ROLE OF EMPLOYEE ATTITUDE AS MEDIATING VARIABLE BETWEEN HR PRACTICE AND ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE: EVIDENCE FROM PUBLIC SECTOR UNIVERSITIES

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine the role of HR practice on organizational performance. The role of HR practices is crucial for the success of any organization. The conceptual framework was developed for this study and the model was also supported by many researchers. Numerous studies have done on HR practice in the world. However a little research regarding HR practice is present in Pakistan, but new scholars and researchers are interested in this field as its emerging one in Pakistan. The data was collected from the respondents of three different categories, the teaching faculty, officers, and policymakers (the members of senate and syndicate) from nine different universities of Sindh registered in the general category, engineering category, and medical category. A total number of 235 useable responses received through a simple random sampling technique. The data were analyzed by using SPSS 26.0 and Smart PLS-3. The study findings show the positive and significant relationship between the predictors with employee attitude as a mediating variable and afterward, also there was a positive and significant role between employee attitude and the endogenous construct organizational performance. Further research uncovered that employee is the main factor of organization, if the policies would be in employee favor the attitude will be positive and ultimately organization will achieve its desired objectives.

Keywords: *HR Practices, Employees Attitude, organizational Performance, Public Sector Universities*

Introduction

Since the past two decades, the role of HR and its management has become more central, organizations are looking for ways by which innovative outcomes can increase ((Beugelsdijk, 2008; Shipton, et al. 2006)). Organizational levels are the main focus of many studies to bring innovation, where human resource practices or systems have been appeared to influence innovative outcomes, although through such variables like knowledge or intellectual as mediating variable (Cabello-Medina, et al., 2011). The effect of human resource practices on innovation has given less attention at individual levels (Yuan & Woodman, 2010).

 There is great competition in the world of Business; it looks at the war in counties and its aims are at securing maximum benefits by investing minimum resources. Different organizations are making different policies for operating purposes that acquires people from society to face the competition, no doubt in society people have individual attitudes and behavior but organization requires collective behavior and a positive attitude for this means organizations provide to various training to employees. If policies and HR Practices of organizations are good enough but the attitude of the employee is not a good one, that way customers are not attracted by organizations , as a result, it causes failure of the organization in the market (Hettiararchchi & Jayarathna, 2014).

Using HR practices organizations can able to encourage specific attitudes and behaviors by stimulating desired behaviors and discourage undesired behaviors. Grounded on concepts of social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) and signaling theory (Berg, et al, 2014; (Connelly, et al. 2011) workers are viewed as identifying human resource practices as organizational signals. Employees behave in a situation in a way if he recognizes that which behaviors would be valued rewarded by an organization's manager. If an employee noticed that something valuable is provided by the organization as appreciation than it will also return something of value to an organization such as his/her maximum contribution towards the achievement of organizational goals (Stinglhamber & Vandenberghe, 2003). If employees conclude by developing

perception for HR practices that only ideas are rewarded with a novelty and work environment is the main factor to generate supporting new ideas, the employee will respond with new ideas. Therefore, in this study, we aim to examine the role of HR practices in improving public sector university performance mediated by employees' attitudes.

Introduction to Universities

Higher Education Commission (HEC) is the central body to develop and regulate the policies of higher educational institutes in Pakistan. Since Sindh is a province of Pakistan, and the public and private universities of Sindh have been also regulated by the HEC as well. According to the HEC, there are a total of 24 public universities recognized and are currently providing quality education and offer different programs of BS/BE, Masters, MS/ME and Doctorate degrees. These universities provide different programs and categorized in different disciplines such as general, medical, engineering, technical & agriculture universities (HEC, 2019).

Problem Statement

Public sector universities' performance is affected badly and it can easily be observed from the ranking of Higher Education Commission (HEC) announced each year. The problems that have been faced to the management of the many universities of Sindh specifically the Public Sector Universities are supposed to be affected by the lack of management, it may because management is not utilizing proper applications to human resource management practices, it can be the performance or delivery of quality education, it could be the result of bad governance or the political influence and involvement, maybe nepotism, favoritism, or maybe poor recruitment criteria or policies. If all these things are fair then we need to check the behavior of team concerned with the quality education which ultimately affects the performance, for all these above consequences, this research study will be carried out to find the actual problems that have been faced by the public sector Universities of Sindh specifically regarding the applications of the human resource management practices and in supportive the mediation of employees' attitude and its impact on the performance of the public sector universities of Sindh .

