Predictors of Institutionsl Performance under the Omani Ministry of Education
Faktor Peramal Bagi Prestasi Institusi Pendidikan Di Bawah Kementerian Pendidikan Oman

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Abstract

The present study investigated the relation between the independent variables i.e. concern for customers, concern for employees, service performance, and helping behaviour and the dependent variable institution performance. A total of 514 participants (200 females, and 314 males) participated in this study from the Human Resource Department of the Ministry of Education, Oman. Chuang and Liao's (2010) questionnaire (28 items) was adapt to Omani's context to gather data for the four independents. Additionally, the Institutional performance questionnaire was developed to obtain data for the dependent variable. Results of data analysis revealed significant and positive relations between the four predictors and institutional performance. Concern of customers is the main factor of institutional performance. Findings suggested that these factors have significant influences on institutional performance in the Ministry of Education, Sultanate of Oman.

Keywords*: Institutional performance, concern for customers, service performance, concern for employees, helping behaviour.*

Introduction

Strategic management represents a relatively new transformation in the field of human resources management. It is concerned with the significant role that human resources management plays in organization performance. Educational institutions are increasingly aware that successful human resource policies and practices might improve quality performance of both students and their teachers and would increase the productivity (Brown, 2004; 2005; Batt, 2002; Becker & Huselid, 1998).

The educational organization relies on human resource as its employees. Effective human resource management strategy systematically organizes all individual human resource management measures to directly influence employee attitude and behavior in a way that leads business to achieve its competitive strategy (Huang, 2001). Theorists and empirical researchers have argued whether human resource management should always be positively related to educational organization performance. According to Universalistic theorists, there is a universal set of human resource management best practices that can enhance an educational organization's performance and facilitate the employees' psychological factors to rigorously involve in the job which consequently facilitate the performance (Lau & Ngo, 2004). On the other hand, Contingency scholars hold different points of view and argued that the assumptions underlying the human resource management strategy-performance link are applicable only under high external fit conditions, termed the "best fit" educational organization (Bamberger & Meshoulam, 2000; Boxall & Purcell, 2008).

According to Sultanate (2012), the importance of educational institutions training has been heavily influenced by intensification of competition and dramatic development of the

educational institutions. Therefore, the enhancement of employee skills is considerably emphasized. They added that technological development and educational institutional change have gradually led some employers to the realization that the relative success relies on the skills and abilities of their employees, resulting in considerable and continuous investment in training and development. Therefore, the objective of this study is to examine the factors predicting institutional performance in the Ministry of Education in Oman.

Literature review

It is well researched and documented that there is a positive link between a firm's human resource practices dimensions under high performance work system practices, and various organizational outcomes, such as organizational performance, productivity, financial performance, innovation and employees' turnover (Huselid, 1995; Messersmith & Guthuman Resourceie, 2010; Carldon, Upton & Seaman, 2006; MacDuffie, 1995; Guthuman Resourceie, 2001; Way, 2002; Lee & Miller, 1995). According to Chuang and Liao (2010), a basic premise for the performance of human resource management under strategic human resource management is that a system of internally coherent human resource practices aligned with an organizational strategy, rather than individual human resource practices used in isolation, will facilitate organizational performance. It was firmly hypothesized that there are some strategic human resource practices that if they are implemented in the organization it would enhance employees' morale, facilitate their skills and eventually lead to organizational performance, productivity, job satisfaction, better decision making and lower employees' turnover (Becker & Huselid, 1998; Wright & Boswell, 2002). The nature and the number of these practices are differed from a study to another depending on the researcher ideology and paradigm. However, there are some practices that consistently reported that they have significant impacts on the organization's efficiency and its effectiveness; it is include but not limit to staffing, training, involvement, performance, compensation and caring (Huselid, 1995, Pfeffer, 1998). According to strategic human resource management theory, these practices increase employees' knowledge, skills and abilities which consequently lead to organizational high performance and productivity.

