

The Effect of Motivation on Job Performance of State Government Employees in Malaysia

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Abstract

The bulk of the earlier research on performance has been conducted in the area of job performance. This study is to investigate the relationship between motivations towards state government employees. Applying similarity on the motivation in the earlier research on job performance, this study extends this research by examining the relationships between overall job performance and motivation dimensions of and their job performance. A positive relationship, as measured by possess annual salary progression, was found between affiliation motivation and performance. The results suggest that affiliation motivation and job performance is positively related. Conclusions, management strategies particularly can be formulated according to motivation level of employees.

Key words: State Government employees; motivation; performance

1. Introduction

After more than 50 years of democracy within the Malaysian political environment, the Public Service is faced with a workplace plagued with a multitude of factors that interfere on the effective delivery of crucial services, which it provides. In order for a public sector organization or government department to deliver on its mandate of service delivery to public, human capital within the organization plays an important role and as a backbone to fulfill the ever changing needs of publics. Performance is viewed as the implementation of an action or one's ability. Good performance is also related with achieving the quality, quantity, cooperation, dependability and creativity. Employee performance is considered as the measures of the quality of human capital which was held by the organization and is a key thrust in the Ninth Malaysia Plan. According to Churchill, Ford and Walker, (1987), the determinants of performance are personal, organizational, environmental, motivation, skill level, aptitudes and role perceptions. Moreover, Vroom (1964) explained that motivational components are typically based on expectancy theory, which states that productivity increases when the level of motivation is increased. Motivation is considered as a predictor of job performance. In other words, the determinants of employee job performance were motivation, aptitudes and skill level. To the state government, employee job performance is very important because it will reflect the government performance. Employee performance standards were designed by the government to measure the performance of the organizations. The quality of employees is the important influence on performance. The person with high motivation level will succeed.

Naturally, who is highly motivated will succeed i.e. a person with high motivation level in job (intrinsic and extrinsic motivation) will succeed in his task/job. Job performance becomes the most important focus of administrators and academicians because the performance level will deteriorate if the level of motivation of employee drops. Past research on the job performance by Tyagi, (1985) found a positive relationship between intrinsic factor with the level of motivation (Tannembaum et al, 1991). The employee's talent to perform the job outstandingly once the levels of motivation increased. As a matter of fact that most administrative in government agencies including state government will face with a crucial question of what factors influence employee performance and inadequate empirical information that might guide their efforts in enhancing overall job performance among employees. This employee is believed to be the "backbone" of the state government services with imperative role of ensuring that government policies and programs in the new era of National development are implemented effectively and efficiently.

In 2002, our government introduced a new evaluation system called the Malaysian Enumeration System (MES) on its employees replaced with New Enumeration System (NES). Under NES, employee would receive bonuses and more than one annual increment if he/she has been favourably evaluated by their superordinates. Under the NES also, the quota of five percents of the total number of employees in the whole organization was set to be eligible to recipients of the reward for excellent work performance. However, under the MES there was no such quota but would required certain criteria in evaluating work performance among employees such as the need to attend courses and to pass a few exams. In view of evaluating employee job performance at the work place, therefore, it is of interest the researcher to conduct a study on the relationship between motivation and their job performance among the recipients for excellent service in Terengganu states government. Till to date, there is still very little research on job performance in state government sector and even less empirical research concerning motivation influencing job performance.

Thus, the need for this study to investigate the motivation as the predictors of job performance among state government servants is necessary. The purpose of this study is to examine the relationships between the motivation levels to determine how these features are related to job performance. Comprehensive examinations into the possible factors that can predict employee motivation in East Coast state government departments are imperative in this study. These have been several reasons in pursuing this research. Firstly, the job motivation of employees is significant in public services because this factor will help the government to extend the services. The findings of this research will help the administrators to receive more information or guidelines on how to motivate their staff. Secondly, the findings of this research are important to the development of organization's management strategy, where a few researches have been carried out before. Public services sector in Malaysia has shown a marked improvement in its services performance over recent years. The dynamic future of public services sector is move closer to the forefront of Malaysian economic activities. This study is intended to promote a better theoretical understanding and recognition of the complexities associated with overall job performance. Moreover, it can contribute significantly towards future theoretical advancements in public services models.

