CHALLENGES OF STUDYING PART-TIME WHILE WORKING TOWARDS EMPLOYEE’S JOB PERFORMANCE

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CHALLENGES OF STUDYING PART-TIME WHILE WORKING TOWARDS EMPLOYEE'S JOB PERFORMANCE

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ABSTRACT

The Challenges of Studying Part-Time While Working Towards Employees' Job Performance

Alpha Manik Ak Maling

This study was conducted to seek challenges of studying part-time while working. An open-ended question was used to collect data from four (4) informants from Faculty of Cognitive Science and Human Resource Development, University Malaysia Sarawak of final year and first year master's students of Human Resource Development. In this study, the main challenge of studying part-time while working has been identified which is "time constraint". At the same time, the positive and negative impacts of studying part-time while working are also investigated in this study. Furthermore, the benefits of studying part-time while working have also been discussed. There are some findings that correlate with prior researches and some new findings. In addition, few contribution and recommendation of this study towards the organization, human resource practitioner and methodology and direction for future research are discussed.
ABSTRAK

CABARAN BELAJAR SEPARUH MASA SAMBIL BEKERJA KE ARAH PRESTASI KERJA PEKERJA

Alpha Manik Ak Maling

Chapter one of this study consist of eight sections. The first section of this chapter explains the background of the study. The second section of this chapter is the identification of the problem statement for the study. Third section is the research objective and specific objectives. The fourth section of this chapter is the research questions that are needed to be answered. The fifth section of the chapter explains the significance of the study. The sixth section of the chapters is on the limitation of the study. The seventh section defines the important terms used in this research. Lastly, the final section is the summary of chapter one.
1.1 Background Of Study

Experience and hard work may not be enough to insure the success in today’s complex life environment. The employees in the organization are expected to finish their respective courses to gain their academic credentials. It is essential for every employee in the organization to have their own basic foundation of learning in order to develop their career. According to Dr. Phil Gardner, Director of the Collegiate Employment Research Institute at Michigan State University, “The bottom line is that many companies will not even look at a graduate without work experience,” (Students Turn to Co-op, 2008).

It is a good start for an employee to have their own background regarding the nature of their work in an organization because it can definitely give them the edge to compete with other potential in the organization. For some people, learning can be a stepping stone to a new career, while others study to broaden their horizons and gain personal satisfaction. According to Newman (2005):

"Access to a quality education system enhances economic opportunities and an educated population will be more politically aware and personally fulfilled".

In this modern world, higher education qualifications are increasingly required in order to secure employment or to gain promotion within existing employment especially for big organization. It can be one of evidence that prove this studying part-time while working towards the employees job performance is a vital area for us to focus on. The need of improving the knowledge among employees in organizations increased. One of the
reasons is related to changing environment and technology nowadays. These changes will affect the employee’s job performance because the pressures of studying and work life are higher.

Moreover, an employee can improve their chances of getting a better job without having to give up their present job. However, juggling work and family commitments is often difficult to opt for an employee to do full-time study. A lot of employees choose study part-time to develop their career. Therefore, having the academic knowledge, skills and other working capabilities are such great advantage for the organization because it is the most influential factor in improving the performance at work place. According to Matthews (1999):

"More and more individuals are consciously making an effort to improve their work-related performance, through a range of different training and education programs."

From this statement, it shows that employees nowadays willing to improve themselves either physically and mentally in order to have good knowledge and gain wide experience in their expertise.

Job performance is referring to the extent to which an employee is productive and achieves organization goals. Nowadays, job performance is one of the most important aspects that must consistently improve in an organization. This is due to the fact that by improving an individuals’ job performance, the organization’s overall performance can
also be improved. For the past few years, there has been various definition of job performance that is used. According to Sinha (2004):

"Job performance is related to the willingness and openness to try and achieve new aspect of the job which in turn will bring about an increase in the individual's productivity."

Meanwhile, Howell (2004) stated that job performance is actually related to the important of social standing within the vocation and to a certain extent this opinion is similar with Greenberg and Baron (2000) who point out a positive relationship between job performance and the status of the vocation itself. From the statement, it shows that the job performance is the result of three factors working together which are skill, effort and the nature of work condition. Skills basically about the knowledge, abilities and competencies the employee brings to the job; effort is the degree of motivation the employee puts forth toward getting the job done and the nature work conditions is the degree of accommodation of these conditions in facilitating the employee's productivity.

Therefore, this research will emphasize on the challenges that face by the employees who studying while working towards their job performance. At the same time, this research will identify the factors to help to balancing the two activities and bring solutions for employee to face the challenges.
1.2 Statement Of The Problem

For the past few years, there were limited studies conducted to seek employees' opinion on how to deal with the challenges of studying part-time while working and its effect towards their job performance in Malaysia, specifically in Sarawak. Supposedly, there should be more studies conducted in Malaysia since many local and foreign higher education institutes and universities have introduced an adult learning in order for an adult to continue their studying.

