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A Case Study in YingChao Co. Ltd, Beijing China

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ABSTRACT

In 21 century, with the trend of globalization, both large and small organizations are facing an environment characterized by extremely high level of competition. In order to be competitive, China's managers are endeavouring to try every effort to improve employees' performance within sound organizational culture, thus to improve organizations' competence. Yet as a matter of fact, since China's open door policy from late 1970's, China's organizations especially managers lag behind the counterpart in western world in terms of management, operating system, experience etc. Exchanging and especially studying from western "ready-made" advanced theory would be the shortcut for Chinese managers to shorten the gap. The researcher conducted this study in YingChao Co. Ltd. which located in China's capital city-Beijing. The main purpose of the study was to explore the possibilities whether the performance cycle model can be applied within an organization with Chinese culture background, to improve the employees' performance and increase the organization's competitiveness and profitability. Furthermore, the managerial implications are provided based on the major findings to indicate what efforts the managers could make in the Chinese culture context when facing up to the global competition. In addition, the researcher also mentioned the sad fact that already has appeared in nowadays China's organization-Karoshi (death due to overwork), thus leading the readers to have the glimpse of China's current organizational culture. The study followed the performance cycle model with regard to planning performance, supporting & enabling performance, and reviewing performance. In addition, the current situation of HRM in China was analysed and formed the first part of the theoretical framework. Two research methods (case study associated with qualitative research techniques and quantitative survey) were employed in the study to answer the research questions from the managers and employees.

Conclusions: The preliminary performance cycle model used in the study can be applied to the practice. In this case, the performance cycle model is just the first step of the long march for managers. After recognizing, understanding, and fulfilling, the consequent steps need to be taken into account as well, such as reward & compensation systems, motivational theories...etc. because these all play vital roles to improve the employees' performance, thus to increase the organization's competitiveness and profitability. In addition, the karoshi phenomenon should not only waken the employees' consciousness to protect their right, but specially to waken the managers pay attention on how to build-up the healthy working condition, organizational culture, and most importantly to waken the state to establish the relevant law and keep attaching the importance on the implementation of the law. Together to build up China harmonious society in accordance with the state goal.

Keyword(s): human resource management, performance management, performance cycle, performance evaluation, karoshi, HRM in China.

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1 INTORUDCTION

1.1 Background and purpose of the study

What is human resource management? Namely is about managing people in organizations for the good of the employees, the company and society. Nowadays most experts agree that there are five basic functions all managers perform: planning, organizing, staffing, leading and controlling (Gary 2001: 2). The employees' role has been summarized by Peters and Waterman in 1980s "Treating people-not money, machines, or minds – as the natural resource may be the key to it all (Peters & Waterman 1984:39).

With the development of hi-tech and the trend of global intelligence, Internet, and knowledge, we are coming into information era. Today, both large and small organizations are facing an environment characterized by extremely high levels of competition, changing values, rapid technological advances, changing consumer's needs and so on. In order to be competitive, managers need their people to be effective in terms of adaptability, commitment, motivation, skill / reskill, stably satisfied performance and team work spirit (Cui 2001:1-2). With the fiercing competition, in China, undoubtedly Chinese managers are exploring and trying every effort to improve employees' performance within sound organization culture, thus to improve organization's competence. Yet from China's open-door policy to now is only about three decades, from the national-plan economy to market-driven economy, China and its enterprises lag behind the western world in terms of management, operating system, experience etc. within the globalization process and with increasing competition, China's organizations have relatively limited time to experience and sum up the "practical theory" for their own usage; therefore, adopting the ready-made theory (performance model cycle) from western world and adapting it to the local situation would be the shortcut for organizations' success. This thesis belongs to the area of Human Resource Management and more especially to organizational development.

The subject for the empirical part in this thesis is YingChao.Co.Ltd (further detailed information refers to appendix 3). The purpose of the study is, therefore, to find out and

examine the possibility of improving the employees' performance within the focused company, in order to improve the productivity and profitability of the company. It leads to the fact that results cannot be applied and transferred to other organizations. Meanwhile another sad fact is also mentioned-karosshi (death due to overwork) to try to draw managers' (even state) attention to face up it, and try to not repeat the tragedy, it also waken the managers to build-up and complete the sound organizational culture in nowadays changing China. Besides it, the main framework of this current study is based on performance model cycle, but in order to find out the real, complete answers for managers to improve their employees' performance, some other efforts are needed to be taken on the field, such as, rewards & compensation, sound organizational culture build-up as well. The current study research is just a part of the long process.

Thus, the guiding research questions of the current study can be formulated as follows:

- How to create conditions contribute to employees' performance improvement?
- How to review employees' performance?
- What is the current situation of HRM in China?

