



Appraising Motivational Factors on Employee Performance: Empirical Evidence of Private Sector in Malaysia

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. Authors SNMB and SBMI devised the project, the main conceptual ideas and proof outline. Authors MAJ and NHHS worked out almost all of the technical details, and performed tread and all author approved the final manuscript. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

The main focus of this study is to investigate the effect of motivational factors on employee performance in the private sector in Malaysia. The motivation factors that have been investigated in this study include wages & salary, reward & recognition and working environment. A questionnaire was adapted in this study in order to collect all the data needed from the respondents. This study uses a simple random sampling method in order to choose the respondents for answer the questionnaire that prepared. A cross-sectional survey was employed, and the primary data were purposively collected through the distribution of copies of the questionnaires to 97 staff of private companies in Northern Malaysia validly filled and returned representing 100 % response rate. According to the findings of this study using regression analysis, it shows that wages, salary, reward

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& recognition have recorded not significant relationship with the employee performance in the private sector in Malaysia. This is said because wages salary, variable recorded p – value is at 0.492, reward and recognition variable recorded p – value is 0.756. This study has confirmed that working environment motivational factor have a significant relationship with the employee performance in the private sector in Malaysia. This can be seen when the working environment motivational factor recorded the p – value less than 0.05 in the regression analysis which is at 0.000. Based on this study finding and other supported findings from the other journals, it is clear that there is a significant relationship between the working environment motivational factor and employee performance in the private sector in Malaysia.

Keywords: Motivational factors; employee performance; wages; salary; reward; recognition; working environment.

1. INTRODUCTION

Organizations today are continuously seeking to develop and motivate their employees in this dynamic globalized world to help achieve improved performance through various human resources applications and policies. Based on the study conducted by Furaha Bonaventura Manyenga in 2016, it shows that motivation will help to establish better employee outcomes such as performance and productivity. Through her study, she stated that recognition and empowerment play an important part in enhancing employee motivation towards organizational tasks. Motivated workers are actively engaged and more willing to take responsibility and they also will be highly involved with their role and careers [1].

Motivations are inspiring forces that become a primary cause of the action of every living organism, including human beings. Motivation for an employee is a significant asset in order to bring value to the company by sustaining and improving its market and maintaining its growth. Employees who do their roles in such a way that they are expected to do their jobs with comparatively more commitment, so that they can do more to play the role they are asked to play [2]. Employers always face the challenge of motivating and creating a high degree of work satisfaction among their employees. Organization performance is driven by positively inspired workers in the organization [3].

When management creates employees to become more involved in assessing the assessment of their own performance, the quality of performance can be improved. The organization's performance relies very much on the ability of employees to use their ingenuity, talents, and know-how to support the organization [4]. It is the duty of an organisation to promote and nourish employee positivity by

adopting successful motivating factors. Motivation factors in the organization have the ability to influence the employee performance on that organization.

Employees with high work motivation will keep on attempting to get promoted and they also will always seek for wise ways to carry out their duties and responsibilities. There is huge agreement among top management about the importance of effective motivation incentives in order to motivate good performance among their employees for the organization's benefits [5]. Several past studies have indicated that motivational factors in the private sector are very effective in improving the employee performance in that related sector [6] [7].

Motivation is the process that accounts for the individual's intensity, direction and consistency of the initiative to accomplish the goal. Motivational factors in the human resource field refer to something that makes a person feel satisfied with their job. It can be said that a perfect motivational factor can influence the employee to improve their positive attitudes towards their job. There are a variety of factors that inspire employees in their workplace, some of that are tangible, such as monetary incentives, and some of that are intangible, such as a sense of accomplishment. Motivated employees will be able to use their ingenuity, expertise and know how to support the organization well [4].

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

There are some previous studies and researches that have been carried out in order examined factors that motivate employees and their subsequent effect on their employee performance. The main purpose of this part is to review some recent empirical studies in various industries that are related to the motivation factors and employee performance.

A study on the title of “The Impact of Employee’s Motivation on Work Performance in the Private Organization in Tanzania” was undertaken by Furaaha Bonaventura Manyenga in 2016. The finding of these studies shows that hygiene factors mainly help to motivate the employees. In simple words, it can be said that the working environment, empowerment & recognition, pay & benefits are the most significant motivation factors that help to improve the employee performance at the workplace [1].

