

**THE IMPACT OF CAREER PLANNING, EMPLOYEES' AUTONOMY AND
MANAGER RECOGNITION ON EMPLOYEES' PRODUCTIVITY IN
MANUFACTURING FIRMS**

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ABSTRACT

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This study investigated the effects of career planning, employees' autonomy, and manager recognition on employee productivity. A survey of 222 employees in Penang manufacturing firms was conducted. A conceptual framework was developed to answer research questions about whether career planning, employee autonomy, and manager recognition contributed to employee productivity. In other words, the data confirmed the existence of a statistically significant relationship between independent variables: employee autonomy and manager recognition; and the dependent variable, employees' productivity. Career planning was identified as a less significant contributor to employees' productivity than the other two predictors. Managerial recognition is considered a better contributor, along with employees' autonomy. These findings offer implications for research on employees' productivity as an asset for manufacturing firms and suggest that in manufacturing firms, managers should have career planning discussions with their direct reports. These discussions set employees' expectations for promotion and increase their level of productivity and involvement in the growth of manufacturing firms. Recognizing employees regularly for work well-done increases their sense of accomplishment towards the expected promotion, thus helping to ensure they always produce high productivity for manufacturing firms.

KEYWORDS: Career Planning, Employees’ Autonomy, Manager Recognition, Employees’ Productivity, Manufacturing Firms

INTRODUCTION

Identifying the factors that influence or maintain staff productivity is critical for improving employee performance and increasing manufacturing firm success. As a result, it is crucial to look into the productivity drivers of workers in each type of business, especially in manufacturing, where it is a top priority. Manufacturing companies serve as inventors, service providers, suppliers, and distributors to huge corporations as well as the general public. Manufacturing enterprises are a growing industry that contributes to the global economy and is the economic backbone of developing countries, according to previous literature (Rahimi & Anarjan,2018).Manufacturing companies are now an important element of global society and the economy, as they employ a huge number of people who must be productive. Manufacturing firms employ a small number of workers and rely solely on them. As noted in a previous study, the situation is different in the case of huge corporations, which have a larger workforce, greater market power, and sufficient financial resources to increase this amount. To raise productivity, reduce attrition, increase revenues, and expand their business with their limited personnel, manufacturing companies must increase employee productivity. Various scholars have looked into customer satisfaction, staff performance, employee retention, business profitability, and a range of other outcomes like production, safety, and firm commitment (Kang, Yu& Lee,2017;Lartey,2018).

Other researchers have studied factors contributing to employee productivity, including rewards and recognition, learning opportunities and supervisor support, and the work environment. In their analysis of the determinants of employee productivity, previous studies were made by measuring employee productivity against five job attributes and task characteristics: task importance, task diversity, task identity, autonomy, and feedback. They concluded that task diversity was a key driver of employee productivity and found that feedback and task importance were positively associated with engagement (Imas,2018). Although different studies focus on the effects of various factors on employee productivity, the current literature indicates many studies that focus on the contribution of career planning, employee autonomy, and manager recognition to employee engagement. The current article attempts to fill the current gap in research by examining the relationship between the independent variable (IV) of career planning, employees’ autonomy, and manager recognition, and the dependent variable (DV) of employee productivity. This will not only fill the current gap in research but will also have practical implications in the field. To achieve the stated goals, this paper will first present the theoretical perspectives and reviews of the main constructs of the study before presenting the methodology, results, and discussion (Doroshkevych, Ivasyuk& Salata,2018).

2. Research Objectives and Research Questions

2.1 Research Objectives

Objectives of the study covered:

1. To identify the relationship between career planning on employees’ productivity in manufacturing firms.
2. To examine the relationship between employees’ autonomy on employees’ productivity in manufacturing firms.
3. To evaluate the relationship between manager recognition on employees’ productivity in manufacturing firms.

