The Effects of Reward System on Employee Performance

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ABSTRACT

Reward system which consists of financial rewards and non-financial rewards has become essential to an organization in managing employees' performance. Motivated employees can be a significant factor in organizational success. When employees are motivated to work at higher levels of productivity, the organization as a whole will run more efficiently and is more effective at reaching its goals. Literature review of the previous studies has proven that a reward system can motivate and subsequently increase employees' performance. Reward system comes in many forms, for example, intrinsic rewards and extrinsic rewards. Thus, the organization must critically understand what types of reward system can motivate the employee to perform well in their job. The purpose of this research is to investigate the effects of a reward system in an organization on employee performance. The variable tested in this study includes salary, bonuses, appreciation and medical benefits. This study adopted a quantitative approach where 132 sets of questionnaires were distributed to the participants selected using convenience sampling. Data were then analyzed using SPSS software and a few analyses were carried out such as correlations analysis and regression analysis. The results show that all variables have a significant impact on employees' performance. The results of this study can be used by the organization to improve its reward system and to ensure it could help in increasing the employees' performance.

Keywords: Reward System, Financial Rewards, Non-Financial Rewards, Employee Performance

INTRODUCTION

Reward system is essential to the organization as it has become important in managing employee's performance. Over the last 25 years, other elements in compensation have evolved to provide employers with a broad scope of reward, and thus, it motivates the employees. The reward systems are directly and indirectly involved in the vision and mission of the organization that gives sense to the employee that a reward system will benefit both parties. A study conducted by Latham (2012) to motivate and keep the employees motivated is an essential part of human resources and management within organizations. Reward systems have a huge impact on organizations to retain and motivate the employees and as a result of achieving high levels of performance (Barber and Bretz, 2000). Thus, organizations must develop programs such as reward systems to fulfil employees' needs and motivate them to work.

Most organizations have problems to decide the right reward systems and which reward system suit the most for the employees. A properly administered system of rewards can provide good quality of employee performance. If the organization does not have a proper reward system, it will lead to problems such as low employee morale, the unproductive performance of the employees, or it can lead to high turnover rate among employee (Wilson, 2004). Edward and Christopher (2006) have mentioned that most of the employees are not automatically will come to work, continue to work or work hard for the organization. A recent study by Anitha (2013) defined employee performance as an indicator of financial or other outcomes of the employee that has a direct connection with the performance of the organization as well as its achievement. The organization needs employees with high performance to meet goals, deliver products and services and to achieve competitive advantage in the market (Ojeleye, 2016). Performance is very crucial same as to reward system because when employees achieve their high level of performance, they want an adequate reward in return. If they cannot achieve the goals and show low performance in the organization, it will result in dissatisfaction (Ojeleye, 2016).

A motivated person will result in a good performance as the employees know there is a reward waiting at the end of every month. Reward systems have a huge impact on organizations to retain and motivate the employees and as a result of achieving high levels of performance (Barber and Bretz, 2000). Forsooth, reward strategy and systems are competitive tools that can make employee show good performance and motivated them to work in the organization. Since the 1980s, developing countries such as United State and China have done many research and studies on a reward system (Edward and Christopher, 2006; Lee and Wong, 2006; Paul, 1981; Sarin and Mahajan, 2001). However, few researchers have started to focus their study on the reward system in Malaysia. Therefore, this research aims to study the types of reward systems that can affect employees' performance in an organization in Malaysia.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Employee Performance

Employee performance as proposed by scholars, it is based on the type of reward system in place within organizations (Bari, Arif & Shoaib, 2013). A study by Anitha (2013) suggested that employee performance is an indicator of financial or other outcomes of the employee that has a direct connection with the performance of the organization as well as its achievement. Hence, people in management such as top, middle, and lower management contributes significantly in performance (Xanthopoulou et al, 2009a). Employers found that it is difficult to understand the behavior of employees and how to attract, retain and motivate them for a longer period in the organization as their behavior keeps on changing.

