Managerial Practices Influence on Employees Behavior among Academic Staff in Syria

Abdullah Alnsseraat [1*]

[1] Postgraduate Center, Limkokwing University of Creative Technology, Malaysia.

Article Info

Abstract

Reports from Syria and MENA areas in different domains such as manufacturing industries claimed that employees' behavior, and performance are at low level. Scholars stated that the relations between managerial practices and employees' behavior has not been studied well and still need more investigation. Therefore, this study aimed to examine the relationship between organisational managerial practices (Such as empowerment, compensation, teamwork) and h employees' behavior. Three theories form the theoretical framework for this study; the job demands-resources model, theory of work adjustment (TWA), and Herzberg's motivator-hygiene theory. The proposed model has nine HRM practices that have relations towards employees' behavior and PMS system.

Keywords: Performance Management System, Employee Behaviour, HRM Practices, Universities, Syria

1. Introduction

Higher Education Institutes (HEI) is a level of education that is provided by universities, vocational universities, community colleges, liberal arts colleges, institutes of technology and other collegiate level institutions, such as vocational schools, trade schools, and career colleges, that award academic degrees or professional certifications (Brubacher, 2017). Precisely, in whichever way and with whatever concept used, it can be interpreted as that phase of education is obtainable after the secondary and the aim is to usher in development (physical, technological, mental, and economical and socio-political) ranging from the individual, to organizational to societal and such development that will be used in solving day to day problems. Similarly, HEI's can contribute to future leaders and build up the high-level technical capacities that strong economic growth and development (Matthews, 2018).

The importance of HEI's world over and Syria, in particular, cannot in any way be underpinned. This is perhaps because they are saddled with the tedious task of preparing the youth to living a purposeful life in the course of fitting arrangement and execution of the institutions core curriculum and the aggressive situation since last decade (Seal et al., 2019). The management and administration of HEI's entails the collaborative efforts of the management, the teachers and non- teaching staff to achieve the desired aim and objectives. The educating aspect and perhaps research that are very prominent, play fundamental roles in national development, mainly in workforce development. Thus, if education especially at the university level remains a sine qua non for social and economic transformation, then its provision, administration, updating and financing should be accorded a greater significance (Carnoy, 2017; McGee, 2015). Correspondingly, it is apparent that, the whole intellectual and professional life of a country depends on sound higher education, particularly university education that grants quality graduates for societal consumption. The Syrian university system is not different, because it was born out of the need for the development of a highly qualified manpower capable of standing the test of time and taking up the challenge of nation building (Baram & Ben-Israel, 2019).

Series of reports and complaints from various individuals, groups and the media pointed out that despite all the alluring issues of significance regarding education as mentioned in the background of this study, the higher educational system in Syria in general is besieged with myriads of problems and public universities in particular are grossly underperforming (Kateb & Ramanathan, 2019). Many reasons could stand for that; however ineffective and inefficient performance management system (PMS) is one of the most noticeable reasons (Dalati & Alchach, 2018; Milton, 2019).

Scholars stated that the relations between managerial practices and employees' behaviour were not studies well and still need more investigation (Sahi, 2017). In addition, creating and sustaining employees pattern includes behaviour, satisfaction and engagement with employees is an ongoing challenge for organizations; establishing employee organizational commitment represents a significant additional challenge (De Vito, Brown, Bannister, Cianci, & Mujtaba,

* Corresponding author Email: ammar.malik419@gmail.com

2018). Engaged, satisfied, and committed employees constitute a highly productive workforce that is coveted by management (Khalif, Ibrahim, & Szabó, 2017 Ahmed, & Ismail, 2020). Lee and his colleges suggested that the high levels of senior leadership retirements expected in the coming years raises significant concern regarding the quality and delivery of services from businesses (Lee, Hom, Eberly, & Li, 2017).