2.2 Research Questions of the Study

1. Is there any significant relationship between career planning on employees’ productivity in manufacturing firms?
2. Is there any significant relationship between employees’ autonomy on employees’ productivity in manufacturing firm?
3. Is there any significant relationship between manager recognition on employees’ productivity in manufacturing firms

3. Literature Review

3.1 Career Planning

Manufacturing companies have difficulty maintaining high-performing staff in today's global and competitive business climate. Manufacturing companies include career planning into their strategic plans to promote employee productivity growth and workforce stability to stay competitive. As prior research has shown, careers are made up of evolving patterns of work experience; persons typically advance through each consecutive career stop along this evolutionary path. Employees need to see long-term plans for prospects presented to them because careers are not static (Siregar,2017;Gulzar,2017).According to a survey of 16,500 employees conducted, the best practices and personnel management business currently owned by research and technology advisory firm Gartner, employees join different manufacturing firms because they don't see opportunities to grow in their current one. Managers and their employees can explore career options in the workplace during career planning conversations. In this study, I defined career planning as a process in which an employee identifies his or her skills, interests, knowledge, abilities, and aspirations; identifies jobs or positions that are appropriate for the stated capabilities; and plans steps and actions that increase the employee's chances of landing the job(Munir, Salleh, Omar, Aburumman, Hazimah, Mat& Almhairat,2018). Managers and their employees can explore career options in the workplace during career planning conversations. In this study, I defined career planning as a process in which an employee identifies his or her skills, interests, knowledge, abilities, and aspirations; identifies jobs or positions that are appropriate for the stated capabilities; and plans steps and actions that increase the employee's chances of landing the job (Teychenne, Parker, Teychenne, Sahlqvist, Macfarlane& Costigan,2018).

Supporting employees on their chosen career pathways requires mentorship or contributions from management. Career planning is based on the concept that once a person begins working in a manufacturing firm, they will attempt to move up and around the company if given the option, or depart if no such opportunity exists. As previously said, career planning entails discussing and analyzing a potential professional path for an individual based on his or her abilities, weaknesses, interests, and potential (Wendling & Sagas,2018;Yan,Tang, Zhang & Zhai,2018).It assists employees in identifying future career alternatives that will give them both satisfaction and challenges that will keep them active and engaged. Manufacturing companies and their management teams play a critical role in fostering their employees' career ambitions since they must collaborate with employees on career development activities to continue to offer high-quality performance in an ever-changing work environment. For good career planning, a manager-employee relationship is required, and manager recognition ensures that the employee is on the right track toward completing the phases leading up to the next career chapter (Monteiro, Monteiro,Torregrossa& Travassos,2018;Fasbender,Wöhrmann,Wang& Klehe,2018).

3.2 Employees’ Autonomy

Employees are increasingly expressing emotions of stress at work as a result of micromanaging by too controlling managers. Micromanagement has been characterized in previous

studies as the conduct of a person who determines and controls the intricacies of tasks performed by his or her employees, instructing them what to do, when to do it, and how to do it. According to previous research, this managerial style inhibits subordinate employees from having any form of autonomy, resulting in increased pressure (Bureau, Mageau, Morin, Gagne, Forest, Papachristopoulos, Lucas, Thibault, Landry & Parenteau, 2018). Employee autonomy, in contrast to micromanagement, has been shown to reduce stress, boost morale, and contribute to overall well-being. Employee autonomy is the single most essential factor in boosting productivity in the workplace. Employee autonomy refers to an employee's ability to make decisions about where, when, and how they work. This definition is adopted by several experts, with early management theorists emphasizing the concept of employee autonomy (Yang & Zhao, 2018; Malinowska, Tokarz & Wardzichowska, 2018). It is expressed in the four principles of Scientific Management by the third principle, which states that we shall work for approximately three-quarters of our time using any manner that fits us. This is an initial concept for workplace autonomy, giving employees the freedom to make pertinent decisions at work. Employee autonomy has been the subject of numerous studies (Tummers, Steijn, Nevicka & Heerema, 2018; Kottwitz, Schade, Burger, Radlinger & Elfering, 2018). Employee autonomy experiences have also been studied in the past, and consistent influences on employee productivity have been identified. Their findings showed that job autonomy was associated with all hypothesized outcomes, including job satisfaction, family satisfaction, life satisfaction, stress and well-being, and dizziness intentions, among others, in a study of the relationship between family support, job autonomy perceived control, and employee well-being using a hierarchical regression model. As a result, while enhancing pleasure and well-being, autonomy also enhances work-life balance, which employees and businesses aspire to (Cai, Lysova, Khapova & Bossink, 2018; Martela & Riekkii, 2018).

