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**JUDUL : THE MEDIATING ROLE OF JOB INVOLVEMENT IN THE  
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND  
TALENT DEVELOPMENT PRACTICES TOWARDS EMPLOYEE  
QUALITY WORK LIFE BALANCE: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY  
AMONG PUBLIC SECTOR EMPLOYEES IN SABAH**

**IJAJAH : SARJANA PENGURUSAN PERNIAGAAN**

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**THE MEDIATING ROLE OF JOB  
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TOWARDS EMPLOYEE QUALITY WORK LIFE  
BALANCE: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY AMONG  
PUBLIC SECTOR EMPLOYEES IN SABAH**

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**SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS  
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## DECLARATION

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

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **THE MEDIATING ROLE OF JOB INVOLVEMENT IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND TALENT DEVELOPMENT PRACTICES TOWARDS EMPLOYEE QUALITY WORK LIFE BALANCE: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY AMONG PUBLIC SECTOR EMPLOYEES IN SABAH**

This research will focus on the Work-Life Balance of employees in Sabah public sectors. Work-life balance has been always viewed / studied from the perspective of Job factors, and quality relating to work-life balance. The study will attempts to explore and identify the career development and talent management practices that affect the balance of work-life and quality of the employees. The aim of the study is to investigate the effectiveness of the relationship between the factors and the Employee Quality Work-Life Balance (EQWLB). A survey research method was used to gather 153 usable questionnaire from supporting staff, executive and managerial staffs who have worked in Public Sectors' Kota Kinabalu, Sabah. The outcome of the analysis show that career development practices do have a significant and positive relationship with employee quality work life balance. The hierarchical regression analysis also reveals that the mediating effect in the relationship between career development and employee quality work life balance is positively significant. The contribution of this study shall extend on the development of 'Employees Work-Life', to 'Employees Quality Work-Life Balance' that will signify the importance of integrating career development practices, and talent development system in nurturing a balance employee work-life.



## ABSTRAK

*Kajian ini akan memberi tumpuan kepada keseimbangan hidup berkerja bagi pekerja sektor awam di Sabah. Keseimbangan hidup berkerja telah dilihat / dikaji dari perspektif faktor kerja, dan kualiti yang berkaitan dengan keseimbangan hidup berkerja. Kajian ini akan cuba untuk meneroka dan mengenal pasti pembangunan kerjaya dan amalan pengurusan bakat yang menjejaskan keseimbangan hidup berkerja dan kualiti pekerja. Tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk menyiasat keberkesanan hubungan antara faktor-faktor dan Kualiti keseimbangan hidup berkerja. Kaedah penyelidikan kaji selidik telah digunakan untuk mengumpul 153 soal selidik yang boleh digunakan daripada kakitangan sokongan, kakitangan eksekutif dan pengurusan yang telah bekerja di Kota Kinabalu Sektor Awam Kota Kinabalu, Sabah. Analisis menunjukkan bahawa amalan pembangunan kerjaya mempunyai hubungan yang signifikan dan positif dengan pekerja kualiti keseimbangan hidup berkerja. Analisis regresi hierarki juga mendedahkan bahawa kesan pengantara dalam hubungan antara pembangunan kerjaya dan kualiti keseimbangan hidup berkerja adalah signifikan secara positif. Sumbangan kajian ini boleh dilanjutkan kepada pembangunan Keseimbangan hidup berkerja, 'Kualiti Keseimbangan Hidup Berkerja' yang akan menandakan kepentingan mengintegrasikan amalan pembangunan kerjaya, dan bakat pembangunan sistem dalam memupuk pekerja keseimbangan hidup berkerja.*



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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter includes six sections. The first section explains the background of the study. The second section identifies the problem statement. The research objectives are explained in third section. The fourth section reveals the significance of the study. The operational definition of the important terms used in this research explained in the fifth section. The conclusion is elaborated in the last section.

