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### INDIVIDUAL WORK PERFORMANCE SUCCESS FACTORS: REVISITING THE HUMAN PERFORMANCE SYSTEM MODEL

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#### **ABSTRACT**

The work performance of individual employees plays an important role in increasing the labour productivity of a nation in the long term. Past studies have revealed models of work performance factors. However, the human performance system model offers a relatively more detailed and comprehensive range of determinants of individual work performance which is seemingly absent from past studies. The model's six work performance determinants are performance specification, task support, consequences, feedback, skills/knowledge and individual capacity. A questionnaire was designed to identify research variables from each work performance determinant in the model. A pilot study was conducted to finalise it. The seven factors in our study are: competency, self-efficacy, career awareness and interests, resources and support, incentives and rewards, performance targets, and performance feedback. Data were obtained based on

stratified random sampling of 4,000 employees from different job levels in the Information Technology and Network Division of a telecommunication company which yielded 3,529 final responses. The results show that out of these seven factors, performance feedback was not significant and that only the incentives and rewards factor is negatively significant with work performance. Thus, it is important for the organisation to focus on competency, self-efficacy, career awareness and interests, resources and support, and performance targets to increase labour productivity; and at the same time, carefully look into the dimensions of incentives and rewards for the benefit of a nation

**Keywords:** Work performance, human performance system model, competency, self-efficacy, performance targets.

### INTRODUCTION

Labour productivity plays an important role in Malaysia's transition to a high-income economy in the coming period of between 2024 and 2028, as reported by the new World Bank report - Aiming High -Navigating the Next Stage of Malaysia's Development year 2021. The Malaysian Government is committed to achieving a transition to high-income economy. However, recently, the Department of Statistics Malaysia reported that labour productivity per employment declined 5.6 per cent in the third quarter of 2021 as compared to the previous quarter (Q2 2021: 13.7%). In addition, labour productivity per employment for services sector dropped 6.2 per cent (Q2 2021: 11.1%). Hence, there is a need for organisations to improve employees' work performances in order to increase labour productivity and for a nation to aim for the highest growth. Work performance is defined as activities and measurable outcomes. There is a relationship between individual jobs within the organisation, the processes which they are a part of, and the results at organisational level (Rummler and Morrill, 2004). Thus, it is important to understand the factors that will determine individual work performance, especially in the telecommunication sector which contributes largely to economic growth. Although there have been many studies on work performance factors such as those of Jankingthong & Rurkkhum, (2012), Saeed & Igbal (2013), Jayaweera (2015), and Al Zefeiti & Mohamad (2017), their focus shows a mixture of organisational and individual factors instead of the more

detailed and comprehensive range of determinants of individual work performance as outlined by the human performance system model.

This study has important research and managerial contributions. It lends empirical support to different work performance factors in the human performance system model. This is important because previously the factors had been studied separately by different researchers. Furthermore, only a minimal number of studies measured all the factors in the human performance system model and they had been limited to case studies only. This study impacts the organisations as well as the national economy. Organisations can use the study's findings to strategise the elements inside their organisations which need attention due to the significant impact on employee work performance. For example, now that organisations are aware that employees' competency in their jobs and their interest in their occupational fields help them perform better, the organisation's recruitment and hiring efforts should take this information into account when sourcing for and hiring workers. It will enable organisations to manage the right elements thus improving employees' work performance. The country's labour productivity will increase, and the rate of economic development will also be enhanced.

This study aims to analyse the factors influencing individual work performance in reference to the initial work of Rummler (1972). According to Rosdi, Alias & Ismail (2020), there are many studies on work performance but each focuses on different factors in the human performance system model. In addition, there is a lack of studies that are based on the complete human performance system model which in turn, are limited to a few case studies such as Rummler and Morrill (2004), and Kelly and Huff (2007). This shows that the model needs to be further explored. This study utilises quantitative research techniques to understand the individual work performance factors based on the complete human performance system model. The results show that out of seven factors, performance feedback is not significant and that only incentives and rewards are negatively significant with work performance.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

In exploring factors influencing employee work performance, this study refers to the original work of Rummler (1972) and the subsequent

study of Rummler and Morris (2004) on the human performance system model. The model highlights six determinants influencing human performance, namely performance specification, task support, consequences, feedback, skills/knowledge and individual capacity (Wilmoth, Prigmore, & Bray, 2002). However, through the years, a multitude of other researchers added their perspectives on work performance factors based on these six determinants. Hence, this study investigates seven factors outlined by contemporary research as those having significant impact on employee work performance. The factors under study are competency, self-efficacy, career awareness and interests, resources and support, incentives and rewards, performance targets and performance feedback.

