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An Assessment of Leadership Styles for Organizational Performance: A Case Study of Mika Hotels Lusaka, Zambia

Kennedy K Chitiya (corresponding author)

School of Business - Texila American University Email: kennedy.chitiya@gmail.com

Jacqueline Siwale

School of Business - Texila American University

Victor Chikampa

School of Social Science- Mulungushi University-Kabwe, Zambia

O'Neil Mweemba

Department of Management-Radisson Blu Hotel

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Abstract

A cross-sectional study explored the influence of leadership styles and employee recognition on organizational performance at Mika Hotels in Lusaka, Zambia. A total of 100 participants from various organizational levels were involved. Data were collected using a semi-structured questionnaire and analyzed through logistic regression using Stata software (version 14.0). The median age of participants was 31 years, with an interquartile range of 26–35 years. Most participants held diploma-level qualifications (53%) and worked in clerical or administrative roles (81%).

The findings showed that situational leadership was associated with a modest, non-significant effect on organizational performance (AOR = 1.05; 95% CI: 0.21-3.77; P = 0.939), indicating no conclusive evidence of its impact. In contrast, employee recognition was found to be strongly **and significantly** associated with improved organizational outcomes (AOR = 33.14; 95% CI: 2.29-425.58; P = 0.007), suggesting that recognition is a key factor in enhancing organizational success. In conclusion, while situational leadership did not show a significant effect, employee recognition emerged as a critical driver of organizational performance at Mika Hotels.

Keywords: Leadership Styles & Organizational performance

1. INTRODUCTION

The first major study of leadership styles was performed in 1939 by Kurt Lewin who led a group of researchers to identify different styles of leadership (Lewin, Lippit, White, 1939). This early study has remained quite influential as it established the three major leadership styles: (U.S. Army, 1973): authoritarian or autocratic, democratic and laissez-fair (free-rein) Leadership has a direct cause and effect relationship upon organizations and their success. Leaders determine values, culture, change tolerance and employee motivation. They shape institutional strategies including their execution and effectiveness. Leaders can appear at any level of an institution and are not exclusive to management. They influence those around them to realize benefits from the organization's resources (Michael, 2010).

1.1. Leadership styles

Leadership theories categorize leaders based on their style and how they use power and influence to achieve organizational goals. The right leadership style, when combined with other operational factors, increases an organization's likelihood of success. Organizational leadership style influences culture, which directly affects performance (Haque et al., 2015; Klein et al., 2013).

Leaders can be classified into several styles: autocratic, democratic, bureaucratic, charismatic, situational, transactional, and transformational. Autocratic leaders tend to be controlling, with minimal trust in their subordinates, and direct their teams based on their own authority (Luftman, 2004; Al Khajeh, 2018). Bureaucratic leaders rely heavily on policies and procedures to guide decision-making and ensure outcomes.

Democratic leadership, also called participative leadership, involves shared decision-making and fosters engagement and creativity, though it can lead to slow decisions and potential inefficiency (Nwokocha & Iheriohnma, 2015). Charismatic leaders, often highly motivated, have a clear vision and the ability to inspire followers, fostering innovation and strong commitment to organizational goals. Situational leadership theory emphasizes that the most effective leaders adapt their style based on specific situations. This approach is suited for experienced leaders who can assess organizational needs and individual motivations, although problems can arise if the wrong leadership style is used. Transactional leadership is based on reciprocal exchanges, but it can be limited by high expectations and a focus on short-term outcomes.

Transformational leadership, which aims to inspire and change followers, creates lasting impact by embedding deep principles within followers. This type of leadership is considered one of the most effective, as it results in sustainable development and self-replicating leadership practices even after the leader's departure. In other words, each leadership style has its strengths and weaknesses, and the choice of leadership approach should align with the specific needs and context of the organization.

1.2. Organizational performance

The organization's leadership has a strong influence on its performance, employee satisfaction and commitment. Leaders motivate and help their employees to be competitive depending on the style of leadership employed (Bhargavi & Yaseen, 2016). Research has shown that leadership style has a significant relationship with organizational performance and different styles may have a positive or negative correlation with organizational performance (Wang et al, 2010). Organizational performance is conceptualized in simple terms as the actual output or results of an organization as measured against its intended outputs (or goals and objectives) (Short, Ketchen, Palmer & Hult, 2007). The level of organizational performance is determined by several contributing factors that include operational efficiencies, mergers, acquisitions, levels of diversification, organizational structures, top management team composition and style, human resource management, manipulation of the political and/or social influences intruding upon the market conformity (Mankins & Steele, 2005). Therefore, the leader's use of effective and suitable leadership style is imperative to promoting standards of excellence in the professional development of members and organizational performance.

