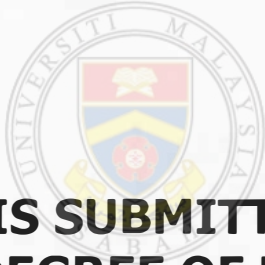


**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERSONALITY
TRAITS, JOB CHARACTERISTICS, EMPLOYEE
ENGAGEMENT AND JOB PERFORMANCE IN
MALAYSIAN GOVERNMENT LINKED-
COMPANIES (GLCs) INVOLVED IN
TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMMES**

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MARLINA BINTI MERDEKA



UMS

**THESIS SUBMITTED IN FULFILLMENT FOR
THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

**FACULTY OF BUSINESS, ECONOMICS AND
ACCOUNTANCY**

UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH

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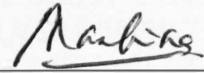
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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the material in this thesis is my own except for quotations, excerpts, equations, summaries and references, which have been duly acknowledged.

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Marlina Binti Merdeka
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ABSTRACT

The aim of this research is to examine the relationships between five factors of personality traits, five factors of job characteristics, job performance and employee engagement in Malaysian Government Linked Companies (GLCs) involved in Transformation Programmes. The five factors of personality traits comprised openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism; while the five factors of job characteristics encompassed skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback. This research also examined the mediating effects of employee engagement and the moderating effects of gender in their respective hypothesized relationships within the research framework model. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) via Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS) was used to analyze the data that were collected from sampling among 383 administrative staff in 17 Malaysian GLCs which were involved in Transformation Programmes. The research found that all factors of personality traits were not significant with employee engagement and job performance. Meanwhile, the factors of job characteristics such as task identity and task significance were found to be significant with job performance but only skill variety was found to be significant with employee engagement. Mediation analysis demonstrated that employee engagement mediated the relationships between task identity and job performance. The results also further demonstrated that there were moderating effects of gender in the relationships between personality traits and job characteristics toward job performance. This study's results have contributed to the previous pool of literature on employee engagement studies through testing using models of Costa and McCrae's Big Five Personality (1990) and Hackman and Oldham's (1976) Job Characteristics Model. Finally, this research would suggest to potential future study that the demographic characteristics of individuals such as genders ought to be considered along with any other factors that may be linked to job performance and employee engagement.

ABSTRAK

HUBUNGAN DI ANTARA SIFAT PERIBADI, CIRI KERJA, PENGLIBATAN PEKERJA DAN PRESTASI KERJA DALAM SYARIKAT BERKAITAN KERAJAAN (GLC) DI MALAYSIA YANG TERLIBAT DENGAN PROGRAM TRANSFORMASI

Kajian ini bertujuan mengukur hubungan di antara lima faktor sifat peribadi, lima faktor ciri-ciri kerja, prestasi pekerjaan dan penglibatan pekerja dalam Syarikat Berkaitan Kerajaan (GLC) yang terlibat dengan Program Transformasi. Lima faktor sifat peribadi meliputi keterbukaan, ketelitian, kepelbagaian, kebersetujuan dan neurotik, manakala lima faktor ciri-ciri kerja meliputi kemahiran pelbagai, identiti tugas, kepentingan tugas, kebebasan dan maklumbalas. Kajian ini juga mengukur kesan perantara penglibatan pekerja dan kesan penyederhaan jantungina dalam hubungan yang dinyatakan di dalam model reka bentuk kajian. Model Persamaan Struktur (SEM) menggunakan "Analysis of Moment Structures" (AMOS) telah dijalankan untuk menganalisis data yang telah dikumpul menggunakan prosedur persampelan mudah di kalangan 383 kakitangan pentadbiran di 17 GLC Malaysia yang terlibat dalam Program Transformasi. Keputusan mendapati bahawa kesemua sifat peribadi tidak mempunyai hubungan dengan keterlibatan pekerja dan prestasi pekerjaan. Manakala, faktor ciri kerja seperti identiti tugas dan kepentingan tugas mempunyai hubungan yang signifikan dengan prestasi pekerjaan. Hanya kemahiran pelbagai sahaja yang signifikan dengan penglibatan pekerja. Analisis perantaraan memperlihatkan bahawa penglibatan pekerja mempunyai kesan perantara dalam hubungan di antara identiti tugas dan prestasi pekerjaan. Keputusan kajian ini juga memperlihatkan wujud kesan penyederhanaan oleh jantungina dalam hubungan di antara sifat peribadi dan ciri-ciri kerja terhadap prestasi pekerjaan. Kajian ini menyumbangkan literatur bagi keputusan kajian ini yang diuji bersama Model Big Five Personality oleh Costa and McCrae (1990) dan Model Job Characteristics oleh Hackman and Oldham (1976). Akhirnya, kajian ini mencadangkan kepada kajian seterusnya supaya ciri demografi seperti jantungina perlu diambil kira terhadap faktor-faktor lain yang dihubungkan dengan prestasi kerja dan penglibatan pekerja.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATION

