

ASIAN JOURNAL OF KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

Vol. 2 • No. 2 : 2015

In This Issue

- **Knowledge Talent Management - Talent Leadership Process**
Dr. Tan Thai Soon
- **The Knowledge Management Accountant - Role in the
Twenty First Century**
Dr. Tay Jon Jon
- **Career Ceiling: Phenomenological Research on Employees**
Dr. Joseph Walter Anthony

ISSN 2287-6287



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Asian Institute of Knowledge Management Sdn Bhd

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CONTENTS

Editorial

Knowledge Talent Management

- Talent Leadership Process

Dr. Tan Thai Soon

The Knowledge Management Accountant

- Role in the Twenty First Century

Dr. Tay Jon Jon

Career Ceiling: Phenomenological Research on Employees

Dr. Joseph Walter Anthony

Editor's Note

The development of knowledge management has accelerated in the late 1990s due to the rapid development of information technology. The development of information technology provided a new means for the subsequent development of information management into knowledge management. The early 2000s saw management writers integrating organizational learning and innovation with knowledge management. Subsequent writers argue that knowledge management is best represented as strategic knowledge management and should be an integral part of business strategy.

The current development of knowledge management has seen the use and applications of knowledge management process into multi-disciplinary subject matter, such as risk management, project management and engineering management.

The first article on this issue is entitled, "Knowledge talent management". The concept incorporates the four perspectives of knowledge processes, referred as the 4 Cs (Tan, 2013) in talent management. The new process is referred to as the "Talent-Leadership Process"™, and includes Knowledge Creation (talent acquisition), Knowledge Conversion (talent development), Knowledge Communication (talent retention) and Knowledge Change (talent succession).

The second article looks into the "The Knowledge Management Accountant - Role in the Twenty First Century". The aim of this paper is to show the transformation in the role of the traditional Cost Accountant, as we used to know it, to that of the Knowledge Management Accountant (KMA), a figure who has come to have a more involved strategic role in business.

The third article studies the issue of the 'undervalued employee', who can face a career ceiling, one with a negative impact on an employee's quality of life. The purpose of this research is to encourage organizations to embrace and cultivate a holistic approach towards management. They need to foster value in every employee's perception, as this can lead to employee satisfaction, recognition, greater performance, and retention.

Dr Tan Thai Soon

Editor, *Asian Journal of Knowledge Management*

Knowledge Talent Management

-Talent Leadership Process

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Abstract

This article looks into the use and application of Knowledge Management Process (KM Process) in the talent management. This concept was first introduced in my book (Tan, 2013), by incorporated the four perspectives of knowledge processes. These were referred to as the `4 Cs`: Knowledge Creation, Knowledge Conversion, Knowledge Communication and Knowledge Change.

In applying the original four perspectives of knowledge processes in knowledge talent management, the new processes is referred to as a “Talent-Leadership Process”™, these include Knowledge Creation (talent acquisition), Knowledge Conversion (talent development), Knowledge Communication (talent retention) and Knowledge Change (talent succession).

Keywords: Talent-Leadership Process, Talent Acquisition, Talent Development, Talent Retention and Talent Succession.

1. Knowledge Talent Management

Knowledge talent management is *a continuous process of managing talent by acquiring, developing, retaining and succeeding the right people in the right place at the right time in the organization.* The four perspectives in knowledge talent management include knowledge creation (talent acquisition); knowledge conversion (talent development); knowledge communication (talent retention); and knowledge change (talent succession).

A new concept within the knowledge talent management process is called “Talent-Leadership Process”™. As set out in figures 1 and 2 below, this is particularly suitable for innovative organizations.

2. Talent-Leadership Process™

In “Talent-Leadership Process”™, the talent is a function of leadership. The main premise of this concept is about *creating high value talent and leadership of human capital in the organization.*

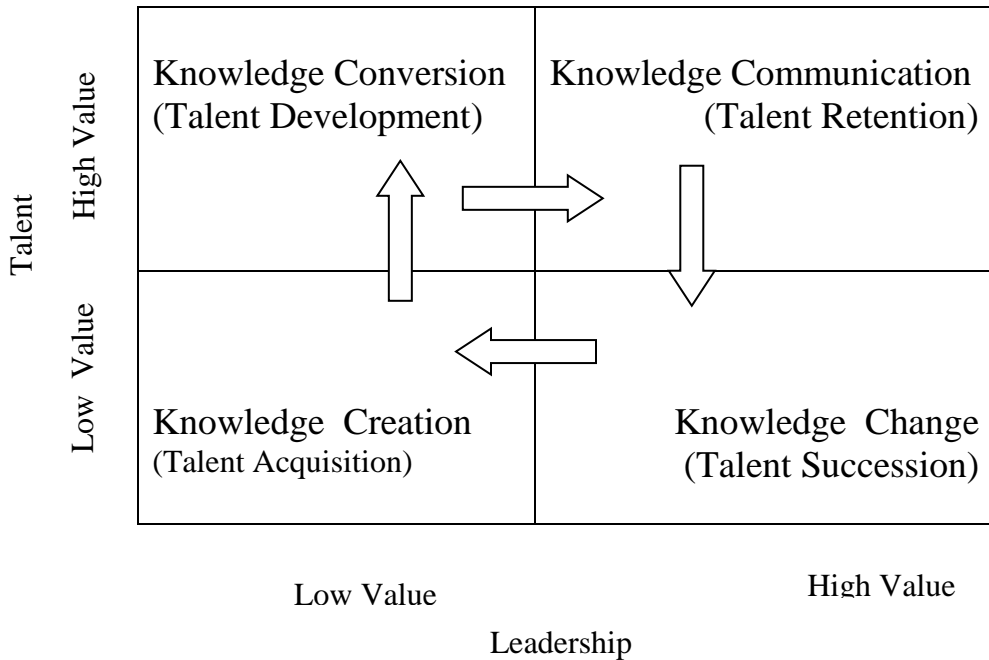
High value is an important aspect of “Talent-Leadership Process”; the first dimension is talent, which includes talent skills and competencies. The second dimension is leadership which is comprised of leadership skills and communication.

3. The Four Modes of the Knowledge Talent Management Process

This concept was first introduced in my book (Tan, 2013), by incorporated the four perspectives of knowledge processes. These were referred to as the “4 Cs”: Knowledge Creation, Knowledge Conversion, Knowledge Communication and Knowledge Change.

In applying the original four perspectives of knowledge processes in knowledge talent management, the new processes is referred to as a “Talent-Leadership Process”™. As shown in figure 1 below, these include Knowledge Creation (talent acquisition), Knowledge Conversion (talent development), Knowledge Communication (talent retention) and Knowledge Change (talent succession).

Figure 1 – The Four Modes of Knowledge Talent Management Process



“Talent-Leadership Process”™

Source: Tan, T. S. (2015) Knowledge Talent Management
-A process perspective

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3.1. Knowledge Creation (Talent Acquisition)

The knowledge creation process in talent management examines the process of talent acquisition or hiring the right talent for the right job at the right time. To acquire the right talent for the right job in an organization is difficult, because of imperfect information in the talent market. Using a recruitment agency can generally help to recruit the most suitable talent, but it by no means ensures a perfect fit for the job. Hiring a poor candidate can be very costly to the organization in term of time and money. Therefore hiring a right people for the right job position at the right time is very important for subsequent talent development and retention.