Another study titled “Effect of Motivational Factors on Employee Performance in Tristar Tyre Factory” was carried out by Hein Htet in 2019. The motivation factors that have been used in this study are payment, job security, promotion, employee welfare, work condition and training. The result of this study shows that training and work environment are the most dominant motivation factors that influence the employee performance in the Tristar Tyre factory [8].

Njanja, Maina, Kibet & Kageni [9] conducted a study on the title of “Effect of Reward on Employee Performance”, the finding of this study shows that cash bonus reward has no effect on the employee performance and it is not really help the organization to motivate their employees in order to achieve their organizational goals. This study also suggests the organization to focus more on the intrinsic nature and content of the jobs as the author will help them to motivate their employee performance.

A study titled on “Influence of Salary, Promotion, and Recognition toward Work Motivation among Government Trade Agency Employees” was carried out [4]. The result of this study indicates that rewards are the best motivation factors that can be used by the organization in order to improve their employee performance. Other than reward, the author also concluded that salary, promotion and recognition can motivate the employees to perform better in their workplace.

A study in the title of “Factors Influencing Employee Motivation and Its Impact on Employee on Employee Performance” was undertaken by Caroline Njambi in 2014 [10]. The outcome of this study has identified some intrinsic factors such as employee achievements, recognition, working environment, responsibility & advancement and salary structure that have the ability to influence the motivation of employees. This study also shows that

motivation of employees has a positive relationship with the employee performance.

2.1 Employee Performance

It can be said that the most significant aspect in every organization is the employee performance, this is because the organization's success or failure relies on its employee's performance. Performance is seen as the application of an action or the outcome that a person achieves by doing something. Employee performance can be defined as the job opportunities and it requires the employee's knowledge, ability and skills in order to implement their job duties effectively and successfully without any mistakes. While, work performance has been described in relation to the quality of work likely to be carried out from every worker [4].

Employee performance is known as the measure of the quality of human capital that organization retains. According to Oluseyi & Tasleem Ayobami, employee performance or work performance refers to the employee behaviors in their workplace. Most of the organizations nowadays trying to satisfy their customer needs more compared to their employee's need in order to achieve success in their field [11]. It is important for the organization to satisfy their employee needs first, because satisfied employees will put more effort in the organization's work and this will help the organization to satisfy their customer needs easily [3].

Employee performance involves the quality and quantities of production, the appearance at the workplace, the cooperative and supportive behavior and timeliness of output. Employee performance is significantly affected by motivation, this is because once employees are motivated, they will work with more responsibility and this will directly increase their performance [12]. Excellent employee performance is mandatory, because the success of an organization in its field relies on the creativity, originality and commitment of the organization employees [13]. Other than attention to commitment, motivation is also still seen as having a significant influence on employee performance [3].

There are similarities between the terms of employee performance and job performance. Based on Kahya's article in 2009, it can be said that there are 2 dimensions of employee behavior in the term of job performance which is

task performance and contextual performance [14]. Task performance can be defined as the behavior of the employees in an organization that directly involved in the main activities related to the organization. Task performance requires employees to use their personal skills and knowledge in the organization activities. Contextual performance refers to the employee's effort that is not directly related to the major activity of the organization and it is still considered important in order to support the organization [15].

2.2 Wages & Salary

As everyone knew, money indicates the right to do something that people want to do. Most of the people believe that money is a solution to solve a lot of the problems that they face. One of the main factors that most of the people consider in determining job decisions is about the end of month salary [16]. Money is a basic encouragement, there is no other incentive or motivation better than money. It can be said that wages & salary are one of the best motivation factors that an organization can use in order to strengthen and maintain competitive employees to help them to achieve the organization goals.

Wages and salary generally can be defined as the amount of money payment from an employer to their employees. The main differences between wages and salary are wages will be paid as the daily payments for the work done by the employee during that working day while salary will be paid to employees who work for the organization based on the monthly or annually basic. Wages are paid based on the hours worked and performance. Salary is the most essential component for the organization [2]. Wages and salary is the fairly easy aspect, the rise or reduction in wages or salary will result in a lot of dissatisfaction within an organization.

