

MOBILIZING WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT FOR GEN X: THE CHALLENGES OF NEW BABY BOOMERS IN MALAYSIA

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ABSTRACT

The Gen-X workers should retain their significant role in workforce. Ignoring them due to incompetence in new digital skill sets and ignoring them in future due less mobility and ageing factor were a mistake. As potential baby-boomers, respondents agreed that talent Gen-X could be engaged and developed to guide the programme for professionals like school teachers, counsellors, researchers, policy makers and academician. There were 100 questionnaires distributed to target group including officers of PAWE, "Jabatan Kebajikan Masyarakat" and "Pejabat Kebajikan Masyarakat" and operator of home care within the Klang Valley. This paper examined three (3) factors contribute towards the development of productive and active Gen-X in the society. The effective communication skills in presentation, critical thinking and problem solving have shown a moderate relationship towards facilitating and mobilizing Gen-X workforce in Malaysia. The factors of inconsistency English as medium will lower the quality standards of workforce and low quality skill of workforce in the context of industrial revolution 4.0 have shown a moderate relationship towards facilitating the Gen-X workforce in Malaysia. Skill, knowledge and experience of Gen X's were mediate by education policy plan in Malaysia towards facilitating the Gen-X workforce in Malaysia. The public university in Malaysia has assume a significant role in transforming the mindset in nurturing Gen-X's skill, knowledge and experiences resources towards shaping up the knowledge of professionals like school teachers, counsellors, researchers, policy makers and academician. In the development of the intervention program, the qualitative data were obtained from focus groups provided an opportunity to explore the significant aspects of the intervention program for Gen-X. The focus group of this study would be senior school teachers, counsellors, researchers, policy makers and academician. These interviews were conducted to 50 participants' aged 45 to 55 of focus group above within the Klang Valley. The owners permit to record one (1) hour discussion and made verbatim transcriptions. They analyzed the data using qualitative content thematic analysis. The results point to significant paths between the new organizational-culture which including social support and leadership where the intervention program VLTS has been work out to produce professional of well-being and job satisfaction within the context of globalization, implications for social work management practices for implementing mobilizing workforce policies and practices.

Key words: mobilizing workforce, intervention program, active and productive of talent elderly

INTRODUCTION

This paper begin with population of Gen-X in Malaysia; strength of Gen-Y overcoming weaknesses of Gen-X; the definition of mobile workforce management; the predicament in mobilizing gen-x workforce; why mobilizing Gen-X workforce assist professionals and enterprise, the challenges in mobilizing Gen X workforce in Malaysia; Karasek's Job Demand–Control Model (JD-C Model); the factors influence in mobile workforce in Malaysia including inconsistency English as medium lowering quality standards of workforce and low quality skill of workforce in the context of industrial revolution 4.0; the definition of virtual walking and leader training; intervention program for gen-x as motivator; research methodology; qualitative data; quantitative data; the potential focus group for intervention; the VLTS program for Gen-X as a motivator; mobilizing Gen-X workforce helps to improvise professionals and enterprises, findings and conclusions.

POPULATION OF GEN-X IN MALAYSIA

Those who were born in 1965 until 1980 were placed in this pool based on their previous role, job code, or position identified as the top talent within an organization. The population of this demographic cohort has increased in another 15 years will become new baby boomers. This is due to some candidates pursues their advanced learning or skill development in years to come. Generation X, the demographic cohort after baby boomers, has some been defined as from 1960 to 1980. This particular group in Malaysia has increased steadily since the 1970s, and it is projected to more than 4.0 million by this year 2020 and 6.0 million by 2040 (Ibrahim, 2017).