Organizational structure, work experiences, characteristics of the work, and the relationships established between management and colleagues influence behaviour, satisfaction, and other related qualities. Employees with excellent behaviour to produce outstanding results, such as increased profitability and improved productivity, so this commitment is of strategic importance for organizations (Zhao, Ghiselli, Law, & Ma, 2016). Employees are the fundamental source of value creation for a firm, particularly in knowledge-based industries such as accounting. By keeping employees engaged, satisfied, and committed, accounting firms do not have to be concerned about employees leaving the organization (Lu, Lu, Gursoy, & Neale, 2016).

This study aimed to examine the relationship between organisational managerial practices (Such as empowerment, compensation, teamwork) and employees' behavior among academics of Universities in Syria.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Higher Education Institutes (HEIs)

A level of education that is provided by universities, vocational universities, community colleges, liberal arts colleges, institutes of technology and other collegiate level institutions, such as vocational schools, trade schools and career colleges, that award academic degrees or professional certifications (Alkadash, 2020; Abdulrab, Zumrah, Almaamari, & Al-Tahitah, 2017; Al-Harethi & Al-Maamari, 2018; Al-Tahitah, Muthaliff, Abdulrab, & Al-Maamari, 2018)**.** In this study HEI's refer to those academic institutions saddled with the responsibilities of ensuring national development, inculcating ethical values, promoting scholarship and intellectual activities conducting researches and community services and, ensuring national integration and international interaction; HEI's in Syria covers the universities, polytechnics and colleges of education.

2.2. Employee Behavior (EBH)

Employee behaviour is defined as an employee's reaction to a particular situation at workplace. Employees need to behave sensibly at workplace not only to gain appreciation and respect from others but also to maintain a healthy work culture. Such a behaviour is completely unprofessional (Landy & Conte, 2016). This study defines employee behavior as those behaviors of employees that are not necessarily recognized or accepted by the organization. They are means through which employees express their satisfaction or otherwise regarding organization's action or inaction (Alkadash, & Law, 2020; Abdulrab et al., 2018; Abdulrab, Zumrah, Almaamari, & Altahitah, 2017).

Employee behavior has been defined as －that behaviour that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and that in the aggregate promotes the effective functioning of the organization. The concept of employee behavior has also been branded differently by different scholars for instance, (Organ & Podsakoff, 2006) as extra-role behaviours, (Borman & Motowidlo, 1993) contextual performance, (Dar, 2010) and by (Spector & Fox, 2005) as counter productive work behavior (CWB). Whichever concept is used, employee behaviours have consequences that are not favourable and can cause negative personal upshot such as depression, low morale and decreased self-esteem (Adler et al., 2017).

2.3. Human Resource Management Practices (HRM Practices)

Human resource management is the strategic approach to the effective management of people in a company or organization such that they help their business gain a competitive advantage. It is designed to maximize employee performance in service of an employer's strategic objectives (Alkadash, 2017; DeCenzo, Robbins, & Verhulst, 2016; Alkadash, 2015). Wollard and Shuck (2010) conducted a literature review of employee engagement and out of 256 articles in various journals, they identified a set of individual antecedents and organizational antecedents to employee engagement (Shuck & Wollard, 2010). The following table below contains both set of antecedents they identified.

The Government of the Yukon and the Government of British Columbia (BC) in Canada use the same definition and framework, which were developed by BC Stats, to analyse employee engagement. Employee engagement in these two jurisdictions is defined as job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Alkadash, & Shahid, 2017; Wong, 2017). The definition is premised on the idea that one's commitment to one's job tends to be related to one's satisfaction in that job. Following these two aspects of engagement, the BC Stats model consists of 12 engagement drivers.

The foundation of the house contains two drivers focused on management practices. These two drivers are connected either directly or indirectly to all other drivers in the model and, as a result, have a significant impact on engagement.

