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**COMMITMENT-BASED HR PRACTICES AND  
ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE:  
THE MEDIATING ROLE OF  
ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING  
CAPABILITY AND SOCIAL CAPITAL**



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**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY  
UNIVERSITI UTARA MALAYSIA**

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PERFORMANCE:  
THE MEDIATING ROLE OF ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING  
CAPABILITY AND SOCIAL CAPITAL**



**By**  
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**Thesis Submitted to  
Othman Yeop Abdullah Graduate School of Business,  
Universiti Utara Malaysia  
in Fulfilment of the Requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

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## ABSTRACT

The main objectives of this study were to investigate (a) the relationship between commitment-based HR practices (e.g. selection, compensation, training and development) and organizational performance, organizational learning capability, and organizational social capital; (b) the relationship between organizational learning capability and organizational performance; (c) the relationship between organizational social capital and organizational performance; and (d) the mediating role of organizational learning capability and organizational social capital on the relationship between commitment-based HR practices and organizational performance. Specifically, this study hypothesized that (a) commitment-based HR practices, organizational learning capability and organizational social capital relationship are positively related to organizational performance and (b) the relationship between commitment-based HR practices and organizational performance is mediated by organizational learning capability and organizational social capital. To test the hypotheses, the Partial Least Square – Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) statistical technique was employed to analyze the survey data collected from 401 Japanese MNCs organizations in Kedah, Pulau Pinang, Perak, Selangor, Kuala Lumpur, Melaka and Johor. The results of the study showed that (a) commitment-based HR practices are positively related to organizational performance, organizational learning capability and organizational social capital; (b) organizational learning capability has no influence on organizational performance; (c) organizational social capital is positively related to organizational performance; and (d) organizational learning capability does not mediate the relationship between commitment-based HR practices and organizational performance, and organizational social capital fully mediates the relationship between commitment-based HR practices and organizational performance. Theoretically, the study contributes to knowledge by providing support for the importance of commitment-based HR practices and the mediating role of organizational social capital which influence the organizational performance of Japanese MNCs in Malaysia. Practically, this study provides guidelines to policy-makers and HR practitioners to understand that business success depends on the organization's capabilities and abilities to utilize its human resources to achieve its business objectives and goals. The result of this study is able to offer evidence that commitment-based HR practices help promote mutual and long-term relationships in the organization at all levels. Hence, HR practitioners need to institute HR practices that encourage network-building relationships characterized by trust, cooperation and commitment towards the organization.

**Keywords:** commitment-based HR practices, organizational learning capability, organizational social capital, organizational performance, Japanese MNCs.

