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**MANAGING MIGRANT WORKERS' JOB SATISFACTION: A STUDY ON A
MANUFACTURING COMPANY IN MALAYSIA**

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to examine and gain a better understanding of the impact of human resource practices on migrant workers' job satisfaction in a manufacturing company. Ninety migrant workers consist of 52 Bangladeshi and 38 Nepalese workers participated in this study. Data was obtained using questionnaires and analyzed. Statistical analysis using regression analysis found the research model has a weak predictive power on migrant workers' job satisfaction. Among the independent variables, only compensation was found to have an impact on migrant workers job satisfaction. T-test results also revealed that Nepalese workers and migrant workers who possess only primary education have higher job satisfaction.

Key words: cross-culture management, human resource practices, job satisfaction, migrant workers

INTRODUCTION

Migrant workers are an integral part of Malaysia's economic engine and will continue to be part and parcel of the nation's economy growth in years to come. Their contributions to economic growth and development of Malaysia have been acknowledged. It is not an exaggeration to say the nation's economic development will be affected without the presence of these migrant workers. Therefore, migrant workers deserved a fair treatment from all parties who recruit them into this country.

Background of Study

Typically, migrant workers' employment terms and conditions in Malaysia are under the provision of Employment Act, such as entitlement of overtime, rest days, holidays and other benefits. However, the lack of enforcement has led to these provisions being ignored. It is noted that Malaysia is signatory to the *Association of South East Asian Nations* (ASEAN) Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers.

The exploitation of migrant workers originated with the terms and conditions of employment which favored the employers, particularly in terms of salary and wages. Typically, migrant workers in manufacturing sector are paid daily wages ranging from RM16.50 to RM21.00 (USD2 to USD7) per day for eight hours work plus another 4 hours compulsory daily overtime. Added in other monetary allowances entitlement, a worker in such capacity may earn up to an estimated of RM1,000.00 (USD330) per month. This is still within the poverty line in the country's urban living.

The exploitation on migrant workers in Malaysia is well described by the two incidents occurred recently in the country:

In June 2010, about 100 migrant workers hired by sub-contractors working at the RM800 millions National Palace (Istana Negara) project site had complaint that they have not been paid their salaries for three months. Two police reports were made; the incident was investigated by the Royal Malaysian Police, Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC), Labor Department and Suhakam (Malaysia Human Rights Commission).

In August 2010, more than 5,000 migrant workers in Tebrau Industrial Estate, Johor comprising workers mainly from Nepal, Myanmar, Vietnam, Bangladesh and India, carried out a strike and later turned into a violent riot to show their dissatisfaction on their employers following the death of a fellow migrant worker.

The above incidents have highlighted there is a need to further examine the current regulations, policies and human resource practices concerning the employment and protection of migrant workers. Otherwise, Malaysia's reputation will be tarnished for her failure to protect the rights of the migrant workforce working in the country.

According to Ting (1997), human resource practices are closely associated with job satisfaction. Scholars and practitioners believe that sound human resource practices result in higher job satisfaction, and ultimately improves organizational performance. Job satisfaction is also associated with other factors such as absenteeism (Hackett and Guion, 1985; Hulin, 1991), turnover (Carsten and Spector, 1987), happiness and organization commitment (Boehm and Lyubomirsky, 2008).

This study is aimed to examine the impact of human resource practices towards migrant workers' job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is the combination of feelings and belief that workers hold in relation to their current jobs. A worker with high level of satisfaction will generally like their job; they feel that they are being fairly treated and believe that the job has many desirable facets (Jones *et al.* 2006).

Research Questions

The main objective of the study is to examine the impact of human resource practices on migrant workers' job satisfaction. This study seeks to answer the following questions: Do human resource practices affect migrant workers job satisfaction? Which human resource practices has the most impact in determining migrant workers job satisfaction?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Job satisfaction is the most widely discussed issue in the field of organizational behavior. Some have defined job satisfaction as a general attitude of workers constituted by their approach towards the wages, working conditions, control, promotion related with the job, social relations in the work, recognition of talent, personal characteristic, and group relations apart from the work life (Blum and Naylor, 1986). Locke (1976) defined job satisfaction as pleasure or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experience. While Robbins (2009) perceived job satisfaction as an individual's general attitude regarding his or her job.