1.3. Statement of the Problem

The management at Mika Hotels observed that the hotel industry in recent times faces fierce competition due to increasing service demand, government's tariff on services, technology adaptation and changing customer profile. Consequently, the existing

organization particularly faces the challenge of developing a leadership that addresses contemporary business needs. Mika Group of Hotels is an international organization with its large presence in Zambia, Angola and Tanzania but it faces the challenge of business dynamics. Hence forming the premise of conducting this research.

1.4. Objectives

1.4.1 General Objective

An assessment of leadership styles for organizational performance. A case study of Mika Hotels.

1.4.2 Specific objectives

- To assess which leadership style for organizational performance at Mika Hotels.
- To determine which leadership style will address the business needs at Mika Hotels

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The leadership definitions can be termed as a diverse explanation as various philosophers and historians have endeavored to clarify the term. In broad dimension, leadership plays a role of an influence on the relationship between leaders and the followers, in a manner that ensures the arrival or attainment of the defined goal or goals (Bennis & Nanus 1985; Burns 1978). Leadership remains as the key determination, which is associated with the success and failure of any organization. Leadership style holds a set of manners in which people in the organization are motivated or directed by leaders to meet the organizational goals. Over the last 25 years there has been considerable theoretical and empirical work conducted on organizational performance. This work has sought to better understand the antecedents, processes, and emergent states that facilitate effective organizational outcomes (Jing et al., 2016). The following section provides a summary of the academic literature that is relevant to this study. It includes a section on leadership and leadership behavior, organization performance, organization commitment and employee motivation.

2.1. Leadership Behaviors

Haque et al. (2015) conducted a study in the IT sector of Pakistan, focusing on the correlation between transformational leadership and female employee motivation. The study found that the dimensions of transformational leadership were the most dominant in motivating female employees, with a strong positive relationship (0.75). Transactional leadership had a moderate positive relationship (0.38) with motivation, while passive management and laissez-faire leadership styles showed no significant relationship with motivation. Gopal et al. (2014) explored the impact of leadership styles on employee motivation at a leading oil company in India. They found that transformational and transactional leadership styles were the most prevalent, and employees exhibited moderate motivation. The study concluded that different leadership styles affect various components of employee motivation. Anees Ullah (2013) studied the impact of leadership on organizational performance at D&R Cambric Communication. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used, and the research showed that leadership behaviors, particularly those of the CEO, played a significant role in the company's success. Leadership behaviors were identified as key factors contributing to organizational growth, particularly in the service sector. Judith Mwenje (2017) investigated leadership styles during economic crises. The study found that in harsh economic environments, leadership styles adapt to meet the challenges, with transactional leadership becoming dominant in maintaining high performance standards and retaining skills. These studies underscore the

importance of leadership styles in influencing employee motivation and organizational performance, especially in challenging or competitive environments. 2.3. Organizational performance