3.3 Manager Recognition

In a poll conducted by Marks for the Washington Post, seventeen thousand people in the United States stated they were actively looking for new jobs, with the top reason being a lack of recognition in their existing roles. Researchers and businesses are becoming increasingly interested in employee recognition. Employee recognition has been the subject of previous research that has published qualitative articles studying it from a human resources viewpoint, intending to clarify the conceptual nuances and limitations of employee recognition. Non-cash employee recognition was compared to cash-based prizes in Canadian and Australian organizations, with the conclusion that, despite their popularity, non-cash rewards do not replace cash-based performance programs (Khan, Yang, Xie & Ringler, 2017; Kok, Ormel, Broerse, Kane, Namakhoma, Otiso, Sidat, Kea, Taegtmeier, Theobald & Dieleman, 2017). The process of associating a reward with accomplishments, such as the completion of a task or project, or the attainment of a goal, is known as recognition. It can take the shape of money in the case of a cash prize, or it can take the form of non-monetary praise or appreciation in the case of verbal or written praise or appreciation. Managers frequently employ workplace recognition programs as a motivational tool, according to a previous study. In most circumstances, management appreciation takes the form of non-monetary gratitude either verbally or in writing. Many academics advocate for managers to use non-monetary incentives to boost employee engagement, productivity, and satisfaction. "Workplace recognition stimulates, gives a sense of success, and makes employees feel valued for their work," according to several previous articles (Cheng, 2017; Gayed, Tan, La-Montagne, Milner, Dedy, Milligan-Saville, Madan, Calvo, Christensen, Mykletun, Glozier & Harvey, 2018).

Employee recognition has been shown to enhance not only individual employee engagement but also productivity and firm loyalty, resulting in higher retention. Employee well-being,

willingness to learn, job happiness, and intrinsic motivation have all been linked to managerial recognition. The study surveyed 249 employees and 151 managers in nine Canadian organizations, obtaining 130 usable dyads, to better understand the influence of manager and colleague recognition on employee engagement in the workplace. Their findings support the theory that management recognition leads to meaning, which in turn contributes to employee behavioral engagement at work. Managerial praise is a powerful motivation for employees, especially when combined with career planning sessions. It has the psychological effect of reassuring employees that they are on pace to meet their objectives, potentially paving the way for their next career aspirations (Authayarat & Umemuro,2018; Zakrzewska-Bielawska,2018).

3.4 Employees’ Productivity

Employees' outstanding work performance determines an organization's overall performance. Employees who are in charge of completing a task that their bosses have allocated to them. While the success of a company is measured by the performance of its personnel. Employees are workers who are in charge of carrying out any daily job obligations while focusing all operations on attaining the firm's objectives. Employee performance refers to an employee's talents, abilities, and competencies in a company (Akinwale,2017;Pawirosumarto& Iriani,2018). Previous literature reviews have found a link between employee performance in terms of work quality and productivity, skills and competencies, creativity and innovation, problem-solving and decision-making, job knowledge, attitudes and discipline, communication, teamwork, management skills, and professionalism and job performance in general. In their study, previous literature claimed that an employee in a corporation has a significant role to play, particularly in a position designed to attain maximum profitability over a lengthy period (Halomoan,2018;Ahmad,Jamin,Beta, Ismail,Sakarji& Zain,2018). Employees also have a role to play in ensuring the continued survival of their companies in the global market, as well as their ability to take the companies forward in comparison to their competitors. When an employee can accomplish a task flawlessly, they are said to be efficient and skilled. Firms are going forward to achieve the success that has been set based on the vision and mission that has been designed on what has to be achieved in a task as a result of success in the implementation of a task (Massoudi & Hamdi,2017;Sutrisno& Sunarsi,2018).