In an organizational context of performance, employee performance is defined as the degree to which an organizational member contributes to achieving the goals of the organization. Employee performance is vital to an organization as they play as an imperative mechanism that contributed to the success of an organization. Most organizations can measure employee performance through the quantity of output, quality of output, timeliness of output and labor productivity (George, 2015). What employee does or does not do will affect the reputation of the organization. The successful of supervising, create and empower the employees is an important basis of organization performance (Christensen, 2011). Therefore, outcomes achieved by the employee can be measured by using indicators that can describe an employee's pattern of performance over time (Ying, 2004).

Salary

Salary is defined as a fixed amount paid to the employees at regular intervals for their performance and productivity in a day (Surbhi, 2015). It is also the main mechanism for the organization to reward employees but very less exposure to how does it work in the reward system. In order to understand how salary can change the performance of an employee, the organization must understand their preferences in a reward system. Therefore, the salary issue is very challenging for the managers to handle and they should work hard at communicating with performance and financial reward connection (Lawler, 1988: 68 - 71). According to Umar (2012), salary or wages has become important that works as an effective tool in increasing employee performance. He also added that allowances are not influenced by employee performance except for the salary. A previous study by Kanzunnudin (2007) indicated that every organization must determine and decide the amount of salary of the employees that align with the needs of their life. An effective wage strategy is expected to contribute on the viability of the unit of work, the realization of the vision and mission, as well as for the achievement of the targets of work (Umar, 2012).

Bonuses

Bonus, as defined by Heathfield (2016), is the compensation over and exceeding the amount of pay that the employees received as a base salary or hourly rate of pay. Bonus plans are one of important part in reward systems. This is because a bonus that will be given to the employees will be based on their current performance in the organization. According to Bardot (2014) bonuses is a payment where the employees should not be expected to receive as it is commonly discretionary or backwards-looking. However, it can be considered as an extra amount of money paid by the organization when the employee performance is outstanding over the whole year. This bonus plan is to enhance the performance and effectiveness of employees on their job. The payment of bonus is commonly made at the end of the performance period that has been set up by an organization's policies which is a year (Romanoff, 2008). He stressed that bonus is to reward an extraordinary effort made by the employees throughout the year to motivate them and bonus also works as an incentive that will encourage the employees to show outstanding performance compare to low performers in the organization.

Appreciation

Appreciation is defined as meaningful and valuable to oneself (Sansone and Sansone, 2010). There are many definitions of gratitude that has been defined by scholars and views on the relationship between gratitude and appreciation. However, while agreeing to the relationship between gratitude and appreciation, McCraty and Childre (2004) argued that appreciation does not contain negative feelings. It is way from someone to thank others on their achievements. Moreover, McCraty and Childre (2004) indicated that appreciation has an energetic quality that expressed an extraordinary feeling of thankfulness from one person to another person. According to Fagley (2016), he argued that appreciation is another aspect of appreciation under gratitude such as ritual and it considered as a higher-order construct. Most of the employees truly appreciate an appreciation post or by saying a simple "thank you" for their hard work in the organization. Apart from that, appreciation can be classified into public thanks, the team thanks, private or verbal thanks and written thanks. These kinds of appreciation will make them feel valued by the organization.

Medical Benefits

Health care benefits are defined as policies and programs for maintaining and improving health (WHO, 1948) The way employees accept the health care benefits offered will affect their

satisfaction. Apart from that, an organization must not only pay for the health care premiums but must be able to improve and take care of employee health. The productivity of employees will be at a loss if the company is not willing to pay for employee health benefits. Thus, it will result in poor employee health and affects their performance. A study conducted in other countries by Noe et al. (2015) stated that the cost of benefits adds 44.5% to every dollar of payroll, accounting for 30,8% of the total employee non-financial compensation package. When the cost of health care programs keeps on increasing, it is very challenging to the organizations. Coggburn et al. (2012) explained organization should be responsible to create less competitive wage structure for employees. In this global area, health care benefits that cover all employees regardless they are healthy or disable are harder to find due to it is costly.