Review of literature has shown that job satisfaction has received significant attention in workplace studies. There are important reasons why organizations are concerned with workers' job satisfaction. First, in the humanitarian perspective, individual deserves to be treated fairly and with respect. Job satisfaction is to some extent a reflection of good treatment. It can also be considered an indicator of emotional well-being or psychological health (Haccoun and Jeanrie, 1995). Secondly, in the utilitarian perspective, workers' job satisfaction can lead to behavior that affects organizational function. This is due to general recognition that job satisfaction can be one of the major determinants of organizational performance and effectiveness (Angle and Perry, 1981; Riketta, 2002). Levy (2003) argued that consequences of job satisfaction lead to a better job performance, reduction in withdrawal and counterproductive behavior.

Job satisfaction and performance has been found to be related in studies conducted since in the 1950s (Herzberg et al., 1966). However, Euske *et al.*, (1980) argued that relationship between job satisfaction and performance is still open to question. A number of studies indicate a weak relationship between satisfaction and performance (Caldwell and O'Reilly, 1990; Spector, 1997).

Studies have also examined the relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment which indicate positive results (Bedeian and Armenakis, 1981; Bhuian and Abdul-Muhmin, 1997; Dubinsky and Hartley, 1986; Lambert, 2004; McNeilly and Russ, 1992; Robinson et al., 1997; Wong *et al.*, 1998). Organizational commitment was

commonly defined as employees' interest in, and connection to an organization (Hunt et al., 1989; Mowday *et al.*, 1982; Meyer and Allen, 1997).

Both job satisfaction and organizational commitment are found to be strongly correlated. According to Vroom (1964), low level job satisfaction had resulted to higher absenteeism rates. This finding was supported by Clegg (1983) who found that low job satisfaction was also associated with lack of punctuality and a higher propensity to quit. Relationship between job satisfaction and intention to quit has also being examined by Freeman (1978). He had highlighted that job satisfaction was positively related to the probability of quitting. This relationship was also supported by Akerlof et al. (1988).

Human Resource Management

Human resource management (HRM) is defined as productive use of people in achieving the organization's strategic business objectives and the satisfaction of individual employee needs' (Stone 1998). HRM refers to the policies and practices involved in carrying out the human resource aspect of a management position including planning, job analysis, recruitment, selection, orientation, compensation, performance appraisal, training and development and labor relations (Dessler, 2007). It is comprised of policies, practices and systems that influence employees' behavior, attitude, and performance (Noe, *et al.*, 2007)

There has been widespread debate in literature over the effects of HRM on job satisfaction. Job satisfaction has been identified as a key variable mediating any positive relationship between human resource practices and organizational performance (Guest, 2002). According to Ting (1997) human resource practices are closely associated with job satisfaction. Scholars and practitioners believe that sound human resource practices result in higher job satisfaction which ultimately improves organizational performance (Appelbaum, et al., 2000).

Edgar and Geare (2005) found human resource management practices had a significant impact on employees' outcomes such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and organizational fairness. Yu and Egri (2005) also found that human resource practices had a significant impact on commitment of employees in Chinese firms. Steijn (2004) found that human resource practices had positive effect on job satisfaction of the employees from Dutch public sector where as individual characteristics such as age, gender and education had insignificant effect on job satisfaction.

Studies in the UK showed that use of specific human resource practices in local government organizations was associated with a greater degree of job satisfaction, workplace trust, commitment, effort and perceived organizational performance. Boselie

et al., (2002) have found that ‘bundles’ of human resource practices, implemented together as a ‘high involvement’ approach to management, can be associated with higher level of job satisfaction. In contrast, Green (2006) suggested that implementation of human resource practices has been associated with higher level of work intensity but lower job satisfaction. Others researchers noted that human resource practices adopted as part of a ‘high-performance work system’ are not primarily designed to increase job satisfaction as they may not have such an effect (Appelbaum, 2002).

Human Resource Practices

There are basically four commonly adopted human resource management models such as the Fombrun, Tichy, and Devana HRM model, Harvard HRM Model, Guest HRM Model, and Warwick HRM Model (Bratton and Gold, 1999). According to Aswathappa (2008), Guest Model is a useful model in describing HRM practices. The model incorporate functions such as human resource planning, recruitment and selection, training and development, compensation, employee relation and performance appraisal which were the functions incorporated in the Guest Model (Yeganeh and Su, 2008).