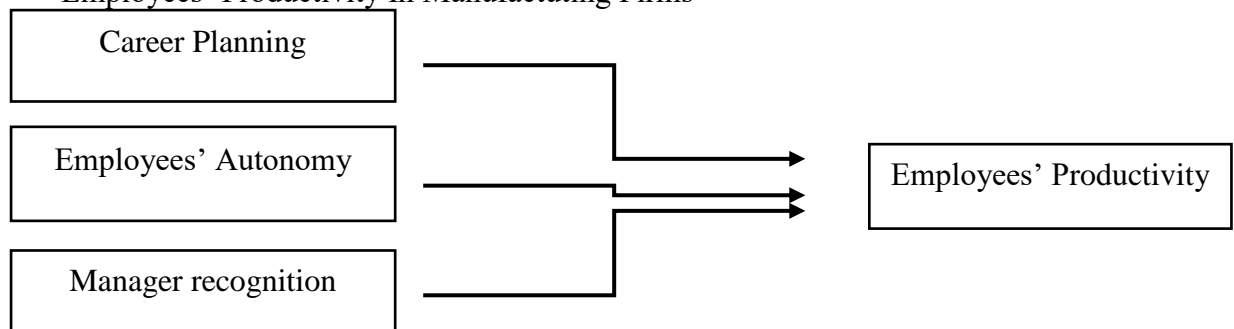
4. Conceptual Framework

4.1 Independent Variables

- Career Planning
- Employees’ Autonomy
- Manager Recognition

4.2 Dependent Variable

- Employees’ Productivity In Manufacturing Firms



4.3 Hypothesis Development

H1. There is significant relationship between career planning on employees’ productivity in manufacturing firms.

H2. There is significant relationship between employees’ autonomy on employees’ productivity in manufacturing firm.

H3. There is significant relationship between manager recognition on employees’ productivity in manufacturing firms.

5. Data Analysis

5.1 Participants

The data was collected from 28 electrical manufacturing firms, 361 questionnaires were distributed and 222 questionnaires were analysis among the employees. The respondents were selected using the stratified sampling technique.

5.2 Measurement Scale

Questionnaires are designed in Linkert Scale (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly Agree).

5.3 Data Analysis

The data obtained were studied using SmartPLS version 3.7.8 to discuss the findings obtained. SmartPLS is highly recommended by statistical scholars in producing accurate analysis of the cause and effect relationship of each variable. SmartPLS is also referred to as a large multivariate analysis technique in social and psychological research. SmartPLS is capable of analyzing measurement model evaluation and structural model evaluation.

Table 1 shown the Loading, Composite Reliability (CR), Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value for each construct studied and the lowest value is 0.5044 and the highest value is 0.6242. These values are greater than 0.5 (> 0.5), confirming that the study construct is able to explain the mean change of variance within the items (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Gefen & Straub, 2005; Henseler, Ringle & Sinkovics, 2009).

Table 1 .Loading, CR & AVE Results

	<i>Loading</i>	<i>CR</i>	<i>AVE</i>
Career Planning		0.9152	0.5743
CP1	0.7802		
CP2	0.7869		
CP3	0.8164		
CP4	0.7835		
CP5	0.7782		
CP6	0.7031		
CP7	0.7223		
CP8	0.6819		
Employees’ Autonomy		0.8902	0.5044

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EA1	0.7475		
EA2	0.7593		
EA3	0.7484		
EA4	0.7286		
EA5	0.7484		
EA6	0.7601		
EA7	0.7956		
EA8	0.7338		
Manager Recognition		0.9305	0.6242
MR1	0.7725		
MR2	0.7828		
MR3	0.8314		
MR4	0.8163		
MR5	0.8277		
MR6	0.7834		
MR7	0.6928		
MR8	0.8068		
Employees’ Productivity		0.8993	0.5296
EP1	0.7682		
EP2	0.7446		
EP3	0.7677		
EP4	0.8088		
EP5	0.7002		
EP6	0.7712		
EP7	0.7811		
EP8	0.7475		