The main areas of the current study can be presented in the following way (figure 1)

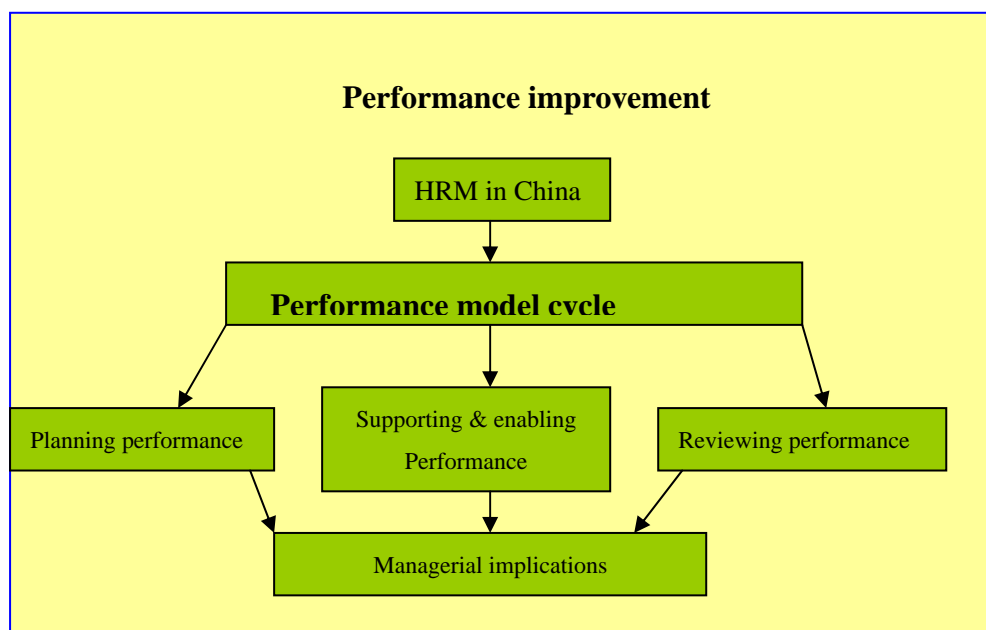


Figure 1. Key concept elements of the current study

1.2 Methodology of the study

Two research approaches (case study associated with qualitative research techniques and quantitative survey) are employed in the study to answer the research questions from the managers and employees. The structured questionnaire is developed on the basis of the theoretical framework, and used as a guideline to direct the conduct of selected employees within the organization. In addition, the focused questions for the interview are based on the theoretical framework as well, to explore the attitude of the managers. Data collection methods mainly consist of two parts: structured questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. With selected employees in the case company, who have the clear ideas and vision of their own about the company and are eager to provide individual comments and experience about the company development.

1.3 Structure of the study

Chapter 2 begins with the overview of China, and then the general situation of human resource management in China is introduced in the second part. It forms the background and context of the theoretical part; the aim of it is to introduce a glimpse of the HRM situation in today's China. Chapter 3 introduces the performance cycle model in three aspects: planning performance, supporting & enabling performance, and reviewing performance. In Chapter 4, the methodology of the study is presented. The findings and descriptions are presented in chapter 5. Finally, Chapter 6 summaries the study and draws some conclusions as well as suggests some managerial implications and future research. As shown in figure 2.