Human resource planning is defined as the procedure by which an organization ensures that it has the right number and kinds of human resources at the right place and at the right time (Decenzo and Robbins, 1999). Aswathappa (2008) argued that an organization should have better human resource plans to motivate its employees. Effective human resource planning can enhance job satisfaction of employees by providing opportunities for them to participate in planning their career path and enhancing employees’ satisfaction (Weeratunga, 2003). Employers understanding the specific needs of their employees will maintain a higher level of motivation and satisfaction across the firm as a whole (Hodgart, 1994).

Recruitment and selection is part of a hiring process which determines the decisions as which candidates will get an employment offer. Recruitment is a process of generating a pool of qualified candidates for a particular job, while selection is the process of making a “hire” or “no hire” decision regarding each applicant for a job. The hiring process is completed with the socialization stage involves orientating new employees to the organization and to the units in which they will be working. It is important that new employees be familiarized with the company’s policies, procedures, and performance expectations. Effective recruitment and selection system can ensure a better fit between the individual’s abilities and the organization’s requirement (Fernandez, 1992). Hunter and Schmidt (1982) concluded that employment stability could be achieved through a selection procedure based on ability. Katou and Budhwar (2007) found that recruitment and selection was positively related to all organizational performance variables such as effectiveness, efficiency, innovation, and quality.

Training and development is a mean of improving workforce utilization and thereby potentially raising job satisfaction. Training is often utilized for enhancing employee's knowledge, skills and abilities within organizations. Meta-analysis provides evidence that training interventions enhance performance (Arthur *et al.*, 2003). Also, it has been shown that team building training was effective for enhancing employee's job satisfaction (Naumann *et al.*, 1989). According to Saks (1995), employees participating in training can enhance their job satisfaction. Rowden and Conine (2005), proposed that training may be used as a tool to increase job satisfaction.

Performance appraisal represents a central function of human resource management and has remained an important topic of investigation among organizational researchers (Dulebohn and Ferris, 1999). There is an increasing use being made for the performance appraisal process which is generally motivated by an organizational desire to influence employee behaviors and attitude and ultimately, organizational performance (Murphy and Cleveland, 1991). Performance appraisal is a complex process and there is a scope for variation, in particular when the supervisor is required to make subjective judgments of employee performance. Subjective judgments have the potential to dilute the quality of the performance appraisal process as they may be influenced by bias or distortion as a result of emotion (Murphy and Cleveland, 1995). In regards to dissatisfaction with appraisal is rampant. Hence, understanding the impact of performance appraisal quality is particularly important as Treadway *et al.*, (2007) suggests that performance appraisals are becoming increasingly subjective.

As job satisfaction is the result of an employee's perception of how well their job provides those things that are viewed as important (Locke, 1976). High quality performance appraisal experience is likely to enhance employees' feelings of self-worth, achievement, attitudes about their job and their feelings of a positive standing in the organization. It is also likely to generate confidence in the quality of the outcomes from the performance appraisal process (Hendrix *et al.*, 1998). High quality performance appraisal experiences are therefore likely to generate higher levels of job satisfaction (Fried and Ferris, 1987).

There is a large body of literature on the pay and job satisfaction relationship (Ahgo, *et al.*, 1993; Weiner, 1980). An appropriate allocation of compensation structure was said to have a significant impact on job satisfaction (Adams, 1963, 1965; Bloom, 2002; May *et al.*, 2002), and job satisfaction that is perceived as general attitudes of employees towards their job are directly tied to individual needs, which includes challenging work, equitable compensation and a supportive work environment on colleagues (Ostroff, 1992). The ability of organization to allocate the structure of compensation based on

proper rules such as value of the job and performance levels may lead to an increased job satisfaction (Mathieu and Zajac, 1990; May *et al.*, 2002).

A good employee relation involves providing a fair and consistent treatment to all employees so that they will be committed to the organization. Many organizations have found that the key to a good employee relations program is the communication channel that gives employee access to important information and an opportunity to express their ideas and feelings. The key in any communication is to remain consistent, regular employee communications, and honestly respond to what one hears from employees (Bates, 2004).

Employees' perceptions of fairness in organizations" significantly influences their behavior (Trevino and Weaver, 2001). How employees perceive the overall fairness and justice of the organization determines their decisions about their relationships with it. Referring to the equity theory (Adams, 1963; Austin and Walster, 1974), employees will modify the quality or quantity of their work to restore justice.

