

WOMEN ADVERTISING PRACTITIONERS IN MALAYSIA: VIEWS ON CAREER SATISFACTION

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Abstract

Much has been said about gender differences in the professional field. In fact, patriarchal societies like Malaysia, is said to have a great deal of biasness favoring males still exist. It is pleasing to note that there is a profession, where gender discrimination hardly exists, and that is advertising. Moreover, advertising is an industry dominated by women in Malaysia. Somehow, women have no problem climbing up to the top. However, advertising is a fast-paced industry which highly demands countless efforts, enthusiasm and sheer perseverance in order to succeed. The research investigates the level of career satisfaction among women advertising practitioners in Malaysia, and determines the specific factors that make them stay or leave the industry. In-depth interviews via the focus group method were done with thirty respondents as to gather data which are more personalized, more in-depth, spontaneous and comprehensive. The respondents were categorized into three groups, namely, veteran, junior and advertising major women students who have had once or twice internship experiences in any advertising agencies. Results indicated that on the average, there is a relatively an average level of job satisfaction among the respondent. Veteran women advertising practitioners showed a higher level of satisfaction whereas the junior respondents generally have low level of satisfaction. Consequently, the undergraduate advertising students had also shown a relatively low level of satisfaction towards their internship experiences. Suggestions from the respondents will be able to provide guidelines for advertising agencies to handle and maintain their women staffs' work enthusiasm and satisfaction for a better organizational commitment.

PENGAMAL PENGIKLANAN WANITA DI MALAYSIA: PANDANGAN MENGENAI KEPUASAN KERJAYA

Abstrak

Dalam bidang profesional, perbezaan gender menjadi isu yang sering diperkatakan. Malah, bias kepada kaum lelaki masih wujud dalam masyarakat patriarkal seperti di Malaysia. Namun begitu, terdapat satu profesion yang hampir tidak wujud diskriminasi gender iaitu bidang pengiklanan. Di Malaysia, industri pengiklanan ini didominasi oleh kaum wanita. Wanita tiada masalah untuk mempertingkatkan kerjaya cemerlang dalam industri ini dan mereka terus bersinar dan mendominasi kerjaya ini. Walau bagaimanapun, industri pengiklanan adalah sebuah industri yang bergerak pantas dan memerlukan usaha yang tidak berpenghujung, semangat, kesungguhan serta keteguhan diri untuk berjaya. Oleh itu, tahap kepuasan bekerja dalam kalangan pengamal pengiklanan wanita wajar dikaji. Apakah faktor-faktor yang menyebabkan mereka terus kekal atau meninggalkan industri ini? Kaedah temubual fokus digunakan untuk mengumpul data terhadap tiga kategori informan iaitu pengamal veteran, pengamal muda dan pelajar wanita yang mengkhusus dalam bidang pengiklanan di institusi pengajian tinggi dan telah mengikuti satu atau dua kali latihan industri di mana-mana agensi pengiklanan di Malaysia. Hasil kajian mendapati pengamal veteran mencapai tahap kepuasan yang tinggi manakala pengamal Faktomuda dan pelajar wanita mencapai tahap kepuasan yang rendah. Cadangan-cadangan daripada informan boleh dijadikan panduan kepada agensi pengiklanan dalam usaha meningkatkan semangat dan kepuasan kerja pengamal wanita ke arah membina komitmen organisasi yang lebih baik.

Keywords : *advertising, job satisfaction, advertising practitioners, women, advertising industry*

Introduction

Although it is very gratifying to learn that this is an industry where gender hardly matters, nevertheless the advertising industry is no doubt a fast-paced industry which demands countless efforts, enthusiasm, sheer perseverance and above all, time. This poses a major problem to women, especially those who are married and having a family which requires as much attention as it is needed at work.

Such a demanding profession refrain them from balancing and sustaining a healthy lifestyle, both mentally and physically. Despite these problems, however women continue to outshine and bloom in this industry in Malaysia. This perhaps has to do with the kind of satisfaction this job is giving them.

But at another situation, it is also a fact that the turnover rate in Malaysia's advertising industry, in general, is increasing tremendously. There is a significant proportion of women advertising practitioners are not satisfied with their jobs. Staff turnover is a serious problem in Malaysia's advertising industry. According to Aquent Press Release (2006), turnover rates are highest in the fields of public relations/communications (71%), media/advertising (40%), and creative (50%). Thus, it is important to study what are the specific characteristics that make women stay or leave the industry. How satisfied are they in their working field and what do this endeavor has got to offer them in comparison to other professions?

