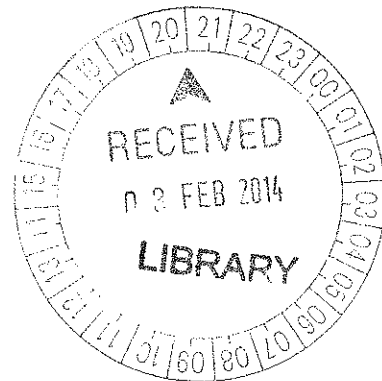


INTI INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

GENERATION Y'S WORK VALUE IN THE MALAYSIAN HEALTH CARE EQUIPMENT RETAILING INDUSTRY



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Table of Contents

Table of Contents.....	i
List of Tables.....	iv
List of Figures.....	v
Acknowledgement.....	vi
Abstract.....	viii
Chapter 1 Research background.....	1
Introduction.....	1
1.1 Overview of Malaysia retail industry.....	1
1.2 Overview of HRM in Malaysia retail industry.....	2
1.3 Malaysia healthcare equipment retailing industry.....	3
1.4 Malaysian Generation Y.....	4
1.5 Problem definition.....	5
1.6 Research questions.....	8
1.7 Research objectives.....	8
1.8 Significance of the research.....	8
1.9 Scope of the study.....	9
Summary.....	9
Chapter 2 Literature review.....	10
Introduction.....	10
2.1 Conceptualization of work value.....	10
2.2 Generation Y and work value.....	11
2.3 Work value measurements.....	12
2.31 Super's Work Values Inventory-Revised.....	14
2.32 The Minnesota Importance Questionnaire.....	14
2.33 Ronen's Taxonomy of Needs.....	14
2.4 Work value measurements of RTN.....	15
1) Time.....	16
2) Area.....	16
3) Security.....	17
4) Physical.....	17
5) Benefits.....	18
6) Co-workers.....	18
7) Manager.....	19
8) Earnings.....	19

9) Recognition.....	20
10) Advancement.....	20
11) Skills.....	21
12) Autonomy.....	21
13) Challenge.....	22
14 Training.....	22
2.5 Literature gap.....	23
2.6 Hypothesis of the study.....	23
Summary.....	25
Chapter 3: Research Methodology.....	26
Introduction.....	26
3.1 Variables identification.....	26
3.2 Research Design.....	27
3.3 Questionnaire design.....	27
3.4 Data collection.....	29
3.5 Sampling method.....	29
3.6 Data Analysis.....	30
Summary.....	30
Chapter 4 Findings and discussions.....	31
Introduction.....	31
4.1 Demographic characteristics of respondents.....	31
4.11 Demographic characteristics of fresh graduates.....	31
4.11 Demographic characteristics of existing sales workforce.....	33
4.3 Assessment of reliability.....	35
4.4 Assessment of normality.....	37
4.5 Findings.....	38
4.51 Findings of fresh graduates' work value.....	38
4.52 Findings of existing sales workforces' work value.....	40
4.53 Findings of work value differences between the fresh graduates and existing sales workforces.....	41
4.6 Results of hypothesis.....	43
4.61 Not Supported hypothesis.....	43
4.62 Supported hypothesis.....	44
4.63 Summary of results of hypothesis.....	45
4.7 Discussion.....	46
1) Earnings.....	46
2) Advancement.....	46

3) Co-workers	46
4) Recognition.....	47
5) Physical.....	47
6) Manager.....	48
7) Skills	48
8) Time.....	48
9) Autonomy.....	49
10) Training.....	50
11) Security.....	50
12) Challenge.....	50
13) Benefits.....	51
14) Area.....	51
Summary.....	51
Chapter 5 Conclusion and Recommendations	53
Introduction	53
5.1 Conclusion.....	53
5.2 Theoretical implications.....	55
5.3 Contribution to New Knowledge.....	56
5.4 Limitation of this research.....	56
5.5 Recommendation for future study.....	57
References	59
Appendix 1 The human capital challenges for organizations	65
Appendix 2 OSIM and OGAWA'S growth of revenue from FY 2009-2011	66
Appendix 3 Characteristics of Generation Y.....	67
Appendix 4 Questionnaire	68
Appendix 5: SPSS Output	70