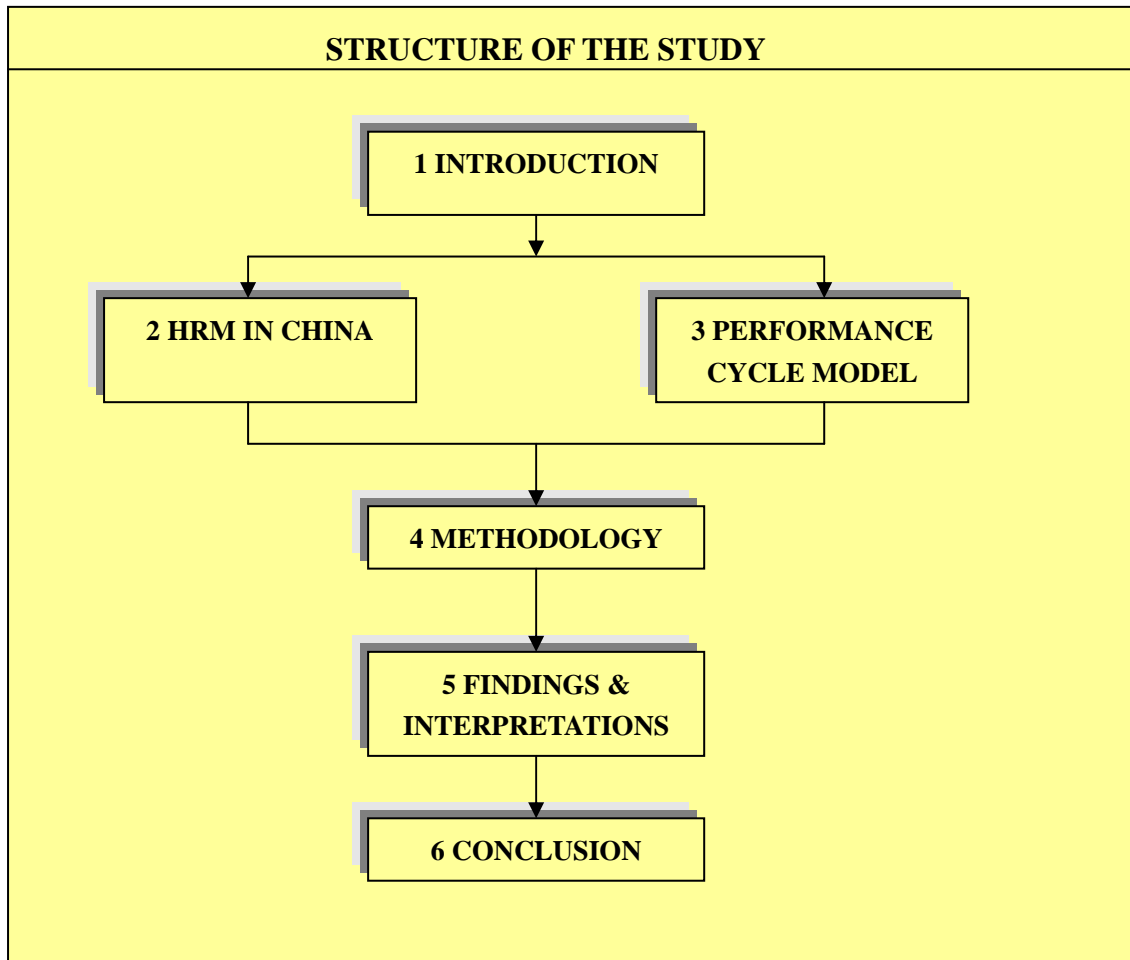


Figure 2. Structure of the study

2 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT IN CHINA

2.1 Chinese Human resource management

In China human resource management development is deeply related with the contemporary political and economic situation. In 1950s, as part of the state socialist system, employees enjoyed lifetime employment security and comprehensive welfare coverage. From the 1950s to the late 1970s, there were rigid wage and migration controls, which make the labor system increasingly irrelevant to contemporary needs. In this period, the “Great Leap Forward” and the “Cultural Revolution” in a way smashed system; the workers were rewarded by political and ideological reasons rather than the productivity. In the late 1978, the government introduced The Open Door policy. The main focus of this policy was to modernize Chinese industry, which would introduce western technology and management skills. Yet in this beginning stage, the human resource management concept was not fully understood by the

entrepreneurs. Less than one percent of enterprises have the human resource department. The old and outdated system is still being used (He 1999: 21-24).

Some of the major implications of this legacy vis-à-vis Chinese management and employee behavior are: problems in adapting to a market economy that requires initiative, customer focus, diligent application of new skills, and information sharing; and continuing expectations of welfare provision, reluctance to share information within organizations has been reported even where it was necessary to overcome obstacles that slowed or stopped production (Child 1994: 17). In Lin's book, from a Chinese researcher's aspect, he expatiates the obstacles that hinder the development in human resource management field. Traditional thinking (Confucianism, Daoism, equalitarianism. etc.), lack of the systematic environment that designed by managerial people, the imperfect labor market, the low social security and so on (Lin 2003:107-110)

Since human resource management is such a wide field; it includes the fields such as staffing, performance management, rewards, training and development and so on. Furthermore, cultural issues always play significant role nearly in every field. Needless to say, human resource field is not the exception. In order to make it clear and easy to understand the basic knowledge of human resource management in China, the basic information of the typical fields within human resource management in China is introduced as follows.

2.1.1 Staffing and recruitment (*zhao pin*)

The first step in staffing is to put a group of job applicants together from which to choose. It is called recruiting. The greater the number of applicants and the better their qualifications, the more likely the firm is to build a solid personnel base (Stearns 1987: 358)

In China, due to the changing circumstance, human resource practices are transiting from a highly centralized allocation process to a more market-driven and merit-oriented system. Staffing practices are becoming more decentralized and the selection criteria have focused more on job-specific information such as technical skills and proven work experience.

Employee referral is widely used in recruiting lower level jobs, recommendation from existing employees is also considered by large companies. Here also needs to mention that the statuses of local employees are important too. Because in many cases, not only the skills count, but their family connections and status also or even play more important roles than their skills do (Chow 2005,632-635). And due to the lack of professionals in the local market, firms search for the qualified managerial, technical and marketing staff across the whole nation by posting advertisements in major newspapers and on the internet (nowadays two most famous websites for job seeking are www.51job.com and www.Chinahr.com), recruiting on the campus of reputable universities, and scanning the databases of the so-called talent-exchange centers in large cities (Ding,Ge & Warner 2004:22)

2.1.2 Training and development (*yuan gong pei xun*)

Training is any systematic process used by organizations to develop employees' knowledge, skills, behaviours, or attitudes in order to contribute to the achievement of organizational goals. It is also referred to human resource development (Michael & Malcolm, 1998, 643)