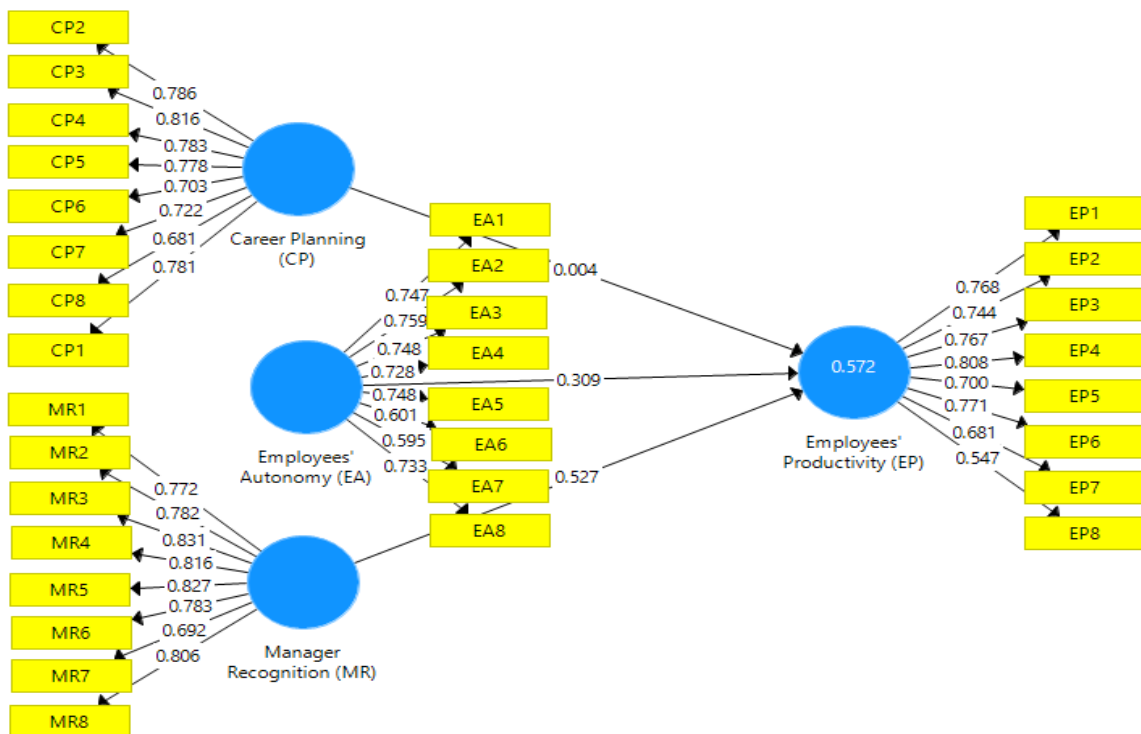


Figure 1: Structural Model Direct Effects

The discriminant validity test was measured using the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) criterion test and cross-loading (Henseler et al., 2009). Table 2 below shows the output from the HTMT analysis. The results can be calculated easily using the formula (Henseler, Ringle & Sarstedt, 2015).

Table 2
Discriminant Validity

Constructs	CP	EA	EP	MR
CP	0.7582			
EA	0.5247	0.7103		
EP	0.5288	0.6267	0.7276	
MR	0.5540	0.5978	0.7145	0.7902

Note: Values in Bold face are the square root values of average variance extracted

5.4 Assessment of Structural Model

The findings for testing this direct effect model using SmartPLS software package version 3.7.8 through the structural equation model. This measurement aims to test the direct effect model and the effective model of the mediated variable. Therefore, empirical evidence has been used to construct a direct effect model, as shown in Figure 3.

Table 3
Summary of Hypotheses

Relationship	Summary of Hypotheses				
	beta	Std Error	T-Value	P-Value	Decision
CP->EP	0.0078	0.05540	0.0734	0.9248	Not-Significant
EA->EP	0.3118	0.06384	4.9106	0.0000	Significant
MR->EP	0.5274	0.06128	8.6144	0.0000	Significant

6.Result

6.1 Career Planning

The results obtained showed that the career planning variable have NOT-significantly affectson employees’ productivity in manufacturing firms ($\beta = 0.0078$; $t = 0.0734$; $p = 0.9248$). H1Rejected. The results also showed that career planning contributed 0.4% ($R^2 = 0.004$) to employees’ productivity in manufacturing firms.

