

WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN TELECOMMUTING

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I/ we hereby declare that I have read this project paper and in my view, this project paper is sufficient in term of scope and quality for Bachelor of Technology Management (Technology Innovation)

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WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN TELECOMMUTING

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement of Bachelor Technology Management
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DECLARATION OF ORIGINAL WORK

“I hereby declare that this project paper is result of my independent work except the summary and excerpts that have been specifically acknowledgement”

Signature :

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DEDICATION

To the most amazing and awesome person in my life, my parents and family,

Husain Bin Awang

Maliah Bt Mohd

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Praise to ALLAH S.W.T, I am giving my appreciation to almighty the most gracious and most merciful, fortunately I have done my „Projek Sarjana Muda“ which is a compulsory project as a fourth year student at Universiti Teknikal Malaysia Melaka (UTeM).

I would like to extend my thankfulness to my parents, the most precious person in my life who always supports and giving advices. I also like to express my appreciation to my supervisor Madam Edna Bt Buyong for all of her guidance and reprimands that encourage me to complete this research. Special thanks to my second examiner, Prof. Dr. Khairul Baharein Bin Mohd Noor for his support due to create the research more meaningful. Not forgetting all my friends who always help me in sharing ideas to finish this report. Deepest gratitude to respondents at Klang Valley for their cooperation participating in my research by answering the questionnaire.

ABSTRACT

For decades, Malaysia very much concerned with the roles of women's employment and their contribution to the societies. Too often women leave the workplace to care for their children, young family, aged parents and family members. The most common issues uncovered by this research are women nowadays have no flexible working arrangement and they are facing difficulty in childcare arrangement because both of responsibilities are under women shoulder under the Malaysian culture. This research also explores increasing of women's participation in telecommuting and the impact towards their work-life balance in order to increase their work satisfaction and productivity. The researcher provides three types of research objectives into this study, which are to identify the factors that encourage women remain in employment or return to work from a career break, however, to determine how significant is telecommuting in encouraging women to remain in employment and lastly to determine the level of women's performance at the work place through telecommuting. This research was done in Klang Valley as it was the most suitable place to get correct and relevant data. The researcher used explanatory for research design and chose a quantitative method. This research depends on a questionnaire as the primary data and refer to journals, articles and internet sources as secondary data. The researcher had distributed 100 questionnaires to the respondents and got 100% feedback from them. Findings showed that, the most influenced factor towards the increasing of women's participation in telecommuting is SOHO rather than flexitime and telework. The result showed that SOHO reported the highest value compare to other factors which is 0.00. Flexitime and telework represented 0.162 and 0.171 respectively.

ABSTRAK

Berapa dekad yang lalu, Malaysia mengambil berat terhadap peranan pekerjaan wanita dan sumbangan mereka kepada masyarakat. Antara isu yang paling lazim adalah wanita pada hari ini tidak mempunyai susunan kerja yang fleksibel dan mereka menghadapi kesukaran dalam pengurusan anak-anak kerana kedua-dua tanggungjawab ini diletakkan di atas bahu wanita mengikut budaya Malaysia. Kajian ini prihatin terhadap peningkatan penglibatan wanita dalam telecommuting dan keseimbangan kerja dan kehidupan bagi meningkatkan kepuasan kerja dan produktiviti mereka. Pengkaji telah menyediakan tiga jenis objektif kajian dalam kajian ini iaitu untuk mengenalpasti faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi wanita dalam pekerjaan atau kembali untuk bekerja semula selepas berhenti, walaubagaimanapun kajian ini adalah untuk mengenalpasti tahap kepentingan telecommuting bagi menggalakkan wanita untuk terus kekal dalam pekerjaan dan akhir sekali untuk mengenalpasti tahap prestasi wanita di tempat kerja melalui telecommuting. Kajian ini telah diadakan di Klang Valley kerana ianya adalah kawasan yang paling sesuai untuk mendapat data yang tepat dan relevan. Pengkaji telah menggunakan explanotary untuk rekaan kajian dan memilih quantitative sebagai kaedah kajian. Kajian ini bergantung kepada soal selidik sebagai data primer and membuat rujukan melalui jurnal-jurnal, artikel dan sumber internet sebagai data sekunder. Penyelidik telah mengedarkan 100 borang soal selidik kepada responden dan mendapat maklum balas sebanyak 100% daripada mereka. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan faktor yang paling mempengaruhi terhadap peningkatan perlibatan wanita dalam telecomuting adalah SOHO berbanding flexitime dan telework. Hasilnya menunjukkan bahawa SOHO menunjukkan nilai tertinggi berbanding dengan faktor-faktor lain iaitu 0.00. Flexitime dan telework masing-masing 0.162 dan 0,171.

