

# The role of job satisfaction as the mediator between human resource practices and employees' performance based on the assumption of Adams' equity at Saudi ports Authority especially in cargo section

Mohammed Saud Mira, Dr. Yap Voon Choon and  
Dr. Chan Kok Thim

***Abstract---** The ports of Saudi Arabia are considered as the most officious seaports in the Middle East. It has the leading and most expanded industry in the Middle East and plays a great significant role to increase the economics of the country. Saudi Ports Authority has nine main ports on the two cost of the kingdom, which achieved 95% of trading goods through the kingdom's seaports and export share is 55%. However, cargo's over stock is the major problem that just came up, which raise the expense of cargo's handle to 200%. As a result, it reduces job opportunities and satisfaction in the employees of the cargo sector. Additionally, there is a lack of appropriate human resource practices. Therefore, our study takes a step to observe the effects of human resource exercise on worker's performance and also the facilitating role of job satisfaction in the association between human resource practices and employee's performance in Saudi Port Authority. Moreover, this study will validate the assumption of Maslow theory. A questionnaire based survey was utilized in this study.*

***Keywords---** Human resource Development, Job Satisfaction, Workers' Performance, Maslow Theory, CARGO Section Saudi Ports Authority.*

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Saudi Arabia is the largest oil exporter in the world and these are done through seaports. Saudi Port Authority(SPA) is essential to increase the economics of the nation by cargo handling. Elentably (2015) stated that the SPA has nine critical ports on the cost of the kingdom, which achieved 95% of trading goods, while 55% of the cargo is exported. Besides, annually 11,000 ships stay at these ports that also handle, 5 million Twenty-Foot Equivalent Unit (TEUs) annually (Elentably, 2015). , Regardless of the positive role to Saudi's GDP, however, limited cargo store and handling capacity is the major problem that recently came up which raise the rate of cargo's handle equal to 200%, which as a result of deficiency of job pleasure in the employees of the cargo section (Arab News, 2016).

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*Mohammed Saud Mira, Phd Candidate, Department of Management, Faculty of Management, Multimedia University (MMU), Persiaran Multimedia, Cyberjaya, Selangor, Malaysia. E-mail: merah3000@hotmail.com*

*Dr. Yap Voon Choon, Department of Management, Faculty of Management, Multimedia University (MMU), Persiaran Multimedia, Cyberjaya, Selangor, Malaysia. E-mail: vcyap@mmu.edu.my*

*Dr. Chan Kok Thim, Department of Management, Faculty of Management, Multimedia University (MMU), Persiaran Multimedia, Cyberjaya, Selangor, Malaysia. E-mail: ktchan@mmu.edu.my*

Al-Bassami demonstrated that low job satisfaction their employee performance. It is . the consequence of an unsuitable human resource (HR) practice in the cargo sector at SPA (Arab News, 2016). Although there are numerous types of literature about the impacts of HR exercise on employees' job satisfaction and their performances (Jeet& Sayeeduzzafar,2014). However, these research have appeared minimal inadequate influence on the significance of HR practice on the employee in SPA (Elentably, 2015). Hence, this article intends to examin the consequence of HR development on employees' in the cargo's field of SPA.

## **II. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### ***2.1 Human Resource Practices***

Nowadays, most of the organizations concentrated on the appropriate HR practices to meet the challenges of an unstable market and gain the competitive advantage (Berisha and Kutllovci, 2015). HR practice is a technique to improve the skills, synergy, commitment, and outcome of the organization. Hence, HR practice is vital to achieving the goal of the organizations (Harter, Schmidt & Hayes 2002; Cania,2014). Additionally, it adjusts the behaviour of the workers to build a strong relationship between management and workers. It also motivates the workers to put extra energy to realize the goals of the organization (Tan & Nasurdin 2006, p. 156). The business field is more development and rapid changes. Therefore, that kind of challenges can be defeat by human resource practices through different offer practices which increase the satisfied of the workers, so they will spend more effort to achieve the main goal of the organization. Those practices offer success to the organization through people (Armstrong 2006). HR s utilizing many exercises, for example, selection, training, reward, job analysis, employee relationship, employee authorization and social support (Delery & Doty,1996; Nataraja & Alamri,2016). These practices built the coherent system within the apparent role of each one, to attain satisfaction and performance of employees (Dessler, 2007; Majumder, 2012; Jeet& Sayeeduzzafar,2014; Albrecht et al.,2015; Hassan,2016)

