

Factors Influencing Job Performance among Academic Staff in Malaysian Public University

Che Mohd Syaharuddin Che Cob^{1*}, Ummi Kalsom Zakaria², Mohd Hafeez Al-Amin Abdul Wahab³, Julaina Baistaman¹, Siti Nur Zahirah Omar³, Nor Baizura Osman⁴

¹Faculty of Business and Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Kelantan, Kampus Kota Bharu, Malaysia

²Faculty of Business and Management, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Selangor, Malaysia

³Faculty of Business and Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Kelantan, Kampus Machang, Malaysia

⁴Maybank Berhad, MM55-59 Jalan Persiaran Dara Medan Mewah, 26700 Muadzam Shah, Pahang, Malaysia

*syaha793@uitm.edu.my, ummizakaria88@gmail.com, mohdhafeez@uitm.edu.my, julaina@uitm.edu.my, sitinurzahirah@uitm.edu.my, cili2_4padi@yahoo.com

Abstract: Extensive research has been conducted on the factors that determine job performance. The current study was required by a lack of research relating to the factors of job performance among academic staff in Malaysian public universities. The purpose of this study is to investigate the effects of personality traits, motivation, leadership style, and learner autonomy on job performance. Data was collected from the academic staff of a public university in Malaysia. The probability technique, which is simple random sampling was used in this study. The study is guided by an adapted ten-point Likert Interval Scale structured questionnaire as the main instrument used in collecting the data. Furthermore, the analysis of data was undertaken by using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) procedures. Structural equation modeling (SEM), a multivariate approach, was used to empirically evaluate and estimate the hypothesized link between constructs using Analysis of Moment Structure (AMOS) software version 20.0. The findings indicate that job performance is significantly and positively related to personality traits, motivation, leadership style, and learner autonomy. Motivation is a significant predictor of job performance when compared to other variables. The study proves that the combination of personality traits, motivation, learner autonomy, and leadership style on job performance may contribute to the optimal service delivery to stakeholders within Malaysia's educational system. Therefore, the implications of the findings, potential limitations, and directions for future research are also discussed.

Keywords: *Job performance, personality traits, motivation, learner autonomy, and leadership style.*

1. Introduction and Background

The employee is the organization's most valuable asset. Employee job performance has a significant impact on whether a business succeeds or fails (Al-Jedaia & Mehrez, 2020). This suggests that employees' job performance plays a part in the organization's success. Furthermore, according to Song et al. (2019), job performance is crucial for the advancement of employee development and human resource capabilities. Thus, regardless of industry, job performance was acknowledged to be related to an organization's success (Angeles et al., 2022). As such, this study aims to determine the effect of personality characteristics, motivation, learner autonomy, and leadership style on job performance. Additionally, by identifying the most significant aspects of job performance, the empirical data obtained from this research should be beneficial as a basis for management decision-making to assure the organization's continuity. Despite the importance of the issues, a lack of research has investigated the combined effect of these factors on job performance. The existing research has mainly focused on the personality traits, motivation, and leadership style on job performance, without considering their interrelationships with learner autonomy. Therefore, there is a need for a comprehensive study that can provide insights into learner autonomy as a new variable. Such a study can help organizations design effective human resource management practices that can enhance job performance among academic staff in Malaysian public universities.

2. Literature Review

Job Performance: Job performance has been defined as a person's ability to perform tasks accurately, completely, cost-effectively, and efficiently, with the primary goal of achieving organizational objectives (Grahandika and Wijayati, 2021; Lai et al., 2020). Job performance can be categorized into task performance, adaptive performance, and contextual performance. Task performance refers to the efficiency of job-related

