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Contributing Factors in Informal Worker Performance: A Cross-Sectional Study in an Agro-Fish Market in Lamongan, East Java, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Performance presumably improves and develops the quality of an organization's products and services. This study analyzed some factors that are likely contributing to informal worker performance as the informal sector has distinct characteristics from the formal one because it is a more flexible setting with no hierarchical position nor fixed income which usually drives worker performance. We analyze worker performance at one of the Agro-Fish Markets in Indonesia, located in Lamongan, East Java. The multifactor leadership questionnaire (MLQ) was used for formulating the leadership styles, while motivation was measured using the multidimensional work motivation scale (MMWS), which was based on Self-determination Theory (SDT). Safety culture was measured using a questionnaire based on the safety culture approach. Performance was assessed using the behavioral anchor rating scale (BARS). The research design is causal explanatory. Our study involved 171 workers. We use the binary logistic regression to identify the relationship between leadership style, motivation, and age towards safety culture as well as the relationship between safety culture and age towards worker performance. We found that safety culture and age could impact 40.1% on worker performance. Although motivation directly impacted safety culture, the study found that it had an indirect impact on performance. The agro-fish market's characteristics as an informal sector may explain why the findings differ from research on the formal sector.

Keywords: Performance, leadership style, motivation, safety culture, informal worker

Introduction

The workplace is segmented into formal and informal sectors. International Labor Organization (ILO) has recently reported that more than 60% of workers are employed in the unorganized sector, where they lack access to social security, labor laws, and fair working conditions. Additionally, the informal sector is marked by several inadequacies related to the nature of the activities. For example, labor law provides other workers with job security, working hour limitations, holidays, minimum wage, and health and safety protections that are not available to workers in the informal sectors due to a lack of adequate recognition, regulation, or enforcement. Indeed, some studies revealed that job security can improve worker satisfaction and performance (Yuanto et al., 2022; Sanyal et al., 2018).

Productivity and performance are some of the factors assumed to improve and develop the quality of an organization's products and services. Some factors including mental attitude, education, skills, management, industrial relations, income, nutrition and health, social security, work environment, and work facilities may influence performance (Bonenberger et al., 2014; Terzioglu et al., 2016). Others than those factors the work atmosphere and environment that

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mostly cause job stress and lower performance. With this scant environment, the number of customers may decrease as they prefer better organizations with higher-quality production (Borhani et al., 2016; Tate et al., 2014).

Leadership style and work motivation have a relationship with performance (Guterresa et al., 2020). Research on health service and government organizational units has shown a significant relationship between leadership style and work motivation with worker performance (Hanafi, 2019; Rad & Yarmohammadian, 2006; Shintia & Rachmiyati, 2016). Speaking about safety culture and behavior, the safety behavior variables could have a significant relationship with employee performance (Christina et al., 2012; Ünal et al., 2021). Theoretically, some studies assume a relationship between performance and leadership style, work motivation, and safety culture (Christian et al., 2009; Leroy et al., 2012).

The motivation to act safely needs to be supported by the ambient work environment. Safe behavior is a form of safety culture used for evaluating a person's performance (Folkard & Tucker, 2003). lack of awareness of safe behavior may lead to work accidents (Dodoo & Al-Samarraie, 2019; Zhao et al., 2016).

Safe behavior should be practice in any type of work, for example, a fish market. Every day hundreds of informal workers such as freelancers, lifting workers, drivers, and middlemen come and work in markets. Transport workers usually have a leader, namely an owner or skipper of the fish trades. Initial observations have demonstrated that a lot of workers engaged in unsafe behavior such as not wearing personal protective equipment. The leadership style of the skipper is assumed to influence their behavior. For example, skippers seem indifferent to the workers' unsafe behavior despite their firm leadership style in certain respects.

