Effects of Organizational Learning Culture and Developmental Feedback on Engineers' Career Satisfaction in the Manufacturing Organizations in Malaysia

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Effects of Organizational Learning Culture and Developmental Feedback on Engineers' Career Satisfaction in the Manufacturing Organizations in Malaysia

[Johnny Ding Dung Ngie, Nasina Mat Desa & Muhammad Hasmi Abu Hassan Asaari]

Abstract— The purpose of this paper is to test the hypotheses that relations between organizational learning culture, developmental feedback and career satisfaction in the manufacturing organizations. A sample of 155 engineers was drawn from two major manufacturing organizations located in the Northern Malaysia. Participation in the research was voluntary and data were gathered by means of a survey questionnaire. Multiple regression results provided support for the direct impact of organizational learning culture and developmental feedback on the engineer's career satisfaction. Key implications of the survey findings both of the theory and practice are discussed, potential limitations are specified, and directions for future research are suggested.

Keywords— organizational learning culture, developmental feedback, career satisfaction, engineers, manufacturing

I. Introduction

According to Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF), in the manufacturing sector, the electrical and electronics section having the second highest turnover rate of 23.04 percent per annum [1]. The interview with a few of the human resource managers of this manufacturing organizations in Bayan Lepas Free Trade Zone, Northern Region of Malaysia revealed that career satisfaction is one of the major factors that influence engineers' turnover [1]. Therefore, it is crucial for us to determine the predictors of career satisfaction among engineers in the Bayan Lepas, Free Trade Zone area, which is the largest industrial manufacturing zone in the Northern Region of Malaysia.

Career satisfaction is assessed as a subjective career success which defined by individual's satisfaction with their career accomplishments. Amongst the famous predictors of career satisfaction are pay and promotion [2]. Pay and promotion are always regarded as a part of the organizational factor. We are interested on the different factor, that are called contextual factors such as

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organizational learning culture and developmental feedback.

Organizational learning culture is defined as "an organization skilled at creating, acquiring, and transferring knowledge, and at modifying its behavior to reflect new knowledge and insights" [3]. Developmental feedback is defined as the extent to which supervisors provide employees with useful information that enables the employees to learn, develop, and improve on the job [4]. Supervisors will be able to improve the employee performance by engaging in this way.

According to [5], organizational learning culture and developmental feedback would significantly influence career satisfaction. As there are a limited number of research in related to manufacturing and engineers, the purpose of this paper is to test the hypotheses that relations between organizational learning culture, developmental feedback and career satisfaction in the manufacturing organizations.

II. Literature Review

A. Organizational Learning Culture

According to [6] and [7], organizational learning culture is composed of both the people level (i.e. continuous learning, dialogue and inquiry, team learning, and collaboration) and the structural level (i.e. embedded system, system connection, empowerment and structural leadership).

Organizational learning culture is an influential contextual characteristic to enhance positive outcomes in the HRD aspect [8] [9]. Marsick & Watkins 2003). According to [8], organizational learning culture will enhance the employees' level of career satisfaction. Employee participative decision making [10], employee empowerment [11], and leadership behaviors inspiring teamwork [12] had a significant influence on career satisfaction.

B. Developmental Feedback

Developmental feedback is defined as supervisor provides valuable messages to employees and empower the employees to develop, learn, and make improvements on the job [4]. Organization engaging in this practice, which supervisors actively provide employees with behavioral feedback that influence employees to improve their performance in the absence of pressure for a particular

outcome. The behavioral feedback practices with the objective to boost intrinsic motivation [13] and strengthen the interest desire in the task itself with an orientation toward learning and advancement.

Some studies suggested that positive or developmental feedback has generate positive energy on career satisfaction. According to [14], employee satisfaction with performance reviews come with superiority of performance feedback combined with goal setting over performance feedback session. Besides, [15] discovered positive feedback from supervisors enables employees to learn positive ways of doing things, behaviors reinforcement, competency improvement, and enhances performance satisfaction in their job function. Thus, with efficient developmental feedback expected to increase career satisfaction of employees.

C. *Career Satisfaction*

[16] found that career satisfaction is the overall corporate attachment & its feelings of an individual, through out his/her career. It is a measure of satisfaction or dissatisfaction of an individual about his/her career. It is a perception that how an individual feels about his current job. According to [17], when someone is satisfies with his/her job and things that his/her career is secure and a safe through this job than he would be more satisfied.

