



Analysis of Performance and Innovative Work Behavior of Employees at the National University of Timor Leste

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Article Info	Abstract
Article History Received: 2024-07-22 Revised: 2024-08-19 Published: 2024-09-04 Keywords: <i>Employee Performance; Innovative Work Behavior; Organizational Support.</i>	This study explores the performance and innovative work behavior of employees at the National University of Timor Leste (UNTIL). The aim of this study is to analyze the factors influencing these behaviors and provides recommendations for fostering a more innovative work environment. This study employed a qualitative approach with data gathering through in-depth interviews with a diverse group of university employees. The study reveals that organizational support and individual motivation are the factors can affect employee performance and innovation. The findings suggest that strategic interventions at both organizational and individual levels are essential to enhance performance and innovation at UNTIL.
Artikel Info	Abstrak
Sejarah Artikel Diterima: 2024-07-22 Direvisi: 2024-08-19 Dipublikasi: 2024-09-04 Kata kunci: <i>Kinerja Karyawan; Perilaku Kerja Inovatif; Dukungan Organisasi.</i>	Studi ini meneliti kinerja dan perilaku kerja inovatif karyawan di Universitas Nasional Timor Leste (UNTIL). Tujuan dari studi ini adalah untuk menganalisis faktor-faktor yang memengaruhi perilaku ini dan memberikan rekomendasi untuk mendorong lingkungan kerja yang lebih inovatif. Studi ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan pengumpulan data melalui wawancara mendalam dengan berbagai kelompok karyawan universitas. Studi ini mengungkapkan bahwa dukungan organisasi dan motivasi individu merupakan faktor-faktor yang dapat memengaruhi kinerja dan inovasi karyawan. Temuan tersebut menunjukkan bahwa intervensi strategis di tingkat organisasi dan individu sangat penting untuk meningkatkan kinerja dan inovasi di UNTIL.

I. INTRODUCTION

Employee performance and innovative work behavior are critical factors in the success of any organization, especially in educational institutions where the cultivation of knowledge and innovation is paramount. This study examines these elements within the context of the National University of Timor Leste, exploring the dynamics that drive or hinder employee performance and innovation. The study aims to provide actionable insights for university administrators to improve organizational practices and support employee development. Employee performance and innovative work behavior are critical factors in the success of any organization, particularly within academic institutions where the creation and dissemination of knowledge are fundamental goals. This article examines these elements within the context of the National University of Timor Leste (UNTIL), exploring the dynamics that drive or hinder employee performance and innovation. The study aims to provide actionable insights for university administrators to improve organizational practices and support employee development.

The National University of Timor Leste, known locally as Universidade Nacional Timor Lorosa'e, is the largest and most prominent public university in Timor Leste. Established in 2000, following the country's independence, UNTL plays a pivotal role in the nation's higher education landscape. The university offers a range of undergraduate and postgraduate programs across various faculties, including Social Sciences, Health Sciences, Engineering, Agriculture, Economics, and Education. In academic institutions like UNTL, the performance of employees, including faculty members, administrative staff, and researchers, directly impacts the quality of education and research outputs. High-performing employees are essential for maintaining academic standards, ensuring effective administration, and contributing to the university's strategic goals.

The National University of Timor Leste has a total of 1,845 employees, with a majority being male (970) and a significant number of female employees (875). A large workforce offers the advantage of improved task execution and increased efficiency. However, the effective management of employees and work systems by the organization is essential to ensure good

performance and behavior. Therefore, it is crucial for organizations and institutions to commit to establishing an efficient work system (Fitrio et al., 2020). This requires attention to qualifications and effective skills to maintain high standards. While many employees can potentially reduce work efficiency, a high level of education equips employees with the necessary skills and knowledge to fulfill their duties effectively. According to data, the educational levels of employees at the National University of Timor Leste show that the majority have completed high school (579 individuals), followed by those with a bachelor's degree (484 individuals). Education not only enables individuals to complete their tasks more effectively and efficiently but also fosters leadership qualities. This contributes to a culture of innovation, creativity, and critical thinking within the organization (Khan et al., 2020).

Innovative work behavior, which encompasses the generation, promotion, and implementation of new ideas, is equally important. In a rapidly changing global educational landscape, universities must foster innovation to stay competitive, address emerging challenges, and enhance their educational offerings. For UNTL, fostering innovation is crucial not only for academic excellence but also for contributing to the socio-economic development of Timor Leste.