THE STRENGTH OF GEN-Y IN OVERCOMING WEAKNESSES OF GEN-X

Francis (2018) indicated that today's Gen-X is materialistic, competitive and individualistic in behaviour; concern more on status and luxury; they are the new baby boomers of the future. The weaknesses of gen-x would be the challenges for them in facing future workforce. According to Francis (2018), less than 40% of Gen-X are satisfied with the senior management in their organization. This generation is less inclined to say something if they disagree with management than their successive generations. Gen-X value being able to do things quickly and are less inclined to spend hours of overtime completing something perfectly. Gen-X workforce should have the strength of Gen-Y which they should become independent workers. They should be concerned with ethic and social responsibility of organization they work for. They should create their own processes as

nowadays, world is full of information. Generally the strength Gen-X being as independent workers, concerned with ethic and social responsibilities. Finally Gen-X should increased their mobility in order to sustain their workforce in future. This is due to the aspect of independency, ethical and social responsibility towards the environmental and which respond to their surrounding.

THE DEFINITION OF MOBILE WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT

A mobile workforce of an elderly specifically Gen-X is a group of productive and active Gen-X that isn't bound by a central physical location instead, the employees are connected by various types of technology and devices including the mobile technology and networking smart phone (Silver, 2019; Ramu, 2020). As technology and IR 4.0 were concerned, unlocking innovation or turning good ideas into economic, environmental or social benefits, and into improved processes benefited human being, maintaining customer loyalty, enhancing the customer experience. Pasioka (2009) identify that the benefits of mobilising workforce management allows training and development of human resources to be conducted externally to meet the demand of counselling and motivation among the professional like school teachers, counsellors, researchers, policy makers and academician. Unlike talent mobility helps the organization to dynamically develop and align workforce to the strategic sector especially counselling and motivation (Solimano, 2008). The global mobile workforce of elderly is expected to reach 300 million increasing by 2025 (Crown, 2014; Jancey, 2008; Sheikh, 2020).

THE PREDICAMENT IN MOBILIZING GEN-X WORKFORCE

Gen-X from ages 38-52 is not left far behind in catching up with the new technology revolution 4.0. They live in the beginning era of Information Technology whereby voicemail and email were widely used. The personal computing era of 16 and 32 bit processing with Netscape and Internet Explorer windows, "SMS" mobile phone and wide and local area internetworking were as part and parcel of their life. The demographic cohort following the baby boomers and preceding the Millennial reluctantly in forgetting the previous normal practices in catching up with the new millennial Internet of Things and the aspect of industrial revolution 4.0. This transformation required an aggressive transformation and revolution with the new practise and applications. However, the challenges in mobilizing Gen-X workforce would define below.

WHY MOBILIZING GEN-X WORKFORCE ABLE TO ASSIST PROFESSIONALS AND ENTERPRISE

Ma, (2002) found that mobility affects enterprises, process, and employees by enhancing workflow, improving access to knowledge, the speed of business transactions and providing better modes of monitoring. It is essential to have the right mobile solution which could support the existing system and easily customize or change business requirements. The change of management can cost to the organization. Ma, (2002) indicate that mobile capability will let employees' to continue their work offline and synchronized as they come back in network range or wi-fi. The mobile solution should be promptly deployable and adapted the organization's infrastructure while minimizing implementation timelines. The mobile solution should provide easy integration with third-party tools and at the same time leverage features and functionality of available mobile devices.

THE CHALLENGES IN MOBILIZING GEN X WORKFORCE IN MALAYSIA

As Pasioka (2009) mentioned above that mobilising workforce management allows training and development of human resources to be conducted externally to meet the demand of counselling and motivation among the professional like school teachers, counsellors, researchers, policy makers and academician. How companies are adapting their talent mobility practices to address the issue of Gen-X. Baby boomers and Generation X should adapt with new technologies of internet, emails, and smart phones, have changed their way of working, their attention span, and their way of thinking. The organizations and professional of Gen-X workforce shall reevaluating their practices responding to new Human Resources trends and business development efforts due to new technological, new mobility patterns, expectations from generations Gen-X at work (Sheikh, 2020). Companies might need to review their current policy and practices. Among the challenges of Gen-X were retraining and redeveloping the mindset, funding for human resources development, Informative and mobile technology literate and sustaining medical support and treatment (Sheikh, 2020)

KARASEK'S JOB DEMAND–CONTROL MODEL (JD-C MODEL)

Karasek's Job Demand–Control Model (JD-C Model) assumes that control moderates the impact of job demands on health and well-being (De Croon, 2000). It was proposed that lack of evidence for this interaction hypothesis was a consequence of an inadequate conceptualization of decision latitude but it concludes that the interaction hypothesis was not supported in the present study. With the role of social support content and structure can be broadly divided simply into two basic modes of action as the 'main effect model' and 'moderator effect model'. In the main effect model, social support has a direct positive influence on health and well-being. Figure 1 below demonstrates the 'moderator effect model' states that social support reduces stress and decreases the detrimental effects of stress on health outcomes.