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to identify the human resource management practices/elements through which public sector universities can improve their performance, other than general specific objectives are given below

- ➢ To identify the role of HR practices in improving Public sector universities performance of Sindh
- ➢ To identify the link between HR practices and employees' attitudes.
- ➢ To identify the attitude of employees at different levels and their impact on the performance of universities.

Research Questions

- ➢ Can the performance of Public Sector Universities be improved by implementing proper HR Practices?
- ➢ Is there any link between HRM practices and employee`s attitudes?
- ➢ What are the attitude of employees at different levels and their impact on universities' performance?

Hypothesis

H1. Recruitment and selection have a positive relationship with employees' Attitude.
H2. Compensation has a positive and significant relationship with   employees' Attitude.
H3. The working environment has a positive and significant relationship with employees' Attitude.

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H4. Employee involvement has a positive and significant relationship with employees' Attitude.

H5. Employees' Attitude has a positive and significant relationship with the organizational performance

H6. The recruitment and selection criterion has a positive relationship with organizational performance through the mediating role of employee attitude

H7Compensation has a positive relationship with organizational performance through the mediating role of employee attitude

H8. The working environment has a positive relationship with organizational performance through the mediating role of employee attitude

H9. Employee Involvement has a positive relationship with organizational performance through the mediating role of employee attitude

Literature Review

Various studies have tested the relation of HR practices and organizational performance such as research (Bos-Nehles & Veenendaal, 2017) and (Leghari, et al. 2014) with helpful results. The HR practice includes Recruitment & Selection, compensation, working environment, employee involvement, training & development. If these HR practices run, smoothly they would have a positive influence on organizational performance but when employees' attitudes added as mediating variables than situation varies because employees' attitudes may be positive and negative. How organizational performance can be improved through these HR practices. Besides, the researcher has done studies, where they found what type of attitude will be good for the organization and how attitude will provide more profit to the organization .

Rameez Ali Mahesar (2019) According to his study the list issued by Edarabia number one guide of the Middle East. Author tag to report World Economic Forum (WEF) Global Human Capital Report published in 2017 addressed in his article titled "Institutes on the rise; performance in decline" Published on website www.pakistantoday.com.pk. The total HEC recognized educational institutions are 188 in Pakistan according to the Pro-Pakistan the report released news publisher 2017-18, there were 186 (One Hundred Eighty-Six) universities, with 56,900 (Fifty-Six Thousand & Nine Hundred) teachers with the total student's enrolment of 1.6 million in the country of Pakistan and this enrolment was 7.7% higher than previous years. The report quotes the organizational performance of the higher education sector of Pakistan is declines day by day and this report was developed All Pakistan Universities, Academic Staff Associations (FAPUASA), Islamabad Chapter and the working group on Higher Education Reforms Pakistan. According to the World Economic Forum (WEF's) Global Human Capital Report, published in 2017 had placed Pakistan as one of the worst countries in terms of education skills development and to improving universities' performance and also Higher education in Pakistan is not at the same level as international standards. In Pakistan 2017-18 whole scenario of the article, it shows only focus on quantity rather than quality. Only focused on Institutes, enrollment, and recruitment but organizational performance is not paying attention. Sothe background of this study focuses on organizational performance (Mahesar, 2019).

Human Resource Practices (HRPs)

Recruitment and Selection

The most influencing research scholars have pinpointed fit-in-culture as the most suitable and appropriate theory for the relationship of the recruitment & selection with organizational productivity. The term also refers to the person-organization fit (P-O fit). This refers to the potential employees who wanted to seek a good career must look into the organizations which should be appropriate for them, and this could only be possible with the good understanding, clarity, and the communication methods to survive at the new workplace and produce the best and required results for the organizations (Clarke, 2001; Armstrong, 2010; Dessler, 2002).

