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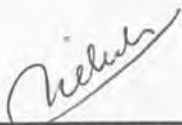
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**GENDER DISCRIMINATION IN HUMAN CAPITAL
PRACTICES**

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**THESIS SUBMITTED IN FULFILLMENT FOR THE
DEGREE OF MASTER IN HUMAN CAPITAL
MANAGEMENT**

**SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH
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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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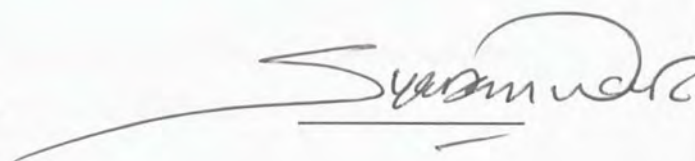
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ABSTRACT

GENDER DISCRIMINATION IN HUMAN CAPITAL PRACTICES

The objective of this study is to look into the distinction in situation of gender discrimination in human capital management practices, organisational commitment and human capital performance in both public and private sector, specifically in health care industry. Little was done in researching the effect of gender discrimination in human capital management practices towards human capital performance in local context. The findings were organisational commitment partially mediated the relationship between human capital management practices with human capital performance and there was no apparent differences in human capital performance between public and private sector in relation with the existence of perceived gender discrimination in human capital practices.



ABSTRAK

Objektif kajian ini adalah untuk melihat sejauh mana situasi diskriminasi terhadap jantina dalam amalan-amalan pengurusan modal insan, komitmen terhadap organisasi dan pencapaian modal insan di sektor awam dan swasta, khususnya di industri penjagaan kesihatan. Dalam konteks tempatan, tidak banyak kajian telah dilakukan untuk mengkaji kesan diskriminasi terhadap jantina dalam amalan-amalan pengurusan modal insan terhadap pencapaian modal insan. Penemuan daripada kajian ini adalah komitmen terhadap organisasi terbukti menjadi pengantara separa untuk hubungan antara diskriminasi terhadap jantina dalam amalan-amalan pengurusan modal insane dan pencapaian modal insan dan juga tidak terdapat perbezaan yang nyata dalam perbezaan pencapaian modal insan kedua-dua sektor awam dan swasta apabila terdapat situasi diskriminasi terhadap jantina dalam amalan-amalan pengurusan modal insan.



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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Women make up forty five percent of the workforce in our country. Although so, there were not many women holding high or managerial positions in the organisations they work in. The government was hoping that by the year 2016 at least 30 percent of women will be involved in decision-making posts (The New Straits Times, 2011a and 2011b). This was stated by Malaysian Prime Minister in January 2010 in conjunction with the 10th anniversary celebration of Women, Family and Community Development Ministry. He also commented that there were no such things as discrimination towards women in the workplace in the country and they are able to hold high-ranking positions, unlike other countries.

Was it really true that there was zero-discrimination towards women in the workplace, especially here in Malaysia? How did the way they perceive this matter affect their job performance? According to Atteya (2012), "human resource management practices influence job performance indirectly through: (1) positive job satisfaction, organisational commitment and organisational citizenship behaviour and (2) negative quitting intention and negative word of mouth". If women felt that they are being discriminated, how did it affect their jobs? Maybe the top management or other male co-workers were not aware that their actions towards their women colleagues were some forms of discrimination, but some women might felt offended and perceived it as acts of discrimination towards them. For instance, stereotyping can also be a form of discrimination, not just discrimination in terms of physical things like wage, career development and others. It was the human capital managers' responsibilities that their employees were protected from discrimination in any human capital practices in the company.



Now, what was actually gender discrimination? According to Levitin et al. (1971), "gender discrimination, as well as other forms of discrimination, could be classified into two practices: access and treatment". "Access" here means non-job-related qualifications on individuals, like gender, age, physical appearance, race and others limit or bar their recruitment. On the other hand, "treatment discrimination" involved salary, job-level and status-symbol discrepancies that resulted in differences in job outcomes between two groups that were of the same level in work experience, education and skills after "access" occurred. Ensher et al. (2001) found in their study that perceived discrimination, be it from peers, supervisor or the organisation affects employees' organisational commitment, job satisfaction, organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB). Perceived supervisor discrimination affected job satisfaction and organisational commitment while perceived co-worker discrimination lowers organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB). However, it was greater organisational discrimination that was perceived by employees that caused lesser job satisfaction, organisational commitment and organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB).

Previous research that was done in a big company in France have shown that perceived gender discrimination was negatively related to subjective career success overall (Herrbach and Mignonac, 2012). Subjective career success here means career satisfaction or intrinsic career success. However, the study was moderated by career anchors. Some anchors such as managerial, technical and lifestyle seemed to enhance the impact of perceived gender discrimination, while anchors such as security and autonomy seemed to have lessened it. The study was done on women employees from a private sector.