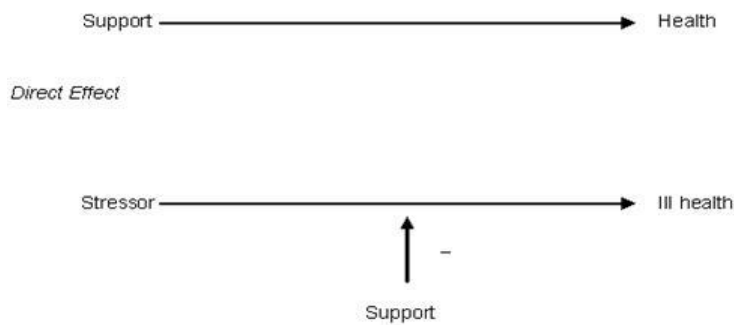


Figure 1: Direct and indirect effect of Gen-X as Motivators' (Social support)

The 'job-demand-control-model' in occupational health research by Karasek proposes that job strain is higher in jobs with high demands and low control. The inclusion of third dimension social support renamed as 'job-demand-control-support' model (JDC-S theory) states that social support can moderate the negative influence of high demands and low control on job strain (De Croon, 2000). To manage workforce effectively with the inclusion of organizational environment in global society is a challenge for social work managers (Findler, 2007). With social identity theory and inclusion-exclusion conceptual framework, this study tests a comprehensive theory-based model of the relationship between organizational culture and employee outcomes. Using structural equations modelling, the proposed model was tested between organizational-culture variables such as social support and leadership to professional outcomes of well-being, social support, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment to employee outcomes. Within the context of globalization, implications for social work management practices particularly in implementing policies and practices that promote an inclusive organizational culture and a sense of belonging, satisfaction, and commitment in employees. The results point to significant paths between the organizational-culture variables such as job satisfaction and commitment in employees (Findler, 2007).

THE FACTORS INFLUENCE IN MOBILE WORKFORCE IN MALAYSIA

There are two (2) factors impacting the future mobile workforce of Gen-X in Malaysia including flip-flop in English as medium of delivery and low quality skill in labour force in the industrial revolution 4.0. Both major factors were interrelated due to the future mobile workforce of Gen-X were turn to Baby Boomers in few years ahead.

I. INCONSISTENCY ENGLISH AS MEDIUM LOWERING QUALITY STANDARDS OF WORKFORCE

Gen X who was born between 1965 until 1979 soon will turn to Baby Boomers, they obtain Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia in Bahasa Malaysia since 1965 and flip-flopping between Bahasa Malaysia and English, depending on political agendas (MOE, 2020; Sheikh, 2020). According to experts, most graduates from this group do not possess good writing and speaking skills in English, moreover if the flip-flopping of policy continues, the problem will not be resolved (Sheikh, 2020). Thousands of Malaysian graduates from local universities every year equipped with very poor command of the English language were unable to keep current with the rapidly changing knowledge in the fields of science, engineering and technology (Development, 2019). The experts broadly agreed that lower-quality education directly reduces the quality of workforce and threatens Malaysia's ability to progress. Experts' claim that Malaysia's education system and the quality of the talent and workforce it produces. (Sheikh, 2020) The lower-quality standards, curriculum, teaching and skills mismatched to industry needs. The 'Erosion of English standards over the years caused by the lack of trained teachers, infrastructure, and teaching standards will lower the level of creativity and innovation of our human capital' (Sheikh, 2020). The political changes to the curriculum have demonstrated a marked deterioration in English language skills, critical thinking and problem-solving.