tasks (Bhat & Beri, 2016). Adaptive performance refers to an employee's ability to adapt to changes in the workplace, creative problem-solving, learning new tasks, and interpersonal, cultural, and physical flexibility (Fogaca et al. 2018). Then, contextual performance refers to an employee's commitment to their social, psychological, and organizational context, surrounding efforts, initiative, enthusiasm, resourcefulness, motivation, creativity, cooperation, communication, interpersonal relationships and organizational commitment (Ramawickrama et al., 2017). Job performance is an important indicator of how well employees perform their work, whether it is good or not. Job performance refers to the effort employees make on their jobs, ensuring dependable performance and responsibility for tasks (Hasanah & Kurniawan, 2017). It includes activities that contribute to a company's effectiveness, even if they are outside their specific task. Kaveri & Prabakaran (2013) define job performance as the contribution employees make to enhance company productivity. Job performance measures individual worker effectiveness and influences personnel decisions like merit-based payment, promotion, and retention (Motowildo 2003; Mohamad & Jais, 2016). It's crucial for workers and organizational success, ensuring the best performance among employees. Besides, job performance refers to a person's high effectiveness and efficiency in achieving their goals and objectives (Hirlak et al., 2018; Khoshnaw and Alavi, 2020). Employee performance is determined by the amount and standard of work an employee accomplishes while performing their assigned tasks (Darma & Supriyanto, 2017). Song et al. (2019) highlighted the significance of job performance in developing human resource skills and as an indicator of an organization's success and achievement. Measurement of performance is central, as important organizational decisions are based on individual performance (Sadick & Kamardeen, 2020).

Personality Traits and Job Performance: The Big Five Personality Dimensions, colloquially referred to as the five-factor model, are extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, openness to experience, and neuroticism. Job performance can also be classified according to job results, job conduct and personality qualities (Cook, 2005; Detrick & Chibnall, 2006; Zulelawati & Yusri, 2015). The current study examines employees to determine the predictive validity of the big five personality traits on their job performance and to establish a link between personality traits and job performance (Seddigh et al., 2016; Alsuwailem & Elnaga, 2016; Tuteja & Sharma, 2018; Maryam & Muhammad, 2020; Beng and Muthuveloo, 2020; Gridwichai et al., 2020; Delima, 2019; Ajayi et al., 2017). The predictive association revealed that openness to experience, agreeableness, and extraversion were significant correlations and predictors of job success, accounting for 35.2% of the variance in participants' management performance. Neuroticism was discovered to be a significant negative relationship. On the other hand, conscientiousness had a negligible effect on the model. Based on these arguments, this study asserts that personality characteristics have a strongly favorable effect on job success. Therefore, this study aims to find out the personality traits that affect their job performance. Hence, it is hypothesized as:

H1: *Personality trait has a positive significant influence on job performance.*

Motivation and Job Performance: Motivation is one of the most important factors in any organization, whether private or public sector, in achieving excellent job performance. Motivation appears in a person because they realize something that needs to be done and will strive towards a better way until they succeed (Nazrin, 2020). Jalagat (2016) uses theoretical models and existing literature to analyze the relationship between motivation and job performance. Although research has been undertaken on motivation and job performance, the extent to which they are related continues to be debated. The findings indicated that motivation and job performance are inextricably linked. When job performance is compared to team performance, it is discovered that higher performance is associated with higher performance, albeit this is not always the case. Collaboration is critical to achieving desired outcomes, which means that people should be encouraged to collaborate to effectively accomplish goals and achieve success. Moon et al. (2019) conducted another investigation to gain a better grasp of the underlying process through which work motivation affects service personnel's job performance. The purpose of this study is to determine how job motivation affects job performance. The findings of this study indicate that motivation is favorably associated with job performance (Triswanto et al., 2021; Nordin and Hassan, 2019; Miao et al., 2020; Omale et al., 2022; Fawehinmi et al., 2020; Trinh et al., 2021; Adomako et al., 2016; Basinska et al., 2019). Therefore, the motivation factor is one of the important aspects of improving job performance and achieving organizational goals among UiTM academic staff. Thus, the following hypothesized is proposed:

H2: *Motivation has a positive significant influence on job performance.*

Learner Autonomy and Job Performance: The concept of learner autonomy has been around for quite some time and is often associated with the ability of learners to take charge of their own learning experiences. However, from a human resource management perspective, learner autonomy encompasses several other learning concepts, such as employee development, self-development, self-directed learning, workplace, and informal learning. Researchers have suggested a potential relationship between learner autonomy and job performance in the workplace. Learner autonomy is believed to promote a higher degree of employee engagement with training materials, leading to better productivity and knowledge retention (Wihler et al., 2017; Ustunloughlu, 2009; Lengkanawati, 2017, Tutu and Constantin, 2012, Mogos et al., 2021, Keskin, 2020). Baron and Kenny created the model (1986). It is also thought to improve learning strategies and act as a driver of learner engagement. By offering learners an autonomous learning approach, learning and development professionals can equip them to perform better professionally and in their professional lives. The study's findings indicate a positive association between the aforementioned topics. Thus, it is hypothesized as:

