

# Performance Management Policies And Procedures And National Culture: A Case Study Of An Electricity Generation Company In Malaysia

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## Abstract

**Purpose** – This paper aims to examine the link between Performance Management Policies and Procedures (PMPP) and National Culture of An Electricity Generation Company in Malaysia.

**Design/methodology/approach** – A qualitative study, using an explanatory case study approach; utilising Content Analysis (CA) Method, with Nvivo14 software as part of the analysis.

**Findings** – The study provided evidence of significant influence of national culture (NC) on Performance Management Policies and Procedures (PMPP) in the Malaysian company.

**Research limitations** – While this study provided a rational means of understanding the influence of culture on PMPP, the application is limited to the company's documents. The content analysis needs to be applied from the start of the policy generation stage to ensure that the language used does not pose a barrier to meaningful interpretations.

**Practical implications** – The Government and the Company need to recognize that culture is not neutral and the economic benefits of diversity may vary in time. This would be beneficial for implementing future Performance Management Policies and Procedures (PMPP) in ensuring the development will lead to effective changes and improved Performance Management Policies and Procedures (PMPP), for the benefit of both the stakeholders and shareholders.

**Originality/value** – There is a need to distinguish the depth of the influence of national culture in Malaysia as it went through the history of colonization. The situation requires its own further analysis as national culture is explicitly maintained and, enforced through the Government Linked Corporations (GLCs), and followed by non-GLCs. The national culture was found to influence the PMPP.

**Keywords:** Performance Management (PM), Performance Management Policies and Procedures (PMPP), Culture, National Culture (NC), Content Analysis (CA).

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## I. Introduction

Previous studies showed a great deal of attempts have been made to examine the influence between national culture (NC) and performance management system (PMS). In spite of that, there were few studies conducted on the influence of national culture (NC) and performance management policies and procedures (PMPP).

The intention of this study is to determine the influence of national culture (NC) on the privatized and globalized former public sector electricity generation company's data; specifically its performance management policies and procedures (PMPP).

A qualitative study, using an explanatory case study approach; the analyses focuses on the electricity generation company's hard copy documents. Content Analysis (CA) Method was utilised, with Nvivo14 software as part of the analysis. The qualitative findings assisted in answering the research questions, in an attempt to meet the research objectives; with the intention of closing and/or contributing to the existing or non-existence body of knowledge, where there are currently gaps in the research literature.

Evidences showed national culture (NC) does influence performance management policies and procedures (PMPP). National culture is believed to be embedded deeply in everyday life and is relatively impervious to change. National culture is a central organizing principle of employees' understanding of work, their approach to it, and the way in which they expect to be treated. National culture implies that one way of acting or one set of outcomes is preferable to another.

## **Research Background**

It is evident that there have been attempts made to examine the influence between national culture (NC) and performance management policies and procedures (PMPP). Scholars, Jwijati, Bititci, Caldwell, Garengo, and Dan (2022) used case studies for their research on the complex impact of national culture on the design and use of Performance Management System (PMS). Their study involved clarifying previous inconclusive research results by explaining how various dimensions of national culture influence the performance management system (PMS) (technical controls) and performance management practices – the social controls dimensions of performance measurement on different organizations. They concluded that national culture does influence how organizations design and use their PMSs. Research conducted by Sha Jin (2018) using Hofstede's national culture theory showed Chinese national culture has a great influence on company performance management; specifically large power distance, high uncertainty avoidance, collectivism and masculinity. Other studies frequently identify culture as one of the key drivers of success and failure in its implementation on the development and use of performance measurement systems (PMS) for managing international operations (Nudurupati, Bititci, Kumar & Chan, 2011), in both large and small organization (Taylor & Taylor, 2014, 2013). Scholars Maslina Binti Mohammed Shaed, Noor Alyani Nor Azazi and Mohamad Shaharudin Samsurijan (2021) found national culture to be one of the important variables on employee participation in decision-making.

