

FACTORS ASSOCIATING WITH EMPLOYEES' JOB PERFORMANCE

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ABSTRACT

FACTORS ASSOCIATING WITH EMPLOYEES' JOB PERFORMANCE

Chong Siew Jung

This study aims to identify the factors associating with employees' job performance in public sector. The study was conducted in Jabatan Penyiaran Sarawak, Majlis Bandaraya Kuching Selatan, Kumpulan Wang Simpanan Pekerja dan Jabatan Kesihatan Negeri Sarawak. Quantitative method was used and five Likert-scale questionnaires were distributed to the respondents. The respondents used in this study are 200 people. This study was conducted to determine the relationship between selected factors which consists of management control, organizational communication, employee involvement and goal setting. Demographic characteristic such as gender of respondents is reviewed to determine its significant difference with their job performance by using Independent Samples T-test. In addition, the relationship between these factors and their job performance were tested by using Pearson Correlation Coefficient. Multiple Linear Regression was used to determine the dominant factor that are associated with employees' job performance. The results found that there was no difference in job performance between gender. All the factors studied showed that there was significant relationship between management control, organizational communication, employee involvement and goal setting with employees' job performance. Goal setting was the dominant factor that associating with employees' job performance. Based on these findings, several recommendations were presented to the organization and future researchers. The organization should utilize the information gathered to develop new strategies in organizational functioning to increase and improve their employees' job performance. Future researchers are also encouraged to conduct similar research through qualitative method, increased sample size and explore other factors that associate with employees' job performance.

ABSTRAK

FAKTOR-FAKTOR YANG BERKAITAN DENGAN PRESTASI KERJA PEKERJA

Chong Siew Jung

Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengenalpasti faktor-faktor yang berkaitan dengan prestasi kerja pekerja dalam sektor awam. Lokasi kajian adalah di Jabatan Penyiaran Sarawak, Majlis Bandaraya Kuching Selatan, Kumpulan Wang Simpanan Pekerja dan Jabatan Kesihatan Negeri Sarawak. Kaedah Kuantitatif telah digunakan dan borang soalan selidik berskala 5 Likert diedarkan kepada responden-responden. Jumlah responden yang digunakan dalam kajian ini seramai 200 orang. Kajian ini dijalankan untuk menguji perkaitan di antara faktor-faktor yang terpilih iaitu dari segi kawalan pengurusan, komunikasi organisasi, penglibatan pekerja dan penetapan matlamat. Ciri demografi responden seperti jantina dikaji dengan menggunakan Ujian T-test Sampel Bebas untuk mengenalpasti perbezaan prestasi kerja antara pekerja lelaki dengan pekerja perempuan. Selain itu, perkaitan antara faktor-faktor dengan prestasi kerja mereka diuji dengan menggunakan Analisis Korelasi Pearson. Multiple Regrasi analisis juga digunakan untuk mengenal pasti factor dominan yang berkaitan dengan prestasi kerja pekerja. Keputusan analisis didapati bahawa tiada perbezaan dalam prestasi kerja antara lelaki dan perempuan. Semua faktor yang dikaji telah menunjukkan terdapat hubungan signifikan antara kawalan pengurusan, komunikasi organisasi, penglibatan pekerja dan penetapan matlamat dengan prestasi kerja. Pentapan matlamat ialah faktor dominan yang berkaitan dengan prestasi kerja pekerja. Berdasarkan dapatan ini, beberapa cadangan telah dikemukakan kepada pihak organisasi dan para pengkaji pada masa akan datang. Pihak organisasi haruslah menggunakan informasi yang telah dikutip untuk membuat strategi-strategi baru dalam organisasi untuk menambahbaik prestasi kerja pekerja. Para pengkaji pada masa akan datang pula digalakkan supaya menggunakan kaedah kualitatif dalam kajian yang serupa, menambahkan saiz sampel dan mencari faktor-faktor lain yang berkaitan dengan prestasi kerja pekerja.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

In this chapter, the background of study and problem statement is discussed. This is followed by objectives, research hypothesis and conceptual framework of the study. Then, significance of study as well as the limitation and scope of the study are discussed. Finally, there is the definition of terms, which the conceptual definitions and operational definitions of the independent variables and dependent variable are discussed.

