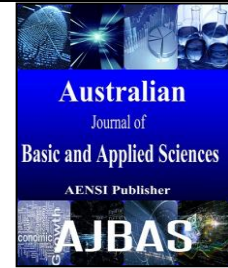




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The Evaluation of Employee Engagement in Retaining Employee: A Case of Rapid Penang

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ABSTRACT

The relationship between employee and employer is crucial in order to increase productivity and enjoyment of working in an organization. Indirectly, this relationship is an indirect motivation of employees in their routine practices. Previous investigations show that if employees can work up to the limit of pressure and full responsibility, they can produce a highly impact of output. This will benefit both parties; employer and employee. Employer can be able to gain the maximum profit, whilst employee will be more productive with minimal supervision.

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INTRODUCTION

Employee engagement has been a growing interest for several years because there is mounting evidence in researches that demonstrates the relation of employee engagement with positive work outcomes, including low attrition, high performance and positive business results (Hallberg & Schaufeli, 2006). Ramsey and Finney (2006) also found that engaged employees may be more likely to commit stay with their current organization.

The increasing pressures from the rapid changes that are occurring in the business environment have led to a variety of responses among organizations. Globalization of markets and production, the rate of technological innovation and fluctuation in customer demand are among the factors that have increased the dynamism of the competitive environment to which organization must respond. This factors make is very difficult for companies to further differentiate themselves from their competitors on the basis of products, prices and technology (Fisher, Schoenfeldt, & Shaw, 2006).

For Rapid Penang to survive in global economy nowadays, they need to invest all the available resources in order to get the high profit and increase the organizational performance. This is to enable them to focus more on human resource which is the most important resources in any organization. The organization in highly competitive environment adopt HRM practices to improve the ability of its employees. These practices are aimed to help the organization, and all levels of management,

regarding how to effectively engage their employees in order to improve the organizational profit. Chartered Institute for Personal and Development (Trust, Sloan, Edwards, Wisdom & Burnett, 2006) published a report that described employee engagement as “ a passion for work” and engaged employees as feeling positive about their jobs and being prepared to go an extra mile to make sure that they do their jobs to their best ability. Engagement is a personal association formed by individual employees’ unique aspirations, values, beliefs, and interests. Full engagement depends on employees having an increased personal connection with their work and belief that they have promising future in their organization.

The best performing companies know that an employee engagement linked to the achievement of Corporate goals will help them win in the marketplace. Employees who are engaged in their work and committed to their organization give companies highly competitive advantages including lower employee turnover and a higher productivity which is increase organizational profits (Robert, 2006).

Definitely, different management level has different weight of work engagement. However, the employee in the same level may have different attitude because every individual has their own thinking, perception and behaviors. Employee’s loyalty and dedication to the organization, heightened performance, reduce in absenteeism and reduce in employee’s turnover is the common attitude can be proven by many of the

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previous researches (Roaddes & Eisenberger, 2002). In material realistic world, majority of the employee are unwilling to do over or pay extra commitment to the organization. They will leave the company on time; also attend to work on time with intent to avoid from late punishment. Work engagement is define as the employee participation in the scope of task that assigned by the employer. Commonly, higher level of the employees has bigger and wider job responsibility and involvement. The employees tend to be more willingly or agree to dedicate to the organization success without affected by the pay or rewards system. This positive behaviour is shown when the employer is concerning and appreciate on the employee contribution and taking cares on employee's well-being (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). There are few drivers that can determine the important of employee engagement and retention such as leadership, corporate cultures, learning and development opportunities. For the purpose of this study, I will be exploring more in depth on leadership, career development and organizational culture.

Problem statements:

Additionally, studies do not differentiate human services staff from workers in other industries. To address this problem, more research that focuses specifically on the engagement levels of workers in human services occupations is necessary. Despite evidence of how destructive employee burnout or disengagement can be, studies from the human services field on the opposite condition, engagement, are limited. Surprisingly little academic and empirical research has been conducted overall, and a large portion of it comes from the business management community (Saks, 2006). Empirical data are needed so professionals can better understand employee engagement and use what they learn about it to develop managerial interventions and alternative strategies that foster engagement for human services workers.

