FACULTY OF COGNITIVE SCIENCES AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

THE ROLE OF SUPERVISOR SUPPORT IN MEDIATING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING AND WORK PERFORMANCE IN ORGANIZATION

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Final Year Project Report   '''

Masters

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THE ROLE OF SUPERVISOR SUPPORT IN MEDIATING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING AND WORK PERFORMANCE IN ORGANIZATION

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This project is submitted
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The project entitled '**The Role of Supervisor Support in Mediating the Relationship Between Self-Directed Learning and Work Performance in Organization'** was prepared by Nurul Alia binti Jamil and submitted to the Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Bachelor of Science with Honours (Human Resource Development).

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Date: 24th August 2020

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to investigate the role of supervisor support in mediating the relationship between self-directed learning and work performance in public sector organization in Kedah, Malaysia. Data were gathered from 141 employees from an organization in Kedah. Quantitative research methodology is used in this research and the data were collected using questionnaires as the instrument. The data were analyzed using descriptive, inferential statistics and mediation analysis. Descriptive statistics were reported, followed by reliability analysis, Spearman correlation and hypothesis testing using stepwise multiple regression. The findings have shown that there is moderate relationship between supervisor support and work performance in organization in Kedah. In addition, there is strong positive relationship between self-directed learning and work performance in public organization in Kedah. Besides, findings from this study also indicated that adaptability is the most dominant among independent variables for the public organization. In addition, consistency is the most dominant among independent variables for the public organization. The study contributes to the existing pool of knowledge to the public employee's in Malaysia. It has enhanced both the organization and human resource practitioners' knowledge and understanding on how self-directed learning and work performance of employee's in Kedah. On the other hand, the result of this study could help the organization to improve the quality to ensure the organizations can achieve performance of the employee's.

Keywords *work performance, self-directed learning, supervisor support*

ABSTRAK

Tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk mengkaji peranan sokongan penyelia dalam memediasi hubungan antara pembelajaran kendiri dan prestasi kerja di sektor organisasi awam di Kedah, Malaysia. Data telah diperoleh daripada 141 orang pekerja dari sebuah organisasi di Kedah. Data tersebut dianalisis menggunakan kaedah berdasarkan deskriptif dan inferens serta mediasi analisis. Statistik deskriptif dilaporkan, diikuti dengan analisis kebolehpercayaan, pekali korelasi, pengujian hipotesis menggunakan regresi pelbagai prosedur secara berperingkat. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan terdapat hubungan yang sederhana antara sokongan penyelia dan prestasi pekerja di Syarikat Air Darul Aman di Kedah. Tambahan pula, terdapat hubungan positif yang kuat antara pembelajaran kendiri dan prestasi kerja dalam organisasi awam di Kedah. Selain itu, penemuan dari kajian ini juga menunjukkan bahawa kemampuan menyesuaikan diri adalah yang paling dominan di antara pemboleh ubah bebas untuk organisasi awam. Di samping itu, konsistensi adalah yang paling dominan di antara pemboleh ubah bebas untuk organisasi ini. Kajian ini menyumbang kepada pengetahuan yang ada untuk kakitangan awam di Malaysia. Ini telah meningkatkan pengetahuan dan pemahaman pengamal sumber manusia dan organisasi mengenai bagaimana pembelajaran kendiri dan prestasi kerja pekerja di Kedah. Sebaliknya, hasil kajian ini dapat membantu organisasi untuk meningkatkan kualiti untuk memastikan organisasi dapat mencapai prestasi pekerja..

Kata kunci *prestasi kerja, pembelajaran kendiri, sokongan penyelia*

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0   Introduction

The purpose of this research is to identify the role of supervisor support in mediating the relationship between self-directed learning and work performance in organization. This study focused on two main factors which are self-directed learning and work performance. The sub-factor self-directed learning consists of self-efficacy, continuous learning practices, interaction amongst employees.

1.1 Research Background

As globalisation has become the major human resource challenge since it is an important asset for a company to compete internationally. Human resources has to be knowledgeable and competent where the employees need to continue upgrading their skills and learn new skills in order to become more competent. Hence, it is the self-directed learning should be practice in organization when perform work, as they carry out their work and reflect the experience. When perform work, it includes the knowledge, skills and attitudes, they do or feel to interact with others to achieve results and they practice their own learning style and learning process (Hashim, 2012).