Empirical studies (Huselid, 1995; Pfeffer, 1998; Boxall, 1996; Armstrong, 2009; Baird & Meshaoulam, 1988; Karami, Analoui & Cusworth, 2004; Salanova, Agut, & Peiro, 2005; Wright, Gardner, Moynihan, & Allen, 2005) suggested that the ways employees behave largely depend on how they interpret features and characteristics of the work environment and organization climate. On the other hand, the work environment and organization climate have a strong linkage with the organization performance, employees' commitment, motivation and productivity. According to Huselid (1995), human resource management practice improve knowledge, skills and abilities of an organization's current and potential employees, increase their motivation, and enhance retention of quality employees while encouraging non-performances to leave the organization to improve their services. According to Burke, Borucki and Hurley (1992), individual employees "*may cognitively appraise their work environment in terms of what is significant or meaningful not only to their well-being but also to the well-being of other relevant organizational constituencies*" (p.718).

Consistently, Schneider and Bowen (1992) unequivocally and emphatically argued that a positive climate for customer well-being and positive climate for employees' well-being are very distinctive because organization might have policies and practices that are positive to the sense of employees that they have been treated well but have little relationship with service customers' experience unless the organization also have policies and practices that encourage

and promote service excellence. Thus, the statement indicated that concern for employees, and concern for customers, are different entities which if one is adopted it is not necessarily automatically lead to the other unless appropriate measures are taken to enhance both concerns.

However, studies have predicted the exiting of the relationships between factors such as concern for employees, concern for customers, service performance and helping behaviour with institutional performance (Chuang & Liao, 2010; Huselid; 1995; Pfeffer, 1998; Wright & Boswell, 2002; Messersmith & Guthuman Resourceie, 2010; Carldon, Upton & Seaman, 2006). Based on the literature, the present study was conducted to examine the relationship between four predictors on institutional performance. It was carried out to test and describe the following hypotheses:

H1: Service performance would be a significant predictor of institutional performance.
H2: Concern of Customers would be a significant predictor of institutional performance.
H3: Helping behaviour would a significant predictor of institutional performance.
H4: Concern for customers a significant predictor of institutional performance.

Methodology

This cross-sectional survey study was conducted to gather (1) quantitative data for testing the four hypotheses of the study, and (2) qualitative data to describe the relationship. Survey questionnaire was relevant to collect quantitative data (Chua, 2013) for the relationship among the variables of the study.

Sampling

The population of this study comprised all the employees from the Directorate of Human Resource of the Ministry of Education, Sultanate of Oman. Oman is divided into 11 districts which are further divided into Directorate General of Human Resource Department. Furthermore, every district has its own Directorate General of education at state level which manages the educational system in the Sultanate. Selecting a representative sample is needed to generalize the results from the sample to the population of the study (Chua 2009). A total of 514 employees were selected using purposive sampling procedure. The data for this research was analyzed using SPSS. Several demographic information were pre-analyzed with descriptive statistics. As an overview, the sample consisted 61% male and 39% female stuff. The majority of employees (49%) had between 11 to 20 years of experience, whereas only 27% employees had between 21 to 31 years of experienced. The remaining 24% were within 1 to 10 years of experienced.

Instruments

The questionnaire used in this study include the adapted questionnaire from Chuang and Liao (2010) and a self-constructed questionnaire. The first questionnaire contained 28 items and divided into four dimensions. Each dimension of the instrument, i.e. concern for customers, concern for employees, service performance, and helping behaviour consists of 7 items. On the other hand, the institutional performance questionnaire was a self-constructed scale. The initial pool of possible items was generated from many sources, including literature reviews and meaningful previous instruments. The first draft of the questionnaire led initially to 30 items and was validated by using various methods such as expert comment and peer review.

Precisely, after the validation processes, some items were modified or dropped due to concern about redundancy or item clarity. Eventually, the number of remained items were 21 after deletions and modification based on the constructive comment from the experts. The developed-items were given to the experts for evaluation again and their comments and remarks were taken into consideration in later revision. In terms of content, the instrument consisted of two sections. The first section consisted of demographic characteristics of respondents and personal detail such as gender, highest educational qualification, years of working experience and current position. The second section is the attribute that the researcher intends to measure. This section contained of 28 items with 4 distinctive factors. Both sections were combined together in the form of final questionnaire with a short letter to the respondents about the aims of the study.

A total of 44 employees participated in a pilot study from different sections. Reliability analysis with regard to the internal consistency yielded Cronbach alpha coefficients of .91 for *concern for customers, concern for employees, service performance, and helping behaviour were* .71, .92, .93 and .96 indicating satisfactory reliability. Chua (2006) stated that items of an instrument is reliabile with Cronbach alpha coefficients between .65 and .95. The further examination of item-total correlations revealed that all items in each subscale contributed to the consistency of scores with item-total correlation higher than .40.

