

# Art Making Process: Job Satisfaction, Commitment and Visual Artists' Productivity in Malaysia

Syed Alwi Syed Abu Bakar<sup>1\*</sup> Mohd Fawazie Arshad<sup>2</sup> Azian Tahir<sup>3</sup> Aznan Omar<sup>4</sup>  
Ameruddin Ahmad<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Universiti Teknologi MARA, Cawangan Perak, Kampus Seri Iskandar, 32610 Perak, MALAYSIA

<sup>2</sup> Universiti Teknologi MARA, Cawangan Perak, Kampus Seri Iskandar, 32610 Perak, MALAYSIA

<sup>3</sup> Universiti Teknologi MARA, Cawangan Perak, Kampus Seri Iskandar, 32610 Perak, MALAYSIA

<sup>4</sup> Universiti Teknologi MARA, Cawangan Perak, Kampus Seri Iskandar, 32610 Perak, MALAYSIA

<sup>5</sup> Balai Seni Negara, Jalan Temerloh, Off Jalan Tun Razak, 53200 Kuala Lumpur, MALAYSIA

\*Corresponding author. Email: [syeda214@uitm.edu.my](mailto:syeda214@uitm.edu.my)

## ABSTRACT

Producing artwork is the central activity of visual artists, which included the process in making arts as the primary source of reference for the visual arts industries. It can have an effect on the productivity, satisfaction and commitment of the artists. Human resource management is a complicated issue to be discussed in the context of visual art, in which it has to include efforts, interests and self-confidence to determine an artist's productivity. This study aims to examine the relationships between job satisfaction and commitment with visual artists' productivity and how it is important to be reflecting to the management. Due to the previous study finding it's showed that there are is a relationship between job satisfaction and productivity, however there is still lack of information about it.

**Keywords:** Job Satisfaction, Commitment, Visual Arts, Productivity.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Administration is a philosophy applied in order to retain visual artists' motivation in producing work of art. Their level of commitment, job management is a breeze, which then promotes an increase of in creative work productivity. An artist's personality and interests in making arts are vital elements in ensuring their satisfaction while working, which later help to improve their motivation and productivity. But it is not enough to maintain the artist survival in the industry, the effective management also takes an important part to increase productivity. An artist's self-discipline as well as planning and strategy need to be coordinated to safeguard their profession in the industry. A number of studies have linked job satisfaction and commitment with productivity in general, nevertheless there is very little information available on the influence of job satisfaction and commitment on productivity of visual artists can be found in the Malaysia visual art scene.

## 2. OBJECTIVE

First, This study aims to find answers for the followings:

- i. The level of job commitment of visual artists in Malaysia.
- ii. The level of job satisfaction of visual artists in Malaysia.
- iii. The relationship between job commitment and satisfaction with the productivity of visual artists in Malaysia.

In order to find the answer to the objective of this paper, the researchers have to determine the level of visual artists' job satisfaction and commitment in the process of making arts in Malaysia, and also the connection between these two factors and that contribute to the artists' productivity.

From the readings done by the researchers recently, the finding has led to the attention that there are only

few researches been conduct by others which are related with the issue of artists' commitment, job satisfaction and productivity. Due to this matter, it is very important to discuss and conduct further research on it and the findings will lead to better structural working methods for the visual artists in the Malaysian.

The terms job commitment, job satisfaction and productivity are common among people in the industry and visual artists are no exceptions to all these. Productivity is deemed subjective for visual artists and therefore it is difficult to give a specific definition of productivity in the context of visual arts.

Nevertheless, job commitment is a prerequisite in the art industry in Malaysia. Most professional visual artists are self-employed without any financial support for a patron or sponsor. These statements are based from the finding from Syed Alwi's study in his PhD thesis entitled "*Faktor-faktor yang Mempengaruhi Proses Penghasilan Karya dalam Kalangan Pengarca Muda di Malaysia*" (The influence of the environment on the process of producing works among young Malaysian sculptors) [1]. A high level of job commitment is key for successful visual artists to thrive in their careers.

Furthermore, it knows that job satisfaction is mutual among visual artists. They constantly find gratification from accomplishing their artworks. However, is it sufficient to depend solely on this kind of satisfaction for them to sustain economically in the visual arts industry or consider it as their source of income?

