

# Insufficient staff in an organization



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

In today's wobbly economic climate there is probably a good chance for the employees either has or currently working in an understaffed office. Working in an environment whether colleagues, or even friends, were already let go is a stressful situation on many levels. The rest of the office members need to pull together. They may be given one or two extra duties to smooth the process of completing the tasks. In this situation, the office manager needs to assess each staff member to make sure they are given appropriate tasks suitable with their abilities. Thus, this section establishes the background of the study, the problem statement, the purpose of the study, the objectives of the study, the research questions, the significance of study, the scope of study and the limitations of study.

## **1. 1 Background of Study**

Basically, working in an understaffed office can be highly stressful. The other office members need to practice the best time-management skill in order to complete other extra duties before the deadlines. Likely in this office, there are some staffs that help to complete other task which is not their responsibility. They may need to learn other skills in multiple areas in order to help complete other task. This is because they have been given new responsibilities and routine tasks that may not be in their arena or preferences. This study is mainly based on the material contained in the Pejabat Tenaga Kerja Kinabatangan databases.

## **Background of Company**

### **1. 2. 1 Introduction**

Labor Department is one of the departments under the Ministry of Human Resources Malaysia. This department is responsible directly to the MOHR in the administration and enforcement of labor laws in Sabah.

According to history, JTKS exist during the administration of British North Borneo Company in the 1880s. It is established and known as “ the Chinese protectorate” to accommodate the needs to bring in migrant workers from China to this country. The need to bring in migrant workers was transferred to the workers from Java, Indonesia, the department was known as “ the protector of Labor.”

After the Second World War, in the middle of 1947, the measures to restructure the department have been made and on January 1, 1948, this department recognize as the Department of Labor and Immigration. began in 1954, the immigration functions were transferred to the Police Department and the name was changed to the Department of Labor and Social Welfare Department until in early 1968, when the function of welfare and labor have been separated, the Labor Department in its own existence. On February 19, 2003 changed the name of the Department of Labor Department of Labor in accordance with the merger of the Employment Services Division, Labor Department with the Department of Labor.

In achieving the objectives of the department, particularly in preserving the interests of workers and employers as well as putting and maintaining employment opportunities for citizens in this country, JTKS headquartered in

Kota Kinabalu, is supported by a network of fifteen (15) Office of Labor Offices Work Kota Kinabalu, Sandakan, Tawau, Keningau, Kudat, Beaufort, Lahad Datu, Tenom, Kunak, Kota Kinabatangan, Sipitang, Kota Marudu, Semporna, Kota Belud, Ranau. To ensure the effectiveness of local services, the mobile office services are also established in Pitas, Kundasang and Kuala Penyu.

## **Departmental objectives**

Protect and advance the interests of social welfare industry.

Putting and maintaining employment opportunities for citizens.

Help increase the competitiveness of the industry to face the challenges of globalization.

Workforce and employers who are knowledgeable in labor and labor law in order to create an atmosphere conducive to the development of labor and industrial investment.

## **1. 2. 2 Vision and Mission**

### **VISION**

Prime mover in generating excellent private sector human resource management.

### **MISSION**

To develop a productive, informative, disciplined, caring industrial society and responsive towards changes in environment surrounding labor matters.

### **1. 2. 3 Functions**

In order to achieve its objectives, the department carries out two main functions as follow:

#### **Management Functions**

Training of officers and staffs

Research and Planning

#### **Operational Functions**

Enforcement of Labor Laws

Employment Services

Labor standards

Legislation

Employment of non-resident workers

Research and information

Employment-Services

### **1. 2. 4 Client's Charter**

The Sabah Labor Department which is responsible in safeguarding and maintaining employees' and employers' interest besides creating harmonious relations between them and their trade unions hereby promises to implement their commitment:-

### **Handling of Labor Complaint Case: –**

To investigate and settle every labor complaint within three (3) weeks from the date of the complaint received except for complicated cases.

### **Handling of Labor Claim Case:**

To investigate and settle every claim case within one and half (1½) month from date of the claim case received except for complicated cases or incomplete information.

#### Handling of Workmen's Compensation Claim Cases :-

##### (a) Temporary Disability Case

To investigate and settle every case within two (2) weeks from the date of notice of accident claims received accept for complicated cases or incomplete information.

