

Insight of Academicians' Job Performance: Do Transformational Leadership, Pay Satisfaction and Work Environment Matter?

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ABSTRACT

It is important for a university to understand and manage issues related to academicians' job performance. This paper is intended to examine the influence of transformational leadership, pay satisfaction and work environment on academicians' job performance in one of Private Higher Education Institution in Malaysia. This study employed a quantitative approach and data were gathered from 142 academicians. Using multiple regression analysis, the findings shows that transformational leadership and work environment significantly influences on academicians' job performance. However, the finding failed to predict the relationship between pay satisfaction and academicians' job performance. The significant findings of transformational leadership and work environment provide the new insight of managing academicians job performance in both practical and theoretical ways. Management team of univesity needs to consider transformational approach. It inspires lecturers in ways that go beyond exchanges and rewards by expressing the value and purpose behind the organization's goals. The finding indicates that transformational leadership has strong concern for job performance because this type of leadership is able to win over their subordinates' trust and respect by conveying a clear vision, acting with resolve, and displaying a sense of authority. Same goes to work environment. It provides good sign of conducive work environment that can stimulate positive effort and attitude in the workplace. Pay satisfaction, on the other hand, may not their priority in dealing with performance management.

Keywords – Job performance, pay satisfaction, transformational leadership, work environment, Private Higher Education Institution, Academician

INTRODUCTION

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) success is essentially dependent on the performance, competence, commitment, and motivation of academicians in pursuing the University's missions and visions [7]. Job performance studies is critical since it has a direct impact on individual achievements as well as the overall productivity of organisations. Employees carry out the actions necessary to accomplish the goals of the organisation, their performance have significant impact on university succeeds or fails in reaching its objectives [16]. Therefore, academicians are valuable asset to a university and their performance is crucial because they are performing various roles in achieving university performance, that includes teaching, research, reputation building, and overall institutional development.

Several private universities struggle to improve the teaching quality, research and publication volume due to an overemphasis on workload pressure and profit-oriented focus [15], [16], [20]. Teaching quality is normally

assessed based on the students' feedback and results. Considering that publication records are an important component of academicians' performance, it stands to reason that high workload level, profit-oriented pressure, and lack of resources can limit publication efforts [16]. In the University, the high workload level is mainly due to high academic load where academicians have to teach many courses in a single semester. Academicians are also burdened by profit-oriented pressure in which they are required to be involved in marketing activities to achieve the University's target numbers of student enrolment. In addition, the lack of resources such as the limitation of internal funding, the high competition in obtaining external funding, and improper research facilities have contributed to less research and publication activities.

The disparity in publication numbers revealed that private and public universities have different levels of overall publication performance. Based on the data, Taylor's University Malaysia is the only private university that has gained recognition as one of the top ten active establishments in terms of publication output. Statistics from the QS ranking indicate that a number of private universities in Malaysia had notable shifts in their ranks between 2014 and 2018 [26]. More crucially, the primary reason for the variation may be due to the influence of the university's research impact which accounts for 20% of the overall score [20]. This shows that academicians in private universities should improve their job performance by involving into research and increasing their publication volume through high-impact scientific publications.

Academicians may experience dissatisfaction if their workload is disproportionate to their salary and benefits. When academicians' performance is properly rewarded and their pay demands are met at a higher level, it contributes to their satisfaction and commitment to the university. Studies focusing on the impact of salary and benefits towards academicians' job performance are lacking. Prior studies discovered a correlation between pay and job performance of academicians. However, there is insufficient discussion about the role of pay equity in increasing academicians' job performance. According to [12], pay is commonly used as a gauge of career status and equity in the workplace.

In addition, leadership style has a direct impact on faculty commitment in the educational sector [27]. The absence of effective dean's leadership may negatively affect academicians' commitment and job performance. Working under a hostile and unsupportive leader can be frustrating for employees. Past studies have investigated the influence of different leadership styles towards employee performance, but there is limited number of studies that solely focus on specific leadership style such as transformational leadership especially in private higher education in Malaysia.