When employees perceive justice in the organization, they are less likely to balance things out by increasing their own benefits at the company's expense (Trevino and Weaver, 2001). Additionally, when employees are treated fairly, they are more willing to subordinate their own short-term individual interests to the interests of a group or organization. However, employees who had perceived unfairness in the organization, they tend to have negative attitudes toward the company thus will act against it (Cohen-Charash and Spector, 2001). Employees also tend to behave unethically when they perceive that the company is treating them unfairly (Cohen-Charash and Spector, 2001; Trevino and Weaver, 2001).

Safety and health management is committed to providing its employees with good and safe conditions of work. Workplaces with active, visible safety leadership are often rated as better places to work and have more satisfied, productive employees who are less likely to change jobs. Occupational health and safety risk factors can have direct or indirect effects on levels of organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and the job productivity of workers. Kilic and Selvi (2009) found the most important factors on the job satisfaction are the biological and chemical risk factors. It is expected that as long as the risk level on the occupational health and security increase the satisfaction level of the employees will accordingly decrease.

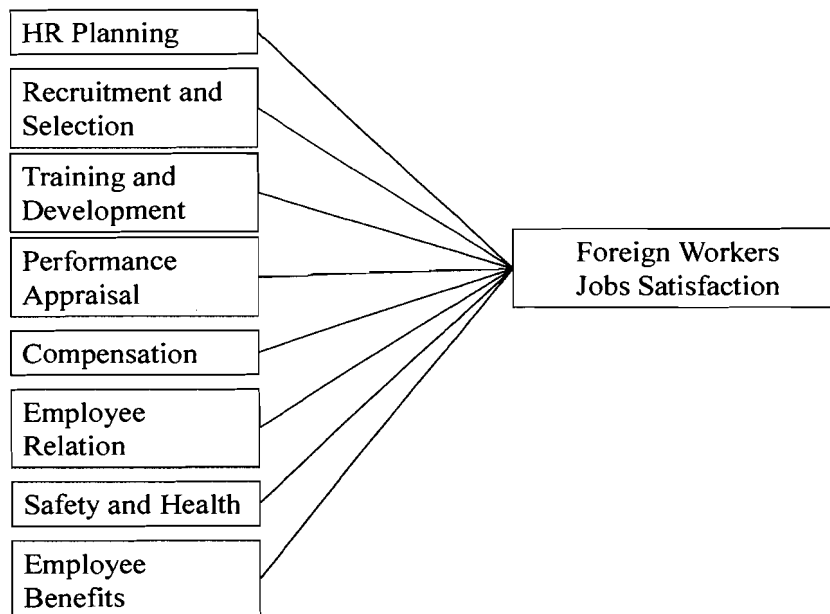
Working in an unsafe environment and highly demanding conditions without proper safety and health management may cause stress or burnout on workers. Stress is associated with impaired individual functioning in the workplace. Stress has been associated with important occupational outcomes of job satisfaction, organizational

commitment and employee withdrawal behavior (Naumann, 1995; Sullivan and Bhagat, 1992; Tett and Meyer, 1993; Williams and Hazer, 1986). High levels of work stress are associated with low levels of job satisfaction (Terry *et al.*, 1993) and job stressors are predictive of job dissatisfaction and a greater propensity to leave the organization (Cummins, 1990).

Employee fringe benefits can impact job satisfaction in several ways. First, fringe benefits stand as an important component of worker compensation. Fringe benefits can act as valuable substitutes for wages. Employers may choose to offer various type of employee benefits since workers can have strong preferences for such benefits thus decreasing the prevalence of turnover as effectively as an equivalently valuable increase in wages (Dale-Olsen, 2006). Woodbury (1983) found that workers also view benefits and wages as substitutes, willing to give up wages in exchange for more benefits.

METHODOLOGY

The theoretical framework for this study is established after carefully considered the research questions, objectives and review of relevant literature. The independent variables are human resource practices such as human resource planning, recruitment and selection, training and development, performance appraisal, compensation, employee relation, safety and health and employee benefits. On the other hand, job satisfaction among migrant workers is the dependent variable. The research framework of the study is depicted as follow (Figure 1):



Independent Variables (IV)

Figure 1: Research Framework

Hypothesis Development

The relationship between human resource practices and migrant workers' job satisfaction are hypothesized as followed:

- H₁ : Human resource planning affects migrant workers' job satisfaction.
- H₂ : Recruitment and selection affects migrant workers' job satisfaction.
- H₃ : Training and development affects migrant workers' job satisfaction.
- H₄ : Performance appraisal affects migrant workers' job satisfaction.
- H₅ : Compensation affects migrant workers' job satisfaction.
- H₆ : Employee relation affects migrant workers' job satisfaction.
- H₇ : Safety and health affects migrant workers' job satisfaction.
- H₈ : Employee benefit affects migrant workers' job satisfaction.