According to Bullock, Stritch, & Rainey [17] research, it shows that salaries are one of the significant factors that can be used to motivate the employees to be more loyal and sincere in their work [17]. It can be said that the employee's performance will be affected negatively if the employers pay moderate salaries and implement payment methods that are not consistent [2]. This is said because employees will not be satisfied with the low salaries and wages and this will cause poor performance among the employees. Employees would be satisfied and inspired to perform better if they are paid or received an increase in their wages or salary.

Extrinsic rewards such as salary and wages will raise the work motivation among the demotivated employees and it will also encourage them to come to work everyday and to perform more in their job scope [18]. Every employer must be reasonable in determining the amount of wages paid to the employee in order to make sure the amount of wages given to them are enough for them to meet the needs of their lives [19]. The research result of Bullock, Stritch and Rainey [17] shows that in both private and public sectors, wages play a significant role in ensuring that workers are inspired, attentive, committed and responsible to their jobs [17].

Nowadays, almost all organizations use various motivation factors such as salary, promotion, bonuses or other forms of incentives to inspire and promote the high-level performance among employees. Increase in the amount of wages and salary given to the employees will cause an increase in the employee performance in the organization as well. In order to make efficient use of salaries as a motivator, management must understand wage structures that may include the value the company assigns to each job, success rewards and other allowances. It can be said there is always a significant relationship between the salary & wages motivation factors on the employee performance in their organization.

2.3 Reward & Recognition

Reward can be used as a way to improve good conduct and performance among employees. Rewards are very beneficial to attract the best human resources [9]. The reward mechanisms should also concentrate on enhancing positive behavior among the employees. Rewards are really important for employees, whether they are extrinsic or intrinsic. Intrinsic reward occurs in an individual after the achievement of a certain task or job, whereas extrinsic reward arises from outside sources or powers such as salary, money or grades [20].

In simple words, recognition can be defined as an appreciation. Appreciation is one of the best motivation factors that can be used to motivate and increase the productivity of the employees in the organization [21]. This is because through recognition and appreciation, the employees will feel more confident about themselves and their potential to help the organization to achieve their organization aims. Workers with a high self-esteem are highly motivated, confident, able to work harder, engage in work successfully, have a

lower absenteeism rate and they will be highly satisfied with their jobs [16].

A successful reward system and recognition program that focuses on engaging workers and their teams can act as the motivating factor for employees to achieve better results in order to achieve organization goals and objectives. This means instant recognition for better results, short-term rewards for better performance can be given on a monthly or quarterly basis, and long-term rewards for sincerity over the years [9]. The reward system of each organization should concentrate on these main field: compensation, incentives, recognition and appreciation.

Recognition, on the other hand, focuses on expressing gratitude to the employee for his or her performance. Rewards such as recognition will also help the employees to increase their performance and they will get to know whether they current performance are good or not [22]. When intrinsic rewards have been offered to the employees, they will have come to recognize their success and have worked harder to achieve recognition [23]. Almost all categories of workers, whether private, government, small or big, are influenced by rewards [4].

Organizations can introduce non-monetary incentives into the rewards structure in order to retain their work desires and increase communication between workers [24]. Based on all the explanation above, it is said there is a positive relationship between the reward & recognition motivation factors on the employee performance in their organization. So that, it is important for the organizations to plan well their reward and recognition as it is capable to motivate the employees to perform better in the task given to them by the organization. It can be said there is always a significant relationship between the reward and recognition motivation factors on the employee performance in their organization.

2.4 Working Environment

Working environment is the next best factor of motivation that can improve the employee performance in the organization. A good working environment only is not able to motivate the employees but it has the ability to determine the performance and productivity of the employees [25]. Working environment includes safety to the employees, job security, better relations with co-workers, recognition for good performance, motivation for better performance and

involvement in the decision making operation for the organization.