H3: *Learner autonomy has a positive significant influence on job performance.*

Leadership Style and Job Performance: In today's competitive business world, leadership styles have garnered considerable attention. It has grown in popularity as a means of standardizing human resource management practices (Islam, Rahman, & Siddiqui, 2020; Hasmin, 2017; Clark & Gruber, 2017). A business may be able to realize its vision if it has a meaningful and established method for doing leadership activities. Additionally, research has established that leadership style is a significant predictor of employee work effectiveness. The research's primary objective is to unearth participatory, supporting, and authoritarian leadership practices that influence employee job performance and to investigate the relationship between leadership styles and employee job performance. The research findings indicate that there is a statistically significant positive correlation between leadership styles and employee job performance and that leadership styles have a significant impact on employee performance except for the autocratic style, which policymakers and practitioners must address to ensure employee job performance, particularly in the mobile telecommunications industry. Booth et al. (2019) explained that the leadership style applied in an organization determines whether the organization produces a lot of innovation. Innovation is determined by the leader to motivate group members to the extent that each member can contribute to the organization. Leaders at the upper level until the operational part of the organizational structure determine the potential of the organization to produce innovation. It is not only focused on the leadership style of the administration. However, Rosul Asmawi (2017) argues that an effective leadership style can affect the characteristics and performance of subordinates in an organization. Leadership style for academic staff is very important in the development of an institution at a higher level in Malaysia (Masi & Cooke, 2000; Miller, 2011; Paracha, 2012; Odumeru & Ifeanyi, 2013; Van & Sitkin, 2013; Razak et al., 2014; Moo Jun & Rashad, 2015; Yahaya & Ebrahim, 2016; Sol et al., 2016; Mustaqim, 2016; Anderson & Sun, 2017; Fariq et al., 2017; Velikova, 2017; Behery et al., 2018; Mohd Azuan et al., 2019; Zakaria et al., Rahman et al., 2021; 2021; Voster, 2019; Amirah 2021; Sastra et al., 2021; Mahmood et al., 2021; Rosnizah et al., 2022). It will affect the emotions, performance, behavior, and even actions of lecturers in their daily tasks. Therefore, this hypothesized is proposed:

H4: *Leadership style has a positive significant influence on job performance.*

3. Research Methodology

The unit of analysis of this study is individuals. Data was collected from the academic staff of a public university in Malaysia. The probability technique, which is simple random sampling was used in this study because it ensures that all members of the population have an equal chance of being chosen as a representative sample, the results are unbiased, and the hypothesis developed can be tested (Sekaran, 2003). The study population consisted of 8,275 academic staff of a public university in Malaysia. The study's sampling frame is a thorough list of the names of the academic staff of public universities in Malaysia. As a result, the proper sample size for this analysis was 385 employees (Sekaran, 2003). The researcher distributed 385 surveys and received responses from 354 respondents. Following a review of each, the researcher eliminates questionnaires with unanswered questions. As a result, the researcher collected 323 valid questionnaires from respondents (with an 84 percent response rate). Additionally, data were analyzed using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and Structural Equation Model (SEM) techniques with AMOS software.

Table 1: Summary Table of Instruments

| VARIABLE TYPE | ITEMS | SOURCES |
|------------------------------|-------|---------------------------|
| <i>Dependent Variable</i> | | |
| Job performance | 14 | Borman & Motowidlo (1997) |
| <i>Independent Variables</i> | | |
| Personality traits | 29 | Goldberg et al., (2006) |
| Motivation | 10 | Bliss (2008) |
| Learner autonomy | 28 | Confessore & Park (2004) |
| Leadership style | 28 | Bass & Avolio (1990) |

4. Results and Discussion

This study is interested in determining the influence of personality traits, employee motivation, learner autonomy, and leadership styles on job performance. The results of the descriptive analysis of this study are displayed in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Descriptive Analysis of Respondents (N=323)