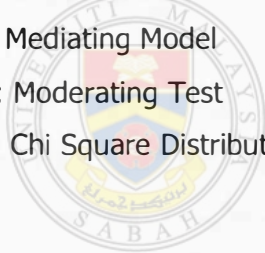
AMOS	Analysis of Moment Structure
AVE	Average Variance Extracted
CEO	Chief of Executive
CFA	Confirmatory Factor Analysis
CFI	Comparative Fit Index
CIPD	Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development
CMB	Common Method Bias
CR	Composite Reliability
FFM	Five Factor Model of Personality
G20	Group 20 of GLCs
GFI	Goodness of Fit Index
GLCs	Government Linked-Companies
GLCTP	GLCs Transformation Programmes
GLICs	Government Linked Investment Companies
JCM	Job Characteristics Model
JDS	Job Diagnostic Survey
KPI	Key Performance Indicators
MSPB	U.S Merit System Protection Board
PCG	Putrajaya Committee on GLC High Performance
RM	Ringgit Malaysia
RMSEA	Root Mean Square Error of Approximation
SDT	Self-Determination Theory
SEM	Structural Equation Model
SPSS	Statistical Package For Social Sciences
U.K	United Kingdom
U.S	United States

LIST OF SYMBOLS

%	Percent
α	Alpha
β	Beta
=	Equals
<	More than
>	Less than
r	Regression
R²	R Square
L	Lambda
f²	Cohen's f ² effect size calculation
N	Population
p	Significance value
Σ	Summation
ϵ	Estimation Error Variance
χ^2	Chi-Square
df	Degree of Freedom
S.E	Standard Error
BC	Bootstraps Confidence
->	Path
Δ	Changes

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CHAPTER 1

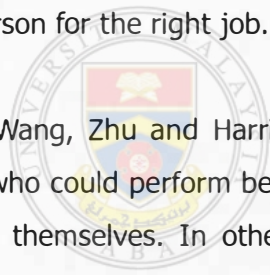
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

People are one of the most important factors that provide flexibility and adaptability to organizations. Arunkumar and Renugadevi (2013) revealed that an organization should realize the importance of employees, more than any other variables, as the most powerful contributor to an organization's competitive position. Hence, every organization needs reliable workforce support that can help to achieve their vision and mission but it will be easy for them if they delegate duties and responsibilities to the right person. To identify the right person who can perform well, organizations need to identify some factors that can be used to help them to hire the right person for the right job.

He, Wang, Zhu and Harris (2015) found that some organizations required employees who could perform better for the mutual benefit of the organization and the workers themselves. In other words, organisation prefers workers who have intrinsic interest in improving their performance. Indeed, He *et al.*, (2015) had focused the study issue on the employees' perceived oneness with and belongingness to the organizations which may influence workers' job performance. There is necessity to advance such a study focusing on the potential factors of individual performance or the extended literature coverage of the concept of employee engagement to support the important role of employees' personality traits in their job performance, which Tiraieyari and Uli (2011) defined as "actions, behaviour and outcome that an employee may contribute towards achieving the goals of an individual organization."