Leadership styles could be analyzed using the multifactor leadership questionnaire (MLQ) developed by Bass (1990). The MLQ can identify two types of leadership styles, namely transformational and transactional (Yukl, 2010). On the other hand, motivation was measured using the multidimensional work motivation scale (MMWS) which was based on the self-determination theory (SDT) proposed by Deci and Ryan, (2008). In terms of safety culture, this study adopted the safety culture aspect by Cooper (2002). Performance, in this respect, was assessed using the behavioral anchor rating scale (BARS) expected to reduce the level of subjectivity in the assessment (Kustiadi, 2018). Within the areas, this study aimed to analyze the relationship between leadership style, motivation, age, and safety culture on worker performance.

Material and Methods

Our study is causal explanatory research. This study was designed for the workers in the Agro-fish Market in Lamongan, a regency located on the north coast of East Java Province, Indonesia. There are 50 fish markets in the Agro-fish Market, with a total of 300 registered workers. However, only 171 were involved in this study according to simple random sampling. A sample of 171 respondents was agreed to participate in the study and signed informed consent before the study conducted.

Independent variables included in this study are leadership style, motivation, and age, while the dependent variable is worker performance. Binary logistic regression was performed two times to identify the relationship between variables. The first regression was carried out to identify the relationship between leadership style, motivation, and age toward safety culture. Whereas the second regression was to point out the relationship between safety culture and age towards worker performance. Data were collected from questionnaires and interviews.

The multifactor leadership questionnaire used for leadership assessment was distributed to the workers (Bass, 1990). The questionnaire was on a Likert scale which is more common and reliable for a larger amount of data than other scales (Cooper et al., 2006). This questionnaire employed 0 to 4 scales (0: Not at all; 1: Once in a while; 2: Sometimes; 3: Fairly often; 4: Frequently, if not always). The average scale of each leadership style value would indicate types of leadership styles.

In this study, we employed a shortened version of the questionnaire form 6S (MLQ-6S), which includes 21 items about leadership style. Questions about transformational style explored ideal behavior, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual considerations. While those related to the transactional style were about contingent rewards and management by exception. At the same time, the Laisseze-faire style is related to the Laisseze-faire leadership factor and passive management by exception. The highest average score on each questionnaire was used to determine types of leadership styles (Rowold, 2005).

Work motivation was assessed using the multidimensional work motivation scale (MWMS) questionnaire. MWMS consisted of six dimensions, namely motivation, extrinsic regulation social, extrinsic regulation material, introjected regulation, identified regulation, and intrinsic motivation. MMWS was developed based on the self-determination theory (SDT) proposed by Deci and Ryan (2008). In this study, worker motivation was assumed to affect safety culture in the workplace by asking questions e.g., "why are you or will you put forth the effort to take health and safety actions in your current workplace?". Respondents could choose answers on a 1-7 scale (1: Not at all; 2: Very little; 3: A little; 4: Moderately; 5: Strongly; 6: Very strongly; 7: Completely). The average score of their answers determined their motivation level.

Safety culture usually can be measured using a self-administered survey (Cooper, 2002; Guldenmund, 2000). There are three main components of safety culture, namely psychological, situational, and behavioral, which can be measured qualitatively and quantitatively (Cooper, 2018). Physiologically, what a person feels is closely related to personal aspects (person), such as ways of thinking, values, knowledge, motivation, and expectations. In a situational aspect, people show daily behavior, such as daily behavior in the company, and habits in safety. The behavioral aspect is related to the work environment such as the company's attitude towards safety, for example, the OHS management system, standard operating procedures, safety committees, equipment, and work environment (Kurniasih & Rachmadita, 2013).

Besides that, worker performance was measured using the behavioral anchor rating scale (BARS) questionnaire (Klieger et al., 2018). Work productivity was assessed based on seven aspects of work performance i.e., service, initiative and work ethic, communication skills, flexibility and resilience, problem-solving skills, responsibility, and teamwork with a Likert scale of 1-6 from completely ineffective to very effective. This method described the expected behavior from the expected level of performance. The BARS introduced by Smith and Kendall (1963) focuses on the issues of reliability and validity of performance appraisals. It combines various traditional performance appraisal methods such as the graphic rating scale and the critical incident method (Swaartbooi, 2016).