Competency includes activities that span a combination of knowledge, behaviours and skills which influence human performance (Srividya and Basu, 2015). In a study by Mansor and Hamzah (2015), the right competencies are established to have positive effects on the work performance of leaders (Mansor & Hamzah, 2015); while the study by Ariffin (2015) shows that a lack of relevant skills affects teachers' performance in Indonesian schools. A lack of job skills thwarts employee work performance as well as their career development (Lasim, Fernando & Pupat, 2016). There are also more recent research data that highlights the impact of individual competency on work performance (Sabuhari, Sudiro, Irawanto, & Rahayu, 2020; Rosdi, Alias & Ismail, 2020). Existing research not only covers job competency in general, but also its elements such as knowledge, skills and abilities. Data also shows competency and its elements having a significant influence on work performance.

### H1:Competencies have significant impact on individual work performance.

For the ability to perform work tasks, researchers studied the concept of self-efficacy. Early studies such as Bandura (1986) refer to self-efficacy as an individual's belief in his or her ability to accomplish his or her work. Those with high self-efficacy are more likely to provide better services to customers and better work performance while those with low self-efficacy will have problems in performance and in solving difficult tasks (Manaseh, 2015). More recent research works also establish that employees with high self-efficacy are shown to

have lower anxiety regarding work and recorded higher levels of work performance (Rosdi, et. al, 2020; De Clerq, Ul Haq, & Azeem, 2018). Rosdi, Alias and Ismail (2020) describe how the concept of individual capacity to perform one's job is operationalised as pertaining to the concept of self-efficacy, which is an approach similarly taken by many previous researchers such as Judge and Bono (2001), DeDonno and Demarce (2008) and Iroegbu (2015). All of these previous researches show significant impact of self-efficacy on individual work performance. The study by De Clerg, Ul-Hag and Azeem (2018) gave further support for the role of self-efficacy in job performance as their empirical findings reveal that self-efficacy serves to enhance individual job performance by making employees experience less anxiety and higher confidence levels while undertaking their daily tasks. A more recent study by Parashakti, Ekhsan and Siti Komariah (2021) also provides additional empirical support for the significant effects of individual competence on work performance.

### H2:Self-efficacy has a significant impact on individual work performance.

Research seems to indicate that the general interest and awareness an individual has in his or her career also impact their work performance as employees bear the responsibility of managing their own careers (Segers & Inceoglu, 2012). A study involving 33 insurance agents in Thailand shows that the career interest and awareness factor is crucial in assisting them to achieve work goals (Lasim, Fernando and Pupat, 2016). More recent research data from the telecommunications sector in Malaysia by Rosdi, et al. (2020) also stresses that employees perceive higher work performance as being motivated by the interest in their jobs and the career fields of their choice.

# H3:Career awareness and interests have significant impact on individual work performance.

Resources and support, commonly termed 'perceived organisational support', refer to anything provided by organisations for employees to perform their work tasks (Abas, Omar, Halim & Hafiz, 2016). Past studies indicate that organisational support has positive impact on employees (Kim, Eisenberger, & Baik, 2016; Basit & Arshad, 2016). Resources and support can be anything perceived by employees that

assist them in the achievement of their work goals (Halbesleben, Neveu, Paustian-Underdahl, & Westman, 2014). These can come in the form of job security, work environment, access to high-quality work tools and care and consideration, that have been shown to impact job performance (Vuuren, de Jong, & Smulders, 2020; Badrianto & Ekhsan, 2020; Fee & Gray, 2020; Rosdi, et al, 2020). Overall, current research works seem to indicate significant influences of organisational resources and support, on employees' work performance.