Data Collection

Data was collected using a structured questionnaire which consisted of 44 items. The questionnaires were distributed to 90 migrant workers in a manufacturing company. 15

migrant workers were gathered in a total of six batches to answer the questionnaires. These questionnaires were returned immediately to the researcher when completed.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Table 1 shows a majority of the respondents (57.8 percent) comprised of Bangladeshi workers, the remaining 42.2 percent of the respondents were Nepalese workers. In terms of age group, 46 percent of the respondents fall within the age group of 26-30 years old. This is followed by age group of above 31 years (27.8 percent). Only 21.1 percent of the respondents are from age group between 20–25 years old. A majority of the respondents were operation workers (86.7 percent), while the remaining 13.3 percent are supervisors.

As far the respondent's department is concerned, 33.3 percent were from liquid plant, 32.2 percent from GMP plant, 22.2 percent are from oil plant, followed by quality control (6.7 percent) and warehouse (5.6 percent). On the other hand, slightly less than half (42.2 percent) had education up to primary level, while 57.8 percent had completed secondary education. In terms of tenure, 42.2 percent had worked between 2 to 5 years with PCSB. This is followed by respondents with less than 2 years of service (35.6 percent). Only 22.2 percent of the migrant workers had worked for more than 5 years in the company.

Table 1: Respondents Profile

Demographic	Categories	Frequency	Percentage (percent)
1. Ethnic	Bangladeshi	52	57.80
	Nepalese	38	42.20
	Total	90	100.00
2. Age Group	20 - 25	19	21.10
	26 - 30	46	51.10
	31 and Above	25	27.80
	Total	90	100.00
3. Position	Operation	78	86.70
	Supervisor	12	13.30
	Total	90	100.00
4. Department	Liquid Plant	30	33.30
	GMP Plant	29	32.20
	Oil Plant	20	22.20
	Quality Control	6	6.70
	Warehouse	5	5.60
	Total	90	100.00

Demographic	Categories	Frequency	Percentage (percent)
5. Education Level	Primary	38	42.20
	Secondary	52	57.80
	Total	90	100.00
6. Years of Service	Below 2 Years	32	35.60
	2 - 5 Years	38	42.20
	Above 5 Years	20	22.20
	Total	90	100.00

Respondents' Profile

Table 2 highlights the mean values of the eight human resource practices which are the independent of this study. Generally, the respondents perceived they were most satisfied with performance appraisal (mean 4.13) and compensation (mean 4.08). This is followed by human resource planning (mean 3.99), training and development (mean 3.99), recruitment and selection (mean 3.98) and safety and health (mean 3.96). However, respondents perceived that they were neutral in terms of employee fridge benefit (mean 2.51) and employee relation (mean 2.44). Overall, respondents perceived that they were moderately satisfied with their job (mean 3.94).

Table 2: Descriptive Statistic of the Variables ($n = 90$)

Variable	Mean (Min-1, Max-5)	Standard Deviation
Job Satisfaction	3.94	0.770
Human Resource Planning	3.99	0.256
Recruitment and Selection	3.98	0.366
Training and Development	3.99	0.342
Performance Appraisal	4.13	0.465
Compensation	4.08	0.410
Employee Relations	2.44	0.408
Safety and Health	3.96	0.276
Employee Benefits	2.51	0.459

T-Test of Mean Differences

T-Tests were performed to compare job satisfaction between groups, namely ethnic and education level of migrant workers. Table 3 indicates that t-test result is significant for ethnic group based on $p < 0.05$, for Nepalese (mean 4.16) and Bangladeshi (mean 3.79) workers. This showed that Nepalese workers had higher job satisfaction compared to Bangladeshi workers. T-test results was also significant for education level based on

$p < 0.05$, whereby migrant workers with primary education level (mean 4.18) seems to be more satisfied compared to migrant workers with secondary educational level (mean 3.77).

