

Performance management, job happiness and job performance among Chinese knowledge workers: Inputs to employee productivity model

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Abstract

By evaluating each dimension of performance management, job happiness and job performance, this study determined the relationship among performance management, job happiness and job performance among knowledge workers in China. To boost Work Performance, respondents revealed the importance of Monitoring Performance, work-life Balance and Growth and Opportunities. This study also proves that performance management has a very significant positive predictive relationship to job performance. There is a significant positive correlation between performance management and the sub variables of work happiness, and between the sub variables of work happiness and work performance; while Corrective Measures in performance management have positive correlation with work performance, but it is weak. Finally, a framework was developed to show that Monitoring Performance is an important impact factor in promoting job performance.

Keywords: performance management, job happiness, job performance, knowledge workers, employee productivity

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1. Introduction

It is impossible to separate the development and expansion of a company from its personnel, who are the most essential resources that the firm possesses, regardless of the fluctuations that occur in the external environment. As China's education system undergoes a process of progressive transformation, an increasing number of knowledge workers are entering the workforce and becoming the primary driving force behind the organization. Knowledge workers, who are considered to be the driving force behind an enterprise, exhibit distinct traits from regular employees (Xie Minglei and Liu Desheng, 2021). They have a high level of education and fundamental talents that are difficult to find in another person. In general, they seek freedom, democracy, autonomy, and a high value for themselves. However, businesses are facing an increasingly challenging challenge: how to recruit and inspire employees with knowledge-based skills. Evaluative performance assessment and developmental performance appraisal are the two forms of performance appraisal that are distinguished by academics. The distinction is based on the aim of the performance appraisal (Cao Yanmin 2022).

Among them, the developmental performance evaluation has garnered the most attention due to the fact that it focuses more on the expansion and maturation of workers from the point of view of the employees themselves. The same time, developmental performance appraisal focuses on the performance appraisal method of growing and enhancing employees' potential and professional abilities based on the outcomes of the performance appraisal. This contrasts with traditional performance appraisal, which focuses on rewarding employees for their current level of performance. In contrast to the evaluative performance appraisal, the developmental performance appraisal can learn from the results of the performance appraisal the obvious deficiencies that employees have in their work. This knowledge can be used to clarify future employee performance improvement strategies and to carry out training activities and interactions that correspond to those strategies (Qiao Yanjie, 2018). When evaluating an employee's performance, a development-oriented assessment places primary emphasis on the future development direction and career planning of the employee, and subsequent actions are carried out in accordance with the comprehensive goals of both the individual and the enterprise, looking for performance flaws and deficiencies.

After the performance evaluation, timely communication with employees to provide performance feedback, clarification of the future career development plan of employees, and provision of sufficient, rich, and diversified enterprise resources for training work, timely, accurate, and effective attention to staff training results, and full encouragement of employees to take advantage of training opportunities to improve their own quality. When an organization has an atmosphere conducive to developmental performance appraisal, its staff members are better able to deeply feel the organization's support and recognition for them, gain the independence of their work, feel respected in their work, organize themselves as insiders of the organization, and receive recognition and support from the organization (Du Linzhi and Yuan Wenli, 2019). This, when combined with organizational goals, allows the staff to fully realize the value of the organization and improves their work performance, which in turn increases the profit of the enterprise. Therefore, it should come as no surprise that a developmental performance review is quite important to one's overall work success. The academic community started paying attention to the feelings and levels of satisfaction experienced by workers in the workplace not long after the formation and growth of the field of positive psychology (Yuan lin 2016). Because of this, the investigation of the contentment of workers in the workplace, also known as job satisfaction, has been steadily added to the agenda. Job satisfaction may be affected by organizational fairness and other factors, which in turn influence an employee's behavior and performance. Job satisfaction is determined by an employee's perspective of their own emotional

experience and how their cognitive growth is affected by the work environment. Therefore, pleasure at work may play a role in bridging the gap between one's performance on a developmental evaluation and their performance on the job (Zhang Yajun et al., 2019).