There exist numerous literatures on the links between national culture and joint venture, namely merger, acquisition and takeover. A substantial number of studies focused on national culture with various aspects of management such as: management practices and national culture (Elango, & Srinivas Talluri, 2023; Newman & Nolan, 1996), effect of (2023), drivers and inhibitors of cultural integration (Anvari, Nargesian, Asgari, & Mohammadesmaeili, 2023), cultural intelligence and international construction joint ventures: insights from Chinese companies (Cui, Liu, Xia, & Cheng, 2019), joint venture dissolution based on the effect on culture (Park & Ungson, 1997), merger and change effort (Buono, Bowditch, & Lewis, 1985), and cross border acquisition and cultural challenge through the implementation of national culture compatible post-acquisition strategies (Morosini & Singh, 1994).

Even though there are many literatures on the influence of NC and PMS; there are limited literatures linking specifically to PMPP. In essence, this study attempts to examine the influence between NC and PMPP.

Briefly, for the purpose of this research - a power generation company, "T"; in Malaysia was chosen. The company in the electricity generation industry was chosen, an attempt to see whether the PMPP is applicable to the company and to determine the influence of national culture on PMPP in the country. The government initiated major changes, resulting to changes in the regulatory environment of the electricity industry as a result of the 1980s reformation. The power generation company was previously a public company. As the government embarked on privatization and globalization, the company became a privatized company. The Malaysian Company was privatized in 1990.

It is important to understand that the case study country – Malaysia, went through a historical background; especially with the heavy influence of the British, as a result of colonization. Malaysia earlier called Malaya; experienced the conservative British colonial policy during which the public utilities and infrastructure were developed to generate profit for the colonial authorities (Jomo & Tan, 2009). Many public enterprises or state owned enterprises (SOEs) were established after World War II from the British colonial authorities in the effort of reducing the dominance of Chinese business and encourage Malay business (Jomo & Tan, 2009). In 1983, the Malaysian government announced the privatization policy which is in line with the "Malaysia Incorporated Concept (Dasar Pensyarikatan Malaysia)". Privatization is the transfer or change of ownership of a business, service or industry from state, government or public to private ownership or control. However, in Malaysia, privatization usually means that half of the assets or shares of SOEs are sold to private shareholders with the government retaining control through majority ownership (Jomo & Tan, 2009). Even if the government share decline to less than half, the government can retain effective control or at least have veto powers with considerably diminished minority ownership through the creation of a "golden share" (Jomo & Tan, 2009).

## **II. Literature Review**

### **Definitions – Performance Management (PM)**

Performance management (PM) as defined by London and Mone (2001, p. 245) is *"the process of goal setting, performance monitoring for feedback and development, and performance appraisal for evaluation as input to compensation and other administrative decisions"*. They also added that the performance management process is a series of interactions and not a single event or a series of discrete events (p. 245). It is a continuous cycle that relate to each other as the overall system do not only affect the individual employees' goals, but the departmental goals, other departments, and finally the entire organisation. According to Baron and Armstrong (2000), the human resource management (HRM) process of getting the best performance from the individuals, the teams and the whole organization is called performance management. Lebas (1995, p.23) mentioned that the

context and the measures of performance was created by performance management. Without performance measurement, there is no performance management.

Scholars Kubiak (2022) and Schleicher et al. (2018) defined performance management systems (PMSs) a combination of planning, feedback and evaluation activities that help employees achieve performance expectations. Further investigations found changes in organizational PMSs, from narrow result-oriented focus to extensive behavioural focus i.e. innovative work behaviour (IWB) (Aguinis et al., 2012; Van Veldhoven et al., 2017; Kubiak, 2022). Distinct, consistent and consensus PMSs send strong signals to employees as they have a clear idea about PMS practices (i.e. planning, feedback and evaluation) (Bauwens, Audenaert, & Decramer, 2024). A consistent PMS practices that is fair and is based on agreement between decision-makers are applied systematically will reflect common consent (Van Waeyenberg et al., 2022).

### **Definition – Performance Management Policies and Procedures (PMPP)**

It is important to note that this study looks at the “**hard copy documents of the companies’ PMPP**”. This study is **NOT** focusing and researching on the performances of the company or the employees; but rather looking into the company’s PMPP; before looking into the culture of the company, and ascertain whether culture has any influence on the PMPP. Thus, prior to that, it is necessary to first know the definition of PMPP. Performance Management Policies and Procedures (PMPP) is the not the whole Performance Management System (PMS), but rather a comprehensive documentation that comprised of all the performance management policies and procedures. Policies and procedures are designed to influence and determine all major decisions and actions, and all activities take place within the boundaries set by them (<http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/policies-and-procedures.html>).