### ***2.2 Human resource practices and Employees' Performance***

The experiential studies indicate the relationship among HR practices and performance (Gerhart and Milkovich, 1992; Huselid 1995; Arthur 1994; MacDuffie, 1995; Munjuri, 2011; Tabiu & Nura, 2013; Guest, 1997, Haddock et al.,2016). All these valuable research have been done in diverse sectors in various countries and discovered a definite link between HR practices and workers' performance. Therefore, organizations use HR practices to realize their targets by staffs' performance (Hassan, 2016).

Consequently, the Organisation pursues to choose the correct persons that have the skills and ability to provide a successful environment. (Pfeffer,1994; Cania,2014, Aliyu and Marthandan, 2017). Thus, The management should utilize the practices of HR in a precise way as the achievement of HR exercises is depend on the way of execution. Therefore, the administration should need to concentrate fully once they plan to apply HR practices to overcome any error that causes a failure (Guest, 2011; Guest, 2017). , We Also, test the impact of HR practice on another facet of employee behaviour such as loyalty, engagement, etc.(Si& Li,2012). Hence, this research thoroughly inspects the role of HR practices on employees' performance at SPA, especially at cargo's section due to the absence of the research in this field.

### ***2.3 Human resource practices and Job satisfaction***

Gould-William (2003) conducted research at local government institutes in the UK to test particular HR practices. The outcome of the study showed that HR development provide a encouraging influence to job satisfaction; thus, the workplace trust, commitment, engagement, performance will increase, therefore organization approaches towards their final goal. This study fully analyses the influence of HR practices on employees' job satisfaction at SPA particularly at cargo's section.

### ***2.4 Job satisfaction and performance***

The relation among job satisfaction and employees' performance is vital, and it is a feature of organizational psychology (Bakotić,2015). Thus, a lot of scholars researched exam the association between job satisfaction and employees' performance in different areas(Judge, Thoresen, Bono, & Patton, 2001). Job satisfaction is the Holy Grail of organizational psychology (Landy, 1989; Mitchell et al.,2017). The relationship between the workplaces' attitude and effect of employees' behaviour still an essential area of researchers which present the stem from the characteristic organisation and social psychological theory (Harrison, Newman, & Roth, 2006; Schleicher, Watt, & Greguras, 2004; Lawler & Porter, 1967; Wicker, 1969). Now a days, job satisfaction offers the thoughts and mood of workers to respect to their jobs. Brief and Wesis (2002) stated that job satisfaction could be analysed in accordance with the mood and emotion of employees toward their job condition.

Job performance is the nature of workers that present when they perform their job to accomplish the goal of the organization; this behaviour is visible (Campbell, McHenry, & Wise, 1990). The organization is concentrated on their worker's performance to reach at the goal of the organization (Hunter & Hunter, 1984). The performance must be concentrate on the conduct of the staff not to the result of the organisation. However, most of the organizations are interested in the outcome of the organisation rather than the of employers lead the worker to find easiest way to gain the goal of the organisation. Campbell, McCloy, Oppler, and Sager (1993) mention that performance is an observed behaviour of employees during their task and duties. Thus, job satisfaction is an significant feature that provides a positive contribution to employees' performance (Gosselin, 2005; Yvonne et al.,2014). Despite many experiential researches done in the different field to test the impact of job satisfaction on the performance of employees and to test the implication of job satisfaction on another dependent variable such as engagement and loyalty etc (Owusu, 2014 Bakotić, 2015; Ram,2013; Davar& RanjuBala, 2012; Abraham, 2012; Waqas, 2014). However, in the context of the Saudi Ports Authority, there are very small number of articles to measure the influence of job satisfaction on workers performance especially cargos' field. Hence, this study thoroughly analyse the role of job satisfaction on workers' performance at SPA especially at cargo's section.