Levels of employee engagement at transportation services firms have not been adequately studied in a temporal fashion. Furthermore, the relationship between employee engagement and business outcomes in transportation service firms and their business units, especially along a timeline, is not clear. Employee engagement ratios, as defined by Crabtree (2004), for all entities studied were below that associated with world-class organizations. This paper will apply the engagement theory and engagement measuring methods to measure the existing level of engagement of administrative workers in Rapid Penang. The aim is to find the current engagement level of employees and to find the factors, which need to be improved in order to further increase engagement.

The aim of this paper is to contribute to the research regarding the engagement of administrative

workers within educational institutions, as this part of the employees is rarely studied, though their day-to-day performance has a significant influence on the quality of the entire organization performance.

Factors such as globalization, mergers, government regulations and acquisitions forced the organization to look for new strategies keep their organization in the high level of profitability (Gubman, 2004). Organization are always trying to gain a competitive advantage. Normally these organizations have focused on developing and executing operational processes such as Six Sigma, lean operations, total quality management and other technically based tools and processes to facilitate their ability to win against their competition (Bates, 2004). The literature review on previous research on the employee engagement was focusing at the individual level. There is little research on how employee engagement might influence on organizational profitability (Harter *et al.*, 2002). This create unlimited question regarding whether employee engagement can predict business-unit operational profit (Konrad, 2006). In the research literature, the statistical relationship between business-unit employee engagement and operational profit is unclear (Johnson, 2004).

Research objectives:

Research is an organized investigation of a problem in which there is an attempt to gain solution to a problem. To get the right solution of a right problem, clearly defined objectives are very important. Clearly defined objectives enlighten the way in which the researcher has to proceed. Therefore, this study proposes two research objectives:

1. To investigate the relationship between engagement styles in the organization and job performance.
2. To investigate the most influential factors of engagement styles that to Rapid Penang staff job performance.

Literature review:

Various employee engagement dimensions are consolidated and classified into five groups. A global account of employee engagement is also presented. Business outcome indicators, used in this research study, are described in the penultimate part of this chapter. This is followed by a discussion about professional services firms. The unique aspects of engineering services firms are highlighted. A summary of the topics discussed is presented at the end of this chapter.

Employee Engagement:

In order to stay competitive, organizations today need to be both proactive and reactive. Organizations need to pursue relentless problem-solving. They also need to commit to continual innovation. Morse and

Babcock (2010) point out numerous ways in which individuals in an organization are instrumental in endeavours like creativity, problem solving, invention, innovation, and subsequent deployment and implementation. As we press on into the 21st century and grapple with the modalities of the knowledge economy, the need for education cannot be overemphasized. An educated workforce could be treated as a natural resource that provides impetus to wealth creation (Morgan, 2008). Workers in wealthier nations do tend to be more educated. In fact, "today's workers are better educated and more literate than ever before. ... they have access to unprecedented learning opportunities through community colleges, universities, TV, and the Internet. Moreover, our culture places a premium on creativity and individual expression" (Dennis, 2007, p. 102).

It would be very prudent for an organization to leverage the education and experience of its employees to achieve better business outcomes. Moreover, forming an organization rooted in continuous improvement is contingent upon the presence of engaged employees, "especially those on the front lines, where the real work gets done" (Dennis, 2007, p. 102). Thus, it can be argued that engaged employees can successfully identify and fix the innumerable smaller problems that are continually encountered, which, in turn, could lead to much bigger issues. Babbitt (2010) cited the Gulf of Mexico Deep Horizon oil spill and the Three-Mile Island nuclear plant leakage as examples where the cumulative effects of smaller problems led to major disasters.