Senior Leadership reflects perceptions that senior leaders are genuinely interested in employees' well-being and provide clear direction for the future, and that essential information flows effectively from senior leadership to staff (three questions). (Alkadash, 2020);

Supervisory-Level Management includes survey questions that measure whether employees believe they have a positive working relationship with the person they report to, receive feedback that helps them improve their work performance and that the person they report to provides clear work expectations (three questions).
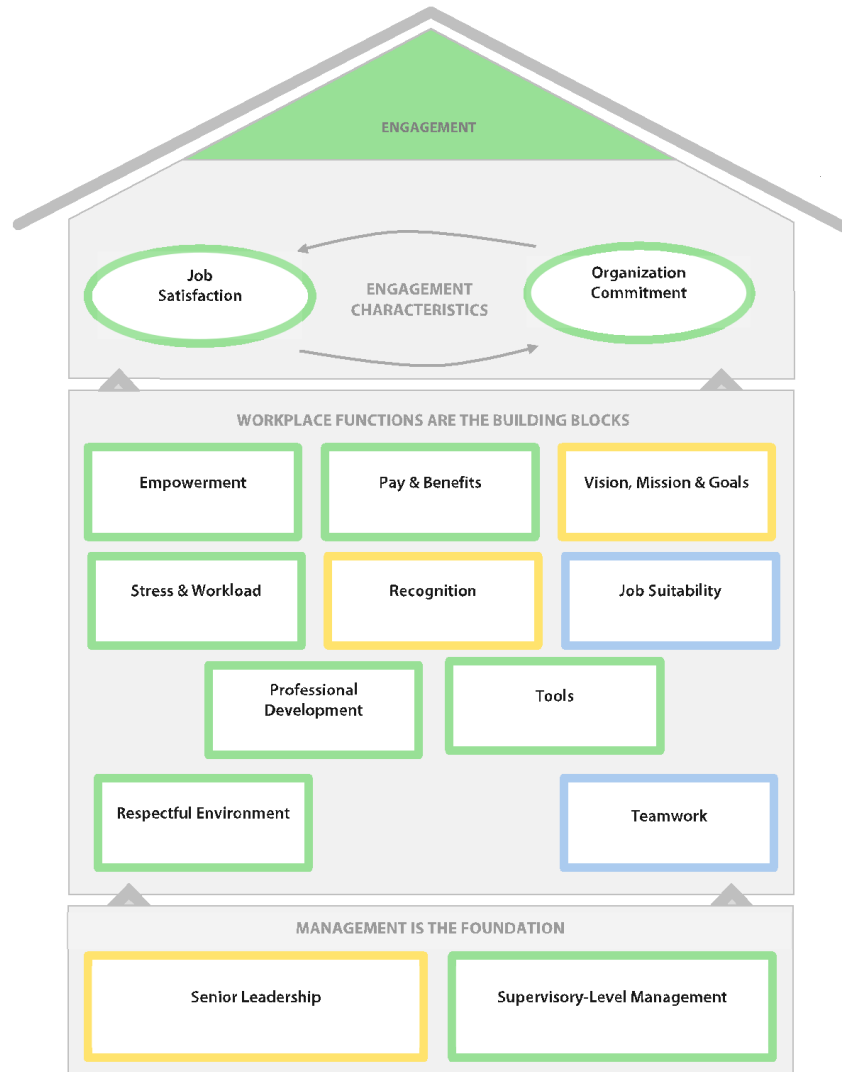

Fig. 1. Employee Engagement Model of Yukon Government

Supported by the foundation, the middle section of the house contains the ten building blocks that represent the workplace functions that matter most to employee engagement. All building blocks are impacted by one or both drivers relating to management practices. Each building block is made up of between two and four survey questions.

- Vision, Mission & Goals represents employees' beliefs that their department's vision, mission, and goals are well communicated, and that their department is taking steps to ensure its long-term success (two questions).
- Compensation is a measure of employees' perceptions that their pay is fair and their benefits meet their needs well (two questions).
- Empowerment reflects employees' opinions about having opportunities and freedom to provide input, make decisions to do their job well, and implement new ideas (three questions).
- Job Suitability reflects employees' beliefs about their work being meaningful and a good fit with their skills and interests (two questions).
- Recognition captures employees' experiences with meaningful and performance-based recognition (two questions).
- Stress & Workload is a measure of whether employees perceive that their work-related stress and workloads are manageable (two questions).