Academicians' job performance at educational institutions is heavily influenced by their work environment. Most of the previous studies only focused on discovering physical work environment but less attention is given to non-physical work environment. The non-physical work environment is generally considered to be one of the vital issues in enhancing employees' performance.

Most studies on employee performance have been done across a variety of industries. Even so, there is still a lack of study conducted on academicians' job performance in Malaysia higher educational sector, especially in private HEIs. Therefore, this study is intended to examine the influence of transformational leadership, pay satisfaction and work environment on academicians' job performance in a private HEI.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Job performance

In organizational context, job performance has been defined as an organisational member's contribution to achieving the organization's objectives and goals [30], [33]. According to [33], employee performance is the degree to which an employee fulfils their duties and responsibilities. The performance of academicians has been examined in numerous studies using performance measures such as teaching, publications in prestigious journals, research income generation, student satisfaction, citizenship, or patents. These measurements are now commonly used in academic contexts [13], [20], [30]. [33]. In an educational setting, academicians' job

performance will be evaluated using three criteria including teaching performance, research, and publication [23]. Teaching and learning, administrative, research grants, publishing and research, supervision, and professional service are the criteria used in Malaysia to evaluate the performance of academicians. The first indicator to assess performance of academicians is teaching performance [15],[25]. Besides, an academician's ability to convert knowledge can be used for evaluating their teaching abilities. Students' learning achievement is influenced by the expertise of lecturers, the preparedness of instructional materials, and learning management [30]. The teaching methods used by academics should effectively increase the knowledge of the students while being in line with the subject and learning objectives [25].

Research activities are the second measure of an academician's performance [12],[20]. The amount of publications produced over a given time period by a person (the academician), a group (the academic department) and an institution (the university) can be used to measure the quantity of research activity. The third indicator to evaluate academicians' performance is via the number of publications. The number of citations of the academician's papers by other researchers can be used to assess the quality of those publications [12],[20].

In addition to the higher educational system, performance of academicians as educators can also contribute to high or low educational quality. Indeed, the quality of lecturers has an impact on the academic performance of students as well as the education institutions to which they belong [13], [25]. Greater service quality can increase student satisfaction and loyalty, which then assists the education institution produce long-term benefits through repeat purchase behaviour and positive student referrals [7].

B. Transformational Leadership and Job Performance

Leadership is one crucial element in organization that effect employee performanc because it provides a good example by emphasising the importance of moral values and integrity [1], [27]. Previous researchers stated that transformational leadership happens when a leader's actions encourage their subordinates to perform at levels that exceed their accepted capabilities. Thus, these leaders can motivate and direct their followers to accomplish unexpected outcomes since they give employees autonomy for certain tasks. In this situation, employee empowerment typically occurs since they are given the authority to make decisions after getting adequate and effective coaching [14]. The transformational leadership is widely used in higher education [15]. According to [15], transformational leadership allows all employees regardless of status, race, or background to contribute optimally towards a shared goal. Empirically, a number of previous studies have discovered that transformative leadership has a favourable and large direct impact on academicians' job performance. For instance, a study demonstrated that lecturers' performance at multiple universities in the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir improved as a result of the distribution of authority and the application of transformational leadership [18].

C. Pay Satisfaction and Job Performance

Pay is one of the most crucial aspects that influence job performance among academic staff [24]. In the global higher education sector, pay is seen as a vital factor influencing academicians' attitudes and behaviours. A well design, competitive and fair pay structure that aligns with contributions and market standard can increase academicians' job performance. As found by [8], higher pay leads to greater satisfaction which contributes to better performance. It is important to compensate lecturers in order to encourage them to perform beyond what the university requires of them [4].

A greater pay package will enable the academicians to fulfil their needs and enhance their focus on their job which then improve their ability and produce excellent performance. Pay dissatisfaction can be a key source of demotivation for academicians which can result in poor performance, higher turnover and absenteeism. Poor pay system such as low or unfair pay will affect the performance quality of academicians. This is due to the

fact that pay is viewed as a reflection of the importance placed on the academician's job. Besides, decreased pay scales and employee salaries are the main causes of resignations among academicians [28].

