

The Relationship between Job Crafting and Work Engagement in One of the Local Authorities in Malaysia

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Abstract--- *This study aims to investigate the relationship between job crafting (task crafting, relational crafting and cognitive crafting) and work engagement (vigour, dedication and absorption) in Malaysian context. This study is focused on public officers and respondents of this research include 79 middle managers at one of the local authorities in Malaysia. The hypothesis of this study was tested using Pearson Correlation Coefficient Analysis. Both mean levels of job crafting and work engagement were high level with 4.66 and 4.64, respectively. Therefore, it is proven that the middle managers agreed and practiced both job crafting and work engagement. In addition, the results also revealed that job crafting is positively and significantly related to work engagement where $p=0.000$ ($p<0.05$) and $r=0.712$. Hence, the result imply that organizations should be paying more attention to the fact that job crafting and work engagement are related to one another and its benefits may help the organization to be more competitive and more successful in the future.*

Keywords--- *Work Engagement, Job Crafting, Public Service, Malaysia.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Until today, researchers are still debating on the effectiveness of work engagement in creating sustainable growth and development for the organization to survive [1,2]. Survival of an organization is highly dependent on its ability to satisfy their customers' needs and at the same time maintaining their quality, promote work innovation and flexible environment as well as other organizational responsibilities through employees' commitment and engagement with work [3,4]. In this regard, study conducted by Schaufeli and Bakker [5] expressed that work engagement has the potential to improve employees' welfare and organizational achievement or performance. There are also several studies conducted on work engagement which showed that employees are able to perform well despite facing challenges by having resourceful work environments. It is because work engagement assists them to achieve job satisfaction, obtain organizational commitment [6], encourage their willingness to do extra-role performance [7], as well as increase their productivity [8] and retention [9,8] if the environment itself is able to provide them work engagement [10].

However, according to the State of the Global Workplace report of 2018 [11], 85% of employees are not engaged or are actively disengaged at work. Specifically, 18% are actively disengaged at work, while 67% are not engaged at all [11]. These individuals may give their time to the company, but not the best version of their work. In addition, study done by Oehler and Adair [12] had shown that there is an increase in percentage of employee engagement with 66% compared to 65%, last year. However, Malaysian employees are still among the least

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engaged with work, joining the Singaporean counterparts in being the least engaged among major Asian markets compared to the other Asian countries. Therefore, improving work engagement may help in addressing the numbers of disengaged employees.

II. MALAYSIAN CONTEXT

Narrowing down from the global indexes to Malaysian public services indexes, there are also some alarming issues in Malaysia. Other than corruption cases among the public servants, there are also high number of complaints regarding public service performance that affecting the efficiency of the government services [13]. Numbers of public complaints regarding public service performance are still in an alarming state even if the numbers of complaint cases are on declining trend [14]. As at March 2019, the monthly average complaints made with regards to the inefficient performance of public servant services were about 500-530 cases [15]. This is worrying as public servants still received high numbers of complaints despite having the best support in the workplace in order to perform their duties well [13]. The negative situation occurring today is associated with low level engagement among the public servants in carrying their work tasks and subsequently, they work with low interest and passion in completing their daily tasks [13,2]. Hence, this study will focus on the public sector to ensure the efficiency of Malaysian public services.

III. WORK ENGAGEMENT

Work engagement was first introduced by Kahn [16] known as The Work –role Model of Engagement. Kahn [16] was heavily influenced by Goffman in which he suggested that people act out momentary attachments and detachments in role performances; hence, directly referring to Goffman's Internationalist Theory. This conceptualization has been interwoven throughout the development of Kahn first theory of personal engagement and personal disengagement [17]. Therefore, personal engagement is defined as one's become physically immersed in their tasks, cognitively aware and emotionally associated to others when fulfilling their jobs [2] and personal disengagement as separation or split-up from work roles [16] (p.694).