6.2Employees’ Autonomy

The results obtained showed that employees’ autonomy variable significantly affects employees’ productivity in manufacturing firms ($\beta = 0.3118$; $t = 4.9106$; $p = 0.0000$). H2 Accepted. The results also showed that employees’ autonomy contributed 30.9% ($R^2 = 0.309$) to employees’ productivity in manufacturing firms.

6.3Manager Recognition

The results obtained showed that manager recognition variable significantly affects employees’ productivity in manufacturing firms ($\beta = 0.5274$; $t = 8.6144$; $p = 0.0000$). H3

Accepted. The results also showed that manager recognition contributed 52.7% ($R^2 = 0.527$) to employees’ productivity in manufacturing firms.

7. Discussion

The goal of the employee productivity-based study was to look into the impacts of career planning, employee autonomy, and management recognition on employee productivity, which leads to better performance and helps the company achieve its goals. A stratified sample strategy was used to pick 222 employees from Penang Electrical Manufacturing Firms for a face-to-face survey. The findings of this study found no evidence for the proposed link between career planning and employee productivity. In other words, employee autonomy and managerial recognition were found to have a favorable impact on employee productivity. Expected returns are identified as career promotion chances grounded in career planning talks in this study, which supports that viewpoint.

Employee autonomy enforces this sense of achievement of the intended reward. In other words, the employee is confident in his or her ability to make decisions and choices in the performance of his or her duties. The "carrot," or expectation of a reward, is proof that you're on the correct course, as well as acknowledgment from your boss. This study, as described, will be used to investigate and validate several circumstances that can encourage employees and keep them engaged because they are confident in the potential rewards. This study's conclusions have significant and essential consequences for manufacturing companies and their leaders. Manufacturing companies may adopt easy three-step planning to keep their staff motivated, according to one study. First and foremost, employees must believe that they have the potential to succeed in manufacturing companies. Such promotion could be within the employee's existing responsibilities, toward supervisory and managerial roles, or to a different department or sector of the company.

Employee productivity suffered as a result of not following these three processes in planning. As a result, making a progress plan for each existing position is a useful strategy to handle this. Employees must be trusted in their existing jobs, in addition to their perceptions of future advancement. Such trust can be shown in the sense of autonomy that managers provide their staff in carrying out their responsibilities. To put it another way, managers should avoid micromanaging their personnel to the greatest extent possible. Finally, acknowledging employees is a good approach to ensure that they are on track for a planned promotion or a future position recommendation. These three aspects work together to produce intrinsic and extrinsic motivators for employees, resulting in increased productivity and performance.

8. Limitations and Future Prospects

Although this study finds that career planning has little effect on employee productivity and that employee autonomy and management recognition have a big impact on employee productivity, it still has certain shortcomings that need to be addressed. To begin, the researchers utilized a self-administered face-to-face questionnaire that allowed individuals to answer questions without having to explain why they chose certain options. Because some participants may fill out their forms methodically without understanding the question, there may be data bias in this situation. Even though some safeguards were put in place to prevent this, some data may have made it through and been included in the study. The study's sample limit to manufacturing enterprises in Penang is another flaw. As a result, the study's findings should not be applied to major corporations or other countries. More research is needed before such broad generalizations can be made, and this could be a future study area.

9. Conclusion

These organizations were tasked with looking into the impacts of career planning, employee autonomy, and managerial recognition on employee productivity. Employee productivity is studied from the standpoint of employee competencies and capabilities. The first research question investigated if career-planning talks, employee autonomy in job performance, and management acknowledgment influenced employee productivity. The second research question was whether there were any significant variations in the contributions of career planning, employee autonomy, and management recognition in employee productivity estimates if any existed. To answer the research questions, a multi-standard conceptual framework was developed. The findings of the study show that there is a statistically significant association between the independent factors and employee productivity among manufacturing personnel. The results also show that there are disparities in predictor contributions. To that aim, career planning, along with employee autonomy and management recognition, was recognized as a bad contributor to employee productivity. Manager recognition, on the other hand, has a greater impact on staff productivity.

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