In china, faced with the shortage of managerial, technical and marketing talent, firms tend to place heavy emphasis on training and the development of talent (Chow 2005, 635). As a matter of fact, only large companies are willing to invest on this issue, and that does not mean that surely they would have the results that they expect. Some companies only have the training courses when they have to have, this could be related to the bureaucratism. Besides this, some small companies only provide minimal or basic training (Ding,Ge & Warner 2004:22)

2.1.3 Rewards & compensation (*jiang li he bu tie zhi du*)

As we all know that the Chinese culture plays a core role in people's daily life. Due to the traditional value of collectivism together with the need to maintain the harmonious relations within the organizations, compensation tends to be egalitarian indeed, especially in stated-owned enterprises. Furthermore Confucian values place an important emphasis on seniority, thus seniority and group based pay systems are still used in a large extent in China (Chow 2005: 635). However we cannot ignore the trend of performance based pay is getting

more and more popular especially in the large cities, such as Beijing, Shanghai, Shenzhen. And especially in the foreign invested enterprises, some Town Village Enterprises and so on. Just as Zhu in their articles claims that the individual performance based pay and individual incentives formed the pay systems would become more common and there will be a greater acceptance of wider reward disparities based on individual performance (Zhu 1997: 19-44).

2.1.4 Performance management

Zhu and Dowling argue that performance appraisal is a managerial tool to control individual performance in organizations in order to achieve maximum performance. A systematic evaluation system is difficult to implement in a collective society where it is hard to single out an individual who is accountable for results. There is a general lack of rigorous performance appraisal system in place (Zhu & Dowling 1997: 115). In China, technical knowledge and job related performances are getting more important than political ideology in performance evaluation. But in fact, because of the value placed on harmony and face, great differentiation is uncomfortable for both parties in a sense, thus performance may not necessarily relate to pay. Confrontational feedback and free expression of views still remain sensitive issues both in State-owned enterprise and private enterprises as well (Chow 2005:636).

2.1.5 Karoshi (death from overwork)

karoshi means the worker (employee or employer) dies due to over work. It first appeared in Japan 1970s' (zhujing 2005:52).According to the analysis, in Japan's producer industry, the totally all-year working hours per worker was more than 530 hours than the counterpart in Germany and France, more than 200 hours more than in England and America.(zhang shuling 2002:62). Sadly, this phenomenon has already appeared in mainland China, the latest tragedy was a 25 years old engineer named Hu Yuxin died in 28th May after one month consecutive overwork in HUA WEI Information Technology Company in the city Shenzhen 2006. In China, the main reasons lead this phenomenon can be summarized as following

- The unsound labor market: In nowadays China, the organizations and job seeker are still in unfair circumstance. In order to have a relatively stable job, the job

seekers even sacrifice their health in return to have that place.

- Human resource management department haven't built-up sound and healthy system: in some organizations, managers cut-down the costs by reducing employees' numbers and expanding employees' working hour, promotion still based on the working hours, it brings heavy-burden to employees, especially in the mental sense.
- Human resource management neglects the employees' sustainable development.
- Poor relationship between employees and employers, lack of communications to construct healthy working environment

3 THEORETICAL FINDINGS

Typically performance is seen as the result between individual ability and motivation. Yet increasingly, there is recognition within all organizations that planning and enabling performance surely have a critical effect on individual performance. Such as, clarity of performance goals and standards, appropriate resource, guidance and support from the individual's manager all become central resource (Derek & Stephen 2002: 296-298). There are three major aspects of effective performance in the performance cycle, as illustrated in the Figure 3. These aspects are used as stepping-stones to manage employee performance and are intended to be seen as a positive management tool to improve employee performance.

