

Employees' Performance and Organisational Culture in the Utility Sector

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Received Date: 14 November 2021

Accepted Date: 21 December 2021

Published Date: 31 January 2022

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ABSTRACT

The study investigates the influence of organisational culture towards employee performance in the utility sector. There is a lack of cultural integration between employees, which is a primary cause of failure in the utility sector. The purpose of the study is to analyse the relationships between factors that influence employee performance, which are employee participation, openness to communication, and reward systems among the employees of the utility sector. The researchers have selected the employees working in the utility sector as the study's population, which has included 134 employees. A set of questionnaires has been used to collect and analyse data and distributed via Google Form to the respondents. The statistical analyses have been performed by using Version 23 of the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). In order to identify the impact of organisational culture on the employees of this sector, Correlation analyses have been used. The results show that there is a strong relationship between independent and dependent variables. The results also indicate that the three hypotheses are accepted. The researchers hope that the results will also provide benefits to the organisation. As a result, the study focuses on how an effective organisational culture is formed to improve employee performance can be identified. Furthermore, this study has also emphasised the current theoretical and empirical gaps in the field of organisational culture and employee performance, hence, the findings may be valuable for future research.

Keywords: *Employees' Participation, Openness to Communication, Reward Systems, Employees' Performance*

INTRODUCTION

Job performance has always been a key challenge in the management of any organisation. Using methods for motivating their workers to reach and provide increased work performance to improve the competitiveness of the organisations is a key objective of every business organisation (Inuwa, 2016). Job performance is indeed an important factor to every organisation. According to Weerathna and Geeganage (2014), performance could give positive and negative effects on an organisation. This is because, in an organisation, employee performance is a mean scenario. When employees start to decrease their performance, it could give a negative effect on the operation of their company. This situation, which is faced by the company, should motivate the company management to take fast action to overcome it before the problem affects more deeply on the company's growth. To address this, the management should discuss and troubleshoot the root of the problem that has caused this. Typically, most companies have to deal with the same employee-performance problems because of the strict cultures that prevail. In addition, since the performance of employees is key in a company, the aspects that underlie the high performance must be critically examined by the company for it to succeed and survive (Inuwa, 2016). This is because employee performance symbolises a broad trust of personnel about the behaviour of the employees and their contributions to the performance of the company.

According to Weerathna and Geeganage (2014), people-orientation is still one of the most debated issues in the organisational culture today. It is necessary to improve the literature by studying which aspects of the organisational culture has determined employee performance and finding out the extent to which the management focuses on people. Some organisations are well-known for being employee-oriented because they are more focused on creating a better working environment for their "colleagues" to work. However, other companies are still feudal, which means that they treat workers no better than "robots" or "machines". A people-oriented culture can make a difference between successful companies and those that are not. The level of aggressiveness with which their employees work lays down on every organisation. The competitiveness of an organisation is not only in technology but also in corporate culture. According to Hickey (2012), employees may become aggressive at their workplace when they feel unfairly treated. They may respond differently according to different psychological stresses by using a variety of coping mechanisms in high-risk situations and during stress (Hickey, 2012). Thus, this study has been conducted to determine which variables in the organisational culture contribute to the performance of satisfied employees.

Some organisations believe that innovation and continuous changes are key to organisational growth (Weerathna & Geeganage, 2014). To make sure that the organisations are stable, they would focus more on making themselves and their operations better. In other words, employee performance means contributing towards producing a high quality of services and products. The utility sector, like every other company, is dealing with substantial interruptions in operations, employees, and plans as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. So far, the utility sector has done a good job in providing power while also safeguarding its employees' performance too. However, at times of stress, other concerns can be overwhelmed by the sense of urgency. The risk is that the utility sector will pay insufficient attention to safeguarding and even strengthening its culture (Sowby, 2020).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Employee Performance

Weerathna and Geeganage (2014) have defined employee performance as the most important component for many organisations. The performance of employees is regarded as the foundation of any organisation because it directs its effective progress. To achieve organisational targets, many organisations

always expect high performance from their employees. If the employees show poor performance, then the organisational performance would be poor and inefficient too. One of the weaknesses faced by the companies is that if they are aware of the fact that the performance of their employees has decreased, the management should respond immediately to re-establish it before it may affect the companies' growth (Weerarathna & Geeganage, 2014). Most studies done by researchers have shown that employees' job performance is always the main challenge in the management of organisations and using efficient methods can motivate their employees to increase and prepare themselves for high work performance to improve their organisational competitiveness to achieve every main objective targeted (Wu & Lee, 2011). Hence, it is believed that the performance of employees is responsible for the growth and profitability of organisations. Muda, Rafiki, and Harahap (2014) have reported that employees are considered key business resources that facilitate the day-to-day operations of organisations. The employers' ability to understand employee satisfaction, as it relates to daily schedules and responsibilities, would greatly affect the performance of their employees and their production. Nevertheless, some employees have a high level of job dissatisfaction that leads to unwanted attitudes (Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 2013).