#### 1.1 BACKGROUND OF STUDY

"For Malaysia to be a high-income nation, we must be able to compete on a regional and global stage. This requires redoubling our effort to attract investment, drive productivity and innovation. The foundation of any productive high-income economy lies in a globally competitive, creative and innovative workforce. To achieve this, an integrated approach to nurturing, attracting and retaining first-world talent base will be implemented. The creativity, energy and initiative of the private sector will be harnessed as the primary driver of Malaysia's growth aspirations. We will remove structural barriers and outdated regulations in order to create an efficient and flexible business environment for the private sector." (Dato' Sri Mohd Najib Bin Tun Abdul Razak, 2010)

The Statement above is strongly focuses on talent development, which is pointed out towards the human capital itself. Malaysia has always been criticized on the method use to manage its talent pool and squandering its human resources as skilled talent surged out of the country to neighboring Singapore, Australia, Canada, US and the UK while millions of low skilled foreign laborers flooded into



Malaysia (Lian L. W, 2010). The Prime Minister's administration will allocate 40 per cent of 10th Malaysia Plan (10MP) funding to soft infrastructure such as skills development as compared with 22 per cent under the 9<sup>th</sup> Malaysia Plan in a bid to overcome the nation's talent crunch.

The 10<sup>th</sup> Malaysia Plan report (2010) released to the public said that a transformation of Malaysia from a middle-income country to a high-income country required a switch to high value added and knowledge intensive activities and said a shift in emphasis from physical infrastructure to soft infrastructure is required.

From previous administrations the main focus was more towards building infrastructure and prestige projects, while various brain gain and human resource development schemes failed to make meaningful headway into transforming Malaysia into a developed country.

This was particularly true of the 22-year long Tun Dr. Mahathir era that was characterized by expensive mega-projects such as Putrajaya and the Bakun Dam (Lian L. W, 2010). This contrasted to the approach by high-income advanced countries such as Norway and Switzerland that focused instead on nurturing highly skilled human resources.

Asian countries such as the Republic of Korea and Singapore have propelled themselves into the group of developed nations within a generation as a result of precise, deliberate and purposeful prioritization of focus sectors while concentrating on developing, upskilling and delivering the right talents required to drive growth in those sectors. For Malaysia, the development of a first world talent base requires nothing less than a comprehensive, all inclusive national effort from the public and private sectors as well as civil society(Lian L. W, 2010).

Three areas have been identified for the bulk of 10MP soft infrastructure investment — skills development, providing enablers to support concentrated industrial clusters and specialization and increasing R&D and venture capital funding. In today's business world, it can be seen that in various sectors and

industries are now focus on human being in various role and dimensions. Therefore, it is very crucial for any company to focus on their human capital.

Currently there is a huge gap between public and private sectors management. The most common factors that differentiate these two sectors are the salary base from both sides as the primary edge. Money, returns, profits have always been the key element in private sector management, as for the public sector it is still trying to get accustomed to the 'lead and 'lag' factor of the salary base. However, both sectors are highly concern of employee's involvement to the organization to ensure the organization is operating and managing their human capital with great efficiency at the same time still able to balance their life between non-work life and work life balance. To address this issue, career development practices and talent development system need to be a focal discussion point.

A speech by the Prime Minister, Dato' Sri Mohd. Najib, (2010), mention about improving efforts for human capital development in the public sector. He mentioned that, "the delivery of efficient and effective government services is closely linked to the quality of human resource. To ensure the best talents remain in the civil service, the framework for human resource management and career development will be improved. Opportunities for civil servants to increase their knowledge and field of expertise will be expanded. In this respect, a world-class civil service college will be established to raise the competency of civil servants".

By providing career development practices and Talent development practices, employees are keen on tapping employee's job involvement. Job involvement by an employee is seen as an indicator of high performance and organization return of investment. As a result, there will be a certain baseline for employee's recruitment that will be considered despite job preference taking place among labor force.



## **1.2 BACKGROUND OF PUBLIC SECTOR IN SABAH**

The public sector, occasionally signified to as the state sector or the government sector, is a part of the state that deals with the production, ownership, sale, provision, delivery and allocation of goods and services by and for the government or its citizens, whether national, state, or local. Although all business nature is closely related with money, public sector is not mainly concern on profit making but providing good delivery service. Financial management is only seen as one accountability aspects of many tasks (De Gooijer, 2000). Government is continuously focusing on developing a well human touch organization, especially in terms of managing resources.