Despite its significant role, UNTL faces numerous challenges that can impact employee performance and innovative work behavior. These include: (1) resource constraints: As a public institution in a developing country, UNTL often grapples with limited financial and material resources. This can hinder the provision of necessary support for employees and limit opportunities for professional development and innovation; (2) Leadership and Management Issues: Effective leadership is crucial for fostering a supportive and innovative work environment. However, leadership styles and practices at UNTL may vary, influencing employee morale and motivation. (3) Cultural Factors: Timor Leste's unique cultural context, including its history and socio-political landscape, can impact organizational behavior. Understanding these cultural nuances is essential for developing effective management and support strategies; (4) Infrastructure and Technological Limitations: Adequate infrastructure and access to modern technology are critical for supporting innovative work behavior. UNTL's infrastructural and technological limitations can pose significant

barriers to innovation. This study aims to explore the factors influencing employee performance and innovative work behavior at UNTL. The findings of this study are expected to provide valuable insights for university administrators, policymakers, and stakeholders in Timor Leste. By understanding the factors that influence employee performance and innovation, UNTL can develop targeted strategies to support its staff and enhance its overall effectiveness. Moreover, this research can contribute to the broader body of knowledge on organizational behavior in academic institutions, particularly within the context of developing countries

II. METHOD

This study employs qualitative approach. Data was gathered through in-depth interview and document analysis. Informants of this research are faculty members, administrative staff and researchers, to capture a wide range of perspectives. Informants has a different level of experience and tenure at UNTL, to explore how these factors influence their perceptions and behaviors. Data was analyzed using thematic analysis. Transcribed interview is coded to identify key themes and patterns. An initial set of codes is developed based on the research questions and literature review, and additional codes are generated inductively from the data. The coded data are organized into broader themes that reflect the key factors influencing employee performance and IWB. Themes are iteratively refined through constant comparison and validation with the data. The identified themes are interpreted in light of the existing literature and the specific context of UNTL to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research findings

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings from the qualitative study conducted at the National University of Timor Leste (UNTL). The results are organized according to the key themes include job satisfaction, work environment, managerial support, individual creativity, organizational culture, and resource availability. These themes are explored in relation to employee performance and innovative work behavior (IWB) within the context of UNTL.

1. Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction among UNTL employees is influenced by several factors, including the adequacy of resources, recognition and

rewards, and opportunities for professional growth. Informants highlighted the following points: A significant factor affecting job satisfaction among UNTL employees is the adequacy of resources. Many employees have expressed dissatisfaction with the limited resources available for teaching, research, and administrative tasks. This scarcity severely impacts their ability to perform effectively and meet their professional goals.

For instance, faculty members have voiced concerns about the lack of basic materials necessary for conducting lectures and facilitating learning. One faculty member highlighted this issue, stating, "We often struggle to find basic materials for our lectures. This makes it hard to deliver quality education." This scarcity of resources not only hampers their ability to provide high-quality education but also adds stress and frustration, leading to lower job satisfaction. The lack of adequate resources means that employees have to find alternative ways to achieve their objectives, often at the expense of their time and personal funds.

Furthermore, the limited resources available for research activities hinder academic staff from engaging in meaningful research that could contribute to the university's academic reputation and the broader body of knowledge. The absence of sufficient funding, modern equipment, and research materials forces many researchers to curtail their projects or abandon them altogether. This not only affects their career progression but also diminishes the university's potential for innovation and contribution to the academic community. Administrative staff also face similar challenges. The lack of modern office equipment and adequate administrative support tools makes their tasks more time-consuming and difficult. This inadequacy leads to inefficiencies and increased workloads, further exacerbating job dissatisfaction.

Another critical factor influencing job satisfaction among UNTL employees is the recognition and reward system. Many employees feel that recognition and rewards for their efforts are sporadic and insufficient. Recognition is a crucial element in maintaining high levels of motivation and job satisfaction. When employees feel valued and appreciated for their contributions, they are more likely to remain committed and productive. One informant noted, "There is

little recognition for hard work. We need more frequent and meaningful rewards to stay motivated." This sentiment reflects a broader dissatisfaction with how the university acknowledges and rewards its employees. The current system appears to lack a consistent and transparent approach to recognizing achievements and contributions. This inconsistency leads to feelings of underappreciation and demotivation among staff.

Effective recognition and reward systems should include both formal and informal mechanisms to acknowledge employee contributions. Formal recognition might involve awards, bonuses, or promotions, while informal recognition could include verbal appreciation, public acknowledgment, or even small tokens of appreciation. A well-structured recognition system not only boosts morale but also fosters a culture of appreciation and respect within the organization. The lack of meaningful rewards further compounds the issue. Employees need tangible incentives to remain motivated and committed to their roles. These rewards could take various forms, such as financial bonuses, additional leave days, or professional development opportunities. Without adequate rewards, employees may feel that their hard work is going unnoticed and unrewarded, leading to decreased job satisfaction and potentially higher turnover rates.