D. Work Environment and Job Performance

According to [11] and [9], the work environment encompasses several elements such as physical working conditions, job characteristics, social support, training and development, and communication processes that impact the work and employee motivation and work performance. Improvements in the working environment will increase employee performance, which in turn can affect the employees' health, relationships with co-workers, sense of well-being, and efficiency.

Studies show that performance is impacted by a favourable work environment in both physical and non-physical ways [17], [22]. Employee motivation and morale are impacted by both the physical and non-physical working environments. In a comfortable working environment, employee will naturally perform better which next assist the organization achieve its goals and establishment of a positive work environment [17].

RESEARCH METHOD

A. Population, Sample Size and Sampling Technique

According to [29], population refers to all of the individuals, occasions, or objects that the researcher intends to investigate and that share the same characteristic. The study's population is academic staff at one private HEI. As of October 2023, the university employed a total of 250 academic staff which included all the position levels such as professor, associate professor, senior lecturer and lecturer. However, only 230 academicians are taken as the population for this study due to the remaining academicians with less than 1 year of service is not fulfilling the requirement of the study. Based on the sample size determination table by [19], the required sample size for the study is 144.

In this study, a non-probability sampling method is used in gathering data. According to (Etikan & Bala, 2017), the non-probability sampling approach does not offer a basis for determining the likelihood that a particular dimension element would be selected for the research sample. Instead of requiring every member of a target group to participate in a study, non-probability sampling techniques allow participants to self-select or be referred to by the researcher [31].

Convenience sampling is utilized in this study as a non-probability sample strategy primarily due to its ease of use and accessibility. Convenience sampling is the process of choosing respondents for the study from the target population who satisfy certain practical criteria such as being easily accessible, geographic proximity, available at a specific of time, and eager to participate.

B. Measurement

As shown in Table 1, a total of twenty-three questions were chosen to examine the influence of pay satisfaction, leadership, and work environment on academicians' job performance at the University. Among the scale types that are frequently utilised in questionnaires is the Likert scale. A Likert Scale is a type of psychometric response scale that is frequently used in surveys to assess a respondent's level of agreement on a statement or collection of statements. A Likert scale is a non-comparative type of scaling in which respondents use an ordinal scale to indicate their agreement level towards a given statement.

TABLE 1 MEASUREMENT OF VARIABLES

Definition	Items	Sources
<p>Variable: Pay Satisfaction</p> <p>Pay satisfaction is the degree to which people feel generally favourable about their earnings.</p>	<p>(1) My current salary is adequate for me. (2) Overall, I am pleased with how my increments are determined. (3) I feel satisfied with my most recent pay rise. (4) I feel satisfied with the pay disparities amongst jobs in the company.</p>	<p>Heneman III and Schwab (1985)</p>
<p>Variable: Leadership</p> <p>Leadership is a social influence process in which leaders seek and organise the engagement of their followers in order to accomplish the goals of organisation.</p>	<p>(1) My dean's vision for the future encourages others. (2) My dean is constantly looking for new opportunities for the faculty. (3) My dean serves as an excellent role model to follow. (4) My dean leads by "doing" rather than "telling." (5) My dean motivates the team to work together towards a shared goal. (6) My dean fosters a team culture and spirit among his or her staff.</p>	<p>(Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Bommer, 1996)</p>
<p>Variable: Work Environment</p> <p>Work environment refers to the aspects in the workplace that influence employees, in both the direct and the indirect ways</p>	<p>(1) In my institution, praise & recognition will be given for a well-done job. (2) As academician our work schedule is more flexible. (3) High teamwork culture among faculties in my institution. (4) I'm experience a good working relationship with other faculties' staff.</p>	<p>(McCusker, Dendukuri, Cardinal, Katofsky, & Riccardi, 2005)</p>
<p>Variable: Job Performance</p> <p>Job performance refers to the quality and quantity of a job that every employee completes while doing their tasks based on the responsibilities that have been delegated for them by the organisation.</p>	<p>(1) I used to keep a good standard of work. (2) I am highly enthusiastic about my work. (3) I used to finish all of my work on time. (4) I used to perform well in order to mobilise collective intelligence for effective teamwork. (5) I used to be able to deal well with organisational changes. (6) I am very at ease with having a flexible schedule. (7) I used to assist my coworkers whenever they asked or needed it. (8) I take an active role in group discussions and work sessions. (9) I used to maintain a strong relationship among coworkers.</p>	<p>(Pradhan & Jena, 2017)</p>