List of Tables

Table 1 Fourteen most common Gen Y's attitude toward work and career.....	7
Table 2 comparisons of three work value measurements.....	13
Table 3 Ronen's Taxonomy of Needs: four constructs and fourteen measurements	15
Table 4 Theoretical framework.....	26
Table 5 Sections and scales used in the questionnaire	28
Table 6 Demographic characteristics of respondents (Fresh graduates).....	32
Table 7 Demographic characteristics of respondents (Existing sales workforce)	34
Table 8 Summary of factor analysis.....	36
Table 9 Nomadity of the Construct: Summary of Skewness and Kurtosis test	37
Table 10 Summary of the Malaysian fresh graduates' (Gen Y) work value measurements	38
Table 11 Summary of work value constructs and measurements of the Malaysian existing sales work forces (Gen Y) in the healthcare equipment retailing industry.....	40
Table 12 Summary of Independent Samples T Test of two work value constructs.....	41
Table 13 Summary of Independent Samples Test of Fourteen Work Value Measurements	42
Table 14 Summary of not supported hypothesis.....	43
Table 15 Summary of four supported hypothesis.....	44
Table 16 Summary of work value ranking.....	54

List of Figures

Figure 1 Asia retail sales growth by volume (% pa).....	1
Figure 2 Employment by Occupation.....	2
Figure 3: Malaysia's population in year 2000 and 2025.....	4
Figure 4 summary of result of the hypothesis.....	45

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Abstract

The world is changing. A new source of competitiveness has moved into the rival that is – PEOPLE! Researches have shown that organizations have never stopped facing various challenges from human capital and among all the challenges, recruitment and retention are the two biggest concerns (Vedior, 2008) (Appendix 1). One school of thought argued that organizations should never ignore the generational differences while managing their human resource, as they believe that there is no such thing called 'one-size-fits-all' and people vary from generation to generation (Henderson and Thompson, 2009; Cennamo and Gardner, 2008; White, 2006). Playing the major role of the workforce throughout the world, including Malaysia, Generation Y has become a hot topic and numerous researches have been done about their values at work. However, are these assumptions true and universally accepted? Are the work values remaining static within the same generation? Can one 'one-size-fits-all' be applied across Gen Y? This research aims to find out the answer!

Chapter 1 Research background

Introduction

This chapter explains the background of the research, starting with an overview of the Malaysian retail industry and its human resource issue. Discussion about generation Y (Gen Y) is discussed explained why this particular group of people was chosen. Subsequently it focuses on the Malaysian healthcare equipment retailing industry. Problem definition is also stated in this chapter which brings out the triggering points. Moreover, research questions and objectives clearly point out the main focus of this study, followed by the significance of the research. The final section of this chapter sets out the range of the study and specifies the scope under which the study is constructed.

1.1 Overview of Malaysia retail industry

As one of the most dynamic sectors in the Malaysian economy, retail has become the second largest contributor to the national GDP, contributing about US\$ 35 billion in 2009, with a projection of US\$ 58 billion in 2014 (PWC, 2009). Thus, the retail industry is considered to be a significant contributor to the growth, economy and stability of Malaysia.

The retail sector in Malaysia has experienced continuous and significant change over the last few decades. As shown in Figure 1, the PWC Report forecasts that total retail sales will grow 5%, higher than the 3.5% in 2011. A rising disposable income, high employment rate, and strong tourism industry all lead to this great growth (PWC, 2012).

Figure 1 Asia retail sales growth by volume (% pa)

Territory	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Australia	0.7	1.4	0.2	0.8	1.9	1.6	1.9	2.3
China	14.7	16.8	19.0	9.5	9.8	11.2	10.9	11.2
Hong Kong	-0.4	-2.3	8.9	4.5	2.8	2.2	2.1	3.2
India	4.1	-0.6	9.1	4.4	5.3	5.4	5.4	5.4
Indonesia	8.5	3.9	5.1	4.5	4.6	4.9	4.7	4.7
Japan	-0.5	-0.9	2.5	-0.8	1.2	0.2	0.6	0.1
Malaysia	7.7	0.7	6.1	3.5	5.0	5.3	4.5	4.4
New Zealand	-1.7	-1.3	-1.9	-1.4	0.6	2.6	2.3	3.3
Philippines	4.1	0.0	6.0	2.5	4.4	4.5	4.8	4.7
Singapore	1.2	-2.0	-3.6	1.4	2.7	4.3	5.1	4.5
South Korea	0.5	-0.2	3.9	1.3	1.8	2.3	2.3	2.9
Taiwan	0.3	-1.4	4.1	2.8	2.5	1.2	1.5	1.4
Thailand	-2.1	-0.5	6.2	3.2	5.2	5.9	5.8	5.8
Vietnam	8.9	2.9	4.7	2.2	5.8	8.4	9.8	9.9

