

ORGANIZATIONAL TALENT MANAGEMENT INITIATIVES AND
PRACTICES IN CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

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ORGANIZATIONAL TALENT MANAGEMENT INITIATIVES AND
PRACTICES IN CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

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DEDICATION

Especially for my beloved husband, Irwandy Hj Johari and to my beautiful daughters, Iman Ufairah, Iman Qaireena, Iman Dzaqirah and the handsome boy Ahmad Zayyan. Thankful dear parents, Tukinam Binti Rusik and Kusni Bin Muhtaram, for their unending prayer of this success. The supports, understandings, and assistance that I am gratefully blessed with are very much appreciated and cherished. To my fellow classmate, for making this course a wonderful experience, rather than a strenuous one. Only Allah can repay your kindness

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In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

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ABSTRACT

This study analyses the talent management practices in organizations from the human resource views in the construction industry. Talent management encompasses manpower planning activities, recruitment and selection processes, training and staff development, payroll administration aimed at enabling them to provide effective services to achieve organizational goals. Without proper talent management, an organization will tend to face various problems whether it involves the internal and external affairs of an organization. If the turnover activity has increased as compared to the previous year. This increasing number can be an advantage to those organizations who are at the receiving end of talent acquisition but could spell disasters for the company that keeps losing their best employees to competitors. The objectives of the study are to identify organization talent management initiatives, to determine the impact of talent management practices and strategies, to gather information about recruitment, employee development, and employee retention practices in the construction industry, to explore the differences between organizations with and without specific talent management initiatives in place. The study administrated a (50) set of structures surveyed questionnaire from the random construction industry. The collected data was then analyzed using frequency distribution analysis and the average index method. The results are categorized according to the level of satisfaction or agreement and presented in the table and figures for easy interpretation. The results of the study show that large companies (500 or more employees) are more inclined to have talent management initiatives in place compared to small and medium organizations. The results also show that respondents agree that talent management has its impact on them (mean score 3.8 and above) with the top impact of that initiative would create an environment where employees' ideas are listened to and valued. However, there are no significant differences in these impacts between the organization with specific talent management initiatives in place and organization without one on the impact of talent management initiatives in place. The study also found that more than 80% of the respondent said that their organization has a formal budget for retention, developing and retaining its employees with 60.8% of the respondents predicted it to increase in the span of three years. Finally, there are huge differences between organizations with and without talent initiatives in place on the adequacy of the organization in preparing its or mid-level employees to step into senior leadership positions (73%), organizational with formal budget for recruitment (52.4%), further developing employees (47.6%) and retaining employees (48%). In conclusion, although the findings reveal that the majority of organizations have specific talent management initiatives in place, there are no significant differences as to perceived impact the talent management initiatives would have on their organizations. However, those with talent management initiatives in place have a more positive attitude toward their organization on the matter of recruiting, developing and retaining its employees.