Results

Normality of data was identified prior to hypothesis testing. Results of normality analysis indicated that skewness values (-.12 to .52) and kurtosis (-.76 to .39) of the five variables in the study were in the normality range of -1.96 to 1.96 (Chua, 2009). Thus the data of the study met the requirement of parametric data analysis.

The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was used to determine if there was a statistically significant relationship between concern for customers, concern for employees, service performance, and helping behaviour in relationship to institutional performance. In the present study, the correlation coefficients were interpreted by employing Davis (1971) descriptors (negligible = .00 to .09; low =.10 to .29; moderate = .30 to .49; substantial = .50 to .69; very strong = .70 to 1.00).

As seen in Table 1, the Pearson correlation coefficients show statistically significant relationships between concern for customers, concern for employees, service performance, and helping behaviour and institutional performance. There is a positive, substantial relationship between concern of customers and institutional performance (r=.69, $p <$ .01). In other words, higher level of institutional performance is associated with high level of concern of custamers.

There is a positive, substantial relationship between concern of employees and institutional performance (r=.538, $p <$ .01). In other words, institutional performance is significantly associated with service performance. Also, there was a positive and moderate relationship between institutional performance and service performance (r=.450, $p <$ .01). It means high level of institutional performance is associated with high level of service performance. Furthermore, there was a positive, moderate relationship between institutional performance and helping behaviour (r=.347, p< .01). In other words, institutional performance is significantly associated with helping behaviour.

Table 1: Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient among the variables

Variable	HB	SP	CC	CE
Help behaviour (HB)	1			
Service performance	.676**	1		
Concern for customer (CC)	.290**	.452**	1	
Concern for employee (CE)	.248**	.392**	.661**	1
Institutional performance	.347**	.450**	.689**	.538**

Multiple regression analysis was conducted to identify the best predictors of the dependent variable institutional performance and to show the proportion of variance in the dependent variable explained by the proposed predictors (service performance, concern of customers, helping behaviour and concern of employees). A direct entry method was used for the multiple linear regression analyses to test the relationships among variables (Chua, 2009). Prior to the multiple regression analysis, the assumptions of multiple regression analysis have been checked; they include lack of multicollinearity, linearity, homoscedasticity, influential points and outliers, and independence of participants' scores (Steven, 1990). Accordingly, no violation for conducting multiple regressions analysis was found.

The association between the dependent variable and independent variables (R), the proportion of the dependent variable's variance (institutional performance), which is accounted by the linear combination of the independent variables (R^2), and the population R^2 that can be used to generalize the findings from the sample (Adjusted R Square) were extracted. The results revealed that 50.8% of the variance in institutional performance was explained by the independent variables (see Table 2). Furthermore, the regression model involved all the variables was significant at the p< .01 level of significance [$F(4, 508) =133.336$; $p< .01$] (see Table 3).

Table 2: Regression Model Summary

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
.716	.512	.508	1.47101

Table 3: Summary Results of ANOVA (Regression Significance)

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	1154.089	4	288.522	133.336	.000
Residual	1099.244	508	2.164		
Total	2253.332	512			

The standardized regression coefficients beta (β) (see Table 4) gives an indication of the contribution of each predictor in predicting the dependent variable (Aron & Aron, 2005). The results reveal that service performance was statistically significant predictor of institutional performance ($\beta = .092$; $t = 2.024$, $p < .05$). For the concern of customers variable, the test results indicated that it was statistically significant ($\beta =.538$; $t = 12.515$, $p <.05$). These suggested participants 'perceptions of their concern of customers were significant predictor of participant' perceptions about institutional performance. Furthermore, for the helping behaviour variable, the test was statistically significant ($\beta =.098$; $t = 2.339$, $p < .05$). It

suggests that helping behaviour variable was significant predictor of Institutional performance. Finally, for the concerns of employees variable, the test was also statistically significant (β =.122; $t = 2.927$, $p< .05$). It suggests concerns of employees was a significant predictor of institutional performance.