Source: PWC (2012)

1.2 Overview of HRM in Malaysia retail industry

Human resource is the key to success in all businesses. It is especially important in the retail sector, as salespeople have great influences in the customers' purchasing decision, and the employee-customer relationship is also essential to retailing company's success (Tan and Amna, 2011). According to Nielsen (2006), seventy-five percent of customers' purchasing decisions are influenced by the service or information provided by the salespeople. This is because salespeople interacts directly with customers, the value of the product perceived by the customer depends highly on how much and how well the product information is delivered by the salespeople to the customer (Davis, 2008). In addition, an unmotivated sales workforce could lead to high absenteeism, high turnover rates, and involve high sales force supervision costs (Martin, 2005).

Figure 2 Employment by Occupation

Pekerjaan ¹ Occupation	2010							
	Suku 1		Suku 2		Suku 3		Suku 4	
	1 st Qtr (000)	(%)	2 nd Qtr (000)	(%)	3 rd Qtr (000)	(%)	4 th Qtr (000)	(%)
Penggabai Undang-undang, pegawai kanan dan pengurus <i>Legislators, senior officials and managers</i>	814.1	7.4	898.3	8.0	848.3	7.6	810.4	7.1
Profesional <i>Professionals</i>	677.4	6.1	717.3	6.4	706.4	6.3	729.9	6.4
Juruteknik dan profesional bersekutu <i>Technicians and associate professionals</i>	1,812.3	14.8	1,584.5	14.2	1,682.9	15.0	1,709.8	15.0
Pekerja perkeranian <i>Clerical workers</i>	1,129.3	10.2	1,092.9	9.8	1,183.6	10.3	1,159.0	10.2
Pekerja perkhidmatan dan pekerja kedai dan jurujual <i>Services workers and shop and market sales workers</i>	1,834.5	16.8	1,826.9	17.2	1,899.7	16.6	1,898.1	16.7

Source: Statistics (2011)

In the fourth quarter of 2010, 1.9 million people in Malaysia were employed as service, sales and shop workers. This represents 16.7 per cent of the total employed workforce in Malaysia (Statistics, 2011).

1.3 Malaysia healthcare equipment retailing industry

In Malaysia, there are handy numbers of players in the healthcare equipment retailing industry, namely OSIM, OGAWA, OTO, OMEI, GINTELL, FITNESS CONCEPT, JONHSON and TAKASIMA. The two market leaders in the healthcare equipment retailing industry – Osim and Ogawa – both showed positive growth of revenue at an average 5.5% in the past 3 years (Appendix 2). This is mainly due to increasingly fast-paced lifestyle and the rise in widespread chronic diseases, which are hard to treat with conventional allopathic therapies (Tham and Yahya, 2008). As a result, there is a shift of lifestyle from 'sick care' to 'health care' in Malaysia as people start looking for substitute therapies to maintain health and prevent sicknesses.

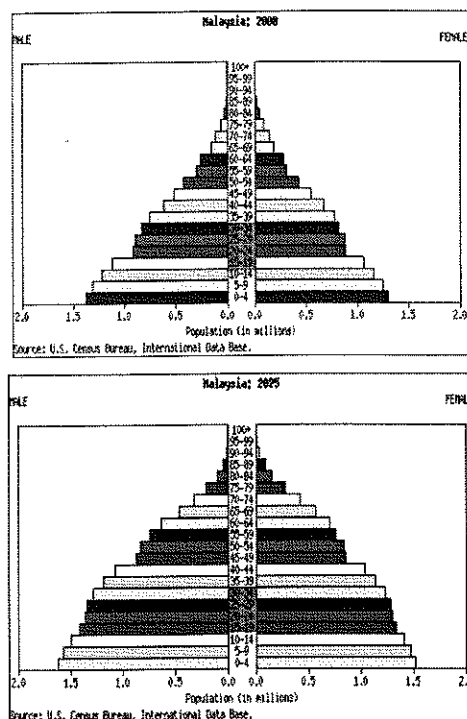
In addition, rising income and education level have resulted in the Malaysian consumer's lifestyle shifting and upgrading. Malaysian consumers have also become more prosperous, sophisticated and multicultural due to the global mass media as more and more high profile multinational retailers enter the market. As a result, they have shifted from the simple need for nourishment to concerns of leisure such as beauty, health, fitness, and lifestyle (Lim, 2010).