### H4:Resources and support have significant impact on individual work performance.

Researchers have long identified how incentives and rewards impact employee behaviour, and more specifically, work performance; in which employees believe that the main purpose of working is indeed to be entitled to fair rewards (Mamdani & Minhaj, 2016; Rosdi et al, 2020; Sieng, L.W. & Azman M., 2021). Organisational incentive programmes have positive results on employees' motivation and work performance, along with recognition of employees' work shown by superiors (NDungu, 2017). Other past research works such as that of Aktar, Sachu and Ali (2012) and Khan, Shahid, Nawab and Wali (2013) highlight the different types of employee rewards such as monetary rewards as well as non-monetary ones; for example, giving praise, recognition and more worker autonomy. Nevertheless, all the studies' findings emphasised the significance of rewards on employee work performance. Recent studies such as that of Darda, Siti Maesaroh and Rizaldy (2021) also provides empirical evidence on the significant influences of compensation and rewards on employee work performance.

# H5:Incentives and rewards have significant impact on individual work performance.

The performance appraisal process and performance targets have been shown to facilitate the work performance of employees (Mauya, 2015). This is based on the belief that clear work objectives assist employees in being more focused on their specific tasks. A goal-oriented approach to managing employee work performance is critical to organisation performance and success (Jung, Schneider, & Valacich, 2010). Providing clear and achievable work goals or targets is important

towards having an effective performance appraisal process. It would not be possible for employee performance to be fairly assessed when they are not even properly informed of their work goals. When the communication of work goals is carried out effectively, allowing more effective performance management and control processes, it is found to influence employee motivation and performance (van der Kolk, van Veen-Dirks & ter Bogt, 2018). Benefits of having clear performance targets include enabling employees to understand the standards used to measure the efficacy of their work, hence enhancing performance levels (Rosdi et al, 2020). The existing body of literature overall supports the performance target-work performance link.

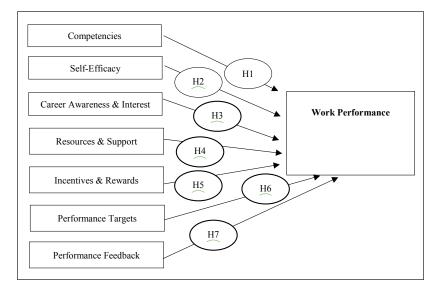
### H6:Performance targets have significant impact on individual work performance.

Previous studies have established how informative and constructive feedback improves employee performance as it impacts competency and productivity (Rony, Yasin, Lubis, & Syarief, 2020; Kuhnen and Tymula, 2012). Employees use feedback to improve their selfawareness and work motivation, which thereafter enhances their work performance (Rochayatun & Setiawan 2020; Anseel, Beatty, Shen, Lievens and Sackett, 2015). A study by Menguc, Auh, Fisher and Haddad (2013) involving service employees in the retail industry shows that feedback enhances employee work performance and customer engagement. The provision of clear and constructive feedback to employees is important in ensuring an effective performance appraisal process, as employee performance cannot be fairly assessed when they are not given feedback on their strengths and weaknesses for improvement. A more recent work by Jovita, Erostya, Dewi and Andronicus (2020) highlights the significant effects of supervision on individual work performance, whereby attention and feedback on employee performance given by work supervisors are found to motivate employees and help them enhance their work output. Hence, it is observed that existing research data is in support of the link between feedback and work performance.

# H7:Performance feedback has significant impact on individual work performance.

Figure I

Outlines the Research Framework: Factors Impacting Work Performance.



### METHODOLOGY

A survey approach was utilised in this study by distributing questionnaires randomly to 4,000 employees from different job levels in the Information Technology and Network Division of a telecommunication company. The questionnaire was developed by modifying those of Rummler (1972), Rummler and Morris (2004) and Rosdi, Alias and Ismail (2020) to suit the focus of this study based on the human performance system model. Each item in a factor utilises a 5-point Likert scaling ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

Stratified random sampling was used to derive the sample. A list of employees was collected from human resource department and an online questionnaire was used to collect the data. Out of 4,000 questionnaires distributed, only 3,529 questionnaires were without missing data. Descriptive analysis and regression analysis were carried out via SPSS. Table 1 indicates the frequency and percentage of demographic data related to age, gender, the highest level of

education, employment years in the current organisation, employment status, job classification and work location.