3.1.1 Mistakes in hiring

Many candidates look excellent on paper. However, it is common for candidates with promising CVs not to fit into the needs and expectation of an organization. The possible consequences of mistakes in hiring include loss of customers, employee conflict, low productivity and increased accidents in the workplace.

3.1.2 Mismatch in knowledge and skills

There can also be concerns over a mismatch between the qualifications of graduates and the skills set required by an organization according to the needs of industry.

Although some of the basic knowledge and technical skills required in an industry can be learned during academic study, high value technical skills are best learnt along the way from on-job training and the practical experience gained at work. Some high value technical skills and knowledge are specific to or even a trade secret of a particular organization. They can therefore only be acquired from job experience in that particular organization.

Another reason of a mismatch between what students study from a textbook and the actual application of technology in the workplace arises from the speed of change in technological progress.

3.1.3. Recruitment and Selection process

Good selection processes can reduce the cost incurred in recruiting. The following represent some best practices in the recruiting and selection process:

- Prepare a human resource plan and avoid hiring out of desperation
- Use the right selection and assessment tools
- Provide a clear job description and responsibilities
- Have a well-structured interview questionnaire
- Document every phase of the interview
- Ensure that the selection process is objective and not based on relationships or personal bias.

3.2. Knowledge Conversion (Talent Development)

The knowledge conversion process in talent management is essentially a talent development programme. It is related to how organizations develop their talent for the right jobs, and provide new learning opportunities through job rotation at the right place at the right time.

3.2.1 Talent development programme

The role of the management is to provide a talent development programme that can develop soft skills in employees, at the same time allowing such employees learning opportunities which enable them to keep up-to-date with the technical skills that are relevant to their job function. Much research has shown that job rotation at an early stage is critical for talent development.

The purpose of talent development is to create a positive and high value talent. High value talent means higher productivity and gains in efficiency and effectiveness. This will in turn translate into improved organizational performance.

3.2.2. Attitudes towards work

As mentioned above, the role of management in talent development is to provide learning opportunities for employees. In order for a talent development programme to be successful, the employees must show a good

attitude towards work. A good attitude encompasses a readiness to embrace change; a willingness to handle setbacks; the embrace of challenges; and a willingness to take the opportunity to learn something new. At any talent development stage, a good attitude, involving a passion for the job, is very important.

3.3. Knowledge Communication (Talent Retention)

The knowledge communication process in talent management is concerned with a talent retention strategy. It relates to how leaders communicate and provide direction and clear team goals to their talent employees. Ultimately, they should be able to empower and nurture them into a leadership position. Under this perspective, having talented employees is not enough; it requires a great leader or manager who can communicate and nurture their talent employees. Poor communication on the other hand can cause feelings of insecurity about their job position within an organization, which could eventually lead talent employees leaving their job.

3.3.1. Leader communication in “strategy as plan”

Leadership communication is an important factor in retaining talent. The leader must provide direction and clear team goals to their talent employees. Many of the latter leave their job because they find it hard to work with managers who gives unclear instructions and do not provide clear direction.

According to Mintztberg (1987), “Strategy as Plan” is concerned with how leaders try to establish direction for organizations with a view to setting them on predetermined courses of action.

According to Mintztberg (1987), Strategy as Plan should include:

- how leaders try to establish direction for organizations,
- setting a predetermined course of action with a defined schedule.

Leaders who provide clear directions can avoid talent employees moving in conflicting directions and towards the wrong goals. Similarly, the wisdom of good leadership creates *strategy, process and culture*. Strategy creation can play an important role in retaining talent.

3.3.2 “T-Shaped” managers

The manager, management communication and the sharing of information play important roles in an organization. In particular, the “working relationship” between talent employees and managers can be crucial.

Hansen and Oetinger (2001) introduced the concept of “T-Shaped” managers, who are willing to share knowledge freely across the organization. The term “T-Shaped” refers to the behaviour of managers who are flexible in sharing knowledge, learning and collaborating across the business units – this is the horizontal part of the T. They are thus managers who are willing to share knowledge freely across the organization.

In summary, T-Shaped skills managers operate effectively between inter-business units (the horizontal part of the T) and within the business unit (the vertical part). T-Shaped skills managers are flexible in sharing knowledge freely across the business units; at the same time, they are prepared to hire and work with people who are unlike them. This inter-business unit sharing of information and collaboration is important. For example, the sharing of information between a production department and a marketing department helps to ensure smooth production and distribution schedules, thus reducing inter-departmental conflict and talent employees leaving the job.

Similarly, T-Shaped skills managers also encourage the hiring of and fruitful collaboration with people who are unlike them within their department. Such managers will encourage creativity and innovation, particularly in the research and product design department. The concept is so appealing that T-Shaped skills managers have come to be considered a critical factor in retaining talent.

3.3.3. Reward and recognition

The organization has to recognise the high value employees through a proper reward system, one which includes monetary reward and job recognition through career growth. The reward can be based on skill, competency and performance. Recognition and acknowledgement of talented employees by leader for outstanding work serves as motivation to all. Motivated employees are more likely to be retained and stay on their job.

3.3.4 Empowerment

In addition to monetary reward, job development and career advancement are important attributes that determine whether talent will stay and potentially be empowered into a leadership position.

At this stage, job development and career advancement is very important; the company must empower and nurture their talent into leadership roles in order to retain such employees in the long term.

3.4. Knowledge Change (Talent Succession)

The knowledge change process in talent management looks into the process of identifying potential candidates to ensure a ready pool of talent employees who can be adequately developed to take on various organization positions and responsibilities at the right place and at the right time. It is a necessary journey in the talent management process.

3.4.1. The need for talent succession

The need for talent succession can arise out of changes in the business environment which present such challenges to an organization as follows:

- During economic crisis and uncertainty;
- Changing technology that require innovative `tech-savvy` talent;
- Competitive market environment and lack of performance;
- Inefficient services or old business processes;
- An existing talent losing passion for the job and deciding to quit;
- and many other factors.

At such points, the value propositions offered by the existing talent are low, and therefore a process of changing and replacing low value talent may be inevitable and necessary. The process of executing the change required high leadership skills.

3.4.2. Challenges and mistakes in succession planning

The following are some of the common challenges and mistakes made in succession planning:

- One common mistake is either not to have a formal succession plan or to have left it too late to form a proper succession plan
- The challenges in family-owned business include: sibling rivalry and jealousy; succession selection through nepotism; appointment of manager through family ties or personal relationship (*guanxi*)
- Another challenge in choosing succession is the fear factor: the root of procrastination can be a fear of losing control by certain individuals or groups of people. This can result in the selection of a successor which is not based on merit but on favouritism.

3.4.3. Succession plan

Successful organizations always draw up and implement a formal succession plan for the selection of a future talent based on competencies, leadership ability, experience (local and international), performance, achievement and job responsibility. These organizations are more likely to achieve long term organizational performance and become and remain successful business enterprises.