Table 3: T-Tests

Group		F	df.	Sig (2 tail)	Mean
Ethnic	Bangladeshi	4.643	86.256	.016*	3.79
	Nepalese				4.16
Education Level	Primary	11.07	79.66	.005**	4.18
	Secondary				3.77
	Supervisor				3.92

*Significant $p < 0.05$

Factor Analysis

The eight human resource practices dimensions are subjected to factor analysis to assess the validity and reliability of these indicators. Separate factor analyses were performed to ensure the ratio variables to sample size were maintained at about 1:10. Kaiser (1974) recommends accepting value greater than 0.5 as acceptable, values between 0.5 – 0.7 are mediocre, values between 0.7 and 0.8 are good, and values between 0.8 and 0.9 are great, and values above 0.9 are superb. Table 4 shows the values of between 0.6 -0.7, which falls into the range of being mediocre and good. Factor Analysis was conducted separately on all eight human resource practice dimensions. Each dimension had loaded into a single factor and was subsequently labeled. The results of each analysis are shown in Table 5.

Table 4: KMO and Bartlett's Test Result

Variable	Number of items	Items dropped	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin and Bartlett's Test
Human Resource Planning	5	-	0.725
Recruitment and Selection	5	-	0.777
Training and Development	5	-	0.717
Performance Appraisal	3	-	0.671
Compensation	4	-	0.730
Employee Relations	5	-	0.723
Safety and Health	5	-	0.784
Employee Benefits	5	EB1	0.715

Table 5: Total Variance Explained

Label	No of Component	Eigenvalues	Percentage of Variance Explained
Human Resource Planning	1	2.44	48.88
Recruitment and Selection	1	2.70	54.07
Training and Development	1	2.59	51.70
Performance Appraisal	1	1.93	64.37
Compensation	1	2.22	55.58
Employee Relations	1	2.32	46.43
Safety and Health	1	2.58	51.75
Employee Benefits	1	2.34	57.85

The reliability coefficients (Cronbach's alpha) are used to determine the internal consistency of items. The results are acceptable for further analysis as alpha values for the eight human resource practice dimensions are above .07 (Table 6).

Table 6: Reliability Analysis ($n = 90$)

Variable	Number of items	Cronbach Alpha
Human Resource Planning	5	0.724
Recruitment and Selection	5	0.776
Training and Development	5	0.765
Performance Appraisal	3	0.719
Compensation	4	0.733
Employee Relations	5	0.708
Safety and Health	5	0.763
Employee Benefits	4	0.752

Regression Analysis

Multiple regression analysis was performed to test the regression model and identify the predictors of migrant workers job satisfaction as conceptualized in the model. Enter method was used in the regression analysis and Table 7 shows the results of regression analysis.

Table 7: Regression Analysis

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square
1	.298(a)	0.089	-0.001

a. Predictors: (Constant), toteb, totcom, toter, totrs, totsh, tothrp, totpa, tottd

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	4.696	8	.587	.990	.450 ^a
	Residual	48.026	81	.593		
	Total	52.722	89			

a. Predictors: (Constant), toteb, totcom, toter, totrs, totsh, tothrp, totpa, tottd

b. Dependent Variable: JS1

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	4.600	2.013		2.286	.025
HR Planning	-.513	.501	-.170	-1.022	.310
Rec. and Selection	-.349	.319	-.166	-1.095	.277
Training and Dev.	-.602	.679	-.267	-.886	.378
Per. Appraisal	.039	.378	.024	.104	.918
Compensation	.984	.524	.524	1.879	.064
Emp. Relation	-.031	.215	-.017	-.146	.884
Safety and Health	.186	.460	.067	.404	.687
Emp. Benefits	.139	.188	.083	.741	.461

a. Dependent Variable: JS1

Overall, the results for regression analysis are not significant, at $p < 0.05$. The human resource practices in the proposed model only revealed about 9 percent of the observed variance in migrant workers' job satisfaction. In other words, about 91 percent of the variations of migrant workers' job satisfaction are not depicted in the model. The regression analysis revealed none of the predictors was significantly related with migrant workers job satisfaction ($p < 0.05$) as indicated in Table 10. However, at 10% significant level ($p < 0.1$), workers' compensation was found to have a positive effect on migrants' job satisfaction.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study is to determine the impact of human resource practices on migrant workers job satisfaction. A model was developed for this purpose. Eight human resource practices perceived to influence workers' job satisfaction being examined are human resource planning, recruitment and selection, training and development, performance appraisal, compensation, employee relation, safety and health, and employee benefit.

