

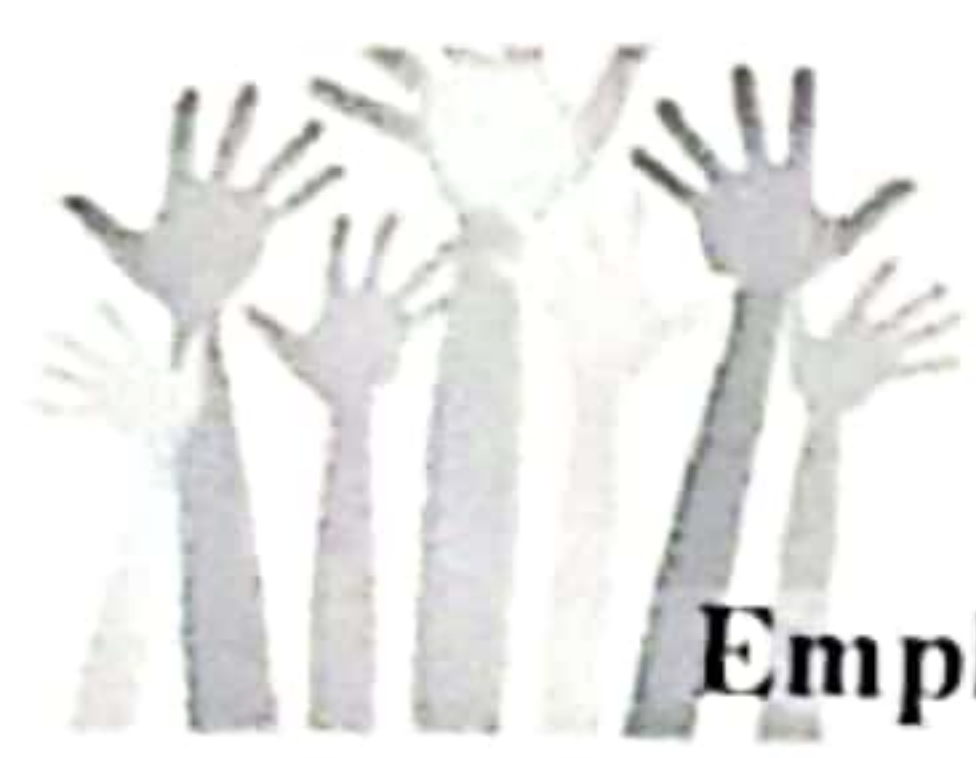
EMPLOYEE PARTICIPATION IN ASIAN WORKPLACE

New Perspectives on Employment Relations
in Malaysia and Indonesia

Edited by

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**Employee Participation In Asian Workplace: New Perspectives on
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Employee participation and involvement

Leonie Kooiker, Balakrishnan Parasuraman, Noraani Binti Mustapha, Rienk Goodijk, and E. M. Kneppers-Heijnert¹

Introduction

In today's turbulent, fast changing environment, firms need to be more flexible, adaptive and competitive (Singh, 2009; Becton & Schraeder, 2009). According to Singh (2009) involving the workforce's entire capacity to generate new ideas and ways of working, is one of the drivers of success. In research and practice employee involvement and employee participation is one of the HR practices that has been receiving much attention for a long time (Ogbeide & Harrington, 2009). Employee participation (EP) refers to the wide variety of policies, mechanisms, and practices that enable employees to take part in decision making, frequently at the level of the enterprise or workplace (Parasuraman, 2007).

In most Western countries a form of indirect EP is forced by legislation. In the Netherlands, EP is considered as 'part of the organizational culture' (Goodijk & Sorge, 2005). Trade unions play a role at the organizational and national level, and the Law on Works Councils requires companies with more than 50 employees to install a Works Council. While the trade unions are involved in collective bargaining on wages and other primary conditions as representatives of workers, the role of the Works Councils at the level of the organization is to influence the strategic decision making process (Goodijk, 2003). These works councils have a few rights which give them influence in the process of (strategic) decision making in the organization (Goodijk, 2000). Works councils have the right to receive relevant information and the right to advise on major issues concerning financial economic matters like transfers of ownership, plant closings and major investments. Works councils also have the right to approve on changes in social arrangements (e.g. pensions, working hours, wages, and

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Employees participation of 5S practices

Jolly Bin Marikan and Balakrishnan Parasuraman

Introduction

5S is an approach to organize, order, clean, standardize and continuously improve a work area. It is one of the efficiently-working tools of Lean Manufacturing. The program gets its name from five activities beginning with the letter S, which were derived from five Japanese words. The words are Seiri, Seiton, Seiso, Seiketsu, and Shitsuke, which when translated mean Sort, Set in Order, Shining, Standardize, and Sustain, respectively. Sort helps to remove all unneeded items; only what is needed stays. Set establishes locations and quantities needed for efficient operation. Shine represents cleaning through inspection. Standardize implements visual displays and controls. Sustain helps to keep the organization effort in place through training and total employee involvement.

Japan was the first country to use the 5S approach to assist a manufacturing sector organization. Implementing 5S in the organization is one of the important steps toward continuous improvement. Implementing 5S ensures continuous improvement in housekeeping and results in better safety standards and environment. To start with 5S implementation, there is a need of developing a common language that is understood by all, Therefore people in the organization can communicate with each other.

5S team organized through the establishment of environmental quality within the firm including the cleanliness and order. 5S provide a more effective approach when integrated with the management system. Support management is a necessity to provide potential benefits of the implementation of 5S (Narasimhan, 2009). Schools, homes, workplaces and communities can be improved through 5S activities (Gapp et al., 2008). Implementation of 5S brings improvements to the neatness and order and eventually generate improvements in overall productivity improvement products. Learning and participation of employees is a major benefit that

Employee participation in services industry



Kamil Salem and Balakrishnan Parasuraman

Introduction

Today's business environment is experiencing rapid changes with mounting turbulence and uncertainties. With this external circumstances lurking, it is difficult for the firm to make a reliable prediction of the future in order to craft a long term plan. Thus, firms are under great pressure to develop new strategies and to make speedy decisions to circumvent the changes. In view of the increase in the rate of change, there is a need for fast and immediate response, which necessitates broader organizational flexibility. Such scenarios have enhanced the net-worth of talented employees and their contribution to the decision-making process.

The employee participation in the firm's management leads to potential innovation, which in turn will facilitate opportunity and recognition in the organization. To reciprocate, managers provide opportunities for participation of subordinates in decision making on the basis of their merits as it has been proved by researchers to have improved firm performance (Witte, 1980; Sagie & Aycon, 2003).

The advantages of employee participation in an organization are:

- It increases employee's morale and enhances the productivity (Chang & Lorenzi, 1983);
- It provide employees the opportunity to use their intellectual which will lead to better decisions for the organization (Williamson, 2008);
- Employee participation contributes to trust and sense of control (Chang & Lorenzi, 1983);
- As a result of employee participation, resources required to monitor employee can be minimized thus reduced cost (Arthur, 1994; Spreitzes & Mishra, 1999);
- Employee participation in an organization maximizes the view points and give diversity of perspectives (Kemelgor, 2002);



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This book meets the challenge of offering a global perspective by offering a collection of key strategic employees' participation, representation, and social partnership topics in Asian region. The active participation of workers in organizations is crucially important for sustainable and long-term growth and innovation.

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