Relationship Between Employee Performance and Salary

According to Agburu (2017), salaries and wages are very significant and he also argued that wages must show a few elements of equity instead of focusing on adequate wages. This is because an adequate salary will provide satisfaction and enhance their performance in an organization. An employee aims to earn income either in the form of financial or non-financial. Past studies by Kanzunnudin (2007) indicated the amount of wages paid to the employee must be attainable to fulfil their needs for daily life. Fringe benefits and nature of the working environment are the main factors that influencing employee performance (Edirisooriya, 2014). A positive change in salary from the employer such as salary increment or increasing the size of the current salary of the employee will encourage them to improve their performance in the organization. A research conducted by Edirisooriya (2014) showed that there is a strong positive relationship between employee performance and financial rewards such as salary and wages.

H1: Salary has a positive effect on employee performance.

Relationship Between Employee Performance and Bonuses

Bonus is a payment that was not expected from the employees and the old line to some of the organization (Bardot, 2014). The decision made to pay is either to a group of employees or a person. The management needs to decide what criteria needed to reward the past achievements of the employee. For instance, the employee reaches specific profit or achieve sales target for the organization, and influence employees' behavior to achieve the objectives by providing an incentive such as a bonus to define an incentive as a progressive plan for the employee. The incentive aims to work towards the goals.

Another definition of bonus by scholar, it is defined as one payment made at the end of the year to reward extraordinary employees who achieve organization goals (Romanoff, 2008). Most of the bonus is a tangible reward such as cash. Despite there is a difference in bonuses and incentives, both are designated to motivate employee. Some straightforwardly give the worker money. Rewards based on execution against spending plan, quality or different norms might be utilized as prompt money related motivating forces. According to William (2010), the board remunerates by rewards have gotten prevalent in a few organizations as methods for furnishing representatives with a prompt buster for a culmination of a venture or action. Most organizations utilize monetary pay intend to motivate their workers. A previous study conducted by Hameed et. al (2014) and Sayuyigbe (2014) showed that the result of reward such as bonus has positive and significant effect towards employee performance.

H2: Bonuses has a positive effect on employee performance.

Relationship Between Employee Performance and Appreciation

An organization with positive aspirations could make accessible a system inside which elevated levels of inspiration could be cultivated through non-monetary reward frameworks by the arrangement of chances for learning and improvement (William, 2010). Appreciation is an expression of someone to thank for extra effort done by the employee in an organization. According to William (2010), the significant appreciation is to encourage the employees and to encourage others to do the same. Appreciation can be done through formal or informal and it is an effective way that does not have cost. However, an appreciation or gratitude should not be done or relying on a formal event organized by the organization as it can create a border and unhelpful to maintain employee's performance in the organization (Kouzes & Posner, 2017).

Porath, Gerbasi and Schorach (2015) argued that a sincere thank you from the employer will create a good environment that will increase productivity in the organization and also improve social network between the employer and employees. Feedback that into positive criticism is necessary for employee's development. It is significant to create a positive workplace culture. Positive feedback also motivates employees to function as a member team (William, 2010). A study conducted by Ozutku (2012) from the respondents from Turkish manufacturing firms showed a positive result of non-financial rewards such as appreciation and has a significant effect on employee performance.

H3: Appreciation has a positive effect on employee performance.

Relationship Between Employee Performance and Health Care Benefits

Knowing what affects employee satisfaction with health care benefits can provide sufficient information that enables employers to make the right decisions about the workplace. A study conducted by Hernandez and McDonald (2010) analyzed employee satisfaction as per specific industry of health care and alongside with the expenses and benefits of individuals with and without inabilities. They also stated that employers are more aware of people with disabilities and invest more money in healthier people. Thus, this will give dissatisfaction to healthier workers if their health care benefits are not equally compared to disabled people. Dulebohn, Molloy, Pichler, and Murrary (2009) declared that employee benefits are among the "most relevant for remaining competitive in the labor market" (p. 86). The medical cost is expensive, thus employees want organizations to understand their financial burden by designing effective health care benefits. Previous research by Tanya (2013) showed a positive result and health care benefit has a significant effect on employee performance.