There are several problems related to the challenges of studying part-time while working towards employee's job performance. Mostly journals from western mentioned about the lifelong learning in the research study but not specifically in the challenges of studying part-time while working. Even though, some journals shown that workplace can become a place where an employee can gain knowledge and skills which help them to upgrade and equip an employee in order to increase performance and remain competitive other than from formal education. According to Sloman and Webster (2005), learning for people in today's organizations is increasingly seen as an important issue and the ability of people and organizations to learn is seen by some as a source of competitive advantage (Doos et al, 2005; Eddy et al, 2006). From this statement, it is true that the workplace is a beginning place to acquire knowledge but employees who which to mastering and become specialties in particular field. Therefore, for this research, it is crucial to explore more about the challenges of studying part-time while working.
Furthermore, the impact and ways to manage of studying part-time while working towards the employees job performance are barely investigate. There are instances where learning and working are coming together. This is because of the tight situation in the area of employment; many people choose to work while learning. The arrangement is based on their own assessment and schedule. Employees who opted to upgrade themselves by continuing their education will have to sacrifice and divide their time accordingly in which they will have to learn while working. They could be working in day time and learning at night time or working on weekdays and learning during the weekends. It is believed that these arrangements significant influence on their work and generate an impact in an individual’s performance at work. Therefore, the impact and ways to manage their studying part-time while working will be the main purpose of this study.
1.3 **Objective Of The Study**

Main objective of the study:

(a) To study the challenges of studying part-time while working towards employee’s job performance.

Specific objectives of the study:

(a) To find out the individual performance in their work while studying part-time.

(b) To explore the impacts of working while studying part-time.

(c) To identify the success factors that enable individual to overcome challenges of studying part-time while working.

1.4 **Research Question**

1. What are the main challenges that employee encounters in their work while studying part-time?

2. How do employees manage to cope with their studying despite the busy nature of their work schedules?

3. What are the impacts of studying part-time on employee’s job performance?

4. What are the factors that contribute to overcome the challenges of working and studying part-time?
1.5 Significance Of The Study

1.5.1 To the Students

The results of these studies provide useful information on how to cope with their studying while working. In other way, this study will be beneficial a guide to students who faced the challenges of studying part-time while ensuring and maintaining good job performance for the organization.

1.5.2 To the Future Researcher

This research will provide recommendations on how an individual will improve the impact of challenges of studying part-time while working towards employees’ job performance. Thus, this study can acts as guidelines to any party or human resource development researcher who is interested in this research work whereby it can be used as reference especially for human resource development studies. Besides that, it also will bring knowledge and perhaps theories or models related to learning while working.
1.5.3 To Methodology

As this is a qualitative study, the data collected from survey questionnaires along with interviewing session were interpreted and figures were used to explain the findings. This method can be replicated in future research by using different population and may serve as reference for future researchers who are interested in this research.

1.5.4 To the Human Resource Practitioner

Findings from the study help human resource managers to understand the issues of studying part-time while working towards employees' job performance. Hence, it helps them to prepare the solutions to overcome such problems and face difficulties in handling employee's problem. Other than that, this research will also inform employees to accommodate part time learning and perhaps device conducive on how to facilitate lifelong learning among their employees since new knowledge and skills from the employee are vital for the progress of the organization.
1.6 Limitation Of The Study

The first limitation is location. The study was conducted in only one local university in Kuching and involved one faculty as a place to be investigated. Therefore, the result of the study cannot be used to represent the Malaysian's perspective on the issue of challenges of studying part-time while working. There could be different results if the sample used in this research includes those local universities in Peninsular Malaysia or Sabah. This research was using small sample whereby the results will only reflect the selected informants that involved in the studies. In another word, the result of the study cannot be generalized.

Furthermore, the other limitation is this study is only using an interviewing, observation, document analysis and acquisition the information from the secondary data such as journals, articles for data collection. These are part of qualitative technique. The informants will be given the open-ended questions first, and then they will be interviewed in dept for further information. If the respond from the informants are not apparent, there will be a follow up session with the informants so that their answers are fulfilled the questions and objectives of the study.

Besides that, issue of biasness of the researches could reflect on the small sample size in this study. The reliability and validity of the study depends on the given time constraints and the informants may be hast and may not be totally honest in reviewing their life experiences.
1.7 Definition Of Terms

Definition of terms is divided into two types which are conceptual and operational definitions. A conceptual definition describes what a concept means by relating it to other abstract concepts. An operational definition describes a concept in terms of its observable and measurable characteristics or behaviors, by specifying how the concept can be observed in actual practice.

(i) Employee

Conceptual Definition
An employee is a person who works in the service of another person under an express or implied contract of hire, under which the employer has the right to control the details of work performance. (Murray. J, 2009).

Operational Definition
A person who is working for another person in order to get pay or a person who works part-time or full-time under a contract of employment and has recognized rights and duties.