

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING, CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND ADAPTIVE PERFORMANCE

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Abstract

Individual adaptive performance is one of the prominent behaviours needed for an organization to function effectively. This study was conducted to identify the relationship between organizational learning and career development with employees' adaptive performance. This study was conducted at an automotive manufacturer in Malaysia in an attempt to identify the predicting factors of adaptive performance in this context. The data was analysed using multiple regression. Findings showed that there is a significant relationship between career development and an employee's adaptive performance, whereas the results for the organizational learning showed otherwise. This paper provides better knowledge and information on how to increase adaptive performance among employees at a given setting. The findings may also contribute to the existing literature.

Keywords: Adaptive Performance, Organizational Learning, Career Development

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Technology has brought in many changes to the work structure and how work is done, which in turn affects the dimensions to measure employees' work performance. As technology has become vital in work performance, individual adaptive performance has become an essential skill for employee. Employees especially at manufacturing sectors, must be able to adapt with new work practice demands in a workplace. Adaptive performance is a task-performance behaviour that an individual enacts in response to, or the anticipation of changes relevant to job-related tasks.

Those who perform well in changing environments are said to have high adaptability, and those who do not, are said to have low adaptability. Task performance and adaptive performance have been found to be separate dimensions in employees' performance (Pradhan & Jena, 2017). According to Koopmans et al., (2012), adaptive performance refers to the condition of the workers adjusting and understanding the change that occur in the workplace, whether it is able to be managed or not. In order for organization to remain competitive, there is a great need for employees to be flexible in changes that lead to a higher job performance (Ployhart & Bliese, 2006; Solberg, 2017). Hence, it is vital for organization to hire employees who are responsive to face uncertainties in business environments such as mergers, acquisitions and the use of new technologies (Reeves & Deimler, 2011).

To adapt with change, there is a need to not only be in constant readiness, but to also be in constant involvement in the learning process. Adaptive performance is a behaviour that demonstrates the ability to cope with change and to transfer learning from one task to another as job demands vary (Allworth & Hesketh, 1999; Griffin, Parker, & Mason, 2010; Jundt, Shoss, & Huang, 2015). Individual task adaptability is important in the light of factors such as the introduction of new technology, work redesign, and changes in strategy, all of which can require individuals to adjust their workplace behaviour (Griffin, Neal, & Parker, 2007).

In social sciences, adaptability is a key determinant of whether an individual successfully adjusts to changes in a social or working environment. Despite its importance, there is a scarcity of research that has systematically investigated the impact of contextual factors on adaptive performance (Baard, Rench, & Kozlowski, 2014). Furthermore, one local study has insisted more studies are needed to understand the predicting factor of adaptive performance (Shahidan, Hamid, & Ahmad, 2017). Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between organizational factors, namely organizational learning and career development, with adaptive performance.

2.0 LITERATURE STUDY

2.1 Organizational Learning and Adaptive Performance

Organizational learning refers to the development of new knowledge or insight that might influence behaviour (Mavondo, Chimhanzi, & Stewart, 2005). Organizational learning pertains to employee development and new knowledge acquisition, which belongs to staff dimensions (Cambra-Fierro, Hart, Polo-Redondo, & Fuster-Mur, 2012). To promote adaptability among employees, it involves not only the employees' factors but also organizational factors. In order for employees to willingly adapt with changes, organizations must support for learning to happen. Continuous learning embraces both, the organization as well as the individual to encourage a learning environment. This is to increase adaptability in changing circumstances which will ultimately increase productivity. However, the relationship between organizational learning and adaptive performance has been scarcely studied (Pradhan, Jena, & Singh, 2017). Therefore, hypothesis one: there is a positive relationship between organizational learning and adaptive performance.

2.2 Career Development and Adaptive Performance

A career refers to roles in a lifetime that involves progression and the development of skills. Career development involves a continuous learning process in mastering certain job roles. Employees try to adapt well to the constant change of work demands as it will help them to increase their employability (Mäder & Niessen, 2017). In an organization, career development is a formal approach use in human resources to plan the career progression of employees. It involves multiple training activities to ensure that employees are equipped with the related skills.

Career development has found that providing career opportunities is one of the key practices which influences organizational performance (Purcell, 2003). Career development is crucial to retain employees in an organization and keep them motivated. Realizing that the organization provides a good career path and opportunities, this may contribute to a higher work performance. Investment in employees' development offers the organization a competitive advantage through continuous learning this situation will improve employees' current skills which in turn help them to be adaptable and perform effectively (Nadarajah, Kadiresan, Kumar, Kamil, & Yusoff, 2012). Career development enhance the personal growth,

together with the firm's performance. Despite the awareness of its importance, there are limited studies in identifying career development as one of the factors influencing adaptive performance. Therefore, hypothesis two: there is a positive relationship between career development and adaptive performance.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Setting, Procedures and Participants

This study took place in an automotive manufacturer company in Malaysia. It is in the nature of the sector to use high technology equipment in their mostly daily operations. The organization needs to adapt with the current equipment, technologies and procedures in order to increase the quality of vehicles and profitability of the organization from time to time. Probability sampling, namely the systematic sampling method was used for the study. The researcher requested permission from the management of the company to conduct this study. The questionnaires were distributed through the use of email as the channel of distribution to the respondents. A total of 252 questionnaires were distributed, where 201 questionnaires were returned and usable, indicating an 80% response rate. Adaptive performance was measured with a seven item scale developed by Koopmans et al., (2012) with an alpha value of 0.89. Organizational learning was measured by a ten item, using a scale developed by Chiva, Alegre, & Lapidra, (2006) with the alpha value of 0.88, while career development was measured by a ten item scale developed by Heimler, Rosenberg, & Morote, (2012) with the alpha value of 0.88.