Thus, the objective of this paper is to determine the level of visual artists' job satisfaction and commitment in the process of making arts in Malaysia, and also the connection between these two factors and the artists' productivity.

### **3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The studies related to the job satisfaction of the Malaysian artist are still in question. More research needs to be done, and it is difficult to get the exact information to support the discussion. Therefore, the researchers have opted for several papers related to the career management for the artist. The culture of an organization includes the management, decision making, employment opportunities, problem solving, decision making, cheerfulness and productive workspace, is needed to be learn by the artist to develop relevant personality as well as to organize conducive working environment [2]. The significance of an organization is derived from the efforts of all involved [3].

It is difficult to get the exact information to support the discussion about job satisfaction, commitment and the productivity of visual artists. Therefore, the researchers have opted for several papers on career

management. In the process of making arts, artists are expected to observe the elements of management including planning, strategy and discipline. Visual artists also need to learn to develop relevant personality, as well as to organize a more conducive working environment. Culture of an organization includes management, decision-making, employment opportunities, problem solving, cheerfulness and productive workspace [2]. Significance of an organization is derived from the efforts of all involved [3]. Hence, proper research needs to be done to investigate the connection between job satisfaction, commitment and productivity of visual artists.

The purpose of this research is to obtain a clear understanding of the subject matter while adding value to the visual artist profession. Therefore the suggestions on effective practice and other related information gained from this research could be implement by visual artists to improve their job satisfaction, commitment and eventually their productivity. For sculptors, it is inadequate to determine their productivity by only looking at the increased or decreased costs, or, the increased or decreased sculptures created by them [1]. This is because creative artworks produced by artists are made based on demands and requests, they are not mass-produced .

### **4. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

It is hoped that the study gives many benefits as a part of continuous attempts to provide opportunities and rooms for various latest initiatives to empower the industry of visual arts in Malaysia. It is also expected that this study can be used as a helpful reference in the strategic management of organizations, holistically and realistically especially to the Malaysian artist. Indirectly it leads to an increase in income and ensures continuous job opportunities in the visual arts industry.

### **5. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Figures Making arts is the most significant competence of visual artists as this determines their paths and goals to accomplish all their ambitions. Once they venture into this field, instinctively they make a vow to contribute continuously to pursue all their dreams. Because of this reason, it is mandatory for visual artists to dedicate their full commitment. This will help to improve their skills and boost their productivity. Job satisfaction and commitment are two facilitating factors in achieving goals. Both attributes are also incorporated in the quality of work life applied by industries [4]. Expertise or competency is the quality of service offered in regards to the amount of input [5]. Thus, visual artists must be prepared to adapt their personality traits with their job, as this will contribute to

their job satisfaction, which eventually strengthens their commitment to producing more artworks.

Compatibility between personal traits and tasks, as well as the type of job, is key to guarantee job satisfaction, improve work motivation and inflate productivity [6]. Individuals' satisfaction, which is gained from doing their job, is linked to their motivation and productivity [7].

Planning is one of the main factors in managing issues and challenges in the arts industry. Poor planning particularly in job commitment and strategic planning will result in inefficient or ineffective visual artists and the organization. Commitment and job satisfaction are part of the psychological aspects that affect an increase in productivity, and they are essential to be observed [8]. In fact, these aspects are also connected to the artists' efforts and commitment towards their job. Artists are supposed to give undivided attention to increase their job satisfaction and commitment in producing more arts. Besides that, positive relationships between the artists and their staff (if any) need to be strengthened as this helps to increase staff' productivity. Most of the problems are caused by people, therefore it is central for an organization to understand people's behavior and attitudes [9].

Productivity does not depend solely on machines but there are other factors including commitment and job satisfaction. This plays an important role to determine productivity. The connection between these two factors will result in a quality and positive work culture, which will bring benefits to visual artists as it will eventually escalate their productivity.

## **6. METHODOLOGY**

Several studies have been conducted to obtain the information about the connection between job satisfaction, commitment and productivity in an organization in general. But there is a lack of studies or research related to the visual arts industry and the need to run the research is demanding. For these studies the data for this current research are gathered in qualitative method, which contains many different versions of sources to obtain the depth of the study for the researcher to be able to identify the suitability process of the research.