### ***2.5 job satisfaction as a mediator***

Job satisfaction has a positive influence on workers' behavior to rise the commitment, performance, loyalty, and engagement, but the rate of turnover, accidents, grievances, tardiness and absenteeism will drop (Aliyu and Mathandan, 2017; Rothenberg et, 2017). Job satisfaction contributes significantly to employees' performance (Khan el, 2016). Although, there are a lot of empirical researches that show the encouraging relation between human resource practices and performance through job satisfaction at the various field beside test a job satisfaction as a

mediator between human resource practices and another outcome (Khan et al., 2016; Nabi,2017). However, there is a limited of studies that present the impacts of job satisfaction as a mediator in the public sector in Saudi Arabia, especially Saudi ports authority. Therefore, the study will examine the function of job satisfaction as a mediator between human resource practices and employees' performance at Saudi ports authority especially at the cargo section

## ***2.6 Underpinning Theory***

### ***2.6.1 Maslow hierarchy theory***

The first theory that considers the needs of growth, fulfilment, and development as the main thing for employees in term of their psychology, is Maslow's (1943) theory of human motivation. Therefore, he rewarded as a father of humanistic psychology (Anderson,1998) Humanistic psychology is a relevant field that each organization should emphasis on it in order to grow the personality of the workers. Thus, Maslow considers it as a third force of Psychology following behaviourism and psychoanalysis. Going back to the source of his theory (1943), Maslow suggests a model of human motivation. Firstly, Maslow supposes that the person needs a special environment and a unique complement of needs at birth, which will guide him/her to grow up in a healthy environment. The genes and culture are two determining factors that determine the behaviour based on on Maslow's viewpoint (Ryckman, 2000).

On the other hand, if the environment was not healthy, restrict the chance of growing and reduce the opportunity for workers to accomplish their needs and the neurotic ways of dealing with the issue. Also, Maslow declared the following five levels of needs; those levels are organized in a hierarchy. Physiological needs are the necessary level of needs; it includes such as sleep, rest, food, and sex. The human body can be present in two categories, which are Homeostasis and body reaction regard to the lack of chemicals in the body. Homeostasis means that once the body receives a normal quantity of water, salt, sugar, protein, and temperature, a regular stream of blood will maintain. On the other hand, lack of those or chemicals in the body will lead the person to create a special hunger or appetite for this lack. Thus, the basic needs or Physiological needs are important to the human to move to another level of needs (Maslow, 1943).

The next needs of humanity are safety which includes fairness, physical and psychological safety, security and predictability, once those determinations of safety are not meet the satisfying level, then the bad attitude, behaviour, envy, low level of psychological beside the injury at work will be as a result. Therefore, Maslow urges the organizations to offer safety and healthy work condition to their employees, which will decrease the level of those results (Maslow, 1943).

Love and Belongingness Needs are the third level of needs, at this level employees are looking to work in pleasant environment that offers good relationship such as support their employees whether by tangible or non-tangible compensations, right of communication between all levels, offer tolerance and advice between each other , thus the employees will feel of loving which lead them to feel that there are a part of the organisation, in other word, they will work at the organisation within considered it as a second home (Maslow, 1943).

Esteem Needs are the fourth set of human needs. This need is in accordance with the appreciation, respectful and autonomy at work; once those factors offered at work, the employees can spend more effort within the feeling of self-worth, strength, capability and the adequacy of being useful to the world.