2. Literature Review

The importance of the performance of government function is significant, many early management and academicians studies focused on personal factors believed to relate to or predict job performance among government employees. Employees are the human capital to the organizations and performance of them within an organization which leads to organizational success or failure. The management of organizations needs to manage the resource appropriately to ensure success. Shulze and Steyn (2003) postulate that motivation represents the complex forces and needs which provide the energy for an individual to perform a particular task. Someone who is motivated is always conscious of the goal to be achieved and directs his or her efforts at attaining that goal

On the area of job motivation and public service employees' performance, there is little research was conducted. Habibah and Noran (1999), conducted a study of 82 excellent employees from one of the higher education institutions in Malaysia. There were four objectives of conducting the study; (a) to determine their job motivation and job performance, (b) to identify the factors related to job motivation, (c) to compare job motivation according to gender and work category of respondents and (d) to explain job performance in terms of job motivation. The researchers measured job performance using New Enumeration System (NES). Employees who have been favorably evaluated by their super-ordinates would receive bonuses as well as get more than one annual were considered as performed employee. Meanwhile job motivation was measured using instrument developed by Sutarto Wijono (1997), based on the theories of motivation which comprised of 40 items, half of them negatively stated. This multidimensional concept constitutes existence motivation, motive for affiliation, motive for power and achievement motivation.

The findings of the study showed that overall job motivation and job performance were not significant which suggests that employees with high achievement and low achievement motivation have the same performance. Studies on job performance and achievement motivation were contributed more by the field of marketing. Silvester, Patterson and Ferguson (2003) support their findings that an achievement motivation model of job performance among retail sales assistants. A study by Renate, Janet and Richard (1999) look into the relationship of achievement motivation as related to sales performance believed to be positively related to sales performance. The study was aimed to a hypothesis: there will be a positive relationship between need for achievement and sales performance. A sample of 190 respondents comprised of the employees of a major pharmaceutical company, employed MBA students and professional affiliated with various companies and institutions were positively related to sales performance, as represented by four different measures; i) self rated, ii) sales as compared to average prior quota, iii) sales as compared to recent quota and iv) earnings.

The need of achievement was measured using manifest Needs Questionnaires (MNQ), which comprised of 5 item scales, contains statements that describe how people execute, or attempt to execute, work-related responsibilities. These relationships support the concept that the need of achievement motivation to performed in their job. Yagil (2006) found that service providers with high power motivation experience more burnout as a result of stressful relationships with customers compared with service providers with a low power motivation. According to Habibah and Noran (1999), power motivation may be viewed either negatively or positively which the negative power motivation reflected the individual who wants to influence and overpower others for his/her own personal advantage. Conversely, positive power motivation plays an important role in improving the performance or productivity of the organization. Power a person need can be either personal or institutional. Person need personal power to direct others and this need often is perceived as undesirable.

Meanwhile the person needs institutional power (also known as social power) wants to organize the efforts of others to further the goals of the organization. Managers with a high need for institutional power tend to be more effective than those with a high need for personal power. Past studies by Cummins (1967), McClelland and Boyatzis (1982) and McClelland (1984) reported significant relationship between job performance and power motivation which suggests that employees with high power motivation will perform better. A study on affiliation motivation by Hill (1987) on a personality attributes reflects of individual's desire for social interaction. The result suggested those with a high need for affiliation need harmonious relationships with other people and need to feel accepted by other people and tend to conform to the norms of their work group. Individuals with high need affiliation choose work that provides significant personal interactions and perform well in customer service and client interaction situations. According to Boyatzis (1972), affiliation motivation is as dual in nature, namely interest and assurance. An employee with highly affiliated motivation is interested in or considers the feelings and opinions of his/her colleagues or subordinates and will strive for acceptance and agreement from subordinates or colleagues.

On the other hand, good relationship with co-workers or colleagues at the work place creates a feeling of affiliation and this is called existence motivation. Reis and Patrick, (1996) have examined the effects of affiliation motivation on an individual's attitude, emotion and behavior in social psychology studies. The study found that people with higher affiliation motivation have higher levels of self-esteem and self-confidence. On the other hand, people with less affiliation motivation describe themselves negatively and feel anxious about social interactions with others. They are less motivated for social interactions and feel isolated from others. Another studies on affiliation motivation and job performance by Litwin and Stringer (1968) and Chemers and Ayman (1985) showed negative relationship between affiliation motivation and job performance. However, Shouksmith (1987) reported affiliation motivation was not correlated with job performance.