The findings revealed that most of the respondents are millennials in the 31-40 years age group (31%), followed by the above 50 years age group (26%), 25-30 years (22%), 41-50 years (20%), and less than 25 years (1%). In terms of gender, male respondents (66.5%) were approximately twice the number of female respondents (33.5%). The heavy distribution of male respondents is due to the fact that respondents were derived mostly from the company's Information Technology and Network Division, which is inherently made up of more male than female employees. For education background, most have a diploma level of education (34.2%), followed by certificates and certification (32.8%), bachelor's degree (29.3%), master's degree (3.6%), and PhD/DBA (0.1%). Educational background also reflects the background of technical employees from the Information Technology and Network Division. Majority of employees recorded employment years in current their organisations as being between 5-9 years (30.9%), followed by 25 years or more (26.9%), 20-24 years (14.1%), 3-4 years (10.8%), 15-19 years (7.6%), 10-14 years (7.2%), 1-2 years (2%), and less than 1 year (0.5%). Longer service somehow reflects the respondents' loyalty to the organisation. In terms of job category, a majority of them are permanent (99%) in the non-executive category (68%), while the rest are executive (32%). More than half of them (54%) are located in Kuala Lumpur and Selangor, while the rest come from other states in Malaysia.

 Table 1

 Respondent Demographics

Variable	Level	Frequency (N)	Percent (%)
Age	Less than 25 years	49	1
	Between 25-30 years	760	22
	Between 31-40 years	1101	31
	Between 41-50 years	690	20
	More than 50 years	929	26

(continued)

Variable	Level	Frequency (N)	Percent (%)	
Gender	Male	2347	66.5	
	Female	1182	33.5	
The Highest Level of Education	Certificate	1158	32.8	
	Diploma	1207	34.2	
	Bachelor's	1033	29.3	
	Master's	126	3.6	
	PhD/DBA	5	0.1	
Employment Years in Current Organisations	Less than 1 year	16	0.5	
	1 but less than 3 years	69	2	
	3 but less than 5 years	381	10.8	
	5 but less than 10 years	1092	30.9	
	10 but less than 15 years	254	7.2	
	15 but less than 20 years	269	7.6	
	20 but less than 25 years	498	14.1	
	25 years or more	950	26.9	
Employment Status	Permanent	3496	99	
	Contract	33	1	
Job Classification	Executive	1115	32	
	Non-Executive	2414	68	
Work Location	HQ	871	25	
	Kuala Lumpur	364	10	
	MSC	202	6	
	Selangor	454	13	
	Petaling Jaya	13	0	
	Melaka	111	3	
	Negeri Sembilan	109	3	
	Johor	256	7	
	Perak	244	7	
	Pulau Pinang	150	4	

(continued)

Variable	Level	Frequency (N)	Percent (%)	
	Kedah/Perlis	162	5	
	Terengganu	81	2	
	Kelantan	34	1	
	Pahang	108	3	
	Sabah	215	6	
	Sarawak	155	4	

#### **FINDINGS**

Table 2 presents the regression estimation of individual work performance. With R square 0.548, then approximately half of the observed variation can be explained by independent variables. The overall model provides a statistically significant relationship between factors determining individual work performance and overall work performance.

The t-value and alpha level were used to interpret the regression results. The t-value was more than 1.96 for all the factors except performance feedback. The alpha level also shows that all the factors were less than 0.05 except performance feedback. Hence, we reject the null hypothesis that there is no significant between the factors determining individual work performance and overall work performance, and conclude that all the factors are significant except performance feedback. The factors are significant at a 1 percent significant level except for incentives and rewards where it was significant at a 5 percent level. Specifically, competencies, self-efficacy, career awareness and interests, resources and support, incentives and rewards, and performance targets were significant with overall work performance. In summary, hypotheses H1, H2, H3, H4, H5 and H6 are supported, but not hypothesis H7.