In spite of this, there is a dearth of pertinent research when it comes to investigating the process of organizational justice and its relationship to work performance from the point of view of job satisfaction. Job satisfaction, on the other hand, takes into account employees' motivation, attitudes, emotions, and levels of cognition, in addition to other aspects of their lives, and it is of great theoretical and practical significance to investigate the mechanism that acts as a mediator between organizational justice and job performance. This study focuses on knowledge workers, primarily investigates the relationship between developmental appraisal performance, job well-being, and job performance, and places an emphasis on the mediating effect of job well-being on the relationship between organizational justice and job performance (Zhang Yajun et al., 2019). Based on this, and after sorting out relevant studies, this study focuses on knowledge workers.

Objectives of the Study - This study aimed to assess the performance management, job happiness and job performance among Chinese knowledge workers. More specifically, assessed performance management practices in terms of planning, monitoring, developing, rating and rewarding song knowledge workers; determined the job happiness among employees in terms of salary and welfare, work it- self, leader behavior, personal growth, and job competency; determined the job performance of knowledge workers in terms of task performance, contextual performance, and counterproductive work behavior; tested the significant relationship of performance management and job happiness to job performance; proposed a model that will enhance employee productivity among knowledge workers based on the results of the study.

2. Methods

Research Design - Data obtained from special investigations are used to analyze the research results fully and accurately. The research made use of the different statistical tools to count, code and interpret the data. These include the following: One is the frequency distribution and weighted mean for descriptive statistical analysis, in order to quantitatively obtain the overview of the relevant variables. The second is analysis of variance to test the significance of the difference between means of two or more samples. The third is the use of Pearson correlation test for all variables to verify the correlation between the variables, which provides a preliminary basis for the subsequent regression analysis. Finally, after the previous descriptive statistics and correlation statistics analysis, used multiple regression to empirically test the impact of relational trading and earnings management. The use of the above tools was based on research goals. In addition, all data were processed using the statistical PASW version to analyze the research results.

Participants of the Study - The respondents were employees in China. The respondents were selected based on a random sampling.

Data Gathering Instrument - The questionnaire used in this study is divided into basic information questionnaire and variable measurement questionnaire, with a total of 52 questions. Among them, the basic information of respondents includes employee personal information and enterprise information, mainly including employee gender, age, education level, years of work in the company, position and department nature, and enterprise nature. Variables were measured on the Likert 4 scale, which was divided into three parts according to different variables: organizational justice scale, job happiness scale and job performance scale, with a total of 45 questions. Performance management consists of three dimensions: Monitoring Performance (5), Feedback (5), Corrective Measures (5), a total of 15 questions; There are three dimensions of happiness at Work: Team Atmosphere (5), work-life Balance (5), Growth and Opportunities (5), with a total of 15 questions. There are 15 questions about work Performance in three dimensions: Task Performance (5), Contextual Performance (5) and Adaptive Performance (5).

Data Gathering Procedure - The questionnaire was done through literature analysis and integrated expert

opinions, and then distributed the questionnaire online through the questionnaire star research platform for pre-survey. After the questionnaire was revised and improved under the guidance of the adviser, the questionnaire was distributed online through WeChat and email. The reliability and validity analysis results of the questionnaire are shown in the table.

Reliability Results

Variables	No. of Items	Alpha value	Interpretation
Performance Management			
Monitoring Performance	5	0.883	Good
Feedback	5	0.891	Good
Corrective Measures	5	0.908	Excellent
Overall	15	0.960	Excellent
Job Happiness			
Team atmosphere	5	0.947	Excellent
Work life balance	5	0.919	Excellent
Growth and opportunities	5	0.874	Good
Overall	15	0.967	Excellent
Job Performance			
Task performance	5	0.902	Excellent
Contextual performance	5	0.896	Good
Adaptive performance	5	0.834	Good
Overall	15	0.947	Excellent

Legend >0.9= Excellent>0.8=Good; >0.7=Acceptable; >0.6=Questionable; >0.5=Poor; <0.5=Unacceptable

After the preliminary design of the questionnaire was completed, eight experts were invited to conduct a pre-test of the questionnaire, which further improved the questionnaire structure and language expression. The pre-test of the questionnaire shows that the Cronbach's and CR values of each variable are both higher than 0.800, indicating that the scale has good reliability. After the questionnaire was confirmed, researcher prepared a letter of intent as a request by the researcher to collect data from the respondents.