H4: Health care benefits have a positive effect on employee performance.

Figure 1 below depicted the relationships between variable used in this study.
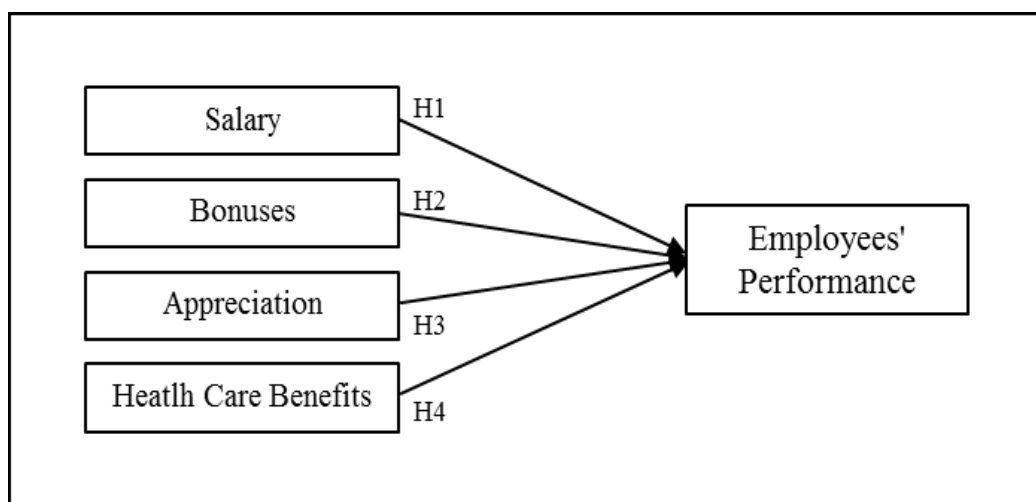
Figure 1: Theoretical Framework of Variables

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In this study, a quantitative research approach was adopted to identify the factors that influence employees' performance. Data were collected using questionnaires from a group of respondents consists of employees from McDonald's in Perlis and Penang region. The questions were structured in a Likert-type scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). 6 items were intended to determine demographic information like gender, age, race, education, experience and income. Four independent variables were employed to try to determine the effects of reward system on employee performance in the organization as it is compulsory benefits that they received for their performance in the organization. It is really important to measure the amount of salary, bonuses, appreciation and medical benefits that they received is adequate for living, fair with their workload and also meet their satisfaction. Data collected was then analyzed using the SPSS version 22.0 software in measuring the correlation between variables and regression analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This study has answered all the research questions and research objectives of this study which main focus was to examine the effect of salary, bonuses, appreciation and medical benefits (independent variables) towards employees' performance (dependent variable). Two tests were carried out, which are the correlation analysis and multiple regression analysis, to determine the relationship between variables and to determine the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable. The results of the analysis are presented below.

Correlation Analysis

The correlation analysis is to measure one to one relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable. The independent variables are salary, bonuses, appreciation, and health care benefits and the dependent variable is employee performance. Coefficient values of +1, -1, and 0 are being represented as a perfect positive relationship, a negative-positive relationship and no relationship exists. Results from the analysis as presented in Table 1 below indicated a positive correlation of (r= .360) between salary and employee performance. Even though it is a weak correlation, but it is statistically significant at the level of (p= .070), indicating that there is a