Results and Discussion

The informal sector is a distinct workplace where it is challenging to generalize about quality and nature. However, the characteristics of the informal sector are certain. These features include low job security, such as lack of protection against non-payment of wages, retrenchment without warning or pay, unsatisfactory occupational health and safety conditions, and a lack of social benefits like pensions, sick pay, and health insurance. The informal workforce is accounted for more than 60% of the global workforce which benefited the economies of most developing countries. Furthermore, it was discovered that in countries like Myanmar, Indonesia, and the Lao PDR informal employment makes up to 80% of all non-agricultural employment (World Bank, 2020).

Figure 1 depicts a complete conceptual research framework displaying the interaction between the variables. It describes the possibilities of factors influencing performance directly (red arrow) and indirectly (blue arrow). Motivation and age were exogenous variables predicted to contribute to safety culture as they could affect performance. In an organizational context, motivation is defined as an underlying drive to complete tasks and achieve goals, regardless of whether the motive is internal or external (Šijaković, 2017). The degree of safety culture and

performance may vary according to motivation. Contrast, workers will experience aging where they are at risk of functional decline. Aging brings changes in cognition and emotion, which have an impact on subjective well-being, social relationships, decision-making, and self-control. As a result, they might face restraint functions in their work.

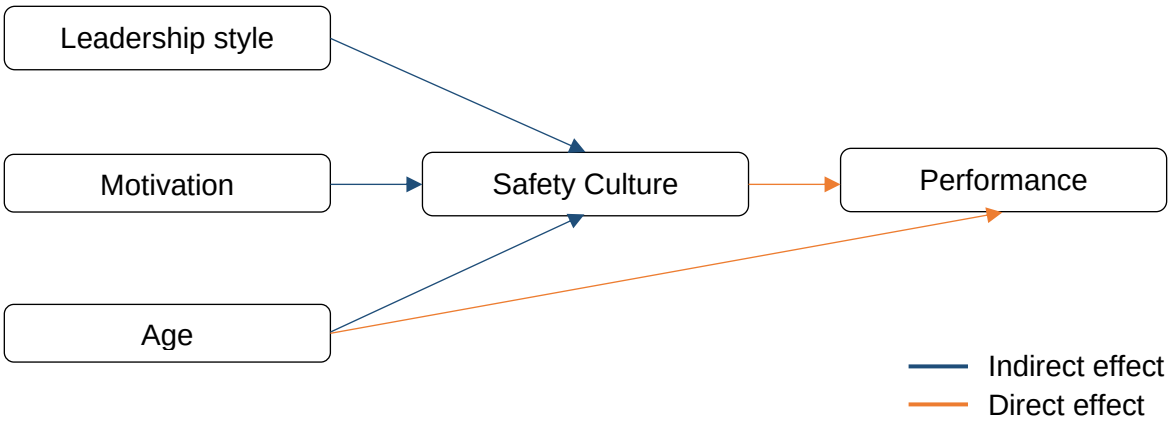

Figure 1. The Conceptual Research Framework

The classic motivation theory initiated by Maslow mentions a hierarchy of needs that might influence an individual's motivation (Maslow, 1943). Security requirements in the second level of needs must be addressed after fulfilling physiological needs. In a workplace, security can be anything that gives employees a sense of safety. Security indicators that affect motivation-performance in one of the healthcare providers were assessed from working condition, organization staff policy, workplace safety, and health and pension insurance (Ştefan et al., 2020). Safety needs in their analysis included personal security, financial security, health, well-being, a safety net against accidents or illness, and their adverse impacts.

