



Working Paper No. 48, March 2011

HOW JUSTIFY IS MY TAKE HOME PAY?

Nwanesi Peter Karubi and Muhammad Khaliq

Working Paper Series

**Faculty
of
Social Sciences**

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Faculty of Social Sciences

UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SARAWAK

Introduction

That Malaysia is one of the highest employers of migrant workers in Asia is no longer a debatable issue but a fact supported by overwhelming statistics. Penang one of the ever dynamic industrial regions of Malaysia provides work for thousands of young women from local and international countries. Most of these young women earns as little as RM450 per month and spend close to 45 working hours weekly. Most of these young women are as young as 18 years, doing jobs that have no bearing to their future career development. This and other factors have continued to strengthen most female factory workers to constantly be on a look out for a new industrial unit to sell their labour. In many instances, their toil is mechanical; devoid of emotion, attachment, and sometime commitment or loyalty to their job; after all, they are being used and not appropriately compensated or cared for.

Thus, the principal objective of this paper is to examine the motives and the impact of changing jobs among the Female Factory Workers (FFW) at the SME¹ factories located in Penang Island, and assess if there are correlations between injustice and the motive(s) to depart from one industry to another. In order to appreciate the peculiarities of this paper, it is important to note that the degree of time spends at a specific job and

¹ SMEs are usually enterprises that employ no more than 250 employees. The technical definition varies from country to country in the Asia-Pacific region but is usually based on employment, assets, or a combination of the two. Some countries have different definitions for SMEs in the manufacturing and services sector and may exempt firms from specialized industries or firms that have shareholdings by parent companies (Vadim Kotelnikov 2007)

the experiences acquired in the process enhance human development and individual accomplishment. In deed, this study aimed or seek to unveiled whether these short time experiences and Mono-tasking duty they perform in these factories contribute to human development?

Background & Study Area

This research was conducted in Pinang Island, Penang state of Malaysia. The growth of this unique human settlement began with the acquisition of the Port of Penang in 1786 by the British. The extension of their rule to the Malay States in the interior laid the foundation of Penang as an urban city. This expedition (the British acquisition of Penang Port in 1786) ushered in a new era in the development of human settlement in the region (George 1972:8). Besides, being the centre of trade and services sector for the northern region, Penang hugely benefited from the Malaysian government programmes for industrial development which stressed import substitution industrialization. The outcomes of this vigorous and ambitious objective of Malaysian government ushered in massive industrial establishment, growth, industrial free zone and create considerable job opportunities for many young adults especially women.

In fact, most of these industrial units depend on young women to assemble products and perform other non-skilful jobs in their factories. In essence, driven by the availabilities of *easy-to-get* jobs at Penang's sparely factories in the states' industrial free zone, many young women migrate to the Island city to join the workforce; thereby re-echoing one of the characteristics of current global industrial trend since 1930s.

The increasing numbers of women in the workforce is associated with various historical factors and economical transformation. For example, in the 1930s and after the Second World War, there was an astronomically increase on the number of women entering the workforce due to a dire economic needs and the shortage of men in the workforce (England and Farkas, 1986). After the war, the number of services oriented jobs such as sales clerk, secretary, waitress, or nurse was rapidly taken over by women. This historical epoch recurred with the