Every organization requires the people who can work to produce the desired work, without the involvement of the people, directly or indirectly, there is no existence of the organization (Khanna, 2014). Recruitment and selection have been considered one of the basic and core functions of the human resource department in any organization (El-Kot & Leat, 2008). The recruitment process starts with the job analysis, which includes job specification and the job description. It is the gap identified in the real and desired work, which is often called a vacant job. So, HR personals start drilling their ideas to fulfill the gap with the best option of manpower they can have at a particular time and suitable and efficient rates (Shailashri & Shenoy, 2016).

Compensation

Compensation is another significant function of human resource management (Patnaik & Padhi, 2018). This process enables employers to make a system by which can provide monetary value to the employees who work and provide their services to the particular organization. This function also refers to the monetary value given to the workforce in exchange for their work performance (Muguongo, Muguna, & Muriithi, 2015). Researchers have identified that a good and crystal compensation management system can enhance and support the performance of the individuals, and can provide them with moral support (Garcia, Posthuma, & Colella, 2008), help reduce turnover, increase the satisfaction level of work (Grigoryev, 2006), and eventually increase the long term productivity of the firm (Malakate, Andriopoulos, & Gotsi, 2007).

Further, it also helps employees to get direct work involvement and the work engagement and also can attract employees to work harder and can avail a level, which can lead them to the extra mile for the particular organization. The good and the bad decisions of the human resource management regarding the compensation system can lead employees to the next level and towards the employee silence or downfall of the particular organization respectively (Zhao, et al., 2019). So, this particular system is considered to be very critical and important for the HR department to provide a close concise on every step of supporting organizational productivity. Because this is one of the basic reasons, which attracts most of the employees to work for any organization.

Working Environment

The working environment is considered as a wider term, it means the in and out (the surroundings) of an institute or an organization, where employees and the employers come and sit together and they perform the task for a similar cause. Such activity and the environment are known as the working environment (Kiruja & Kabare, 2013). Working environment includes several points as follows:

- ❖ The lightening system
- ❖ Noise
- ❖ Peers and supervisor's support
- ❖ Work layout/design
- ❖ Working ethics, and
- ❖ The temperature conditions within the working premises

Employees are the only reliable and intangible source of an organization who can lead to the top against the competitors. In services providing institutes, they have a unique and vital role to display. Therefore, the institution needs to have proper attention to their employee's wills and wellbeing (Kiruja & Kabare, 2013). Well, it has been identified that there are only employees in the universities or the educational institutes who can provide a remarkable identification to the Institute besides the infrastructure (which is considered the tangible asset). Therefore, these employees will always require much attention from the governing body to get the required facilitations to work efficiently and effectively and can attain above the line targets.

Employees' Involvement

Employees' involvement has become a greater need in today's business world (Kasaya & Munjuri, 2018). Globalization and technology have influenced organizations to involve each of their employee's thoughts in each minor and the major decision-making process. This behavior will significantly help organizations to maximize their market share, improve the organizational culture, significantly impact on the values and importance, moreover increase the organizational commitment, support, and the performance (Murlis & Armstrong, 2004).

Employees' involvement is defined as the process of allowing and empowering the employees in the decision-making process and problem-solving activities so that to achieve higher organizational performance (Sofijanova & Chatleska, 2013). This activity also helps employees to increase their commitment to the organization, increase their moral level, they start owning the things and attach themselves with the organization, and also increase the level of their satisfaction with the work they are performing (Kasaya & Munjuri, 2018).

Employees' Attitude

The attitude of employees plays a paramount role in organizational performance. There is a positive useful and significant relationship between employees' attitude and organizational performance, without proper monitoring of these both things it is quite difficult for the organization to manipulate their activities smoothly.

Orisatoki & Oguntibeju, (2010) Asserted about employees' attitude that; organizational effectiveness and efficiency entirely dependent on employees' attitude and their performance through which organization can increase their managerial competencies and usefulness.

Proclaimed that; nowadays, employees have a high degree of job dissatisfaction which turns degenerate their performance ability and effect working place and they adds the idea that when management and government pay a low concern to the career development of employees it is believed to be a major and main cause of turnover rate and poor job attitude. It leads to a great dissatisfaction (Muhammad, Mashi, & Salisu, 2017)

According to George & Jayan (2013), they both believe that employees' attitude is necessary for manipulating and maintain the effective performance of employees. In today's hyper-competitive world employees, attitudes consider as a dire needed and necessary for an effective and efficient workforce inside the organization.