1.1 Background of the study

Since there are advanced technologies in this globalization era, competitiveness become the most important element that determine the organizational performance and effectiveness. This is because there are high demands for skilled human capital to ensure work and economic performance. Especially in public sector in Malaysia, excellent employees are needed in ensuring the effective functioning of the government operations. According to Noore Alam Siddiquee and Mohd. Zin Mohamed (2007, p.284), “issues in governance have, of late, become matters of growing concern in developed as well as developing countries”. Therefore, the employees of public sectors should perform well in their job in order to ensure the development of our country. For this research, it is conducted in several government agencies, which is located at Kuching, Sarawak in order to determine the factors associating with employees’ job performance in public sector in Kuching.

Due to today’s job mobility, insufficient of talented employees make the organization more difficult in attracting and retaining the talents. In order to solve the problem, many organizations have concentrated on their performance management on their existing employees. An effective performance management can help the organizations’ effort to enhancing their employees’ job performance. London and Smither (2002) had mentioned the importance of performance management in enhancing the employees’ job performance. Therefore, in this study, the purpose is to investigate the factors that associating with employees’ job performance. This study will study on the relationship between management control, organizational communication, employee involvement and goal setting with employees’ job performance.

According to Ojo (2009), performance is the degree where a person does on his assignment or task. It refers to how well a person can do in his job. Performance management is an approach that used by the organization, which includes activities to

manage the employees' job performance. The employees' job performance is improved by involving them into various program or course in order for them to develop and upgrade their skills, abilities and knowledge. Besides, organizational initiatives are also needed to ensure the high job performance from employees.

In government agencies, public sector employees have to perform well and it should be monitored and evaluated from time to time by their upper management. According to Armstrong (2006, p. 8), "without a method to provide formal feedback on job performance, the organization's level of productivity may remain status quo". Therefore, setting goal is very important in measuring the employees' job performance as it provides a guideline for evaluation. In order to have good job performance, a clear goal or job expectation must be acknowledged to all employee level. It helps the employees to have a guideline or direction to move on and develop planned effort to reach for it. Besides, by the way the employees work to achieve the goal or expectation, their performance has to be monitored continually by giving feedbacks such as advices or recommendations. It helps the employees to identify their mistakes and correct it immediately. By providing feedback, the job performance can be improved and thus increase the organizational productivity. The outstanding job performance would be one of the significant factors that contribute to the success of the organization as it affects the whole organizational productivity especially in public sector. A good job performance helps the public sector to cope with challenges faced in ensuring the community's welfare.

Apart from that, the organization has to develop capacities for the employees to perform. For example, the organization should develop available job or task, which can provide the opportunities for the employees to show their competency and talent. Lastly, the employees' performance has to be rated periodically. It aims to review and evaluate the employees' performance in order to assess the employee potential. For the employees who perform well in the organization, they should be rewarded.

Consequently, they will be motivated and put more effort in their job to improve their job performance.

According to Light (2004), due to organizational changes that happened in today work environment, interaction between management and employees affects many aspect of organizational environment. Thus, effective upward and downward communication between management level and employees are needed. As effective organizational communication is developed, employees' job performance can be improved and increased. This will help in improving and smoothening the organizational operations and working process. In public sector, the upper management and employees have to work together and communicate with each other in order to ensure the improvement of their job performance. This enables the employees in public sector to gain better understanding about their new roles and responsibilities in order to help their government agencies to gain sustained competitive advantage.

Today, there is a trend of organization transforming into decentralization structure and this does effect on the management control of management level. The decentralized structure had reduced the level of management control. Management control refers to control of management, which is one of the important human resource functions to control over human capital. However, appropriate management control is needed in order for the management level to control and coordinate the employees' work behavior. In public sector of Malaysia, it is believed that the management control is high especially at higher level as they have to make important decisions that will strongly affect the whole Malaysia's nation development and progression. As the employees' performance standard and work behavior are under supervision and control by upper management level, employees can perform better in a more effective and efficient way.