statistically significant positive correlation between salary and employee performance. This result means that within this population the salary received is associated to employee performance, that is, the higher the employees were paid for their jobs, the tendency is to perform better in their jobs will be improved. Next, the results indicated a positive correlation of (r= .624) between bonuses and employee performance. It is a moderately positive correlation, and it is statistically significant at the level of (p= .000), indicating that there is a statistically significant positive correlation between bonuses and employee performance. This result means that within this population the bonuses play an important part of compensation or rewards system to them where they would perform better if bonuses were given to them after one year of service. Next, the results indicated a positive correlation of (r= .530) between medical benefits and employee performance (table 1). It is a moderately positive correlation, and it is statistically significant at the level of (p= .000), indicating that there is a statistically significant positive correlation between medical benefits and employee performance. This result means that within this population, they care about medical benefits offered to them as it is expensive and harder to find a better offer of medical health provided by the organization.

Table 1: Results of Pearson's Correlation Analysis

		meanS	meanB	meanA	meanHC	meanEP
meanS	Pearson Correlation	1	.485**	.194*	.091	.360**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.027	.306	.000
	N	130	130	130	130	130
meanB	Pearson Correlation	.485**	1	.514**	.330**	.624**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	130	130	130	130	130
meanA	Pearson Correlation	.194*	.514**	1	.395**	.587**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.027	.000		.000	.000
	N	130	130	130	130	130
meanHC	Pearson Correlation	.091	.330**	.395**	1	.530**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.306	.000	.000		.000
	N	130	130	130	130	130
meanEP	Pearson Correlation	.360**	.624**	.587**	.530**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	130	130	130	130	130

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Multiple Regression Analysis

Regression can be used to explore the relationship between dependent variable which is employee performance and independent variables to ensure the appropriateness of the outputs from the regression analysis, the assumption of multiple regression was tested by checking the Standardized Coefficient Beta, Significant and R square.

Model Fit

The model summary in Table 2 below shows the result of R-value as a level of prediction of the dependent variable which is employee performance. For this study, the result of R as shown in Table 4.44 indicated that the level of prediction for this model is good and acceptable. The result for R square is 0.569 shows that the independent variables and dependent variables were able to explain 56.9% of the variability of the dependent variable.

Table 2: Model Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.754ª	.569	.555	.38464

Statistical Analysis

In this study, the researcher used ANOVA test to test the overall regression is a good fit for the data which indicate whether the model is a significant predictor of the outcome variable. Table 3 below shows the result of $F_{(4,125)} = 41.190$, $p<0.01$ indicated the model was a significant predictor of employee performance.

Table 3: Model Summary of ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	24.376	4	6.094	41.190	.000ᵇ
	Residual	18.494	125	.148		
	Total	42.870	129			

a. Dependent Variable: meanEP
b. Predictors: (Constant), meanHC, meanS, meanA, meanB

Estimated Model Coefficient

Table 4 below presented the coefficient value of the variables.

Table 4: Model Summary of Coefficients Analysis

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-.176	.358		-.491	.624
	meanS	.130	.071	.123	1.824	.070
	meanB	.340	.083	.321	4.100	.000
	meanA	.347	.089	.278	3.895	.000
	meanHC	.194	.042	.303	4.674	.000

a. Dependent Variable: meanEP

Unstandardized coefficient shows that the dependent variable varies with an independent variable when all other independent variables are held constant. For salary, the unstandardized coefficient is equal to 0.130, this means one level of salary increase, there is an increase in employee performance of 0.130 level. This is represented by the equation $Y= 0.130x + C$. Result also shows the significant value of p=0.070, which shows that salary is not a significant factor that contributes to the model.

For bonuses, the unstandardized coefficient is equal to 0.340, this means one level of increase in bonuses, there is an increase in employee performance of 0.340 level. This is represented by the equation $Y= 0.340x + C$. Result also shows the significant value of p=0.00, which shows that bonuses have a significant impact that contributes to the model.