Research problem

Advertising is a time-consuming, high pressure and a fast-paced industry. Success in this field can only be earned by hard working and sacrifices. Despite this fact, women thrive and dominate the industry. It is therefore, very interesting to know what kind of career satisfaction this profession gives the women as practitioners in the advertising industry. A person's job satisfaction can affect one's physical and mental health and it may also affect longevity and other types of behavior as well (Locke, 1976). Having said that, it would seem important to know how this group of women struggles to sustain a healthy lifestyle and maintain a balance in their family responsibility. It seems an amazing feat for these women, considering the efforts and time needed to work in advertising.

However, there are a significant proportion of women advertising practitioners who are not satisfied with their career in the profession. Job hopping is very common in the industry. Turnover rate is generally high in the profession especially among the junior practitioners. According to Jennifer Chan (interviewed on June 25, 2009) an advertising veteran of more than 20 years and currently the chief executive officer of BBDO Advertising Malaysia, advertising is very hard work and very real work, not only at her level. From her 20 years of experience in her profession, she does acknowledge that young women just could not cope with the hectic work load. Hence they leave the industry at their early age.

Advertising practitioners who held relatively high level jobs within the advertising industry may be assumed to be somewhat more satisfied with their jobs and their careers than, say, beginners who are working at lower echelons (Jugenheimer, 1978). Therefore, it is also vital to know why there are gap differences on job satisfaction between the veterans and the novices. This may also seem to be significant as these novices are the future leaders on the industry. Adding to that, high level of turnover rate among the beginners may lead to the problem of talent shortages and quality retention in the industry, especially among

women.

Thus, this research holds the goal to provide an in-depth understanding towards the women working group in the Malaysia's advertising industry. The women advertising practitioners can be considered as the significant women group who are always at the forefront of women in career, in addressing women leadership in the professional market. It aims to look into the career life of the group in terms of their satisfaction and commitment to their profession.

Research objectives

The objectives of this research are:

- To determine the level of job satisfaction among women in Malaysia's advertising industry.
- To identify specific characteristics of advertising profession that make women more satisfied or less satisfied.
- To identify variations in career satisfaction among advertising women based on several factors, among others are years in the work place, salary, age and marital status.
- To provide real information on women in advertising to their employers, so they will know how to handle and maintain their women staffs' work enthusiasm and organizational commitment better.

Literature review

Career or job satisfaction can be defined as a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or career as fulfilling or allowing the fulfillment of one's important job or career values, provided these values are compatible with one's needs (Locke, 1976). Values refer to what one desires or seeks to attain. Hence, career or job satisfaction can be considered as reflecting a person's value judgment regarding work-related rewards. Locke and Henne (1986) define career or job satisfaction as the pleasurable emotional state resulting from the achievement of one's career or job values in the work situation. As an operational definition of career or job satisfaction for the research, the researchers adopted Baron's definition (1983), that says "attributes held by employees about their work", and expands on that to say it is "the extent to which a worker is content with position, conditions, cooperation and general treatment relative to others in organizations."

Satisfaction is an individual-organization relationship and will results in commitment where individuals attach to the organization in return for certain valued rewards from the organization (Hrebiniak & Alutto, 1972; Angle & Perry, 1983). Organizational commitment is define as a global attitude that employees have toward the organization – an affective and evaluative reactions toward the organization (McCaul et. al. 1995). To conclude, if the organization is perceived

as failing to provide sufficient resources capable of satisfying the needs and goals of organizational members will result to lower job or career satisfaction, employees' commitment to the organization will likely to decrease.

Locke (1976) also stated that a person's satisfaction or dissatisfaction on work will affect his or her attitude towards life, family and self. It can affect physical health and possibly longevity as well. It may also be related to mental health and adjustment and plays causal roles in absenteeism and turnover. There are five job dimensions that represent the most important characteristics of a job about which people have affective responses. These are the work itself, pay, promotion opportunities, supervision and coworkers (Smith et. al., 1976).

Job satisfaction among women in the communication field became popular and studied in the late 70's and the 80's. Among the earliest research was done by Barret (1984) among newspaper women and followed by Selnow and Wilson (1985) among women in public relations. Perhaps the earliest study examined on job satisfaction among women in advertising was done by Pokrywczynski and Crowley (1988). It is essential to examine the study by Jugenheimer (1978) which provides the background on job and career satisfaction among advertising practitioners.

Jugenheimer (1978) study was to determine the degree of job and career satisfaction among advertising practitioners. Subjects were separated according to whether they worked for advertising agencies, advertisers or advertising media and the mail survey method was employed. The research has identified what are the characteristics that made them more or less satisfied with their job. Those respondents who were satisfied with their jobs and career used words like "challenging", "diversity", "excitement", and "creative" to describe the reasons for liking their work. Those respondents who were not satisfied with their jobs and career defended that advertising jobs are "unstable", "bureaucratic", "pressure", "frustrating", "long hours" and "hassle".