## ABSTRAK

Objektif utama kajian ini ialah untuk mengkaji hubungan antara komitmen berasaskan pengurusan sumber manusia ( pengambilan pekerja, ganjaran, latihan dan pembangunan) dengan prestasi organisasi, kemampuan pembelajaran organisasi dan kemampuan sosial organisasi. Selain itu, objektif kajian ini juga adalah untuk mengkaji hubungan antara komitmen berasaskan pengurusan sumber manusia dan prestasi organisasi dengan kemampuan pembelajaran organisasi dan kemampuan sosial organisasi sebagai pemboleh ubah pengantara. Secara khususnya, hipotesis kajian ini adalah merangkumi hubungan antara komitmen berasaskan pengurusan sumber manusia, kemampuan pembelajaran organisasi dan kemampuan sosial organisasi yang secara positif berkaitan dengan prestasi organisasi. Manakala hipotesis hubungan antara komitmen berasaskan pengurusan sumber manusia dengan prestasi organisasi dipengaruhi secara positif oleh pemboleh ubah kemampuan pembelajaran organisasi dan kemampuan sosial organisasi. Bagi menguji hipotesis, teknik statistik *Partial Least Square – Structural Equation Modelling* (PLS-SEM) digunakan untuk menganalisis data soal selidik yang dikumpul daripada 401 buah organisasi multinasional dari Jepun yang berada di negeri Kedah, Pulau Pinang, Perak, Selangor, Kuala Lumpur, Melaka dan Johor. Keputusan kajian menunjukkan bahawa hubungan antara komitmen berasaskan pengurusan sumber manusia dengan prestasi organisasi, kemampuan pembelajaran organisasi dan kemampuan sosial organisasi adalah positif. Manakala kemampuan pembelajaran organisasi tiada hubungan positif dengan prestasi organisasi dan kemampuan sosial organisasi pula adalah signifikan dengan prestasi organisasi. Hasil kajian juga menunjukkan bahawa kemampuan pembelajaran organisasi tidak signifikan sebagai pemboleh ubah pengantara dalam hubungan antara komitmen berasaskan pengurusan sumber manusia dengan prestasi organisasi dan kemampuan sosial organisasi adalah signifikan sebagai pemboleh ubah pengantara dalam hubungan antara komitmen berasaskan pengurusan sumber manusia dengan prestasi organisasi. Secara teorinya, kajian ini menyumbang kepada pengetahuan dengan memberi sokongan terhadap kepentingan komitmen berasaskan pengurusan sumber manusia yang mempengaruhi prestasi organisasi multinasional Jepun di Malaysia. Di samping itu, kajian ini dapat meningkatkan pengetahuan tentang peranan kemampuan sosial organisasi sebagai pemboleh ubah pengantara antara komitmen berasaskan pengurusan sumber manusia dengan prestasi organisasi multinasional Jepun di Malaysia. Secara praktiknya, kajian ini dapat memberi panduan kepada pihak pengamal sumber manusia untuk memahami bahawa untuk mencapai kejayaan dalam pengurusan perniagaan, ia bergantung kepada kemampuan organisasi dengan memanfaatkan sumber manusia melalui komitmen berasaskan pengurusan sumber manusia dan kemampuan sosial organisasi. Hasil kajian ini membuktikan bahawa pengurusan sumber manusia yang efektif boleh meningkatkan komitmen serta mempromosikan hubungan jangka panjang yang menguntungkan semua peringkat dalam organisasi. Oleh itu, pihak pengamal dan pengurusan sumber manusia perlu menggalakkan hubungan sosial dalam organisasi yang berteraskan kepercayaan, kerjasama dan komitmen terhadap organisasi.

**Kata kunci:** komitmen berasaskan pengurusan sumber manusia, kemampuan pembelajaran organisasi, kemampuan sosial organisasi, prestasi organisasi, multinasional Jepun

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<b>Page</b>
<b>TITLE PAGE</b>	i
<b>CERTIFICATE OF THESIS WORK</b>	ii
<b>PERMISSION TO USE</b>	iii
<b>ABSTRACT (English)</b>	iv
<b>ABSTRAK (Bahasa Malaysia)</b>	v
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT</b>	vi
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b>	vii
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b>	xiii
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b>	xv
<b>LIST OF ABBEVIATIONS</b>	xvi
 <b>CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION</b>	
1.0 Introduction	1
1.1 Background of the Study	1
1.2 Problem Statement	9
1.3 Research Questions	21
1.4 Research Objectives	22
1.5 Significance of the Study	22
1.6 Scope of the Study	28
1.7 Definitions of Key Terms	31
1.7.1 Dependent Variable – Organizational Performance	31
1.7.2 Independent Variable – Commitment-based HR Practices	31
1.7.3 Mediator Variables – Organizational Learning Capability and Organizational Social Capital	32
1.8 Organization of the Chapters	33
 <b>CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW</b>	
2.0 Introduction	34
2.1 Definition and Conceptualization of Organizational Performance	34
2.2 Definition and Conceptualization of Commitment-Based Human Resource (HR) Practices	37