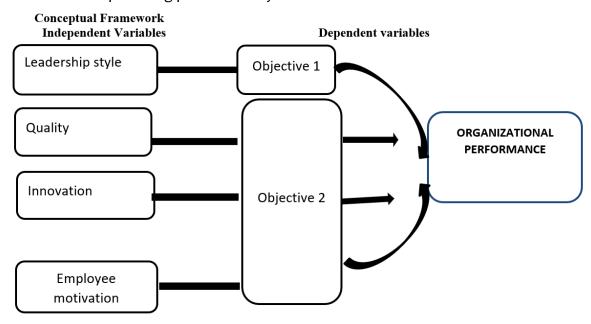
Bass et al. (2003) investigated the impact of transformational and transactional leadership on unit performance under both stable and high-stress conditions. They found that both leadership styles positively predicted unit performance, with the relationship between platoon leadership and performance being partially mediated by the unit's potency and cohesion. Abasilim et al. (2019) examined the influence of leadership styles (transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire) on employee commitment within the Lagos State Civil Service Commission in Nigeria. The study revealed a significant positive relationship between transformational leadership and employee commitment, while transactional leadership showed a small negative effect. Laissez-faire leadership had a small, insignificant positive relationship. They suggested that demographic factors should be considered when adopting leadership styles to enhance employee commitment. Rosemary Muthingu Lola and Dr. Samson Nyang'Au Paul (2018) explored the effects of strategic leadership on public sector performance in Kenya. They found that idealized influence and inspirational motivation significantly contributed to organizational performance, recommending the alignment of rewards with performance goals, and the development of human capital to drive innovation and improve public sector outcomes. André de Waal and Tobias Mulimbika (2017) analyzed the use of the High-Performance Organization (HPO) framework in Zambian governmental institutions. Their study confirmed that the HPO framework was applicable and effective for evaluating and improving institutional performance, emphasizing the importance of full management commitment for successful implementation. Grayson et al. (2016) investigated the relationship between quality management practices, productivity, and profitability in Zambia's manufacturing industry. They found that leadership, benchmarking, people management, and process management were key factors driving productivity, and that productivity mediated the relationship between quality management practices and profitability. Overall, these studies underscore the critical role of leadership styles, strategic leadership, and quality management practices in improving organizational performance across different sectors.

2.2. Employee Motivation

Thu and Suong Huynh (2021) conducted a study on the effect of transformational leadership on work motivation: a case of employees at small and medium enterprises in Vietam. The study examined effect of transformational leadership (TFL) on work motivation in Vietnam, through the mediating role of employee emotions (expressed by the effect of leader on employee satisfaction). The study proved that the relations of transformational leadership have a direct, indirect influence on employee motivation, in which the mediator is the satisfaction which has direct impact on work motivation. The results of the research show strong evidence for policy makers and enterprises for management at SMEs as well as it contributes to literature review of behavior organizations. Madalitso Themba Zulu (2018) conducted a study, an Analysis on the impact of motivating factors influencing Employee satisfaction at Zambia National Commercial Bank. The study was set out to investigate the key factors of motivation that affect the employee satisfaction in Zambia national commercial bank (ZANACO). The study revealed that Zambia national commercial bank (ZANACO) carries out motivation of its employees in several ways namely, promotion, Salary increment, fringe benefits, job

security and relationship between employer and employee. However, the study further revealed that the factors of motivation play a major role in improving the employee satisfaction in Zambia national commercial bank (ZANACO).

The researcher recommends that Zambia national commercial bank (ZANACO) should consider further providing periodic salary review.



The conceptual framework lists innovation, leadership style, employment and quality as the drivers or antecedents of organizational performance. As such, this study is intended to investigate the relationship between organization performance and leadership style/quality of service/innovation and employee motivation in the organization. The association will be tested by statistical analysis following a structured interview with participants at Mika Hotels against the following hypothesis.

Ho: There is no significant relationship between organizational performance and four factors; namely, innovation, quality, leadership style and employee motivation at Mika Hotels.

H1: There is a significant relationship between organizational performance and four factors; namely, innovation, quality, leadership style and employee motivation at Mika Hotels.

2.3 Contribution to Existing Literature and Context of Zambian Hotels

This study contributes to the existing body of knowledge by examining the role of leadership styles and employee recognition within Zambia's hospitality sector, focusing specifically on Mika Hotels. Although previous research has investigated the impact of leadership across various industries and regions, there remains limited empirical evidence on how different leadership styles particularly situational leadership affect organizational performance in Zambian hotels. Given the sector's unique challenges, including increasing competition, rising service demands, and evolving customer expectations, this study provides timely and context-specific insights into effective leadership practices in a developing economy. Moreover, while much of the existing literature tends to examine leadership styles and employee motivation independently, few studies explore their combined influence alongside employee recognition on organizational outcomes. This study addresses that gap by adopting an integrated approach, thereby offering a more holistic understanding of

organizational performance. It also extends the findings of de Waal and Mulimbika (2017), who applied the High-Performance Organization (HPO) framework to Zambia's public sector, by shifting the focus to the private sector. In doing so, the research enriches the broader discourse on leadership and performance in Zambia and provides practical implications for enhancing organizational effectiveness within the hospitality industry.