Lastly, Professional growth and development opportunities are also crucial for job satisfaction. Many employees at UNTL feel that there are limited opportunities for career advancement and professional development. The lack of training programs, workshops, and support for further education significantly impacts their ability to enhance their skills and advance their careers. One administrative staff member commented, "We need more opportunities to attend workshops and training sessions to enhance our skills." This statement underscores the need for more comprehensive professional development programs that cater to the diverse needs of the university's staff. Employees who have access to continuous learning and development opportunities are more likely to feel engaged and satisfied with their jobs.

Professional growth opportunities can take many forms, including on-the-job training, mentorship programs, and formal education opportunities. Providing employees with

access to these resources not only enhances their skills but also increases their sense of value and belonging within the organization. It demonstrates the university's commitment to their personal and professional growth, which in turn fosters a more motivated and satisfied workforce.

Moreover, the absence of clear career advancement paths contributes to the lack of job satisfaction. Employees need to see a future within the organization and understand how they can progress in their careers. Without such clarity and support, they may feel stagnant and unmotivated, leading to decreased productivity and job dissatisfaction. The factors influencing job satisfaction at UNTL have a direct impact on employee performance and, consequently, the university's ability to achieve its goals. When employees are dissatisfied due to inadequate resources, lack of recognition, and limited professional growth opportunities, their motivation and productivity decline. For instance, the scarcity of resources affects the quality of education and research output. Faculty members who are unable to access the necessary materials and equipment struggle to deliver high-quality education and conduct meaningful research. This not only affects their job satisfaction but also diminishes the university's academic reputation and its ability to attract and retain talented staff and students.

Similarly, the lack of recognition and rewards leads to decreased motivation and engagement. Employees who feel undervalued are less likely to put in the extra effort required to excel in their roles. This impacts the overall productivity and effectiveness of the university's operations, hindering its ability to achieve its strategic objectives. Finally, the limited opportunities for professional growth result in a stagnant workforce that is ill-equipped to adapt to changing demands and challenges. This lack of development opportunities hampers the university's ability to innovate and improve its services, ultimately affecting its competitiveness and reputation.

2. Work Environment

The work environment at UNTL encompasses both physical and psychological aspects. Informants shared their experiences related to the work environment, namely

Physical infrastructure, psychological environment. The physical infrastructure of a workplace includes the office spaces, classrooms, laboratories, and other facilities that employees utilize daily. At UNTL, many employees have expressed concerns regarding the state of the physical infrastructure, citing issues such as outdated facilities, inadequate maintenance, and a lack of modern equipment. These concerns significantly impact their ability to perform effectively and achieve their professional goals. The physical and psychological work environment significantly impacts employee performance and IWB. Poor physical infrastructure hinders productivity and innovation, while a negative psychological environment reduces motivation and collaboration. Improving both aspects is essential for enhancing performance and fostering innovation.

The condition of office spaces at UNTL has been a recurring concern among employees. Many have reported that the offices are not only outdated but also poorly maintained, with inadequate lighting, ventilation, and ergonomic furniture. Such conditions can lead to discomfort, health issues, and decreased productivity. A faculty member noted, "Our offices are cramped and poorly lit, which makes it difficult to focus and work efficiently." Inadequate office spaces also hinder collaboration and communication among employees. The lack of common areas and meeting rooms limits opportunities for informal interactions and teamwork, which are crucial for fostering a collaborative work culture. Employees often find themselves working in isolation, which can lead to a sense of disconnection and reduced job satisfaction.

The state of classrooms at UNTL also poses significant challenges. Many classrooms are equipped with outdated furniture and lack essential teaching aids such as projectors, smart boards, and adequate seating arrangements. This not only affects the quality of education but also limits the ability of faculty to engage students effectively. A lecturer remarked, "The classroom facilities are not conducive to modern teaching methods. We struggle to deliver interactive and engaging lectures because of the outdated equipment." Such conditions make it difficult to implement innovative teaching practices and reduce the overall effectiveness of the educational process.

Laboratories are critical for research and practical learning, yet many employees at UNTL have reported that the laboratories are not equipped with modern tools and equipment. This significantly impacts their ability to conduct meaningful research and produce high-quality outputs. A researcher highlighted this issue, stating, "The labs are not equipped with modern tools, which affects our research output." The lack of modern laboratory equipment not only hampers research activities but also limits opportunities for students to gain hands-on experience and develop practical skills. This can have long-term implications for their employability and career prospects.