2.2.1	Selection	41
2.2.2	Compensation	42
2.2.3	Training and Development	43
2.3	Definition and Conceptualization of Organizational Learning Capability	44
2.4	Definition and Conceptualization of Organizational Social Capital	47
2.5	Gaps in the Literature	51
2.6	Underpinning Theory	58
2.6.1	Research Base View (RBV) Theory	58
2.6.2	Social Capital Theory (SCT)	61
2.7	Theoretical Framework	62
2.8	The Relationship between Variables and Formation of Hypotheses	63
2.8.1	Commitment-based HR practices and Organizational Performance	63
2.8.2	Commitment-based HR practices and Organizational Learning Capability (OLC)	68
2.8.3	Commitment-based HR practices and Organizational Social Capital (OSC)	71
2.8.4	Organizational Learning Capability (OLC) and Organizational Performance	73
2.8.5	Organizational Social Capital (OSC) and Organizational Performance	76
2.8.6	Mediating effect of Organizational Learning Capability (OLC) on the relationship between Commitment-based HR practices and Organizational Performance.	79
2.8.7	Mediating effect of Organizational Social Capital (OSC) on the relationship between Commitment-based HR practices and Organizational Performance.	81
2.9	Summary of the Chapter	83

## **CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY**

3.0	Introduction	84
3.1	Research Design	84
3.2	Sampling Technique	87
3.2.1	Population and Sample Frame	88
3.2.2	Size of Sample	90
3.2.3	Random Selection of Sample	90
3.3	Data Collection	91
3.4	Measurements	94
3.4.1	Commitment-based HR practices	94
3.4.2	Organizational Social Capital	96
3.4.3	Organizational Learning Capability	98
3.4.4	Organizational Performance	99
3.5	Questionnaire design	100
3.6	Pre-Test	101
3.7	Pilot Test	104
3.8	Data Analysis Techniques	106
3.8.1	Preliminary Analysis	107
3.8.2	Main Analysis	109
3.8.2.1	Evaluation of PLS Path Model Results	112
3.8.2.1.1	Assessment of Measurement Model	112
3.8.2.3.1.1	Convergent Validity	113
3.8.2.3.1.2	Discriminant Validity	114
3.8.2.1.2	Assessment of Structural Model	116
3.8.2.2	Testing Mediation in PLS-SEM	118
3.9	Summary of the Chapter	120

## **CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS**

4.0	Introduction	121
4.1	Overview of Data Collection	121
4.1.1	Demographic Characteristics	122
4.2	Preliminary Analysis Results	123
4.2.1	Missing Values	124
4.2.2	Outliers	124

4.2.3	Normality	125
4.2.3.1	Numerical Method: Skewness and Kurtosis Test	125
4.2.3.2	Formal Normality Test: Shapiro-Wilk Test	128
4.2.4	Multicollinearity	129
4.3	Measurement Model	130
4.3.1	Assessment of Measurement Model	135
4.3.1.1	Convergent Validity	136
4.3.1.2	Discriminant Validity	140
4.3.1.3	Descriptive Statistics of the Latent Constructs	141
4.3.1.4	Correlational Analysis	142
4.3.1.5	Assessment on Common Method Bias (CMB)	143
4.4	Structural Model	146
4.4.1	Assessment of Structural Model	146
4.5	Hypotheses Testing Results	153
4.5.1	Direct Relationship	153
4.5.1.1	The Relationship between Commitment-based HR Practices (independent variable) and Organizational Performance (dependent variable)	153
4.5.1.2	The Relationship between Commitment-based HR Practices (independent variable) and Organizational Learning Capability (mediating variable)	153
4.5.1.3	The Relationship between Commitment-based HR Practices (independent variable) and Organizational Social Capital (mediating variable)	154
4.5.1.4	The Relationship between Organizational Learning Capability (mediating variable) and Organizational Performance (dependent variable)	154