Ethical Considerations - Before beginning the study project, much deliberation was given to several ethical questions. In order to ensure that the recovered questionnaires were of high quality and had all of the necessary information, it was communicated to the people who participated in the interviews that the survey would only be used for the purpose of conducting academic research and placed in a prominent location on the questionnaire. At the same time, the researchers also tried to get the approval of the responsible individuals at the institutions that were questioned by writing them letters and exchanging contact information. in order to guarantee that the people being interviewed can provide honest answers to the pertinent questions. At the same time, the respondents of interest provided their responses to the questionnaire in a manner that preserved their anonymity. This not only totally ensured their anonymity but also their right to privacy during the interview process. Finally, the dignity and privacy of the target interviewees were protected. All the information in the questionnaire was treated strictly confidential to fully protect the privacy of respondents.

Data Analysis - The research made use of the different statistical tools to count, code and interpret the data. These include the following: One is the frequency distribution and weighted mean for descriptive statistical analysis, in order to quantitatively obtain the overview of the relevant variables. The second is analysis of variance to test the significance of the difference between means of two or more samples. The third is the use of Pearson correlation test for all variables to verify the correlation between the variables, which provides a preliminary basis for the subsequent regression analysis. Finally, after the previous descriptive statistics and correlation statistics analysis, used multiple regression to empirically test the impact of relational trading and earnings management. The use of the above tools was based on research goals. In addition, all data were processed using the statistical PASW version to analyze the research results.

3. Results and Discussion

Table 1 provides a synopsis of the results obtained as a result of the performance management procedure.

The results suggest that performance management is equivalent in terms of monitoring performance and giving feedback, with an average score of 2.56 for monitoring performance and 2.50 for providing feedback, respectively. This is shown by the fact that both of these aspects were given scores of 2.50. The fact that there is not much of a difference between the two scores, ranking 1 and 2, demonstrates that respondents typically perceive monitoring performance, and the results are consistent with the research that Ni wen bing (2016) carried out. The vast majority of individuals who possess expertise are employed within the organization's primary business group at the present time. Managers have a propensity to keep a closer eye on important employees since they are already versed in the fundamental business plan of the organization and have already mastered a considerable number of crucial trade secrets. This illustrates that, according to the survey of Chinese knowledge workers, they have a rather high degree of recognition for the two qualities that were previously discussed. It's likely that the people being interviewed have the misconception that their work unit knows them better and can offer quick feedback on their performance, but this alone is not enough to dispel the interviewers' false beliefs and assumptions.

Table 1

Summary Table on Performance Management

Indicators	Composite Mean	VI	Rank
Monitoring Performance	2.56	Agree	1
Feedback	2.50	Agree	2
Corrective Measures	2.45	Disagree	3
Grand Composite Mean	2.50	Agree	

Legend:3.50-4.00=Strongly Agree;2.50-3.49=Agree;1.50-2.49=Disagree;1.00-1.49=Strongly Disagree

Employees with knowledge who work for a business that has an effective performance management system are aware of how the top management wants them to respond to any specific situation that may arise. According to Chen Fu (2016), this enables the organization to build an efficient performance management approach that is able to provide feedback and make corrections in a timely way. This was emphasized by the author. The score of 2.45 that was given for corrective measures indicates that the recognition that was obtained for them is not very high. This shows that respondents do not agree on the role of linking the preceding with the following in performance management, which is something that has been demonstrated in the study that was done by Li Xiyuan (2014). This is something that has been proven in the research that has been done. Within the context of the larger system of corporate governance, the responsibilities of administrative offices often have the ability to serve as a "lubrication" role. This specific kind of employment does not come within the scope of knowledge workers' occupational field in any way, shape, or form. The performance management of the relationship between the function that came before it and the function that will come after it does not agree with knowledge workers since knowledge workers often confront obstacles on the technological front line.