## **7. DISCUSSION**

Job satisfaction, commitment, and productivity represent the key components in determining a visual artist's career path. Job satisfaction refers to the resulting output from artistic production. Meanwhile, commitment is the sacrifice made by an artist to perform tasks or produce visual arts. The combination of both

job satisfaction and commitment will consistently generate outputs, or also known as productivity.

### **7.1. Job Satisfaction**

A study related with the job satisfaction among professional visual artist has been carried out through this study. This study revolves around job satisfaction among visual artists from various disciplines, including sculpting, painting, printmaking and drawing. As a result of interviews conducted with 20 artists, researchers found that most visual artists are satisfied with what they were doing. These are evident when their skills were positively recognized by society. With the recognition, some visual artists were also invited to become consultants, lecturers and offer to organise exhibitions both local and international. And this activity will help the artist to be known on a different level to the job satisfactory and career.

Job satisfaction is an important element for visual artists, it becomes a motivation to ensure their lasting career as visual artists. Work conditions that are supported by interests and enthusiasm will produce creative works that lead to the development of positive work culture. A higher degree of artists' commitment will help increase their motivation to continue creating high-quality artworks and can also create a sense of satisfaction in what they are doing. This job satisfaction is actually an important element in increasing the artists' spirits and work culture. [3].

In order to reach a high level of satisfaction, efforts and motivation, rewards or wages also play a key role as it functions as a good motivator for an artist to keep working. A reward is a catalyst to encourage an individual to continue working more vigorously and positively [4].

However, there are few big obstacles for the artist to maintains their satisfactory for producing artworks which are the work structuring and planning. These issues can be solved by experience and year of involvement in the field of arts, and that is the artists' main advantages, as stated, [noted that employee's work experience has a direct relationship with the quality of services they offer, employee's stability, seriousness in work attitude, reduced negative work behavior like absenteeism and nature of judgment which may lead to the improved performance of an organization] Irda (2011) [10].

A quality work environment with appropriate rewards can help increase the level of job satisfaction and at the same time improve job commitment. This generates higher productivity and leads to the achievement of the desired goals. These are some of the advantages that can be gained by an organization that practices great work quality and job planning in their field [4].

## 7.2. Commitment

Visual artists should have a high degree of commitment in producing their artworks, and if they ignore it, this action will hamper the accomplishment of their visions or dreams. Commitment can also promote a sense of responsibility amongst visual artists up to the point that they are willing to work with full dedication without being calculative of their energy, time and money. Artists must create an effective workspace that can help foster their commitment in making arts. An individual's commitment towards the discipline for creating artworks is also indirectly influenced by their comfortability during the process of producing the artwork [11]. Precise plans and well-defined goals are also needed so that artists can decide what they want to achieve and how to make it a reality. Commitment is a stage in which workers believe and accept the goals and aspirations of an organisation [12]. Therefore, the higher commitment and job satisfaction that receive by the artist will enhance the better process and production of the visual arts. [8]

Moreover when the artist in the process of producing an artwork they will lean to the aspect of loyalty. Commitment can be interpreted as having both aspects of loyalty and involvement [3]. This is based on deep interests and occurs when something is suitable with individuals' personal lifestyle and likes. Loyalty and involvement also help in building visual artists' sense of commitment that can contribute to their job satisfaction and productivity.

Commitment is also related to individuals' desire to continue working or performing a job. Visual artists' commitment involves the planning of their goals and values, and the readiness to contribute their efforts in producing high quality works of art and the desire to continue producing a quality artworks [13]. Commitment in an organization is also much needed from employees or workers, where it becomes the deciding factor in the effectiveness and success of an individual especially a fine artist [14]. Therefore, in order to determine and achieve personal goals as an artist, the aspects of loyalty, involvement and effort are most needed. These can help increase the productivity and effectiveness of visual artists in the production of their creative works.

In the world of art, a commitment is a promise, whether it is a promise towards themselves or towards others or client. It is not just verbally expressed; it must also be reflected in visual artists' decisions as commitment represents a total devotion that comes from deep within themselves. Therefore, it is important that the artist be more responsible towards what they are doing compared to the artist who does not commit to their work [15]. The effectiveness and success of visual artists or individuals are determined by their expression

of commitment. Commonly, success comes to those who work hard and are always ready to do extra work compared to the ones who are less committed in doing their work. The results will lead to better job satisfaction for the artists and in due course, it will increase their productivity in producing creative works.