4.5.1.5	The Relationship between Organizational Social Capital (mediating variable) and Organizational Performance (dependent variable)	155
4.5.2	Indirect Relationship	155
4.5.2.1	The Relationship between Organizational Learning Capability (mediating variable), Commitment-based HR Practices (independent variable) and Organizational Performance (dependent variable)	156
4.5.2.2	The Relationship between Organizational Social Capital (mediating variable), Commitment-based HR Practices (independent variable) and Organizational Performance (dependent variable)	157
4.6	Summary of the Chapter	159
<b>CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION</b>		
5.0	Introduction	161
5.1	Recapitulation of Study and Summary of Findings	161
5.2	Discussion of the Findings	162
5.2.1	Commitment-based HR Practices and Organizational Performance	163
5.2.2	Commitment-based HR Practices and Organizational Learning Capability	167
5.2.3	Commitment-based HR Practices and Organizational Social Capital	170
5.2.4	Organizational Learning Capability and Organizational Performance	171

5.2.5	Organizational Social Capital and Organizational Performance	177
5.2.6	The Mediating Role of Organizational Learning Capability on the relationship between Commitment-based HR Practices and Organizational Performance	178
5.2.7	The Mediating Role of Organizational Social Capital on the relationship between Commitment-based HR Practices and Organizational Performance	180
5.3	Implication of the Study	181
5.3.1	Theoretical Implications	181
5.3.2	Practical Implications	183
	5.3.2.1 Policy Makers & HR Practitioners of Japanese MNCs	184
	5.3.2.2 Stakeholders of Japanese MNCs	187
	5.3.2.3 Implication for Japanese Association in Malaysia	189
	5.3.2.4 Implication to the economic and citizens in Malaysia	190
5.4	Limitations	192
5.5	Suggestions for Future Research	193
5.6	Conclusion	194

## REFERENCES

## LIST OF TABLES

		<b>Page</b>
Table 1.1	Total Trade, Export and Import Value between Malaysia and Japan	29
Table 2.1	Summary of HRM Practices Studies by Various Researches	53
Table 3.1	Operational definition and items for Commitment-Based HR Practices variable	95
Table 3.2	Operational definition and items for Organizational Social Capital variable	97
Table 3.3	Operational definition and items for Organizational Learning Capability variable	98
Table 3.4	Operational definition and items for Organizational Performance	100
Table 3.5	Organization of the Questionnaires	101
Table 3.6	Summary of Feedback from The Selected Respondents	102
Table 3.7	The Reliability Results from Pilot Test	106
Table 3.8	Criteria of Reflective and Formative measurement	115
Table 4.1	Response Rate	122
Table 4.2	Demographic Characteristics of The Respondents	123
Table 4.3	Results of Multivariate Outliers	125
Table 4.4	Skewness and Kurtosis for the Assessment of Normality	127
Table 4.5	Shapiro-Wilk Normality Test Result	129
Table 4.6	Multicollinearity Assessment	130
Table 4.7	Rules of Thumb for Selecting PLS-SEM or CB-SEM	133
Table 4.8	The Result of Measurement Model	138
Table 4.9	Discriminant Validity of Constructs, Fornell-Larcker Criterion	141
Table 4.10	Descriptive Statistics	142

Table 4.11	The Mean and Standard Deviation of Correlation of Latent Constructs	142
Table 4.12	Common Method Bias (CMB)	144
Table 4.13	The Result of R2	147
Table 4.14	The Result of R2, Q2 and q2 Values	148
Table 4.15	The Result of f2	149
Table 4.16	The Result of Structural Model	152
Table 4.15	The result of R2, Q2 and q2 values	139
Table 4.16	The result of direct relationship	142
Table 4.17	Summary of the hypotheses	157



## LIST OF FIGURES

	<b>Page</b>
Figure 1.0 Japanese organizations performance in Malaysia	11
Figure 2.0 Theoretical framework of the relationship between Commitment-Based HR practices, Organizational Learning Capability, Organizational Social Capital and Organizational Performance	63
Figure 3.0 Measurement model for Commitment-based HR practices, Organizational Learning Capability, Organizational Social Capital and Organizational Performance	139
Figure 4.0 Path Coefficient of Independent Variable, Mediating Variables and Dependent Variable	150



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## LIST OF ABBEVIATIONS

### ABB

JETRO

JAP

MIDA

MATRADE

MITI

MOFA

OLC

OSC

OP

### FULL LIST

Japanese External Trade Organization

Japanese Association Penang

Malaysia Investment Development Authority

Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation

Malaysia of International Trade and Industry

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Organizational Learning Capability

Organizational Social Capital

Organizational Performance



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# **CHAPTER 1**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.0 Introduction**

This chapter introduces the background of study, followed by the problem statement, research questions, and objectives, the significance of the study, the scope, and the definitions of key terms. The organization of the chapters and its summary are also presented.