3. Methodology

3.1 Sampling and Data Collection

The respondents are the selected excellent service employees for the year 2003 of the three states government in east coast Malaysia. About 50 employees from each state were given questionnaires on job motivation and job performance. An important characteristic of the sampling procedure is to select all the excellent employees that have been favorably evaluated by their super-ordinates and also passes a few exams. In other words, the employees whom were considered as performed when they have salary progression for the year. This requirement is necessary to ensure that all respondents have some knowledge and experience in the jobs, so that they will able to answer the questionnaire accurately. The questionnaires supposed to be distributed to the respondents by the researcher herself and mark the answer to avoid misrepresentation and bias.

Since the policy of the state governments that did not allowed disclosing the name of their employees, the questionnaires were then handed to the chief clerk at the office by the researcher, who then distributed the questionnaires to the individual employees. To ensure confidentiality of employee response, the questionnaires were given numbers corresponding to names only known to the chief clerks. Employees filled out the self-administered questionnaire and hand out to their chief clerks. Out of 150 questionnaires distributed, 135 sets were completed and used for data analysis, yielding a response rate of 90 percent.

3.2 Survey Instrument

The motivation questionnaires for the study is based on the work of Habibah and Noran Fauziah (1999) who used the structured questionnaires developed by Sutarto Wijono (1997) based on theories of motivation. The survey instrument was a five-page close-ended questionnaire designed to measure job motivation comprised of three variables which are (1) achievement motivation, (2) power motivation and (3) affiliation motivation. Half of the job motivation questionnaire which comprised of 30 items was negatively stated. Each statement is measured on a five-point Likert-type-scale, namely “strongly disagree”, “disagree”, “undecided”, “agree” and “strongly agree”. The second part of the questionnaire was on the job performance which is (4) salary progression. Factors 1 to 3 from the independent variables and factor 4 is the dependent variable. Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) computer software version 14.0 was used for all statistical procedures. Item analysis and Pearson correlation were employed to analyze the surveyed data.

3.3 Job Performance

For the purpose of this study, the scope of discussions on job performance will cover the Malaysian remuneration system, which have been formulated and implemented by Malaysian Public Service in its efforts to upgrade and enhance its service delivery through the people. The Malaysian Remuneration System (MRS) has placed greater emphasis on knowledge acquisition, skills development and inculcation of good personal values among public service employees. Job performance need to comply with knowledge acquisition, skills development and of course good personal values and as rewards the employee will have an annual salary progression and promotion. This assessment on job performance in the study will be considered on employees' that possess annual salary progression only. According to MRS, to possess annual salary progression, the employee need to attained 2 things; i) pass the specified test (skill development) and (ii) favorably evaluated by super-ordinates (good personal values).

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Scale Verification

The first point of consideration in the study before analyzing the data was to assess the reliability of the predictor variables. Reliability refers to the extent to which a scale produces consistent results if measurements are made repeatedly. Nunnally (1967) recommended a value of 0.5 above as the acceptable levels of reliability coefficient while Malhorta (1996) suggested that a value of 0.6 or less generally indicate unsatisfactory internal consistency reliability. Cronbach alpha reliability tests were performed on all scales. Table 1 presents the reliability coefficients of all the psychometric scales used. First, with respect to predictors of performance scales, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of four variables ranged from 0.73 to 0.94 (coefficients 0.7 and above). The alpha reliability indicates high internal consistency of all three predictors, with $\alpha = 0.84$ on achievement motivation, $\alpha = 0.82$ on affiliation motivation, and $\alpha = 0.73$ on power motivation. These scores were acceptable according to Nunnally (1967). Table 1 presents the results of predictor variables reliability scales.

4.2 Profiles of the Respondents

A total of 135 responses were obtained in this study and secured for data analysis. Based on these data, a demographic profile of respondents is presented in Table 2. There are seven (7) demographic characteristics which were discussed including gender, age, education, experience, monthly income, services grade and salary progression. From the table, the majority of the respondents are male (79.3%) as compared to female (20.7%). The average age of the respondent is above 40 years old and accounted for 74.1% (100 respondents). 25.2% respondents are in the ages of 30 to 39 followed by only 0.7% or only one employee in the 20 to 29 years age group. The composition of these respondents indicate that majority of the respondents who are excellent or performed in the job are from the elder age group (40 and above years old). In terms of the formal education attainment there is an unbalance distribution between those with tertiary education (8.9%/12 respondents) and secondary education (91.1%/123 respondents). The respondent's job experience with is more than 15 years comprises 57.8% (78 respondents), 26.7% (36 respondents) with 10 to 15 years experience and 14.1% (19 respondents) with 5 to 10 years experience. Only 1.5% (2 respondents) has an experience of less than 5 year. From the study, more than half of the respondents (68.1%) who are excellent receive a monthly income of below RM2,000 consisting the Support 1 and Support 2 (45.9% and 46.7% respectively) service grade employees.