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini menganalisis amalan pengurusan bakat dalam organisasi dari pandangan sumber manusia dalam industri pembinaan. Pengurusan bakat merangkumi aktiviti perancangan tenaga kerja, proses pengambilan dan pemilihan, pembangunan latihan dan kakitangan, pentadbiran gaji yang bertujuan untuk membolehkan mereka menyediakan perkhidmatan yang berkesan untuk mencapai matlamat organisasi. Tanpa pengurusan bakat yang betul, sesebuah organisasi akan menghadapi pelbagai masalah sama ada ia melibatkan hal ehwal dalaman dan luaran sesebuah organisasi. Sekiranya aktiviti perolehan meningkat berbanding tahun sebelumnya. Jumlah yang semakin meningkat ini boleh menjadi satu kelebihan kepada organisasi-organisasi yang berada di akhir penerimaan pengambilan bakat tetapi boleh mengeja bencana untuk syarikat yang terus kehilangan pekerja terbaik mereka kepada pesaing. Objektif kajian ini adalah untuk mengenalpasti inisiatif pengurusan bakat organisasi, untuk menentukan kesan amalan dan strategi pengurusan bakat, untuk mengumpulkan maklumat tentang pengambilan, pembangunan pekerja, dan amalan pengekalan pekerja dalam industri pembinaan, untuk meneroka perbezaan antara organisasi dengan dan tanpa inisiatif pengurusan bakat tertentu. Kajian ini membentangkan satu set (50) set struktur yang disurvei dari industri pembinaan rawak. Data yang dikumpul kemudian dianalisis dengan menggunakan analisis pengedaran frekuensi dan kaedah indeks purata. Hasilnya dikategorikan mengikut tahap kepuasan atau persetujuan dan disajikan dalam jadual dan angka untuk interpretasi mudah. Keputusan kajian menunjukkan bahawa syarikat besar (500 atau lebih pekerja) lebih cenderung untuk mempunyai inisiatif pengurusan bakat di tempat berbanding organisasi kecil dan sederhana. Hasilnya juga menunjukkan bahawa responden bersetuju bahawa pengurusan bakat mempunyai kesan terhadap mereka (min skor 3.8 dan ke atas) dengan kesan atas inisiatif itu akan mewujudkan persekitaran di mana idea-idea pekerja didengar dan dihargai. Walau bagaimanapun, tidak ada perbezaan yang ketara dalam impak ini antara organisasi dengan inisiatif pengurusan bakat tertentu di tempat dan organisasi tanpa ada kesan daripada inisiatif pengurusan bakat. Kajian ini juga mendapati lebih daripada 80% responden berkata bahawa organisasi mereka mempunyai belanjawan formal untuk pengekalan, membangun dan mengekalkan pekerjanya dengan 60.8% responden meramalkan ia akan meningkat dalam tempoh tiga tahun. Akhirnya terdapat perbezaan yang besar antara organisasi dengan dan tanpa inisiatif bakat yang ada pada kecukupan organisasi dalam mempersiapkan kakitangannya atau peringkat pertengahan untuk melangkah ke jawatan kepimpinan kanan (73%), organisasi dengan bajet formal untuk pengambilan (52.4%), membangun pekerja (47.6%) dan mengekalkan pekerja (48%). Kesimpulannya, walaupun penemuan mendedahkan bahawa majoriti organisasi mempunyai inisiatif pengurusan bakat khusus yang ada, tidak terdapat perbezaan yang signifikan terhadap kesan yang dimiliki oleh inisiatif pengurusan bakat terhadap organisasi mereka. Walau bagaimanapun, mereka yang mempunyai inisiatif pengurusan bakat di tempat mempunyai sikap yang lebih positif terhadap organisasi mereka mengenai perkara merekrut, membangun dan mengekalkan pekerjanya

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

According to the statistics posted on the website of Department of Statistics Malaysia (DOSM), construction sector recorded the value of construction work done of RM37.4 billion in the first quarter of 2019. This value however, recorded a slower growth of 0.7 per cent year-on-year to record RM37.4 billion as compared to fourth quarter in 2018 which is RM36.5 billion. The value of construction work done is expanding because of positive growth in the Civil engineering sub-sector with 9.5 per cent and Special trades activities sub-sector with 4.3 per cent. The Non-residential buildings and Residential buildings sub-sectors on the other hand, declined to 4.4 per cent and 7.4 per cent respectively. Civil engineering sub-sector continued to be the fore front of the performance of value of construction work done in terms of contribution and with 43.1 per cent share, followed by Non-residential buildings (27.3%), Residential buildings (24.5%) and Special trades activities (5.2%). The private sector also help to push the construction activity with 56.0 per cent share (RM20.9 billion) as compared to the public sector with 44.0 per cent share (RM16.5 billion) (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2019).

With such significant contribution to the country, it was no surprise that the construction industries needed to be at the edge of their competitiveness by retaining their best employees. However due to its hazardous and stressful job conditions, construction organizations suffer from high levels of employee turnover (Chih *et al.*, 2016). In U.S. for example, according to Bureau of Labor and Statistics (BLS) construction industry reported one of the highest annual quit rates (28.2%) in the world (Bureau Of Labour and Statistics, 2019). A high turnover rate will impose a significant