The sample selected in Jugenheimer's (1978) study was relatively more appropriate to this study as compared to Pokrywczynski and Crowley (1988) because he drew respondents directly from women employees of advertising departments. However, the respondents were all listed in one of the prestigious directories and many of the respondents held relatively high-level jobs within the advertising industry, thus may be assumed to be somewhat more satisfied with their jobs and their careers than, say, novices who are working at lower echelons or that women practitioners who have not been as successful in advertising careers, or than persons who have abandoned advertising careers.

Another salient finding by Jugenheimer (1978) was that no respondent said that they would not allow their children to work in advertising. However, of the three groups, advertising agency practitioners were the least likely (37%) to encourage their children into advertising careers, and they were also the group least likely (12%) to choose advertising career again. The result also showed that some of the respondents felt that they would neither encourage nor discour-

age their offspring from any job or career, which in part might account for the higher number of respondents who would not encourage their children to work in advertising than the number of respondents who would not choose an advertising career again for themselves.

Pokrywczynski and Crowley's (1988) study might be lacking of stability but the results do showed some points to be considered. The findings indicated that women in advertising have high level of satisfaction similar to or greater than women in general work force and women in other related communication fields. It was also depicted that younger women were more satisfied than older women working in the advertising field. Younger females have probably not experienced doors closed to career advancement as they approached the level of middle management. Pokrywczynski and Crowley (1988) explained that females may not experienced the frustrations of the job, added workloads and conflicts with personal life until at least given a number of years into their careers.

Another finding by Pokrywczynski and Crowley (1988) was that females were more satisfied with the "variety" in their work, the "friendliness of co-workers" and the chance "to do things that don't go against their conscience". Having said that, it would seem the qualities of the work itself rather than personal self-achievements provided the greatest satisfaction to the respondents. Pokrywczynski and Crowley's (1988) study showed a contrary result of Jugenheimer (1978) which showed that there was a low level of job satisfaction among women in advertising. However, bear in mind that Jugenheimer (1978) study was done 10 years before. On the other hand, females were least satisfied with their salaries and two characteristics of supervisors; the way bosses delegate work and the help bosses provide on tough problems.

Pokrywczynski and Crowley pursued another study in 1996, this time examining job satisfaction in advertising industry from a gender perspective. The study concluded that women in advertising, unlike women in the general work force, were less satisfied than man. This study identified seven dimensions of advertising job satisfaction: (i) intrinsic rewards such as opportunities for advancement, recognition and getting ideas accepted, (ii) a "stick with it" tolerance of current working conditions, (iii) affects toward the company, including pride and loyalty, (iv) daily work experiences, including relationships with supervisors, (v) relationships with co-workers, (vi) salary, and (vii) understanding of how one's work fits with those goals. These dimensions were deemed to be very useful to the advertising employers to manage their employees' job satisfaction.

Pokrywczynski and Crowley (1996) study had established an understanding of what job satisfaction is, in the advertising industry, and where it stands relative to other industries. In general, advertising practitioners are somewhat satisfied with their jobs. However, despite the fact that both males and females share many of the same sources of satisfaction, females in the advertising industry consistently expressed lower level of job satisfaction compared to males. This

study seemed parallel to Jugenheimer (1978) conveying that women advertising practitioners had a low level of satisfaction in their career. Women practitioners seem to have the least satisfaction with regard to both salary and extrinsic recognition, proven by both study.

Perhaps the latest research that can be discussed was done by Al-Ajmi (2006) to explore the effect of gender on employee perception of job satisfaction and organizational commitment in Kuwait. The findings showed that there are positive relationship between gender and job satisfaction, and gender and organizational commitment, but these relationships were not significant. Employee gender was also found to be not significant in the consequence of effect on her or his perception of job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Therefore, male and female employees in Kuwait have the same level of job satisfaction and commitment.

An article by Aljunid (2004) explored the framework of women advertising practitioners in Malaysia through interviews with three CEO of top advertising agencies in Malaysia. The advertising industry, especially in terms of client servicing tends to favor female than the male groups. This perhaps is the main reason of why numbers of women in the industry is increasing. It was also said that young advertising practitioners tend to leave the industry at their early age due to unbearable hectic work load in the industry (Aljunid, 2004).

Hypothetical statement

Based upon recent research findings, two hypothetical statements are generated for the purpose of this study:

- There is a high level of job satisfaction among the women working group working in the advertising industry.
- Women veterans in advertising are more satisfied with their job in comparison to junior advertising practitioners.