Maslow (1946) mentioned that there are two kinds of esteem needs that offer motivation to the workers, the first one is established on the respectful between workers in order to satisfy ego needs which result in those three which are emotional state of self-confidence, capability and adequacy emerge, the second is respect that we give to our selves, in another word, self-esteem which guides the employees to feel of dignity, value and masterful at their job (Rowan, 1998)

Self-Actualisation is the topmost need of humanity, at this level, employees feel that they can do everything such as solving the problem, acceptance of facets, create or innovate a new method beside feeling of morality, lack of prejudice and free of restriction (Maslow, 1943). He also stated that the last level of needs which is self-actualization is not the end of the process, but it is an ongoing process, some of the workers achieved, and the other is not able to achieve it. Thus Maslow presents some studies of person lives that achieved the highest level of the theory. Some of those people had been interviewed by Maslow, on the other hand, some of them were mention in history books a figure, for example, Thomas Jefferson and Ludwig van Beethoven, in addition, some of them were as luminaries, for instance, Eleanor Roosevelt and Albert Einstein, whose lives had been studies through means of historical and other documents (Gleitman, 1991).

The patterns identified between these characters were observed such as accepting themselves and others, being unprompted, prefer to have a friendly relationship with a few people rather than surface friendship with many people, offer catering to the problem through working on it than themselves (op cit. p.735). Maslow (1991) intent to explain why there are a few people who gained the highest level of the hierarchy, through the present the concept of Jonah Complex. Jonah Complex defined as one's fear of his/her greatness. Maslow declares that many people prefer to be seen as an average person rather than show their greatness. Maslow built up those five levels of hierarchy needs that include motivation of human in his original writing. However, the last level which called self-actualization has been written later during his life.

The needs of human were arranged at an ordinal level based on Maslow's theory, however, those levels cannot motivate the employees unless they feel satisfied with the basic one, before reaching the second level, in another word, satisfaction is most important to the employees and without satisfaction, these levels of needs cannot offer motivation or be sufficient to the employees (Maslow, 1943). They are designed with a basic level of need, that includes water, home, sex, food, etc. Feeling satisfied at the primary level will guide the employees to join the second level of need, which is security and so on. For example, employees feel confident with the basic level, such as got full of food and water, live at home and do sexual relationship, etc. it means that the basic level is achieved. Thus, the second level of needs will be the next step. Maslow, state that once A want is offered, then it is no longer want. In another word, the Unwanted level of Maslow's theory does not organize the behaviour of the worker. However, the need level of Maslow's' organize the behaviour level of the employees (Maslow, 1943).

Maslow's theory is distinguishing to theories of motivation in two concepts which are deprivation (an unsatisfied need) and gratification (a satisfied need). Those two thoughts determine the behaviour. The deprivation (an unsatisfied need) present in negative response and gratification present in positive reaction. The five-level of needs based on Maslow's theory is divided into two levels, which are deficiency needs or D-needs and being need or B-need. The deficiency needs or D-needs include all four levels, at the deficiency, needs human will not feel satisfied unless they were deprived. In addition, once they feel confident at the previous level, the feeling of deprivation will appear to the next level. On another hand, needing or B-need which include the last level, which is called Self-actualisation, it is the final level that the employees can reach, within feel full motivation and satisfied (Smith, 2003). A cycle of motivation, support employees to be satisfied with their work, is ongoing and never reach ending beside it is varied, complex and fluctuating. Thus, theories of human motivation should be aware of it (Smith, 2003; Upadhyaya; 2014; Osman et al., 2017)



Figure 1: Maslow's Need Hierarchy (Maslow, 1965)

### ***2.7 Impacts and Implication of Hierarchy of Needs Theory on Human Resource Management***

In any organization, the critical role of HR management is to realize the goal of the organization. There are many theories that explained how to motivated workers at the workplace to increase a high level of performance and productivity, which increase the rate of profit of the organization. HR management includes a different organizational function which present theories and idea from several areas for example management, psychology, sociology and economics (Storey, 1992). These are intended to increase the outcome of employees at the workplace (Bratton & Gold, 2001). Robbins and Judge (2009) indicate that HR management has five main functions, which are managing conflict, motivating, staffing, disciplining, and training. Likewise, Storey (1992) mention that human resource management has five functions, namely as staffing, rewards, employee development, employee maintenance and employee relations. Those functions are positively influenced by the Maslow theory. Malone and

Lepper (1987) indicate that leadership at the organization can build up a motivational environment through challenge motivation, Competition motivation, Cooperation and recognition motivation.