TABLE OF CONTENT

CHAPTER	TITLE	PAGES
	DECLARATION	ii
	DEDICATION	iii
	ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	iv
	ABSTRACT	v
	<i>ABSTRAK</i>	vi
	TABLE OF CONTENT	vii
	LIST OF TABLES	x
	LIST OF FIGURE	xi
	LIST OF SYMBOLS	xii
	LIST OF APPENDICES	
CHAPTER 1	INTRODUCTION	
	1.1 Background of Study	1
	1.2 Problem Statement	3
	1.3 Research Objectives	5
	1.4 Research Questions	5
	1.5 Scope & Limitation of Study	6
	1.6 Significant/ Importance of the Study	6

CHAPTER 2	LITERATURE REVIEW	
2.1	Introduction	7
2.2	Women Participation in Employment	8
2.3	Telecommuting	10
2.3.1	Small Office/ Home Office	13
2.3.2	Flexitime	15
2.3.3	Telework/ Mobile Work	17
2.4	Women Employees Performance	18
2.5	Theoretical Framework	19
CHAPTER 3	RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	
3.1	introduction	20
3.2	Research Design	21
3.3	Quantitative Research	22
3.4	Primary Data and Secondary Data	23
3.5	Validity and Reliability	
3.5.1	Validity	23
3.5.2	Reliability	24
3.6	Conclusion	24
CHAPTER 4	DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS	
4.1	Introduction	25
4.2	Respondents' Demographic Profile	26
4.2.1	Respondents' Race	27
4.2.2	Respondents' Marital Status	28
4.2.3	Respondents' Telecommuting	29
4.2.4	Respondents' Educational Level	30
4.2.5	Respondents' Years of Work Experience	31
4.3	Reliability Analysis	
4.3.1	Cronbach's Alpha	32

4.3.2 Respondent's Perception on Research Framework Variables	33
4.4 Multiple Regression Analysis (MRA)	35
4.5 Correlation Analysis	39
CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION	
5.1 Introduction	42
5.2 Discussion	43
5.3 Conclusion	47
5.4 Recommendations	48
REFERENCES	52
APPENDICES	60

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE	TITLE	PAGE NUMBER
4.1	Respondents' Race	27
4.2	Respondents' Marital Status	28
4.3	Respondents' Telecommuting	29
4.4	Respondents' Educational Level	30
4.5	Respondents' Years of Work Experience	31
4.6	Case summary of Cronbach's Alpha	32
4.7	Reliability Statistic of 20 items	32
4.8	Descriptive Statistic for independence variables	33
4.9	Descriptive Statistic for importance of telecommuting	34
4.10	Factors influenced to the increasing of women participation in telecommuting	35
4.11	Model summary of MRA	36
4.12	Coefficient of MRA	37
4.13	ANOVA analysis	38
4.14	Relationship's strength of correlation	39
4.15	Correlation of independent variables and dependent variable	40

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE	TITLE	PAGE NUMBER
4.1	Respondents' Race	27
4.2	Respondents' Marital Status	28
4.3	Respondents' Telecommuting	29
4.4	Respondents' Educational Level	30
4.5	Respondents' Years of Work Experience	31

LIST OF SYMBOLS

SOHO	=	Small Office/ Home Office
MRA	=	Multiple Regression Analysis
WLB	=	Work-life Balance
WLC	=	Work-life Conflict
R&D	=	Research and Development
P	=	Significant Value
R	=	Correlation Coefficient
R ²	=	Coefficient of Determination
N	=	Number of Respondents

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

In developed countries, the telecommuting program is nothing incredible while it has even been implemented by developing countries like Malaysia, Philippines and Thailand. A lot of international organizations worldwide such as Microsoft, IBM, HP and Accenture are obtained competitive advantages by practicing the telecommuting program to their organizations. The telecommuting program provides the flexibility of employees in their working hours and this is very popular among the information technology companies. In Malaysia, SCOPE International Sdn. Bhd, which is one of the local Information Technologies companies that was a subsidiary company of the Chartered Bank of UK has been used the telecommuting program to all the staff as an official program that brings to the purpose of encouraging work-life balance among them specially women employees.

The female labour participation rate in Malaysia was 52.4% in 2013, which means for every 100 women, 52 were in the labour force. For the 2013/2014 intake into the public higher learning institutions, 68% of the new students were female students. "However, according to the labour force survey by the Department of Statistics, women managers make up only 3.2% and women professionals only 14.8%," said Women, Family and Community Development Minister Datuk Seri Rohani Abdul Karim. (<http://www.thesundaily.my/news/1040272>).