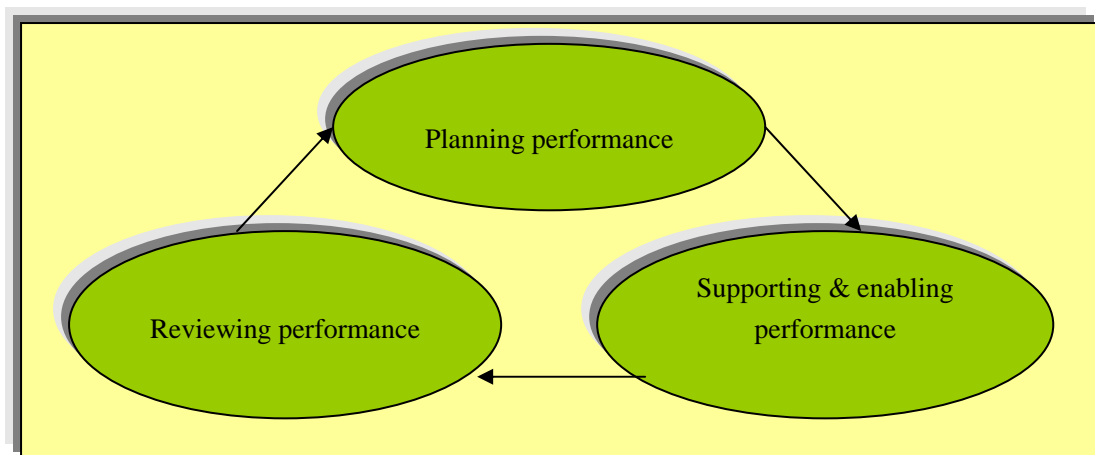


Figure 3. Performance Model Cycle framework

3.1 Planning performance

In an effective organization, work is planned out in advance by setting performance expectations and goals for groups and individuals to channel their efforts toward achieving organizational objectives. Getting employees involved in the planning process will help them understand the goals of organization, what needs to be done; why it needs to be done and how well it should be done. Every job in an organization should have set standards that clarify what is the expectation from the job. These performance standards should be clear and objective enough to be understood and measured; they should not be articulated in ambiguous phrases such as “a full day’s work” or “a good job”. Unfortunately, too many jobs have vague performance standards. Ideally, standards should be tangible, measurable, and verifiable (Robbins 1982: 355). This can be thought as a shared view of expected performance between managers and employees, according to Derek and Stephen the shared view is understood and interpreted in various ways, for instance, a traditional job description, key accountabilities, performance standards, specific objectives or targets. In general, there exists a legible trend to utilize particular objectives with a timescale for finalization in addition to normal tasks, and these objectives provide employees a clear idea of the expected performance and enable them to concentrate on the priorities while they must choose what they need do. Apparently it helps to enhance employee performance (Derek & Stephen 2002: 297). It is critical to understand the shared view both by the managers and the employees. Usually it is not enough for the managers to just provide the job specifications and objectives to the employees; performance is expected to be understood completely and requires the contributions from every individual that is involved.

3.1.1 Work design and job design

In practice, it is more important for the employees to undertake the actual tasks to achieve the goals than just setting the objectives of the work by the managers. Correspondingly, it is also rather important for the managers to give a hand to the employees to understand definitions and structure of their work goals. Other related issues are what tasks are necessary to be received as priority attentions, how the employees should spend their time efficiently, which activities are regarded as basic sources of job satisfaction, and what sort of activities may help

the employee to plan future goals and assignments (Walker 1992: 260).

Formally, the jobs are defined as job descriptions, even though it is indeed not required to specify the individual how to make it. Sometimes the managers though they are aware of what their subordinates are doing or will do; however, they are usually shocked at find that their estimations do not apply with realities, when confronted with data. In spite of how well the job descriptions are defined, both managers and employees need develop an agreement of job activities as they progress and change. Work design contains activity specifications and methodology to meet performance requirements. In all, the goal of job design is to develop the increased challenges and autonomy into the work for the people to assign employees to behave. Alternatively, jobs are also able to assist individual's stretch and grow as human beings and improve the sense of their competence and values. In summary, it means jobs can be planned in several ways which will provide maximum motivational impact (Walker 1992: 261).

Furthermore, another point from the managers' aspect needs to be mentioned here is that planning the training, development and resources necessary for employees to achieve their objective is imperative. Without the crucial support from the managers or organizations, even the most determined employees will unlikely achieve the performance required by the organization (Derek & Stephen 2002: 297-298).

3.2 Supporting and enabling performance

Once the employees on the track to perform and achieve their goals, that doesn't means the managers get nothing to do just stand aside. Contrarily, the managers retain a key-enabling role. Organizing, offering the resource and training is essential to assist their employees to fight for the better performance (Derek & Stephen 2002, 299). For many organizations, there is a tremendous gap between reality and the vision of the high performance, high commitment organization. People in an organization are not often being utilized with their full talents due to many factors. The purpose of an organization is a task of management to organize, motivate, equip, and direct rather ordinary people to perform at their highest possible levels (Walker.1992: 257).

In the flexible organization, where goals, circumstances, organizational structure, staffing, and activities are constantly changing, managers plan an especially important role in helping employees understand what is expected of them (establishing performance objectives), helping them meet these expectations successfully, evaluating performance and providing feedback, and providing meaningful recognition and rewards. As a result, the cycle can be a powerfully positive process, or it can be a negative cycle, when objectives are poorly defined, support and feedback are lacking, and rewards are insufficient or irrelevant, successively reducing the likelihood of effective performance. Managers have increasingly recognized the need to support and enable employees' performance effectively. This requires direct, personal involvement by managers to improve utilization within the company, to empower employees to act, to provide the resources needed, and to coach employees within the organization (Walker.1992: 257-258).

3.2.1 Improving utilization

For all organizations, a critical question for the managers to answer is how to use the limited resources and employees at the most effective and efficient level. One of the most important way to do it is to eliminate the least productive tasks from their job. By redesigning the work to continually strengthen and refocus activities on the most valuable tasks, managers help employees make the highest possible performance contribution. Through periodic review of activities, there are many ways for managers to help their employees to contribute effectively, for example (Walker.1992: 263).