problem to an organization especially for the medium size company. It is a well-known fact that an employee is an important stakeholder for the company, but it was unfortunate after much resources has been spent in recruiting, developing and training, the employee departs for another company (Abdul Quadri *et al.*, 2015). A survey done by Global Talent Management and Rewards and Global Workforce Studies finds the employee and employer have an aligned views, and also some deviation in their view of top drivers that make them want to stay in an organization. As the issues on the significance of base pay and career development opportunities are among the top three in both lists, it seems both group have an agreement on these issues (Watson, 2016). However, there is an obvious area of disagreement in the significance of job security. Despite being the third most important attraction driver for employees, it does not make it to the top seven ranks on the employers' list of reasons of job retention. First appeared in 2012, this disconnection is a relatively recent phenomenon and has since deteriorated. During that time, job security was the second most important factors for recruitment, but managers ranked it as a fourth most important, indicating that they had more insight into the needs of workers than they do now. It was probably because employers thought that job security issues among workers have declined with a slowly improving economy, when in reality they have not (Watson, 2016).

The usage of computer-aided design and drafting software such as Building information modelling (BIM) and Autocad used to create precise 2D and 3D drawings have rapidly changed the construction industry. According to the Bureau of Labour Statistics (BLS) of the U.S. Department of Labour, the demand for highly skilled construction professionals (architects, engineers and constructors) is expected to outpace the supply over the next twenty years (Wu & Issa, 2013). This will have its impact on the organization's strategy in staffing as they not only have to recruit the right talent that suits the organization needs but also involves processes such as retaining, succession planning, developing leadership, and career planning.

As stated previously, this changing demand of workforce in construction industry has changes the need for human resource management. Traditionally, human

resource management has solely focus on recruiting staff, attending their needs and taking disciplinary actions when needed. This role however has expanded for the past years as human resource professionals are not merely focus on the preface of recruiting, but has extended itself to take account of wider range of organizational programs such as workforce growth preparation, workplace equality and equity, disaster preparedness, incentive management, and organizational strategy development and implementation (Society for Human Resource Management, 2006). The challenge of the modern age companies would most likely to engage employees in organization as engagement will bring more satisfaction towards their job than money, incentives and benefits can offer (Phillips & Roper, 2009). A shorter tenure among employees is another phenomenon that affects the workplace. Over the past several decades, the average length of jobs tenure in all age groups has decreased steadily. The average number of years working for the same company for the age of 35 is less than three years (Phillips & Roper, 2009). This will surely have its impact towards the company as each time a talented employees left, a chunk of profit will go with them. And it will take too much time and effort to train a new employee to reach the similar level as the one that left.

The connection between human resource development and organizational effectiveness has been established since the 1970s. However, the term 'talent management' was initiated by McKinsey & Company following a 1997 study. The following year "talent management" was entered in a paper written by Elizabeth G. Chambers, Mark Foulon, Helen Handfiled-Jones, Steven M. Hankin, and Eduard G. Micheals III (Blass, 2009). Talent management is a concept that is actually quite difficult to define as it can be viewed from a number of perspectives (Blass, 2009). There is the process perspective which proposes that it includes all processes needed to optimise people within an organisation and there is the cultural perspective that believes talent management is a mind-set, and that you must believe that talent is needed for success (Farley, 2005; Creelman, 2004).

1.2 Problem Background

In the middle of War on Talent, a term first coined by (Chambers et. al, 1998) recruitment and retaining talents will be one of the biggest obstacles faces by employers in the coming years. It heightens the need for a review of recruitment policies and procedures in the midst of increasing competitive landscape. A talented employee could be described as the expert in their field of work and are with the skills essential to business growth.

Recruiting the best talent is not an easy task especially for managers in Asia. A report that highlights salary and recruiting trends based on responses from Hays Asia operating markets Mainland China, Hong Kong, Japan, Malaysia, and Singapore (Hays Malaysia, 2019) finds that a total of 46 per cent of employers are not confident in discovering talent with the skills they need to meet operational requirements in the year ahead. This is an increment of 11 percent as compared to last year of 35 percent on similar issue. Employers' inability to find the suitable candidates has raises some concerns as this talent shortage would hamper the effectiveness of the organization in achieving their target. The same report has also reported that when asked which area would most likely have had a negative impact on their organization, they said that productivity (71 percent), growth and expansion (52 per cent) and employee morale (46 per cent) were most impacted, in that order (Hays Malaysia, 2019).

