THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MARS MODEL (MOTIVATION, ABILITY, ROLE PERCEPTIONS, SITUATIONAL FACTORS) AND EMPLOYEES’ PERFORMANCE AT THE WORKPLACE

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ABSTRACT

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MARS MODEL (MOTIVATION, ABILITY, ROLE PERCEPTIONS, SITUATIONAL FACTORS) AND EMPLOYEES' PERFORMANCE AT THE WORKPLACE

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This study aims to identify the relationship between MARS model (motivation, ability, role perceptions, situational factors) and employees' performance at the workplace specifically in the hotel industry. The independent variables are motivation, ability, role perceptions and situational factors while the dependent variable is employees' performance at the workplace. The sample of study consisted of 68 employees in one of the hotel which located in Kuching area. Survey questionnaire were used to collect the required data for analysis. The collected data were analyzed by using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) Version 17.0. Five informants were being selected to conduct the interview sessions and the interview findings were used to support the research findings. Frequency and percentage was used to summarize respondents’ demographic and Independent T-test was used to determine the difference in employees’ performance at the workplace based on gender. Person Correlation Coefficient was used to measure the relationship between MARS model and employees' performance at the workplace while Multiple Linear Regression was used to determine the dominant factor that influence employees’ performance at the workplace. Instrument’s validity and reliability had been identified by using pilot test. Present study found a statistically significant relationship between motivation (r=0.786, p=0.000), ability (r=0.851, p=0.000), role perceptions (r=0.777, p=0.000), situational factors (r=0.661, p=0.000) and employees’ performance at the workplace. Among the four independent variables, ability (β=0.639, r²=0.748) was found as the dominant factor that influence employees’ performance at the workplace. Also, the finding showed that there is a significant difference in employees’ performance at the workplace based on gender (p=0.042, p<0.05). In conclusion, organization may provide training to employees as to improve their ability in order to perform well on their job. Moreover, organization should emphasize on how to enhance the motivation level of employees and make sure all employees have clear role perceptions, as well as provide good working condition and working environment for employees so that they can concentrate on their job. For future researchers, they may study on other factors which can affect the performance level of employees and they can modify the research framework by using moderator or mediator.
ABSTRAK

HUBUNGAN ANTARA MODEL MARS (MOTIVASI, KEMAMPUAN, PERSEPSI PERANAN, FAKTOR PERSEKITARAN) DAN PRESTASI PEKERJA DI TEMPAT KERJA

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Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengenalpasti hubungan antara model MARS (motivasi, kemampuan, persepsi peranan, faktor persekitaran) dan prestasi pekerja di tempat kerja khususnya di industri perhotelan. Factor tidak bersandar adalah motivasi, kemampuan, persepsi peranan dan faktor persekitaran manakala faktor bersandar adalah prestasi pekerja di tempat kerja. Sampel kajian terdiri daripada 68 orang pekerja dari salah sebuah hotel di Kuching. Borang soal selidik telah digunakan untuk mengumpul data-data yang diperlukan untuk analisis. Data yang telah dikumpul dianalisis dengan menggunakan Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) Versi 17.0. Lima informan dipilih untuk menjalankan sesi wawancara dan hasil soal selidik akan digunakan untuk menyokong hasil kajian. Frekuensi dan peratusan digunakan untuk merumus ciri-ciri demografi responden dan T-test analisis digunakan untuk mengenalpasti ketidaksamaan dalam prestasi pekerja di tempat kerja berdasarkan jantina. Ujian korelasi Pearson digunakan untuk mengukur hubungan antara model MARS dan prestasi pekerja di tempat kerja manakala ujian regresi linear berganda digunakan untuk mengenalpasti faktor yang dominan terhadap prestasi pekerja di tempat kerja. Kebolehpercayaan dan kesahihan boring sosial selidik telah dikaji dengan menggunakan uji Pilot. Keputusan kajian ini menunjukkan terdapatnya korelasi antara motivasi (r=0.786, p=0.000), kemampuan (r=0.851, p=0.000), persepsi peranan (r=0.777, p=0.000), faktor persekitaran (r=0.661, p=0.000) dengan prestasi pekerja di tempat kerja. Antara keempat-empat faktor, kemampuan (β=0.639, r²=0.748) didapati merupakan faktor yang paling mempengaruhi prestasi pekerja di tempat kerja. Di samping itu, kajian ini menunjukkan perbezaan prestasi pekerja di tempat kerja berdasarkan jantina (p=0.042, p=0.05). Kesimpulannya, organisasi boleh memberi latihan kepada pekerja untuk meningkatkan prestasi mereka supaya mereka dapat mencapai prestasi yang cemerlang. Selain itu, organisasi perlu menekankan cara-cara untuk meningkatkan motivasi perkerja dan memastikan semua pekerja mempunyai persepsi peranan yang jelas serta menyediakan keadaan kerja dan persekitaran yang menyenangkan kepada pekerja supaya mereka dapat menumpu perhatian terhadap kerjanya. Untuk bakal penyelidik, mereka boleh mengkaji faktor-faktor lain yang boleh mempengaruhi prestasi pekerja dan mereka boleh mengubahsuaikan rangka kajian dengan menggunakan penengah atau perantara.
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1.0 Introduction