3. METHODS

The study used a cross-sectional design, where data from participants was collected with the aid of an objectively structured questionnaire. The study examined the relationship between leadership styles and organizational performance at Mika Hotels. a cross-sectional design where participants were interviewed was used. The survey method was appropriate for this study because it easily facilitated the collection of data from large populations, making it easier to develop and administer the research questionnaire while generalizing the research findings.

All employees with more than two years of work experience in the organization with a valid work plan were enrolled into the study. All employees with more than two years of work experience in the organization with conflict of interest as indicated on the signed conflict of interest forms were excluded.

Sample size

$$n = \frac{z^2 p(1-p)}{e^2}$$

n= sample size, **Z** (Confidence level of 95%) = 1.96, (Margin of error) \mathbf{e} = 0.05, \mathbf{p} =prevalence (0.60%)

$$n = \frac{1.96^2 \ 0.6(1 - 0.6)}{0.05^2}$$

$$n = 368.79$$

Variable	Operational definition	Measure of scale
Organizational	This is the actual output or results of an	Nominal
performance	organization as measured against its	
(dependent variable)	intended outputs (or goals and objectives).	
Innovation	This factor concerns the creation of better	Nominal
	products, services or new ways of doing	
	things.	
Leadership styles	This is comprised of styles of leadership	Nominal
	manifested by personnel given the	
	responsibility of leading an organization.	
Quality	This factor is concerned with organizational	Nominal
	actions designed to ensure consistency in	
	approach, process and services	
Employee motivation	The enthusiasm, energy level and	Nominal
	commitment evidenced by creativity an	
	employee brings to the organization	
	consistently.	

In this study the target population of the study was 369. Of the population, a sample size of 100 employees was used in the study representing 27% of the employees at Mika Hotels. Semi structured questionnaires were used to interview the employees and collect data. Secondary data was also collected using books, research done by others and human resource information. Semi structured questionnaires were used to interview the employees and collect data. Secondary data was also collected using books, research done by others and human resource information. The data was checked for completeness and accuracy on a Microsoft excel sheet after importation from epi-info software version 7.2.2.6. We coded the variables systematically for efficient electronic analysis in STATA version 14. The focus of the study was examining the relationship between leadership styles and organizational performance. The researchers described study variables on the variable list and questionnaire. We collected the outcome variable (organizational performance) as a binary response taking either below or above performance (below= failure to achieve marketing, growth in sales and maximization of profit or above= achieve marketing, growth in sales and maximization of profit). The researcher cleaned data, checked for completeness/accuracy, coded, and labelled the variables appropriately on Microsoft Excel sheet then imported to STATA version 14.1 for statistical analysis Data analysis was conducted using STATA version 14. Categorical variables, such as organizational performance and employee motivation, were presented as numbers and percentages. To assess associations at the unadjusted level, either the Chi-squared or Fisher's exact test was applied, depending on expected frequencies. For continuous variables like innovation and quality, the normality of data was tested using the Shapiro-Wilk test and histograms. Normally distributed data were presented with the mean and standard deviation, while skewed data were represented by the median and interquartile range. Differences in means or medians of continuous variables, stratified by organizational performance (below par or above average), were tested using either a ttest or Wilcoxon rank-sum/Mann-Whitney test, based on data distribution. Histograms were used to visualize data distribution. For inferential statistical analysis, logistic regression was employed to examine the association between organizational performance and explanatory variables, adjusting for other factors. A backwards stepwise approach, led by the investigator, was used in the logistic regression model to identify the best predictors of organizational performance, allowing for human reasoning in variable selection, as opposed to a machine-led stepwise method. Variables with p-values greater than 0.05 were excluded, leaving only statistically significant predictors in the model, with decisions on variable inclusion guided by statistical and social science expertise.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

We interviewed one hundred (100) respondents in this study. The basic characteristics of participants are as presented in table 4.0. The median age of participants was 31 years with lower and upper quartiles of 26 years 35 years respectively. Mika Hotels had more staff with Diploma level qualification (53/100=53%), with clerical/administrative roles (81/100=81%). The results in table 4.0, showed that there was evidence of a difference in terms of influence on organizational objective attainment with respect to leadership styles (0.026, quality of products/service provision (<0.001) and employee recognition in the organization (0.007) at univariable level. Figure 4.0 compared to organizational performance and leadership styles utilized at Mika Hotels. The graph showed that the organization was utilizing Situational leadership style (71/100=71%) with a bearing on

organizational performance above average. Bureaucratic was the least manifested style in the organization (1/100=1%).