Every employee needs to empower him/herself as a self-directed learner to meet the demands of the rapidly changing business environment (Guglielmino & Guglielmino, 2006). Previous studies were very limited in identifying antecedent factors that drive the emergence of SDL in the workplace context (Chou, 2012; Junaidah Hashim, 2008; Li, Tancredi, Daniel, John, & Daniel, 2010; Merriam, 2010)

Moreover, human resources is the most valuable and vital asset of an organization in order to compete both local and global competition. Tomlison (n.d) his studies revealed that

knowleageable and competent are the two major characteristics that need to be internalized within a human resource. The workforce must be able to adapt and adopt their work environmental changes through the opportunities to improve and upgrading their current skills as well as learning new skills not only for current development but also for future purposes (Boateng, 2011). Therefore, each individual's commitment and ability to learn is essential as it influenced self-directed learning and performance.

1.2 Problem Statement

As the years past, many of theories, models, sets of assumption and principles, and explanations have been yield in attempt to understand human learning (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Kolb, 1984; Knowles, 1980; Bandura, 1977). However, an effective learning requires more in-depth understanding of various principles or theories of how an individual learn, and it requires an effort to apply those principles into practice. Moreover, most of theories and principles in human self-learning emphasized one takes responsibility on their own learning. Nevertheless, the theories, models and principles applied may not similar for individuals' self-directed learning activities at workplace.

Continuous learning and development is very crucial in the workplace as for the survival of an organization. Human competence has become the most decisive resources as well as the parameter of competition especially within an organization. Therefore, each employees needs to initiate themselves to function as a self-directed learner in order to meet the demands of the rapid changing workplace (Guglielmino & Guglielmino, 2006).

Self-directed learning in workplace context has become a major concern (Stansfield, 1997; Dealtry, 2004; Scheeres *et al.*, 2010; Warhust, 2013). According to Gerber et al. (1995), self-directed learning in work context is emphasizing on independent learning which more toward self-conscious, beliefs and values. However, there is still insufficient information in self-

directed learning at the workplace whether it is voluntary or involuntary action. Besides, different individual has different way of self-learning at the workplace.

Several factors that influence self-directed learning are including manager roles, managerial characteristics, workplace characteristics, and organizational culture and practices (Billet, 2004; Scheeres et al. 2010; Eraut, 2011; Fuller & Unwin, 2011; Illeris, 2011; Warhust, 2013). This may affect individual's action about self-directed learning at workplace. In addition, it is still ambiguous whether learning in workplace is problematic or unproblematic; assisted or not assisted to do (Somerville & Lloyd, 2006; Scheeres *et al*, 2010).

Past research on self-directed learning at workplace mostly conducted in western countries especially Europe countries (Gerber *et al.*, 1995; Illeris, 2003; Dealtry, 2004; Scheeres *et al.*, 2010; Warhust, 2012). Moreover, there are differences between studies conducted in two different countries on the role of supervisor support as a mediator. A study in Korea shows the role of supervisor support mediates the leadership style and subordinate creativity (Kim & Baik,2015), while in Taiwan a study shows the role of supervisor support mediates the authoritarian leadership and self-efficacy (Shu, Chiang & Lu,2017). Hence, there is no studies shows the role of supervisor support in mediating the relationship between self-directed learning and work performance.

Meanwhile, past research regarding the practice of self-directed learning at workplace in Malaysia is considered very little to exist. Therefore, there is a need to research and compare whether role of supervisor support do mediate the relationship between self-directed learning and work performance.

1.3 Research Objective

1.3.1 General Objective

The general objective of this study is to study the role of supervisor support in mediating the relationship between self-directed learning and work performance in organization.

