Assessing Generation Y Readiness To Meet Job Demand: A Case Study Of Internship Students At Large Government Invested Company

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ABSTRACT

This paper will discuss the survey that was carried out in Large Government Invested Company. Every year, the organization accepted more than 100 internship student placement ranging from various public and private higher learning institutions (HLI) in the country. Those internship students are categorized as generation y. This generation will take over current job position when the baby boomer generation reaches their retirement ages. Survey was conducted to access the readiness of internship students towards job demand. Data were collected through online survey that was developed on the Microsoft SharePoint Portal. The result of the survey will be used to create a profile of future recruitment and developing new working surrounding for generation y in the organization.

Keywords: Generation y, human resource, internship, practical, Malaysian student

I   INTRODUCTION

Most of the students from higher learning institution (HLI) are required to undergo the so called practical training or internship program at the organization. The objectivesare to develop potential talent, apply what have been taught in the classroom to the real world and also integration between university and industry.

According to organization record on internship student's application 2011-2012, the majority ages are between 21 to 25, and better known as generation y (Asianone, 2009).Generation y is those who were born between 1988 and 1998 (Geyzel, 2009). In year 2012, their ages are between 24 and 14 years old. Where are they now? For those who were born in 1998, they are at the final year in the university and undergo for internship programme at the various organizations in the country.

The organization's financial reports show that for the end year 2011, RM101,985.00 was paid for trainee allowance involving 106 internship students. Other than part of the corporate social responsibility, most organizations accepted internship students for various reasons. Shortage of manpower, taking advantages on cheap labour and not to mention of utilizing the knowledge from this generation on IT skills embedded in them.

Employers are also looking at certain qualities the student could offer to their operations. Some students are too selective on job assignments. Students with narrow mind set will face difficulties in adapting with work environment.

At the end, both parties should have a win-win situation where students gained experience with good rating on their final report and the employers benefited from trainees contributions.

Specifically, the study aimed to:
1. Accessing the readiness of the internship students if the organization is offering jobs in future.
2. Identify challenges faced by internship student during the practical duration.
3. Establish profile of generation y for future recruitment.

II   GENERATION Y

Imagine, in five years time, 70 % of our officemates are generation y. Price Water House Coopers (2009) reported, their workforce comprises of 62% of this generation. Two third are female colleagues.

As the youngest cohort entering workforce, generation y is technology saxy, born between 1978 and 1997 also known as digital natives. Today, they are workers of the future(Pharmy, 2009).

According to Geyzel (2009), generation y is the biggest skilled workers in the history. The domination of this generation in the workplace shall create new office revolution to other remaining working generation of gen x and baby boomers.

Malaysian work forces rely on our new generation to take over all the positions when current generation reaches the retirement age. The baby

boomers, generation X and here comes the generation Y.

Malaysia demografics profile for year 2012 shows that 64% of Malaysian population ranging 14 to 64 years old (IndexMundi, 2012). In 10 years time those with current age 45 will reach 55 and those with current age 14 shall be 24.10 years from now the generation y will be fulfiling the workplace. Malaysian organization must be able to revise not only the policy, working environment but also to accomodate the needs of this generation.

The organization future plan on human capital is to study and prepare human capital strategic plan to attract generation y to choose the organization as a preferred place to work. According to www.workgo.net (2012), an animated job readiness skills program is designed to introduce job readiness and employability skills needed for youth at working entry level. The program highlights the expectation from employers in three areas; work attitudes, behaviours and skills.
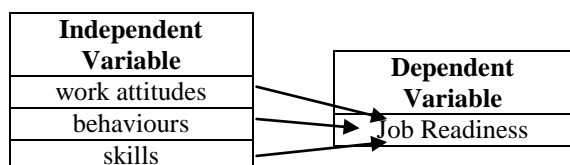
III   METHODOLOGY

Figure 1. Framework

The online questionnaire was developed on the Microsoft SharePoint Portal. There are 18 questions covering work attitudes, behaviours and skills questions. In this survey, the measurement ranged from 1-5 where 1= very low to 5=very high. Survey questions were designed based on www.workgo.net online program on job readiness. Some of the outlines are positive attitudes at work, initiatives, leadership, communications and others. Based on the outlined program, 18 questions were set up into the intranet at the survey section for the purpose of data collecting.

As a pilot project, 60 internship students were selected randomly to participate in the survey through online survey that can be accessed on the corporate intranet 1 week before the completion of internship duration. The data captured in the Microsoft SharePoint server was analysed using SPSS.

IV   RESULTS

The population of this survey is the internship students in this organization. Respondents for this pilot project were selected between internship periods of July 2011 to April 2012. Although

approximately 200 students was accepted to undergo their internship training in the stipulated timeframe, only 60 students was selected for initial project. This is due to the project only started in August 2011. Furthermore, we managed to get 60 students that completed their internship program between September 2011 till April 2012. The respondent's profiles are shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Demographic

Item		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	29	49
	Female	31	51
HLI	IPTA	47	78
IPTS		13	22
Level	Degree	28	47
	Diploma	30	50
	Certificate	2	3

N=60

From the table 1, tabulation of respondents is divided into gender from public and private HLI according to their level of study such as degree, diploma and certificate level.

Question starts by assessing respondent's attitude towards job situation and working environment. Respondents will feel the supervisory authority, pro active or passive indicator and workload pressure plus the motivational towards work responsibility.