A system is an organized set of doctrines, ideas, or principles usually intended to explain the arrangement or working of a systematic whole an organized or established procedure (<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/system>).

The term PMPP is used throughout this study. In defining PMPP, some scholars used the term “Business Performance Measurement (BPM) system” or “Performance Management System (PMS)”. There are many definitions of BPM. Bourne, Neely, Mills and Platts (2003, p. 4) defined BPM as “A *business performance measurement system refers to the use of a multi-dimensional set of performance measures for the planning and management of a business*”. According to Lebas (1995, p. 34), “*Performance measurement is the system that supports a performance management philosophy*”. He stated that performance measures can be key success factors, able to detect deviations, able to track past achievements, able to describe the status potential, output and input. It should also include a component that will continuously check the validity of the cause-and-effect relationships among the measures. A study by Franco-Santos et al. (2007) found that business performance measurement system involves many characteristics, but they found that the most common characteristics are performance measures and achieving strategic organizational goals. However, according to Kaplan and Norton (1996, p. 55), performance policies and procedures is a comprehensive set of performance measures defined from four different measurement perspectives (financial, customer, internal, and learning and growth) that provides a framework for translating the business strategy into operational terms, known as balanced scorecard.

Performance management system (PMS) is defined as ‘a process for communicating employee performance’ (Marie, Rylan & Khumalo, Njabulo, 2024). Performance system is a strategy to motivate employees to achieve institutional goals by rating each other’s contributions. The results of their study conducted in a South African municipality showed the factors that influenced the performance management system are managing performance, upskilling, motivating, engaging with employees, job satisfaction, training and development; and it is a two-way process. Scholars Dewettinck & van Dijk (2013) study on Belgian employee, found that the process in which PM systems are shaped and executed is of fundamental importance for their effectiveness. On the contrary, performance management policy and procedures is an information system support provided to improve the effectiveness of performance management implementation from the preparation of performance plans to performance evaluations (Winda Budiarti, Asropi, & Ridwan Rajab, 2022).

To sum up, PMPP is a set of documents containing a comprehensive performance measurement that will be used by a company to determine its performance. PMPP could be used to determine either the performance of the company or the individual employees; or both, and is used towards achieving the company’s strategic goals.

### **National Culture (NC)**

According to Singh and Parashar (2005, p. 2), Hofstede (1980) conceptualized national culture as “collective programming” of the mind that distinguishes inhabitants of one nation from another. It is argued that collective programming develops as a result of the experiences shared by inhabitants of a nation and includes values transferred by the educational, government and legal systems, family structure, patterns of religious preference, literature, architecture and scientific theories. National culture changes very slowly, because what is in the minds of people of a nation also becomes crystallized in its institutions. On the other hand, according to

Smith (1992, p. 60) the basis of national identity includes historical territory or homeland, common myths, common historical memory, mass public culture, common legal rights & duties and common economy with territorial mobility for members are the antecedents of culture formation. Interestingly, Sinha et al. (2002) said that contributors to culture are identified as historical influences and contemporary”.

Beck and Moore (1985) and Hofstede (1991) defined national culture as the values, beliefs and assumptions learned in early childhood that distinguish one group of people from another. This definition is consistent with Hofstede’s (1991) definition of national culture as the software of the mind. It is also aligned with Jaeger’s (1986, p. 179) definition of culture as “*common theories of behaviour or mental programs that are shared*”. National culture is believed to be embedded deeply in everyday life and is relatively impervious to change. National culture is a central organizing principle of employees’ understanding of work, their approach to it, and the way in which they expect to be treated. National culture implies that one way of acting or one set of outcomes is preferable to another.

Fiol (1991) said that in accomplishing certain tasks, the national culture leads and contributes to the adoption of country-specific routines. Shane (1993) discovered that if employees perform tasks in ways that are consistent with their national cultural values than to have them carry out tasks in ways that are not compatible with their cultural beliefs, it would be less costly. However, Hofstede (1980) believed that the acceptability of freedom from organizational control varies across national cultures. Shane (1992, p. 140) found that it is less costly to innovate in the context of some national cultures than in others and the ability to develop certain routines and repertoires is partly dependent on the national cultural environment in which firms operate (p. 141).