4.0 RESULTS AND DATA INTERPRETATION

Based on the findings, males represented 50.7% and females represented 49.3% among the 201 employees who participated in this study. 52 respondents were aged 16 to 25 years old, 86 respondents were aged 26 to 35 years old, 52 respondents were aged between 36 to 45 years old and 11 respondents were aged 46 to 55 years old. The majority of the respondents were Diploma holders at 45.8%, where the majority of the respondents (35.3%) have worked for 3 to 5 years. As for the rest, 30.8% of the respondents have served their respective organizations for 1 to 3 years, 13.4% of respondents have worked for less than 1 year, 12.9% of the have been working for 5-10 years and 7.5% of the respondents have been working for more than 10 years.

Confirmatory factor analysis was conducted to confirm construct distinctiveness. The items of the independent variables (organizational learning and career development) and dependent variable (adaptive performance) were loads on their respective factors. The 3-factor model fits the data with the values RMSEA=0.60, CFI=0.94 and TLI=0.9. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of sampling adequacy is at the value of 0.88.

The correlation and regression technique were used to measure the association and relationship among organizational learning, career development and adaptive performance. All two independent variables were shown to correlate with adaptive performance. Table 1 shows that the strength of the correlation between adaptive performance and organizational learning is moderate with the r-value at 0.400 ($p < 0.01$). The association of the use of career development and adaptive performance is also deemed as moderate, with an r-value of 0.484 ($p < 0.01$).

Table 1. Pearson's Correlation Coefficient

Variables	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2
1. Adaptive Performance	3.82	0.55	-	
2. Organizational Learning	3.78	0.50	.400**	
3. Career Development	3.90	0.48	.484**	.608**
* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$,				

Multiple regression analysis was used to determine the relationship between organizational learning, career development and adaptive performance. Table 2 shows the results for the Regression Analysis.

Table 2. The Coefficients Table

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.408	.298		4.733	.000
	Organizational Learning	.185	.085	.168	2.172	.031
	Career Development	.438	.089	.382	4.931	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Adaptive Performance						

Based on Table 2, career development is shown to have a significant effect with adaptive performance ($p < 0.001$), while organizational learning showed otherwise. Therefore, H1 is not supported, while H2 is supported. In addition, the total R-square value for the contribution of independent variables (organizational learning and career development) with adaptive performance is 0.243, which explains that only 24.3% of the independent variables, namely career development and learning organization, contributed to employees' adaptive performance.

5.0 DISCUSSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Adaptive performance is vital for employees who are working in manufacturing sectors. For this purpose, the study conducted is to identify the relationship between both, organizational learning and career development with adaptive performance. The findings showed that organizational learning is not significant to adaptive performance. On the other hand, career development was shown to be significant with adaptive performance in this study context.

One of the best ways to increase adaptive performance of employees in the workplace is through organizational learning. As the use of new technologies changes rapidly, the procedures or work tasks demands employees to be adaptable and accepting change that occurs naturally in the work setting. Organizational members need to accept the constant change and be flexible to these changes. A learning organization is more important than the capability of organizational learning, as it is the people (the employees) who learn and practice the changes. At an individual level, continuous learning activities predict an individual's adaptive performance. However, the team learning climate was found to be insignificant between the relationship of continuous learning and individual adaptive performance (Han & Williams, 2008). Apart from that, organizational learning capability has been found to be significant to individual

performance in uncertain environments moderated by employee flexibility (Camps, Oltra, Aldás-Manzano, Buenaventura-Vera, & Torres-Carballo, 2016). The employee and organization must always cooperate and learn something new to improve the flexibility in the changing conditions as well as increasing work efficiency (Pradhan et al., 2017).

At the same time, career development was shown to be a significant variable to adaptive performance. In order for employees to perform adaptively, they must be informed of the incentives or recognition on behaving as such. Employees who drive their own development are more likely to be motivated and are optimally productive on a consistent basis. Support from the top management is also important for the career development of the workers. Consequently, the organization will utilize their knowledge and skills in order to make them successful in dealing with change effectively (Kidd, Hirsh, & Jackson, 2004). It is possible that in this setting, the main inducement for employees to be adaptive in the workplace is through the opportunity of career development. This will motivate employees to learn the new practices needed in carrying out the new work demands. This study can also help practitioners to understand more on the factors influencing individual adaptive performance.

Since this study is limited to an automotive manufacturer industry, future studies should be done in service organizations that require a high level of organizational learning. Since study has identified that organizational learning is insignificant with adaptive performance, the future study may introduce a moderator variable that may have effect the relationship between organizational learning and adaptive performance Besides that, future studies should also add other independent variables such as motivation and readiness to change to determine their relationship with adaptive performance.

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