C. Data Collection Procedure

The questionnaires are sent to the targeted respondents by using a Google form link. In this study, 160 questionnaires were sent to targeted respondents to guarantee that the returned responses met the needed sample size. The targeted respondents are required to complete questionnaire and submit it back through google online platform. The data collection process began when the respondent was informed of the study's purpose and asked to complete a questionnaire.

FINDINGS

A. Respondents' Profile

As depicted in Table 2, out of 142 responses, 63 (44.4%) were male, while the remaining 79 (55.6%) were female. In term of the age distribution, majority of the respondents were among the ages of 31 to 40 years old (45.8%) followed by ages of 41 to 50 years old (26.8%), 51 years old and above (22.5%) and lastly the respondents from age group of 21 to 30 years old (4.9%). Regarding respondents' marital status, the predominant group consists of 111 respondents (78.2%) who are married. Approximately 26 (18.3%) respondents are single, 3 (2.1%) respondents are divorced, and the remaining 2 respondents (1.4%) are widowers. Lastly, from the total of 142 respondents, 72 (50.7%) respondents indicated that they have served the University for 7 years and above. Meanwhile, around 32 (22.5%) respondents have been working between 4 to 6 years and the remaining 38 (26.8%) respondents demonstrated that they have worked with the University between 1 to 3 years.

TABLE 2 RESPONDENTS' PROFILE

	Demographic Profile	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	63	44.4%
	Female	79	55.6%
Age	21 – 30 years old	7	4.9%
	31 – 40 years old	65	45.8%
	41 – 50 years old	38	26.8%
	51 years old and above	32	22.5%
Race	Malay	57	40.1%
	Chinese	26	18.3%
	Indian	44	31.0%
	Others	15	10.6%
Marital Status	Single	26	18.3%
	Married	111	78.2%
	Widowed	2	1.4%
	Divorced	3	2.1%
Education Level	Bachelor's Degree	1	0.7%
	Master Degree	82	57.7%
	Doctor of Philosophy	59	41.5%
Position	Lecturer	35	24.6%
	Senior Lecturer	64	45.1%
	Associate Professor	23	16.2%
	Professor	20	14.1%
Service Tenure	1 – 3 years	38	26.8%
	4 – 6 years	32	22.5%
	7 years and above	72	50.7%

B. Reliability and Multiple Regression Result

As indicated in Table 3, the dependent and independent variables' Cronbach's Alpha values ranged from 0.929 to 0.684. All variables are considered accurate if the Cronbach Alpha value exceeds 0.60. Scores are divided into four categories: below 0.6 is poor, between 0.60 to 0.70 is acceptable and fair, between 0.70 and 0.80 is good, and over 0.80 is considered as very good (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013).

According to the Table 3, the independent variable which is leadership has six items with a Cronbach Alpha value of 0.929 classified as the highest value among the other variables, followed by pay satisfaction has four items with a Cronbach Alpha value of 0.897, and the least is work environment has four items with a Cronbach Alpha value of 0.684. Whereby, the dependent variable, job performance which has nine items produced Cronbach Alpha value of 0.841. It can be said that each variable in this study has a reasonable and acceptable level of reliability.

TABLE 3 RELIABILITY OF VARIABLES

Variables	Number of items	Cronbach Alpha Value (α)
Pay Satisfaction	4	0.897
Leadership	6	0.929
Work Environment	4	0.684
Job Performance	9	0.841

Meanwhile, the multiple regression results as depicted in Table 4 indicates that the IVs (pay satisfaction, leadership, and work environment explains only 26.1% of the variance in job performance (R square = 0.261) which is quiet weak percentage. Simultaneously, the ANOVA exhibited a significant correlation at the 0.001 ($p < 0.05$) level. The coefficient analysis reveals that among the three variables, only two (2) exhibits a significant relationship with the dependent variable (job performance). Leadership ($p = 0.026$) and work environment ($p = 0.001$) are statistically significant, with p -values < 0.05 . Also, there is insignificant relationship among the pay satisfaction and job performance with the significance value $p = 0.961$, which is bigger than 0.05 ($p > 0.05$). Besides, based on the Table 4, the findings for standardized coefficients beta demonstrates that all three variables received positive beta values. The beta value for pay satisfaction, leadership and work environment are $\beta = 0.005$, $\beta = 0.170$ and $\beta = 0.449$ respectively.