### **1.1 Background of the Study**

Business organizations play a significant role in today's civilization because they serve as a driving force in the national economy and social development (Gavrea, Ilies, & Stegeran, 2011) by providing employment opportunities to the people and generating income for the government, contributing subsequently towards the growth of a country's gross domestic product (GDP) (MIDA, 2015). Realizing their crucial role in the national development, many researchers have been analysing the performance of organizations for the last 25 years. In doing so, researchers have been able to find out why some organizations managed to achieve best performance while others failed to do so (Bashaer Almatrosshi, Sanjay Kumar Singh, Sherine Farouk, 2016; Florian, 2013; Gavrea et al., 2011; Overstreet, Hanna, Byrd, Cegielski, & Hazen, 2013; Popova & Sharpanskykh, 2010; Richard, Devinney, Yip & Johnson, 2009).

In order to perform well, organizations must have the resilience to withstand the challenges (e.g., market volatility, control of market share, surveillance of competitors, increase of raw materials prices, currency pressures, international regulations and shortage of competent human resources) derived from the market

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## APPENDIX





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HUMAN RESOURCE DIRECTOR /MANAGER

Dear Sir /Madam

I am a PhD student in COB, Universiti Utara Malaysia, Kedah. Currently, I am conducting a research on '**Commitment-based HR Practices and Organizational Performance: The mediating role of Organizational Learning Capability and Organizational Social Capital**'.

Your participation in completing the questionnaire is important to the success of this research. It will be grateful if you are able to return the completed questionnaires by soonest. The information you provide will remain strictly anonymous and confidential.

I would appreciate your returning the questionnaire at your earliest convenience. Thank you in advance for your cooperation. Should you have any enquiries, please do not hesitate to contact me or my supervisors.

Yours sincerely,  
Ms. Chia Po Li  
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**SECTION ONE:**

**1. ORGANIZATION PROFILE**

In year your organization established in Malaysia:

1 – 5       6-10       11  – 15  
16 – 20       21 and above

Number of employees in 2015:

1 – 50       51 – 150       51 – 500   
501 – 1,000       1,001 and above

Type of industry:

Manufacturing       Non-manufacturing

**2. RESPONDENT PROFILE**

Job position: \_\_\_\_\_

Service Duration:

2-3 years       7 - 9 years  
 4-6 years       >10 years       Others, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

Highest academic qualification:

Bachelor Degree       Doctoral Degree  
 Master Degree       Others, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

Nationally:

Malaysian       Non-Malaysian

Years with this organization /department: \_\_\_\_\_

Years of working experience: \_\_\_\_\_



## SECTION TWO

**INSTRUCTION:** With reference to your organization HR practices, please indicate the level of agreement to the following statements by circling the appropriate number in the scale given.

Strongly degree (1) ————— Strongly agree (7)

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Undecided	Agree	Agree somewhat	Strongly agree
1 Internal candidates are given consideration over external candidates for job openings.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2 We select employees based on an overall fit to the company.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3 Our selection system focuses on the potential of the candidates to learn and grow with the organization.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4 We ensure that all employees in these positions are made aware of internal promotion opportunities.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5 Employee bonuses and incentive plans are based primarily on the performance of the organizations.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6 Salaries for employees in these positions are higher than those of our competitors.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7 Shares of stock are available to all core employees through stock purchase plans.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8 Goals for incentive plans are based on business unit or company performance.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9 We provide multiple career path opportunities for employees to move across multiple functional areas of the company.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10 We provide training focused on team-building and teamwork skills training.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11 We sponsor company social events for employees to get to know one another.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