Hierarchy of needs present five levels, those five levels is ordinary; in another word, once the first level met the second level will be the next. Those five levels are physiological needs safety needs, social needs, esteem needs and self-actualization need Physiological needs present in food, water, home, sex. Thus the organization should offer practices that meet the first level. Safety needs, the workplace should be safe to gain the goal of the organization. Therefore the organization should provide a helmet and warning system at construction place, al; safety need could be present in the security of financial. Once the employees feel that they will work at the company without any threat of resigning and decrease of his/her salary. Then the rate of leave will decrease. Social needs, employees at the workplace should feel that they are work as one team without any discrimination, besides they should get sufficient time to spend their life with their families. Esteem needs, leaders should reward or recognize their workers based on their achievement. The reward could be financial such as increase salary or non- financial such as praise; thus, the workers will be valued. Self-actualization needs, at the last stage, employees, can release their potential power in term of creation and innovation. Human resource practices were applied at the different organization based on the assumption of Maslow theory which leads the employee to feel valued to their organization thus the level of their satisfaction and performance increased (Ameke,2016; Razak & Majid,2017). There is limited of studies based on applying the HR practices due to the assumption of Maslow theory at Saudi port authority, especially cargo section. Thus, the study intends to analyse the effect of HR practices on employees' job satisfaction and performance at Saudi port authority especially cargo section

### ***2.8 Maslow theory and performance***

The employees must be satisfied at each level before reaching the highest level which is self-actualization needs, in another word, once the first level is fulfilled, the second level will be the next aim (Zalenski & Raspa, 2006; Osman et al., 2017). Organisations focus on their employees' performance to gain success. Employees performance is the act, duty, responsibility that spend by the employees in a determined time and cost to achieve or complete the task, it is an important issue to the organization Ray (2016) state that motivations offer a positive impact to employees performance once it met the assumption of Maslow theories. Therefore, organizations focus to remain their employees within a high level of performance through offer different practices of HR management to fill the psychological needs of workers (Oh & Kuchinke, 2017).

### ***2.9 Maslow theory and job satisfaction***

job satisfaction is a variables that has been studied in the area of workplace psychology (Barriball, Zhang & While, 2012) and has been related to Psychosocial issues which is concerning to organizational factors which extend from leadership to job design (Spector, 1997; Prajogo et al.,2017). Job satisfaction the popularity relationship of job satisfaction within occupational and organizational as a field of psychology (Spector, 1997; Prajogo et al.,2017), many scholars and practitioners have built out their own definition of job satisfaction. However, two standard definitions correctly describe job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is the emotional sensitivity of the 'workers toward their jobs (Locke,1976) and the level of happiness and dissatisfaction of workers toward their jobs (Spector,1997).

Although those theories are normally recognized in the literature of human motivation, Maslow's needs hierarchy theory is the first theory that indicates to test the significant contributors to job satisfaction (Maslow, 1995).