TABLE 4 MULTIPLE REGRESSION RESULT

Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	Change Statistics			Sig. F Change
						F Change	df1	df2	
1	.510 ^a	.261	.244	.38696	.261	16.205	3	138	<.001

a. Predictors: (Constant), WE, LS, PS

b. Dependent Variable: JP

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	7.280	3	2.427	16.205	<.001 ^b
	Residual	20.664	138	.150		
	Total	27.944	141			

a. Dependent Variable: JP

b. Predictors: (Constant), WE, LS, PS

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error				Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	2.797	.224		12.483	<.001		
	PS	.002	.046	.005	.049	.961	.570	1.754
	LS	.099	.044	.170	2.255	.026	.948	1.055
	WE	.287	.061	.449	4.670	<.001	.581	1.723

a. Dependent Variable: JP

DISCUSSION

The multiple regression analysis showed that the transformational leadership has significant influence towards job performance. In other words, an effective leadership style would shape good performance among the academicians in the University. The findings gained from this study also associated with previous studies, where the result demonstrated that the transformational leadership style is interconnected and has a significant positive influence on academicians' job performance. These findings stay in line with the outcomes reported by [1], [2], [5],[21] that leadership significantly influences employees' job performance. Transformational leadership promotes power transfer and autonomy allowing academicians to feel a sense of involvement and value from their leaders which next drive to better performance.

On the other hand, the result showed that pay satisfaction and academicians' job performance obtained insignificance relation. This finding contradicts the results reported by [6], who stated that pay serves as both a performance motivator and a strategy for attracting and retaining best employee. Moreover, according to [3],

pay is among the factors that have a direct effect towards employee productivity, motivation, and performance. Since the study's findings indicated that pay satisfaction has insignificant influence on academicians' job

performance, it is implying that pay satisfaction may not have significant influence on academicians' job performance. There are several reasons that could be contributed to the result. Firstly, the respondents may perceive that they are getting underpaid due to imbalance between job demands and their salary. This finding is proportional with the study conducted by [32] where the researcher discovered that pay equity is associated with pay level satisfaction. Secondly, the increment procedure practiced by the University might be lacking or inappropriate such as involvement of favouritism element in organisation which could lead to discontent among the respondents. Thirdly, the amount of pay rise may not up to the expectation of the respondents and this could be due to the University's low budget capacity to pay the increment.

Last but not least, the study found that academicians' job performance is positively and significantly influenced by work environment. The findings consistent with previous study by [17] and [22]. They claimed that the work environment (environment) had a positive relationship with employee performance. A supportive and pleasant work environment in academic setting would encourage academicians to perform their task efficiently that can lead to improved job performance. This study emphasizes specifically on the non-physical work environment involving human and organizational environment. A supportive human environment creates a sense of belonging and camaraderie among academicians which encourages teamwork and cooperation. Employee performance is significantly impacted by the work environment, relationships within the team and co-workers

CONCLUSIONS

Generally, the study provided valuable insights on academicians' job performance at the University. Significantly, the results could aid the university management in devising strategies to address independent variables such as leadership and work environment, which are identified as key factors contributing to the job performance of the University's academicians. Furthermore, academicians have a significant role in shaping future leaders who will eventually contribute to the strength of the whole country. Consequently, the study's findings have major impact not only for the education sector but also for Malaysian community as well. Additionally, future researchers should consider the limitations and recommendations presented in this study. In sum, this study provided valuable analyses laying the groundwork for future studies on academicians' job performance in Malaysian higher education institutions.

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