Another critical issue related to physical infrastructure is the maintenance and upkeep of facilities. Many employees have expressed concerns about the poor maintenance of buildings and equipment, which leads to frequent breakdowns and disruptions in their work. The lack of a systematic maintenance plan exacerbates these issues, making it difficult to address problems promptly and effectively. A staff member commented, "The maintenance of our facilities is often neglected. We frequently face issues like broken equipment and inadequate heating, which disrupt our work and create a frustrating environment." Such conditions not only affect productivity but also contribute to a negative perception of the university as an employer.

The psychological work environment encompasses the interpersonal relationships, organizational culture, and overall emotional climate within the workplace. At UNTL, employees have reported various issues related to the psychological work environment, including lack of collaboration, communication barriers, and a hierarchical culture. These issues significantly impact their job satisfaction, motivation, and ability to innovate. Interpersonal relationships play a crucial role in shaping the work environment. Positive relationships among colleagues can enhance collaboration, support, and job satisfaction. However, many employees at UNTL have reported challenges in building and maintaining effective interpersonal relationships. A faculty member shared, "There is little collaboration between departments. This siloed approach limits our ability to innovate."

The lack of collaboration and communication among different departments leads to a fragmented work environment where employees work in isolation rather than as part of a cohesive team. This not only reduces opportunities for knowledge sharing and innovation but also creates a sense of disconnection and isolation among employees. The organizational culture at UNTL has also been a significant concern for many employees. The culture is described as hierarchical and rigid, with limited opportunities for open communication and feedback. This creates an environment where employees feel undervalued and disconnected from decision-making processes. An administrative staff member noted, "The hierarchical culture here makes it difficult for us to voice our opinions and contribute to decision-making. We often feel like our contributions are not valued." This lack of inclusivity and recognition can lead to decreased motivation and job satisfaction, as employees feel that their efforts are not acknowledged or appreciated.

Effective communication is essential for a positive work environment. However, many employees at UNTL have reported significant communication barriers, both within and across departments. These barriers include a lack of clear communication channels, inadequate information sharing, and limited opportunities for feedback. A faculty member commented, "Communication between departments is often poor. Important information is not shared in a timely manner, which leads to confusion and inefficiencies." Poor communication can lead to misunderstandings, conflicts, and a lack of coordination, which negatively impacts employee morale and productivity.

The physical and psychological work environment at UNTL significantly impacts employee performance and innovative work behavior (IWB). The quality of the work environment plays a crucial role in determining how motivated, engaged, and productive employees are, as well as their ability to generate and implement new ideas. Poor physical infrastructure hinders productivity and innovation by creating a challenging and uncomfortable work environment. Inadequate office spaces, outdated classrooms, and poorly equipped laboratories limit employees' ability to perform their duties effectively and efficiently.

This not only reduces their job satisfaction but also affects the overall quality of education and research output at the university. A negative psychological work environment reduces motivation, collaboration, and innovation. Issues such as lack of collaboration, communication barriers, and a hierarchical culture create a work environment where employees feel undervalued and disconnected. This not only affects their job satisfaction and motivation but also limits their ability to contribute to the university's goals.

When employees feel unsupported and disconnected from their colleagues and the organization, they are less likely to engage in innovative behaviors and contribute new ideas. This can have long-term implications for the university's ability to adapt to changing demands and maintain its competitive edge. Improving both the physical and psychological aspects of the work environment at UNTL is essential for enhancing employee performance and fostering innovation. By addressing issues related to physical infrastructure, such as outdated facilities and inadequate resources, the university can create a more supportive and productive work environment. Similarly, by fostering a positive psychological work environment that promotes collaboration, effective communication, and inclusivity, UNTL can enhance job satisfaction and motivation among its employees. Creating a supportive work environment is not only crucial for the well-being and satisfaction of employees but also for the overall success of the university. A positive work environment enables employees to perform at their best, contribute new ideas, and work together towards achieving the university's goals. By investing in both the physical and psychological dimensions of the work environment, UNTL can build a more resilient and innovative institution that is well-equipped to meet the challenges of the future.

3. Managerial Support

Managerial support at UNTL varies widely across departments and units. Informants discussed their experiences with managerial support and emphasized two factors, namely feedback and guidance and support for innovation. Employees emphasized the need for regular and constructive feedback from

their managers. Many reported that feedback is often infrequent and generic. An administrative staff member stated, "We rarely receive specific feedback on our work. It would help if managers provided more detailed guidance."