Relationship between motivation, leadership, and age towards safety culture

Table 1. Factors affecting safety culture

Predictors		**Safety Culture**		**Sig.**	**OR**	**R^2**
		Fair	Good			
Motivation	Less	8 (13.3)	52 (86.7)	0.000*	0.078	
	High[a]	71(64.0)	40 (36.0)			
Leadership	Transformational	34 (49.3)	35 (50.7)	0.345		0.302
	Transactional	7 (38.9)	11 (61.1)	0.116		
	Laisseze faire leadership[a]	38 (45.2)	46 (54.8)			
Age[b]				0.552		

[a] Reference group
[b] Continuous data
*Significance level at 0.05
Notes: The values in parentheses are percentages within a row

The motivation was the only factor that exhibited a significant correlation with safety culture ($p < 0.05$) with a 30.2% effect. Informal workers who were less motivated were 0.078 times less likely to have a good safety culture compared to highly motivated ones. The current research did

not perform a linear relationship between motivation and performance because less motivated workers (86.7%) mostly implemented a good safety culture. Meanwhile, the vast majority of the highly motivated workers (64%) had a fair safety culture implementation. Leadership and age did not show a significant correlation with safety culture ($p > 0.05$); hence, these predictors were removed in the new framework (Figure 2).

Motivation is a core element in people's overall behavior (Šijaković, 2017), and it drives individuals to behave in certain ways (Abimbola et al., 2019). Scientists have empirically found that motivated employees bring benefits to organizational performance. Research has shown a linearity between motivation and performance. However, different instruments were carried out in assessing worker motivation. Lee and Raschke (2016) conducted a literature review that extended the definition of motivation involving multiple disciplines. Several external aspects need to be considered. Nilasari et al. (2021) who analyzed employee motivation changes during the COVID-19 pandemic mentioned only extrinsic motivation factors e.g., wages, incentives, promotion, etc. A study conducted by Zameer et al. (2014) grouped motivational factors into monetary (salaries and wages, bonuses, and special individual incentives) and non-monetary (working conditions, job status, job security, and job enrichment). The use of the factors varies according to the objectives, subjects, and variables evaluated. Various prior research analyzes theories of motivation with different indicators. The difference in research outcomes may be due to the types of work sectors sampled. Meanwhile, most studies identified the relationship between motivation and performance more among formal workers rather than informal workers.

The informal sector has distinct characteristics from the formal one. The informal sector is a more flexible setting that is not always bound by corporation rules different from the formal sector. In the informal sector, there is no hierarchy of positions and fixed income; therefore, workers are paid according to their discretion. It could be concluded that there are no external variables that drive worker motivation. Therefore, a questionnaire about worker motivation for safety culture exclusively took into account internal factors and became the implementation of SDT.

Less motivated workers were likely to possess a good safety culture and vice versa. Robescu and Iancu (2016) found a relationship between motivation and performance as an inverted-U function. It suggests that performance does not improve as motivation gets higher. However, it may improve when motivation is moderate. In the informal sector, standards governing safety culture are lax and not governed by Indonesia's labor regulations on occupational health and safety (OHS). Only the formal sector has labor legislation. Essentially, OHS procedures in both formal and informal sectors are governed by Indonesian health law. As a result, the execution of a safety culture in an informal work sector is lacking. Currently, primary healthcare centers in Indonesia are in charge of the implementation and supervision of OHS activities through *Pos UKK* (Unit for OHS efforts in a local setting). This unit is responsible for all preventive, promotional, and curative OHS efforts for informal workers.

Relationship between Safety Culture, Age, and Performance

Table 2. Factors affecting performance

Predictors		**Performance**		**Sig.**	**OR**	**R^2**
		Low	High			
Safety Culture	Fair	74 (93.7)	5 (6.3)	0.028*	0.281	0.401
	Good[a]	56 (60.9)	36 (39.1)			
Age[b]				0.048*	1.057	

[a] Reference group
[b] Continuous data
*Significance at level 0.05
Notes: The values in parentheses are percentages within a row

Safety culture and age likely affected performance. Table 2 infers that a good safety culture will impact more workers with a high performance. Workers with a fair safety culture were 0.281 less likely to perform well than workers with a good safety culture. Meanwhile, age and performance had a negative association. A one-year increase in a person's age is possibly a one-time more significant for having lower performance. Safety culture and age may have a 40.1% impact on changes in performance. The shorter framework was portrayed in Figure 2.