4. Knowledge Talent Management Process Map

A detail summary of the above processes is set out in Figure 2 as a Knowledge Talent Management Process Map. The purpose of a knowledge talent management process map is to assist the organization in creating a long term career path for talented workers. It draws on the four modes of knowledge talent management process.

Figure 2 - KM Process Map

Talent	High Value	<p>Knowledge Conversion (Talent development)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talent development programme • Job rotation • Attitude and passion 	<p>Knowledge Communication (Talent retention)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leader communication • T-Shaped managers • Reward and recognition • Empowerment
	Low Value	<p>Knowledge Creation (Talent acquisition)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mistake in hiring • Mismatch in knowledge and skills • Recruitment and Selection process 	<p>Knowledge Change (Talent succession)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talent succession • Succession plan • Leadership skill

Low value

High value

Leadership

“Talent-Leadership Process”™

Source: Tan, T. S. (2015) Knowledge Talent Management
-A process perspective

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5. Conclusion

In summary, the main premises of knowledge talent management are talent acquisition, talent development, the retention of talent through leadership communication, and the provision of a talent succession plan in the organization.

Knowledge communication between the talented employee and leadership will ensure talent retention in the organization. In turn, talent retention in the medium term will result in continuous organizational efficiency and hence organizational performance and, ultimately, economic growth for the nation.

However, it should be noted that there are many instances in which top management and chief officials are not found within an organization but recruited externally to provide new talent-leadership when this is thought necessary.

In summary, talent-leadership remains a critical part of the knowledge talent management process. Retaining high value talent, possibly with a view towards subsequent leadership succession, is an important process for an organization.

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The Knowledge Management Accountant - Role in the Twenty First Century

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Abstract

Purpose - The aim of this paper is to show the transformations in the role of the traditional cost accountant as we know it to that of the Knowledge Management Accountant (KMA) who has to a more involved strategic role in the business. Approach - To examine various papers, compare and contrast their observations. Findings - the emphasis of this paper is to examine the theoretical and professional concepts that the KMA has to resolve. Research Implications - It is hoped that this paper will stimulate more models in the knowledge management accounting arena. Practical Implications - The KMA will find this paper important in focusing on the future transformations impacting the role in not just being a manager but being almost entrepreneurial and allowing for predictive analytics and big data make an impression on the profession. With all the developments in data analytics the KMA is by right the succeeding Chief Knowledge Officer (CKO) and carries with him the responsibility of sharing innovation.

Key terms: Costing, Information Systems, Strategy, Environment, Economy, Big Data, Decision-Making.

The Changing Roles of Management Accountants

Knowledge Management Accountants (KMA) have changed from being just bean counters to business advocates, supporting and advising senior managers in strategic decision making. Bean counting is still important for management accountants working in smaller sized firms and some known as being hybrid management accountants do both (Loo *et al.* 2011).

KMAs also organize themselves in teams and their activities can influence organization decision making especially in enterprise resource planning. A management accountant supports and advises management in realizing

economic, public and financial goals. Support means design and maintenance of management control and accounting information systems plus the procurement and distribution of information (Loo *et al.* 2011).

The management accountant is evolving into a business oriented officer or strategy focused officer. Four types of management accountants determined are the involved controller, the independent controller, the strong controller and the split controller. The split controller occurs when business orientation are disassociated from the integrity of financial information or perhaps the internal analysis and risk management process. The tightening of external reporting rules via the IFRS, have impacted on the activities and classification of management accountants. Score keeping still form the major daily activity carried out by management accountants (Loo *et al.* 2011).

Management Accountants Facing Environmental Issues

KMAs today are also concerned with environmental issues such as compliance, eco-efficiency and strategic positioning. Compliance to international and national regulations on safeguarding the environment from pollution and resource degradation in other words a commitment to a model of sustainability. Eco-efficiency concerns management accountants with the use of resources and energy one example is the effective and efficient consumption of water. Strategic position concerns whether environmental operations can be perceived as a competitive advantage and advertise to attract additional customers. A company would have an ethical stance towards the environment and adopt environmental management accounting to satisfy various stakeholder or pressure groups. Regulatory bodies will take over unless a business will self regulate and anticipate future regulations and clean up their act. Energy tax can be imposed in society and environmental crimes can be taxed. Finally, if resources are scarce allocation and use becomes important (“Environmental management accounting,” 2015).

Environmental management accounting can be defined as identification, collection, analysis and use of two types of information for internal decision making namely physical information and monetary information. The former could be the consumption of energy and water in kilowatts and liters and the latter on material costs of product and non product outputs, waste and

emission costs, prevention and management costs and R&D (“Environmental management accounting,” 2015).

Management Accountants and New Systems

KMAs need to view the importance of grooming the younger generation within the company to take the reins in the organization’s course of events. ‘To help young professionals learn, adapt, and provide the highest quality service available’ KMAs have to develop a knowledge management system that will serve the company well into the future (Johnston 2010).

Cokins (2013) contributed that the major trends that will affect most of KMAs would be that they would have to play a supporting role to marketing and sales function. ‘A company needs to know best type of customers to retain, grow, win back and acquire - and those who aren’t’ thus maximizing shareholder wealth. A company cannot spend unnecessarily on loyal customers that does not fulfill this premise. On the other hand spend too little on loyal customers risks defection to the competitor. This knowledge of the customer will thus justify why there is minimal financial performance.

The KMA has an arsenal of tools that he could use to measure, manage and improve key performance indicators. Tools like strategy maps, balance score cards, driver based budgeting, lean management and customer relationship management enhance the efficacy of the KMA to deliver the desired results that the organization’s stakeholders are looking for. The Enterprise Performance Management system connects all these tools ‘like gears in a machine’(Cokins 2013) also sometimes termed as data analytics.

KMA would need to provide owners of organisations not only present and historical costs but also what future cost would be and the reasons for it being so. ‘The past reflects decisions already made. Decisions that will be made will impact the future’ (Cokins 2013). In a world where tariff barriers are lowered because of free trade like ASEAN and EU and the impending TPPA would mean rapid changes in customer preferences, technologies and competitor strategies.

The KMA is involved in value creation through good decision making. His is involved in Cost Accounting - which is assigning of expenses into outputs

e.g. Cost of Goods Sold and the Value of Stock. It is usually for external reporting and compliance with IFRS and has low value add significance for the entity in general (Cokins 2013).

Secondly, with modest value add, the KMA tracks performance for the organization such as spending versus budget variance, profitability reporting and process analysis (lean benchmarking) (Cokins 2013). The KMA becomes a participant in the learning organization.

Third, concentrating on the future and high value add significance the KMA examines decision support with cost planning. The KMA combines historical costs information with economic information, forecasting techniques and planned changes such as processes, products, services and channels to make decisions to set a healthy path for the company in the future (Cokins 2013).

In the past the cost accountant viewed expenses as either unused or used to make products. It was known as full absorption costing and historical in nature. The KMA has a predictive view of costs. Expense was classified as sunk cost, fixed (unavoidable), step fixed, semi variable and variable (avoidable; adjustable capacity) depending on the planning time horizon. Assets can be leased rather than bought and future workers can be hired on a contract basis. Further, customers can be viewed on their profitability, and the organization can ask itself what can be changed and what are future opportunities. Thus the KMA allows managerial economics to be a substantial component of his decision support and cost planning (Cokins 2013).