Table 4.0 Participant's baseline characteristics

Characteristic	Organizational Performance		P-value
	Below par	Above	
		average	
Gender, No. (%)			
Female	2 (50%)	50 (52%)	1.000 ^E
Male	2 (50%)	46 (48%)	
Age, median (IQR)	34 (23, 43)	31 (26, 35)	0.832 ^M
Academic qualifications, No. (%)			
Certificate	1 (25%)	34 (36%)	1.000 ^E
Diploma	3 (75%)	50 (52%)	
Bachelors	0 (0%)	7 (7%)	
Masters	0 (0%)	5 (5%)	
Leadership Style employed, No. (%)			
Bureaucratic	1 (25%)	o (o)	0.026 ^E
Democratic	o (o%)	2 (2%)	
Charismatic	o (o%)	3 (3%)	
Situational	1 (25%)	71 (74%)	
Transformational	2 (50%)	20 (21%)	
Quality of products/services, No. (%)			
Bad	4 (100%)	o (o%)	<0.001 ^E
Good	0 (0%)	96 (100%)	
Consistency in quality service			
provision No. (%)	4	(>	-
No	1 (25%)	0 (0%)	0.040 ^E
Yes	3 (75%)	96 (100%)	
Organizational innovation No. (%)			_
Bad	o (%)	0 (0%)	0.152 ^E
Good	3 (75%)	35 (36%)	
Much better	1 (25%)	61 (64%)	
Employee recognition No. (%)			
Bad	3 (75%)	10 (10%)	0.007 ^E
Good	1 (25%)	86 (90%)	



Figure 4.0 Organizational performance vs leadership styles.

Predictors of organizational objective attainment

Table 4.1 presents a model developed to predict the attainment of organizational objectives. An investigator-led stepwise logistic regression was performed, incorporating both priori variables and those found to be statistically significant. Variables that contributed minimally to the model were excluded immediately during the selection process.

The results showed that utilization of situational leadership style increased the chance of organizational objective attainment by 1.05 times compared to bureaucratic and other leadership styles, while accounting for the factors like employee recognition in the organization and organizational work experience. This influence could be as low as 0.21 and as high as 3.77 at 95% confidence interval (p-value=0.939).

Employee recognition in the organization increased the chance of organizational objective attainment by 33.14 times compared to non-recognition of employees in the organization. The effect could be as low as 2.59 and as high as 425.58 at 95% confidence interval while accounting for other factors like leadership styles and work experience (p-value=0.007). A unit increase in work experience reduced the chance of objective organizational attainment by 42%. The reduction could be as low as 21% and as high as 72% at 95% confidence interval with respect to factors like leadership styles and employee recognition in the organization (p-value=0.149)

Table 4.1 Predictors of organizational objective attainment

Predictor	Odds ratio	95% CI	P-value
Leadership Styles	1.05	0.29-3.77	0.939
Employee recognition			_
Bad	Ref	Ref	Ref
Good	33.14	2.59-425.58	0.007
Organizational work experience	o . 58	0.28-1.21	0.149

Demographic characteristics

Age

The results in table 4.0 showed that the median age of participants was 31 years with lower and upper quartiles of 26 years 35 years respectively. The reason for these findings could be attributed to the presumption that youths are more likely to be employed in such businesses or companies due to the nature of the job involved and that hostels are more likely to employ young ones to attract customers.

Academic Qualifications

The results in table 4.0 showed that Mika Hotels had more staff with Diploma level qualification (53/100=53%), with clerical/administrative roles (81/100= 81%). The reason for these findings could be attributed to the presumption that there are many colleges offering diploma courses in hotel and catering management than universities which offer degree courses.