12	We offer an orientation program that trains employees on the history and processes of the organization.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13	We use job rotation to expand the skills of employees.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14	We have a mentoring system to help develop these employees.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15	Performance appraisal are used primarily to set goals for personal development.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16	Performance appraisals are used to plan skill development and training for future advancement within the company these employees.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7



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### SECTION THREE

**INSTRUCTION:** With reference to your organization social capital, please indicate the level of agreement to the following statements by circling the appropriate number in the scale given.

Strongly degree (1) ————— Strongly agree (7)

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Undecided	Agree	Agree somewhat	Strongly agree
1 Employees engage in open and honest communication with one another.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2 Employees at this organization have no hidden agendas or issues.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3 Employees share and accept constructive criticisms without making it personal.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4 Employees discuss personal issues if they affect job performance.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5 Employees willingly share information with one another.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6 Employees at this organization keep each other informed at all times.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7 Employees can rely on the managers they work with in this organization.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8 Employees in this organization are usually considerate of one another's feelings.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9 Employees have confidence in one another in this organization.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10 Employees in this organization show a great deal of integrity.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11 There is team spirit among employees in this organization.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

12	Overall, employees at this organization are trustworthy.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13	Employees are committed to organizational goals.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14	Employees enthusiastically pursue collective goals and mission.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15	Every employee is in total agreement on the organization's vision.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7



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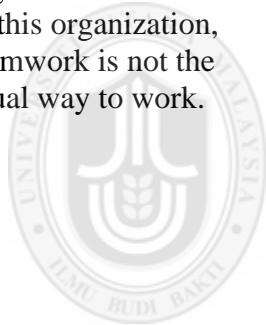
## SECTION FOUR

**INSTRUCTION:** With reference to your organization learning capability, please indicate the level of agreement to the following statements by circling the appropriate number in the scale given.

Strongly degree (1) ————— Strongly agree (7)

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Undecided	Agree	Agree somewhat	Strongly agree
1 The managers frequently involve their employees in important decision-making process.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2 Employee learning is considered more as expenses than investment.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3 The organization's management looks favorably on carrying out changes in any area to adapt to and/or keep ahead of new environmental situations.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4 Employee learning capability is considered a key factor in this organization.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5 This organization follows up what other organizations in the sector are doing, adopting those practices and techniques it believes to be useful and interesting.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6 Experiences and ideas provided by external sources (advisors, customers, training, etc) are considered a useful instrument for this organization's learning.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

- |    |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|----|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7  | Part of this organization's culture is that employees can express their opinions and make suggestions regarding the procedures and methods in place of carrying out tasks. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 8  | Errors and failures are always discussed and analyzed in this organization on all levels.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 9  | Employees have the chance to talk among themselves about new ideas, programs and activities that might be of use to the organization.                                      | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 10 | In this organization, teamwork is not the usual way to work.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |



## SECTION FIVE

**INSTRUCTION:** With reference to your organization performance, please indicate the level of agreement to the following statements by circling the appropriate number in the scale given.

Worse (1) ————— Very good (5)

1 Compare to other organization's that do the same kind of work, how do you compare your organization's market performance and internal performance over the last three years in terms of:

	Worse	Not good	Satisfactory	Good	Very good
a) Quality of products and services.	1	2	3	4	5
b) Development of new products and services.	1	2	3	4	5
c) Ability to attract employees.	1	2	3	4	5
d) Ability to retain employees.	1	2	3	4	5
e) Satisfaction of customers or clients.	1	2	3	4	5
f) Relations between management and employees.	1	2	3	4	5
g) Marketing of products and services?	1	2	3	4	5
h) Growth in sales?	1	2	3	4	5
i) Profitability?	1	2	3	4	5
j) Market Share?	1	2	3	4	5

**Thank you for sparing your valuable time to complete this survey**