Meanwhile, another study that was conducted in Botswana's public sector result contradicted with the previous study mentioned (Munyae, 2011). Women employees in Botswana's public sector did not perceive that they were discriminated based on their gender. Another study done among public sector employees in Bangladesh found that women were discriminated from the entry level to the higher posts (Habib, 2000 as cited in Channar et al., 2011). Channar et al. (2011) conducted a research among public and private sector employees to

compare on the situation of gender discrimination in their work environment. It was found that females were discriminated more than males in private sector than it was in public sector. Gender discrimination decreased satisfaction, motivation, commitment and enthusiasm level of employees as well as increasing employees' stress level.

1.2 Problem Statement

In Malaysia, not much research has been done on gender discrimination at the workplace. If there was, most of the researches would be based on discrimination towards women (Zubaidah et al., 2009). Therefore, there is still uncertainty on how gender discrimination affects human capital performance in local context. As was found by Ensher et al. (2001), perceived discrimination led to de-motivation, low organisational commitment and tendency to leave the organisation among American employees. In local context, the effect of gender discrimination towards human capital performance is it positive or negative, remained unknown. It is important to know whether the situation can be a threat towards the organisation as a whole, or not.

1.3 Scope of Study

This research looked into the distinction in situation of gender discrimination in human capital practices (hiring and recruitment, job description, decision making and employee promotion), organisational commitment and human capital performance in both public and private sector, focusing on the health care industry. The targeted respondents were both male and female employees (both medical and non-medical staff) from Sibul Hospital (public hospital) and Sibul Medical Centre (private hospital) in Sibul, Sarawak.

1.4 Research Objectives

The specific objectives of this study were:

- i. to identify if there was gender discrimination perceived by employees from both public and private sectors in terms of human capital practices in their organisations (hiring and recruitment, job description, decision making and employee promotion);
- ii. to compare the situation of gender discrimination between both sectors;
- iii. to examine how gender discrimination in human capital practices affecting human capital performance and;
- iv. to examine whether organisational commitment mediates the relationship between human capital practices and human capital performance.

1.5 Research Questions

Research questions aligned with the objectives were as such:

- i. was there any gender discrimination in human capital practices such as hiring and recruitment, job description, decision making and employee promotion in both private and public sectors?
- ii. how did the situation differ between the two sectors in term of which sector faced more gender discrimination in human capital practices as perceived by its human capitals?
- iii. did the human capital performance get affected by gender discrimination in human capital practices?
- iv. could organisational commitment be the motivating factor for human capital performance that remained unscathed even when they perceived the existence of gender discrimination?

1.6 Significance of the Study

This research focused on medical employees' perception towards gender discrimination in human capital practices in their respective organisations. There

have been researches done on whether there are gender differences in medical industry. As reported by CEJA (1993), disparities between male and female physicians involved a number of things, such as the level of income of practicing physicians, faculty members and deanships in academic medicine and representation in medical research.

A study conducted by Miller and Clark (2008) in the United Kingdom medical profession found that gender discrimination and segregation still exist in the profession. However, there were significant differences in the perceptions between the two genders. Conflict between personal and professional lives became the effect of the gendered career structure and organisational culture of the health sector. The difficulties in dealing with this conflict challenged women's progression in the medical profession.

A study conducted by Channar et al. (2011) in Pakistan among health and education employees from both public and private departments found that females were discriminated more than males in private sector compared to public sector and it lowered satisfaction, motivation, commitment and enthusiasm of the employees. LaPierre and Zimmerman (2012) found that women were less likely to be promoted to senior management in healthcare management in the United States.

Therefore, by figuring out whether the same situation has happened in our own backyard, it is possible to figure out what could be done to deal with the situation so that employees can give full commitment and their best performance in an environment that is conducive, free from discrimination. Gender discrimination will not only affect the performance of the employees, it also gives bad image towards the organisation related because people would think that the organisation is weak in terms of its human capital practices and managing its human capital welfare.

1.7 Definition of Terms

This study took into account the effect of gender discrimination in human resource practices such as hiring and recruitment, job description and employees' promotion towards their job performance, and also figuring out whether or not their commitment to their organisation influenced their job performance. From there onwards, the differences in how the situation affected the human capital performance of employees from both public and private sectors perceived this situation was explored as well.

1.5.1 Human Capital Practices

Wright et al. (1993) recognised the potential of human capitals for making up a sustainable competitive advantage and also defined human resources as "the pool of human capital under the firm's control in a direct employment relationship". In relation to that, human resource practices are the organisational practices that led the way in overseeing the human capital and making sure that the capital is driven towards achieving organisational goals. Jones and Wright (1992) (as cited in Huselid, 1995) argued that "the use of High Performance Work Practices such as comprehensive employee recruitment and selection procedures, incentive compensation and performance management systems and extensive employee involvement and training can improve the knowledge, skills and abilities of a firm's current and potential employees, increase their motivation, reduce shirking and enhance retention of quality employees while encouraging nonperformers to leave the firm". Therefore, by implementing human capital practices wisely will increase the capital's motivation and eventually, the performance and productivity of the capital as well.

1.5.2 Hiring and Recruitment

According to Ployhart (2006), most recruitment definitions involve identifying, attracting and influencing job choices of reliable applicants. Recruiting the best talent is one of organisational leaders' most crucial problems. Selection can only be

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