Hence, an engaged employee is someone who is well compensated and has his/her interests aligned with the organization. He/she also seeks opportunities for development and recognition. Furthermore, an engaged employee believes in the management's effectiveness and expect open and clear communication with all levels of the organization.

Relevance of Employee Engagement Dimensions:

As the best resources to any organization is always its human resources, the attainment of an workplace with high calibre employees are the key to success & the way to set competitive advantage in the global scenario. A well functioning organization is the product of its healthy, committed and motivated employees, who can be termed as 'engaged employees'. Engagement takes place when employees are committed to their job. They are interested and indeed excited about what they do. It involves loyalty, faith and pride in the organization, a willingness to advocate for his organization and a sense of personal responsibility. Global economy has experienced significant shifts in the recent past which have accelerated the need

for organizations to find innovative ways to address new technological, demographic and marketplace realities. These shifts made the organizations to re-evaluate costs associated with talent. High workforce performance and organizational success must be maintained along with changes in strategies. Research has consistently shown that employee engagement is powerfully linked to a range of business success factors such as:

1. Employee performance/efficiency
2. Productivity
3. Safety
4. Attendance and retention
5. Customer service and satisfaction
6. Customer loyalty and retention
7. Profitability

During economic down turn, many organizations focused less on how to manage their talent and engage their employees, instead focusing on how to reduce costs by cutting salaries, bonuses, rewards and development costs. Some short sighted leaders may even think that employee engagement no longer matters because their employees have fewer options and will stay because of their need for job security.

However, smart leaders realize that while they may need to find short-term solutions to cut costs, they must also identify longer-term talent management strategies to remain viable. Employees could prove more effective if their interests and activities align with organizational goals. Gagnon and Michael (2003) maintained that successful implementation of strategic organizational initiatives require employee alignment. Furthermore, Speculand (2006) surmised that a vast majority of organizational strategies fail because of employee ignorance and/or misperception. Alignment ensures that employees clearly comprehend what they can contribute to the organization (Loch, 2008). Additionally, Vlcek (1987) contended that "high turnover [is] due in part to insufficient personnel standards and ambitious individuals who sometimes contradict company goals" (p. 71). Macky and Boxall (2008) maintained that managers play a critical role in developing systemic linkages which, in turn, engender high employee involvement. Successful business endeavours require trust that is "built on respect and timely communication, as well as energized leaders and strategic responses that eliminate actions based on panic" (Goodridge, 2009, p. 28). Goodridge added that "the keys to getting through the tough times are respect and timely communication" (2009, p. 30). Ahmed *et al.* (2010) found that communication assists in "crafting healthier relations between ... [managers] and their employees and the entire organization ultimately benefits from this relationship" (p. 107). Communication "affects coordination of effort, job instruction, performance feedback, group effort,

motivation of employees, [and] interpersonal relations ...” which espouse vibrant organizational climate (Khetarpal, 2010).

Employee Engagement: A Global Panorama:

Flade (2003) reported the proportions of engaged workers for eleven countries: USA – 27%, Canada – 24%, Germany – 12%, Japan – 9%, Great Britain – 19%, Chile – 25%, France – 12%, Israel – 20%, Australia – 18%, New Zealand – 23%, and Singapore – 6%. Gallup Inc. (2005) reported that 12% of Chinese workers and 12% of Thai workers were engaged. Crabtree (2011) reported that the ratio of engaged to actively disengaged workers in Western Europe is 0.81:1, which is relatively high by global standards, although it falls well below Canada and the U.S., where the ratio is 1.44:1. Crabtree (2011) also reported that the ratio of engaged to actively disengaged workers in Australia and New Zealand almost is 1:1. Alternatively, about 20% of the workforce in Western Europe, Australia, and New Zealand were found to be engaged. In India about 10% of the work force were engaged (Crabtree, 2011).