[18] suggested that one-way organizations may meet the challenge to support their employees in developing their own careers and increase their career satisfaction. This approach recommend organizations perform a new supportive, rather than directive role in empowering their employees' career success.
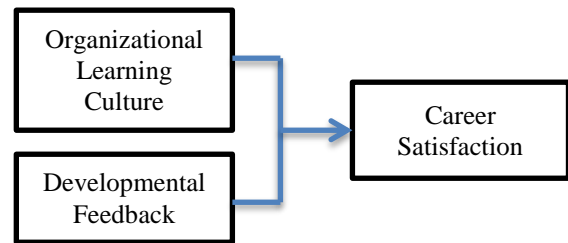
According to [19], career satisfaction is the intrinsic and extrinsic aspects of the personal satisfaction obtain from their careers, including salary, advancement, and developmental opportunities. It has been perceived as an integral factor in the career success and as an important criterion for an individual's career value as a whole [20]. [21] [22] [23] found that career satisfaction assess the extent of individuals believe their career progress is consistent with their own goals, values and preferences.

Career satisfaction and career success were interchangeably used in many career researches. [21] defined career success as a positive psychological or work-related outcomes that a person gained as a result of work experiences. Previous research has viewed career being passive for individual and influenced by situational factors [24]. Whatsoever, some recent studies thought that personality through certain behaviors would influence the environment. [23] noticed that career success seem to be cumulative outcome of behaviors over a long-time period which personality is likely playing a role.

III. Theoretical Framework and Hypotheses Development

According to [25], organizational learning culture and developmental feedback are significantly correlated with career satisfaction. Thus, Figure 1 depicts the theoretical framework.

Figure 1: Theoretical Framework

A. *Organizational learning culture and Career satisfaction*

[32] expected organizational support for career development (OSCD) introduces the necessary programs, processes, and assistance to support and strengthen their employees' career success. This includes formal strategies (career planning, training and assessment centers) and informal support such as coaching and mentoring opportunities [33] [34]. [25] disclosed in their study of Korean employees that organizational learning culture has significant correlation with career satisfaction. Thus, it is more likely that organizational learning culture will affect career satisfaction:

H_1: Perceived organizational learning culture will be positively related to employee's career satisfaction

B. *Developmental Feedback and Career Satisfaction*

The previous studies found that the developmental or positive feedback has a positive correlation on career satisfaction. [14] found that there is advantage of doing employees' performance feedback and goal setting concurrently instead of performance feedback alone with respect to their satisfaction with performance reviews. Additionally, supervisors' positive feedback would cultivate employees to learn effective way of doing things, reinforces positive behaviors, enhances their competence, and improves performance satisfaction in the workplace. Therefore, with the expectation of regular developmental feedback will cultivate better career satisfaction:

H_2: Perceived developmental feedback will be positively related to employee's career satisfaction

IV. Methodology

Below are the methodology used in this study.

A. Population and Respondents

The population and respondents of this study were engineers whom are working in the two manufacturing organizations in Bayan Lepas Free Trade Zone, Penang, the Northern Region of Malaysia. There were 255 questionnaires randomly distributed to the engineers.

B. Measures

The organizational learning culture questionnaire was developed by [9] and further validated by [6]. This study adopted the seven items from Yang et al. (2004) shortened version of the organizational learning culture questionnaire. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.81. All these measures were assessed using a five-point Likert-type scale ranging (1) "strongly disagree to (5) "strongly agree".

Developmental feedback was measured with three-item scales developed and validated by [4]. The reliability coefficient of the five items was 0.82 in this study. All these measures were assessed using a five-point Likert-type scale ranging (1) "strongly disagree to (5) "strongly agree".

A five items developed and validated by [19] was used for this study to measure career satisfaction. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.81. The survey questionnaire measured with a five-point Likert scale ranging (1) "strongly disagree to (5) "strongly agree".

V. Results

A total of 159 questionnaires were returned with the response rate of 62.1%. However, there was 4 questionnaires unusable due to incorrectly or incompletely responses. As a result, only 155 questionnaires were usable and given the final response rate of 60.5%. The respondents of this survey consisted of 74.2% male engineers and 25.8% female engineers.

Majority of the respondents are below 40 years. Most of the respondent are holding a bachelor degree qualification (38.1%) and holding a senior engineer post (50.3%). The respondents working tenure in the current post is two to six years and majority of the respondent earned Ringgit Malaysia of five thousand per month.

A. Correlations Analysis

Correlations analysis was done on the organizational learning culture and developmental feedback with career satisfaction. The relationship between organizational learning culture and developmental feedback with career satisfaction were investigated using correlation coefficient. Preliminary analyses were performed to measure no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity and homoscedasticity. Based on the correlation analysis results below, career satisfaction has a significant positive relationship with organizational learning culture (r =0.41, $p<$ .01) and developmental feedback (r =0.37, $p<$ 0.01). Overall, there were strong correlation ($p<0.01$ and $p<0.05$) between variables.

B. Multiple Regressions

Multiple regression analysis was employed to predict the impact of the organizational learning culture and developmental feedback on career satisfaction. The results of multiple regression analysis, R^2 is 0.22 has indicated that organizational learning culture and developmental feedback affected 22% of career satisfaction among the engineers.