Method

The focus group interview was chosen as the methodology for the study. This qualitative research method was believed to provide at least three advantages. Firstly, it is a more personalized way to solicit response. It is able to produce more in-depth, spontaneous and comprehensive information. Finally, it is an ideal method for investigating personal, sensitive or confidential information which is unsuitable to cover with the quantitative methods.

A total of 15 women respondents from the advertising agencies were selected to participate in the study. They were then divided into three groups based on their years of experience of work force in the industry. The respondents came from the account servicing, creative and media planning and buying departments. Group A comprised of advertising practitioners (veteran) whom have at least 10 years of experience and held a relatively high position in the agency.

Group B were from women advertising practitioners whom have ventured in the profession for less than 10 years. Group C embraced of five undergraduates advertising students whom have had at least twice internship experiences in any advertising agencies. The respondents were divided into three different groups (five to each group) due to the following reasons: (i) to get information on the study from different angle and perspective, and, (ii) to test the hypothetical statements that was planned.

Purposive sampling was chosen as sample selection. This non probability sampling was selected as consequence of the researchers to have predefined groups to study. The respondents must be from the women group and have experience in the advertising industry. This allowed the researchers to reach the targeted respondents quickly. In addition, with the purposive sampling method, the researchers were likely to get the relevant opinions of our target populations.

The data collection method was aided by unstructured questions and the respondents would answer the questions with their own words without any constraint by a fixed set of possible responses. This option gave the respondents the freedom to share their inner thoughts and minds towards the intention of this study. Their responses will help to provide an in-depth understanding as to the actual working environment in the advertising industry.

The interview was conducted in English and each group has not more than a three hour session. A tape recorder was used during the interview to record the entire conversation and to capture the most candid response from the respondents. Verbatim remarks of the respondents were the only one being used for data analysis.

Findings: Background of respondents

Fifteen respondents participated in the study. The respondents were selected from advertising agencies namely, Ogilvy & Mather, Mindshare, Impact Challenger, J. Walter Thompson, BBDO, Starcom and Bates. Group A comprised of veteran women advertising practitioners whom have more than 10 years of experience working in the advertising field. Their position comprises of a Group Planning Director, a General Manager, an Account Director, a Senior Planning Manager and a Creative Director. They are the veteran advertising practitioners who are extremely passionate of their work. They have achieved numbers of advertising winning awards in their portfolio. The group session with them was great and rewarding experience. The data collected were very resourceful, inspiring and comprehensive.

Group B of respondents comprised junior women advertising practitioners with less than 10 years experience. They hold positions of a Copywriter, three Account Executives and a Strategic Planner. Unlike the veteran group, the responds of this group were rather less inspiring. Nevertheless, the respondents were able to provide good insights based on their job experience. Group C of respondents comprised on female undergraduate advertising students who had

at least twice internship experiences in advertising work. They were two from Limkokwing University of Creative Technology, two from University Tunku Abdul Rahman and one from Taylor's College. The respondents were exceptionally genuine in their responses. This was due to the fact that they are not bonded nor related with any advertising related agencies. They were being frank in their answers. Hence, their source of information was the most reliable and unobstructed.

The researchers divided the findings into three different parts as each group portrayed a relatively huge contrast in their responses.

Group A: The Veterans Group

The veterans group was first asked what spurred them to choose advertising as a career. Two of them depicted that they have a high level of interests towards communications and working in advertising helped them to pursue their long term career dream. Another two of them claimed that they venture into this career by chances. Despite their unrelated education background, they decided to give themselves a chance to venture into advertising and eventually fall in love with the nature of the work. Lastly, the only one saw potential and talent in herself in advertising. Hence, she chose advertising as a career choice.

Next, what are their perceptions towards the advertising job? All of them perceived advertising had the wrong image of being glamorous. They vented their frustrations towards society who constantly perceived advertising job as being fun and glamour. In fact, the job is hard work and a hard earn job. Among the comments, "there is no short cut to success (in this field). So if you want to commit to this career and be successful, you have to roll up your sleeves, get your hands dirty and work very hard." And, "you have to be passionate. This work demands a lot of your time, patience and perseverance. Make sure you really like the work."

They were then asked if they have experienced gender discrimination during their work. All of them disagreed that the male counterparts have had advantage over them. They agreed that advertising is an industry dominated by women. However, despite this truth, one of them pointed out that the leaders in the industry are predominantly male. But generally, not many of them have the staying power. Very few of their male counterparts have the perseverance to make it to the top. They unanimously agreed that people in advertising have become more liberal now. Status is not that important anymore. In fact, it is more on who can do the job better.