This study examines on the relationship between MARS model (motivation, ability, role perceptions, situational factors) and employee’s performance at the workplace. In this chapter, background of the study, statement of problem, objectives of the study, research hypothesis, conceptual framework are covered in this particular chapter. It also remarks the significance of the study, limitations and scope of the study as well as definition of terms to provide a deeper insight for this topic. This chapter is crucial since it will provide the overall overview and perspective of this study.
1.1 Background of the Study

Why people want to work? Different people have different needs that drive them to work. Understanding the reasons of why people work for will stimulate them to perform well (Kovach, 1987). The successfulness of an organization is very much depended on the performance of employees. Employee performance can be considered as one of the important factors in maintaining the effectiveness and efficiency of organization as well as the efforts to make sure the organization become competitiveness in the market level. Organization cannot be formed without the existing of the employees. For that reason, managers have to determine the causes or factors that can lead to deteriorate of employees’ performance.

Employees’ performance can be affected by external forces and internal forces. The external forces that can influence the employees’ performance can be technological changes, working environment, competition and so on. On the other hand, the internal forces are motivation level, ability, skills and knowledge. Therefore, it is significant to understand external forces as well as internal forces which can lead to the performance of employees.

Model of individual behavior, also known as MARS model consist of four factors which are motivation, ability, role perceptions and situational factors. Motivation is the internal psychological forces that drive to the changes of employee behavior and lead to the effectiveness of performance. Motivation is a continual process that needs to be sustained and developed due to individual and organizational factors tends to change over time (Schein, 1980). Therefore, managers have to make sure that employees are motivated in the workplace so that they feel satisfy and increase their working performance in delivering effective services.

Motivation can be categorized into two forces which are intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation is the feeling of
satisfaction when self actualization, self accomplishment arises when something that is desired for is achieved and intrinsic motivation is free from financial rewards (Chandan, 2008). For example, people will feel satisfy and motivate in psychological form when they are praised by managers or when they are given recognition or power to some position. Besides, employees will feel motivated when they are involved in decision making due to they feel that their contributions and opinions are being appreciated by their managers. On the other hand, extrinsic motivation is induced by external factors which mainly consists of financial rewards such as higher pay, fringe benefits, stock options profit sharing scheme, health and medical insurance and so on (Chandan, 2008). In order to motivate employees to produce desirable behavior or to perform well in organization, the financial rewards should be set as powerful as possible so that employees can be motivated and persistence of their efforts in performing the job at the workplace. Money is one of the most powerful rewards that can be given as motivator to employees because money has its wide usage and can obtain many other resources from it.