- Tools represents whether the computer and non-computer based tools employees have access to help them excel in their jobs (two questions).
- Professional Development reflects employees' beliefs about the extent that their organization supports their learning and development, provides good quality training, and offers adequate opportunities to develop their skills (three questions).
- Teamwork represents employees' having positive working relationships and support from their team, and feeling that their team communicates effectively (three questions).
- Respectful Environment captures whether employees experience a healthy and diverse atmosphere where conflict is dealt with effectively (four questions).

The most important positive feature for any organization today regardless of motive is, Human Resource. This is perhaps so because, it is the starting place of achieving competitive advantage. The management of this valuable resource remains more tasking and challenging than managing other material resources such as finance, technology and etc. To be able to effectively manage human resource, adequate, appropriate and sound human resource management practices need to be put in place.

2.4. *Underpinning Theories*

Three theories contribute to the design of the model and its relations, Job Demands-Resources model, theory of work adjustment, and motivator-hygiene theory.

The job demands resources model (JD-R) design is a model for strain / burnout explanation. The theory stated that imbalance between job demand and the offered resources will cause worker burnout and decrease workers' satisfaction. However the proper balance are great and able to offset the consequences of severe task demands, and inspire engagement and commitment.

The Theory of Work Adjustment (TWA) describes the relationship of the individual to his or her work environment (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984). TWA was developed as the guiding framework for a program of research in job-related psychology (Satisfaction, engagement, behaviour, …etc), and this is the area of its greatest application today.

Herzberg's Motivator-Hygiene Theory of job attitudes is a job satisfaction theory, in which the factors produce job satisfaction are different from factors that produce job dissatisfaction (Herzberg, 1968). The theory distinguish between satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

3. Conceptual Framework

The framework for this study is relays partly on the model of Katou (2012) who used recruitment, training compensation and involvement (human resource management policies) to investigate the reverse causality between human resource policies and organizational performance in small firms using employee attitude and behavior as the mediators. This study however added more variables for HR practices and substituted employee attitude with employees' behavior to suit the study. Figure 2 shows the theoretical model of the Study.
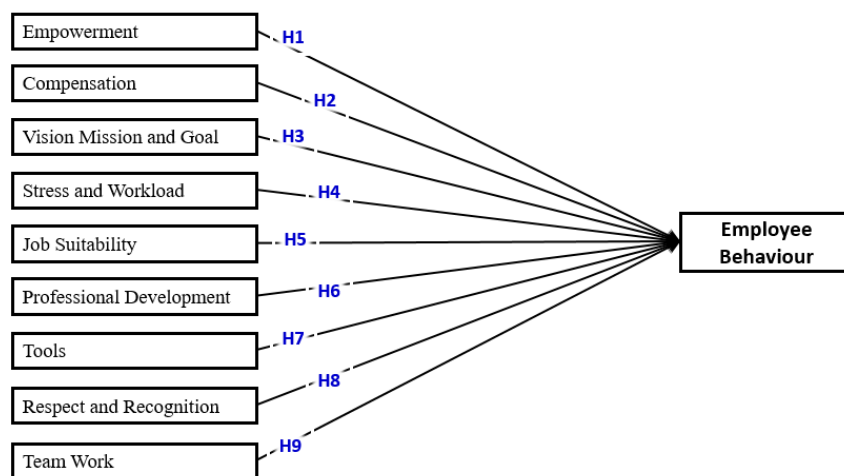

Fig. 2. Proposed Model with Hypotheses

- H1: Empowerment has a direct impact on employees' behavior in higher education institutes – Syria.
- H2: Compensation has a direct impact on employees' behavior in higher education institutes – Syria.