II. LOW QUALITY SKILL OF WORKFORCE IN THE CONTEXT OF INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION 4.0

Low quality skill has been defined as low communication skill, non-critical thinking and low in problem-solving aspect in academic and skill training. The key aspects for labour force were influenced by Internet of Things and latest technology, training new skills and digitalization (Tunik, 2019; Sima, 2020). Automation and digitalization influence the transformation of job profiles and employment forms in generating challenges for social policy. Therefore the labour forces of Gen-X were influenced by quality of education at their time and background in engineering. An additional of alternative medicine and healthcare were another aspect which generates high quality labour forces for Gen-X or potential baby-boomers in Malaysia. An educated, creative and innovative labour force was the foundation for economic growth (Selvaratnam, 2016). Previously, there were a lower enrolment into STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) - related fields of studies at the tertiary levels from late nineties and early 2000 (MOE, 2020). The industry skills acquire critical thinking; languages presentation skill, effective communication skill, vocational and information skill should synchronize with demands of industry (Sheikh, 2020). The acquired skills were statistics, mathematics, and computing or IT-based would be in critical thinking and communicating. The moderate awareness in those areas gave them a sense of confidence as superficial knowledge for employee at work (Sheikh, 2020). The skills required for STEM can facilitate problem-solving and the current workforce has raised the increased need for STEM-related skills and knowledge (Sen, 2018).

THE DEFINITION OF VIRTUAL WALKING AND LEADER TRAINING

Virtual walks could be defined as experience in terms of view and audio of particular places over the internet (Murakami, 2005). Murakami (2005) define that the virtual training refers to training done in a virtual internet environment thru the internet connection where learner and the instructor are in separate locations. Lin, (2002) states that virtual training and virtual training environments are designed to simulate the traditional classroom or learning experience. She added that virtual walking, connecting to node or neighbours, learning about the community. Shape passion into a connection-focused virtual walking experience to share with your community. She concludes that all virtual walking movement leaders to lead walks on routes and with themes that are meaningful to their members in the community or group. She also added that the successful virtual training strategy begins from develop a training or research content; consider audience base on primary objectives; spread out virtual training course; focus on theme discussion content; ask provoking questions to drive discussion; draw attention to important content and encourage group collaboration via social media platforms.

INTERVENTION PROGRAM FOR GEN-X AS MOTIVATOR

The intervention program for Gen-X being as motivator as to contribute skill, knowledge and experience in becoming professionals like school teachers, counsellors, researchers, policy makers and academician. The criterion of an intervention program of Gen-X is based on targeted graduate’s criteria in acquiring knowledge, skill and experience from the common field expertise. In accordance with the post Covid-19 pandemic outbreak, the virtual leader training of sustainability (VLTS) has been promoted as the most effective and efficient virtual intervention program for Gen-X during the crisis. VLTS has emerges a relevant intervention program that able to manage a team with individuals who telecommute or work from other locations which shown in table 1 below. The VLTS programme ensures volunteers are well trained, competently and confidently plan their right strategies, support and sustain the participants act as ambassadors to make difference to their existence. The talented, skill, experience, knowledgeable of Gen-X should be given a convenient, flexible and complimentary program to enhanced their leadership capabilities. This could be performing by providing sustainable online program including free easy access of internet and technology, maintenance of the support system and fund incentive and social support. These were including in Virtual Training, Coaching & Professional Programme.