Organizational Performance

Performance is a necessity for the effective and efficient use of resources. The performance of the organization also plays a vigorous role in achieving the desired ends. An organization must improve the performance of employees to meet the accomplishment of directed goals.

Opatha (2009) every worker within the organization must perform his job in a dependable why. Employees working within the organization are fully responsible for the effective and efficient performance of duties and different tasks involved in job and employment contract employees must be willing and agree to accept the job assignment and various tasks to perform them dependably. Employees should have a sense of responsibility for performing the job in quite an effective manner.

Research Methodology

A sample of 235 respondents from different universities participated in this study. A total number of 500 questionnaires were distributed to respondents belongs to faculty, administration, members to senate and syndicate. Among distributed questionnaires, 235 were received as filled and useable so the response rate was 76.8%. The questionnaire distributed consisted of portions. The first portion was about demographic details of respondents, the respondents were requested to give information related to their age, gender, position, university name they are working, member of senate or syndicate, type of university, nature of Job and education. The items were measured by using the five-point Likert scale. Items of recruitment and selection and compensation were adopted from the research of Nancy Quansah (2013). The items for the measurement of the working environment were adopted from Kouzen and Posner (1995), and Ann Tourangeau & Katherine McGilton (2004). Dominic Addai (2013) adopted the items for employee involvement. The items of the mediating variable were adopted from Liao et al. (2012) and Muhammad Inuwa et-al (2017). In addition, the items of endogenous construct organizational performance were adopted from Nancy Quansah (2013). The demographic details were obtained from employees of different universities in Sindh registered in different categories such as medical, general, and engineering university including their designation. In public sector universities, there is a fewer number of female employees in both faculty and administration, therefore the majority of respondents were male 85.9% and 14.1% were female. Besides this, the larger number of respondents were the age 42-52 and their percentage was 34.0%, and those who were in the age of 22-31 were 12.8%, 32-41 were 24.7% and 52 & above were 28.5%. In the education level, respondents with master's degrees were 27.2%, with MS/M. Phil degree was 34.0% and with Ph.D. were 36.2% and respondents with Postdoctoral were only 6%. Further, when respondents were requested to write if they are a member of any formulation body 9 respondent wrote they are a member of the syndicate, 17 respondents replied they are a member of the senate, while 2 respondents mentioned that they are a member of both bodies, further 207 respondent wrote they are not part of anybody. The last question in demography was asked about the nature of the job the respondents who belong to teaching cadre were 148 and 87 were from officer cadre.

Table-1 Demographic Detail

Table Variable	Categories	Respondents Division	%
Type of University	General	94	40.0
	Medical	67	28.5
	Engineering	74	31.5
Gender	Male	202	85.9
	Female	33	14.1
Age	22-31	30	12.8
	32-41	58	24.7
	42-51	80	34.0
	52 & Above	67	28.5
Education	Masters (16 years)	64	27.2
	MS/M.Phil.	80	34.0
	Ph.D.	85	36.2
	Postdoctoral	06	2.6
Member Formulation Body	Syndicate	9	3.8
	Senate	17	7.2
	Both	2	0.9
	None	207	88.1
Job Nature	Teaching Cadre	148	63.0
	Officer Cadre	87	37.0

Data Analysis

When data are collected through self- reported questionnaires the common method variance needs to be examined specifically when predictor and criterion both the variable are obtained from the same person (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). (Podsakoff & Todor, 1985) also identified that " Invariably, when self- reported measures obtained from the same sample are utilized in research, concern over same-source bias or general method variance arise". In the literature there are numerous remedies are suggested to this issue. To detect this issue Harman's single factor test is one of the common methods. According to the (Podsakoff & Organ,1986) by putting all the principle constructs into a principal component factor analysis, this can be done. When a single factor arises from the factor analysis, the evidence method bias exists or, for the majority of the covariance among the measures one general factor is accounted (Podsakoff et al., 2003). According to the study of (Bagozzi, Lynn, & Phillips, 1991) using the correlation matrix look at the inter-correlations of principle constructs, and if any of the correlations are r>0.90 substantially above, the common method bias then the evidence is there.