 Table 2

 Results of Regression Analysis

Independent Variables	No. of items	Cronbach a	Mean	Standardized Coefficients B	t	Sig.
Competencies	4	0.83	4.1009	0.17	9.567	0.000***
Self-Efficacy	3	0.919	4.0879	0.246	13.998	0.000***
Career Awareness & Interests	3	0.804	4.1575	0.258	15.179	0.000***
Resources & Support	6	0.894	3.8533	0.083	4.258	0.000***
Incentives & Rewards	4	0.912	3.5558	-0.034	-2.109	0.035**
Performance Targets	3	0.881	3.7669	0.158	8.63	0.000***
Performance Feedback	3	0.937	3.6271	0.02	1.019	0.308
Dependent variable						
Work Performance	3	0.934	4.1556			
R Square = 0.548						

<sup>\*\*\*</sup> and \*\* indicate significant at 1% and 5% respectively

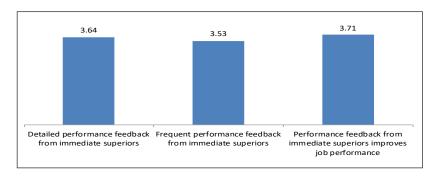
### DISCUSSIONS

Performance feedback was not significant with work performance. According to Table 2, the t-value is 1.019 which is less than 1.96 and the p-value is 0.308 which is larger than 0.05. This is not in line with previous studies (Rony et al, 2020; Kuhnen and Tymula, 2012) that confirmed the existing relationship between performance feedback and overall work performance when the feedback is informative and constructive. Based on the findings in Figure 2, all the items tested under performance feedback show low average score out of 5. Frequent performance feedback from immediate superiors is the lowest (3.53) followed by detailed performance feedback from immediate superiors (3.64), and performance feedback from immediate superiors improves job performance (3.71). Hence, performance feedback from

immediate superiors may not be as detailed and frequent as desired. The findings also contradict that of Jovita et al. (2020) which indicates that performance feedback from immediate superiors improves employees' job performance and help them enhance their work output. Although performance feedback should give information on work performance strengths and weaknesses and recommendations for improvement, there are many root problems faced by employees that are still not been solved and are not known to the top management (Rosdi et al. 2020). This usually occur when top management place key performance indicators above the well-being of the employees. Looking at the respondents' demographic data, 46 percent of the respondents are age 41 years and above and majority of the employees employment years in current organisations are between 5-9 years (30.9%), followed by 25 years or more (26.9%). Hence, they might not desire frequent feedback or closer guidance by immediate superiors as compared to younger employees.

Figure 2

The Average Score for Performance Feedback Items

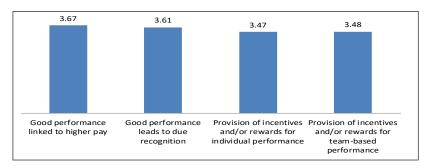


Out of the seven factors, surprisingly, the incentives and rewards factor was negatively significant with work performance at a 5 percent level. In general, incentives and rewards factor motivate employees to perform better (Mamdani & Minhaj, 2016; Rosdi et al, 2020; Sieng, L.W. & Azman M., 2021). Based on the findings in Figure 3, all the items tested under incentives and rewards show low average scores out of 5. Provision of incentives and/or rewards for individual performance is the lowest (3.47) followed by provision of incentives and/or rewards for team-based performance (3.48), good performance leads to due recognition (3.61), and good performance linked to higher pay (3.67). The low average score reflects poorly

designed incentives or rewards packages provided by the organisation that may cause dissatisfaction and low motivation. The dimensions of the incentives and rewards need to be further investigated to avoid organisational inefficiency in the long term. The incentives or rewards packages should also cater for different employee group needs.

Figure 3

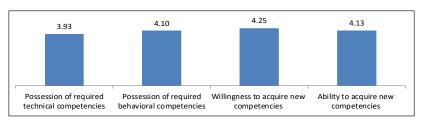
The Average Score for Incentives and Rewards Items



Below are the average score items for competency, self-efficacy, career awareness and interest, resources and support, and performance target factors which are positively significant at 1 percent. For competency, technical competency is perceived to be significantly lower (3.93) than behavioural competency (4.10), but indicate high readiness (4.25) and ability (4.13) to acquire new competencies. Since the respondents are technical employees from the Information Technology and Network Division, it is important for them to equip themselves with adequate technical training which has an important influence on their work performance. However, it seemed that system training is inadequate as employees have to explore the system themselves (Rosdi et al, 2020).

