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The 9th International Conference on Marketing and Retailing**INFLUENCE OF ORGANIZATIONAL RELATIONSHIP NORMS
ON LECTURERS' PERCEIVED PERFORMANCE**

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Abstract

In a high-stress working environment, management needs to enhance their interaction with employees in ways that boost job satisfaction and performance. In this paper, we hope to address these issues by collecting responses from lecturers teaching at UiTM Terengganu (UiTMCT) and Universitas Sumatera Utara (USU), Medan, Indonesia using a survey method. This paper aimed to evaluate the relationship between three elements of organizational Relationship Norms with the lecturer's perceived performance of both universities. The dimensions of Organizational Relational Norms chosen for this paper include Participation, Solidarity, and Flexibility Norms. Results of Inferential analysis revealed that only Participation norms and Flexibility norms have a low level of influence on the lecturer's performance. Participation exerts a stronger influence on the lecturer's perceived performance. This result indicates that lecturers value an organizational culture that encourages teamwork and cooperation not only among academicians but also among all staff regardless of their position and level of education. Results from the analysis will help the management team of both universities to strategies activities and programs that will enhance and improve the relationship with their lecturers which in turn will elevate the lecturer's performance.

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1. Introduction

To enhance the Lecturer's Teaching Performance, this study will focus on academicians' feedback from Universiti Teknologi MARA, Terengganu (UiTMT), Malaysia, and Universitas Sumatera Utara (USU), Medan Indonesia. The main purpose of this study was to estimate the relationship between organizational relationship norms with the lecturer's performance. The organizational relational norms consist of Solidarity, Participation, and Flexibility. The previous studies stated that organizational relationship quality had a significant impact on lecturer performance. Therefore, according to a study done by UiTMT, Malaysia, the level of lecturers' happiness index has declined but the best relationship quality practices become a future organizational culture (UiTM Happiness Index 3.0, 2020). Meanwhile, from early 2019 until now the world facing with Pandemic Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) caused higher education landscape teaching methodology to be different from before (face-to-face learning section vs. Open and Distance Learning) (Milovanović et al., 2020). According to Setyaningsih and Sukono (2022), the COVID-19 situation has significant effects academicians' performance. The output provided by these two public universities located in South East Asia becomes a "helicopter view" regarding organizational relationship norms with lecturers teaching performance. The expected fundamental output is aligned with Sustainable Development Goal 4 to enhance the quality of education.

1.1. Lecturer's Perceived Performance

Employee performance is understood as the comparison of outcomes contributed by people of the same organization that are judged on the basis of company standards with expectations to improve the company performance (Akhtar et al., 2016). Employee performance from the employee's standpoint is the completion of daily assignments with effects while from the superior's standpoint, the work appraisals (Yilmaz, 2015) which are conducted once a year or once every three months (Hee et al., 2014). Performance and organizational goals can be shaped by quantitative and qualitative output, creativity, flexibility, reliability, or anything else that is desired by the organization. The emphasis of the performance can be short term or long term, it also be at the level of individuals, groups or organizations. Performance can also be an act or execution of tasks that have been completed by a person in a certain period of time and can be measured by four elements: the results of job functions, factors that affect the achievement of employees; the achievement of organizational goals; and a specific time period (McLaughlin et al., 2014).

Generally, the performance of the lecturer is measured from many aspects. One of them is related to student achievement such as, grade of the students for the course taught, how many of them with CGPA less than 3.00, more than 3.00, or 3.5 and above, how many of them being rated with the best score by the industry supervisors during their practical training, and the list goes on. Second, in terms of research and publication, how many research grants won, the value of the research grants, is the research grants from the national level, international level or from industry, how many indexed publications be published that year, and yes, the list goes on. Third, in terms of student development, the lecturer is the student's club and society advisor, the student's club achieves its strategic planning, the club's strategic planning needs to be revised, and many others. Fourth is related to administrative post or ad-hoc post,

such as coordinator, project's advisor, project's secretary and many more. Income generation and community service are also part of the KPIs.

In Malaysia, a study by Markom et al. (2012) concludes that the evaluation category of lecturer workload is education (teaching and supervision), research, service, and administration. The education part is divided into teaching course/demo/design project; supervision for undergraduate and graduate (coursework/thesis); for research including head/member of the project, journal/book writing, proceeding paper/book review/grant application/design, seminar/workshop/course attendance, and consultation service; For service including professional membership (main position and ordinary member), inside and outside the university, involvement in audit/documentation process, and internal and external thesis evaluation; for administration, the university appointed position, faculty appointed position and department appointed position.