Furthermore, the ability is the competence or talent of individual to perform the task successfully. According to Lawler (1973), ability is the formation of natural aptitude and the aptitude that is formed through training and experience (cited in Pinder, 2008).

\[
\text{Ability} = \text{Aptitude} + \text{Aptitude (Training and Experience)}
\]


Pinder (2008) had stated that the effectiveness of job performance can be determined by the natural aptitude or natural talent or skills that a person has and develops over time. This is because if an individual is motivated to perform certain tasks but he or she does not has the necessary ability, the job performance still can be affected because he or she cannot perform the tasks well. This statement is supported by Dunnette (1972, cited in Pinder, 2008) who conducted
an experiment to test the ability is more vital than motivation in job performance. In that experiment, participants were required to lift a very heavy weight from floor to the table and who successful in doing the task will be rewarded $100. Many participants were motivated to do so but due to their physical strength, they were not able to lift the heavy weight. Therefore, the results showed that people with high motivation but no ability can produce poor performance. As a result, it is important for managers to make sure employees have certain abilities and skills to perform the task. For those who do not have enough abilities and competencies to perform well, training and development can be provided for them in order to increase their knowledge, skills and abilities. However, if an individual has high competencies or high abilities but he or she is assigned to some tasks which are not appropriate and fix to his or her abilities, an individual still cannot perform well if compared to those who have less competencies and abilities but assigned with appropriate tasks (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984, cited in Pinder, 2008).

A role perception is the perceiving or beliefs of an individual about his or her responsibility that he or she can achieve the tasks or roles by performing well during job. Employees might have wrong role perceptions if they interpret the roles inaccurately or managers do not define clearly for the employees about what the roles that they are playing. If employees are clear to their role or responsibility during their job, they can perform based on their ability and skills. On the other hand, if employees have role ambiguity, they cannot concentrate on their job, and they might feel confused or do not know what should do in order to contribute to the organization. Therefore, role perceptions of employees are very crucial in producing proper behavior and thus increase performance level in an organization.

Last but not least, situational factors refer to the environment factors that enable individual to react or act with it. Conducive and friendly environment can reinforce the positive attitude of employees. However, if the environment is hostile to the development of employees, negative reactions or poor performance might take place. According to Chandan (2008), there are two categories of environment factors which are physical and social environment. Physical
environment refer to the arrangement of setting in organization such as nature of job, cleanliness, noise level that can affect behavior of employees (Chandan, 2008). For example, if employees always work under hostile environment, they cannot concentrate on their job, and thus their performance might be affected. On the other hand, another situational factor that is social environment which also affect the behavior and performance of employees. “The social environment relates to interaction among people and respect numerous social and societal laws, rules and norms created by people to regulate and control behavior of people” (Chandan, 2008, p.44). The poor communication among people or weak social network in an organization will affect behavior of employees due to belongingness needs cannot be fulfilled. According to Maslow’ Hierarchy of needs, belongingness is the deficiency needs of people and must be satisfied so that employees will feel security and fundamental comfortable (Chandan, 2008). If cannot fulfilled the belongingness need, people will feel unmotivated and performance of job can be affected. Besides, rules and norms in an organization used to regulate the behavior of employees so that they can be guided to perform well in organization in order to achieve the organizational goals.

The four factors in MARS model are very significant and might bring effects to employees’ performance at the workplace. Therefore, understanding the reasons of why employees cannot perform well or can present well at the workplace is very crucial for managers. This is due to the fact that once the performance of employees cannot reach the expected level; it might affect productivity of organization. Thus, the goals cannot be achieved and organization might face the problem of profit loss.
1.2 Problem Statement

Nowadays, competitions among business become strong. The competitiveness caused the organization faced a lot of challenges in term of utilizing manpower. Job performance among employees is one of the important elements to determine the successfulness of the organization. If employees perform well on their job, work progress can be enhanced; productivity of organization can be increased as well as profits can be gained rapidly. By this, the organization will become competitive enough and able to compete in the market. Due to “the individual employee is the basic building block of the organization” (Matterson & Ivanchevich, 1996, p.186), managers have to understand and figure out the factors that can influence employee performance at the workplace so that they manage to enhance employee performance.