Table 4: Summary Results of Regression Analysis: Regression Coefficients of Standard Regression Model

Predictor	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig	Correlations		
	B	S. E.	Beta			Zero-order	Partial	Part
Service performance	.086	.042	.092	2.03	.042	.347	.103	.072
Concern of customers	.500	.040	.538	12.51	.000	.689	.485	.388
Helping behaviour	.087	.037	.098	2.33	.020	.450	.090	.063
Concern of employees	.118	.040	.122	2.92	.004	.538	.129	.091

To determine the best predictor of institutional performance, standardized regression coefficients (β), partial correlation coefficients, and part correlation coefficients were used. Table 4 shows that the concerns of customers has the greatest value of β, partial correlation coefficient, and part correlation coefficient. As such, concern of customers was the best predictor of dependent variable that had the most significant effect in predicting institutional performance. The regression model derived from this study is:

Institutional performance of Omani human resource departments
= .538(Concern of customers) + .122 (Concern of employees) + .098(Helping behaviour) + .092(Service performance)

In this case, concern of customers is the main factor of institutional performance, which was followed by concern of employees, helping behaviour and lastly service performance.

Results of qualitative data analysis

The data of semi structure individual interview regarding perceptions of six informants of the study indicates that regariding concern of customers, the informants manifest the need of leadership and management in the Omani educational institutions to support the service quality effort, job knowledge and skills of employees to deliver superior quality service. These are in addition to the tools, technology, and other resources provided to employees to support the delivery of superior quality service. Finally, the recognition and rewards employees receive for the delivery of superior work and service. The perceptions on concern of employees manifested that the institution cared about employee's well-being, and was willing to help if employees need special favour, or considering their goals and values. Moreover, help is always available in the institution when employees facing problems. The findings based on each individual research item indicate that employees in the study are able to: help customers when needed; explain services features and benefit to overcome customers' objection; point out and relate service features to customers' needs; approach customers quickly; suggest services to customers; ask relevant questions and listen attentively to find out what customer wants; and are friendly and helpful to customers. The perception of helping behavior indicate that employees help each other out if others fall in his / her work, and to encourage each others when one is down. Moreover, employees were to help co-workers who have work-related problems, or to be peacemakers when other co-wokers have disagreements.

Discussion

The results of this study contributed in various ways to understand the effect of factors predicting institutional performance among Omani human resource employee. The hypotheses H1, H2, H3 and H4 are maintained. Thus service performance, concern of customers, helping behaviour and concern for customers are significant predictors for institutional performance.

Theoretically, this result supported the finding of Chuang and Liao (2010). Schneider and Bowen (1992) unequivocally and emphatically argued that a positive climate for customer well-being and positive climate for employees' well-being are very distinctive because organization might have policies and practices that are positive to the sense of employees that they have been treated well but have little relationship with service customers' experience unless the organization also have policies and practices that encourage and promote service excellence. Thus, the statement indicated that concern for employees and concern for customers are different entities which if one is adopted, do not necessarily or automatically lead to the other unless appropriate measures are taken to enhance both concerns. Therefore, the previous factors can be distinctively categorized into four categories, which are service performance, concern of customers, helping behaviour and concern for customers. It is suggested that future research should be conducted for cross-cultural validation of the predictors since the sample of this study was culturally and environmentally different from the sample size of Chuang and Liao (2010). However, the findings of this study have statistically shown that service performance, concern of customers, helping behaviour and concern for customers are part of distinctive factors that were found in the previous studies (Chuang and Liao, 2010).

The findings of regression analysis revealed that only 50.8% of institutional performance was predicted by the four predicted of the study. Nearly half of institutional performance is caused by other external factors that were not included in this study. Hence future studies should include more factors such as demographic variables as predictors or covariates to provide a bigger picture of factors of institutional performance in the Omani human resource department in the Ministry of Education.

Conclusion

This study explored the four valid factors, namely, service performance, concern of customers, helping behaviour and concern for customers of Ministry of Education in Sultanate of Oman by applying the method of regression analysis. In essence, the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient determined a significant correlation between the four predicted factors and institution performance. The findings suggested that the institutional performance is significantly related to the four factors. The findings suggested that service performance, concern of customers, helping behaviour and concern for customers caused institution of higher learning to achieve high performance. Evidently, the correlation analysis showed significant relationships among the factors of the study. Besides that, the results also discovered that concern of customers was the best predictor of institutional performance.

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