They quoted some of their experiences. In the account servicing team is dominated by women, and somehow women excel better than men in it. This is because client servicing team needs a lot of patience when dealing with clients. It also needs someone to be very meticulous and be bothered with details. Some clients can be very demanding and aggressive at times. Women somehow are calmer than men to conduct good professional relationship with the clients. In

the creative department, on the other hand, have more male staffs than female. Are males more creative than females? They collectively disagreed and one of them pointed out that the ratio of male versus female doing creative subjects has always been consistent from university level to the working field.

In terms of increment and advancement opportunities, all of them agreed that as long as that person is willing to stay on, the chances are always there. They agreed upon giving the following comment, “advancement and increment is great here. People only worried that you would not stay long. If you are willing to stay and persevere, you will definitely get up there.” One did comment, “I joined in the field only a diploma certificate. With only 7 years of service in the field, I already a senior manager.”

The respondents were also asked what attract them to stay long in their current work despite the truth that advertising is a high turnover industry. Interesting job scope and varies challenges are the main reasons which best motivate the female veteran advertising practitioners to choose advertising as their career life.

“Advertising is a fast moving industry. It will never stop growing, expanding and changing. It is never boring. Working in the field, you are dealing with new stuffs every day. One thing which differentiates advertising from other professions is that the work trains you to be versatile. You are not dealing with only one particular industry, you deal with many industries. You learn and you adopt new and different industry knowledge when you handle many different accounts and campaigns. That makes your work so interesting”, said one respondent.

“The charm of this industry is that you are able to see the creation of ads whether is it print or commercial. You are able to change human perceptions. You have the power to change mind sets and set new trends. I think it is so wonderful that you are able to learn human psychic in order to create things that will attract people. I think I will not be able to do that if I am at other professions. The campaigns that you handle can be from a hamburger brand to a non-profit recycling campaign. Your scope is so broad. You deal with different things. It is a very wide perspective,” said another respondent.

“For me, I have always quoted the same line – I have never ever experienced a dull day, but a difficult day. Today I am learning this, yesterday was something else, and tomorrow will never be the same thing again. I feel that this industry keeps me young,” commented another respondent.

The veteran respondents were also asked to rate their level of job satisfaction based on 1 to 5 rating system, with 1 being very dissatisfied and 5 being very satisfied. Generally, all of the respondents gave very high rating points to their job satisfaction (refer to table 1). The respondents gave some comments to support their answers (refer to Table 2).

When asked about specific characteristics in their work that made them less satisfied, they unanimously agreed of the following reasons: heavy workloads, long working hours and unsympathetic clients. They made comments such as, “Long working hours, heavy workloads are the most common frustrations in the

Table 1: Veterans Group Job Satisfaction Rating Points

Respondents	Rating points (1 being very dissatisfied, 5 being very satisfied)
Respondent 1	5
Respondent 2	5
Respondent 3	4
Respondent 4	4
Respondent 5	3.5
Average Rating Point	4.3

Table 2: Statements of Job Satisfaction of Veterans Group

No.	Statements of Job Satisfaction
1.	Enjoy the work all the time
2.	I have always enjoyed my work
3.	Rewarding all rounds (Physically and emotionally rewarding)
4.	Give lots of self accomplishment and satisfaction
5.	Financial rewarding (well paid for the job)
6.	Passion to the field
7.	Think positive of problems (problems are opportunities)

field and you simply cannot do anything about it. The competition is getting stiff and clients are becoming more demanding. You have no choice but to work harder to maintain in the race.”

The veteran respondents were then asked if married women advertising practitioners have struggle balancing their time between family and work. Their answers were, “It is definitely very hard. I can attest to that”, “I do not balance it very well”, “It is never easy”, “I can’t cope with the hours.” When asked how do married women balanced themselves well, the following comments were given, “ I make them understand of my work”, “I try not to work on weekends”, “I managed my time properly” and “Believe me it is not easy but it is not impossible.”

One interesting comment was made by one respondent, “That is why a lot of the women in the advertising industry are still single. Even when they have time to hang out, they hang out with people among their colleagues. Some of them were so committed to the work, they actually place career first, and relationships come later. I personally think that those who have been in the industry for long, they know exactly how they want to live their life.”

Group B: The Junior Group

Similar questions were asked during the focus group session with the junior women advertising practitioners group. Most of them joined advertising due to the interest they have on the field. They were fascinated by the job scope. They had a brief introduction about advertising in the university and its all seem so glamorous, fun and exciting. They believe that working in the field will make them grow, learn and expand. Three out of five respondents said that their perception towards advertising job have changed after they ventured into the field. Here are their comments:

“My first impression was that advertising involved a lot of creativity and quite glamorous in a way. But it turned out to be deadlines, late hours, client screaming, managers pressuring and being creative is not as easy as it looks.”