Overall employee satisfaction can be considered as the overall assessment of employees on the organisational culture that can influence their behaviours towards their organisation. This is because organisational effectiveness and efficiency are dependent on the extent of the effectiveness and efficiency of workers in a company (Omolayo & Oluwafemi, 2012). The performance of employees serves as a financial indicator or the outcome of the employees that is directly related to the performance of an organisation as well as its performance onwards, indicating that the working environment, leadership, team-to-peer relationships, training and career development, reward programmes, guidelines and procedures, well-being stations, and employee involvement are key factors that determine the performance of the employees (Anita, 2014).

Organisational Culture

Organisational culture is defined as the responsibility of a company or organisation, such as focusing on hiring employees, management, and guidelines for the employees that are working within it, and influencing the way the employees communicate with each other (Dimitrios, 2014). The personality of a company and the aspect form of methods the company works on are considered an organisational culture (Weerarathna & Geeganage, 2014). This includes values, beliefs, experiences, and attitudes of a company, which are acquired through social learning, which is the way individuals and groups in the company are related to each other and with outsiders. According to Weerarathna and Geeganage (2014), a culture reflects people's sides of life in an organisation, which emphasises the significance of designing suitable systems to allow the employees to collaborate to achieve organisational targets.

Organisational culture is "*a company's orientation towards its internal stakeholders, which forms the basic rules that guide employees' behaviours developed and shared within an organisation*" (Maseko, 2017). Divyarajaram (2014) has pointed out that organisational culture is important in promoting behaviours that could motivate employees through recognition, which encourage their self-satisfaction and respond as a guideline to employees' actions and thinking.

Employee Participation

According to Kapur (2020), employee participation is considered a system by which they have acquired the right to join a process in decision-making on issues concerning them. In the meantime, Kapur (2020) has defined employee participation as an opportunity for all members of a company to make an

efficient contribution toward promoting the well-being and goodwill of employees. This is because bigger responsibilities and good participation in the decision-making process on behalf of employees will encourage their career development, their confidence and trust, their feelings of responsibility towards supervisors, managers, and the organisation in general. When the employees join business activities with other employees, it is considered employee participation (Mugali, 2015). Employee participation is considered an essential element for setting organisational targets as it can increase the acceptance of goals and it is also an attribute that is positively related to the overall effectuality of an organisation (Shahzad, Iqbal, & Gulzar, 2013). Psychosocial well-being is measured through job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and trust in superiors. All these three well-being indicators have revealed that there are statistically significant differences between participating and non-participating companies in any of the three participation practices (Uribetxebarria, Garmendia Ochoantesana, & Elorza, 2020).

Openness to Communication

According to Femi (2014), organisational communication acts as an important role in an organisation, which can be a challenge to it. The incapability of supervisors in any organisation to coordinate the flow of perfect and seamless communications and interactions between employees and the external business environment may create low productivity with dull and frustrated levels of employees. Consequently, the employees may understand and translate the message differently. Hence, one of the important goals of an organisation is effective communication (Hitka et al., 2018; Spillan et al., 2002). New communication tools, such as network platforms, could be used as a place to share information and internal documents, which is part of transformations that supports open communication. Effective communication assists employees to ensure that they could run consistently the internal process and it is beneficial for realising superior relationships with people; inside and outside an organisation (Shahzad, Iqbal, & Gulzar, 2013).

In the meantime, Stacho et al. (2019) have stated that open communication, in general, can be seen as a motivational instrument for work. Instructions that are unclear and restricted access to information are examples of employees being denied having open communication. Open communication between the management of a company and its employees can be an appropriate tool to create a well surrounding where the employees feel that they belong to their company and are ready to gain success in competition (Stacho et al., 2019). Meanwhile, Schiller and Cui (2014) have reported that communication openness is crucial to efficiency, effectuality, and whole success in businesses. This is because open communication between employers and employees in a company is proven to be an appropriate instrument to create an environment where workers feel friendly relationships with their organisation. In industrial miscommunication, gossip, and disagreements, effective communication plays a very important role to break these. In the interim, Hee et al. (2019) has found that horizontal communication can stimulate learning and decision-making at the lower levels of an organisational hierarchy. It encourages staff to work together more effectively, which is reflected in their work.