Organization's effort in retaining their employees is best seen from the perspective of the employees themselves as opposed to what the company thought of initiatives they have in place for their employees (Wan, 2008). A company might be able to recruit this talented employee, retaining these talents, however, is another challenge posing. A survey done by Global Talent Management and Rewards and Global Workforce Studies in 2016 finds that one third of the 2000 employers surveyed has reported that the turnover activity has increased as compared to last year (Watson, 2016). This increasing number can be an advantage to those organizations who are at the receiving end of talent acquisition but could spell disastrous for the company who are keep losing their best employees to competitors.

The massive roll out of mega projects compounded with the problems mentioned above prove that the war on talent would not dwindle soon. Instead, expect it to intensify further and this would require prompt action from the industry players to recruit quality employees with numerous skills, both local and foreign to ensure the successful completion of the project, considering the complexity and fast-track nature of the projects. At the same time, there is also an increasing need to breed interest in existing employees in order to stop them from turning their back to their employees and working with competitors. Human resource and manpower issues will remain the key issues of the Malaysian construction industry as reported (MBAM report, 2011). Recruitment and retaining talent will be one of the biggest challenges employers have to face and it heightens the need for a review of recruitment policies and procedures in the midst of war for top talent. According to authors review, this study was not discussed by the researchers before especially in the construction industry. Therefore, it is timely for this kind of topic to be studied by the author. This study is also significant to assist the human resources manager in construction industry to identify the range of issues of talent management and broadens their responsibility on implementations of effective measures.

1.3 Aim and Objective of study

The aim of this study is to examine organizational talent management practices and insights from the perspective of HR professionals among construction organization. This aim can be achieved through the following objective:

- 1.To identify organization initiative of talent management.
- 2.To determine the impact of talent management strategies and practices.
- 3.To gather information about employee development, recruitment, and employee retention practices in construction industry.

4. To explore the differences between organizations with and without specific talent management initiatives in place.

1.4 Scope of study

The scope of the study was limited to area Kuala Lumpur, Johor Bahru and Ipoh (Construction firm). However, the study delimited to identify, organization talent management initiative, the impact of Talent management practice and strategies and to explore the differences between an organization with or without specific talent management in the initiative in place. The selection of respondents was based on the HR perspective and those involved in the early stages and their roles and responsibilities in the construction. The investigation is expected to help researchers identify talent management initiatives in construction, determine the impact of talent management practices and strategies in construction and gather information on employee development, recruitment, and retention practices in construction and explore organizational differences with and without specific talent management initiatives on the spot.

1.5 Significant of the study

The research is significant as it contributes to more findings towards talent management study that has gained significant track in driving the success of a company. There are many studies carried out in the various field of industries, but not so much in the construction industry. It was hopeful that the finding would give an insight into the current practice of construction companies in Malaysia in talent management. As stated earlier, construction plays a major part in our developing

country and has a high rate of turnover. A company that lacks on planning, and thus neglect its employee talent, is basically waits for a need to thrive or current employees to leave and look for a new solution (Phillips & Roper, 2009). It is also notable as those who are skilled workers in this industry are rapidly leaving the workplace as retirement is looming, leaving the gap to be filled by later generation that desires a more of a balanced life coupled with flexible working hours and feedback on demand, as compared to the yearly performance assessment that their parents experienced. This new generation of the employee is abler to pick up and choose between employers. Promises about careers, development and how talent is managed will be more rather than less important in the future (Blass, 2009). Therefore, it was significant for the construction industry to adapt to this strategy as it was a well established strategic approach in keeping their company to its competitive edge.

1.6 Research methodology

The methodology of this study begins with exploring the sources of talent management initiatives, practices and strategies in construction. Initial discussions were held with the project supervisor, Mr. Abdul Rahim b Abdul Hamid to determine the title, objective and function as a scientific guide when processing information to be gathered from the questionnaire. Literature is used as the source of the right to find answers to objective research and guidance based on scientific materials and the information obtained will be compared with the information obtained through the questionnaire. Data obtained from questionnaires distributed to selected construction sites such as Kuala Lumpur, Ipoh and Johor Bahru were analyzed to answer the research objectives. Finally, the results and discussions will be examined, analyzed, and corrected according to the objective study. Figure 1.1 shows the methodological flow of this study.