T-test results indicated two significant findings relating to migrant workers job satisfaction based on ethnic and education level of migrant workers. The results revealed that Nepalese workers were more satisfied with their current job compared to Bangladeshi workers. With both ethnics managed under the same human resource practices, such differences in job satisfaction could be explained from the national culture perspective and ethnic perception of job satisfaction of each country where the workers came.

Several studies have reported national differences with respect to the level of job satisfaction (Kristensen *et al.*, 2002; Sousa-Poza, 2000). This infers there is an exogenous cultural factor influencing the level of job satisfaction for individual country. First, the national culture impact on satisfaction level will determine the extent that employees feel that the social exchanges which take place at work are fair to them (Greenberg, 1990).

The results also revealed that migrant workers with primary education level were more satisfied with their job compared to migrant workers with secondary education level despite the previous results on worker's level of education and job satisfaction are ambiguous. For example, Gardner and Oswald (2001) highlighted that job satisfaction decreases when education level increases. There were also evidences to suggest that increase in education negatively correlates with job satisfaction. Thus, this could explain the reason why migrant workers with primary educational level were more satisfied with their routine job compared to workers who had higher education qualifications.

The results of this study revealed that human resource practices explained marginally (only at approximately 9 percent) migrant workers job satisfaction. This means that the eight predictors from human resource practices highlighted in this study had not captured the essence of the job satisfaction among migrant workers.

This outcome was unexpected because previous studies had indicated a positive effect of human resource practices on workers' job satisfaction. This result had appeared to

contradict with the findings from several studies such as Absar, *et al.* (2010), Petrescu and Simmons (2008), Steijn (2004) and Edgar and Geare (2005), which found that human resource practices are significantly related to workers' job satisfaction. This result could not support previous findings such as Azadeh *et al.*, 2008, Carraher and Carraher, 2005, Carraher *et al.*, 2008, Jones *et al.* 2006, Kilic and Selvi, 2009, Konopaske and Werner, 2005, Trevino and Weaver, 2001 and Roolaht, 2006, who found that human resource practices were significantly related to job satisfaction.

One possible explanation is the issues related to national culture. Hofstede's theory has been widely used to describe the differences between national cultures in regards to job satisfaction while differences in beliefs and value between diverse employee background may also impact job satisfaction level. Previous research has also examined ethnic differences in regards to job satisfaction (e.g. Lankau and Scandura, 1996; Moch, 1980). However, most researches on ethnic group job satisfaction were done among the blacks, whites and Hispanic (Davis, 1985; Greenhaus *et al.*, 1990; Milutinovich, 1977, Slocum and Strawser, 1972 Tuch and Martin, 1991).

Although this study could not provide previous evidence which examined the culture and ethnic comparison between Nepal and Bangladesh workers, it is certainly logical to suggest that differences in national culture and ethnic factors are the possible reasons and need to be taken into account when examine migrant workers' job satisfaction such as those from Nepal and Bangladesh.

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this study have several managerial implications. These include managing migrant workers from different nationalities and education levels. The national culture of migrant workers need to be taken into consideration when formulate human resource practices which brings us to the issues related to cross-cultural human resource management. Currently the human resources practices adapted for this study are mainly derived from Malaysian human resource perspectives and, may not be suitable for determining migrant workers' job satisfaction due to national cultural differences.

Similarly to enhance job satisfaction of migrant workers of different education level, the management could consider introducing job enrichment and job enlargement policies as to provide task varieties to migrant workers with secondary educational level. As explained in previous section, migrant workers with higher education may perceive lower satisfaction due to the routine and repetitive operation job. It is also suggested that human resource managers explore other possible predictors of job satisfaction of migrant workers in order to gain a better understanding their satisfaction in the company.

CONCLUSIONS

The proposed model had failed to provide evidence that all eight human resource practices are predictors of migrant worker's job satisfaction since only worker compensation was found to be marginally significant. Thus, the framework is perceived to be insufficient to determine migrant workers' job satisfaction accepts for worker compensation. Future study is suggested to explore other predictors that may contribute to migrant workers' job satisfaction by taking into account the human resource practices in migrant workers country of origin. However, local human resource practitioners could put more effort in managing compensation policy and compensation structure. This could bring great impact on the level of job satisfaction among migrant workers, which may ultimately enhance the foreign worker's commitment, reducing absenteeism, staff turnover, increase productivity and improve organizational performance.

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