Maslow's needs hierarchy was built up to demonstrate human motivation in general. However, Maslow's theory is suitable to the work setting within explaining job satisfaction. The organization should meet the need of its workers from the basic level to the fifth level. Financial compensation, tangible reward and health care insurance are an essential factors that lead the workers to meet the basic level, which is physiological needs. Safety level is the second needs of human it achieved through job security, clear policy of organisation beside feeling physically safe at work, once employees feel satisfied at this level, a third level which is feeling of belonging to the workplace will be the next, at this level, employees feel there is strong connection between all level of workers in term of working as a group, offer tolerance and advice among the employees (Maslow, 1995). The fourth level, which called self-esteem, at this level, the employees realize that they are valued and to their organization and appreciated by their colleagues. Finally, self-actualized, employees are tried to show all their ability, skills and creativity to be a part of everything that able to become. Although it seems to be as ordinary steps from the bottom to the high level, all of those steps are contribute to the fifth level. Therefore, the organization is focusing on employees' job satisfaction as the main factor that should meet each level before reach the fifth level, which considered as highest level (Maslow, 1995). Pham (2016) present that once employees feel satisfied based on their psychology needs due to the practices offered by the organization, their performance level will rise. Therefore, the organization should provide high attention to practices to gain a higher level of employees satisfaction in term of meet the psychology needs (Emu & Umeh, 2014; Mat et al., 2017).

### III. METHODOLOGY

This research is correlation study that seeks to find out whether two variables are correlated or not in another word whether the increase or decrease in one variable correlates with the reduction or increase in the other variable (Kumar & Phrommathed 2005). It is a cross-sectional research that emphasizes on completing it in small time interval in order to evaluate the outcome that appeared from the specified respondents (Levin, 2006). Moreover, The Primary data on all the variables will be obtained using survey questionnaires, especially five Likert questionnaires Which is a famous approach based on single rating (Davidson, 1979) and it is assumed as the most straightforward way to gather the data (Haque & Taher, 2008; Yu & Egri, 2005). Therefore, this study is a quantitative study.

#### 3.1 Conceptual Framework

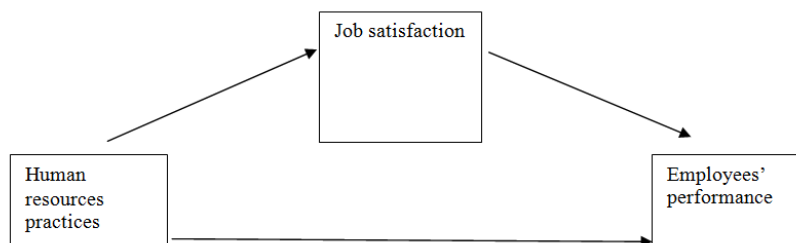


Figure 2: Conceptual framework



Following the conceptualization of Maslow theory that needs of the employee must be fulfilled to have a, more significant positive outcome. Therefore we assume that human resource practices (Training and development, reward, job analysis, recruitment and selection, social support, employee relationship and employee empowerment ) will have a positive connection with job satisfaction and performance, in addition, we assume that employees satisfaction will offer significance contribution to the relationship between human resource practices and employees performance beside , we assume that job satisfaction provide a positive contribution to employee performance. Based on the figure above (figure 1) our proposition as follows:

P1: There is a positive relationship of human resource practices with employees' performance and job satisfaction

P3: There is a positive relationship between job satisfaction and employees' performance

P4: There is a positive role of job satisfaction as a mediator between human resource practices and employees' performance

#### IV. CONCLUSION

This study examines the effect of HR practices on employee's performance and satisfaction in the SPA. HR practices contributes a significant effect to drive the organisations to attain competitive advantage and compete in a global market. The earlier literature recognized that the HR practice offers positive contributions to employees' loyalty, satisfaction, engagement and performance. Thus, the needs of workers have to be satisfied and as well to perform (Kuppuswamy et al., 2017). SPA is essential for economic growth. However, the current challenges of SPA are the overstock of cargo, which is as a result of low satisfaction and performance of workers in the cargo field. According to (Arab News, 2016), lack and appropriate human resource practices are one of the main reason for these challenges. Even though these challenges were addressed in the literature, however, there are ver few studies that tests the relation between human resource practice, job satisfaction and employee performance, more specifically in Saudi Cargo. Therefore, our research takes a step to examine the role of human resource practice on employee's performance and also the mediating role of job satisfaction in the relationship between human resource practices and employee's performance in Saudi Port Authority.

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