It would seem, on the basis of the data described in Table 5, that performance management in the company that was surveyed is viewed as successful in terms of monitoring performance and giving feedback, with scores of 2.56 and 2.50, respectively. On the other hand, the score of 2.45 assigned to the acknowledgment of remedial steps is lower than expected. This indicates that respondents do not feel that the performance management system properly links the functions that came before it and those that will come after it, which is in line with the findings of the study carried out by Yang lan fang (2015). Knowledge employees, who are often employed in the core business area of the organization and have a thorough grasp of the company's fundamental strategy, are subject to strict monitoring by managers. This is another point that has been brought up in the discussion. On the other hand, they might have the impression that their work unit does not completely understand them or is unable to offer timely feedback on their performance. In general, the results indicate that an effective performance management system should not only monitor performance and offer feedback but also effectively link previous and following functions. This is necessary for the system to be considered successful. In addition, it is essential to have a thorough understanding of the specific requirements and obstacles faced by knowledge workers and to adapt the performance management system appropriately.

Table 2*Summary Table on Job Happiness*

Indicators	Composite Mean	VI	Rank
Team Atmosphere	2.49	Disagree	2
Work-life Balance	2.48	Disagree	3
Growth and Opportunities	2.56	Agree	1
Grand Composite Mean	2.51	Agree	

Legend:3.50-4.00=Strongly Agree;2.50-3.49=Agree;1.50-2.49=Disagree;1.00-1.49=Strongly Disagree

The results of the respondents' assessments of their degree of satisfaction at work are summarized in Table 2. Even though respondents do not strongly agree with the team atmosphere and work-life balance, they nevertheless agree with them as a whole, as shown by the composite average of 2.51, as can be seen in the previous sentence. It suggests that, on average, respondents had a modest degree of agreement with the work-life balance and the team climate. The fact that they agree with these features altogether implies that they have a favorable view of their satisfaction in their jobs, even though they may not agree strongly with each of these qualities individually. The composite average takes into consideration the scores of a variety of factors associated with satisfaction at work, such as the spirit of the team and the ability to strike a healthy balance between work and personal life. It gives an overall evaluation of how respondents feel about their level of happiness, taking into consideration a variety of elements that contribute to their total contentment.

The moderate degree of agreement among respondents implies that even though they may not strongly agree with the team culture and work-life balance individually, they nevertheless recognize and value these features as a collective. This suggests that these elements have some beneficial impact on the individuals' general happiness as well as their level of satisfaction with their jobs. Organizations have the ability to concentrate on enhancing the environment of the team and establishing a good work-life balance in order to further boost employees' levels of pleasure at work. This may be accomplished through cultivating a pleasant and welcoming work culture, developing effective communication and cooperation among team members, providing assistance for integrating work and life, and providing programs or initiatives that put an emphasis on the well-being of employees. Growth and opportunity are generally the two most important factors that contribute to the pleasure of today's knowledge workers.

According to Li Yun et al. (2018), a well-organized environment, such as the organizational error management climate, may encourage the fast career progress of workers by enhancing their competence. This is one of the areas in which servant leadership plays a positive regulatory function. In a similar vein, a feeling of organizational support may also equip workers with adequate resources to improve their individual levels of competence. This was complemented by Wang Jing and Liu Zhi (2018), who suggested that development in work may increase workers' professional level and the remuneration that corresponds to that quality, which in turn allows employees to improve their quality of life. Therefore, workers may typically enhance their happiness at work even in the event of a tough working environment and a lot of work pressure, as long as they can develop in it and continue to advance in their careers.