Reward System

According to Ihedinmah and Chijioke (2015), an employee reward system is considered a programme that is developed at the individual or group level by an organisation to reward its employees and motivate them based on their performances. The reward system is usually considered different from the monthly salary or other costs. Besides, Ihedinmah and Chijioke (2015) have also reported that, in planning a reward system, the organisation should determine the goals of a team of employees to achieve and the performance of specific goals that will attract rewards. Thus, the management will help to organise

the reward system to shape the employees' behaviours and, at the same time, be able to reach the organisational targets. Rewards should be used to strengthen and reinforce appropriate behaviours and reinforcement for unwanted achievements should be missed, but, unluckily, employees benefit based on behaviours that are relevant to their performances, and there are limited effects of technology, plans, and regulations (Shahzad, Iqbal, & Gulzar, 2013). According to Ngwa et al. (2019), there is a relationship between a reward system and employee performance. Employers can use the reward system as a motivational factor to fine-tune employees' behaviours towards employee performance.

Theoretical Framework

This study shows the conceptual framework as follows:

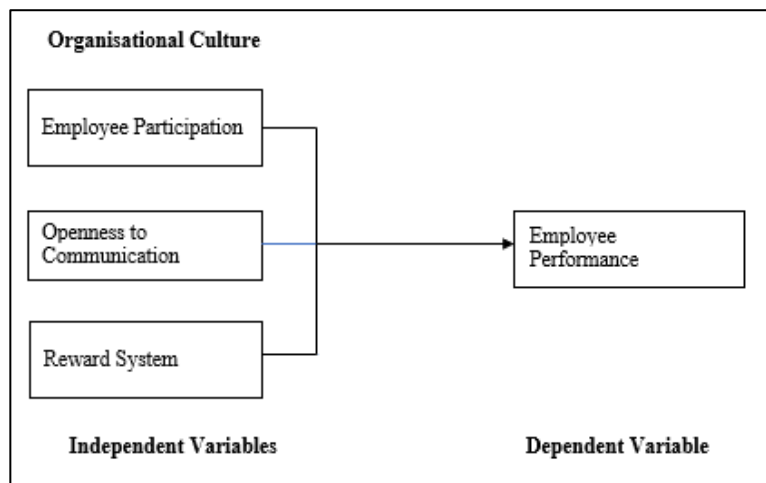


Figure 1: Theoretical Framework

METHODOLOGY

This research has been carried out correlational in nature. Correlational research is defined as a linear relationship between two or more variables without any signs of linking the influence of one variable over another (Salkind, 2012). Correlational research typically examines a relationship between two or more non-manipulated variables. In other words, it refers to research where a researcher seeks to identify a relationship between factors that influence the organisational culture towards the performance of the employees. The sampling frame has been based on the list of the employees working at Tenaga Nasional Berhad Kemaman. The up-to-date list of the employees has been given by the Human Resource Department of Tenaga Nasional Berhad Kemaman, known as the Business Support Office (BSO). Krejcie and Morgan (1970) have provided the sample population and the calculation of sample size for the analysis using the sample size table. Since the population of the study is 134, the sample size of the respondents is 97.

A simple random sampling technique has been used in this study. According to Hayes (2019), a simple random sample is a subset of a statistical population in which each member of the subset has an equal probability of being chosen. A simple random sample is meant to be an unbiased representation of a group. For this study, the questionnaire has been randomly distributed to ensure that there is enough participation by the employees. Having distributed the questionnaire, the researchers have managed to receive feedback from the 97 respondents. The sampling frame of this study has been obtained from eleven (11) divisions,

which are Business Support Office (BSO) (8 staff), Retail (6 staff), Credit Management (6 staff), Meter Reading and Billing (16 staff), Metering (9 staff), Fleet Management (9 staff), Real Estate Venture (REV) (1 staff), Customer Care Business Development (CCBD) (1 staff), Asset Development (13 staff), Network Planning (7 staff), and Operation Maintenance (5 staff).

This study has used correlational research via a quantitative approach by using a survey method. The questionnaires have been distributed to the employees using Google Form. The 5-point Likert scale has been used to allow the respondents to indicate their levels of agreement for each of the independent and dependent variables. The questionnaire has had five sections, which are Sections A, B, C, D, and E. Sections B to E cover items, measured by using scales, of which the employees have been required to answer the questions about whether they agree or disagree with the questions by showing their satisfaction/dissatisfaction levels using the 5-point Likert scales, which are “1 - Strongly Disagree”, “2 - Disagree”, “3 - Neither Agree nor Disagree”, “4 - Agree”, and “5 - Strongly Agree”. Meanwhile, Section A contains items related to the demographic profile of the respondents. The employees have been required to declare their marital status, gender, salary, age, and level of education. In Section B, the respondents have been demanded to answer the questions about employee participation, while Section C comprises items pertaining to openness to communication. Section D covers items associated with to reward system, and Section E asks the respondents questions regarding employee performance.

