

Determinants of Employee Performance in Saudi Arabian Public Organizations: The Mediating Role of Quality of Working Life

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<p>Article history Submitted: 13 December, 2020 Revised: 19 December, 2020 Accepted: 23 December, 2020</p>	<p>Abstract Employee performance is vital for the organizations and countries. The previous studies focused on private sector and few examined this variable in public organizations. The purpose of this study is to review the literature and develop a conceptual framework of employee performance in Saudi Arabia. The literature was reviewed and existing studies were discussed. Based on the literature, the study proposes that leadership, leader-member exchange, and knowledge sharing will have direct effect on the employee performance. Further, quality of working life is proposed as a mediator between the variables. The data will be collected from employees in public organizations and will be analyzed using structural equation modeling. Discussion of the proposed framework and its importance to the literature and decision makers were given in this study.</p>
<p>Keywords: <i>Employee performance</i> <i>Quality of working life</i> <i>Leadership</i> <i>Knowledge sharing</i> <i>Leader-member exchange</i></p>	

1. Introduction

Employee performance is critical for the organizational survival and success and it carries the same importance for the employees and their career development as well as promotion and salary. Researchers believe that employee performance is the most important construct in the Human Resource Management (HRM) and the organizational psychology, and it must be studied to understand the predictors of this performance and understand the need and wants of employees to increase their productivity [1]. Researchers refer to employee performance as the “function that an individual can successfully perform within framework of normal constraints and available resources” [2], [3].

Due to the importance of employee performance, extensive research have attempted to understand its predictors and the causes to improve the performance of employees. Nevertheless, previous studies in this regard have emphasized the studied the performance of employees in business organizations while studies in the public sector is still under researched. Previous studies in business organizations focused on several predictors such as the age [4]–[6]. Other related the performance of employees to the work environment such as the stress, organizational cultures, and the practices of HRM such as training, and development [7], [8].

Among the predictors that receive less attention is the leadership in organization as well as the relationship between the employee-employers as the stress in the workplace is increasing and the nature of the relationship between the employee and his or her supervisor is becoming critical for the success and productivity of employees [9]–[11]. One variable is neglected is the variable that combine the work life and the normal life which is the quality of working life [12]–[15].

Previous studies in performance of employee focused also on developed countries. Country such as Saudi Arabia received less attention in this topic. The country is considered among the richest country in Middle East and one of the biggest oil producers with capacity of production around 14 million barrel per day. However, recently the government initiated the vision 2030 to shift the country to reduce the dependency on oil. Public employees has critical role in this process and their achievements can help greatly in achieving the vision and promoting the non-oil activities in the country [16].

Further, the country rely mainly on foreign workers and it is estimated that more than six millions foreign workers are working in the country. The government also initiated the nationalization plan which aims to increase the local employment in public and private sector. For this reasons several researchers call for more studies in the performance of employees in Saudi Arabia [17], [18]. For example, [19] examined the performance of employee in Saudi Arabia and call for more studies to understand the predictors of the performance in all sectors and industries.

Accordingly, the purpose of this study is to examine the performance of employee in public sector in Saudi Arabia. The study aims to conduct a preliminary study to understand the predictors of the employee performance and support it with

extensive literature. Further, the study aims to examine the mediating role of the quality of working life among the predictors and the performance of employees.

2. Literature review

Performance of the employees is a key indicator for the success of all organizations in the short and long run. Superior performance of the employees leads to superior performance of the company and vice versa. Saudi Arabia aims to increase the competitiveness of its employees to achieve the vision of 2030 and the country is spending large amount of fund for this purpose. The country also aims to increase the employee of national in the public sector. Nevertheless, the performance of employee in private sector outperform those in public sector [20], [21].

Previous studies focused on private sector and identify extensively the predictors of the performance [22] [23] [24]. Previous studies also focused on the employee performance in developed countries while there is a need for more studies in developing countries such as Saudi Arabia [19], [21]. Further, the literature neglected the role of quality of working life in the context of public sector where the duty of employees as well as their task are increasing and in some cases it is leading to quit the job or increasing in the turnover intention [7], [8], [12] [25], [26]. Accordingly, the role of quality of working life must be studied [15], [21]. In Table 1, a summary of the existing studies have examined the performance of employees in several countries. It can be seen that the studies pertaining to Saudi Arabia and middle east are limited.

Table 2.1: Sample of Studies

Author/ year	Country	IV	DV	Sample	Data analysis	Finding
[22]	Australia	Supervisor support Direct voice	Employee engagement	1039 respondents	AMOS	Supervisor support and director voice affect positively the employee engagement supervisor support and senior management support mediated the effect between the variables.
[23]	Norway	Change oriented leadership	Job performance Job satisfaction	9162 respondents	AMOS	Change oriented leadership affected directly and indirectly the job performance and job satisfaction through the mediator learning demand and job involvement.
[24]	Spain	Authentic leadership	Individual performance	543 respondents	AMOS	Authentic leadership affect directly and indirectly the creativity and individual performance. Affective commitment and job resourcefulness mediated the effect between the variables.
[27]	Portugal	Transformational leadership	Employee performance	280 employees	AMOS	Transformational leadership affected the extra role performance directly and indirectly through the self-efficacy and work engagement.
[28]	South Korea	Self-leadership	Job performance	211 employees	SPSS	Self-leadership and communication competency positively affect the job performance of employees. Communication competency played a mediating role between
[1]	Chana	Trust in management Trust in peers	Employee performance	295 employees	AMOS	The effect of trust in management and trust in peers on affective commitment is moderated by organizational culture. In addition, affective commitment mediated the effect of trust in management and trust in peer on employee performance.
[29]	South Korea	Reality shock Professional self-concept	Perceived interpersonal relationship Perceived trust	184 respondents	SPSS	Reality shock was negatively affected the professional self-concept.
[30]	Taiwan	Initiating structure leadership Service climate Collective meaningfulness Employee meaningfulness	Collective turnover Employee service performance	509 employees	AMOS	Initiating structure leader creates high quality service climate.
[31]	Spain	Interaction between	Employee performance	Nil	SPSS	The positive interaction increase the performance of employee .