Nedeljkovic et al. (2018) revealed that due to the increased cooperation between nations and globalization, more studies are conducted on national culture and understanding intercultural. In the process of globalization, trust in an organizational sense is important as trust is imposed daily by the national culture (Doney et al., 1998). Despite their individual differences, people who are part of a sovereign nation have common mental aspects as they are part of the national culture they share together (Rode et al., 2016). Raza et al. (2018) pointed out that cultural dimensions that are specific to a particular culture, can easily be measured through their reactions as it directly influences people’s behavioural practices.

According to Bojadjev et al. (2023) it is crucial for a country to reach the level where there will be a clear distinction between the different cultures that dominate it. There should be a participation of cultural values that promote the development of communication in organizations that have a collectivist approach (Abu Bakar & Su Mustaffa, 2013). In the direction of the existing dimensions national culture developed by Hofstede, a new dimension, which is communication - a two-way connection is proposed as it will enable easier transmission of information through the exchange of symbols and semiotic rules (Bojadjev et al., 2023).

### **III. Research Methodology**

A qualitative study, using an explanatory case study approach; the analysis focuses on the electricity generation company’s hard copy documents. Content Analysis (CA) Method was utilised, with Nvivo14 software as part of the analysis. The research attempts to examine the hard copy documents of the PMPP of the company and its data, archival research using mainly secondary sources. The Content Analysis (CA) focuses on the words used in the documents collated for this research, and translated into meanings relevant to this study. The qualitative findings assisted in answering the research questions, in an attempt to meet the research objectives; with the intention of closing and/or contributing to the existing or non-existence body of knowledge, where there are currently gaps in the research literature.

### **IV. Discussion**

National culture (NC) does influence performance management policies and procedures (PMPP). National culture is believed to be embedded deeply in everyday life and is relatively impervious to change. National culture is a central organizing principle of employees’ understanding of work, their approach to it, and the way in which they expect to be treated. National culture implies that one way of acting or one set of outcomes is preferable to another. Results from the research have shown that foreign influences and colonization have been incorporated in the electricity generation industry in Malaysia since the inception of the Malaysian company. The national culture is being fabricated by government policy rather than organically formed through personal interactions in the development of cultural traditions. Again, this confirms the influence of NC on PMPP.

### **V. Conclusion**

Performance Management Policies and Procedures (PMPP) play a vital role in ensuring operational excellence, regulatory compliance, and workforce efficiency in Malaysia’s electricity generation sector. However, their effectiveness depends on internal factors (leadership, employee skills, digital tools) and external factors (regulations, economic conditions, technology trends, and sustainability goals). By integrating data-driven performance monitoring, employee engagement strategies, and sustainability indicators, energy companies can

enhance productivity, meet national energy targets, and remain competitive in an evolving industry. A well-structured PMPP not only improves individual and organizational performance but also drives long-term innovation and sustainability in Malaysia's energy sector.

Malaysia went through a period of colonization. The colonization period was long in Malaysia and it impacted the administration, education, and culture in the country (Siwar & Hasan, 2002). The significant contributory factor in shaping the present Malaysian social, political and economic climate is the British colonization. Shamsul (2001) stated that the colonization the country went through; does not only refer to the conquest of superior weapons, political and diplomatic shrewdness, and economic energy; but it was also a cultural invasion in the form of a conquest of the native epistemological space as the British interfered with the local thought system. History is found to influence the culture of Malaysia (Kementerian Penerangan Malaysia, 12/06/2013; Ken, 1965, p. 248).

The analyses for the Malaysian Company found that the national culture formation is an explicit action of policies and plans by the Government, explicitly multi-cultural/multi-racial, with an orientation toward Eastern traditional values. The national culture is explicitly maintained and, enforced through the Government Linked Corporations (GLCs), and followed by non-GLCs. The national culture was found to influence the PMPP; and the research concluded that the national policy impacted the PMPP.

## **VI. Limitations And Future Research**

The study findings concluded the research gaps in the literature and contributes to the body of knowledge. While this research provided a rational means of understanding the influences between the variables analysed, the application is limited to the company's documents. A thorough analysis needs to be applied from the start of the policy generation stage to ensure that culture is being taken into account. Further research will enable the creation of an improved performance management policies and procedures (PMPP), in ensuring the policy development is leading to effective changes and improved policy, for the benefits of both the stakeholders and shareholders.

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