In Indonesia, studies from Sukirno and Hamid also identify variables that can be used in measuring a lecturer's performance. Sukirno (2020) identifies lecturer performance construct falls into four categories, which are teaching, research, publication, and social engagement. Whereas Hamid (2013) concludes that lecturer must improve his/her performance in four aspects, which are (1) performing education and teaching, (2) performing research, (3) performing dedication to communities, and (4) supportive elements of lecture's activities.

Achieving individual KPIs which is the output is related to individual productivity. Effectiveness and productivity are mainly used by researchers as synonymous with performance, but actually, they are not similar. Effectiveness refers to the evaluation of the outcomes of performance, and the worker should be rewarded through performance, not effectiveness (Al-Dmour et al., 2018). The organization must embed in their worker (the lecturer) that each performance contributes to the measurement of the outcomes of performance (effectiveness). To embed this aspiration in each lecturer, the organizational relationship qualities must be valued as an important aspect of lecturer performance.

1.2. Organizational Relational Norms

Organizations and employers tend to be too law-centric and less norm-centric despite labour norms being more comprehensive than legal agreements (Benítez-Ávila et al., 2018). Firstly, employment norms are more prevalent especially when many employees work without a contract. The working environment in a shared workspace is also subconsciously imposed on all the employees there. Secondly, employment norms are regarded as more superior and practical than the law. Most members of an organization observe the behavior of their colleagues to determine the workplace culture instead of the employee manuals, as found in empirical research. Thirdly, working norms fill in the blanks left by the manuals. There are limits to what the laws can cover. Other abstract social standards such as corporate culture, office politics, and the complex organizational lifestyle are left to the employment norms to establish. Finally, employment norms are ever-changing with no financial burden to the organization (Fafchamps, 2011; Nedkovski et al., 2017).

Conversely, written laws are more difficult and more expensive to modify. Therefore, employment norms serve their purpose as a relational agreement to guide employees in facing various situations better than the legal manuals. Relational contracts have the power to form relationships founded on planning,

trust and solidarity, superseding the ability of written laws. Defining terms not apparent in the laws but in everyday social interactions are a significant advantage of relational contract theory. Relational contracts not only supplement legal agreements, but have also positively affected the field of law when combined with society, economics, politics, liberalism, and communitarianism. In this research we are proposing three relational norms postulated to influence lecturers' perceived performance which include participation, solidarity and flexibility norms (Liu et al., 2020; McLaughlin et al., 2014)

1.3. Participation Norms

Employee participation is about the participation and influence of employees in decision-making throughout the company. The influence to be achieved through participation is not necessarily associated with the job of the individual and the immediate work situation, but can also be achieved through such activities such as in meetings at a department or company level or through elected representatives. We postulated that research into employee participation may contribute to higher employees' satisfaction and perceived performance (Abdulkadir et al., 2012; Groen et al., 2017; Irawanto, 2015). Employee participation is therefore an endeavour of workers and their organizations, something that is positive depending on context; workers' say or voice, co-decision, industrial democracy, employee involvement, empowerment, etc. (Al-Dmour et al., 2018; Marin-Garcia & Bonavia, 2015). Employee participation implies that the employer, voluntarily or by compulsion, yields power of decision to the employees or to their representatives. This may occur in the form of joint decisions (e.g. pay and working hours agreed in collective bargaining), decision-making based on consultation with employees (e.g. in works councils or at workshop level), or decision-making left by the employer to the employees themselves (delegation of decision authority, autonomous teams, self-management).

All of this discussion falls under the concept of employee participation and imply the influence or potential influence. Having said this, the next questions might be: But do the different forms of participation have the same effect? Do they all contribute to establishing healthy working conditions? Does the individual performance appraisal interview lead in the same direction as the shop steward's efforts to ensure that collectively agreed rights are observed? We therefore intend to maintain a general concept of participation in this article. At the same time, we hope to determine the relationship and association between participation norms and lecturer's perceived and perceived performance in Malaysia and Indonesia.