In this study, work engagement is defined as a positive, fulfilling, work related state of mind that comprises vigour, dedication and absorption [18]. Vigour generally reflects one's readiness to concentrate in doing work; high levels of energy exhibited while working and have high mental resilience even when facing task difficulties. Meanwhile, dedication refers to the individuals or employees' spirit in doing work, and work always comes first compared to other things as it is very important to them. Lastly, absorption refers to when one's completely immersed in one's work and feel like time has passed quickly while working [19-21].

According to Bakker , Tims and Derks [22], employees who are engaged in work tend to experience positive emotions such as happiness, satisfaction and are enthusiastic in doing their work tasks, in which at the end, leads to positive outcome such a variety of ideas and positive attitude that lead them to perform better. This is supported by Bakker and Demerouti [23] who stated that engaged employee performs better than unengaged one because of the positive thought toward their work, hence, they tend to be more productive, confident and open to work opportunities. Other than that, engaged employees also are willing to put extra effort in order to achieve

organizational success [24]. Therefore, they tend to feel more satisfied in their effort and performance and stay longer in the organization.

IV. ANTECEDENT OF WORK ENGAGEMENT

Job crafting concept as a whole is about focuses on employee job redesign which includes changing boundaries and conditions of job tasks, job relationships as well as meaning of the job [25]. It allows changes on employees' meaning of job by altering the characteristics of their job, also the social work environment. According to Berg, Dutton and Wrezniowski [26], employees independently alter certain aspects of their jobs in order to improve person-job fit or to fix the gap between the characteristics of the job and their own needs, abilities, skills and preferences.

According to Wrzesniewski, LoBuglio, Dutton and Berg [27], there are three types of job crafting which are task crafting, relational crafting and cognitive crafting. Task crafting is about altering the range of task involved in the job or taking extra task [28]. Relational crafting involves the freedom to make decision on whom to interact, communicate or collaborate with at work, for instance, making friends with people that have similar skills or interest [29]. On the other hand, cognitive crafting is different from task and relational crafting as it involves altering the process on how one perceives one's job with the perception of making it more personally meaningful, for instance, making an exertion to acknowledge the impact of one's work has on the organization's or community's success. It may also lead to behavioural changes in the manner how employees carry out their jobs [28].

All in all, job crafting is referring to self-initiated changes made by employees towards their jobs with the aim to satisfy his/her goals by increasing the available resources and reducing work demands [30]. This job-centred form of innovation comes up from individual needs and social pressures [25] and encourages employees' involvement and use of knowledge, skills and abilities that may improve work performance [31]. It is interesting to observe when employees implement human resource practices; it contributes directly, or through mediation of job crafting and work engagement, to an improved work performance [32]. Job crafting can be encouraged by management by giving opportunities for employees to innovate; and cultivating their capability and motivation. Continuing this argument, there is a probability that human resource practice influences employees perceived job discretion (i.e. choices having by employees upon significant characteristics of their work, such as methods and timing) [33], job resources (i.e. job autonomy) and job demands (i.e. time pressure and workload) [34].

There are several studies that have been conducted to identify the relationship between job crafting and work engagement. Firstly, Bakker, Rodriguez-Munoz and Vergel [35] proved that employees do impersonate each other's job crafting behaviours and indirectly affect each other's work engagement. This apparently shows that proactive behaviour at work giving important interpersonal consequences. The study found that crafting the job resources and challenge job demands was positively related to employees' work engagement, dissimilar to decreasing hindrance job demands that was found unrelated to one's own engagement. In conclusion, job crafting (job demands and job resources) is related to one's and their colleagues' work engagement levels.