Due to rapid organizational changes, matrix structure of organization is needed in order for the organization to better adapt to the external and internal

environment constraints. According to Kaufman (2003), an effective employee involvement program should allow the employees to better sharing their knowledge and information within the organization. Employees should involve and participate themselves in decision-making process in the organization. According to Riordan, Vandenberg and Richardson (2005), employee involvement helps organizations to increase the productivity, improve work processing and employees' job performance. Different perspectives from different backgrounds of the employees may provide various opinions and views. This can help in knowledge sharing and help to increase and improve their knowledge and skills. Consequently, the employees are able to perform well and outstandingly. Besides, active involvement and participation from employees are needed in assisting the organizational development.

To ensure employees can perform well in their job, goal setting is one of the factors that strongly affect it. According to Cameron and Duff (2007), Locke stated that goal setting is a behavior modification approach that direct people to achieve their goals. In the past research done by Locke, the results show that specific and difficult goals, appropriate feedbacks and a sense of goal commitment lead to higher performance. Therefore, goal setting is important to help the employees to improve and increase their job performance in order to achieve the organizational performance and effectiveness.

1.2 Statements of the Problem

There are rapid changes in this globalization era, especially in technology field. According to Mohamad Sattar Rasul, Mohd Yusof Ismail, Napsiah Ismail, Muhammad Rashid Rajuddin and Rose Amnah Abd Rauf (2010), technological changes affect on the demand for talented workers and other skills, which can help to improve the job performance. Besides, the technological changes had resulting in uncertain economic conditions. Many employees cannot cope with the rapid technological changes and results in low job performance. Therefore, improvement

and upgrading of employees' job performance is very important and it could be a determinant for organizational successfulness. They have to become more marketable in order to face the challenges in rapid changed business environment. This also can help the organization to gain competitive advantage and thus able to compete with other competitors.

Today's, employee employability is one of the emerged issues that should be paid attention in the workplace. According to Nurita Juhdi, Fatimah Pa'Wan, Noor Akmar Othman and Hanifah Moxsin (2010, p.1), "employers are looking for people who are capable of performing various tasks and roles" whereas "employees are searching for opportunities for self-development that can expand their horizons." According to Latisha Asmaak Shafie and Surina Nayan (2010), globalization and technological development had forced employers to look for employable employees who possess basic academic skills, higher order thinking skills and good personal qualities. According to Fuller, Hester, and Cox (2010), proactive people always look for opportunities to upgrade themselves. Thus, this kind of people can perform and learn better than others in this dynamic economic environment. However, for people who cannot perform outstandingly, they will be eliminated. In order to increase the number of employable and proactive employees who can perform well, management level should exert appropriate control on the employees, for example, to control their human capital input through staffing, recruitment and selection process. As employees are capable in performing well in various skills, they are employable.

In every organization, stress is existing among the employees. According to Subha Imtiaz and Shakil Ahmad (2009, p.1), "stress is a universal element experienced by employees around the globe". It is affecting employees' job performance. According to Ussahawanitchakit and Sumritsakun (2008), organizational changes can lead to high stress in individual and lower employees' job performance. According to Franch and Caplan (1972); Margolis et al (1974) ; Russek and Zohman (1958), "eleven forces are used as antecedents of stress by researchers

(Overload, Role vagueness, Role conflict, Responsibility for people, Participation, Lack of feedback, Keeping up with quick technological change, Being in an innovative role, Career growth, Organizational structure and environment, and Recent episodic events.” (as cited in Usman Bashir & Muhammad Ismail Ramay, 2010, p.123). According to Rubina Kazmi, Shehla Amjad and Delawar Khan (2008), stress affect organizational efficiency, result in high turnover rate and absenteeism, decreased job satisfaction and job performance. Therefore, employees who cannot cope with stress will not perform. However, stress can be coped if the employees are able to plan their work schedule through step-by-step procedures and apply goal setting theory into it. Employees could avoid themselves of go into stressed conditions, as they have clear direction to move forward their desired goals.