Previously, accountants created information from structured data however, KMA can produce information of value from structure and unstructured data, quantitative or qualitative. KMA can recommend an 'effective pricing strategy, reduce risks whilst improving profitability' of an organization. The application of big data is utilized in a fashion whereby accountants are already use to in arenas like activity based costing system or balanced scorecard. However, KMAs will examine unstructured data to produce reports that produce 'economic, social and environmental performance' (Raval & Greteman 2015).

KMAs of companies that use the Internet will usually incorporate big data whose management are focused on ‘data driven decision making’. KMAs can use big data to examine how business risks are fluctuating such as new fraud risks. Big data provides for ‘reliable financial forecasts’ and examines what drives revenue and margins. Raval & Greteman (2015) espouses that big data induces are richer set of diverse inputs to extract important ‘correlations and causations.’

Getting the most out of big data may is sometimes messy but holds importance in industries such as manufacturing, information processing, finance and health care sectors. Areas where big data can play a bigger role is in the public sector e.g. Education industry.

Using big data whilst has its advantages also may play an averse role if time sensitive data is not used hence and when it is needed. As such wrong applications may not reveal patterns that provide valid and reliable conclusions. However, used wisely and intelligently profits and performance may indeed improve within a supply chain. The KMAs tool box would be greatly enhanced with a dashboard of information at his fingertips.

KMA as The CKO

Conclusion

The objective of this paper was to show the complex roles that the KMA must play in an organization. Knowledge is an integral part of an accountant’s arsenal in wearing many hats and becoming multi functional in his management tasks. In an age of the Internet and Big Data the KMA would need to embody the processes for decision making and projecting what is best for the organization in future.

Referring to Brontis (2001), the Chief Knowledge Officer (CKO) should be able to acquire and store knowledge which is questionable in terms of its validity. However, knowledge provides a business with competitive advantage which is slowly eroded over time when competitors emulate the original innovator. It can therefore be said that the KMA is like the CKO who should provide the ideas and share innovation with his colleagues within the organization. The KMA will then be able to provide ‘stability

during environmental turbulence' and enable specialization to take place in a medium of knowledge sharing (Brontis 2001).

The KMA must be willing to communicate with all stakeholders which is rather much what present integrated reporting is all about. Thus, for integrated reporting to be fully effective the 'awareness gaps, communications skills gaps and culture gaps' of stakeholders has to be narrowed and dealt with.

As a trainer the KMA has to evaluate the returns of the training programs that he has instituted. 'The time and expense to move the new hire to productivity' and minimizing duplication of training resources (Brontis 2001).

Finally, for the KMA to plan strategically there needs to be a knowledge map which denotes the places of every knowledge resource in the company for example the person, the location where he usually works and the library be it virtual or non-virtual. From there the knowledge domains are extracted to develop the business strategy.

The KMA should be conversant in measuring intellectual capital (Tobin's q method) human resource accounting, economic value added and balanced score card. Integrated reporting has meant that KMA and there internal audit counterparts would feed knowledge and information both qualitative and quantitative to external auditors who would provide information that is relevant to direct and indirect stakeholders of a company. Thus the role of KMAs will be all encompassing.

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Career Ceiling: Phenomenological Research on Employees

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Abstract

Employees often experience moments in which they do not pass into the future or in which they feel that career progress is not progressing or less career advancement. The aim of this qualitative research is to understand the negative impact on an employee's quality of life. This negative impact will be the stronger and longer on employee career ceiling is experienced and the more an employee feels unable to overcome it. Hermeneutical Phenomenological approach is used to unfold and uncover the feeling of those involved in depth. Multiple participants were interviewed one-on-one in their natural work setting to attain the perspective of being undervalued at work. Multiple participants were interviewed face-to-face in their natural settings to attain their perspectives on career ceiling at workplace. Staffs from various ranks and industries were interviewed face-to-face using digital video recordings. The major theme emerged from the study, Career ceiling I use this new term, as it explains that an employee has come to a dead end of his/her career where this is no hope of development. This research comes as an evident that employees claim career ceiling do exists in most working environment. Promotion is being blocked, no salary increment and underpaid is experienced most of employees resulting to career ceiling. Career ceiling will become a predicament when an employee is unable to manage with it and/or if every means of dealing with career ceiling has both desired and undesired consequences. This research begins to unfold many events in developing training and development approaches as it contributes to an authentic appreciation of human resource development, and creates a real meaning, a sense of belonging, a deeper sense of collaboration and partnership with their organizations. The researcher upholds the originality of this work with full pride and honesty for current and future improvement and development, paving the way for researchers to continue to fill in the knowledge gap. This research contributes to guiding HRD practitioners to encourage organizations to embrace and cultivate a holistic approach towards management in fostering value in every employee's perception.

Employee satisfaction, recognition, greater performance, and retention can be achieved for organizations as a result of this.

Keywords: Career Ceiling; Phenomenological Research

INTRODUCTION

The surge of transformation in management is a hot topic of current management to continue operation in fast-changing and unpredictable environments. Demographic changes (Busine and Watt, 2005), globalization (Kleinsorge, 2010), and importance of customer relationships (Busine and Watt, 2005; Losey, Meisinger, and Ulrich, 2005) are continuously being mentioned as trends involving organizational changes. Human resource management has made the long journey from the earlier narrow personnel view to the modern, more broader perspective of strategic human resource management, which focuses more on strategic human development (Strauss, 2001). A large amount of research (Bowen & Ostroff, 2004; Bukowitz, Williams, & Mactas, 2004; Fleetwood & Hesketh, 2006; Henard & Mcfayden, 2008; Hendrichson, 2003; Ramlall, 2003; Schein, 2004) has been conducted in the area of human resource management, the literature failed to address the issue of employee career progress and the contribution from the management professionals in tackling that issue. The researcher agree with the scholars above; that is be mere good HR managers is a necessity, become more effective, and to be a stronger voice for the employees. HR must bring transformation, and HR practitioners must be ready and competent to stand for their employees. In the ongoing dilemma of modern-day slavery. Currie and Kerrin (2003) and Storey and Quintas (2001) cautioned human resource practitioners about the negative impact of the issue of undervaluing employees if it is not tackled, or not taken seriously. The feeling of being 'cold storage' by employees at work, and its consequence, is what this research will address. There are continuous presentations from scholars on the belief that human capital is the organization's most valuable asset (Edvinsson & Malone, 1997; Klein, 1998).