- Eliminate the duplicate work within organizations (different jobs with essentially the same tasks)
- Eliminate unnecessary work, automate tasks, where cost-effective
- Consolidate similar tasks performed in multiple jobs or units, to gain economies of time and resource
- Reallocate time and resources among activities, according to priorities
- Reassign tasks to others who may perform more effectively, or at lower cost
- Contract work outside the firm (consultants or vendors), where cost-effective
- Streamline the process of work or reduce it in scope, such as handling

paperwork, approvals, or information flow

- Redefine service levels within the company in terms of speed, cost and quality

In order to identify and plan opportunities for improving staff utilization, activity questionnaires are often used (the sample of activity questionnaire is illustrated in the figure 4) to help managers identify ways to improve the utilization. The questionnaire is designed as an interview, often through it, managers to create a dialogue about work design and opportunities for improvement. Furthermore, employees to generate ideas for improvements may even use it independently. As a result of such analysis by managers and employees, work may be reassigned, jobs restructured, and working relationships redefined. Above all, work may be simplified and priorities set more clearly.

Activities questionnaire

- What are the most time-consuming parts of your job? Estimate the percentage of time required and rank the order of importance
- If you suddenly had an extra day a week (20% more time) to devote to your job, on what major activities (existing and new) would you spend it?
- If you suddenly had one less day a week to devote to your job, what major activities that you now perform would you eliminate?
- What impediments add to the time needed to do your job (e.g., lack of effective information systems, lack of clerical support, lack of clear priorities)?
- What activities in the job should be expanded, eliminated, or otherwise changed?
- Do you currently perform any activities that are now formally part of your position description or performance plan? If yes, should they be continued?
- If you were to make one change in your job to increase its value to the company, what would it be?

Figure 4 Activities questionnaire

From Walker's point of view, we know that the focus of utilization analysis is on the activities that constitute the job, not the current performance of the employee. It is vital to eliminate unneeded work and focus activities on the right priorities. It is important not to focus on the people themselves as the work is examined. But in another word, once the process is done effectively, the organizations improve the performance already (Walker.1992, 263).

3.2.2 Empowerment

Due to the increasing competition both domestically and internationally, organizations are

forced to be more productive. The effective human resource management is seen as a way to improve productivity. Organizations seek to improve product and service quality go to great lengths to get their employees involved. Many empowered employees-that is, give them the freedom and responsibility to make job related decision. Organizations recognize employees' empowerment as one sure way to improve quality (Schuler 1995: 64). In practice, managers could help their employees get empowered in many ways, such as providing the needed resources, giving them the authorities and responsibilities to manage themselves, helping them to build trustworthy relationships thus assisting them in problem solving and so on.

3.2.3 Coaching

In an organization, a manager is viewed variously as a mentor, consultant, facilitator, teacher, friend, partner, boss, navigator, ambassador, initiator, and even the father of the company. In the flexible organization, the manager is first and foremost a coach. Coaching narrowly implies training, instructing, or guiding, but it is more than that. It is caring, listening, encouraging, advising and nurturing others as they strive to achieve results. Good coaching is an essential feature of effective management in a high performing, flexible organization. Yet the sad fact is that only 16% of managers' working time was spent interacting with their subordinates. Spending more time in coaching is not contradictory to the reduction of numbers and levels of management, or to empowerment we mentioned above. As a matter of fact, with fewer managers and wider spans of management, it is essential that these managers spend more of their time in contacting with their employees (Walker.1992, 269).

3.3 Reviewing performance

Appraisal systems formalize the review part of the performance cycle. In today's flexible organizations, performance appraisal is a formal, structured way of measuring, evaluating, and influencing an employee (Schuler 1995, 306). Performance evaluation provides an important way for managers to clarify performance goals and standards and thus to enhance future performance. It also provides a basis for decisions affecting pay, promotions, terminations, training, transfers and other relevant actions. Most large companies have practiced performance evaluation for decades and have adopted various techniques in the process

(Walker, 1992, 273).

3.3.1 Effective performance evaluation

Performance is essentially what an employee does or does not do. Employee performance common to most jobs includes the quantity of output, quality of output, timeliness of output, presence at work and cooperativeness (Mathis & Jackson, 2004, 339)

Effective performance evaluation is the goal that every organization chases eternally. But what makes performance evaluation effective? Many studies have addressed the requirements for the effective performance appraisals. Appropriate performance appraisal could improve job performance, make the correct employment decisions, minimize job dissatisfaction and turnover (Kleiman, 1998, 220-221)

Furthermore these requirements include key factors reflect different perceptions of the purposes. To provide employee feedback, to change performance plans, to develop performance capabilities, and to support human resource actions.

A single system is difficult to address all of these purposes. However, companies are continuing to modify and adapt their approaches in pursuit of continual improvement for all of these purposes. This may entail multiple systems to address different purposes, supplemented with special efforts to link them together. For all purposes, performance evaluation is considered more effective when it is objective, uses appropriate techniques, actively involves employees, is well understood, and is an accepted management responsibility (Walker 1992, 276-278).

Employee involvement

Evaluations are more effective when employees participate actively in them. One of the most powerful tools to involve employees in their performance evaluation process is self-evaluation (Walker 1992, 283). Because employees at all levels are capable of reviewing their own performance, interests, goals and plans in relation to stated job requirements or performance criteria. Experience indicates that employees are often more critical of their own performance than managers are.