Table 1: Virtual leader training program: a sustainability program activities

No.	Criteria and details on virtual programme and activities
1	Expert, friendly, enthusiastic and encouraging.
2	Provision of Virtual Training, Coaching & Professional Programme for presentation and communication skill
3	Motivation on spiritual and mental strength and balanced
4	Provided regular online and communication feedback to participant
5	Encourage online interaction with the community
6	Building the next Virtual leader training program from identification, training and replacement
7	Sustainable online material-benefit of self activity and step by step exercise program
8	Provision of information on online social and community activities

Sheikh (2020) stated that three (3) aspect including the public speaking, communication and mental skill program, the new value added of communication and presentation skills and the new value added of critical thinking and problem-solving skill were listed in the Malaysian long-term milestones (2021-2035) of qualification which is practical and sustainable way in mobilize older workforce thru a virtual activity internationally recognition standard program.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

How was the data collected or generated? How was it analyzed? Show or prove to be right or reasonable. The previous findings on experience during intervention research (Burke, 2013) and physical activity programs (Lazzaro, 2001; Foreman, 2003) has drawn the sensitivity of Gen-X nowadays which requires a technical individual skill and tactical on team works as a unit which would motivates them. These require a transformation in organization's culture, the learning and development methods including the overall management and leadership (Jonine M. Jancey, 2008). Below are both qualitative and quantitative methodology involving active participant from U3e, PAWE, elderly workers from “Jabatan Kebajikan Masyarakat” and “Pejabat Kebajikan Masyarakat” in Klang Valley as target and focus group.

QUALITATIVE DATA

In the development of the intervention program, the qualitative data were obtained from focus groups provided an opportunity to explore the significant aspects of the intervention program for older adults. In the development of the intervention program, the qualitative data were obtained from focus groups provided an opportunity to explore the significant aspects of the intervention program for Gen-X. These interviews were conducted to 50 participants’ aged 45 to 55 of focus group above within the Klang Valley were active participant from senior school teachers, counsellors, researchers, policy makers and academician. The information obtained verified by the officer, operator through report and documentation. The owners permit to record one (1) hour discussion and made verbatim transcriptions. They analyzed the data using qualitative content thematic analysis. This

approach is most suitable for qualitative descriptive studies, as it draws on the tenets of naturalistic inquiry (Sandelowski, 2010). The aims of the focus groups were to determine (a) attitudes toward virtual activity program, barriers and motivators to joining a virtual group; (b) the preferred structure of a virtual group; and (c) salient social supports. The information helped inform the program planning and design in order to change the mindset about virtual walking capacity and the importance of providing older people with social experience and group support.

QUANTITATIVE DATA

Quantitative data collected from a baseline mail survey gave further insights into the uniqueness and potential fragility of the sample. This paper has examined factors contributing to the development of productive, active and influencing elderly in the society. There were 100 selected participants' aged 45 to 55 from 30 sub urban and remote area were distributed to the officers of PAWE from operator, officer and staff from "Jabatan Kebajikan Masyarakat" and "Pejabat Kebajikan Masyarakat" in Klang Valley. The respondents are talented, skillful, experience, productive and active elderly in the society and able to train and developed their peers in their respective area to become professionals. The target group comparison to population mean of 51.6 for this age group (Ware Jr, 1996). A higher exercise self-efficacy score or on how well one can execute action required to deal with prospect situations score is generally linked to greater adherence (Martin, 2001) and activity maintenance (Resnick, 2000). However, self-efficacy decreases as age increases (Resnick B. P., 2000). The mean exercise self-efficacy score for the sample participants was 6.5 (Standard Deviation $\frac{1}{4}$ 2.04) on a likert scale of 1 to 10 (McAuley, 2003). In effect, these factors emphasized the importance of encouragement and reassurance to the elderly (Hayslip, 2016) and the need to enhance social support.

THE POTENTIAL FOCUS GROUP FOR INTERVENTION

This study randomly selected the program participants from 30 zones. The zones in the study were required (a) to be composed of at least 11% persons 55 years old or older; (b) to contain at least 100 people between 45 to 55 years; This study assigned zones to low or medium level of socioeconomic status. The written permissions contain the name, age, and address of Malaysian citizens older than 55 years of age. To be eligible, participants were required to be (a) aged 45 to 55 years, (b) IT knowledgeable or savvy and (c) active and healthy. The aim is to recruit 8 to 12 virtual members per zones. The duration of VLTS programme is 6-month. The written consent was needed from each participant on attendance at the first group session. A total of 50 participants completed the baseline questionnaire and thereby technically entered the 6-month intervention program.