Employee Engagement Surveys:

Macey *et al.* (2009) maintained that employee engagement surveys are principally used to measure and benchmark engagement levels in an organization. They also asserted that various engagement enhancement methodologies employ surveys to assess work environment conditions that might affect engagement. Subsequent analyses of survey data provide valuable insights to employee engagement, which, in turn, help in devising treatments to ameliorate identified issues. Employee engagement surveys are “best suited for measuring employee engagement feelings or state [of] engagement” (Gruman & Saks, 2011, p. 127). In fact several researchers, as reported by Arkin (2011), Bart (2011), Klie (2007), and Wiley (2011), have used surveys to develop meaningful conclusions and actionable plans related to employee engagement.

Organizations conduct surveys to address both the actual challenges in the short term and potential issues over the long term. Wiley (2010) classified the reasons for conducting surveys as:

1. To identify warning signs of trouble within the organization
2. To evaluate the effectiveness of specific programs, policies, and initiatives
3. To gauge the organization's status or strength as an employer of choice among its workforce
4. To predict and drive organizational outcomes, including customer satisfaction and business performance. (p. 8)

Effective employee surveys are tools that could be used to make the workforce congruous with organizational goals. Church *et al.* (2001) proposed a

seven-step process to efficiently design and use surveys: “pooling resources, ... designing and developing, ... communicating objectives,...administering and improving, ... analyzing and interpreting, ... transferring and action planning” (p. 18)

Employee Engagement Program in Rapid Penang:

There were several programs plans and execute in Rapid Penang to cater the needs to close the gap between employee and employer in order to build harmonies relationship between two parties to achieve organization goals. The programs plans and executes to measure the effectiveness of the engagement in the organization. Following are list of programs executes in Rapid Penang for several years;

- a) Tea Tarik Session every month
- b) Religious Talks on every Thursday, on bimonthly basis.
- c) Outdoor sport activities such competitions and friendly matches
- d) Morning Breakfast with Chief Operating Office
- e) Visiting staff if entered hospitals
- f) Birthday Bash for staff inclusive of Bus Drivers

Productivity:

Traditionally, businesses were considered properties of the shareholder. However, in today's knowledge economy, businesses are akin to wealth-creating communities in which both the shareholders and employees act as stakeholders (Handy, 2002). Businesses are organizations that work to achieve specific objectives aimed at providing specific outcomes to their stakeholders while ensuring economic longevity. The objectives, in turn, are formed by implicitly or explicitly defined organizational vision and mission. Expected business outcomes must be defined for all areas on which organizational survival depends. Drucker (1952) defined eight key business output areas: market share, innovation, productivity and quality, physical and financial resources, manager performance and development, worker performance and attitude, profitability, and social responsibility. Buckingham and Coffman (1999) listed profitability, productivity, employee turnover, and customer satisfaction/loyalty as aggregate business performance measures.

In addition to these measures, Harter *et al.* (2009) included safety incidents, absenteeism, shrinkage associated with employee theft, and quality defects as indices of business performance. Parmenter (2010) maintained that key business outcomes included customer satisfaction, net profit before tax, profitability, employee satisfaction, and return on capital employed. It must be noted that business outcomes are indicators of a business's economic viability. Carton and Hofer (2008) held that an organization's performance is a measure of the change in its financial state. The performance could be measured in terms of business outcomes

that “result from management decisions and the execution of those decisions by members of the organization” (Carton & Hofer, 2008, p. 3). Business outcomes selected as key business performance indicators depend on goals the business is trying to achieve. Dragana *et al.* (2011) asserted that appropriately selecting which business outcomes to serve as performance indicators is of great importance to businesses.

Carton and Hofer (2008) maintained that the business outcomes used to represent performance must be in accordance with the organizational circumstances under consideration. Parmenter (2010) proposed that key performance indicators represent a set of “measures focusing on those aspects of organizational performance that are the most critical for the current and future success of the organization” (p. 4). Richardson (2010) noted that key performance indicators could be categorized as “leading [future oriented] or lagging [past oriented] indicators,” “simple or composite indicators,” and “quantitative or qualitative indicators” (p. 367).