This general objective is further specified by the following specific objectives:

1.3.2 Specific Objective, Research Question and Hypothesis

1. To determine the demographic attributes (gender, working experiences, education level and age) among employees.

2. To measure the level of work performance of employees.

3. To identify difference between gender and work performance.

4. To identify the difference between age and work performance.

5. To identify the difference between working experiences and work performance.

6. To identify the difference between educational background and work performance.

7. To identify the relationship between continuous learning factor and work performance

8. To identify the relationship between employee interaction and work performance.

9. To identify the relationship between supervisor support and work performance.

10. To determine the relationship between self-directed learning and supervisor support.

11. To find out the if supervisor support mediates the relationship between continuous learning practice and work performance.

12. To find out if the supervisor support mediates the relationship between employee interaction and work performance.

Table 1

Summary of specific objective

Specific Objective	Research Questions/Hypotheses
To determine the demographic attributes (gender, working experiences, education level and age) among employees	RQ1: What are the demographic attributes of the employees?
To measure the level of work performance of employees	RQ2: What are the level of work performance of employees?
To identify difference between gender and work performance	$H_0 1$: There is no significant difference between gender and work performance.
To identify the difference between age and work performance.	$H_0 2$: There is no significant difference between age and work performance.
To identify the difference between working experiences and work performance.	$H_0 3$: There is no significant difference between working experiences and work performance.
To identify the difference between educational background and work performance	$H_0 4$: There is no significant difference between educational background and work performance.
To identify the relationship between continuous learning factor and work performance.	$H_0 5$: There is no relationship between continuous learning practice and work performance.

To identify the relationship between employee interaction and work performance.	$H_0 6$: There is no relationship between employee interaction and work performance.
To identify the relationship between supervisor support and work performance	$H_0 7$: There is no relationship between supervisor support and work performance.
To determine the relationship between self-directed learning and supervisor support	$H_0 8$: There is no relationship between self-directed learning and supervisor support.
To find out the if supervisor support mediates the relationship between continuous learning practice and work performance	RQ3: Does supervisor support mediates the relationship between continuous learning practice and work performance?
To find out if the supervisor support mediates the relationship between employee interaction and work performance.	RQ4: Does supervisor support mediates the relationship between employees interaction and work performance?

1.4 Conceptual Framework

Independent variable   Mediator   Dependent variable
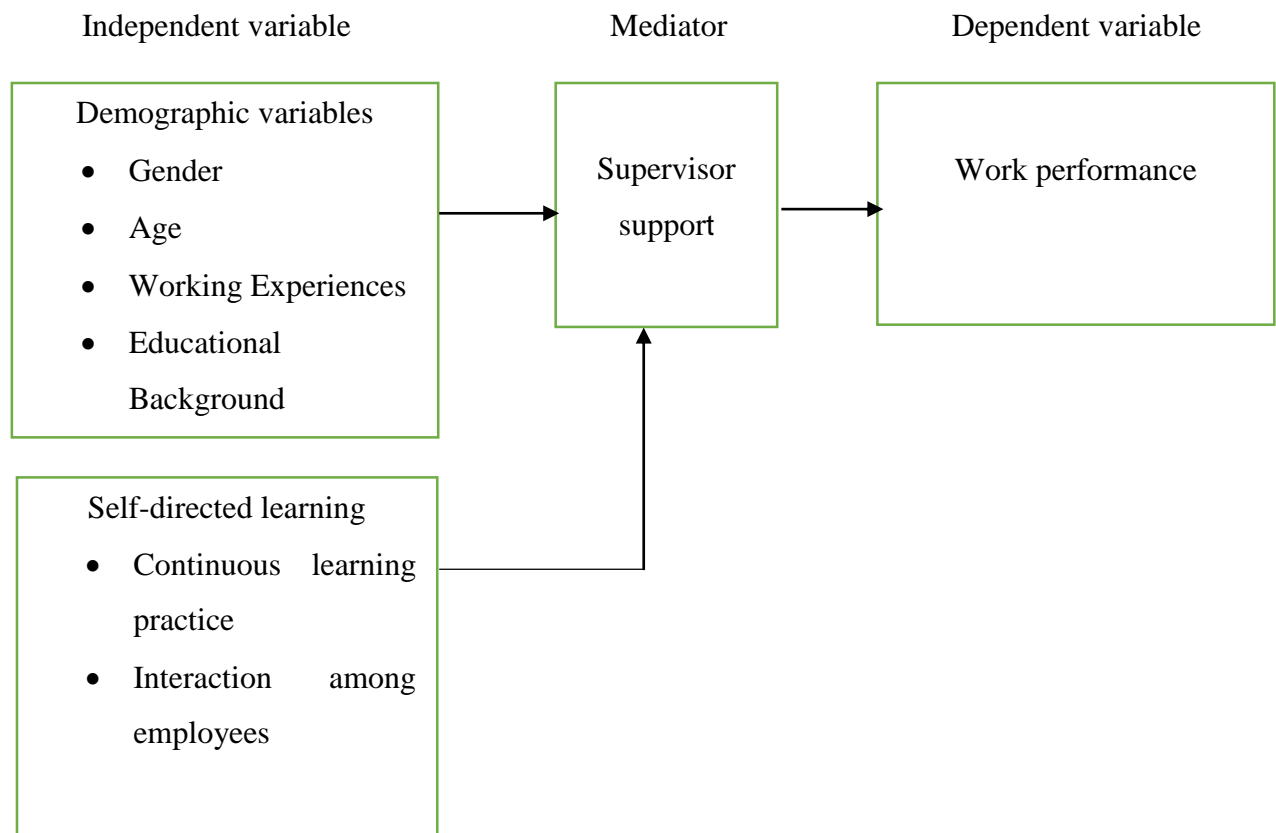
Figure 1