Table 3*Summary Table on Job Performance*

Indicators	Composite Mean	VI	Rank
Task Performance	2.53	Agree	1
Contextual Performance	2.49	Disagree	3
Adaptive Performance	2.51	Agree	2
Grand Composite Mean	2.51	Agree	

Legend:3.50-4.00=Strongly Agree;2.50-3.49=Agree;1.50-2.49=Disagree;1.00-1.49=Strongly Disagree

Table 3 provides a summary of the respondents' responses on their work performance. Among the indications that were provided, task performance (2.53) and adaptive performance (2.51) placed top and second, respectively, and the respondents agreed with both of these rankings. However, the respondents did not agree with the third indicator, contextual performance (2.49), which was presented. These data imply that respondents usually emphasize task performance and flexibility in their work performance, as evidenced by their higher

scores in those dimensions. This is evidenced by the fact that those dimensions received higher total scores. On the other hand, contextual performance, which involves actions that contribute to the broader work environment, earned a lower score, which indicates that respondents may not view it as closely tied to their job performance or may not engage in these activities as frequently. This might be because contextual performance involves behaviors that contribute to the broader work environment. Having an understanding of these findings can assist firms in discovering areas that require improvement and developing ways to increase employee performance on the job. For instance, businesses may prioritize the provision of training and resources in order to increase both their capacity to accomplish tasks and their ability to adapt to changing circumstances.

In addition, building a work culture that places an emphasis on the significance of contextual performance and encourages workers to engage in activities that contribute to a pleasant work environment will help raise the overall job performance satisfaction of respondents. This is because both of these factors lead to a positive work environment. The research conducted by experts such as Moga et al. (2021) has demonstrated that this is really the case. It is argued, with support from social exchange theory and social cognitive theory, that the diversity of an organization's workforce will inevitably result in variations in the quality of work produced. To be more specific, the traits of knowledge workers make it likely that they will be able to swiftly adjust to the conditions of their place of employment and carry out their work responsibilities with both quality and quantity. Contextual performance is a little bit different from other types of performance since it involves shared leadership and role-wide self-efficacy as the mediating and moderating factors. On the other side, research demonstrates that knowledge workers have a high level of self-efficacy, which results in a lack of performance in this area (Xie Minglei and Liu Desheng, 2021). In general, there was very little acceptance despite the fact that respondents were, on average, relatively weak in contextual performance. On the other hand, respondents were nearly unanimous in their agreement with the overall performance of their jobs.

Figure 1 shows the Performance Management, Job Happiness and Job Performance: Among Chinese Knowledge Workers. Numerous academics are interested in conducting studies to better understand the connection between feeling fulfilled in one's work and one's level of professional success. A review of the relevant literature reveals that there is no significant connection between being happy in one's job and being successful in that career. Liu Changzai (2020) investigated the connection between social self-efficacy, work happiness, and job performance, they discovered that only job satisfaction and job performance were significantly connected among the three dimensions of job happiness. The other dimensions of job happiness did not show a significant degree of correlation with one another. Regarding the connection between occupational well-being and job performance, there are two distinct schools of thought. The vast majority of academics are of the opinion that occupational happiness has an effect on job performance and that the magnitude of occupational pleasure is directly proportional to the level of job success. According to Chen Qiuzhu's (2019) research, the level of satisfaction preschool instructors experience with their work has a direct bearing on how well they do their jobs. Mei Zhong (2015) used workers in the scientific and technology industries as her study objects and came to the conclusion that career satisfaction plays an intermediary role in the interaction between non-material incentives and job performance. However, a number of researchers have suggested that one's level of job satisfaction is directly proportional to one's level of performance at work, with performance serving as the antecedent variable that influences job satisfaction and vice versa.

Li Yan (2013) found that there is a direct connection between job performance and career happiness and that there is a positive connection between job performance and career happiness. There has not been a lot of study done on the connection between psychological capital, occupational happiness, and job performance. The researcher Li Yayun (2018) surveyed 310 college teachers in China using a random sampling method. She discovered that there was a significant correlation between job performance, career happiness, and psychological capital; furthermore, psychological capital was positively correlated with job performance and career happiness. College professors' work satisfaction, job performance, and psychological capital all move in the same direction over the course of their careers. In their research on the UAE, Al-ali et al. (2018) found that the level of satisfaction that employees experience has a substantial bearing on how well they perform their job. The happy

worker is shown to be a more productive worker, revealing a favorable association between the two.