Responsible management

Normally managers do not give full attention to the performance evaluation because they often view it as paperwork requirements imposed on managers. Managers, as appraisers, are accountable for the performance. Accordingly, they need to see performance evaluations as an integral responsibility in their jobs. Managing and evaluating performance are part of their own performance as managers and should be evaluated in turn. Managers need to take adequate time to conduct performance evaluation, by using time effectively can have a significant impact on behaviors and results. Another fact cannot be overlooked is that managers often avoid conflict. They don't want to disrupt established relationships in the work. The needed courage for managers to make sound but unpopular evaluations, to give poor performer their due evaluation and to take subsequent action (termination, demotion, etc.) is more important (Walker 1992, 284-285). The lack of responsibilities for managers during the appraising system would cause even worse result than without having the system.

Strategies for improvement and performance improvement plan

When the deficiencies are found after the evaluation process, companies can do many things to improve employees' performance. Two typical systems are introduced by Schuler (1995). They are positive reinforcement system and negative reinforcement system.

Positive reinforcement system involves the use of positive rewards to increase the occurrence of the desired performance. It is based on two fundamental principles: people perform in ways that they find most rewarding to them and by providing the proper rewards to improve the performance. It is installed by four basic steps, as shown in the figure 5 (Schuler, 1995, 361-362)

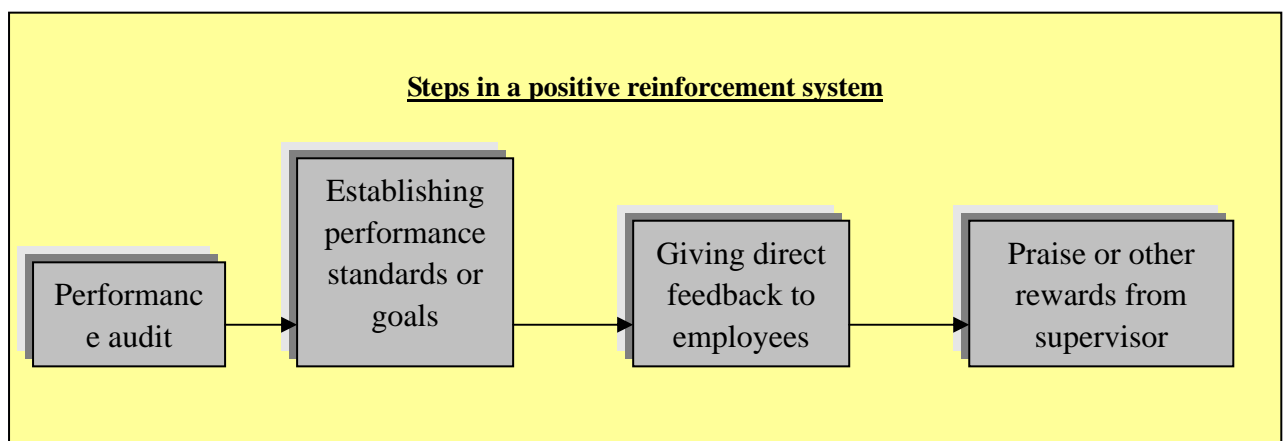


Figure 5 steps in a positive reinforcement system (Schuler, 1995, 361-362)

Negative behavioral strategies basically mean punishment within an organization. Punishment is commonly used because of its perceived ability to correct problems. But however, it may not be effective always. By the human common sense, employees can resent and become angry, even could cause the worse fight-back to ruin the organization. Thus, provide ample and clear warning, ensure the same discipline for the same behavior for everyone, ensure the discipline as quickly as possible and administer the discipline impersonally become critical for reaching the success (Schuler, 1995, 367-368) To be more exact, the appraisal process is incomplete without a positive plan for performance improvement, also because the performance planning process mostly focuses on the individual; it is surely useful to view the tasks from the individual perspective. Figure 6 illustrates the logical process that individuals follow in planning for performance improvement. With the judging role of appraisal requires managers to make an evaluation of past performance, the coaching and developing role requires a positive view toward improvement. The focus is on specific gaps identified in the course of the evaluation (Walker, 1992, 287).