##### (b) Permanent Disability Case and Fatal

To investigate and settle every case within one (1) month from the date of notice of accident claims received accept for complicated cases or incomplete information.

#### Handling of Application For Licenses To Employ Non-Resident Employee:-

To process and issue License To Employ Non-Resident Employee within two (2) weeks from the date of application received

## **Job Registration Service**

(a) To assist in the registration of job seekers and employers online in the JobsMalaysia(formerly known as JCS).

(b) To process the application for Private Employment Agencies License within a month

## **Advisory Services: –**

To serve and provide advisory services to every client.

## **PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Basically, the issue of understaffing in this office has been persisting since last year. Moreover, the purpose of this study was to determine the causes of insufficient staff at this office and analyze the effects to the organization's environment. The obvious predicament about this office is they are facing with insufficient staff. Due to the insufficient staff, the Head Office has to appoint the other staffs to do the tasks that are not in their arena. They need adequate staff to operate and complete the workload. This is to ensure the workload done smoothly and efficiently.

## **OBJECTIVES OF STUDY**

To determine the causes contribute to the insufficient staff in this office.

To analyze the effects to the organization's environment due to the problem of insufficient staff in this office.

To investigate the reasons of the refusal by appointed officers.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

This study was designed to answer the following research questions:

What are the factors contribute to the insufficient staff in this office?

What are the effects to the organization's environment due to the insufficient staff in this office?

Why there is reluctance of officers who were appointed to serve in this office?

## **SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY**

Contribution to the organization

The study of the causes of insufficient staff and the effects to the organization's environment can be a learning paradigm for the staff in this office to manage well their extra duties and responsibilities which is not in their arena and preferences. This is basically aim on the acquisition of handle the extra responsibilities and in managing the stress level for gainful employment. The project's goal is designed to help staff in this office to improve their learning skill in order to complete the tasks given to them. This goal can be achieved through cooperation by all the staff in this office by working together in completing the tasks.

Contribution to the researcher

This study was conducted in the one of government branch office which located in urban area. This project helps open the eyes and mind about the real situation happened in the small branch office. Although it seems like



small, but every staff have big responsibilities to accomplish. Throughout this study, expectation towards the management is they will develop strategic working style according to their right job description.

## **SCOPE OF STUDY**

The significant scope of this study is the staff here of any level and positions. This study focused on the situations or predicament at Pejabat Tenaga Kerja Kinabatangan.

## **LIMITATIONS OF STUDY**

The data to be utilized in this study has been gathered from these office staff members in the Pejabat Tenaga Kerja Kinabatangan. Although this study has shown the causes and effects of understaffing situation to the organization's environment, it does have its limitations. Firstly, this study has been conducted in the Pejabat Tenaga Kerja Kinabatangan, thus the databases was limited only to this office area. Moreover, due to the small number of staff in this office, the numbers of respondents involved are quite small. In addition, this study only includes the view of Head Office and few staff members in this office about the insufficient staff situations, and hence it may only provide perceptions about their view on the small office area.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **I. V D. V**

Understaffing circumstances

Refusal to accept the offer

Less qualified people applying in the public sector

Rural area

## **DEFINITION OF TERMS**

Understaffing: short-handed: inadequate in number of workers or assistants.

Extra-individual phenomena: A situation in which other person has to take responsibilities on others job or tasks.

Excessive workloads: Extra tasks assigned to or expected from a worker in a specified time period which unable to complete.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **Overview**

Within the review of literature a synthesis of current research will be presented addressing the link between the understaffing situation and the effects to the organization's environment.

According to early work by Barker and his colleagues (Barker & Wright, 1955; Barker, 1960; Barker & Gump, 1964; Barker, 1968) on Behavior Setting Theory has prompted a number of studies in the past few years on the effects of understaffing on employees' attitudes and behavior (e. g., Greenberg, 1979; Greenberg, Wang & Dossett, 1982; Oxley & Barrera, 1984). Barker's original treatise is grounded in an ecological psychology perspective that argues for the behavioral influence of extra-individual phenomena. In essence, ecological psychology dictates that in order to study environment-behavior relationships, the environment (i. e., a function of objective reality) and the behavior (i. e., a function of perceptions flowing

from one's psychological life space) must be described and measured independently. The major environmental unit of interest in this theory is what Barker refers to as the "behavior setting" (Barker, 1968; Wicker, 1973).