Factor analysis ran first with rotation in SPSS and the analysis returned to a solution of a 7-factor analysis explaining 67.375% of the variance. Only 26.422% was explained by the first factor that is much lower than the majority. Therefore, it indicating that with this study there is no serious issue of method bias. Afterward, table 3 shows that the inter-correlation value is below 0.9, and there is high inter-correlation at 0.681 therefore the method bias with this present study is not a serious problem as both tests indicated.

The research model was analyzed by using the analysis of Partial Least Square (PLS) through Smart PLS 3.2.9 software (Ringle, Wende, & Becker). (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988) Suggested to two-step analytical procedures in which the validity and reliability of measures (Measurement Model) were tested and the structural model was tested in which relationship among hypothesis was tested by following the recommendations of (Hair, et al, 2014). The bootstrapping method (5000 resamples) was used to test the path coefficients' significance and the loadings.

Measurement Model

Two types of validity will be examined to assess the measurement model, convergent validity first and then discriminant validity. We have determined the Loadings, Average variance extracted (AVE) and composite reliability (CR) in convergent validity (Gholami, et al, 2014). The value of loadings, AVE and CR should be ≥ 0.5, ≥0.5, and ≥0.7 respectively. Table 2 shows that the value of all is above the stated value (Hair, et al. 2019).

Afterward the discriminant validity HTMT was assessed by following the recommendations of (Franke & Sarstedt, 2019). The table-3 shows the discriminant validity score. According to described strict criteria the value should not exceed from 0.85 and that should not be exceeded from 0.90 in a lenient way, here in table scores for all the constructs are less than both criteria which shows both valid and reliable tests for measurement items.

Table-2

Measurement Model

Constructs	Items	Loadings	CR	AVE
Compensation	C1	0.749	0.828	0.547
	C2	0.771		
	C3	0.698		
	C4	0.738		
Employees Attitude	EA2	0.735	0.845	0.523
	EA3	0.715		
	EA4	0.768		
	EA5	0.710		
	EA6	0.685		
Employees Involvement	EI1	0.670	0.863	0.512
	EI2	0.767		
	EI3	0.748		
	EI4	0.728		
	EI6	0.701		
	EI7	0.676		
Organizational Performance	OP2	0.696	0.851	0.535
	OP3	0.805		
	OP4	0.758		
	OP5	0.761		
	OP7	0.626		
Recruitment & Selection	RS1	0.779	0.912	0.599
	RS2	0.799		
	RS3	0.811		
	RS4	0.814		
	RS5	0.764		
	RS6	0.756		
	RS7	0.685		
Work Environment	WE1	0.695	0.860	0.552
	WE2	0.772		
	WE3	0.782		
	WE4	0.763		
	WE5	0.696		

Table-3
   Discriminant Validity (HTMT)

Constructs	1	2	3	4	5	6
Compensation	■					
Employees Attitude	0.536	■				
Employees Involvement	0.531	0.598	■			
Organizational Performance	0.651	0.715	0.662	■		
Recruitment & Selection	0.643	0.584	0.389	0.546	■	
Work Environment	0.616	0.611	0.685	0.648	0.600	■

Structural Model

We assessed multivariate skewness and kurtosis by considering the Hair et al, (2017) and Cain, et al. (2016). The results show multivariate normal fo collected data, therefore the Mardia's multivariate skewness (β=2.769, p<0.01), and Mardia's multivariate kurtosis (β=17.485, p<0.01). Therefore, the standard error, t-value, and p-value in the path coefficient we have reported by using the bootstrapping procedure at 5,000 resamples for the structural model as suggested by Hair, et al. (2019).

Hair, et al. (2019) suggestions are followed to assess the structural model wherein which we have reported the standard error, t-value, p-value through a bootstrapping resample of 5,000. Checking the significance level of a hypothesis only based on p-value is not a good standard criticized by (Hahn & Ang, 2017), according to them besides p-value other criteria like confidence interval and effect size should be included as shown in table 4.