Leadership Styles

The results in table 4.1 showed that utilization of situational leadership style increased the chance of organizational objective attainment by 1.05 times compared to bureaucratic and other leadership styles, while accounting for the factors like employee recognition in the organization and organizational work experience. This influence could be as low as 0.21 and as high as 3.77 at 95% confidence interval (p-value=0.939). The results are similar to the study conducted by Anees Ullah Karamat (2013) on the impact of leadership on organizational performance. A case study of D&R Cambric Communication were they found that there is a strong impact of leadership behaviors on organizational performance. The behavior of the CEO of the D&R Cambric Communication with the employees of the company was one of the major reasons for the company's success and leadership behaviors were found out to be very important key factors for the growth of the companies in the service sectors.

This finding is not in conformity with the study done by Judith Mwenje (2017) on leadership styles in organizations during harsh economic environments. The results of the study show that during hard times or in economic crisis, leadership styles may change to suit the environment. Transactional leadership style becomes a dominant style if organizations are to succeed in the maintenance of high standards of performance and retention of skills. In contrast Kieu Hung Q (2010) conducted a study on leadership style and organization performance: a predictive analysis which found that transformational and transactional leadership related positively and significantly to organizational performance. Transformational leadership was a stronger predictor of organizational performance, satisfaction, and commitment than transactional leadership was. Managers or leaders should be aware of different types of leadership styles which they can use to improve and sustain organization performance and one of them is situational leadership

Organization performance

Table 4.1 showed results that Employee recognition in the organization increased the chance of organizational objective attainment by 33.14 times compared to non-recognition of employees in the organization. The effect could be as low as 2.59 and as high as 425.58 at 95% confidence interval while accounting for other factors like leadership styles and work experience (p-value=0.007). The results are similar to the study conducted by Bass et al., (2003) on predicting unit performance by assessing transformational and transactional leadership. The researcher wanted to find out how do leadership ratings collected from units operating under stable conditions predict subsequent performance

of those units operating under high stress and uncertainty? The researchers found that both transformational and transactional contingent reward leadership ratings of platoon leaders and sergeants positively predicted unit performance. These findings emphasize the importance of recognizing the input of employees towards organizational objective attainment or performance. Leaders should reward deserving employees who have done well in an organization, and this will motivate them to work hard and thus improve organization performance.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the study and its objectives, the following conclusion was drawn: Situational leadership was the most appropriate style of leadership for Mika Hotels. It has been determined that utilization of situational leadership style increased the chance of addressing the organization's business needs and objective attainment by 1.05 times compared to bureaucratic and other leadership styles, while accounting for the factors like employee recognition in the organization and organizational work experience. This influence could be as low as 0.21 and as high as 3.77 at 95% confidence interval (pvalue=0.939). The results of the study showed that: the median age of participants was 31 years with lower and upper quartiles of 26 years 35 years respectively. Mika Hotels had more staff with Diploma level qualification (53/100=53%), with clerical/administrative roles (81/100= 81%). Employee recognition in the organization increased the chance of organizational objective attainment by 33.14 times compared to non-recognition of employees in the organization. The effect could be as low as 2.59 and as high as 425.58 at 95% confidence interval while accounting for other factors like leadership styles and work experience (p-value=0.007). We can conclude therefore that there is a correlation between situational leadership style and organization performance. The study concludes that situational leadership styles should be used in the hotel industry or companies to grow stronger in a competitive global environment and hard-working employees should be recognized through giving them rewards as this can lead to improved organizational performance and attainment of organizational goals.

RECOMMENDATIONS

From the research conducted, the following are the recommendations drawn:

- Mika Hotels must adopt a situational leadership style to attain its organizational performance goals but also consider other leadership styles such as transformational leadership style.
- Mika Hotels must train its management in the utilization of Situational leadership to address the contemporary business needs and grow stronger in a global competitive environment.
- A study should be conducted to establish the relationship between gender and organizational performance in the hotel industry.

6. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study has several limitations. The sample size of 100 participants from Mika Hotels may not be representative of the broader hospitality industry, limiting the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, the cross-sectional design only captures data at a single point in time, preventing causal inferences. Self-reported data also introduces potential biases, such as social desirability or recall bias, which could impact the accuracy of the results. Furthermore, the study focused primarily on situational leadership, without considering

other leadership styles like transformational or transactional leadership, which may also influence organizational performance. External factors, such as economic conditions and government regulations, were not examined, and the study did not explore the various forms or frequencies of employee recognition, which could have provided a deeper understanding of its effect on performance. These limitations suggest the need for future research with larger, more diverse samples and extended timelines to better understand these relationships.

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