Motivation is vital to enhance and drive the interest of employees to do something or accomplish the organizational goals. With high level of motivation, employees will put their efforts in completing their job and thus performance level will increased as well as work progress can be enhanced. According to Pinder (2008), motivation can enhance productivity levels, economic well being can be increased as well. Therefore, in other words, if employees are not motivated to work, their personal satisfaction cannot be fulfilled. As a result, their performance will deteriorate and thus productivity can be decreased. Once the productivity is reduced, economic well being of that particular organization will decreased in the market level.

Besides, ability of employees will affect job performance of employees. Campbell et all stated that ability of employees can determine the productivity level in an organization (cited in Pinder, 2008). If the employee does not have sufficient ability and competencies to perform during job, he or she cannot achieve the expected level of performance. Thus, performance employee will become poor and not satisfied by top management and productivity level can be decreased. According to Pinder (2008), employees’ ability is crucial in
determining the effectiveness of job performance. Although employees have high motivation level, they still cannot perform well during their job if they do not have sufficient ability or skills that are required in performing the job. Therefore, in order to become marketable and employable, employees have to make sure that he or she has the ability to perform better than the others in any tasks or responsibility that are given by the employers.

Role perception can be used to identify individual performance (Saha, 2008). Role perception of employees is crucial in determining the performance of employees because if employees have clear role perceptions on what tasks or roles that they are going to accomplish, they can put their full commitment and efforts in achieving the goals without any doubt and confusion. On the other hand, if employees have role ambiguity, they are unclear of what actual roles they are, they cannot fully concentrate on their job and they do not have self confident when performing their job due to their psychological effect. Hence, it can affect performance level of employees.

Situational factors is also known as environment factors. There are several environment factors that can influence job performance of employees such as hygiene of workplace, working environment, competitors, organizational policies and so on. For example, performance of employees can be affected if they are working under hostile environment due to they will feel uncomfortable and cannot put concentration toward their job. Moreover, if employees do not satisfy to the organizational policies that have been set, they will feel unmotivated and not willing to put their efforts during job and thus their performance might be declined.

Therefore, this current study is carried out so that employees will realize the factors among MARS (motivation, ability, role perceptions and situational factors) which contribute to the job performance at the workplace. Consequently, they are able to cope with it based on the findings of this study.
1.3 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study consist of two categories which are general objective and specific objectives.

1.3.1 General Objective

The general objective of this study is to determine the relationship between MARS model (motivation, ability, role perception, and situational factors) and employees’ performance at the workplace.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

i. To identify the differences in employees’ performance at the workplace based on gender.

ii. To identify the relationship between motivation and employees’ performance at the workplace.

iii. To identify the relationship between ability and employees’ performance at the workplace.

iv. To identify the relationship between role perceptions and employees’ performance at the workplace.

v. To identify the relationship between situational factors and employees’ performance at the workplace.

vi. To identify the dominant factor that influence employees’ performance at the workplace.
1.4 Research Hypothesis

Ho1: There is no difference in employees’ performance at the workplace based on gender.

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between motivation and employees’ performance at the workplace.

Ho3: There is no significant relationship between ability and employees’ performance at the workplace.

Ho4: There is no significant relationship between role perceptions and employees’ performance at the workplace.

Ho5: There is no significant relationship between situational factors and employees’ performance at the workplace.

Ho6: There is no dominant factor that influences employees’ performance at the workplace.
1.5 Conceptual Framework

Figure 1.0 is used to determine the relationship between MARS model and employees’ performance at the workplace. The independent variables that are covered in this study are gender which is under demographic factor, motivation, ability, role perceptions and situational factors. However, the dependent variable is employees’ performance at the workplace. This framework will be used to formulate the hypothesis.