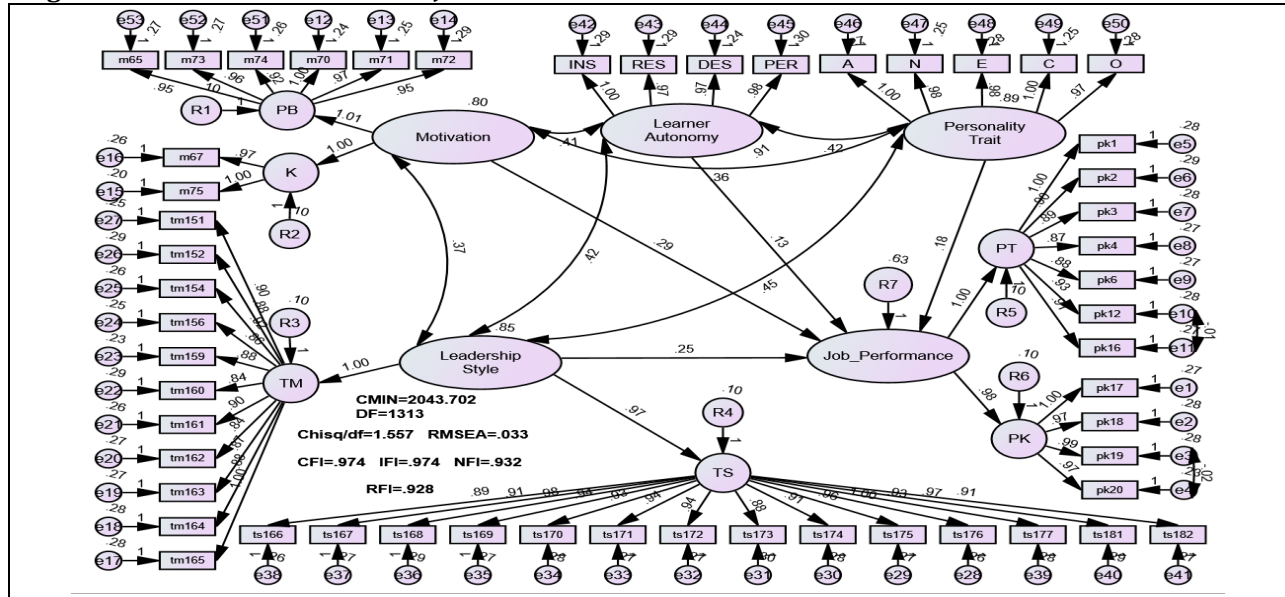
| Items | Categories | Frequency | Percent |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|-----------|---------|
| Gender of Respondents | Male | 136 | 42 |
| | Female | 187 | 58 |
| The Current Age of Respondents | 25 or below | 21 | 6.4 |
| | 26-35 | 83 | 25.6 |
| | 36-45 | 90 | 28 |
| | 46-55 | 90 | 28 |
| | 56 or above | 39 | 12 |
| Education Attainment of Respondents | Master | 140 | 28 |
| | PhD/DBA | 103 | 20 |
| Length of service | 3 years or less | 14 | 4.4 |
| | 3 - 6 years | 67 | 20.6 |
| | 7 -10 years | 71 | 22 |
| | 11 -14 years | 90 | 28 |
| | 15 - 18 years | 39 | 12 |
| | 18 years or more | 42 | 13 |

A review of goodness of fit criteria was used to determine the applicability of Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). The measure of goodness of fit in SEM is based on arguments by Hair et al. (20 and includes the χ^2 or chi-square statistics, the GFI (Goodness of Fit Index), the AGFI (Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index), the CMIN/DF, or the minimum sample discrepancy function divided by the degree of freedom, the TLI (Tucker Lewis Index), and the CFI (Comparative Fit Index) (2013). The final output indicates that the structural equation model fits the sample data satisfactorily. Figure 2 illustrates this structural model more clearly. For models with a good fit, the chi-square normalized by degree of freedom (Chisq/df) should be less than 5.0 (Bentler, 1990; Bhattacharjee, 2001), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), should all be greater than 0.90 (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988; Zainudin, 2015), and RootMean Square of Error Approximation (RMSEA) should be less than 0.08 (Cunningham, Preacher, & Banaji, 2001; Hooper, Coughlan, & Mullen, 2008). For the current model, we achieved all the requirement indices (Chisq/df = 1.557; RMSEA = 0.033; CFI = 0.974) and concluded it was appropriate for the next step. Further, the reliability and validity tests were quantified through composite reliability (CR > 0.70; Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994), AVE > 0.50 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), and discriminant validity (square root AVE must exceed every construct correlation) as exhibited in Table 3. These results permitted us to design the model of this study, which is shown in Figure 1.