Regarding support for innovation, there is a perceived lack of support for innovative initiatives. Employees feel that their ideas are not valued or encouraged by management. A faculty member noted, "We have many ideas for improving our teaching methods, but there is little support from the management to implement them." Effective managerial support is crucial for high employee performance and IWB. When managers provide regular feedback and actively support innovative initiatives, employees feel valued and motivated to perform well and engage in creative activities. The lack of such support at UNTL hinders performance and innovation.

4. Individual Creativity

Individual creativity at UNTL is influenced by personal attributes, opportunities for creative expression, and organizational support. Participants shared insights on these factors: personal attributes, opportunities for creative expression and organizational support. Employees with high intrinsic motivation and cognitive flexibility are more likely to engage in creative activities. A researcher mentioned, "I enjoy coming up with new research ideas. It's my passion, and I feel motivated to pursue it." Opportunities for creative expression are limited due to rigid structures and bureaucratic processes. A faculty member stated, "The bureaucratic procedures make it difficult to experiment with new teaching methods. There needs to be more flexibility." Organizational support for creativity is perceived to be lacking. Employees feel that their creative ideas are not encouraged or supported. An administrative staff member remarked, "We have suggestions for improving processes, but there is little encouragement from the management."

The factors influencing individual creativity directly affect IWB. Employees who are intrinsically motivated and have opportunities for creative expression are more likely to engage in IWB. Organizational support for creativity is essential to foster a culture of innovation at UNTL.

5. Organizational Culture

The organizational culture at UNTL is characterized by hierarchical structures, communication barriers, and a lack of collaboration. The hierarchical nature of the organization limits employees' ability to contribute ideas and participate in decision-making processes. A faculty member noted, "Decisions are often made at the top level, with little input from the lower levels. This limits our ability to contribute." Communication barriers between departments and levels of the organization hinder collaboration and innovation. An administrative staff member commented, "There is little communication between departments. We need more open channels of communication to share ideas." Communication affects the lack of collaboration. The lack of collaboration between departments and units limits the potential for cross-functional innovation. A researcher stated, "Collaboration is essential for innovation. We need more opportunities to work together across departments." The organizational culture at UNTL significantly impacts employee performance and IWB. A hierarchical culture and communication barriers limit employees' ability to perform effectively and engage in innovative activities. Fostering a more inclusive and collaborative culture is essential for enhancing performance and innovation.

6. Resource Availability

The availability of resources, including funding, technology, and infrastructure, is a critical concern for UNTL employees. Informants highlighted the following points: funding, technology, infrastructure. Limited funding affects various aspects of work, from research to administrative operations. A researcher noted, "We struggle to secure funding for our research projects. This limits our ability to conduct meaningful research." Outdated technology and lack of access to modern tools hinder productivity and innovation. An administrative staff member stated, "The computers and software we use are outdated. We need better technology to work efficiently." Inadequate infrastructure, including office spaces and laboratories, impacts employees' ability to perform their tasks effectively. A faculty member commented, "The classrooms are not equipped with modern facilities. This affects the quality of

education we provide." Resource availability directly influences employee performance and IWB. Adequate resources are essential for enabling employees to perform effectively and engage in innovative activities. Addressing the resource constraints at UNTL is crucial for enhancing performance and fostering innovation.

The findings from the study reveal several interconnected factors that influence employee performance and IWB at UNTL. The themes of job satisfaction, work environment, managerial support, individual creativity, organizational culture, and resource availability are all critical in shaping employees' experiences and behaviors. The specific challenges faced by UNTL, such as limited resources, hierarchical structures, and communication barriers, highlight the need for targeted interventions to improve performance and foster innovation. Enhancing organizational culture, improving resource availability, and providing support for individual creativity are key strategies for addressing these challenges.

IV. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

A. Conclusion

From the discussion above, it can be concluded that there are several factors influencing IWB and performance, namely job satisfaction, work environment, managerial support, individual creativity, organization culture and resource availability. To address these challenges and improve employee performance and IWB, UNTL should consider the following strategies, first, Enhancing Resource Allocation, increasing funding and updating technology and infrastructure are critical for enabling employees to perform their tasks effectively and engage in innovation. Second, fostering a collaborative culture, implementing initiatives to break down silos and promote inter-departmental collaboration will facilitate open communication and innovation. Last, supporting professional growth, providing more opportunities for professional development and recognizing and rewarding employees' efforts will boost job satisfaction and motivation.

B. Suggestion

The discussion related to this research is still very limited and requires a lot of input,

suggestions for future authors are to study it more deeply and comprehensively.

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