Based on Figure 1, this conceptual framework consists of independent variables, mediating variables and dependent variable. It is created to explain the relationship between independent variables consist of gender, age and self-directed learning. Then, dependent variable includes work performance. Moreover, it also shows that supervisor support as the mediating variable in the relationship between self-directed learning and work performance.

1.5 Significance of studies

1.5.1 Theory and Knowledge

The study contributes to theories related to self-directed learning and work performance. Researchers will understand better about Experiential Learning theory, Self-determination theory and Adult Learning theory.

Besides, this study will provide beneficial knowledge to employees. It can make them understand more about the importance of self-directed learning in organization. Apart from that, they will be more aware on their knowledge, skills and abilities.

1.5.2 Methodology

This study is a quantitative research. The studies will provide an insight into the mediating role of supervisor support with self-directed learning, continuous learning practices and interaction between employees in private sector organization. Hence, it can be guideline to other upcoming research in similar field. The future researchers can discover more on this topic with more practical clues that can assist the organizations to develop better. Besides, close-ended questionnaire is being used in this study as research instrument. But then, the future researchers can use other type of questionnaire for this study.

1.5.3 Practitioner

This study can facilitate the practitioners in understanding the way of supervisor support and self-directed learning affect work performance of employees. They can comprehend the effectiveness of implementing self-directed learning through this study. Moreover, the collected information, can be used in fixing the problem in the organization and provide better environment as well. Hence, work performance can be improved as well as provide competitive advantage among their organizations' rivals.

1.5.4 Policy

The findings of this study can be a reference to support the policymakers to change their idea, make improvement or build up and introduce new policies and strategies in order to eliminate the issues encountered by the employees in the organization as well as increase their work performance.

1.6 Limitations of study

1.6.1 Topical

There are various factors that affect employee work performance. However, this study highlighted on several factors only, which are self-directed learning and supervisor support. Furthermore, the number of studies studying the mediating role of supervisor support is extremely less. Therefore, the literature about the mediating role of supervisor support in maintaining work performance that can be discussed is very limited.

1.6.2 Subject

There is only self-efficacy, continuous learning practices and employee interaction that has been discussed under self-directed learning. There are no other sub-factors has been selected. Thus, this study is not representing self-directed learning as a whole.

1.6.3 Method

The study is limited to employees in private sector only as the sample size. A total of 300 employees are identified as the respondents in this study. The selection of respondents was based on the status of work as an employee to answer the questionnaire. However, the sample size is not considered a representative of the entire population and at the same time, the results obtained cannot be used to make general conclusion for the entire population. Plus, the only method that used in this study which was questionnaire. Thus, the results of this study may not really be accurate as observation and interview