Work environment described as the behavior and those related to the practices and performance of employees. According to Akinyele [26], employees and working environment of the organization are interconnected. This is said because employees can work better and boost their performance in their job scope when they have a positive working environment [26]. The willingness of employees to exchange information with each other relies on how the environment is used [26]. This is important because high possibilities to exchange information within the organization will increase the quality in terms of earnings, level of competition and others.

The relaxed physical environment is associated with employee motivation, however this relationship is not quite as strong as the relationship between motivation and managerial behaviour [27]. Employees are worried with a healthy physical work environment that would eventually have an extra positive effect of motivation compared to the employees that work in the poor working environment. Negative performance can be caused by unsafe working environments, as workers expect peace of mind and physical peace of mind .

Other than that, it has been proven that a bad and unhealthy working environment of the organization can cause insecurity for that organization's employees. According to Chen & Lien [28], there is a high possibility for the employees to change their jobs to another one if they undergo stress in their current working place [28]. So it is important for the organization to provide a good working environment to all of their employees including both top management employees and lower management employees in order to receive better performance from their employees as it is important to achieve their organizational goals. It can be said there is always a significant relationship between the working environment motivation factors on the employee performance in their organization.

3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The main objective of this study is to identify the motivational factors that affect the employee performance in the private sector in Malaysia. The research objectives for this study are as follow:

- i. To analyze the impact of wages and salary on employee performance in the private sector in Malaysia
- ii. To examine the effect of reward and recognition on performance of employees in the private sector in Malaysia
- iii. To study the impact of the working environment on employee performance in the private sector in Malaysia

4. METHODOLOGY

This study applies a quantitative approach by using a questionnaire method in order to collect all the data needed. However, in the term of research design, it can be said this study adopted a descriptive research design. According to Copper & Schindler [29], descriptive research design includes surveying people and recording their responses for the analysis which is important to find out the main aim in the study [29]. Descriptive research is designed mainly in order to accurately and

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive statistic is used as the measure to describe the data. The main aim of the descriptive statistic is to provide a brief summary of the samples that involved in a study and also to highlight the potential relationships between the variables in the study. The descriptive statistic result for this study are as shown in the Table 1.

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistic result for this study. From the Table 1, it can be indicated working environment motivational factor is the most influence independent variable towards the employee performance as the mean for this variable recorded the highest at 4.3766 compared to the other variables. Working environment motivational factor independent variable also recorded high standard deviation value at 0.52899. These shows that working environment motivational factor have a significant relationship with the employee performance in the private sector in Malaysia.

According to the findings of this study, it shows that wages & salary motivational factor has recorded not significant relationship with the employee performance in the private sector in Malaysia as this variable recorded p – value more than 0.05 in regression analysis which is at

systematically define a population, circumstance or phenomena. Simple random sampling technique used in this research. Simple random sampling technique is the sample collection techniques where all the elements of the universe are treated equally. The study population is private workers in 6 companies located around North Malaysia. A total of 130 populations have been identified and the sample taken is 97 respondents. In this simple random sampling method, respondents ($S=97$) will be picked up randomly from the targeted population ($N=130$).

The level of independent variable influence toward the dependent variable will be analysed based on the correlation analysis. The researcher will use Pearson's correlation coefficient in order to measure the relationship between the independent variable and dependent variable.

0.492. This finding is consistent with the findings of Hendra Gunawan & Rezki Amalia (2015) who states that there is a significant negative effect of the wages on employee performance. Based on the finding of this study and the supported finding, it can be concluded that there is not a significant relationship between the wages & salary motivational factor and employee performance in the private sector in Malaysia [30]. However, there are several studies that shows that there is a significant relationship between the wages & salary motivational factor and employee performance. For instance, the findings by Aworemi et.al [31] 2011 states that the good pay such as wages and salary are the key factor to higher employee motivation which will lead to better employee [31].

