers to seek reinstatement if unfairly dismissed. Meanwhile, Trade Union Act 1959 seeks to control activities of trade



unions 'so that they can develop in an orderly and peaceful manner'. The Act lays down stringent statutory and procedural provisions for the formation and operations of trade union in Malaysia. Employment law governs the relationship between an employer and employee. Its main aim is to safeguard the interests of the employer and society in general and an employee in particular.

Employment Act 1955 is the most important piece of legislation for Malaysian because human resources practices in Malaysia often referring to the law in order to manage and retain their employees. Apart from that, the EA is considered as external factor in managing compensation strategies in organization. The purpose of this Act is to provide a number of minimum benefits for those workers covered by the Act and to establish certain rights for both employers and employees. However, the Employment Act 1955 only covers employees in Peninsula Malaysia and is not applicable in the states of Sabah and Sarawak. Both employees from Sabah and Sarawak are cover by Sabah and Sarawak Labor Ordinances respectively.

Since the study covers the workers who work in the in Kota Kinabalu Sabah therefore, it is emphasizing on matters pertaining to statutory employment rights for workers as stipulated in the employments laws (Sabah Labor Ordinance – Sabah Cap. 67). Apart from that, due to the lack of understanding of employees' right, it resulted to the exploitation or abuse of employees by the employers either for personal or organization benefits (Zoharah et al, 2009). Employers 'exploit' employees in as much as they deploy their labor and/or knowledge power in order to meet their objectives which, in the case of private sector companies, is to generate a surplus (Sissin, K, 2008). Hence, the employees must at least have a basic knowledge about the laws in order to avoid such incident. Therefore, the main focus of this study is to investigate the level of awareness of minimum employment rights at the workplace among non-executives employees in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah. This study examines the awareness of employees' pertaining to statutory rights.



1.2 Problem Statement

Most workers are not aware of their employment rights although the provision of their right was already clearly stated in the existing employment act (Wan Salbiah et al, 2007). Therefore, it attracts the interest of researcher to conduct this study. Besides, Mohd Ibrahim the President of MTUC Sarawak pointed out that, it was a trend that most employees are afraid to report any matter related to employment issues to the department of labor as well as they did not want to take that matter seriously (The Borneo Post, 2014). Apart from that, Aliran (2006) reported that most Malaysian workers are often unaware of labor law provisions. Thus, it may resulted the exercises of exploitation by the employers are being practices widely.

If employees did not aware about their right at workplace thereby it gives opportunities for employer to exploit their employees. Employers 'exploit' employees in as much as they deploy their labor and/or knowledge power in order to meet their objectives which, in the case of private sector companies, is to generate a surplus (Sissin, K, 2008). When such cases happen, therefore the relationship between employer and employee will impaired. Eventually it will cause an industrial dispute. When industrial dispute take place, it will affect business that will leads to loses and decreasing of productivity. Moreover, industrial dispute action like strike might happen where it potentially will affect the economics as the foreign investors are afraid to invest in affected country.

Moreover, according to Maimunah (2009), the reason why employee did not aware about their rights is that, the general understanding of the employee itself. The general understanding is associated with their stereotype where there is no cost to the employee when he lodges claim. The best result might be he will be given compensation by his ex-employer and worst is he has lost nothing except his time.



Furthermore, based on interview with Encik Shahbudin which is Setiausaha Agung Kesatuan Sekerja, Sabah stated that employee usually aware about the right however, mentality and stereotype as mention above has limited the movement of employee to make an complaint for any right abused in workplace.

Nowadays, demographic factors are one of the most important factors that determine the individual level of knowledge and awareness about certain areas. Hence, it is very interesting to examine the relationship between these two variables since there is very limited study on demographic factors. Therefore supported with previous research Zoharah Omar (2009), shown that demographic factors such as educations, tenure and gender have a significant relationship with the level of awareness. Apart from that, Kramer (2008) agrees that employees with higher tenure accumulate more information about their right.

Furthermore, many studies were conducted regarding the employee's level of awareness (e.g., Zoharah et al., 2009; Wan Salbiah et al., 2007; L. Chardie et al., 2004; and Robert et al., 2002). Various factors were takes into consideration in affecting employees' level of awareness such as organizational size, employees' condition, employee situation (Robert et al, 2002). However, trade union also plays an important role in elevating awareness among employees as well as monitoring and enforcing labor statutory policies in workplace (Weil, 1996) cited in (Kramer, 2008). Therefore, it attracts the researcher's attention to examine the relationship of employees' participation in trade union with employees' level of awareness.