Evidently, many academics (see Guthrie et al., 2001; Petty & Guthrie, 2000) claim that, although many organizations trumpet loudly that their employees are the company's most important asset, however only a handful of them "walk the talk". If people are truly an organization's greatest asset, they have

to be protected, and valuing them as assets is unquestionably the best way to do this. Employees who are dissatisfied with their employments only complete the minimum workplace duties (Chen & Hung, 2006; Chen, Lin, Lu, & Taso, 2007; Chen, Tsui, & Far, 2002). Thus, they are conformists

Despite the fact that organizations routinely tend to espouse an ideology of valuing employees, it does not directly follow that employees themselves feel valued. As Malaysia climbs the ladder of development, the emphasis on human capital development and a knowledge-based economy becomes more important. In fact, human capital is an essential factor in every sphere of development today, including in enterprises that strive for success. If in the past, physical capital such as land and financial capital were some of the elements that defined a business' competitive edge, today it is no longer the case. To survive in a global market in the new millennium, Malaysian firms need to exploit their resources as a means of achieving a competitive advantage. Accordingly, there is a call for human resource practitioners to challenge themselves to be creative in addressing issues and being updated, where strategic and human development is seen as crucial (Brewer & Brewer, 2010; Hislop, 2003; Nicolini, Powel, Conville, & Martinez-Solano, 2007). Human capital has become the key component in an organization today. Buildings can exist, but without humans it becomes lifeless. In other words, the researcher claims that companies become lifeless without employees. In experiencing profound doubt of an employee value in resulting the feeling of unworthy or undeserving of respect, achievement, success and fulfilment – in summation, happiness – is not a good indication. In other words, employees who experiences career ceiling, this can affect their work, their relationships and their workplace. The fundamental competitive advantage in this modernistic era positions in human capital. Hence, to harness every employee's potential, it becomes imperative to any company heads. Subsequently, employees' sensitivity of their value to the organization discloses how organizations' populace and guidelines distress these feelings of value and what other elements contribute to employees' perception of their value to the organization. In addition, it makes available a view of individual employee's construct for job satisfaction from equally personal and professional outlooks.

Literature Review

Human Resources Management

It is well expressed in the management literature on effective ways to demonstrate the practices of employee value. HRM seeks to maximize organizational performance through the adoption of best practices in the management of people. Mckenna & Beech (2002) view HRM as an approach to personnel management that considers people as the key resource. Personnel management/ HRM can be traced to philosophies of certain civilizations. Many different philosophies have contributed to our understanding of human values.

In short, the research question of employee's impact on career ceiling at the workplace has its relations from the philosophy of the ancient Egyptians till today. Human resource is very important and it's very critical for any organization in the development of human capital. The development of early civilization contributed to the platform of employees being valued at the workplace.

Today, human resources are seen as a business partner, instead of indulging in paperwork and solving employee issues. Using the tagline that 'employees are the greatest asset'; most companies incorporate the tagline into their company mission and vision statements. If an organization can 'walk the talk' in their mission and vision statement, the development of employee concerns would have been the highest priority. It is sad to say that, unfortunately, many organizations that claim to hold employees as their most valuable asset do not engage their employees and, as a result, the employees tend to underperform.

Human Resource Development

The Malaysian government has given human resource development its highest priority, and is considered as one of the strategies in achieving Vision 2020. Human capital is undoubtedly the fundamental investment in achieving the industrialization status. However, the issue of HRD needs to be tackled and addressed in recognizing the value of employees, not unappreciated, but relatively in a stable form that adds value to the organization.

As stated in the Malaysian newspaper, The Star (Wednesday July 6, 2011) human capital has always been the central factor of many human resources, and in the development of human resources. Because of their skills, knowledge, experience, and competencies they are viewed and monitored as a driving force for the success of the organization (Becker, 1975; Schmidt & Lines, 2002, Harrison & Kessels, 2004). Therefore, it is argued the ability of strategically-focused HRD to formulate plans and policies with business plans (Garavan, 1991; McCracken & Wallace, 1999). Because they are short-term plans, and are scarcely available in some organizations, they are reported as imperceptible organizations (Ardichvilli & Gasparishvilli, 2001; Elbadri, 2001; Budhwar et al; 2002) and may be completely absent in small firms (Kerr & McDougall, 1999; Hill & Stewart, 2000; Hill, 2004). The central emphasis of HRD should be that employees are the greatest asset, and should managed and developed just as well as the most stringent financial asset (Doyel, 2003). If employees are always seen as the greatest asset, the question of career ceiling should never be an issue.

Human Capital

It has been always the anthem of organizations to say “employees are our greatest asset”. In 1954, the term “human capital” was given birth during the discussion of material capital (Schultz, 1971; Becker, 1964). Becker’s book, entitled *Human Capital*, spoke more on personal income, and more attention was given to money instead of employees, which lead to negative undertones by professional practitioners. Today the term “human capital” is widely spoken, accepted and used popularly to describe human resources at management levels since 2003 (Scholz, 2007). Companies all over the world today, no matter where they are operating from, are coming to realize the importance of developing human capital by planting values in them. It is still an unending debate of organizations, why employees are treated so haphazardly, if what they claim, that their employees are the greatest asset, when the “marginal value of the investment in human capital is more than three times greater than machinery value” (Stewart, 1997, pg.85).

As Malaysia passages forwards towards industrial development, the focus on human capital development becomes more essential. Human capital, in fact, is an essential factor for development today, which includes organizations striving for success. Prior to this, physical capital, such as land and financial

capital were some of the factors of business' competitive edge; today, those are no more as human capital overtook that thinking. It is agreed by many that human capital has been the key to most competitive advantages in this new era.

Many organizations have vision and mission statements that state people are their most valuable asset. If this is true, the development and concern of employees in any organization would have the highest strategic priority, and employee engagement within those organizations would be very high. Many surveys conducted by consulting firms consistently state that high employee engagement enhances organizational performance and contributes to the bottom line (*Debunking the Myths of Employee Engagement, 2006; Employee Engagement Report 2006, 2006; Gebauer, 2006*). Why is it then that many organizations that claim to hold employees as their most valuable asset do not engage them and employees are, in fact, underperforming, which contributes to employee to experience career celling? If organizations cannot quantify human capital attributes of employees, then they run the risk of underutilizing it, de-motivating the individual, and losing a valuable resource to a competitor. As stated by Fong (2006):

“Developing human capital through HRD would not be complete if consideration is not given to the issue of values and ethics. Positive work values, the spirit of competition and integrity must be an inherent part of the labour force. Employers are concerned about work attitudes among workers. They are concerned about job-hopping, dislike for hard work, and their unwillingness to put in extra efforts, especially to work over-time.”

Learning Organization

In general, humans are created to learn. During an economic crisis, while most of the organizations squeeze the profit margins, small innovative incremental improvements can provide competitive advantages. Continuous improvement has been the main factor for organizations to remain competitive in a market, and to ensure continuous improvement organization learning is one of the organizational strategies (Robinson, Clemson, & Keating, 1997). Organization learning can be defined as an ongoing process of change (William, 2001), that utilizes acquisition, knowledge creation and transfer (Garvin, 1993) in the decision-making process. Malaysia, as she

begins to compete in the global arena, has a need for learning organizations. Regardless of the call from the government for the implementation of learning organizations, many companies are reluctant. As stated by Hughely & Mussnug (1997), where most companies are doing it just for the sake of doing it, and not being totally serious about it. This leads to employee's career ceiling, which leads to low productivity.