Barker and Gump (1964) note that in settings with fewer members than are needed, each individual is called upon to engage in a wider variety of activities, to expend greater effort on the goals and maintenance of the setting, and to take on added responsibility.

Fewer numbers of staff in this office are doing others tasks in order to help minimize the workloads. They are required to accomplish the jobs which are not specifically in their job descriptions. Job descriptions identify the tasks, duties and responsibilities of jobs and job specifications list the knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics needed to perform the job (Mathis and Jackson, 2004). However, in the situation of they really need an additional staff, they need to put into practice flexibility and cooperation in their job . Joinson (2001) also recognizes that many organizations are shifting away from the use of narrowly defined job descriptions toward more flexible ones that are not skill based, but are based on job roles, which have greater longevity and flexibility than descriptions. Pennel, (2010) " They make clear in each job description that part of the job is to do whatever is necessary to make the operation successful. This simple statement, and its constant reinforcement by other practices, transforms an ordinary job into a job with broad responsibilities" (Gittell, 2003, p. 15).

- The challenge here they been given a task which are not precisely their responsibility. They are facing with difficulties for the first time they received it. However, due to the situation that forced them to complete it, they take a grant to fulfill others responsibilities and gain new skills and knowledge at the same time. Fulmer (2005) agrees and states that best practice organizations believe the most important developmental activity is providing assignments that will help key people grow and develop their potential. More than ever, organizations are recognizing the benefits of growing leadership from within and preparing individuals to assume new responsibilities (Rollins, 2003; Golden, 2005).

Insufficient staff led to excessive workloads. In the meanwhile, the rest of staff practicing focus to motivate their selves to complete the task assigned. Specifically, performing extra-role behaviors early in one's employment affects the development of a role for that individual such that after exhibiting a high level of initial extra-role behaviors, employees may begin to perceive these behaviors to be part of their organizational role (Penner et al., 1997), leading to the development of a citizenship role identity.

In recent years we have been get ting less qualified people applying in the public sector than in the private sec tor (Roth well, Prescott, & Taylor, 1998). Employees that survive layoffs may confront unique work-life issues because they experience increased workloads due to absorbing the responsibilities of their coworkers who were laid off (Fong and Kleiner, 2004; McGinn et al., 2001; Worrall and Cooper, 2001). Armstrong (2006) found that the rigidity inherent in the concept of a job does not mesh with the realities confronted

in the workplace and that a more flexible approach is required to develop skills to respond to new demands and situations.

The time-based antecedent argument is based on the notion that there is too much to accomplish in too short a time (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985).

Binning and Barrett (1989) stated that the staffing problem and model essentially consists of defining the work to be done, identifying individual-level characteristics that are hypothesized to predict performance with respect to the work to be done and developing measurement instruments to assess the relative standing of job applicants on each of the individual-level characteristics (Cascio and Aguinis, 2008).

Similarly, according to Rousseau (2001) if an organization fails to fulfill the expected obligations as perceived by employees, then it is likely that the employees will begin to react negatively within the workplace towards the organization because they feel less satisfied with the context of the job environment.

In a nutshell, the situation of understaffing in this office needs the rest of the staff to put more effort in accomplishing the tasks they have been carrying on. They need to do anything necessary in the office to ensure successful operation, so long until new staff approach and will take over the tasks. Until then, they have to be more flexible in doing their job and practicing broad responsibilities.

## CHAPTER 3

## **RESEARCH METHOD AND DESIGN**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The objective of this study is to identify the causes of under-staffed and the effects to the organization's environment as well. This study is based on inputs from a variety of sources which includes research methods and techniques used in this study to achieve the objective including research design, and data collections.

#### **Research Design**

Research design used in this study is exploratory research. This research design fits into the whole research process for framing questions to finally analyzing and reporting data.

#### **Data Collections**

Data collections can be collected in variety of ways. In this study, the data was collected through observation, in-depth interview and questionnaire distributions. In-depth interview is appropriate for collecting data on their personal histories of working, perspectives and experiences. In addition, questionnaires were distributed to the staff with supervision and enlightenment by the researcher in order to help them to answer.