Employee participation also refers to the involvement of employees and the control that they possess over organization-related decisions. Participation is typically accessible by employees through their positions or current tasks. However, intradepartmental and interdepartmental meetings alike can also give a platform to employees to offer their thoughts themselves or through other more high-ranking colleagues. Employee participation may lead to better scores of employee satisfaction and perceived performance, as found in previous studies (Abdulkadir et al., 2012; Groen et al., 2017; Irawanto, 2015). Thus, employee participation is a favorable quality also termed the employees' voice, co-decision, industrial democracy, employee involvement, and empowerment (Al-Dmour et al., 2018; Marin-Garcia & Bonavia, 2015).

Subordinate participation would not be possible in the first place if the superiors did not extend the invitation. The salary and daily hours of work discussion, employee training programs, and not being micromanaged are examples of two-way decision-making, feedback-centered decision-making, and leveraged decision-making, respectively. These forms of employee participation may be impactful but would they impact the dependent variable to the same extent? Would they result in a positive working environment? Would each member's performance facilitate the upholding of workers' rights by the representative? We therefore aim to take the generalized definition of participation for this paper that would apply to most situations. Simultaneously, we hope to determine the relationship and association between participation norms and lecturers' perceived performance in Malaysia and Indonesia.

1.4. Solidarity Norms

Solidarity should be a mutual want by both those in the higher ranks and the lower ranks. However, it is not easy to inculcate with the consideration of the organizational hierarchy. The reality remains that the power to initiate change in the formal work culture and influence more apparent change in relational outcomes is only given to the superiors (Kelly & MacDonald, 2019; Kelly et al., 2018). When managers act distant from their employees, the employees feel the need to keep their heads down in fear of increasing that distance (Milliken et al., 2003). As a result, solidarity becomes further from reach. Therefore, as solidarity is more effectively achieved by the efforts of managers in the workplace context, managers have to not only initiate but also be persistent in instilling solidarity (Schmidt & Achtzehn, 2018; Syahrizal et al., 2016). The study showed that solidarity and job satisfaction influenced the decision to quit a job early and solidarity also could be used to replenish job resources (Matsumoto & Gopal, 2019).

1.5. Flexibility Norms

In the past decades, employee flexibility has garnered traction, consistent with the increasing demand for a more flexible work culture. Furthermore, when employees are allowed to practice flexibility, their productivity and diligence increase which in the long run, helps the company to run smoothly. Simultaneously, unnecessary workplace issues due to work inflexibility could be avoided (Shaed et al., 2015). Hence, we argue that university management should focus on practicing flexible working systems and decision-making that hinge on the situation and work tasks. The result of the research shows some factors that influence lecturer performance in performing the learning process such as work motivation, education, work satisfaction, supervision perception, age, and work period (Hadiantini et al., 2017). Motivation has a positive influence on lecturer performance by 80.8%. This means that motivation is the driving force that creates the excitement of one's work so that one will cooperate, work effectively, and be integrated with all their efforts to achieve satisfaction (Sri Handayani, 2019).

Flexibility management affords members of an organization to have a work-life balance with success in both aspects (Allen et al., 2013; Bal & De Lange, 2015). Moreover, flexibility grants members more autonomy in managing their work schedule as they would do work when they are most energetic, prepared, and focused. Hence, work piles can be settled more efficiently, boosting individual

performance. A positive correlation between active job participation and increased performance levels was revealed in a previous study (Demerouti et al., 2014). Working together in large numbers tends to be challenging but showing flexibility at the managerial level has been posited by scholars to be a powerful strategy. Thus, the better performance shown by an individual with flexible working practices benefits his department, company, and himself in terms of career advancement (Úbeda-García et al., 2018). Based on these discussions, we proposed the following conceptual framework as shown in figure 1.