- H3: Vision mission and goals has a direct impact on employees' behavior in higher education institutes – Syria.
- H4: Stress and workload has a direct impact on employees' behavior in higher education institutes – Syria.

- H5: Job suitability has a direct impact on employees' behavior in higher education institutes – Syria.
- H6: Professional development has a direct impact on employees' behavior in higher education institutes – Syria.
- H7a: Tools have a direct impact on employees' behavior in higher education institutes – Syria.
- H8: Respect and recognition has a direct impact on employees' behavior in higher education institutes – Syria.
- H9: Teamwork has a direct impact on employees' behavior in higher education institutes – Syria.

4. Conclusion and Future Work

The study aim is to produce a conceptual model that fit to explain the employee's behavior in general and in the higher education in particular. The proposed model is designed upon the Yukon government questionnaire because it has been tested for many years to measure the engagement and satisfaction. However, the predictors of HRM practices are never tested as predictors of the employee behavior. In Future, this research will be proceeded to make an empirical investigation of the academic staff in some of the Syrian universities.

References

Abdulrab, M., Zumrah, A. R., Almaamari, Q., & Al-Tahitah, A. (2017). Transformational Leadership and Psychological Empowerment in Malaysian Public Universities: A Review Paper. development, 7(24).

Abdulrab, M., Zumrah, A. R., Almaamari, Q., Al-Tahitah, A. N., Isaac, O., & Ameen, A. (2018). The role of psychological empowerment as a mediating variable between perceived organizational support and organizational citizenship behaviour in Malaysian higher education institutions. International Journal of Management and Human Science (IJMHS), 2(3), 1-14.

Abdulrab, M., Zumrah, A. R., Almaamari, Q., & Altahitah, A. (2017). The role of psychological empowerment on work engagement: The development of conceptual framework. International Journal of Business Management and Economic Research, 8(6), 1157-1163.Adler, A., Unanue, W., Osin, E., Ricard, M., Alkire, S., & Seligman, M. (2017). Psychological wellbeing. Happiness, 118.

Ahmed, U., & Ismail, A. I. (2020). Meaningful work and COVID-19: a way forward through LDW model. Annals of Contemporary Developments in Management & HR (ACDMHR), 2(4), 27-32.

Al-Harethi, A. A. M., & Al-Maamari, Q. A. (2018). The Impact of Strategic Planning on Improving Institutional Performance at Limkokwing University of Creative Technology in Malaysia. International Journal of Psychology and Cognitive Science, 4(3), 112-129.

Alkadash, T. M. (2020). Mediating role between authentic leadership, organizational commitment on talents turnover intention: In Palestine higher education. TEST Engineering & Management, March-April.

Alkadash, T. M. (2017.) Does Global Human Resource Practice Affect Employee Job Satisfaction In Palestinian Firm's? An Evidence‐Based Analytical.

Alkadash, T. M., & Shahid, M. (2017). Does Human Resource Practices Affect Perceived Organizational Support? An Empirical Study In Palestine Telecommunication Firms. International Journal of Current Research, 9(09), 58036-58042.

Alkadash, T. M. (2015). The Implications of Employee Training Programs on The Employee Productivity. A Study with reference to Private Sector Organizations in Palestine. The International Journal of Business and Management Research, 8(6), 56.

Alkadash, T. M., & Law, K. A. (2020). RESEARCH ON EMPLOYEES IN TECHNOLOGY ENTERPRISES IN THE PROVINCE OF GUANGDONG IN CHINA: APPLICATION OF FUZZY LOGIC TECHNIQUE. PalArch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt/Egyptology, 17(7), 6273-6290.

Al-Tahitah, A., Muthaliff, M. M. A., Abdulrab, M., & Al-Maamari, Q. A. (2018). Paper Review on the Relationship Between Transformational Leadership and Readiness for Change. International Journal of Energy Policy and Management, 3(1), 1-7.Baram, G., & Ben-Israel, I. (2019). The Academic Reserve: Israel's Fast Track to High-Tech Success. Israel Studies Review, 34(2), 75–91.