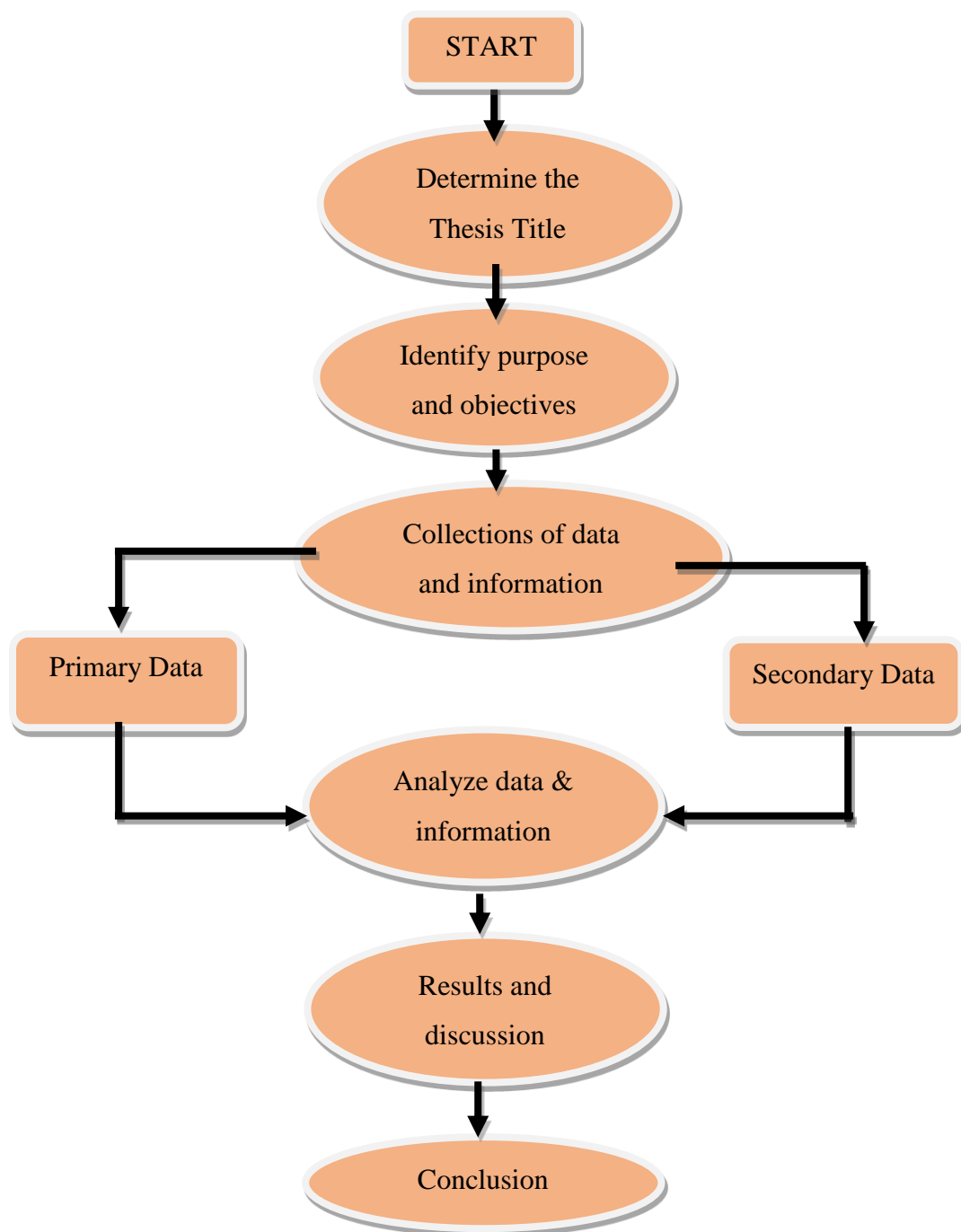


Figure 1.1 Methodology of the study

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