For this research, the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) has been used by the researchers. Sekaran and Bougie (2013) have pointed out that if there is a collection of blank data, which is about 25% and above, the questionnaire must be excluded from being coded in the SPSS database. Luckily, the finalised data could be successfully coded in the SPSS software. In response to that, Sekaran and Bougie (2013) have stated that the objective of doing this is to test the merits of the data and hypotheses developed for the research. There have been a few statistical data that could be used to examine the data, which are reliability analysis, correlation analysis, regression analysis, and frequency analysis.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Reliability Analysis

The questionnaires have been distributed to the respondents by using Google Form and their reliability has been examined by using the reliability analysis to measure and test the questionnaire whether or not the questions or variables are reliable. The rule of thumb of the Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient size (Hair et al., 2015) has been used as a guideline.

Table 1: Questionnaire reliability

Variables	No. of Items	Alpha Value
Employee Participation	10	0.917
Openness to Communication	10	0.956
Reward System	10	0.876
Employee Performance	10	0.948

The table above shows the reliability testing for this research by using 100 respondents. The value of Cronbach’s Alpha explains how excellent and good the correlation is between the questions of all the dependent variables and independent variables, which are employee participation, openness to communication, reward system, and employee performance. For the independent variables, the Cronbach’s Alpha values generated are in a range between 0.876 and 0.956, and the Cronbach’s Alpha value of the dependent variable is 0.948.

For the “employee participation” variable, the questionnaire consists of ten questions and the Cronbach’s Alpha value is 0.917. According to the Rule of Thumb of the Cronbach’s Alpha Coefficient Size, this value shows that the “employee participation” questions have a very good reliability coefficient, therefore, no question has been deleted. Meanwhile, for the “openness to communication” variable, the questionnaire consists of ten questions and the Cronbach’s Alpha value is 0.956. This shows that the “openness to communication” questions have a very good reliability coefficient. For this variable, likewise, there is no question deleted.

The last independent variable is the “reward system”. For this variable, there are ten questions of which the value of Cronbach’s Alpha is also 0.876, which indicates that the questions have a very good reliability coefficient, therefore, no question has been deleted. In the meantime, the dependent variable, which is “employee performance”, contains ten questions. Its Cronbach’s Alpha value is 0.948, which shows that the dependent variable also has a very good reliability coefficient, which means that there is no question deleted. Thus, it could be concluded that the entire variables are all acceptable and reliable for the study.

Frequency Analysis

In this study, the frequency distribution has been used to display the demographic profile, which refers to how many times a subcategory of a particular phenomenon occurs. Hence, to make it easily calculated, the researchers have used the percentage to represent the occurrences, such as the total number of respondents; the total number of males, females, marital status, range of age, salary, and level of education.

Table 2: Demographic Profile

		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender			
Valid	Male	82	82.0
	Female	18	18.0
	Total	100	100.0
Age			
Valid	Bellow 25 years old	4	4.0
	26-35 years old	49	49.0
	36-45 years old	22	22.0
	46 years old and above	25	25.0
	Total	100	100.0
Marital Status			
Valid	Single	8	8.0
	Married	91	91.0
	Divorced	1	1.0
	Total	100	100.0
Level of Education			
Valid	PMR-SPM	67	67.0
	Diploma-Degree	33	33.0
	Total	100	100.0
Salary			
Valid	RM1,001-RM3,000	59	59.0
	Above RM3,001	41	41.0
	Total	100	100.0

The table of the frequency distribution shows that, out of 100 respondents in the study, 82 are male (82%) and 18 are female (18%) who have been involved as the respondents. Based on the responses to the survey, it is found that four respondents are below 25 years old (4%). 49 respondents are aged between 26 and 35 years old, representing the highest percentage of the range of age (49%). There are 22 respondents, contributing about 22%, who are aged between 36 and 45 years old. Lastly, 25 respondents are aged 46 years old and above, which contribute around 25%, representing the second-highest percentage of the range of age. For marital status, a majority of the respondents, representing 91 staff, are married (91%) while the remaining 8 respondents (8%) are single. Only 1 respondent is divorced (1%).

In this research, a majority of the respondents are PMR-SPM holders in terms of their level of education, which represents 67 respondents (67%), followed by Diploma-Degree holders, represented by 33 respondents (33%). The last section of the demographic profile is the salary of the employees of Tenaga Nasional Berhad Kemaman. It is shown that a majority of the staff, representing 59 staff (59%) have a range of income between RM1,001 and RM3,000, followed by 41 staff who have an income above RM3,001 (41%).