THE VLTS PROGRAM FOR GEN-X AS A MOTIVATOR

The VLTS specifically tailored for the older adult in becoming a motivator. The development of VLTS followed by detailed consideration according to target group. The supportive social and virtual environments were created for virtual activity programme. The program content was responsive to the dynamic interaction of the individual and the virtual environment. The duration of the VLTS program activities for Gen-X were run for 6-month program. The criteria are based on their personality, enthusiasm, leadership quality, and empathy for older people. Leaders and researchers remained in contact via e-mail on a weekly basis. This programme would identify issues arise during the programme. A solution was dealt quickly and intervention operated at its optimal level. The VLTS act as a supporting program toward achieving skill in presentation and influencing participant has shown a significant relationship towards facilitating the Gen-X workforce in Malaysia. The VLTS programme was required to inform the research team whenever they were unavailable. All VLTS programme shared the availability of all leaders' personal information for contingency and replacement of a position. A total of 30 regular virtual leaders and 3 backup leaders were available. However, replacements for leaders were seldom required, and will ensure no virtual leader were lost during the program. All leaders had formed a relationship with their participant and will responsible about the members of their group. The 2-hr training sessions duration of VLTS were be received VLTS manuals on (a) leadership and effective communication (b) critical thinking and problem solving (c) the effect of social media (d) online documentation procedures and (d) online programme evaluation. The spot check inspection team would ensure the program was being implemented as planned. The virtual walk leaders appeared to be significant in motivating the virtual groups. They were responsible for delivering and explaining any educational material. An exercise gerontologist who was a member of the research team produced all materials, including the newsletter on health, self exercise and contained profiles of walk leaders and researchers. The VLTS programme provided expert advice, encouragement, and feedback to participants. They were also responsible for organizing virtual social activities.

MOBILIZING GEN X WORKFORCE HELPS TO IMPROVISE PROFESSIONALS AND ENTERPRISES

Ma, (2002) found that mobility simplify complex business operations thus increase employees' productivity, improve company's revenue and profit by enabling the power of real-time response. With the inclusion of mobility, organization would reduce paper-based approach for their day-to-day business transactions; this improvises time-consuming approach in improving approvals and document loss which will increase employees' productivity. Mobilizing workforce has been a real game changer. Around the world, ceo's, cios and business owners have recognized the power of mobility to drive their businesses forward. Today, organizations need real-time insights of ongoing activities performing in the office and field. This helps them to drive more accuracy in their operations and achieve the business goal. Organizations are embarking on a wide range of initiatives to enable mobility for users and the business. Mobilizing workforce helps organizations resolve distance and connectivity issues and empower front-line workers to make better, faster decisions with ease. Management can see their activities in real-time, instructs them and keeps eyes on individual performance. Mobility empowers employees to execute their task more quickly and helps reduce costs and delays in the process flow. It changes and drastically improves the way individuals and teams work together,

collaborate with their core business activities and customers receive service and support. Anytime access to simplified information through their choice of mobile devices let employees complete their assigned task on time which acts as a booster for employees to improve their productivity, responsiveness and job satisfaction.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The VLTS program provides a practical community-based method for mobilizing older people. These include the value of highly skill, knowledge, experience and talent resources staff, the importance of VLTS, the receptiveness to learning new skills and knowledge and the usefulness of social support. The findings of this paper have identified the needs of understanding and motivating Generation X. To accomplish requires a comprehensive VLTS program to transform the experience community Gen-X to be engaged and developed to guide the programme for professionals like school teachers, counsellors, researchers, policy makers and academician. The needs of understanding and motivating Generation X could be brought up in an era of social change and technological change (their technology savvy should not be underestimated, as they were the first generation to grow up with technology), Gen X embraces and thrives on diversity, change, challenge, responsibility, honesty, and creative input in the workplace. Opportunities to learn new technologies, is a value added in creating more practical with latest up to date skills within the industrial revolution 4.0 including the IoT aspect, excellent communicating skills in presenting the material to participant with the excellent critical thinking and problem solving.

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