There will always someone to criticize when seen negatively, public sector have long been given criticisms for inefficiency, red tape, and lack of flexibility, ineffective accountability and poor performance (Siddiquee, 2006). Such criticisms have paved the way for administrative reforms and aligning the organization strategic planning. With chances in time and circumstances reform agenda has varied, but reforms have always been seen and applied as a means to bring about changes in administration and improve its capacity as well as performance. There have been seen many changes in public sector especially when it is shift to follow private sector ways of management.

## **1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Previous research highlights on the concepts of career development as a program to help research and development personnel to achieve their career expectations, nurture their ideals and aspirations, and enhance their independent knowledge. As a result, researchers become sufficiently motivated and encouraged to prepare themselves for their next career development stage and opportunity through the enhancement of their productivity levels and increasing job satisfaction (Chen, Chang, Yeh, 2003). Study in talent development is concerned with enhancing the

attraction, development, and retention of key human resource (Jackson, Mathis, Lim, 2010).

Most literature reveals that career may directly affect work life balance (Jackson, Mathis, Lim, 2010). Various signs indicate that the patterns of individuals work lives are changing in many areas: more freelancing, more working at home, more frequent job changes, more job opportunities but less security. Rather than letting jobs define their lives, more people set goals for the type of lives they want and then use jobs to meet those goals. However, for dual-career couples and working women, balancing work demands with personal and family responsibilities is difficult to do.

For employers, career issues have changed too. The best people will not go to workplaces viewed as undesirable, because they do not have to do so. Employers must focus on retaining and developing talented workers by providing coaching, mentoring, and appropriate assignments (Jackson, Mathis, Lim, 2010).

Interestingly, a thorough review of such relationship reveals that the effect of career development on employee quality work life balance is consistent if job involvement is present in the relationship (Mudrack P.E, 2004). For highly involved employees, their jobs seem inexorably connected with their very identities, interests, and life goals, and are crucially important. Individuals may become involved in their jobs in response to specific attributes of the work situation itself. The prevailing assumption in research seems to be that high job involvement is an inherently desirable attribute of employees. Indeed, highly job involved individuals seem also to be satisfied with their jobs, to be in characteristic positive moods at work, and to be highly committed to their employing organizations, their careers, and their professions (Carson, K.D., Carson, P.P. and Bedeian, A.G.1995; Cohen, 1995) cited in (Mudrack P.E, 2004). Quality of work life program includes all kinds of improvements in organizational culture that supports growth and excellence in the organization. QWL in organization is essential for attracting and retaining employees. Separating and determining which characteristics affect QWL is difficult. Oftentimes quality of work life includes many concepts, one of which is employees'



understanding of work and non-work lives (Wise S., Bond S., 2003).

However, at present little is known about the mediating role of job involvement in career development and talent development practices. With little empirical knowledge about these relationships, the need to further research in this area is imperative. Thus, it motivates the researcher to further explore on this issue.

#### **1.4 RESEARCH QUESTION**

The fundamental question of this research is whether there is a significant relationship between career development practices and talent development practices towards job involvement and employee quality work life balance of the staff?

These are some of the research question that are needed in this research:

1. What is the relationship between talent development practices and employees quality work-life balance?
2. What is the relationship between career development practice and employees quality work-life balance?
3. Is there a mediating effect of job involvement on the relationship between talent development system and employees quality work-life balance?
4. Is there a mediating effect of job involvement on the relationship between career development practice and employees quality work-life balance?

## **1.5 RESEARCH OBJECTIVE**

The overall objectives of this research are to determine the relationship between career development practices and talent development practices towards job involvement and employee quality work life balance.

The research objectives for the study are:

1. To examine the talent development and career development with employee quality work-life in government agencies in Sabah
2. To investigate the non-job factors affecting on work-life balance and the qualities in work-life balance
3. To identify the relationship between talent development, career development, and employee quality work-life in both government agencies.
4. To explore the quality of work-life in government agencies in Sabah

## **1.6 SCOPE OF RESEARCH**

The scope of the study is to explore or to expose the effects by Talent Development Practices and Career Development Practices towards Job Involvement that will lead towards Employee Quality Work-life Balance in organization among lower and middle management employees in Sabah Public Sectors. This study will be conduct in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah by selecting a few organization and the target sample was employees in the position of supporting staff and above.