Apart from that, organizational size in increasing the level of awareness among employee should also takes into account. Additional, in previous research supported by Baird (2002) she reported that, firm size significantly affects knowledge about employment right, especially about leave for both men and women. Organizational size, from an industrial relations perspective, is measured as the number of employees at the



firm. Furthermore, Barrett (1999) agreed that it is generally employment size used in studies of management and industrial relations issues. Thus, this has captured the interest of researcher to adding this variable in the studies.

1.3 Research Questions

- a) Does a demographic factor affect employees' awareness pertaining to statutory right?
- b) Does employee's participation in trade union affect employees' awareness pertaining to statutory right?
- c) Does organizational size affect employees' awareness pertaining to statutory right?

1.4 Objectives

- a) To examine the relationship of demographic factors and employees' awareness pertaining to statutory right
- b) To examine the relationship of employees trade union participation and employees' awareness pertaining to statutory right
- c) To examine the relationship of organizational size and employees' awareness pertaining to statutory right

1.5 Scope of Study

The scope of this study is limited to hotel employees that located around Kota Kinabalu. The sampling of this study was covers among non-executive employees who work in the service sector from three to five star rated hotel industries in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, emphasizing on matters pertaining to statutory employment rights for workers as stipulated in the current employments laws (Sabah Labor Ordinance–Sabah Cap. 67),



hours of work, termination and dismissal, maternity leave entitlement, rest day, annual leaves and entitlement to public holidays.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study was conducted to ensure that all employees in Malaysia especially non-executive employees in Kota Kinabalu Sabah are aware of their statutory employment rights and at least have a little knowledge about their minimum right of employment. Furthermore, the result of this study can be used by the law enforcer such as The Manpower Department as a guidelines and assistant in effort to provide the area of knowledge of employment right that employees' lack of. Furthermore, in the concept of theoretical contribution, this study is conducted in purpose to broaden the concept and understanding of factors that affect employee's awareness towards the statutory employment rights.

1.7 Definition of Terms

1.7.1 Employee

The interpretation of employee within the scope of Employment Act 1955 falls under Section 2 defines that 'employee' as any person that included in any category in the First Schedule (Appendix B) to the extent specified.

1.7.2 Employer

The interpretation of employer in Section 2 of Employment Act 1955 defines that 'employer' as any person who has entered into a contract of service to employ any person as an employee. However, Osad et al., (2013) define employer is a person contributed resources to business venture with intention to maximize profit that encompass both private and government sector.



1.7.3 Workplace

The interpretation of workplace Section 2 of Employment Act 1955 define 'workplace' or 'place of employment' where work is carried on for an employer by an employee

1.7.4 Awareness

Meager et al, (2002) define awareness occur when an individual is sufficiently informed about a subject for him/her to be conscious of its existence and its broad subject matter.

1.7.5 Industrial Relation

According to Fajana (1995), he defined workplace industrial relations broadly as 'the totality of orientation, policies, concepts, theories, procedure and sound practice of management conflict at work'. However, Onasanya (1999) defines industrial relation as concerning 'the relationship between trade union and the employers in the industry, and the intervention of government in that relationship'.

1.7.6 Trade Union

The interpretation on trade union in section 2 of Trade Union Act 1959 defines that 'trade union' or 'union' means any association or combination of workmen or employers, being workmen whose place of work is in West Malaysia, Sabah or Sarawak. However, scholar define that trade union as an organizations design to protect and to enhance the social and economic welfare of their members (Tennenbaun, 1965) cited in (Osad et al., 2013).



1.8 Summary of Chapter

Chapter One

Chapter one provides the readers about research overview of the study, which includes the background, problem statement, research question, scope and objective of the study, significance of the study and the key variable definition to provide more understanding towards the study.

Chapter Two

Chapter two covers the literature on the subject being studied. It looks into previous research or study on the subject of dependent variable (employee awareness pertaining to statutory rights). This chapter also conceptualizes the independent variable (demographic factors, employee participation in trade union and organizational size). Thus, the relationship among the variables also been discussed critically in this chapter.

Chapter Three

Chapter three explain in details about how the study will be conducted. It outlines the theoretical framework and the research methodology that is use in this study. It comprises data collection method, research hypotheses, research design, unit of analysis, sampling design and research instrument.

Chapter Four

Chapter four explain in details about the finding for this research. It outlines the data analyzed that is used for this study. Four hypotheses were tested in order to test the relationship between independent variables with dependent variable. Multiple regressions were being used to explore the relationship between variables.



Chapter Five

Chapter five provides the readers about the discussion of the finding which include the limitation of the study, suggestion for future research and the recapitulation of the study.



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