However, telecommuting (work from home) is deemed to be a vital component in producing a competitive and conducive working environment. According to Mohammad et al. (2000), via telecommuting, companies able to recruit and retain key employees. Furthermore, Hjorthol and Nossun (2008) have proven that telecommuting can allow workers to address both their family needs and corporate task, which is very crucial to retaining a talented workforce particularly women.

Moreover, Diane and Emilie (2007) and Dubrin (1991) have pinpointed that telecommuting not only increases workforce productivity but also satisfaction. As argued by Diane and Emilie (2007), and proven by previous studies, telecommute could motivate staff. Their finding shows that the demand for telecommuting is mainly justified by the flexibility and quality of life, productivity and avoidance of commuting. In short, employees are more efficient at home than when they work at the client's office as home provides a quiet and peaceful working environment with fewer disturbances. This contributes to increased productivity.

Kurland and Bailey (1999) defined telecommuting as the elimination of commute time, the rise in perceived autonomy and control, the invisibility that reduces the need for special clothing and the absence of office politics (Margaret, 2002). Furthermore, they concluded that work-life balance is indeed a benefit of telecommuting and the significant effect is primarily for "dual-career families" (Samia and Richard, 2006). It is also found that productivity can be increased as a result of eliminating the wasted time that a real commute requires (Davis, 1995; Hill et al., 1998).

1.2 Problem Statement

In this study, the researcher would like to highlight the issues of implementing the telecommuting program in an organization that will impact to the women's participation. Housework is the main factor for women in participating in their employment. In Malaysia, this program has still in under popularity because it not gained and support from many organizations due to a lot of reasons, even though the telecommuting brings a variety of benefits to the employees and the organization itself.

However, some of them have formed an unofficial agreement of telecommute practice among the staff and managers without the approval from the company's governors and administration side. Therefore, the researcher do look at this area to enhance the organizations in Malaysia to implement telecommuting as it is supposed to do in order to gain job satisfaction among the women employees. Furthermore, the researcher had stated these two main points that most common issues why are the women employees need telecommuting program in their lives. The issues are:

- a. No flexible working arrangement, and
- b. Difficulty in childcare arrangement

Workplace Flexibility 2010 defines a "flexible work arrangement" (FWA) as any one of a spectrum of work structures that alters the time or place that work gets done on a regular basis. The flexible work arrangement includes the flexibility in the scheduling of hours worked such as alternative work schedules as it can help women regarding shift and break schedule. However, the FWA also can help them with flexibility in the amount of hours worked such as a part time job and job shares. In business view, however, FWA may help the organizations to increase the retention among the women employees and directly help in decreasing the absenteeism among them due to a lot of responsibilities and housework should be done. Moreover, this kind of program can help women to achieve job satisfaction and may increase the quality of work.

Besides that, the second issue that really killing the women's participation in employment is having difficulty in childcare arrangement. Women actually have not enough time with their children as they need to be picking up and dropping off the children to school and sometimes need to fulfill the schedule like medical appointments and so on. In our society, responsibilities, including managing the children, elderly, household chores and household finances, fall on the shoulders of women. There is a need for policy initiatives which will encourage more women to be employed without compromising the stability of the family institution.

In Malaysia, women make up almost half of the total population and their ever increasing roles become more prominent. Women have been mainstreamed into the development process and by carrying a variety of roles in the family, community and society levels, they have been able to contribute to national development and prosperity. The government has taken initiatives to incorporate women in development as early as in the First Malaysia Plan. Starting from the Fifth Malaysia Plan (1986-90) and with the adoption of the National Policy on Women in 1989, the role of women in development has been increasingly reflected in national development plans.

According to the 2010 statistics show that women have a 39.3% share in wage employment. The government aims for women to have a 50% share in the wage employment by 2015. According to World Bank report, women also have lower earnings and productivity. The report argues that gender differences in labour productivity and earnings are primarily the result of differences in the economic activities of men and women.

1.3 Research Objectives

The objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To identify the factors that encourage women remain in employment, or return to work from career break.
2. To determine how significance is telecommuting in encouraging women to remain in employment.
3. To determine the level of women performance at work place through telecommuting.

1.4 Research Questions

The implementation of telecommuting rapidly grows day by day onto companies in Malaysia. The organization's reform is surely exciting the women to work because they can focus on many tasks in different jobs.

Research questions are constructed as follows:

1. What are the factors that influenced women participation in employment through telecommuting?
2. How significance is telecommuting in encouraging women to return to work after a career break?
3. How far is telecommuting influencing women performance at their workplace?