Table 2A. Questions of work attitude

No	Question
Q1	I can work under pressure
Q2	I can work with minimum supervision
Q3	Motivation towards work responsibility

Based on table 2B, more than half of the respondents can work under pressure. Same goes to working under minimum supervision. Generation y is an active person as indicated from the percentage shown, more than 70% considered themselves as team player. Brown (1998) stressed attitudes link beliefs and values with feelings. Thus, positive work attitude leads to good result to the company's performance.

Table 2B. Percentage of respondents for work attitude

Scale (Low – High)	Q1	Q2	Q3
1	0	0	0
2	3.3	1.7	1.7
3	38.3	40	20
4	41.7	46.7	65
5	16.7	11.7	13.3

Respondent is expected to use their knowledge in college and apply to the working place. It shall expose respondents to multi-skills, creativity, simplicity and problem solving.

Table 3A. Questions on knowledge applied and skills

No	Question
Q4	I apply knowledge to work situation
Q5	I am a multi task performer

No	Question
Q6	Creativity & innovative level
Q7	Problem solving skill

The result in table 3B shows that more than 70% apply their knowledge at the workplace. Burns (1995) observes competency based-training is based on this approach. Normally, students are assigned at department that matches their field of study. This may reflect the effectiveness of the classroom approach being transferred to hands-on approach. Respondents scored very high for multi tasking, creativity and problem solving skill. Bahura (1977) suggests human behaviour occurs when they observe and interacting with others. This would also shaped respondents to become multi-tasking person, creative and be able to solve problems.

Table 3B. Percentage of respondents for knowledge and skills

Scale (Low – High)	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7
1	0	1	0	0
2	0	0	1.7	0
3	13.3	30	35	40
4	65	55	51.7	50
5	21.7	13.3	11.7	10

Adherence to rules and regulations give an impact to generation y when it comes to preferred working atmosphere. These may include meeting deadline, cooperation, adherence to normal working hour and regulations.

Table 4A. Questions on rules and regulations

No	Question
Q8	Meeting deadlines
Q9	My Cooperation with others
Q10	Adherence to normal working hours
Q11	Adherence to organization's regulations

The result of table 4B shows a scattered distribution among the respondents, especially when agreeing with adherence to meeting deadlines and working on normal working hours. However, they do not have problems when dealing with others as more than 80% has no issue on this particular section. In Q11, 25percentages of respondents gave a moderate response with organization's regulation. Although, it is only a small amount, some consideration is necessary for future research.

Table 4B.Percentage of rules and regulations

Scale (Low – High)	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11
1	1.7	0	1.7	0
2	3.3	0	1.7	3.3
3	41.7	18.3	21.7	25
4	50	61.7	38.3	58.3
5	3.3	20	16.7	13.3

Leadership factor is quite important to the organization. Future managers are identified through executive management program and also through internship programme. Leadership situational skills can be used by organization in change management program involving future workers. (Hersey, et al., 2000)

Table 5A. Questions on Leadership

No	Question
Q12	Leadership
Q13	Self Initiative / Enthusiasm
Q14	I am a team player

Result involving leadership in Q13 has an indicator of leadership issue among students. As mentioned earlier, leadership situational skills programme can be used in change management programme to address this issue.

Table 5B. Percentage of respondents for Leadership

Scale (Low – High)	Q12	Q13	Q14
1	1.7	1.7	0
2	3.3	5	1.7
3	41.7	23.3	23.3
4	45	61.7	51.7
5	8.3	8.3	23.3

Question of interpersonal and relationship is to address social interaction, communication skills and relationship with colleagues.

Communication and interpersonal skills is very important for individual as a medium to reach and be reached with other person. Holden (2002), stressed the important of effective networking that could provide access to people with special knowledge and influences. As a new worker, it is important to have a good network with senior staff. Most corporate knowledge lies within these people.

Table 6A. Question of Interpersonal relationship

No	Question
Q15	Sociability
Q16	Communication skills
Q17	Relationship with colleagues
Q18	Relationship with senior staff

From the result in table 6B, in general, they do not face difficulties to socialize, communicate with others and build rapport among colleagues and senior staff. Gorman (2011) stressed the important of interpersonal skills as fundamental of effective personal knowledge management.

Table 6B. Percentage of respondents for Interpersonal relationship

Scale (Low – High)	Q15	Q16	Q17	Q18
1	0	0	0	0
2	1.7	0	1.7	1.7
3	25	25	20	28.3
4	50	61.7	48.3	43.3
5	23.3	13.3	30	26.7

V   CONCLUSION

This study was conducted as part of knowledge creation exercises for the learning and development department of human resource division. The pilot project started with 60 participants is meant to develop profiles for generation y workers in the organization. In addition, more studies need to be conducted using other methodology such as interviews, psychometrics test, and on job training (OJT) report. According to Pemandu (2010), improving education system is part of the GTP initiatives to ensure the ascend to high income economy is successful. Thus, the foundation of continuous improvement must be played by the industry when the students are doing their internship programs. These students must be well prepared with the right work attitudes, behaviours and skills when stepping into the real working zone. From the results, generation y has the right working attitudes and be able to work under pressure. However, the endurance duration of working under pressure environment can be further investigate.

Generation y lives in the digital age. An era of information overloaded. They are able learn fast and provide inputs instantly. They are also the future leader with an approach not similar to the older generation. However, flexibility is their main concern when it comes to working environment. Normal and rigid office hours may not suit them. Born in a different era does not indicate the generation y as passive and irrelevant to be in other group of generation. Organization must be fair not only to older generation of employees but to the new comers. The fact is they are coming and the number is huge. The majority will meet the minority. The human resource division must look and study from all angles and revising current terms and conditions (T&C) is essential. Just imagine what would happen if one organization is labelled by the population y generation as unpopular and not preferred workplace for them.

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