Measurement of business outcomes forms an integral part of assessing the success of an organization in achieving its goals. The performance indicators serve also as controls that help to ensure that organizational goals are being met. Gupta (2006) highlighted that an organization’s performance measurement system should monitor and enable achievement of organizational goals. A good control system, built on periodic measurement of business outcomes, must be “effective ... efficient ... timely...flexible... understandable ... tailored ... [able to] highlight deviations ... [able to] lead to corrective actions” (Morse & Babcock, 2010, p. 176-177). Additionally, the goals of successful organizations must be dictated by the organizational vision and mission statements. Niven (2006) asserted

that components of an effective business performance measurement and control system include organizational mission, core values, vision, and strategy.

The advent of the knowledge age has brought about intense focus on the skills, talents, knowledge, and experience of modern employees. Employers are trying to enhance the level of employee engagement in order to become more innovative, competitive, and sustainable. Surveys are considered effective instruments to measure employee engagement. The five dimensions associated with employee engagement are alignment with the organization, management effectiveness, salary and compensation.

Methodology:

In this cross-sectional survey, the data will be collected from the all of Rapid Penang staff, employees through the distribution of questionnaires and the data will be analyzed and interpreted through Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), version 19.0 to determine the relationship involved. In the context of this study using Proportionate Stratified Random Sampling to identify each of the employees at every management hierarchy which had lower level management, middle level management and top level management. Based on Krejcie and Morgan (1970), a total of 285 employees will be the respondents in this study to answer the given questionnaires. This study is going to identify the relationship between variables by using Pearson correlation. Besides that, the most influential transformational engagement styles effectiveness criteria to organization job performance will be analyzed based on the Multiple Regression Analysis. In addition, this study also aims to identify the level of employees job performance based on descriptive analysis.

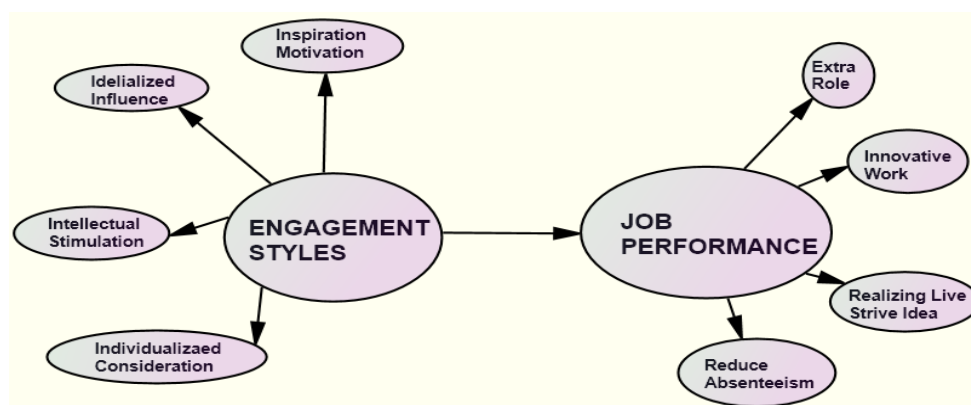


Diagram 1

Conclusion:

Diagram 1 above shows the relationship between engagement style to job performance. In this diagram it consists of four factors (*i.e.* Idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and

individualized consideration). Thus, this model will describe the relationship of two variables and this proposed model will give better understanding either the relationship will affect directly on the relationship between the benchmarks of engagement

styles on job performance. In order to understand the effect of engagement style towards job performance amongst Rapid Penang staff, this conceptual framework provides the factors of engagement styles that able to advance the employees achieve job performance. From the conceptual framework, the independent variables comprise the transformational engagement styles. The dependable variable in this study is about the Rapid Penang staff job performance. The conceptual framework highlight that job performance achievement base on engagement styles.

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