## 7.3. Productivity

A Malaysian aspiration to become a developed country by the year of 2025 has become a key factor for the visual artist to embrace as a contiguous increase in productivity. This is a part of Wawasan 2025 initiatives given by the government.

The definition of productivity as stated in the Public Administration Progress Circular No. 6 is a concept that shows a relationship between the input that is used and the output that is produced by the industry [16]. The issue is how to measure the input and output in the field of arts, in which the products are not mass-produced in bulk at a constant rate. Most artworks are produced due to requests or the artist's own preference. Productivity in the field of art is valued based on efficiency and effectiveness. Efficiency is the level of quality of service offered from the determined amount of input, while effectiveness is the level of clients' satisfaction based on the service [1].

Looking into fine art industries, productivity to fulfill demands of their potential buyer is important. In order to fulfill the demands, productivity plays a big role though there are no limitations to the demands. As know the visual artists' productivity can be measured based on their efficiency in creating the artwork and this is link to the perspective of the artist ability to manage, commit and satisfy toward creating an artwork.

In order to make the productivity increases the visual artists must plan and manage their collection of raw materials, the process of making the artwork systematic and this will bring to the successful for producing and the sale of the artwork. Based on the observations and interviews conducted by the researchers, the study found that only 4 out of 20 artists are successful in ensuring their productivity, the rest failed in managing their productivity. For this, efficiency and effectiveness play a major part in determining the extent to which visual artist can survive in the industry.

Productivity tends to give more focus on an artwork production activities or decisions compared to the rewards gained for it. This explains the importance of good management in and arrangement to produce greater artwork based on the productivity and effectiveness of the artist. Therefore, a comprehensive and thorough management plan can help visual artists to boost their productivity. Due to this it explains why visual artists need to be also seriously involved themselves

in the management system of visual arts productions. When visual artists are highly involved in management matters, a sense of seriousness will slowly develop towards the process of creating the artworks [17].

In order to do so, to enhance productivity among artist, training and exposure to both orders are required. It is undeniable that visual artists with adequate training and continuous exposure are able to upgrade their productivity compared to those who have insufficient training and exposure. Formal education alone is not enough to produce skillful human capital but it needs to be supported with practical programs to train potential and skillful worker as a supplement to their prior knowledge [18].

This statement consistent with the Industrial Revolution 4.0 driven by the Malaysian government, it stated that training is often inadequate as technology too plays a central part in elevating visual artists to a higher level of standard. The diversity of knowledge is an advantage for visual artists as they usually work with various materials and techniques.

Furthermore, besides the knowledge and creativity held by the artist, they are also required to polish their artwork presentation and style in order to gain the public trust to the quality and uniqueness of their artwork. This will helps to heighten their productivity and triggers a healthy competition among visual artist; each of them has their own specialty in creating their artwork. With the trust this will indirectly lead to the value of their artworks and automatically increase their income and motivation to produce more artworks [4]. This indirectly leads to an increase in motivation for the visual artist to be more productive and also will reflect their income.

## 8. CONCLUSION

According to previous studies, factors influencing visual artists' commitment and job satisfaction also have an effect on their level of productivity. A higher degree of commitment leads to higher productivity of the visual artists. Commitment and job satisfaction are both closely related to the psychological aspect of improving the visual artists' productivity. It is vital for visual artists to focus on these two aspects to ensure the survival of their interest and to be able to become an industry that could compete with other bigger industries, such as those in certain developed countries. Visual artists must be committed to their work in order for them to be successful, always ready to do their work excellently to reach the expectations of local art enthusiasts. Because of this, this study finds that productivity is indeed influenced by the relationship between commitment and job satisfaction. Therefore, in the process of creating arts, visual artists must observe their own level of commitment and satisfaction to ensure that both are always top-notch.

## AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

SASAB came out with the idea of study, analysed the data and wrote the paper. MFA helped revise the paper, AT, AO & AA helped provided information; and AT provided intellectual support. All authors contributed to paper revisions and approved the final version of the paper.

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