Borman, W. C., & Motowidlo, S. M. (1993). Expanding the criterion domain to include elements of contextual performance.

Brubacher, J. (2017). Higher education in transition: History of American colleges and universities. Routledge.

Carnoy, M. (2017). Education, economy and the state. In Cultural and economic reproduction in education (pp. 79–126). Routledge.

Dalati, S., & Alchach, H. (2018). The effect of leader trust and knowledge sharing on staff satisfaction at work: investigation of universities in Syria. Business, Management and Education, 16, 190–205.

Dar, O. L. (2010). Trust in co-workers and employee behaviours at work. International Review of Business Research Papers, 6(1), 194–204.

Dawis, R. V, & Lofquist, L. H. (1984). A psychological theory of work adjustment: An individual-differences model and its applications. University of Minnesota Press.

De Vito, L., Brown, A., Bannister, B., Cianci, M., & Mujtaba, B. G. (2018). Employee motivation based on the hierarchy of needs, expectancy and the two-factor theories applied with higher education employees. IJAMEE.

DeCenzo, D. A., Robbins, S. P., & Verhulst, S. L. (2016). Fundamentals of human resource management. John Wiley & Sons.

Herzberg, F. (1968). One more time: How do you motivate employees. Harvard Business Review Boston, MA.

Kateb, M., & Ramanathan, K. (2019). The Impact of the Transactional Leadership Style on EmployeesJob Satisfaction ThroughThe Mediating Role of Communication Competence in Private Universities of Syria. IOSR Journal of Business and Management.

Khalif, A. A., Ibrahim, M. I. S., & Szabó, Z. L. (2017). Some issues in the human resource management.

Landy, F. J., & Conte, J. M. (2016). Work in the 21st century, Binder ready version: An introduction to Industrial and Organizational Psychology. John Wiley & Sons.

Lee, T. W., Hom, P., Eberly, M., & Li, J. J. (2017). Managing employee retention and turnover with 21st century ideas. Organizational Dynamics.

Lu, L., Lu, A. C. C., Gursoy, D., & Neale, N. R. (2016). Work engagement, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions: A comparison between supervisors and line-level employees. International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, 28(4), 737–761.

Matthews, K. D. (2018). A Systematic Review of the Factors Influencing an Effective University Partnership with External Entities for Regional and Local Economic Development. University of Maryland University College.

McGee, J. (2015). Breakpoint: The changing marketplace for higher education. JHU Press.

Milton, S. (2019). Syrian higher education during conflict: Survival, protection, and regime security. International Journal of Educational Development, 64, 38–47.

Organ, P., & Podsakoff, P. M. (2006). MacKenzie.(2006). Organizational citizenship behavior: Its nature, antecedents, and consequences. Sage, Thousand Oaks, 16, 43–44.

Sahi, G. K. (2017). IMPROVING EMPLOYEES DISCRETIONARY BEHAVIOUR: ROLE OF EMPLOYEE CUSTOMER ORIENTATION AND JOB ENGAGEMENT. Journal of Services Research, 17(1), 25–42.

Seal, M., Anastasio, J., Andersson, Å., Araste, L., Archilleos, J., Bardy, H., … Connaughton, P. (2019). Teaching Youth Work in Higher Education. Tensions, Connections, Continueties and Contradictions.

Shuck, B., & Wollard, K. (2010). Employee engagement and HRD: A seminal review of the foundations. Human Resource Development Review, 9(1), 89–110.

Spector, P. E., & Fox, S. (2005). The Stressor-Emotion Model of Counterproductive Work Behavior.

Wong, D. (2017). Increasing employee engagement at the City of Pitt Meadows.

Zhao, X. R., Ghiselli, R., Law, R., & Ma, J. (2016). Motivating frontline employees: Role of job characteristics in work and life satisfaction. Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management, 27, 27–38.