The findings may not necessarily represent the general practices of the public sector in Kota Kinabalu, as only four public sectors will be chosen. The four public sectors were chosen as the have more organized and established Human Resources Practices. Besides that, the public Sectors would have similar standards and thus it would help in better understanding and interpretation of the research question. However, the information and data obtained from the study would be useful as a source of cross-reference in similar study.

## 1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This research will contribute to two parties, which are

### 1.7.1 Significance to Body of Knowledge

The existing theories, Hansen (1976) career development practices theory model which are used as the backbone of this research mostly focused on the elements, characteristic and the importance of work life balance. Besides these had less emphasis on the employee's job involvement as the mediator. The career development practices model can be strengthened with deeper explanation through the applied mediating variable of job involvement. Result of this study may help Human Resource Practitioners to modify work life balance culture in their organization.

### 1.7.2 Significance to Human Resource Practitioners

The research on the relationship between career development practices and talent development practices towards job involvement and employee quality work life balance is a very focal ingredient; much study can be done on this scope. Therefore, this paper will give a beneficial exposure on the said matter. It will not only focus on the Job Involvement and quality work life balance of Employees but the needs of career development and talent development practices that should be practiced by public sectors to yield paramount benefits.

Therefore, from this research, the employers will be able to articulate the requirement of career development and talent development practices an employee need to ensure job Involvement and employee quality work life balance without hesitation, when a great environment is conducive, the outcome will meet the



requirement. However, there are still limitations on this study in certain aspects; researcher would discuss the limitation in depth in the conclusion of this research which could be referred for further enhancement and betterment.

Without hesitation, when talent and career are met in the right track, the outcome will meet the requirement. However, there are still limitations on this study in certain aspects; researcher would discuss the limitation in depth in the conclusion of this research, which could refer for further enhancement and betterment.

## **1.8 DEFINITION OF KEY VARIABLES**

Key Variables and dimensions used in this study carry a specific definition and meaning. The general context of the key variables is outlined below.

### **1.8.1 CAREER DEVELOPMENT PRACTICES**

Career development is basically defined as the total constellation of economic, sociology, psychological, education, physical and chance factors that combine to shape one's career (Reardon, 1999). Career development is far more prevalent today than it was in the past. It is about the development of the employees that is beneficial to both individual and organization (Puah and Ananthram, 2006). This would definitely help employee to have a better understanding of their occupational interest and potential, besides being able to plan and implement career goals, and development themselves.



### **1.8.2 TALENT DEVELOPMENT PRACTICES**

Collings and Mellahi (2009) define talent management as activities and processes that involve the systematic identification of key positions which differentially contribute to the organization's sustainable competitive advantage, the development of a talent pool of high potential and high performing incumbents to fill these roles, and the development of a differentiated human resource architecture to facilitate filling these positions with competent incumbents and to ensure their continued commitment to the organization.

### **1.8.3 JOB INVOLVEMENT**

An employee that is involved is more psychologically present and is more attentive plus intimate to their work. Through this involved employee, it is easy for an organization to access the inaccessible part of them (Kahn and Kram, 1994). Therefore, an employee who is highly motivated towards the job will have a better involvement to the organization than those whom are not (Kanungo, 1982).

### **1.8.4 EMPLOYEE QUALITY WORK-LIFE BALANCE (EQWLB)**

In a layman's term, work-life balance is a broad concept including proper prioritizing between "works" (career and ambition) on the one hand and "life" (Health, pleasure, leisure, family and spiritual development) on the other. Related, though broader, terms include "lifestyle balance" and "life balance". It is also perceived as a working condition in an organization. An average human capital spends a minimum eight hours in a day of working and performing the task diligently to the organization. Quality work life has been viewed: (a) as a movement; (b) as a set of organization interventions and (c) as a type of working life felt by employees (Carlson, 1980).