Employee Turnover and Intention to Leave

Employee turnover has been an important issue that spurs many negative consequences for organizations, such as tarnished image, high costs due to re-staffing and re-training (Siong, Mellor, Moore, & Firth, 2006; Sutherland, 2002), and declining productivity (Bigliardi, Petroni, & Dormio, 2005). There have been countless studies done that investigate the factors motivating employees to leave organizations voluntarily, and most of the studies relate intention to quit to job satisfaction (e.g. Park & Kim, 2009; Cohen & Golan, 2007; Siong et al., 2006; Poon, 2004; Elangovan, 2001), interpersonal relationship (Bigliardi et al., 2005; Firth, Mellor, Moore, & Loquet, 2004), organizational culture (Park & Kim, 2009; Carmeli, 2005) and workplace stress (Bhanugopan & Fish, 2006; Jaramillo, Mulki, & Locander, 2006; Siong et al., 2006; Elangovan, 2001). Intention to quit would spark in one's mind when the individual feels that the organization he/she works for does not fulfill his/her needs anymore. Much of the turnover research has specifically focused on the antecedents of employee turnover (Hom & Griffeth, 1995). Some of these antecedents include job satisfaction (Graske, 2001; Mitchell, Holtom & Lee, 2001, Mitchell, Holtom, Lee & Sabiynski, 2001), wages (Finegold, Mohrman, & Spreitzer, 2002), external job opportunities (Carson & Carson, 1997; Hom & Kinicki, 2001; Scheuermann, Finch, Lecky & Scheuermann, 1998; Snizek & Kestel, 1999; Turnley & Feldman, 1999), non-work externalities (Carson et al., 1997; Flowers & Hughes, 1973; Hom et al., 2001; Scheuermann et al., 1998; Snizek et al., 1999), organizational commitment (Boroff & Lewin, 1997; Cohen, 1993; Snizek et al., 1999; Thorsteinson, 2003; Turnley et al., 1999; Wagner, 2000), and the related factors of role stressors (Carson et al., 1997) and voice (Boroff et al., 1997; Carson et al., 1997).

Besides the aforementioned sources, employees not receiving adequate praise and recognition could be another reason for intention to leave.

Employees are not rewarded for their extra efforts, or acknowledgement for their achievements. Because management is ineffective, the issue of being undervalued is on the rise, however still there is little understood on the phenomenon. The old cliché of ‘your employees are the best asset’ is only true for certain reasons but organizations will never realize that until things turn obnoxious, because of career ceiling. Employee turnover is a phenomenon to be considered seriously. A recent researcher suggested employees leave because they are dissatisfied or being ‘cold-storage’ in their current position (Branham, 2005; Burmeister, 2004).

Value and Undervalue

Maslow (1998) says that to be satisfied is to find value and usefulness in life; when the dissatisfaction occurs, workers encounter a lack of confidence and inferiority complex. Historically, value creation in terms of tangibility was the primary investment focus of an organization. Investment in tangible assets was to create a competitive advantage, and to remain successful, but without intangible assets helping to achieve an organization’s vision, the objectives of being successful will never be achieved (Nooteboom, 2002; Nonka & Takeuchi, 1995; Adler & Kwon, 2002; Hand & Lev, 2003). During the era of industrial economy, machines and equipment were seen as value-creation drivers. Today the focus is on people, but the question of career ceiling is still in existence, even though organizations keep harping that they value employees as their assets. Fitz-enz (2000) claims that people are the value drivers today; we witness high turnover, absenteeism, high employee grievance cases being reported at labor court, and cases of employees being undervalued. Therefore, in today’s knowledge economy, the emphasis is more on intangible assets so to promote performance such as human value, structural capital, social capital and intellectual capital (Hand & Lev, 2003; Blair & Kochan, 2000).

Figure 1: Factors Contributes to Employee's Career Celling

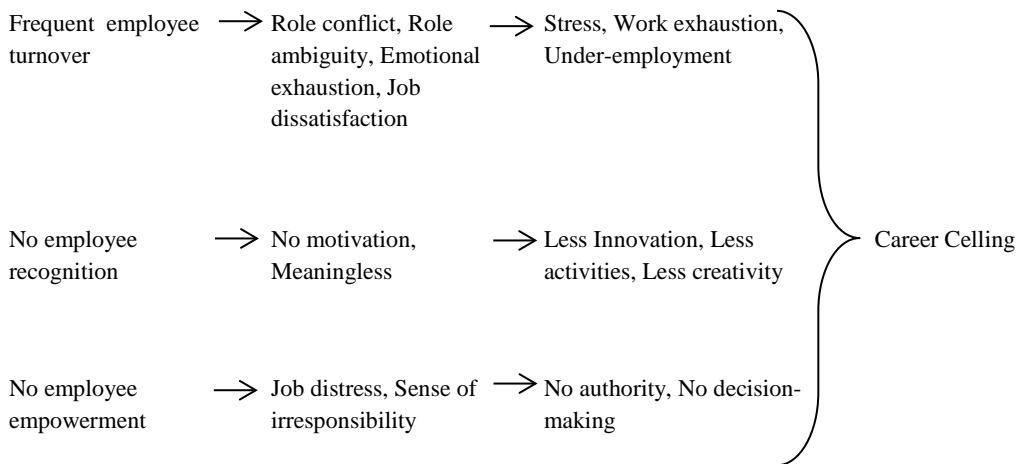


Figure 1 above explains the contributing factors of career celling. One of the major reasons that will contribute to an employee career celling is lack of recognition. This was experienced by one of the researchers of this study who worked as a senior HR manager in which during his tenure he has witnessed many employees left due to lack of recognitions. Management being very snobbish is a factor that may hurt employees and makes them feel undervalued. Employees love to receive praise and congratulations as a reward, this makes them feel proud and valued. Even the smallest praise gives employees self-confidence and boosts their morale. Hay Group Insights had conducted a related study among Asian workers in Japan, Indonesia, Singapore, South Korea, Thailand and Malaysia. The study found that found that 29 percent of Asian feels frustrated about their jobs revealed that nearly three out of four Asian employees feel frustrated with their work. They noted that, even with high motivation, does not necessarily turn them toward high performance. The factors of frustration faced by Asian employees boiled from various system management failures. They added that poor leadership styles, ineffective work structures, unproductive work environments and procedures, also contribute to that failure. Besides that, Asian workers in general lack, or are not given the empowerment with professional development by their bosses.

The study also reveals that there is no guarantee in having highly motivated employees for high performance without sufficient resources to accomplish this, as most employees desire challenging jobs. Most employees want unhelpful managers to not be in the organization, as they can be a hindrance to their achievements. Organizations planning to invest in corporate retreats, development programs, and in team-bonding, are surprised that these sessions are lukewarm and fade easily away from the employee's mind. Their survey suggested that employees look forward to corporate structures and policies that promote healthy effective work behavior instead.