Correlation Analysis

Pearson's Correlation has been used to determine the strength of a relationship between the dependent variable, which is employee performance, and the independent variables, which are employee participation, openness to communication, and reward system. Pearson's values are based on the correlation analysis, which shows a relationship between the independent variables and dependent variables. Meanwhile, the hypotheses are made from two different variables which show the comparisons of how they are related and are made by logical guesses (Sekaran & Bougie, 2009). By using Person's correlation, the researchers have been able to identify, by using the significant level, whether or not the null hypotheses should be accepted.

Table 3: Analysis of Correlation

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation	Pearson's Correlation
Employee participation	43.0200	4.91746	0.759**
Openness to communication	43.6900	5.46928	0.729**
Reward system	43.0400	5.98976	0.749**
Employee performance	44.1500	5.37178	

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

The correlation between the three variables applied in this study is shown in the table above. Employee participation, openness to communication, and reward system are all independent variables that are correlated with the dependent variable, employee performance, in terms of organizational culture. According to the findings, there is a moderate association between 0.759, 0.749, and 0.729. In this section, there are three (3) hypotheses tested. In the correlation analysis, based on the table, it is shown that all the independent variables, which are employee participation, openness to communication, and reward system, have a significant impact on employee performance towards organizational culture as the significant value is below than the critical value, which is 0.05 ($P < 0.05$). Therefore, it could be concluded that the three hypotheses are accepted.

CONCLUSION

This study has required the researchers to analyse the data by using frequency distribution, reliability tests, and correlation coefficients. According to the analyses, the researchers can determine the systematic relationship between the variables. The researcher can summarise that all the proposed research objectives are achieved. The first three objectives are to investigate the relationship between organisational culture, which are employee participation, openness to communication, and a reward system, for employee performance. Based on the analysis, the result indicates that there is a positive relationship between the three variables. This shows that all three independent variables display a significant relationship with employee performance. For the correlation coefficient, the highest value between the variables belongs to employee participation (0.759), followed by the reward system (0.749) and openness to communication (0.729). Based on the analysis, the researchers can conclude that the three “organisational culture” variables have a significant effect on employee performance as their significant values are below ($p < 0.05$). Thus, all the hypotheses are accepted.

Every individual has different cultures and beliefs that he or she works with. When he or she joins an organisation that has a completely different culture and beliefs from his own, he or she should be allowed to internalise himself or herself first with the organisation’s culture and values to know whether he or she can manage with them or not. The employee can cope with the organisation’s culture that will determine how he or she will perform his or her job. The organisational culture must be binding on all members and employees of the organisation as this will encourage uniformity among the employees of the organisation, thus, enhancing commitment and group efficiency. In cases where organisational culture must be changed, the employees must, first of all, be notified and made to learn the modification of the old culture as this will affect their performance positively. Based on the study conducted, the researchers can summarise that employee participation is the factor that mostly influences employee performance in organisational culture, while openness to communication has the lowest contribution, which shows that it needs to be improved though. This denotes that the employees always perceive that they have not been given enough chances to get involved in activities. On top of that, the study has also described the fact that the employees are unsatisfied with their participation in organisational culture.

In the meantime, the employees who seem to avoid joining activities for no apparent reasons could attract unnecessary, negative views of organisational culture towards their performances. To improve employee participation, the organisation needs to improve its training programmes by allowing the employees to join activities regardless of their positions, be they, employees or supervisors, to avoid biases. By doing this, the employees may feel appreciated because they are fairly treated by their employer. In addition, there is also a need to improve information-sharing between the employees and their employer. By sharing information and reprimanding mistakes with the employees, they would be more appreciative and this may motivate them to perform well in the future. All information and advice from the employer should be thought of professionally before he or she discusses it with the employees to avoid misunderstanding between them.

Finally, the employer also needs to improve some mechanisms in terms of rewards, which are by giving rewards to senior employees as a token of appreciation for their contributions. It is known that the senior employees, who have many experiences, knowledge, and skills, would soon retire. By giving away some rewards to them, they may feel highly appreciated. Consequently, they would be willing to share their knowledge and experiences they have with the junior employees, which would increase their competitive advantage and help to achieve organisational goals.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors would like to express the deepest appreciation and special gratitude to Universiti Teknologi MARA, colleagues, and all those who assisted in completing this paper contributed to stimulating suggestions and encouragement and helped coordinate this project especially in writing this research paper.

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