Other than that, research by Siddiqi [36] which focused on understanding the connectedness on both concept of work engagement and job crafting on employees' service to desired customer outcomes, especially in developing

country, specifically in India concluded that job crafting attitude of employees' service results in service employees' work engagement and the desired customer outcomes (i.e. customer satisfaction and loyalty). On the other hand, study done by Akram and Muhammad Hassaan [37] stated that employees that had been given job autonomy tend to have more opportunity to craft their jobs and this enables the employees to be more engaged in creating more challenging work environment and are more motivated in getting their work done quickly. At once, they perform better and yielded better result because they feel the sense of ownership in their work. Based on the literature, the paper developed the following hypothesis:

H1: There is significant relationship between job crafting and work engagement among the middle managers in local authority in Johor.

V. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was conducted on middle managers within a public organization in Southern Malaysia. Two city councils in Johor are involved in this study.

5.1 Sampling and Population

A total of 96 of questionnaires were distributed but only 79 sets of questionnaires were received for analysis. This is equivalent to the table of Krejcie and Morgan [38], in which stated that if the population is about 95 respondents, 76 are the appropriate number of sample size for the result of the study to be generalized.

5.2 Research Instrument

The questionnaire in this study is divided into three sections namely Part A, B and C. Part A provides the demographic information of the respondents. Section B consists of 17 items of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) which identifies the level of work engagement adopted from Schaufeli, Bakker and Salanova [7]. Section C consists of 15 items that measure job crafting adopted from The Job Crafting Questionnaire (JCQ) by Tims, Bakker and Derks [30]. Part B and C were measured using six-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 6 = Strongly Agree).

5.3 Data Analysis

The data gathered then was analysed using Statistical Packages of Social Sciences (SPSS) 20 in terms of descriptive and inferential statistics. The mean data of each item in the questionnaires has been limited to only describe the level of mean of each variable in the participating organization [39]. In addition, the Pearson Correlation Coefficient was done in descriptive analysis to test the hypothesis on identifying the relationship between job crafting and work engagement.

5.4 Reliability Test

The reliability test of each variable also has had been performed and the result as in table below:-

Table 1: Reliability test on work engagement and job crafting

Variables	Number of Items	Reliability Score	Reliability Level
Work Engagement	17	.881	Reliable
Job Crafting	15	.912	Strongly Reliable

VI. RESULT

6.1 Level of Job Crafting

Data analysis shows that job crafting has high mean value with $M= 4.660$ and $STD=.562$ illustrating high degree of agreement among respondents. Based on data analysis, item number eleven (JC11) holds or leads to the highest mean among the 15 items in job crafting with $M= 4.911$ and $STD=.737$. It is stated that 95 per cent respondents agreed that they make an effort to get to know other people well at work, (SID: $f=4$, $\%=5.1$; SIA: $f=13$, $\%=16.5$; A: $f=48$, $\%=60.8$; SA: $f=14$, $\%=17.7$).

6.2 Level of Work Engagement

Data analysis shows that work engagement holds high level of mean value with $M=4.640$ and $STD=.513$ that proved the high degree of agreement among respondents. Based on data analysis, item number twelve (WE12) scored the highest mean among the 17 items in work engagement which $M= 5.279$ and $STD= .678$. It is stated that all respondents agreed with the statement “time flies when I am working” (SIA: $f=10$, $\%=12.7$; A: $f=37$, $\%=46.8$; SA: $f=32$, $\%=40.5$). In addition, the other items representing the other variables also recorded high mean value even the item of relational crafting recorded the highest mean value among all. This showed that the middle managers in particular organization practice work engagement but were more likely to perform or practice the dimension of absorption rather than vigour and dedication to work engagement.

6.3 Relationship between Job Crafting and Work Engagement

The relationship was tested using Pearson Correlation to ensure the value, direction (positive or negative), form (linear) and the degree (strength) of the relationship of the two variables of job crafting and work engagement.

H1: There is significant relationship between job crafting and work engagement among the middle managers in local authority in Johor.