The Malaysian healthcare equipment retailing industry has been shown to have a growing business opportunity. Essentially, it also calls for the support of a strong human resource. Hence this study aims to explore the work value of the sales workforce within this industry.

1.4 Malaysian Generation Y

Figure 3: Malaysia's population in year 2000 and 2025

Diagram 1.2: Malaysia's population in year 2000 and 2025



Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2009)

Gen Y is the collective term for people who were born between 1980 and 2000; they are also named as: GenMe, Nexters, internet (or dot.com) generation, echo boomers, and millenials (Broadbridge, ²⁰⁰⁶2007). Numerous researches have been done on the characteristics of Gen Y, Appendix 3 provides a consolidation of Gen Y's typical characteristics (Anon, 2006; Cennamo and Gardner, 2008; Chen and Choi, 2008; Kerslake, 2005; Morton, 2002; Tan and Amna, 2011). Gen Ys have been described as passionate, confident, well-educated, socially conscious, and upbeat and as having integrity (Retail Merchandiser, 2003). They are also independent, technologically savvy, self-reliant and entrepreneurial thinkers (Martin, 2005). It is noteworthy, Gen Y adds up to 62% of the Malaysia workforce (PWC, 2009). According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2009), it is forecasted that there will be a massive growth in the amount of Gen Y entering the labour force by the year 2025 in Malaysia (Figure 3). This is also why this generation of people has been selected for this study.

1.5 Problem definition

Figure 4 New vacancies reported by occupation

Tempoh Period	Pangurusan Managers	Profesional Professionals	Juruteknik dan profesional bersekutu Technicians and associate professionals	Pekerja sokongan perkeranian Clerical support workers	Pekerja perkhidmatan, dan jualan Service and sales workers	Pekerja mahir pertanian, perhutanan dan perikanan Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers	Pekerja kemahiran dan pekerja pertukangan yang berkaltan Craft and related trades workers	Operator loji dan mesin serta pemasang Fleet and machine operators and assemblers	Pekerjaan asas Elementary occupations
2006	1,470	26,592	10,139	15,648	62,085	68,539	44,764	107,662	497,775
2007	2,018	51,712	17,825	27,068	76,557	81,371	32,913	87,750	452,067
2008	54,501	65,943	36,135	34,990	61,135	131	16,818	84,998	704,329
2009	84,118	62,839	53,942	60,738	133,083	292	18,493	170,958	1,015,890
2010	65,321	67,310	74,037	57,598	135,570	44,331	27,794	158,814	1,200,838

Source: Statistics (2011)

The Malaysia retailing industry has been facing an industry-wide labour shortage for many years (Oxford Business Group, 2012). According to American Malaysian Chamber of Commerce president Datuk Nicholas S. Zefferys (2010), 'Malaysia shows clearly a shortage of manpower in all sectors'. Evidence for this is that from 2006 to 2011, vacancies of service and sales workers in Malaysia had almost tripled from 76,557 to 200,839 (Figure 4). It does not match with the industry growth of 3.5% (PWC, 2012), indicating a manpower shortage and high turnover rate in the Malaysian retailing industry.

It is not surprising that retailing companies struggled to recruit qualified staff; research has shown it is partly due to the traditionally held negative impressions of the work as offering poor employment conditions (Hurst, 2009). In Malaysia, sales jobs are far from exciting; a majority of retailers hire part-time sales workers with very little pay, which also explains widespread problems of low morale and high turnover in the Malaysian retail sector (Tan and Amna, 2011). Sempene (2002) also mentioned that voluntary turnover has been a key challenge for Malaysian organizations and that job-hopping has turned out to be a part of the nation's culture. Although Tan and Amna (2011) claimed that 'regardless of the size, almost all organizations are facing retention challenges', such culture has made the challenge even worse.

In the previous section we have discussed Gen Y's characteristics, and those characteristics have also been found to have created many challenges and this Generation Y workforce has been widely recognized as the 'Most High-Maintenance Workforce in the History of the World' (Martin, 2005). In addition, Tulgan (2009) has been steadily conducting qualitative research on hundreds of Gen Y in the workplace since 1993. As shown in Table 2, he has found the fourteen most common Gen Y's attitude towards work and careers. Examples include: that money is not a primary motivation to them; they are very impatient and want the top job at the beginning of their career; they are too self-focused therefore few become good managers; they want their managers to do their work for them; as they are internet (or dot.com) generation, they only want to learn from the internet; and that many of them were found not to be respectful to elders . (Tulgan, 2009).