Figure 4

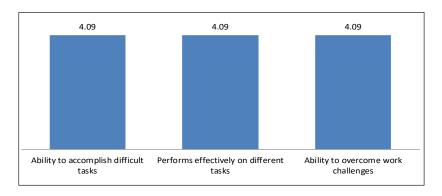
The Average Score for Competency Items



The average score for self-efficacy is more than 4. Generally, respondents show equal self-belief in work-related abilities and in overcoming work challenges. Building confidence among employees is good as it helps to increase work performance.

Figure 5

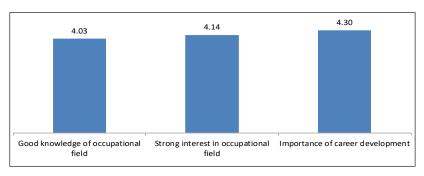
The Average Score for Self-efficacy Items



For career awareness and interest, some inadequacies are perceived in the knowledge of the occupational field (4.03) even though they seem to have a reasonably strong interest (4.14). Career development is of high importance (4.30). Hence, an attractive career pathing needed as it is an important influence on work performance.

Figure 6

The Average Score for Career Awareness and Interest Items.

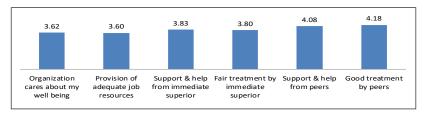


Resources and support items refer to all types of resources and support required to effectively perform tasks. Lack of adequate resources such

as machine and manpower is the main concern in performing duties. In addition, it seemed that satisfaction with peers is higher compared with immediate superiors. This can be linked to the low concern of the organisation for the well-being of employees (3.62).

Figure 7

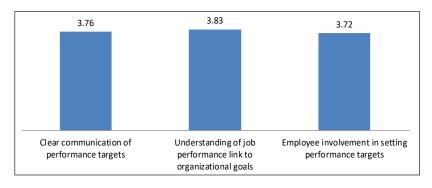
The Average Score for Resources and Support Items



The last significant factor is the performance target or which can be interpreted as key performance indicators (KPIs). Employee involvement in setting performance targets is relatively low (3.72) followed by low average score for clear communication of performance targets (3.76), and understanding of job performance link to organisational goals (3.83). The findings are interrelated as it shows that low involvement of employees on the setting up of KPIs reflects on the low level of clarity of work targets, and the understanding of their linkage with organisational objectives. There is a possibility that low involvement of employees on the setting of KPIs lead to unrealistic KPIs, where management keeps increasing KPIs without understand the constraints that employees face.

Figure 8

The Average Score for Performance Targets



### CONCLUSION

This study has successfully identified the factors influencing individual work performance among telecommunication sector employees. Competency, self-efficacy, career awareness and interests, resources and support, and performance targets were positively significant with work performance, which are in line with past studies. Performance feedback was positive but it is not significant with work performance. For incentives and rewards factor, the findings on its negative significance with work performance add to the existing knowledge in this area. The differences would mean that a customised approach is needed to cater for different employee group needs. The findings of the seven factors provide valuable knowledge for companies in decision making. Companies should invest significant efforts in ensuring that all factors that are positively related to work performance have a high average score. For example, ensuring the involvement of employees in setting performance targets, creating attractive career paths, providing adequate training, and adequate resources and support. In addition, out of the five positively significant factors, the career awareness and interest factor has the highest average score. The finding reveals the importance of good knowledge and strong interest in occupational field, besides attractive career paths that allowed employees to perform well and at the same time, increased labour productivity. When comparing all items, the importance of career development, willingness to acquire new competency, and good treatment by peers contribute to the success factors of work performance.

Even though the study has a large number of respondents and a high respondent participation rate, there are some limitations which include its limited focus on the telecommunications sector employees. Additionally, the respondents were sourced only from one large telecommunication company. Since work performance factors may vary across different organisations and industries, it is recommended that future research include respondents from a more varied industry and organisational background. A more diverse respondents pool would mean richer data as it would enable cross-industry comparisons to be made and patterns of similarities and differences tracked and analysed for better understanding. It would also benefit researchers if future studies can obtain samples from different countries i.e., cross-country comparisons in addition to the cross-industry approach.

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