Only 2.2% and 5.2% from the income group RM2,000 to RM2,999 and above RM3,000. Finally, achievement of performance by respondents' is measured by the salary progression.

4.3 Performance Profile and Associated Factors

This section examines to find out the contribution of the association between motivation levels and employees job performance. One would expect that there would be some degree or correlations between job performances with motivation. In this case, Pearson correlation analysis was used to find the relationship between the predictor variables and job performance. The preceding discussion is to answer the second objective of this research, which is to investigate the relationship between motivation level of state government employees and their job performance. This is related to Hypothesis 1, which posits that **achievement motivation of employees is related significantly to their job performance. Hypothesis 2 posits that power motivation is related significantly to their job performance and Hypothesis 3 posits that affiliation motivation is related significantly to their job performance.**

The result is presented in **Table 3**, shows that motivation levels of the employees' such as achievement motivation ($r=0.016$), power motivation ($r=0.165$), are not significantly related to performance. Thus Hypothesis 1 and 2 are rejected. Meanwhile affiliation motivation ($r=0.188$, $p<0.05$) are significantly and related to job performance. The finding suggested that the higher affiliated employee is interested in or considers the feelings and opinions of his/her colleagues or subordinates and will strive for acceptance and agreement from subordinates or colleagues, the better would be their performance.

To confirm which predictor variables that have the relationship on job performance, once again correlation analysis was run on all variables as shown on Table 3. Only one variable, affiliation motivation under motivation showed the positive correlation (r) exists between them and job performance. To summarize the discussion on the three (3) predictor variables such as achievement motivation, power motivation and affiliation motivation, it was found that only the correlation value for affiliation motivation had low relationship ($r=0.188$). As the r is low it showed that the relationship between motivation levels (affiliation motivation) and performance was low (see table 2). Other variables have no correlation values. This reflected that those two variables had no relationship towards motivation. This shows that job performance of state government employee was low. According to Connolly and Sluckin (1962) the r value 0.90 – 1.00 shows the positive and strong relationships, 0.70 – 0.90 shows the good relationships, 0.40 – 0.70 shows the moderate relationships, 0.20 – 0.40 shows the low relationships and the value less than 0.2 shows the weak relationships. Table 13 shows that correlation between predictor variables and sales performance are at a positive relationships. However, only one variables was significant where $p<0.05$ level.

This study attempts to investigate employee performance from the perspective of employees' motivation levels. Finally, the study also investigates the relationship between predictor variables and employees' job performance. The findings of the study are summarized in **Table 4**. The correlation analysis was also done to see whether there are relationships between predictor's variables and performance. All the predictor variables were found to have no relationships with the performance except affiliation motivation that has a positive relationship with performance. As a summary, from the three hypotheses tested, only one H3 was accepted.

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

This study examines the relationship of motivation on job performance. The result indicates that affiliation motivation is positively associated with job performance. People with higher level of affiliation motivation and with stronger tendency to build interpersonal relationships with others are more likely to perform in their job.

5.1 Implications of the Study

From the explanation of the results above, several suggestion can be identified that would be useful to researchers in public service sector. From the explanation and discussion of the results above, few areas of theoretical can be purposeful to enrich the body of knowledge pertaining to public service sector. The study finds that affiliation motivation positively related to job performance, which indicates that those employees who have high affiliation motivation beliefs i.e., the interest in or considers the feelings and opinions of his/her colleagues or subordinates and will strive for acceptance and agreement from subordinates and colleagues (Boyatzis1972). The study finds that people with higher affiliation motivation are more likely to be excellent employees. People can distinguish from each other by their motivation of being attached with each other. People with different levels of affiliation motivation can be aligned along a continuum. At the beginning stage of being excellent employees, administrator should focus on those people with higher affiliation motivation, who tend to perform.

This group should be identified first and encouraged to perform since they will make the greatest contribution to form the good service. Information obtained from this study can be very useful in formulating administrators' human resource strategy and human capital development. The administrators can take advantage from the findings of this study to enable them to be more effective in the selecting and recruiting new employees and eventually monitoring their performance.