## 1.9 SUMMARY AND ORGANIZATION OF THESIS

This research will focus on the Work-Life Balance of employees in Sabah departments and agencies. Work-life balance has been always viewed / studied from the perspective of Job factors, and quality relating to work-life balance. The study will attempts to explore and identify the career development and talent management system that affect the balance of work-life and quality of the employees. The aim of the study is to investigate the effectiveness of the relationship between the factors and the Employee Quality Work-Life Balance (EQWLB) (which will be measured through employee performance and quality of work and life). The contribution of this study shall extend on the development of 'Employees Work-Life', to 'Employees Quality Work-Life Balance' that will signify the importance of integrating career development practices, and talent development system in nurturing a balance employee work-life.

Chapter one has provided an overview of the study that includes the problem statement, research questions, the scope and objectives of the study and the significance of the topic chosen. It also has general definitions of the main variables found in the study. Chapter two covers the literature on the subject being studied. It looks into past research on the subject of Career Development And Talent Development. It also covers other variables such as Job Involvement and Employee Quality Work Life Balance. Chapter three outlines the theoretical framework and the research methodology that is used in the study. It includes the type of the study, research design, unit of analysis and measurement, population sample, data collection and data analysis methods. Chapter four is concerned with the data analysis and findings of the study. This chapter presents the responders' profile and the discussion of the findings on this study. Chapter five is the final chapter, which recapitulate the finding, and provided the discussion and recommendations based on the findings of the study. This chapter also highlights the limitations of the study and offers some suggestions for future research.



## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.0 INTRODUCTION

The literature review of this research is to investigate the extensive meaning of each key variable in this study. The literature review of this research discusses the impact of career development practices and talent development practices towards employee's job involvement and employee's quality work life balance. An organization requires employee's job involvement to ensure organization success. Quality work life that has been perceived as a tool an organization could adapt in enhancement or providing a balance work environment of various aspect in line to ensure quality of work life. Human capital being the crucial point, are given less attention. Therefore this research will study the relevance of career development practices together with talent development practices towards employee's job involvement. These variables will be studies between two different sectors of organization. The respondents will be employees within the public sector in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah.

#### 2.1 CAREER DEVELOPMENT PRACTICES

Career have always been a journey for every employee, as Baruch (2004) mentioned that Career is a major life constituency – it evolves around work, and work provides sense of purpose, challenge, self-fulfillment, and, of course, income. Baruch (2004) also said that career is a symbol of status in society. Hoekstra (2011) Careers are important as such, above the component jobs, because their story contains essential meaning for the individual as well as for the environment. Hoekstra (2011) For many individuals, their career holds a large part of the meaning of life's journey, and hence of their identity





The career development process, then, can be addressed from two complementary perspectives. The first is from the perspective of the individual employee who is attempting to plan his or her career in a productive and rewarding manner. This career planning process involves becoming aware of opportunities, constraints, choices, and consequences; identifying career-related goals; and engaging in work, education, and related developmental experiences aimed at attaining specific career goals. (Hedge, 2006)

Hall (1986) The second perspective relates to the activities of the organization that will effectively select and develop employees to meet future organizational needs. This organization-level career management is an ongoing process of preparing, implementing, and monitoring career plans undertaken by the individual alone or in concert with the organization's career systems.

The fact that the future is uncertain and cannot be foreseen is universal and does not depend on a certain context. These concepts shed light on the uncertainty of careers or the period when people lack the will to design their careers. Many existing career studies focus on how careers are developed or directed and are intended to present some guidance on how to expand or nurture a career.

However, Kato and Suzuki pointing out with the concept of "planned happenstance," the times when people do not consciously consider their careers often have overall essential effects by providing surprising and unimaginable opportunities. Although this appears quite plausible, a possible reason why this issue has not gained interest is the fact that the existing career studies emphasize the negative impact of not having a plan for or a perspective on one's career.

It is rather unrealistic to believe that the future can always be predicted and that the entire career design should be well planned, regardless of the situation. Such anticipation can be easily distorted or redirected due to management or corporate strategy. Moreover, it is natural to undergo phases in which making active attempts to enrich one's life alternates with simply and aimlessly investing all possible efforts in day-to-day tasks. If differences are found between cultures or

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