Trust

One of the factors that contribute to career ceiling is when there is no trust from the employer. Career ceiling at the workplace tends to be higher in work settings where employees feel they are unappreciated, unimportant, and otherwise excluded from reasonable consideration as part of the organizational team (Shouksmith, 1994). If employees find meaning at work, or in work they do, they tend to become actively involved, enhance their contribution and feel more committed (Benner, 1984). Conversely, when employees are deeply immersed and have the real desire to get actively involved in their jobs, but unfortunately they are not given the opportunity, therefore career ceiling and alienated towards the organization might arise (Lodahl & Keyner, 1965). When employees feel that they are not important, not worthwhile, and undervalued in the existing organization, the intention of looking for another job haunts them and they decide to leave for a new workplace where they can be appreciated more (Belicki & Woolcott, 1996). Trust is very important for anyone who consider in engaging or working together with another (Porras, Collins, & Collins, 2004). In addition, Porras et al. continued to say that, to have successful collaborative teams, trust is very essential.

Incentives Impact on Employee Value

Incentives are necessary for employees, to show that the organization cares for their welfare. Nonetheless, with the continuous changes in organizational structure at the current workplace, the psychological value of the employment contract is seen as being minimized (Sullivan, 1999). In Malaysia, as reported by the Star, Saturday, September 10, 2011, "The

Government is getting ready to implement minimum wage by year-end". According to the then Human Resources Minister of Malaysia, Datuk Dr S. Subramanian, "the wage council is currently working towards setting the figures as statutory minimum wages for the various jobs, sectors and regions in the country". These figures, determined "in the best interest of the country's economy", will be unveiled by year-end, following which employers would have to observe, or face a fine of RM10,000 for each worker they fail to pay according to the new legislation. And with that, many working-class people will have good reasons to cheer, as they will likely feel a tad richer by the end of the year, with their holiday presents coming in the form of wage increases through a price floor set by the Government. Employers, on the other hand, though, will be more concerned.

By Datuk Subramaniam's own admission, the decision to legislate a minimum wage is a controversial one. Nevertheless, he says it is a necessary initiative to protect the welfare of the working class in the country, whose pay has remained depressed for years. "At present, nearly 30% of Malaysians are earning less than RM700 a month," Subramaniam says, adding that there are also some sectors in the country paying their workers a mere RM350 to RM400 a month. Just compare that with the poverty line income of the country - RM720 for the peninsula, RM970 for Sabah and RM830 for Sarawak, which are calculated for a household of four to five people, amid the rising cost of living, and one could perhaps understand why the Government is taking this step to intervene in the labour market." "In my view, labour should not be seen as merely an input to production, but as a development goal. Workers' welfare is therefore paramount in national policy decision-making, hence the desirability of a minimum wage policy," says RAM Holdings Bhd. Group Chief Economist Dr Yeah Kim Leng. According to the guidelines prescribed by the International Labour Organisation (ILO), "a minimum wage should help their families, the general level of wages in the country, the cost of living, social security benefits, and the relative living standards of other social groups"; and "economic factors, including the requirements of economic development, levels of productivity and the desirability of attaining and maintaining a high level of employment" (31 July-11 August, 1995).

Appropriateness of Qualitative Method Applied in this Study

The focal point of any research method is to employ tools that largely contribute in obtaining comprehensive insights of an issue, and developing the richness of the design, the analysis, and development of the implications and interventions (Morse & Chung, 2003). According to Greene and Caracelli (1997), various methods of framing and studying social phenomena have unveiled numerous points of understanding.

Specifically in this study, the researchers engaged with a kind qualitative study which is known as phenomenological. This approach is said to be appropriate in investigating and exploring a core problem identified with a general issue (Creswell, 2005). This method inquiry into the real meaning that individuals ascribe to social or human problems (Creswell, 2007). Its rich analytical and defined perspective as well as its strength in focusing on actual practice *in situ* cannot be denied .

My approach towards phenomenological approach is to generate knowledge that is applicable and faithful to human actions. Such knowledge becomes a prerequisite in our practices, as it is refining and able to bring forth improvements. In order to protect the knowledge, as mentioned by experienced participants, I bring forward my study outcomes to the practitioners so that employees' experiences of career ceiling at the workplace may be improved. With regard to this, the researcher used them.

Dr. Duncan, the first Medical Officer Of Health 1994 in Britain said, "The almost sole recognition given to quantitative methods has trained students inadequately, established flawed standards of practice and research, and delayed the development of essential medical knowledge.... When qualitative methods are clearly established in our research repertoire, the advance of medical knowledge will be greatly accelerated". Dr. Duncan's strong statement has deeply persuaded me to uncover the real phenomenon that causes career ceiling at work. Time and again, studies have been too quick to measure rather than to deeply understand the phenomena or the underlying issues, and this might lead them to irrelevant descriptions. However, my research is aimed at understanding the phenomenon of employees career ceiling.

Results of Thematic Analysis

All interviewed participants expressed wholeheartedly experienced career ceiling at work. All of them agreed that there are negative elements of contribution of career ceiling takes place at work. Based on their responses to several interview sessions, the researcher found that the psychological phenomenon of *career ceiling* had arisen among the participants. Thus, career ceiling is a theme that the researcher establishes in this study. The result of this thematic analysis is summarized in the Table 1 below.

<p>Career Ceiling</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-End of an employee's career-The dead end-No further career growth	<p>The career plateau, "That point where it becomes clearly evident that further job advancement is blocked for any or all of a variety of reasons..." (Kelly, 1985, p. 65) remains a phenomenon that has developed progressively common. The prevailing conviction and probability explains that, within any organisation, all personalities eventually encounter career plateau beyond once all through their employment history (Bardwick, 1986; Near, 1980). Therefore, career plateauing is an ongoing issue (Allen, Russell, Poteet & Dobbins, 1999; Burke & Mikkelsen, 2006).</p>
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Career Ceiling

Career plateau is not a new phenomenon; nevertheless it remains a distressing condition almost the frequency at which it is developing gradually common in countless organizations (Yamamoto, 2006; Lee, 2003). Numerous researchers on organizational careers' have recommended that plateau remain constantly befitting a precarious managerial and organizational concerns which requests to be accomplished appropriately to circumvent employee's dissatisfaction (Burke and Mikkelsen, 2006; Tremblay and Roger, 2004; Tremblay et al., 1995).

Career plateau is well-defined as the purpose where employee's prospect of additional ranked advancement is very scarce (Yamamoto, 2006; Lee, 2003; Tremblay and Roger, 2004). Employees who have live-through career plateau would contemplate that their employers have renounced their careers (Lee, 2003). Career ceiling I use this new term, as it explains that an

employee has come to a dead end of his/her career where this is no hope of development. This research comes as an evident that employees claim career ceiling do exists in most working environment. Promotion is being blocked, no salary increment and underpaid is experienced most of employees.

Moses says “I asked for my further promotion, am been stopped because, they need to pay me higher grade and higher salary, therefore this is the ceiling”.

The interview script confirms there is career ceiling in existences. In experiencing career ceiling, Moses will have less commitment due to depression. Based on the study of Elfering (2005), the career development obstacle including personal ambition obstacle, unfair promotion system, and limited promotion can influence individuals under pressure because they think that they are unable to move forward in their career and unfairly treated. Employees will not have a strong sentimental obligation with continuous engagement with the organization for the reason that they encounter dissatisfaction. Employees will not have extraordinary concentration of normative commitment so they would discontinue with the organization.