Table 3: Composite Reliability, Convergent Validity, and Discriminant Validity

| Construct | CR | AVE | Discriminant Validity |
|--------------------|-------|-------|-----------------------|
| Personality Traits | 0.943 | 0.767 | 0.821 |
| Motivation | 0.938 | 0.884 | 0.825 |
| Learner Autonomy | 0.926 | 0.757 | 0.786 |
| Leadership Style | 0.944 | 0.893 | 0.881 |
| Job Performance | 0.903 | 0.949 | 0.925 |

Figure 1: The Structural Model of Job Performance



The multivariate kurtosis in this study is less than 50.0, indicating that this model was normal. Meanwhile, all variables are satisfied because the skewness value is between -1.5 and 1.5. (Awang, 2015). As a result, this model is admissible for hypothesis testing.

Table 4: Assessment of normality

| Variable | Min | Max | Skew | c.r. | Kurtosis | c.r. |
|---------------------|--------|-------|-------|--------|--------------|-------------|
| Personality | 3.000 | 8.000 | -.011 | -.100 | -.178 | -.814 |
| Motivation | 2.000 | 8.000 | .162 | 1.478 | -.115 | -.526 |
| Learner | -1.000 | 6.000 | -.161 | -1.467 | .473 | 2.160 |
| Leadership | 2.000 | 8.000 | -.052 | -.477 | .071 | .322 |
| Job Performance | .000 | 7.000 | -.169 | -1.538 | .095 | .435 |
| Multivariate | | | | | 6.652 | .974 |

The regression weights for the determining factors affecting job performance are shown in Table 5. The critical ratio (CR) and probability were used to evaluate the hypothesis (P). Based on the previously mentioned results, the hypothesized relationships were tested to develop a structural model for this research study. The results are presented in Table 5 where all the proposed relationships are found significant.

Table 5: Regression Weight of Determinant Factors on Job Performance

| | | | Estimate | S.E. | C.R. | P | Result |
|-----------------|------|---------------------|----------|------|-------|------|-------------|
| Job Performance | <--- | Personality Traits | .292 | .057 | 5.166 | *** | Significant |
| Job Performance | <--- | Motivation | .127 | .053 | 2.401 | .016 | Significant |
| Job Performance | <--- | Learner Autonomy | .179 | .053 | 3.362 | *** | Significant |
| Job Performance | <--- | Leadership styles | .250 | .056 | 4.460 | *** | Significant |

Hypotheses 1, 2, 3, and 4 examine the effects of personality traits, motivation, learner autonomy, and leadership style on job performance. The results revealed that personality traits ($\beta = 0.292$, CR = 5.166), motivation ($\beta = 0.127$, CR = 2.401), learner autonomy ($\beta = 0.179$, CR = 3.362), and leadership styles ($\beta = 0.250$, CR = 4.460) were statistically significant to job performance. It was found that the proposed model explained a highly significant percentage of the variance in job performance = 63%. Cohen (1988) contends that R^2 exceeding 26% is considered to have a large effect in a causal model. Therefore, a model that involves measuring the level of job performance is sufficient and meaningful since it contributes a high impact to the research on job performance. In addition, we supported hypotheses 1, 2, 3, and 4 as reported by the SEM approach. This research found that four constructs are significant in influencing employee job performance.

Personality traits have the greatest impact ($\beta = 0.292$) followed by leadership styles ($\beta = 0.250$), next learner autonomy ($\beta = 0.179$), and lastly motivation ($\beta = 0.127$). Based on the findings gained in this study, first, personality traits were found to have a positive effect on job performance (p-value = 0.000) among academic staff. Personality is explained by using a Big-Five model of personality, namely extraversion, agreeableness, openness to experience, neuroticism, and conscientiousness. This means that the Big-Five model of personality traits contributes to changes in job performance. This finding has been supported by the Study of Mehmood, Mehmood, and Siddique (2017), which shows that there is an influence between personality traits and job performance. The findings of this study also show that personality traits are predictors of job performance (Othman & Fatimah, 2014). This is supported by the findings of the study by Ahmad et al. (2014). De Jonng et al. (2019) show that personality traits are one of the factors that influence job performance. From the results of hypothesis testing, it is found that this model is significant in making assumptions about the influence between leadership style and the job performance of academic staff.