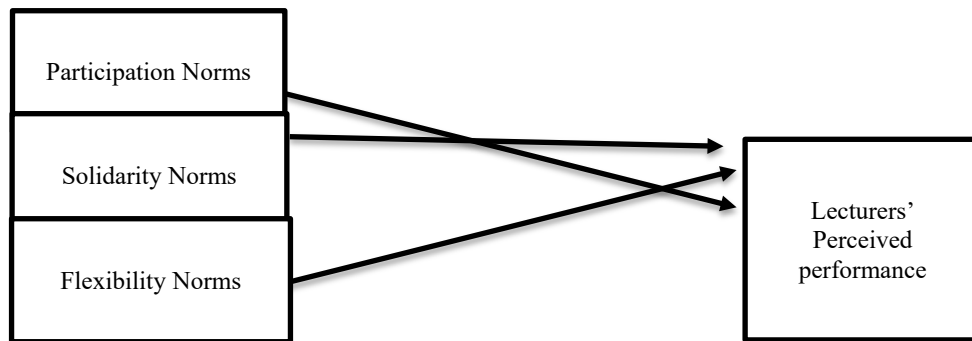


Figure 1. Proposed Conceptual Framework

2. Problem Statement

Based on the study done by Universiti Teknologi MARA Terengganu, Malaysia from 2017 – 2018, the level of the lecturer’s happiness index and the result declined to 69% in 2018 from 2017. Meanwhile, from early 2019 until now the world-facing Pandemic Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) caused the higher education landscape teaching methodology to be different from before i.e., the Open and Distance Learning approach or a face-to-screen vs. face-to-face section. Those scenarios have significant effects on an academician's performance.

3. Research Questions

The research question (RQ) of this study focused on the influence of organizational relationship norms on the lecturer’s performance among academicians from Universiti Teknologi MARA Terengganu (UiTMT), Malaysia and Universitas Sumatera Utara (USU), Medan Indonesia. The specific research questions of this study are as follows:

- i. Does Participation Norms influence the lecturer’s performance?
- ii. Do Solidarity Norms influence the lecturer’s performance?
- iii. Does Flexibility Management influence the lecturer’s performance?

4. Purpose of the Study

The main research objective (RO) of this study is to estimate the influence of organizational relationship norms on the lecturer’s performance. This study involved academicians from Universiti

Teknologi MARA Terengganu (UiTMT), Malaysia, and Universitas Sumatera Utara (USU), Medan Indonesia. The specific objectives of this study are as follows:

- i. To determine the influence of Participation Norms on the lecturer's performance.
- ii. To identify the influence of Solidarity Norms on the lecturer's performance.
- iii. To determine the influence of Flexibility Management on the lecturer's performance.

5. Research Methods

In this paper, we choose quantitative research using a survey method using a questionnaire as the main survey instrument. A purposive convenience sampling was chosen as the sampling method. Samples were chosen from lecturers of Universiti Teknologi MARA, Terengganu Campus (UiTMCT), and Universitas Sumatera Utara, Medan, Indonesia (USU). A total of 400 lecturers from different faculties were chosen as the respondents using a purposive convenience sampling and the questionnaire was transformed into a Google Form format and distributed to the respondent's E-mails. The data collection process was conducted in 2022 and took approximately 5 months to be completed. The response rate, however, revealed that only 389 lecturers responded to the questionnaire. Questionnaires were constructed from the work of previous scholars such as Susanty and Miradipta (2013), Shaed et al. (2015), McLaughlin et al. (2014), and Fafchamps (2011). Four sections were designed into the questionnaires namely; Demographic profiles of respondents, Lecturer's Perceived performance, and three (3) dimensions of Organizational Relationship Norms. These dimensions include Participation Norms, Solidarity Norms, and Flexibility Management. Raw data collected from the respondents was cleaned and analyzed using the SPSS software. The inferential analysis chosen for this paper includes a Multiple Regression analysis in addition to the descriptive statistics.

6. Findings

6.1. Selective Descriptive Analysis

In this paper, we have chosen selective demographic variables that may have some probability of influencing the lecturers' perceived performance. The variables are gender, age, marital status, nationality, highest level of education, and past working experience. In terms of gender, there are more female than male lecturers. As for the age of lecturers, most of them are middle-aged lecturers with 161 of them in the 41-50 years bracket and only 1 lecturer is less than 30 years old. As for Marital Status, the majority of the respondents are married with a total of 363 lecturers. Indonesian lecturers form the highest percentage with 363 of the respondents being Indonesian lecturers who are working at USU. In terms of the highest education level, the majority of lecturers have a PhD (238), followed by those with a master's degree (140), bachelor's degree (8), and others (3). Many of the lecturers have not worked in other organizations (290 lecturers) before joining their respective universities. Only 99 of them have past working experience in other organizations. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Selected Demographic of Respondents