1.5 Scope and Limitation of Study

The limitation of this research is to investigate the attraction and interest among women employees at the Klang Valley by implementing a telecommuting program. Besides, this study also to identify the elements of time management, successful in balancing work-life and family and the achievements which will be the most significant towards women's work performance by implementing a telecommuting program in their organizations.

However, this research will be ending with the factors that showed the most affected and influenced by the increasing of women's participation in telecommuting due to the successful in their achievements in performances. Last but not least, the questionnaire will randomly distribute to 100 respondents around Klang Valley. Based on the research, the researcher might know the job satisfaction where the women employees really attempt to apply the telecommuting program in their work-life.

1.6 Significance/ Importance of the Study

This research was a benefit to women employees around Klang Valley or even in Malaysia that telecommuting can help them to gain their performance better by working at home due to their responsibilities in housework and children. By implementing the program of telecommuting, women also can increase their productivity by focusing on the works well. They also can well balancing their work life to stay better with their families. The researcher was point out the importance in this study which able to help women improving their job satisfaction and morale. However, this research also help recruiting and retaining personnel, improve services to customers and performance measures of women employees while manage to improve retention, engagement and contribution in economic and social development among employees.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher provides the whole of the study describing the literature as a main source. This chapter also consists of the relevant statement, and related written sources such as journals, articles and internet sources by a lot of philosophies that support the research in strengthening the argument given. It is very important to the researcher to emphasize and assert the topic in order to come up with solid and strong evidence unhesitatingly.

2.2 Women Participation in Employment

According to Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, 2011, the 2010 Asia-Pacific Human Development Report (AHDR) estimates that if women's labour forces participation rates were raised to 70%, countries such as Malaysia, India and Indonesia would enjoy between two and four% increase in gross domestic product. Malaysia, in particular, stands to lose RM 13 billion a year.

(<http://econsmalaysia.blogspot.com/2010/06/women-theres-no-progress-without-them.html>).

It is important to change the rules to encourage women participating in employment and remain them in the workforce. It is very necessary to create some policy initiatives to women because of their responsibilities of children, elderly and household chores which will enhance women to participate in employment without worrying the stability of the family institution.

From the source of The Star online, “ In getting back women to work, companies offering flexible work schedules are the key to luring professional women back into the workforce, ” said the Women, Family and Community Development Minister Datuk Rohani Abdul Karim. Besides, the concept of flexible work arrangement was a great strategy used by advanced economies and offered perfect balancing in work and life that was promised to retain employees, especially mothers who want spent more time with family. “So that, employers should look at various arrangements, like job sharing among employees, working from home, and flexitime, under which employees choose when to start and end work,” she said.

The Malaysian Prime Minister, Dato^o Seri Najib Tun Abdul Razak mentioned that female labor force participation, which currently is at 47%, must be improved to ensure robust and sustainable growth in the country. The prime minister said more jobs aligned to women^os needs should be offered to encourage their participation in the workforce such as through home-based, part-time or flexible working hours. *“Women are still not equally represented in the labour force. The Malaysian economy saw exceptional growth at 5.6% last year. But female labour participation must be improved if we want to continue to see robust and sustainable growth,”* he said when delivering his keynote address at the 3rd Global Conference on Women Deliver 2013. (<http://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2013/05/28/pm-wants-more-women-in-labour-force/>)

2.3 Telecommuting

Telecommuting is an employment of working from home for a business while communicating the workplace by using personal sophistication of technology such as computer network, voice mail, electronic messages and communication software. (<http://www.entrepreneur.com/encyclopedia/telecommuting>). (Niles,1998) stated that telecommuting could be defined as the partial or total substitution of telecommunication technologies, possibly with the aid of computers, for the commute to work. However, the employees still keep in touch with the office by attending meetings and solving problems with managers even though they are able to attend meetings from home by conference call and today's video conferencing capabilities. Telecommuting also provides the employees a greater freedom to choose their work location and work hours. (<http://jobsearch.about.com/od/jobsearchglossary/g/telecommute.htm>)

Recently, women employees are very interested in the telecommuting program and encourage the organizations to apply the program due to achieve their job satisfaction, work performance and their responsibilities at home too. Telecommuting is also known as teleworking, e-work, e-commuting, working from home, work from home and telecommute.

The advancement of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has made possible for people to work at any time and from anywhere. Telecommuting, the practice of setting up home offices for employees with appropriate resources for computing and communication is one example of the working alternatives. This option gives individual freedom to do paid work and domestic work based on their needs. Job satisfaction was reported as the most consistent individual's benefits among teleworkers (Jamal, 2007).