Table 2: Pearson Correlation Coefficient Analysis between Job Crafting and Work Engagement

Independent Variable	Pearson Correlation (r)	Significant (2-tailed)	Strength
Job crafting	.712**	.000	Strong

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 2 shows that the correlation between job crafting and work engagement is significant where $p=0.000$ ($p<0.05$) and shows that there is significant, strong, positive relationship where $r=0.712$. Therefore, hypothesis 1 is accepted and there is significant relationship between job crafting and work engagement.

VII. DISCUSSION

This study shows that there is positive relationship between job crafting and work engagement. This means that, the increase in crafting social resources, structural resources, challenging job demands and decreasing hindering job demands provide positive relationship towards work engagement. In contrast, the research done by Sakuraya, Shimazu, Eguchi, Kamiyama, Hara, Namba and Kawakami [40] discovered that decrease in hindering job demands was negatively associated with work engagement, but positively with psychological distress.

In addition, there are another study on the relationship between job crafting and work engagement by Petrou, Demerouti, Peeters, Schaufeli and Hetland [41] and Bakker, Tims and Derks [32]. According to these studies, the analysis showed empirical evidence that job crafting is positively connected to work engagement. This is also consistent with the study done by Lu, Wang, Lu, Du, and Bakker [42] which stated that work engagement can be promoted by job crafting. However, the researcher also added that the work engagement may also promote job crafting. They defined job crafting as actively involved in job redesign in terms of resources and demands. Result showed that employees enhance their motivation by changing some aspect of job to fit their own needs. By being proactive, employees might felt motivated to face any challenges and are engaged in problem solving effectively, which in the end, enhances their engagement with work. Therefore, job crafting (conceptualized as task, relational and cognitive crafting) has been associated with work engagement [43], employee's performance [44], job satisfaction, effectiveness and negatively with absenteeism and turnover [13].

Research done by Akram and Muhammad Hassaan [37] also supported the positive significant relationship between job crafting and work engagement. However, this time, the research revealed that job crafting also positively mediates the relationship between job autonomy and work engagement. The employees that have been given job autonomy tend to craft their jobs and this allows them to be more engaged in creating a more challenging work environment. Other than that, study by Xanthopoulou, Bakker and Fischbach [45] also supported result yielded from the analysis of the present study which stated that there is significant relationship between job crafting and work engagement. However, this study focuses more on role of personal resources and emotional demands. The result of this study also supports that the combination of high demands and high self-efficacy (personal resources) results in high level of engagement and vice versa.

As a continuation from discussion above, the middle managers or respondents in the present study will have the ability to foresee future issues or problems in a fast-changing organizational environment. Hence, they will be able to proactively create new work environment to overcome or prevent those issues. Other than that, the high mean value of job crafting proved that middle managers were likely to change how their work is carried out, how often or with whom do they interact at work and how they cognitively ascribe the significant meaning to their work. Therefore, the middle managers tend to have the sense of duty, happy and enjoying his/her work. Thus, this outcomes shows how the middle managers in present study, in which, they achieved high level of engagement (of about 90 per cent of respondents agree that they feel engaged in their work).

VIII. CONCLUSION

This study discovers that there is a significant, strong and positive relationship between job crafting and work engagement. This finding enables us to further understand behaviours of middle managers in public organization in order to better implement the plans and strategies to foster and improve the work engagement. This study also made the middle manager and organization aware of the benefits of work engagement and the element that might help in improving work engagement which is job crafting.

Effectiveness of work engagement is not just in creating sustainable growth and development for organization to survive the fast-changing work environment [2] but to also help organization to survive based on their ability to

satisfy their customers' needs and at the same maintain their quality, and other organizational responsibilities through employees' commitment and engagement with work [4]. This emphasizes that work engagement is crucial to be fostered in each individual and implemented in organizations because of its capability to lead towards high level employees' performance that indirectly, affects organizations' performance.

This study has also made several directions for future research. First, the future research should focus on extending the sample to a bigger population. In addition, future research should focus on all position levels instead of focusing on certain position because both job crafting and work engagement might occur at different level and yield different result that may help in extension of this study.

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