Workplace isolation is a critical issue that could affect the employees’ performance and thus impact on organizational performance and effectiveness. According to Kamasak (2010, p.27), “perceived workplace isolation may result negative emotional feelings in employees, and this can be related to low job performance”. Employees who felt isolated cannot perform well in their job due to failure in knowledge sharing and social support from colleagues and management level. This will result in affected emotion and thus lower their productivity as well as influence their job performance. In this context, effective organizational communication should be developed in order to solve the problem of workplace isolation. By communication, employees can gain social support, work-related information and informal learning.

Due to uncertainty in the labor market, most organizations tend to hire contingent workers and this had created an atmosphere of job insecurity among permanent employees. According to Staufenbiel and König (2010, p.111), “job insecurity led to reduced work attitudes and this led to a reduction in performance and an increase in absenteeism and turnover intentions”. However, some of the employees might reduce their absenteeism and improve their job performance as well

as to maintain their job status. Job security acts as a driven force that helps to trigger up the employees' desires to work harder directly or indirectly. In order for the employees to be more secured in their jobs, they should involve themselves actively in organizational work process. Employee involvement and participation in organization is important because it could help the employees to develop their decision-making skills and thus can become significant people in developing and implementing business strategies.

In fact, management control, organizational communication, employee involvement and goal setting had positive impact on employees' job performance. Inappropriate management control, lack of effective organizational communication and employee involvement as well as ineffective goal setting will affect how the employees do their work and how they could perform in their job. However, there is lack of such study in Malaysia but most of such studies are done in other countries (Wimalasiri & Kouzmin, 2000; Aamir Ali Chughtai, 2008; Chen, Silverthorne & Hung, 2006; Diefendorff, Brown, Kamin & Lord, 2002).

1.3 Research Objectives

1.3.1 General Objective

The objective of this research is to find out relationship between factors associating with employees' job performance.

1.3.2 Specific objectives

There are six specific objectives in this research as follows:

1. To determine the difference in job performance between gender.
2. To determine the relationship between management control and job performance.

3. To determine the relationship between organizational communication and job performance.
4. To determine the relationship between employee involvement and job performance.
5. To determine the relationship between goal setting and job performance.
6. To determine the dominant factor associating with job performance.

1.4 Conceptual Framework

The purpose of this research is to explore the relationship between factors associating with employees' job performance. The table shows the conceptual framework of this research. The independent variables are including demographic factor (gender) and job performance factors (management control, organizational communication, employee involvement and goal setting). The dependent variable is job performance. Figure 1.1 shows the conceptual framework of this research.

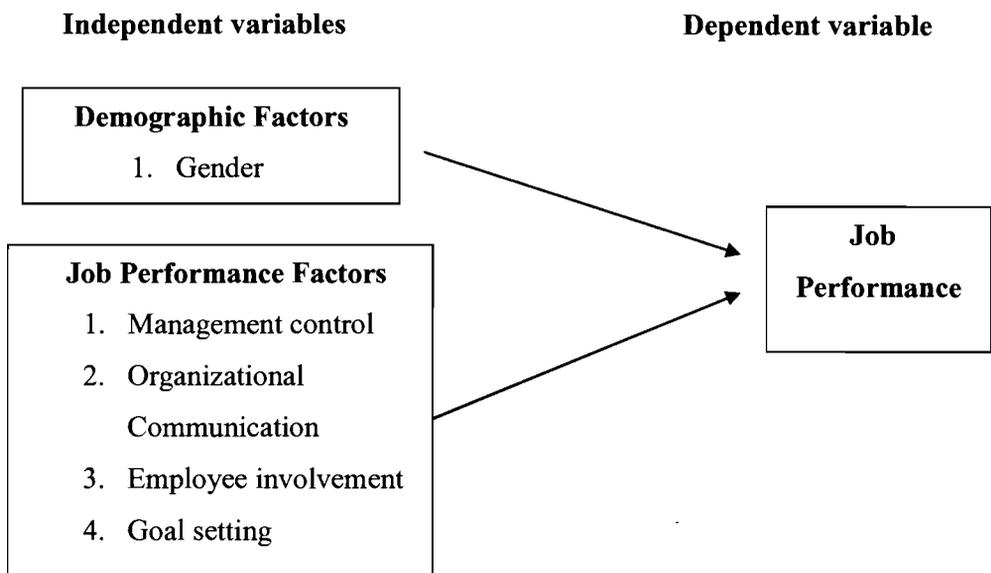


Figure 1.1: The Conceptual Framework

1.5 Research Hypotheses

There are six research hypotheses in this research as follows:

H₀ 1: There is no significant difference in job performance between gender of the respondents.