The happiness of medical employees. The study revealed that the higher the happiness of medical workers at work, the more harmonious the interaction between physicians and patients, the more cooperative the patients, the more accurate the doctors, and the shorter the amount of time needed to recover. According to the findings of research conducted by Ni Guodong et al. (2018), being happy at work can considerably boost both an individual's performance and the performance of an organization. Therefore, when employees can feel a strong sense of happiness at work, their enthusiasm for work will be enhanced, resulting in the creation of a more harmonious organizational atmosphere. Additionally, the possibility of employee turnover and absence will be greatly reduced, and employees' work performance will be significantly improved. It is clear that increasing the level of happiness that workers experience while they are on the job is one of the most effective methods to increase individuals' overall performance at work.

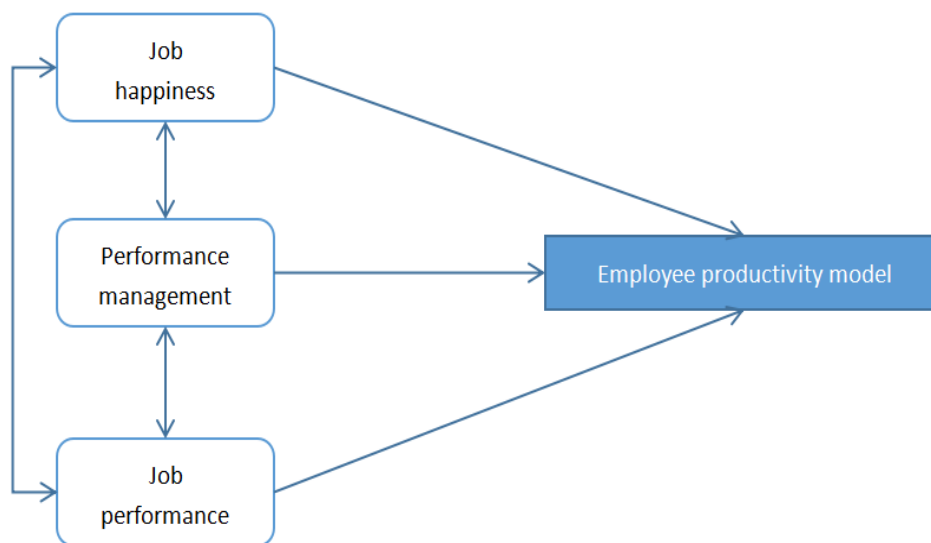


Figure 1. Performance Management, Job Happiness and Job Performance: Among Chinese Knowledge Workers

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

Respondents moderately agree with the performance management in view of monitoring performance and feedback but disagreed in terms of corrective measures exercised by the company. The employees moderately disagreed on job happiness in terms of team atmosphere and work-life balance, and moderately agreed in growth and opportunities of employees. Respondents moderately agree with the job performance in view of task Performance and adaptive Performance but disagreed in terms of contextual Performance exercised by the company. There is significant relationships or high positive correlation between Performance management and job happiness and job performance which implies that happy people have better job performance. The proposed model to improve employee productivity is prepared to enhance employee job performance.

The company can build a good feedback mechanism in performance management and give knowledge employees more opportunities for growth. The company can focus on the construction of soft power, such as providing a good working atmosphere, so that knowledge workers can balance work and life. Strengthen communication between superiors and subordinates in the corporate governance system, so as to correct the deficiencies of the superior management system in a timely manner. Managers of the company can strengthen communication with subordinates and let them give more opinions on the management system. Strengthening

the construction of performance management system is conducive to improving the happiness of knowledge workers at work. A good performance management system is conducive to improving the performance of knowledge-based work. The proposed model can be reviewed or adopted by the company to enhance employee productivity. Future researchers may conduct similar study on enhancing employee productivity using additional variables like job satisfaction to verify the results.

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