Based on the regression analysis result of this study, reward & recognition have recorded not significant relationship with the employee performance in the private sector in Malaysia. This is said because reward and recognition variable recorded p – value which are more than 0.05 which is 0.756. This finding is supported with the findings of Njanja et.al who states that cash bonus reward has no effect on the employee performance and it is not able to help the organization to motivate their employees in order to achieve their organizational goals [11]. Other than this, the result of this study is also supported with the Gostick and Elton (2006) findings who state that employees who perceive

Table 1. Descriptive statistics

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
Wages & Salary (IV)	97	2.88	5.00	3.9697	.53979
Reward & Recognition (IV)	97	2.33	5.00	4.0379	.53812
Working Environment (IV)	97	3.00	5.00	4.3766	.52899
Employee Performance (DV)	97	2.57	5.00	4.2576	.56547
Valid N (listwise)	97				

Table 2. Regression statistics

Variables	Sig. (p – value)
Wages & Salary	0.492
Reward & Recognition	0.756
Working Environment	0.000

a recognition and reward scheme as inequitable, are likely to be highly de-motivated and perform poorly [32]. Based on this findings, it can be said that there is not a significant relationship between the reward & recognition motivational factor and employee performance in the private sector in Malaysia. However, this conclusion is not consistent with Sharon Suri Mesepey [33] who states that reward & recognition are able to motivates the employees in order to provide better work performance to the company [33]. However, in present study the term of gender equality is focusing on cerebral equality of a person on his or her ability to complete tasks. Many studies indicate that while there has been some progress in increasing the representation of women in higher education workforce, disparities persist, coined by Adam, S & Funk, P. (2020). Factors such as the gender pay gap, stereotypes, limited career development opportunities, and challenges with work-life balance continue to hinder women's progress into leadership roles within the higher education sector [34]. Furthermore, organizational cultures that prioritize masculine leadership traits and norms exacerbate these obstacles, even within the higher education workforce.

This study has confirmed that working environment motivational factor have a significant relationship with the employee performance in the private sector in Malaysia. This can be seen when the working environment motivational factor recorded the p – value less than 0.05 in the regression analysis which is at 0.000. Based on this findings, the H3 hypothesis for this study which states that “There is a significant relationship between the working environment motivational factor and employee performance in the private sector in Malaysia.” are accepted. This findings is consistent with the

findings of Aworemi et.al who states that good working environment pay are key factors to higher employee motivation and performance [31]. This finding is also supported by Haneen & Khaleed [35] who states that employers should take initiatives by improving the employees working environment in order to motivate the better employee performance [35]. The study done by Iqra, et.al in 2019 which concludes that employee health is mediating the relationship between workplace environment factor and employee performance is also consistent with this result finding [36]. Based on this study finding and other supported findings from the other journals, it is clear that there is a significant relationship between the working environment motivational factor and employee performance in the private sector in Malaysia. of creating an inclusive and empowering atmosphere where individuals feel encouraged to challenge conventional gender norms and roles.

6. CONCLUSION

Motivational factor is an important factor for the organization to influence better performance among their employees. Based on the study conducted, the researcher suggestion to the organization and employers is to find out what motivational factors that are really able and have the potential to motivates their employees first before implement motivation program to their employees. This is because by identify the motivational factors first, it will be easy for the employers to design the motivation program based on it to their employees. Different people will get motivate by different motivational factors, so it is important to find out the suitable motivational factor first in order to use motivational factor as a tool to increase better performance among the employees.

According to the Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, security needs which can be considered as working environment is important for an individual and based on this it can be concluded that better working environment for the employees is important in order to increase the employee performance for the organization. Reward and recognition is also considered as the motivational factor that are able to increase the performance among the employees according to the other findings. This is said because recognition is also another essential need for the individuals according to the Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Wages & salary is important for the individuals in order to fulfill the physiological needs which are the most essential need for the individuals according to the Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.

Job security, career advancement opportunities, training & development programs and also other potential motivational factors should be studied in the coming days as these motivational factors are capable to motivate the employees to perform better their responsibility and duties. In addition, clear and detailed hygiene or sanitation factors such as work security, sense of smugness, working surroundings and understandable requirements should be added in the coming studies and researches as the working environment motivational factor in this study recorded the significant relationship with the employee performance compared to the other two motivational factor variable. Studies on more motivational factor variable will be able to provide more understanding in the concept of motivation among the employees

DISCLAIMER (ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE)

Author(s) hereby declare that NO generative AI technologies such as Large Language Models (ChatGPT, COPILOT, etc) and text-to-image generators have been used during writing or editing of manuscripts.

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COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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