Selections

The government should concern on the selection criteria for new employees in public service sector based on motivation such as affiliation motivation. However, it may not always be an easy task to identify such candidates just by having them sit for an interview, as currently practised by the public sector in Malaysia. It implies that in selecting, the government should use a more robust selection and assessment system. The motivation questionnaires should be incorporated in the interview instead of just knowledge in public service as a possible method to identify the potential candidates. Although using motivation tests for selection may be a new venture for public service sector, this could help administrator in selecting better candidates for the work position.

Motivating Employees

The state government should find ways to motivate their employees to work up to the maximum level, improve their work attitudes towards work values and the most important is to be aware of public opinion towards the public service. Even though this study does not indicate that motivation is related to employees' performance, researcher's personal experience in state government sector indicates that employees need to motivate. The managements of state governments should find alternative ways to motivate their employees. Firstly, management may provide employees with continuous motivation speech in every day Morning Prayer by reading the quran on the values and responsibility to work hard. During these sessions, it may be good to introduce Prophet Muhammad s.a.w attitude towards work and he was the role models of the excellent employee. This might encourage the employee to work successful in giving the best services for public. Secondly, management should make their employees to understand their responsibility to make the public aware and understand about services. Thirdly, the management could provide continuous problem solving sessions for problematic employees. Sometimes these types of employees are reluctant to look for help but by attending such sessions, they will have the chance to discuss their personal or work problems when needed. Finally, the management may guide the employees on doing the job, to make them more independent.

5.2 Limitations of the Study

This study has its limitations and therefore the results should be construed with a proper degree of concern. Firstly, the researcher was unable to have or see the list of respondents because of the government regulation that cannot exposed the list of excellent employees to public. The researcher depends on the state government to distribute the questionnaire, the outcome could be biased. The technique used may not be precise and envoy of the total population. Biased responses resulted in biased assessment when relating predictors and criterion variables using correlation analysis. Upon applying the results of this study, it should be kept in mind that the field survey for this study was carried out at only three states in East coast of Malaysia, namely, Terengganu, Kelantan and Pahang. Employees in other states or other parts of Malaysia may have different working styles and orientations. Similar samples could have been obtained from other states in the country to represent the employee population in Malaysia. Finally, the findings of the study also focused on the honesty and support make by the respondents. In addition, the understanding from the respondents on the questions may differ since the researcher cannot brief them personally hence there is a chance that the returns results are from other perspective than proposed.

5.4 Recommendation for Further Research

Since the present study used only motivation level as possible relationship of job performance, future research may include other factors such as personality factors to represent personality components in the model of employees' performance such as personality factors, role perceptions factors, skill levels and also organizational factors. Future research also should embark on a longitudinal and make a comparison with this study. Longitudinal studies are significant to help us to investigate the extension towards the model of job performance. More importantly, it may enable an understanding on the effect of the relationship.

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Table 1: Reliability Coefficients (Cronbach Alpha)

Variables	Alpha Coefficients N=135
Predictors: -	
Achievement motivation	0.84
Power motivation	0.73
Affiliation Motivation	0.82

Table 2: Demographic Profiles of the Respondents

Respondent Characteristics	Frequency (n=135)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	107	79.3
Female	28	20.7
Age group		
40 and above	100	74.1
30-39	34	25.2
20-29	1	0.70
Education Level		
SRP	29	21.5
SPM	84	62.2
STPM	10	7.4
Diploma	5	3.7
Degree and above	7	5.2
Experience		
Less than 5 year	2	1.5
5 to 10	19	14.1
10 to 15	36	26.7
More than 15 years	78	57.8
Monthly Income		
Above RM3,000	11	8.1
RM2,000-RM2,999	23	17.0
RM1,000-RM1,999	92	68.1
Less than RM1,000	9	6.7
Services Grades		
Management and professional (Grade A)	7	5.2
Semi Professional (Grade B)	3	2.2
Support 1 (Grade C)	62	45.9
Support 2 (Grade D)	63	46.7

Table 3: Pairwise correlation Matrix for Motivation and Employees Performance

Variables	Performance Target Achieved (N=135)	
	<i>R</i>	<i>Sig</i>
Achievement motivation	0.016	0.850
Power motivation	0.165	0.056
Affiliation motivation	0.188	0.029*

*p < 0.05

Table 4: Summary of Hypothesis Tests

Hypothesis	Results	Support
H1: Achievement motivation is significantly related to their job performance.	None	Not Supported
H2: Power motivation is significantly related to their job performance.	None	Not Supported
H3: Affiliation motivation is significantly related to their job performance.	Significantly related	Supported