H2 is supported (p-value = 0.016) which means that motivation has a significant effect on job performance. Based on the above, the hypothesis suggested that higher motivation will report possessing greater job performance is supported. From the results, it is found that this model is significant in making assumptions about the influence between motivation and job performance of the academic staff. This significant relationship means that higher motivation will result in higher job performance. Therefore, it is necessary to control the performance-driven motivational variables to create motivation to improve job performance. The findings of this study are in line with the opinion (Ali, 2020; Springer & Gary, 2011) that one of the ways management can improve staff work performance is through giving encouragement or motivation. Theoretically, this study is supported by the findings of a study by Maneetr & Thirachaya, (2010) which shows that there is a relationship between motivation and job performance.

Meanwhile, H3 proposed a relationship between learner autonomy and job performance is accepted as p value=0.000. This hypothesis suggested that job performance with good learner autonomy will report possessing greater job performance supported. This study contributes to a new field of knowledge which is the concept of learner autonomy in the workplace. The findings of this study show that learner autonomy influences job performance. This study shows that learner autonomy is a key indicator for individuals to be more high-achieving. This means that individuals with high learning autonomy have higher job performance. Accordingly, this study aims to propose a comprehensive definition and concept of learner autonomy and a theoretical position for further study in the field of organizational psychology and its relevance to the concept of learner autonomy in the workplace. The results of this study are in line with the study by Ellingson et al. (2017) who showed that there is a relationship between learner autonomy and job performance when academic staff who have high learner, autonomy tend to have high job performance. On the other hand, staff with low levels of learner autonomy tend to have low job performance. Researchers conclude that the job performance of

academic staff is influenced by learner autonomy, and this is in line with the theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) a high level of learning autonomy will encourage these staff to improve job performance. This is because staff with high learning autonomy will learn proactively. Indicators of high levels of learning autonomy are, always eager to perform new tasks, proactive to innovate, and strive to find the best way to perform tasks.

The last H4 was also found significant as p-value = 0.000 and leadership styles were found to have the greatest influence on job performance among academic staff. The findings of this study are seen in line with the findings of previous studies. This significant positive relationship means that the better the leadership style of the leader the better the performance of the staff. Leaders with good leadership styles (transformational and transactional leadership styles) will report possessing greater job performance is supported. From the results of hypothesis testing, it is found that this model is significant in making assumptions about the influence between leadership style and the job performance of academic staff. The findings of this study are seen in line with the findings of previous studies. This result shows that the leadership style factor contributes to the change in job performance. Through the leadership styles discussed, it can be concluded that transformational and transactional leadership styles are appropriate to use and influence the leadership pattern of the leader whether perfect or vice versa, inverted and make the situation ineffective. These findings have been supported by studies (Al-Malki et al. 2018). The above analysis indicates that all hypotheses in this study are accepted. The summary of hypotheses testing in this study can be seen in the following table.

Table 6: Summary of Hypotheses Testing

| | Hypothesis | Conclusion |
|----------------------|---|-------------------|
| H₁ | Motivation has a positive significant influence on job performance | Accepted |
| H₂ | Personality trait has a positive significant influence on job performance | Accepted |
| H₃ | Leadership style has a positive significant influence on job performance | Accepted |
| H₄ | Learner autonomy has a positive significant influence on job performance | Accepted |

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the study proves that dimensions of personality traits, employee motivation, learner autonomy, and leadership style influence job performance among academic staff. Besides that, this research shows that employee motivation is the most significant factor that influences job performance. It is further concluded that learner autonomy in the workplace represents one of only a handful in extant literature. It thus offers a novel perspective in the field of human resource management. Based on the results, there is a need for the management of the public university to give attention to the job performance of employees with special attention to their motivation and learner autonomy. This will enhance and improve the quality of service delivery in the organizations.

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