“People who do not have much experience in the field like me may perceive this job as glamorous as it is. But in this job, if you want to be successful, you have to be very passionate and you must be able to cope with the lifestyle. Be prepared to work late hours and sacrifice your time and totally commit to the work. It is not as glamour as what others see. It is pure hard work!”

“I used to think that advertising is all about creativity. You get to see new ideas, you get to design and create new things. That makes me keen to join the industry. But now that I have exposed to this field, my first impression was still there, but I have never thought that advertising are way beyond being creative and designs. Being creative is not so easy at all. I thought designing would be an enjoyable and exciting work. You are able to express yourself. However, at the end of the day, you are not designing for yourself or based on your standards. Instead, you are designing for your clients. You will find your ideas being restricted. Clients will shape your ideas. Basically, you are to design what your client wants.”

Two out of the five respondents said that their perceptions toward advertising have always been consistent before, and after they venture in the field. They gave the following remarks:

“To me, advertising was all about having fun, drinking, parties, late nights, hard work but fun. Once I ventured in, these perceptions are still there depending on how you look at the current situations. Let’s disregard the unsatisfactory towards the clients, life is still beautiful. If you are good at what you are doing, knowing the skill on how to manage your clients, the first impression of the beauty of the industry is still there.”

“I was quite sure of the job scope. I knew that it is not going to be easy. But I was not ready and good enough to cope with the stress. Do not get me wrong. I like my job. It is just that I need to take a break.”

All the respondents disagreed that they have to work harder than their male colleagues to gain the same rewards in the industry. They communally said that they have never experienced gender discrimination in their work. However, they do experience gender stereotyping in their work, like, women are better than

Table 3: Juniors Group Job Satisfaction Rating Points

Respondents	Rating points (1 being very dissatisfied, 5 being very satisfied)
Respondent 1	4
Respondent 2	3
Respondent 3	3
Respondent 4	2
Respondent 5	2
Average Rating Point	2.8

Table 4: Statements of Job Satisfaction of Juniors Group

No.	Statements of Job Satisfaction
1.	Overworked and underpaid
2.	Only the top managers make fortune
3.	Staff poaching being practice, the cream will get richer
4.	Cannot trust anyone in the field
5.	Constant pressure

men for some reasons in the field.

The respondents were then asked to rate their level of job satisfaction based on 1 to 5 point system with one being very dissatisfied and 5 being very satisfied. The points rated by the junior respondents are generally low. Only one of them gave a high point of 4 and the rest are either 3 or 2. On the average the rating of job satisfaction is slightly below average, taking the score of 3 to be constant (refer Table 3). Statements to support their rating are as follows (refer Table 4).

When the respondents were asked what specific satisfaction they can get from their job, they gave two very common answers which are, opportunities for personal growth and the excitement they can get from their work. Others are; it is the learning, the job scope make them satisfied, improve observation skills and how to manage things simultaneously, not get bored, able to be different and being outstanding from the rest, adopting new ideas, new changes and constant observing, and keep thinking of improving things.

The juniors were then asked what are the frustrations have they come across at work. Work pressures, long working hours and meeting unreasonable demands from clients are the most significant answers from them. Coming to work in the industry as a junior comer, they need to learn fast and deliver things on time. Time management and multitasking is a must as there are just so much to handle every day. They further explained that they need to handle multiple projects

at the same time. Hence they need to coordinate, research, implement, contact and also go out and meet clients.

Group C: The Advertising Students Group:

The third group of respondents comprised of undergraduate advertising students who had at least two internship experiences in advertising agencies in Malaysia. Questions were more emphasized on if their advertising internship experiences have affected their decision to venture into the field after they have graduated.

Most of the advertising student respondents were spurred to choose advertising subjects to study in their university level due to their perception towards advertising as a glamorous job. They were fascinated and curious of how does an advertisement is made behind the scene. They believed that advertising is a fun and interesting career. Other than that, they also feel that advertising allows them to have wider subject choices. They believe that the expansion of knowledge in advertising studies will give them more choices of job to apply when they have graduated from college.

They were then led to discuss on what their impression towards an advertising job was, before they had their internship. Then they were asked, if their perception change after they did their internship. All of the respondents admit that their perception has changed. However, only one of the respondents shows favorability towards advertising as a career. The rest started to think negative towards advertising as a career after their internship experience. Those who have unenthusiastic impression towards advertising career gave the following comments:

“Before I had my internship, I have no idea what an agency job would be like, and I thought it would be something really fun. I thought I will be able to go for a lot of ads shooting and designing as well. But when I join as an intern, the experience was totally diverse from my expectations. I was placed in the account servicing team. The work is so much that I could hardly have time to even a proper meal. What I have done during my internship was just simply research and paper work. It was kind of boring to me, honestly.”