Maznah says ““I’ve been in this position for four years. My superior drops indications almost where I may possibly progress from at this juncture, but zero hail from of it. I believe am stuck.” Here, particularly those who endure to be loyal with the unchanged organization for an extended duration and those who fit in to the central of an organization, repeatedly attain career ceiling. To individual employed in human resources professions, they present an exceptional panache of challenge that remains unbreakable to challenge without vigorous support from the distressed individual. Nevertheless, more often than not, an employee held on a career ceiling declines to distinguish that he or she has been imprisoned by a career barrier.

Wong says: “So all this experience makes me feel that I want to quit for another job and I can see this will make the productivity of whole company also would be drop”. Wong’s experience of career ceiling comes as a shock to her and that contributed to her performance directly affected because she believed that ascending or adjacent headway remain as a benchmark to gauge her performance, nonetheless in the absence of this, she is motivated to look for other jobs. Career plateau possibly will hint work stress, less job

contentment, superior work estrangement and immense intention to resign (Burke and Mikkelsen, 2006). If related to career plateau, Nachbagauer & Riedl (2002) found that there is a significant and negative link between career plateau and job satisfaction. Unclear future planning of employees' career by organizations will lead to career ceiling.

Selvam says: "After 22 years of working. I should be given you know, some form of responsibility or some motivation. Do something about it, There a lot of thing I can contribute, but all the time I have been bypassed. We were by pass promotion the fact that promotion is impossible because there was no position created for promotion , there were no position created for self-advancement, even if it the same salary"

Selvam's lived experience, as described by Bradwick (1986) as "life plateauing" is when he realised that there will be no further development to his career life. His experiences explain that career ceiling contributes to the feeling of being undervalued to a point where an employee feels unwanted or their contribution to the organization is not being appreciated. Abdul Halim and Husna Johari (2008) claim the study of career plateauing in Malaysia is scarce. Their search for Perpun Resource on 20th April 2008 and search on 31 August 2012, fail to reveal any results even when the same keyword "career plateau" is used. This result justifies that no seriousness is shown on research focusing on career plateau, particularly in Malaysia.

Rasiyudin says "I put in long hours at work. I work with a strong sense of duty and dedication. Promotion opportunities are scant and there are often too many takers. Nowadays, the trend is to sideline well-deserving senior teachers from the school and instead promote younger people from elsewhere. These senior teachers are expected to dismiss such developments at school and take such embarrassment in their stride! What is the department's stand on this issue? Career ceiling is becoming very critical that it needs organizations to seriously explore the consequences and attend promptly and effectively to the negative implications that it has created resulting in employees feeling undervalued at work.

Career plateau is not a new phenomenon, but the increasing rate of it occurring is critically serious (Yamamoto, 2006; Lee, 2003). Scholars claim that career plateau is becoming widely critical as managerial and

organizational issues needing serious attention from management to encounter employees' disgruntlement (Burke and Mikkelsen, 2006; Tremblay and Roger, 2004; Tremblay, 1995).

Career plateau is defined as the chance of being promoted is rather low due to hierarchical process (Yamamoto, 2006; Lee, 2003; Tremblay & Roger, 2004). Employees experiencing career plateau will have the impression that their employers have forsaken them in terms of career development (Lee, 2003).

Career ceiling has the potential of influencing employees to feel undervalued or rejected as it lacks in upward continued progression. Therefore career ceiling would start to reduce performance levels. Organizations should practice upward movement in terms of career development and this should be attended by a growth of income, influence and prestige as stated by Lee (2003). Plateau employees contributes high turnover as they tend to look for greener pasture for future development. A promotion is not just a matter of status or increase in monetary rewards. It is an acknowledgment of an employee's performance and a way of saying "thank you" for a job well done. How can an employee be a catalyst for change if they are not treated fairly? Being in 'cold stored' is felt strong by employees when a simple "thank you is not said for a good job done by employer. The term "career ceiling" is highly suitable as it evidently claims that many employees reach the ceiling as compare to career plateau. When an employee reaches his/her career ceiling the employees has reached the dead end.

Summary

Researchers of phenomenology in unison agree that returning to embodied and experiential meanings should always be the central concern. Mostly phenomenology researchers' aim for original, thorny, fresh, ornate narrative of a phenomenon, as it claims to be concrete lived experiences. As Wertz (2005) puts it: "Phenomenology is a low hovering, in-dwelling, meditative philosophy that glories in the concreteness of person world relations and accords lived experience, with all its indeterminacy and ambiguity, primacy over the known" (p. 175).

Van Manen (1997) claims that the mission of phenomenological research and writing is to build viable analysis of human experience (p.41). The objective of this research is to understand and describe the phenomenon of employee's impact of career ceiling at the workplace. The intention of qualitative phenomenological research is to deeply explore, examine, and study the sensitivity and lived experiences of affected employees of career ceiling. This research brings light to revealing a stronger version of employees' experiences of career ceiling at the workplace and to "offer plausible insight about this phenomenon that brings us into more direct contact with the world" (van Manen 1997, p.9). The core of this research is to comprehend the fundamental nature of career ceiling at workplace and to relate, share to others. "Phenomenology enables researchers to examine every day human experience in close, detailed ways" (DeMarrais & Lapan, 2004, p. 56).

Using qualitative methodology by way of phenomenological research design, researcher can delve into, and discover the lived experiences of employees to appreciate better, or *beau fait* with employees who experienced career ceiling at the workplace and the consequences in combating this is the major challenge. With face to face deep interview sessions, using semi-structured open-ended questions, qualitative phenomenological research is put forward as a profound understanding of the distinctions in employees being undervalued, and helps unearth the previous and present issues.

Conclusions

The researchers is not trying to solve any problems or, issues, but instead trying to recognize the phenomenon of employees affected by career ceiling at workplace. This research is not a journey in solving any issues or problems, but an addendum in improving human resources development practice through training, which translates to the appreciation of employee value at the workplace. The researchers offer this qualitative phenomenological research as a contribution to the appreciation of employees' experiences of career ceiling at work in anticipation of this invaluable research, which will assist human resources development practitioners in implementing, executing, complying with, and carrying out their core principal role of encouraging management in incorporating employee value at their working environment. As part of the research I did

interview the Human Resource Minister and Industrial Relations Director, not that they are victims but to have them affirm that employees do experience career ceiling. This is what they say: “*Issue on undervalued employee because of career ceiling as such. I am sure it happens, although we can’t quantify it you know, we can give the figure as to how extensive it is*”. And this is what the Industrial Relations Director says: “*From my view, as the committee members they feel they were undervalued by employers on career ceiling and because of that they will fight for their rights. They think what they have got are not worth and enough as what they had contributed to the company. Sometimes, the company earned more money and the business run good but then they did not get any increment of salary, or get any additional benefits such as allowances or bonuses as discussed before*”. We recorded their statement as evidence that career ceiling exists, or the feeling of being undervalued because of career ceiling by an employee once or many times in the lifetime of an employee. Career ceiling is a kind of “virus” that can lead a human from having high spirits to what we called being in “cold storage” by an employer. This research contributes evidence of employee’s career ceiling from their lived experiences. The researcher hopes that this research, as claimed by the interview participants, will elicit new insights for employers in bringing improvements in valuing the employees as assets.

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