H₀ 2: There is no significant relationship between management control and job performance.

H₀ 3: There is no significant relationship between organizational communication and job performance.

H₀ 4: There is no significant relationship between employee involvement and job performance.

H₀ 5: There is no significant relationship between goal setting and job performance.

H₀ 6: There is no dominant factor associating with job performance.

1.6 Definition of Terms

1.6.1 Job Performance

Conceptual Definition

According to Murphy (1989, p. 227), job performance refers to “the set of behaviors that are relevant to the goals of the organization or the organizational unit in which a person works” (as cited in Ferris, Brown, Pang and Keeping, 2010, p.561).

Operational Definition

In this study, the job performance refers to performance of employees in public sector. The job performance includes the aspect of task performance and contextual performance.

1.6.2 Management Control

Conceptual Definition

According to Shahis L. Ansari and Jan Bell (1991), management control refers to all organizational arrangements, formal and informal, designed to accomplish organizational objectives. It includes formal structure, operational controls, rewards, budgeting, planning and other similar activities (as cited in Dahlgard-Park, 2008, p.100).

Operational Definition

In this study, management control refers to the employees perceived on the extent of control over their job. The management control includes the aspect of activity control and output control.

1.6.3 Organizational Communication

Conceptual Definition

According to Price (1997), organizational communication “is a theoretical variable that measures the degree to which information about the job and workplace is transmitted by an organization to its members” (as cited in Vijai N. Giri & B. Pavan Kumar, 2010, p.137).

Operational Definition

In this study, organizational communication refers to employees perceived on the extent of communication in public sector. It includes formal communication and informal communication.

1.6.4 Employee Involvement

Conceptual Definition

According to Lawler and Benson (2003), employee involvement is defined as “providing lower-level employees with opportunities to make decisions concerning the conduct of their jobs and to participate in the business as a whole” (as cited in Wood and Wall, 2007, p.1336).

Operational Definition

In this study, employee involvement refers to the extent of employees involvement in work process and organizational functioning in public sector. It includes involvement in the goal setting process.

1.6.5 Goal Setting

Conceptual Definition

According to Locke et al. (1981), goal setting is a “focused development of behavior modification where conscious decisions to pursue goals determine the level of effort and the direction of this effort (as cited in Cameron and Duff, 2007, p.496).

Operational Definition

In this study, the goal setting refers to the extent of employees setting their goals in their work processes and procedures. It includes the criteria of specificity, measurable, achievable, realistic and feedback.

1.7 Significance of Study

From this research, by investigating employee job performance among employee from several government agencies in Kuching, more information on how the improvement of job performance is been outlined. Therefore, public sector or other organizations can utilize the information gathered to develop new strategies in organizational functioning to increase and improve their employees' job performance. This can be achieved or reached in a more effective and efficient way.

In fact, this research provides the information on what are the job performance factors that can contribute to the employees' job performance and thus help to increase organizational performance and effectiveness. This research can be used by management level of the organization in order to enhance the job performance among their employees since they would have better understanding on it. This can directly help in developing better strategies and reinforcing effective goal-oriented activities to improve employees' job performance.

1.8 Conclusion

In this chapter, it describes on the background of study that related job performance. Statements of problem is discussed. This is followed by objectives, research hypothesis, and conceptual framework of the study. Then, significance of study as well as the limitation and scope of the study are discussed. Finally, there is the definition of terms. The definition of terms that include job performance, management control, communication, employee involvement, and goal setting are discussed.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

In this chapter, context for the topic and basis for formulating conceptual/theoretical framework are discussed. Besides, this chapter also covered the literature review of employees' job performance that proposed by previous researchers and some other similar research that have been done on this area specifically in factors associating towards the employees' job performance. In addition, by reviewing other researchers' work, the possible outcomes of this study can be predicted.