“Before I went in, I was really enthusiastic about it. After I joined them, I started to doubt of my choice of courses I studied. I feel that there is no specialization in account servicing team. Anyone from any course or background can do the job. I do not feel special at all.”

“I knew advertising is hectic with a lot of work. I never expect it will be that crazy. I thought I will be brought to see a lot of clients. But I was not offered a chance. It is quite frustrating, actually.”

“I was not paid a single cent but I was expected to work until late at night. Clients were so demanding. They wanted to change stuffs at last minute. I have to work late to satisfy the client’s demands. I believe this is the kind of cost you have to pay if you are in the creative industry.”

One student who had a positive thinking and a better impression towards advertising made the following comments: “At first, I thought advertising is lots

Table 5: Advertising Students Group Job Satisfaction Rating Points

Respondents	Rating points (1 being very dissatisfied, 5 being very satisfied)
Respondent 1	3.5
Respondent 2	3
Respondent 3	3
Respondent 4	2
Respondent 5	2
Average Rating Point	2.7

Table 6: Statements of Job Satisfaction of Advertising Students Group

No.	Statement of Job Satisfaction
1.	Long working hours
2.	No specialization in advertising
3.	Heavy workloads
4.	Low proposed salary

of fun as it deals a lot with creativity. However, after my internship, the fun element is still there, but I definitely underestimate the job scope in advertising. Advertising is more than just creativity. It requires a lot of strategic thinking. You need to be street-smart and adopt good communication skills. You need to deal with a lot of people; hence you will need to be able to carry yourself well. You need to learn and act fast in order to handle the heavy workloads. The job is glamorous if you are to judge based on the job scope, but it is all about hard work. No pain no gain.”

What are the factors that they feel satisfied during their internship period? Most of them agreed that they found their colleagues (agency’s staff) are very cooperative and helpful, chance to meet new types of people from all walks of life, inspired by the agency’s staff working spirit especially the top level managers, good team work, interesting job scope and the motivations. The advertising students group showed a relatively low level of satisfaction on their internship experience. Only one respondent rated at 3.5 point. Others were at 3 and 2 (refer Table 5). Some of the reasons that supported the results are as follows (refer Table 6).

When the respondents were asked if their internship experience made them more or less keen to work in advertising, only one of them said yes. However, she is also concerned if she is able to cope with the stress of advertising work.

The rest were not eager to go back to advertising work. The main reasons given by them are long working hours and less pay. The respondents were then asked if they see advertising as their long term career, none of the respondents said yes. One of them said if, and she sees herself working in the field for a maximum of 5 years only.

Three of them believe that salary is an important factor when looking for a job. Hence, they believe that low salary will make them think twice before they venture into the field. On top of that, they believe that fresh graduates should not get too demanding on salary. In fact, they should learn to start from bottom and gain as much experience as they can. It is better to think of what can they get from the job in long term.

All of the respondents believe that long working hours and heavy workloads in advertising are the main reasons which contribute to high turnover rate in advertising. They were concerned if they are able to cope with the stress at work. That truly affects their decision to venture into the field.

Discussion and implications

This study was to determine the level of job satisfaction among the women advertising practitioners in Malaysia. The findings were then analyzed to determine if the veteran advertising practitioners have higher level of satisfaction in their job compared to the junior group. The findings gave an insight on the respondents' ideal satisfaction of the job. These concerns can be summarized as opportunities of personal growth, diversity and challenges of work, prospect of advancement and opportunities for expressing ideas. The respondents used these concerns as guidelines to determine their level of job satisfaction, and, if their jobs have helped to achieve their career goals.

The veterans group shows a relatively high level of satisfaction on their advertising job compare to the juniors and advertising students groups. When they were asked to rate their level of job satisfaction based on a 5 point system, the veterans group gave an average high rating point at 4.3. Passion and interest towards work are two main important factors which drive the veterans to stay in the industry. Most veterans stay in the industry mainly because they have already developed their interest and find themselves attached to the job. They are very passionate of their working field and being very contented on their working life. They feel very comfortable with their positions now and are willing to stay on. They find their job very rewarding at all rounds.