The 4 predictors on employees' attitudes we tested first, the square was 0.379, which means 37.9% variance in employee attitude explained by all 5 predictors. Recruitment and selection (β =0.270,p<0.01), Compensation (β =0.273,p<0.01), Working Environment (β =0.016,p<0.01), Employee Involvement (β =0.263,p<0.01) were all related to employee attitude shows positive sign, therefore, we can conclude that H1, H2, H3, and H4 were accepted. Afterward, the Employee Attitude on Organizational Performance effect was tested, The result shows the variance in organizational Performance through R square 0.361 which means 36.1% effect of Employee Attitude in Organizational Performance, therefore the H5 also supported.

Considering the recommendations of (Preacher & Hayes, 2004) about mediation hypotheses testing by the indirect effect of bootstrapping, if it show no zero between 5% and 95% confidence interval, it confirms the significant mediation as table 6 shows Recruitment and Selection→ EI' Attitude → OP (β = 0.103, p< 0.05), Compensation→ EI→ OP (β = 0.071, p< 0.05) Employee Involvement → EA→ OP (β = 0.073, p< 0.1), and Working Environment→EI→ OP (β = 0.054, p< 0.5) all were significant, Therefore, H5, H6, H7, and H8 were also supported

Table-4
Hypothesis Testing Direct Effects

Hypothesis	Relationship	Std Beta	Std Error	T-Value	P Values	BCILL	BCIUL	VIF
H1	CO -> EA	0.273	0.081	3.425	0.001	0.128	0.469	1.525
H2	EA -> OP	0.271	0.075	3.622	0.000	0.120	0.403	1.595
H3	EI -> EA	0.263	0.066	3.987	0.000	0.109	0.374	1.509
H4	RS -> EA	0.270	0.094	2.875	0.004	0.092	0.446	1.536
H5	WE -> EA	0.165	0.085	1.963	0.050	0.005	0.330	1.798

Table-5
Hypothesis Testing Indirect Effect

Hypothesis	Relationship	Std Beta	Std Error	T-Value	P-Values	BCILL	BCIUL
H6	CO -> EA -> OP	0.103	0.045	2.915	0.030	0.023	0.126
H7	EI -> EA -> OP	0.071	0.030	2.411	0.016	0.025	0.134
H8	RS -> EA -> OP	0.073	0.036	2.041	0.042	0.020	0.158
H9	WE -> EA -> OP	0.054	0.029	1.985	0.044	0.004	0.101

Discussion and Conclusion

Undoubtedly, the role of HR practices is significant in enhancing organizational performance. All kinds of organizations such as public sector organizations, private sector organizations, profitable organizations, non-profitable organizations, manufacturing, and service organization progressively perceive the capability of their HR as a wellspring of a unique edge. Close attention is needed to use employees as an ineffective way to create a competitive advantage to practice the finest influence of these assets. Thus in the past ten years, there is an increasing number of researches focus on HR practices and their impact at the organizational level (Delaney and Huselid, 1996; Wrigh et al, 2003).

A significant number of studies have examined that HR practices and employee performance and organizational performance have a positive relationship. Butthe above studies have focused on technologically advanced countries. A very less number of studies in developing countries like Pakistan have been done to check the link of Human Resource performance. The study conducted by (Aycan, et al., 2000) expressed that in the field of Human Resource Management Practices, Pakistan is far behind in research. Another study conducted by (Heneman III & Milanowski, 2007) according to research private sectors are worth appreciating the HR practice implementation in their organizations and there is a positive affiliation of organizational performance and HR practices, recommending that the HR framework has incredible key potential to carry organizations higher than ever.

Further research uncovered that employee is the main factor of organization, if the policies would be in employee favor the attitude will be positive and ultimately organization will achieve its desired objectives. At university level faculty members, officers and members, and policy formulation members like senate and syndicate have an important role in increasing the performance. These three categories are linked with each other, and these are major stakeholders of any university. The has concluded that recruitment and selection policies should be fair and transparent and employees should be promoted on time, while the compensation policy should be revised and performance-based compensation would be introduced, next the working environment should be made better that employees should be encouraged to perform his duties.

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Next employee involvement should be made necessary to motivate them and make them realize their importance towards organizational performance. Furthermore, the universities of different categories are recommended that parallel with other policies HR policies must be considered and employees assets should be utilized in the best way as an employee or only asset that can produce other resource and other resources usage also depends on employees, so the attitude factor would be considered for better and increasing performance of an organization.

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