Gender	Male	Female			
	169	220			
Age	Less than 30 years	31-40 years	41-50 years	51-60 years	More Than 60 years
	1	46	161	139	42
Marital Status	Single	Married	Divorced	No Answer	
	29	363	2	5	
Nationality	Malaysian	Indonesian			
	78	311			
Highest Level of Education	Bachelor's Degree	Master's Degree	PhD	Others	
	8	140	238	3	
Past Working Experience before Joining UiTMCT/USU	Yes	No			
	99	290			

6.2. Inferential Analysis

The Inferential analysis revealed that in general, there is a significant influence between the proposed independent variables (Solidarity, Participation, and Flexibility norms) with the dependent variable, the Lecturer's Perceived performance. This is shown by the Sig. figures in the Coefficients Table (Table 3). The Model Summary in Table 2, however, revealed that the changes in the independent variables influence a small percentage change in the dependent variable as shown by the R Square value of 0.111. In other words, any changes in the independent variables will only influence the changes in the dependent variables by 11%. Furthermore, figures of the Multiple Regression analysis as shown in Table 3, revealed that only two types of norms, namely Participation and Flexibility have a significant influence on the lecturer's perceived performance. This is shown by Sig. figures of less than 0.050. In terms of the Collinearity Statistics, there are no significant issues as shown by the VIF value of lower than 10. In terms of the strength of the relationship, Participation norms have a stronger influence on the lecturer's perceived performance compared to Flexibility norms as shown by the Standardized Beta values of 0.435 and 0.269 respectively. The Beta values however indicate that there is an inverse relationship between the Flexibility norms and the lecturer's perceived performance as shown by the Beta value of -0.269. All results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Model Summary of the Regression Analysis

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.334	0.111	0.104	0.94720

Table 3. Coefficients Table of the Regression Analysis

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
Constant	7.053	0.248		15.051	0.000	0.000	
Solidarity Norms	0.492	0.086	0.114	1.190	0.235	0.251	3.979
Participation Norms	1.122	0.106	0.435	3.632	0.000	0.161	6.212
Flexibility norms	-1.338	0.082	-0.269	-2.820	0.005	0.254	3.932

7. Conclusion

In conclusion, about the multiple Regression analysis, we discover that the combination of the three norms contributes to the lecturer's perceived performance. However, eliciting them individually, there are two norms. i.e., Participation and Flexibility that significantly influence the lecturer's perceived performance; but organizational relationship norms were not significant. Flexibility norms have a negative relationship with the lecturer's perceived performance.

We postulate that when the management of the respective university displays high Participation norms, they are seen as having the care and concern to support the lecturers in their effort to perform better in their jobs. This is highlighted by the highest Beta value of 0.435 for participation norms. The significant relationship between the participation and the lecturer's performance is supported by the work of Keraka et al. (2022) who discovered that employee participation in the implementation of safety standards contributes to improved employee performance in textile manufacturing companies in Kenya. Similarly, we postulate that the participation of a university's management team in the work of their lecturers will help improve the performance of the lecturers.

The negative association between Flexibility norms and the lecturer's performance may be influenced by the concern and ability of lecturers to abide by specific and strict rules and regulations set by the top management. This is contrary to the work of Agono (2022) who discovered that there is a strong relationship between flexible working arrangements and employee performance at a local government council in Nigeria. We postulate that a low Flexibility norm may lead to higher performance since adhering to fixed procedures and predetermined key performance indicators will result in higher annual evaluations by their superiors. Moreover, flexible working hours are part and parcel of a lecturer's working schedule. There is a probability that some lecturers misused this facility to involve themselves in non-academic activities which do not contribute to their performance.

Solidarity norms, on the other hand, are not significant in influencing the lecturer's performance. This phenomenon may be due to the culture of the lecturers to perform better when working with their colleagues as opposed to the management team. Lecturers are tied to perform their tasks according to the standards set by their respective faculties and not directly tied to the general standards put forth by the top management. Lecturers are likely to find conducive working conditions with their colleagues whom they better trust instead of working closely with the top management. Furthermore, we proposed that other variables such as organizational commitment, trust, and work culture may also influence the lecturer's performance. We also postulated that in the long run, the combination of these variables with participation and solidarity norms has the potential to increase the lecturer's perceived performance and help develop a sustainable competitive advantage to enhance the quality of education.

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