Author/ year	Country	IV	DV	Sample	Data analysis	Finding
		employee and their supervisor				
[32]	U.S.	Goal ambiguity Management	Performance	717 employee	Ordinary least square	Goal ambiguity and management are important to improve the performance of employee .
[33]	South Korea	Knowledge sharing	Employee performance	148 employee	SPSS	Knowledge sharing affected the innovative work. Self-leadership mediated the effect.

3. Proposed Framework

Based on the theories of leadership style, the leadership is critical for the performance of employees [28] [24] [27]. In addition, the interaction between the employees and their employer is critical and can affect several work outcome and attitude [31]. Based on the knowledge based view and related literature, knowledge sharing and its practices can strengthen the skills and capabilities of employees which will lead to more productive and creative employees and ultimately will enhance the performance of employees [34] [35]–[39]. Further, the quality of working life can play important and mediating role among the variable. Therefore, this study proposes that the leadership, leader-member exchange, and knowledge sharing will have a direct effect on job performance of employees in public organization in Saudi Arabia. The study also proposed that quality of working life will mediate the effect of the variables on the job performance. Figure 1 shows the proposed framework.

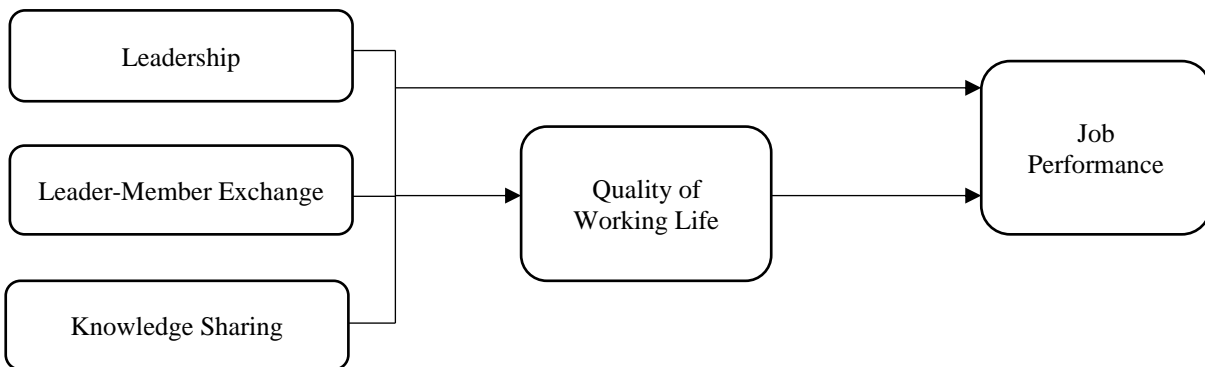


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

3.2 Hypotheses Development

Based on the conceptual framework of this study, the hypotheses are listed as follows:

- H1: Leadership will have a positive effect on job performance.
- H2: Leader-member exchange will have a positive effect on job performance.
- H3: Knowledge sharing will have a positive effect on job performance.
- H4: Quality of working life will mediate the effect of leadership on job performance.
- H5: Quality of working life will mediate the effect of leader-member exchange on job performance.
- H6: Quality of working life will mediate the effect of knowledge sharing on job performance.

4. Research Methodology

This study is a conceptual study that aims to develop a framework of the employee performance in Saudi Arabia. This study aims to examine the predictors of employee performance in Saudi Arabia. To examine the proposed hypotheses of this study, the population is determined to be public employee in Riyadh, the capital of Saudi Arabia. The sample of this study will be chosen randomly. This is because this random sampling method is the most preferable to generalizing the findings of the study [40].

The data will collect using a questionnaire. The measurement of the questionnaire will be adopted from previous studies. A validation and reliability procedures will be conducted prior to field data collection. The study will collect the data from the respondents using online questionnaire. The data will be analyzed using two software. The Statistical Package

for social science will be used to conduct the preliminary analysis. The second software is the Smart Partial Least Square (Smart PLS). This software will be used to examine the measurement model and the structural model.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

Performance is vital for the organizational success and survival. This study is important because it investigates the performance of employee in public sector in developing countries. The study will enrich the database of the literature regarding the employee performance in Saudi Arabia. Previous studies have not focus on this topic and more studies are needed in this regard. Thus, the study is important because it is responding to the call for more studies in this topic.

The study is also important because it will find the predictors that can affect the employee performance, so that the decision makers can utilize this study and focus more on the factors that enhances the performance of employees. Furthermore, this study is in line with the agenda and vision of the government to improve the performance of employee. This will contribute to the vision of 2030 and improve the productivity of the country as well as it will reduce the dependency on oil and on foreign workers. The study will focus on public organizations in Riyadh the capital of Saudi Arabia where most of the public organizations are operating. To execute this study, the data will be collected and analyzed for future work.

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