Safety culture in the workplace will make workers and coworkers feel secure. Organizational attempts to a convenient and safe physical environment have been studied to improve work performance (Grant et al., 2019; Jinnett et al., 2017). Research conducted in the Production Planning and Inventory Control (PPIC) section in a consumer goods company suggested that employees could have optimal performance if they felt safe, had a good working environment, and showed discipline (Putri et al., 2018). A company that maintains a safe working environment will keep employees safe from accidents and adverse effects on health-related work. Employees can be more productive when the organization fosters a sense of security and high performance.

Currently, the working world particularly in industrialized nations has been dealing with difficulties e.g., an aging workforce. Many businesses currently try to combat the aging workforce trend by fostering a healthy, high-performing, fully employed workforce and preventing temporary or permanent job impairment (Clark & Ritter, 2020; Jinnett et al., 2017). In the same way, the Indonesian working-age population (aged 15 years and up) is expectedly to grow by 2.9 million people each year on average. Whereas the number of working-age groups of >45 years likely grows by 2% by 2024. The aging workforce is at risk of job dissatisfaction due to longer working periods (Wisse et al., 2015) but mainly due to safety and health issues (Jinnett et al., 2017; Lavallière et al., 2016). Relatively monotonous work which is challenging for aging workers is the reason underlying this statement. An informal work environment that is not supported by company regulations impossibly develops programs that can protect and improve workers.

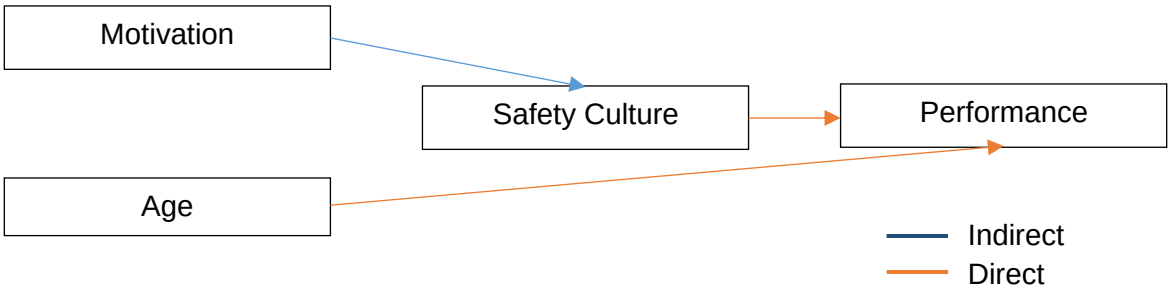

Figure 2. Reduced framework

This model is the final result of the analysis that safety culture and age directly affect the performance of informal workers. Meanwhile, safety culture is influenced by the internal motivation of workers. This current study did not conclude that motivation had an indirect effect on performance. The informal work characteristics make the current findings different from those in formal work settings. The framework in Figure 2 is a significant finding that could be a solid foundation for exploring the performance of informal workers.

Conclusion

Informal employment makes up more than 60% of the global workforce (ILO, 2018). Unfortunately, there are not many external factors that influence job performance in the informal sector because it lacks the power and resources to assure the security of its employees. Job security was said to positively support job performance (Umrani et al., 2019). By using the SDT-based work motivation questionnaire, the results of the analysis in this study found that less motivated workers were likely to possess a good safety culture. Motivation is the only

factor that influences safety culture ($p < 0.05$), and it affects 30.2%. Our study found that a good safety culture will impact more employees with high performance, and an increase of one year in age may be more significant than usual for lower performance.

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