Generally, most organizations initiate their assessment of employees based on the quantity of work, job knowledge, job initiative, job judgment, cooperation, adaptability and innovativeness. However, Barrick, Bradley, Kristof and Colbert (2007) reported that individual personality could pose effect on performance rather



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than other factors such as job skills and capabilities. Personality refers to primarily a combination of emotional reactions, attitudes and behaviour and it also comprises the different elements of thoughts, feelings and actions that make a person distinctive (Amir, Naz, Hafeez, Ashfaq and Dogar, 2014). However, many previous studies such as by Hurtz and Donovan (2000), McCrae and Costa (2002), McCrae and John (1992), Mount and Barrick (1998), Nye, Orel and Kochergina (2013), Rothmann and Coetzer (2003), Rosellini and Brown (2011), Schmitt, Voracek, Realo and Allik (2008), and Dargah and Estalkhbijari (2012) had illustrated Big-Five Factors of personality as human personality namely extroversion, openness to experience, neuroticism, agreeableness and conscientiousness.

Moreover, many organizations realize that certain factors such skill, knowledge and capabilities are crucial too, for employee's success (Cabrera and Cabrera, 2005). These are important criteria on employee's performance evaluation for every organization in managing their human resources in addition to technology and capital. Organizations need to have an effective human resource management system such as recruiting, selecting, rewarding, appraising and planning towards organizational goals. Furthermore, organizations also need to be concerned about people as an individual unit in a workforce and the relationship between employees and employer in a workforce (Doaei and Najminia, 2012).

Johari, Yean, Yahya and Adnan (2015) stated that a successful organization owned a band of excellent workers, who are capable of delivering the expectations of the organizations. Hence the idea of excellent performers hinges on many converging factors such as knowledge, skills, ability, attitude, behaviours and contextual factors such as leadership, job design, physical facilities, and technology. All these factors can be divided into two major determinants of performance, which are 'person factors' and 'system factors' (William, 2002). William (2002) defined that person factor as ability that an individual has and the criteria of an individual. While, system factors relate more to organizational environment such work culture that may affect individual performance, namely the job characteristics, that may influence employees' behavioral outcome. However, work environment encompasses many different dimensions (Lambert, Hogan and Cluse, 2007).

Therefore, it is important to stress that the issues of environment at work may affect individual performance.

Spitzer (2007) revealed that everyone felt they were doing their part, and doing a fine job given from the lowest level to the highest level of the organization. It was illustrated that every employee has scorecards as a set of measures for his or her individual work. Thus, the concept of management had been uplifted to the context of personnel management in which part of management is concerned with people at work and with their relationships within a firm. Its aim is to bring together and develop into an effective organization for men and women who make up an organization and, having regard for the well-being of the individual and of working groups, to enable them to make their best contribution in helping to achieve success for the organisation. Ariani (2013) revealed that individual job performance consisted of distinct sets of activities that contributed to an organization in different ways, while the variety of characteristics in employees mainly determined their own performance and also in how the organization supported them to perform. There is much more gap in how measurement of performance can be set up in organization so that they can get their own real strength to continue over a long duration in business operation.

1.2 Problem Statement

Two major determinants of performance are both team and individual performance. Amir *et al.*, (2014) reported that team performance was much greater as compared to individual's performance and organizations are commonly focused on using teams rather than individual's to sustain their operation and achieve maximum output. Spitzer (2007) reported that too many companies did the transformation programs by changing their structure or systems without making in depth changes in the way how people inside view their organization. For example, Malaysian Government Linked-Companies (GLCs) have initiated the GLCs Transformation Programmes (GLCTP) with ten (10) transformation initiatives that have been emphasized to enhance organizational performance. These include optimizing working capital management practices, strengthening talent management practices and intensifying performance management practices.