### Independent variables

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Figure 1.0: The relationship between MARS model and employees’ performance at the workplace
1.6 Significance of the Study

1.6.1 Theoretical Contribution

This study tends to emphasize on the relationship between MARS model (motivation, ability, role perception, and situational factors) and employees' performance at the workplace. This research will be significant due to there were few leading researches that had done on this issue but it is usually being studied independently with other factors such as motivation and employees' performance. It is not comprehensive and detailed enough as it reflects only on the surface on this issue. The intention is to look deeper into these factors and understand the specificity of the issue relating to MARS model in comparison to prior research which had been carried out by the past researchers. As employees’ performance can affect the productivity and profits of the organization as well as the ability of the organization to compete in the market level, this study can be used as a reference for future researcher to examine the topic that regard to the relationship between MARS model and employees’ performance in the context of Malaysia.

1.6.2 Methodological Strength

This research will be vital for the accuracy of findings from other studies that have been carried out before. This is because there are combinations of qualitative and quantitative methods in completing this research. Therefore, rich data collection that can be obtained through questionnaires and interview might be able to increase the validity and reliability of research findings. Data from survey questionnaire can represent a large number of respondents. Method of interview was being utilized in this study because responds of interviewees can be obtained more accurately and clearly by asking the right questions from face to face. Besides, the combinations methods also can help in minimizing errors in order to gather relevant data and to answer the research hypothesis.
1.6.3 Practical Contribution

This study is significant because the findings of this study might be able to assist the managers to instill some practices in order to improve employees' performance at the workplace. Through this study, managers know how to motivate employees which in turn will lead to the performance at the workplace. In addition, managers will have ideas on how to design training program for employees based on their ability, talent and potential so that they can benefit from the training program and thus can improve their performance. Also, managers can increase the understanding of the exact role perceptions of the employees so that managers can assign tasks for employees to complete accurately. Last but not least, managers can learn how to create a good and friendly environment for the employees to work for so that they feel comfortable to work under pleasure conditions. Therefore, their performance might increased due to there is no more distractions around the working place.

1.7 Definition of Terms

In this section, conceptual and operational definition of terms that are used in this study is being explained.

1.7.1 Motivation

**Conceptual Definition**

"Employee motivation is an innate force shaped and maintained by a set of highly individualistic factors that may change from time to time, depending on the particular needs and motives of an employee." (Roos & Eeden, 2008, p.55)

**Operational Definition**

Motivation can be defined as internal psychological forces that drive an individual to complete tasks that assigned to him or her and thus to achieve the goals.
1.7.2 Ability

**Conceptual Definition**
Lawler defined that “ability is an aggregation of natural aptitude plus the capacity to behave which results from the application of training and experience to one’s aptitude” (cited in Pinder, 2008, p.19).

**Operational Definition**
Ability is the power or competence inside an individual to perform the tasks which are given to him or her successfully whether in the forms of physical, moral, intellectual.

1.7.3 Role Perceptions

**Conceptual Definition**
Role perceptions can be defined as how an individual is going to perceive their own roles and what kinds of responsibility that an individual suppose to implement (Newstrom & Davis, 1997).

**Operational Definition**
Perceiving or beliefs of an individual about his or her responsibility or task and how he or she is going to accomplish the tasks with produce proper behavior.

1.7.4 Situational Factors

**Conceptual Definition**
Situational factors can be defined as “any factor, such as an environmental factor or the equipment a person is using, which contributes to the set of conditions to which a person acts or reacts” (Kent, 2007).
Operational Definition
Situational factors can be factors that come from internal or external environment and beyond the control of people and need action to react with.

1.7.5 Employee

Conceptual Definition
“An employee is a person who works in the service of another person under an express or implied contract of hire, under which the employer has the right to control the details of work performance” (Black's Law Dictionary cited in Murray, 2010).

Operational Definition
Employee refers to an individual who is employed under a contract of employment no matter in full time work or part time in order to provide services or contribute toward an organization.

1.7.6 Performance

Conceptual Definition
“Performance is about behavior or what employees do, not about what employees produce or the outcomes of their work” (Aguinis, 2009, p.171).

Operational Definition
Performance is the attitude, behavior, and action that possessed by employees and performance can be evaluated and appraised with the outcomes whether good or poor in the process of completing their job in order to accomplish personal goals and organizational goals.