For appreciation, the unstandardized coefficient is equal to 0.347, this means one level of increase in bonuses, there is an increase in employee performance of 0.347 level. This is represented by the equation Y= 0.347x + C. Result also shows the significant value of p=0.00, which shows that appreciation is a significant factor that contributes to the model.

Lastly, for the medical health benefits, the unstandardized coefficient is equal to 0.194, this means one level of increase in medical health benefits, there is an increase in employee performance of 0.194 level. This is represented by the equation Y= 0.194x + C. Result also shows the significant value of p=0.00, which shows that medical health benefits are a significant factor that contributes to the model.

To predict employee performance, an equation below is developed:

> Predict Employee Performance = Constant - (0.130 x Salary) + (0.340 x Bonuses) + (0.347 x Appreciation) + (0.194 x Health Care Benefits)

Statistical Significant of Independent Variable

Based on the best result of significant, the result of significant should be $p<0.01$, then it can be considered the items are accepted and signed between the two variables. Based on Table 4 shown above, the result for the independent variable of salary is p=0.70. It clearly shows that salary is insignificantly correlated to employee performance. The independent variable of bonuses shows that the result is p=0.00, where bonuses are significantly correlated to employee performance. The independent variable of appreciation, the result above shows the result of appreciation is p=0.00, where it shows that appreciation is significantly directly correlated with employee performance. The independent variable of health care benefits indicated that the result of health care benefits is p=0.00, where it shows that health care benefits are significantly correlated to employee performance.

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing is to determine accurately if the null hypothesis can be rejected in favor of the alternate hypothesis. Therefore, Table 5 below shows the results of hypothesis testing.

Table 5: Results of Hypothesis Testing

HYPOTHESIS	RESULTS
H1: Salary has significant effect on employee	Rejected (β=.130,p<0.70)
H2: Bonuses has significant effect on employee	Fail to reject (β=.340,p<0.00)
H3: Appreciation has significant effect on employee	Fail to reject (β=.347,p<0.00)
H4: Health care benefits has significant effect on employee	Fail to reject (β=.194,p<0.00)

Hypothesis 1

H1: There is an effect of the reward system for salary on employee performance. Based on the regression analysis, the result showed (β=.130, p<0.70), indicated that salary has a negative significant effect on employee performance. Therefore, the result shows for hypothesis 1 is rejected.

Hypothesis 2

H2: There is an effect of the reward system for bonuses on employee performance. Based on the regression analysis, the result shows for bonuses is (β=.340, p<0.00), indicated that bonuses have a positive significant effect on employee performance. Therefore, the result shows for hypothesis 2 is accepted.

Hypothesis 3

H3: There is an effect of the reward system for appreciation on employee performance. Based on the regression analysis, the result indicated that appreciation has a positive significant effect on employee performance where the beta value for appreciation is (β=.340, p<0.00). Therefore, the result showed for hypothesis 3 is accepted.

Hypothesis 4

H4: There is an effect of the reward system for health care benefits on employee performance. Based on the regression analysis, the result indicated that health care benefits have a positive significant effect on employee performance where the beta value is (β=.194, p<0.00). Therefore, the result shows for hypothesis 4 is accepted.

CONCLUSION

This research has provided an insight into the factor that affect reward systems on employee performance at McDonald's in Perlis and Penang. The model used in this study allowed for an analysis of the independent variables which are salary, bonuses, appreciations and health care benefits. Moreover, the use of the regression analysis was particularly useful to determine the overall fit of the model.

However, future research on the effects of reward system on employee performance could give a brilliant idea to formulate, examine and establish a good research model that could provide a better understanding of what kind of reward system that could increase employee's performance in the organization other than independent variables tested in this research study. This is because there are many types of a reward system in terms of financial and non-financial rewards that might have a huge impact on employee performance as the employees tend to show their good performance when they want salary increment, aim for the bonus at the end of the year, being recognized and appreciated by the organization, or were provided with a good cover-up such as medical insurance or health care benefits that could benefit them for a long time in the organization.

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