Based on the multiple regression analysis, organizational learning culture ($\beta = 0.30$, $p < 0.01$) has a significant effect on career satisfaction. This result concludes that organizational learning culture is positively related to career satisfaction. Thus, hypothesis one (H1) is supported.

Developmental feedback ($\beta = 0.24$, $p < 0.01$) was significantly related to career satisfaction. Thus, developmental feedback is a significant predictor for the career satisfaction. Hypothesis two (H2) is supported.

VI. Discussion & Conclusion

This study has revealed that two contextual factors; organizational learning culture and developmental feedback, were predictors for career satisfaction of engineers. It also stamps the importance of cultivating learning cultures as to providing feedback to them. It can be interpreted as a means for managing the relationships between organizational learning culture and developmental feedback through the connections between organizational purposes to cultivate individual improvement.

A. The relationship between organizational culture and career satisfaction

In this study, organizational learning culture was significantly related to career satisfaction, replicating previous researches [8] [25]. This result is related to characteristics of organization learning culture that provides continuous learning, dialogue and inquiry, team learning, embedded system, empowerment, collaboration and strategic leadership [9]. [26] advocated that organizational learning culture depends on the acquisition of information, the interpretation of information and the formation of organizational knowledge. Example of learning cultures are creating continuous learning opportunities; promote inquiry and dialogue; encourage collaboration and team learning; establish systems to capture and share learning; empower people to have a collective vision; connect the organization to the environment; and use leaders who model and support learning at the individual, team, and organization levels [7].

Findings from this study also indicated that the 59% of engineers who are working in this manufacturing organizations belong to Gen Y. Gen Y defines organizational learning culture as an environment where they can constantly learn and be challenged [27]. Thus, organizations must provide that learning platform for their engineers. Furthermore, Gen Y also has the desire to make crucial decisions of an organization soon after entering the organization; they do not desire to wait for important duties

[28]. Scholars note that Generation Y expects to be valued by their employers as the key assets of the organization and that their input will be taken into full account and acted on by their employers [27] [28] [29]. Organizations must find ways to win the heart of this new generation, Generation Y.

B. *The relationship between developmental feedback and career satisfaction*

The finding has revealed that developmental feedback was significantly related to career satisfaction, replicating previous researches [14] [15]. This is a surprising finding because [25] did not support this hypothesis in Korea. This is probably due to the organizational learning culture that both manufacturer, are actively practicing, which are the one-to-one feedback session on a weekly basis and during the engineer's performance appraisal.

This study also recognized the critical role of managers in organizational learning culture and developmental feedback. It highlights the importance of organizational learning culture to the engineers. Managers should encourage subordinates to increase their career satisfaction through establishing productive learning culture and providing positive feedback [25]. According to [14], it is important that performance feedback session coupled with goal setting compare to performance feedback alone with respect to employee satisfaction with performance reviews.

This study has found that Gen Y is continuously looking for feedback and advice from their superior, it was most likely a result of their strong ties to and constant feedback from their parents [30] [28]. On the job, Gen Y expects frequent direction from superiors regarding their performance. They recognize the role knowledge plays in career advancement and look for opportunities to learn from their superiors and older generations [28]. Additionally, Generation Y views failure as a motivator and not a deterrent. Thus, they view failure as an opportunity to improve job performance [29]. [15] also found that positive feedback from supervisors enables employees to learn better ways of doing things, reinforces appropriate behaviors, improves their overall competence, and achieve career satisfaction in their working field.

Overall, this research has found that contextual characteristics such as organizational learning culture and developmental feedback have had significant impacts on employees' career satisfaction. Practically, managers and HRD/OD professionals should provide support on employee career satisfaction by developing, improving, and delivering the relevant practices, ensuring that the climate and HR practices are such that career satisfaction can be realized. One of the practical ways is to help managers adopting new roles as coaches and learning facilitators. For example; HR Department could design and provide relevant training programs to their managers to embark themselves as coaches and facilitators to their subordinates. Moreover, as an organization reflected themselves as a team, the role of a manager has changed from a traditional hierarchical directive to being a supportive and non-controlling figure. Thus, coaching and mentoring have became as a significant employee development strategy. Explicitly, managerial coaching or manager-as-coach has became nowadays crucial management strategy to increase employees career satisfaction in many organizations [31].

In conclusion, in the Malaysian context, this study provides useful information to researchers who conduct similar studies in different cultural backgrounds. It is also contributes to recognizing the critical role of managers in organizational learning culture and developmental feedback. Managers could encourage subordinates to increase career satisfaction through establishing productive learning culture and providing positive feedback. For example, organizations policy makers should encourage continuous learning opportunity, establish system to capture and share learning, and managers should provide employees with behaviorally relevant information that leads employees to improve their performance in the future in the absence of pressure for a particular outcome.

Acknowledgment

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