Due to their tremendous passion and interest on the job, the married women veterans are willing to stay on, despite the hardship to juggle between work and family. In spite of agreeing that balancing between their work and family is very difficult, the married women veterans still believe that advertising is a right career choice for women. In addition, gender discrimination does not seem like a threat to the veterans at all. The veterans felt that they are being treated equally to men in their working experience. Somehow, they do feel like they outperform

their male colleagues in some ways. On top of that, they do feel that opportunities of increment and advancement are as good as other professions. With these positive responses of the veterans group, the researchers predicted that there is relatively high level of job satisfaction among the women veterans advertising practitioners in Malaysia.

In contrast, the juniors advertising practitioners group shows a relatively low level of satisfaction in their advertising career. When they were asked to rate their level of job satisfaction based on the 5 point system, the juniors group gave a below average rating point at 2.8. Most of the junior respondents first perceived advertising as a glamorous job and were attracted to join as a career. However, their working experiences have proved their perception wrong. Generally, the junior respondents felt suffocated with tremendous pressure from the heavy workloads and long working hours. Most of them felt that they are not paid reasonably for the efforts given on their job. Similar to the veteran respondents, most of them believe that advancement and increment opportunities in advertising are great but somehow fragmented to the best few. However, the responses from the juniors group explain that fresh graduates are going to get very minimum pay when they start their first job in advertising.

They will need to work hard with immense perseverance to be able to stay long enough in the industry and enjoy the increment and advancement opportunities. Perhaps extrinsic rewards such as salary pay and promotion are two important controllable determinant of the juniors' satisfaction to their job. Due to low starting pay in the advertising industry, the junior women advertising practitioners felt the urge to constantly job hop from one agency to another in search for higher pay and better benefits.

Consequently, the advertising students group had also shown a relatively low below average level of satisfaction towards their internship experience. The advertising students group gave a relatively average point at 2.7 when they were asked to rate their level of internship satisfaction. The poor internship experiences had made them consider withdrawing from having a career in the advertising industry. Respondents do not see themselves working for more than 5 years in advertising career.

Judging from the findings, the current study's hypothetical statements were tested. Overall, the research has proven as shown in Table 7.

Overall, this study concluded that there is rather an average level of job satisfaction of women advertising practitioners in Malaysia bearing the score at 3.2 over 5. Thus, the hypothetical statement 1 is rejected. An acceptable statement based upon the findings would be as follows: There is an average level of job satisfaction among the women group working in the advertising industry. The findings were also used to test the level of accuracy to hypothetical statement 2. The study has proven that hypothetical statement 2 is accepted. Women veterans in advertising are more satisfied with their job in comparison to junior women advertising practitioners. The veterans are willing to stay longer in the industry

Table 7: Overall Total Respondents Job Satisfaction Average Rating Point

Respondents Group	Average Rating Point
Veterans Group	4.3
Juniors Group	2.8
Advertising Students Group	2.7
Total Average Rating Point	3.2

because they have developed their interest and find themselves attached to the job. They have tremendous passion to drive them to succeed in their advertising career. Those who have worked in the industry for a long period of time are convinced that they like the job and they have the mindset of not moving around a lot, as to the juniors.

Conclusion

The study bestowed that the advertising industry needs people who are passionate and enthusiastic in the field. Diligence, determination and perseverance are essential keys to be able to go far in the advertising industry. Interesting job scope, varying job challenges, passion and enthusiasm for work, opportunities for personal growth and self accomplishment are the most common satisfying characteristics which the respondents gain from their working experience. Inversely, heavy workloads, long working hours, unpredictable client demands and false perception to advertising job are the main frustrations in the advertising career.

Based upon the findings, the researchers predict that if situation remains the same, the turnover rate will remain a steadily high rate in Malaysia's advertising industry. As high turnover rate is becoming a serious threat to the growth of the advertising industry and as women is dominating the industry, something has to be done to tackle these situations. Several suggestions are to be made upon the study.

The advertising industry should open to a different remuneration structure. Women practitioners should be given the opportunity to work flexible hours. By doing so, married women advertising practitioners will be able to balance themselves between work and family, especially to juniors who are expected to have younger children that need more attention. Perhaps advertising agencies should consider hiring women advertising practitioners to work on project or freelance basis. Protection towards women staff should be enhanced to ensure their safety due to working long hours. As long working hours and heavy workloads are both major contributors to high turnover rate in the industry, advertising agencies should arm more human capitals to spread the workloads and working hours.

This research will definitely help advertising students to prepare for the actual working world of advertising. It bestows useful information to those, especially women, who are interested to venture into advertising career. They will be able to know what to expect and what this field can or cannot offer to meet their career goals and personal accomplishments. As a contribution to the field, the study will help to provide information that can be used as guidelines to the employers on tips of how to handle the employee's job satisfaction, organizational commitment and productivity effectiveness. They are the most valuable asset that advertising agencies have.

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