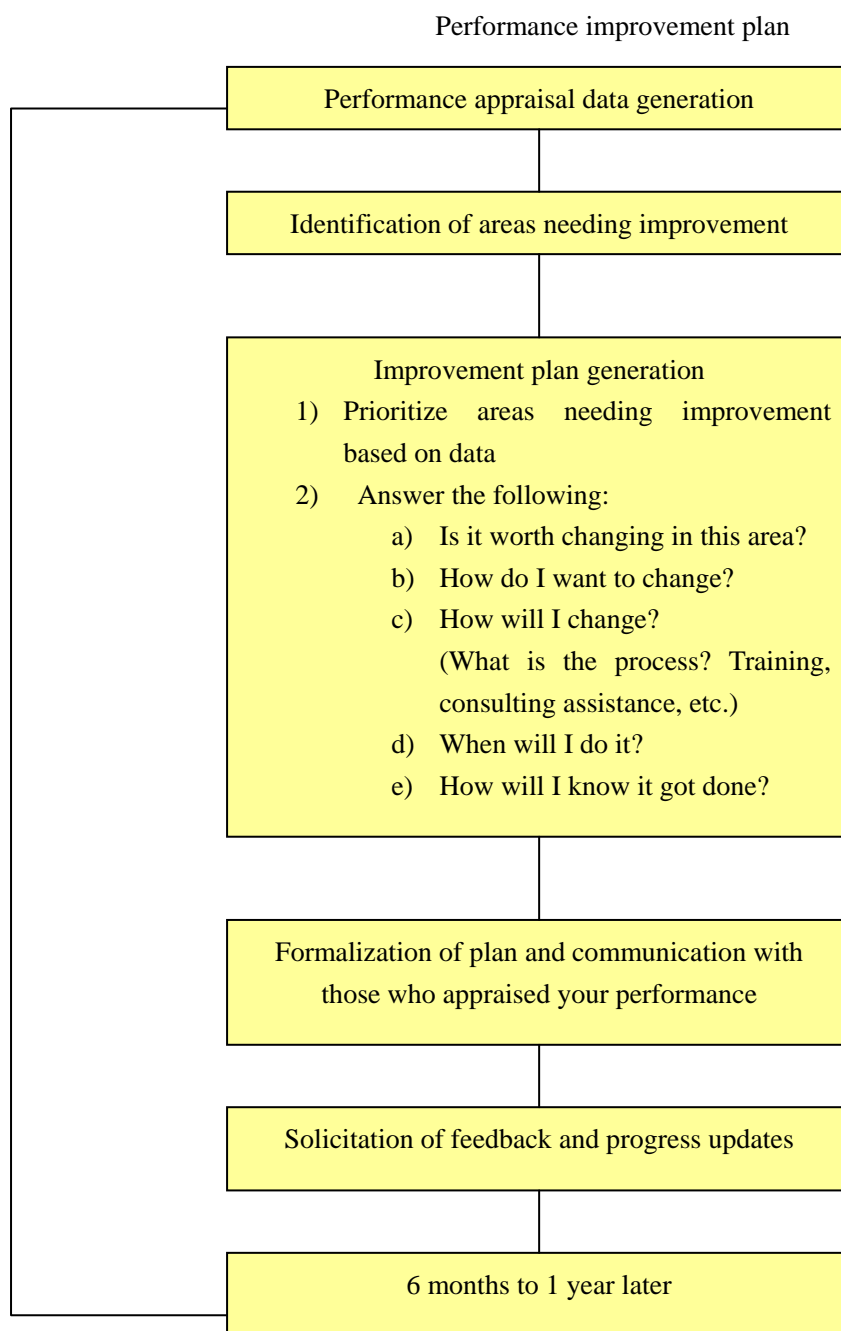


Figure 6 Performance improvement plan (Leonard 1976, 274)

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Research approach

The current study intends to apply the performance cycle model to the target company. Therefore, the theory framework is used as the guidance of composing research questions. In other words, the current study will cover the key contents mentioned in section 1.1 and explore how to implement these contents into practice.

There are many research strategies available at choice. According to Yin, the first and most important condition for differentiating among the various research strategies is to identify the type of research question being asked (Yin 1994: 7). The guiding research questions of the study stated in section 1.1, as follows:

- How to create conditions that assist employees' performance improvement?
- How to review employees' performance?
- What is the current situation of HRM in China?

As the research questions are “what” and “how”, the study nature appears to be explanatory, and likely to lead to the use of case study (Yin 1994, 6-7). The explanatory case study approach was chosen to understand and interpret the performance cycle model by the selected case company. Yin pointed out that the case study strategy should not be confused with “qualitative research”. Case study can be based on any mix of qualitative and quantitative evidence. (Yin 1994: 14). And also according to Derek & Stephen, the mutual understanding of the performance expectation and shared view between managers and employees are critical as well (Derek & Stephen 2002, 297). More importantly, employees carry out the objectives to achieve the organizations' goals and fulfill the organizations' success, thus the situation and condition and their real thoughts from employees' side are more important in this stage. In sum, two research approaches (case study associated with qualitative research techniques and quantitative survey) were employed in the study to answer the research questions from the managers and employees.

4.2 Questionnaire, interview and data collection procedure

4.2.1 Semi-structured interview and data collection of the case study

Data collection for case studies can rely on at least six sources of evidence. Respectively, they are: documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant-observation and physical artifacts. (Yin 1994: 78). However, it should be aware that a complete list of sources could be quite extensive-including films, photographs, videotapes and so on (Yin 1994: 79). In this current study, semi-structured interview (refer to appendix 2) is adopted, which is a half-structured method that lacks the exact form and order of questions typical to structured methods, yet has a sequence of themes to be covered, as well as suggested questions (Kvale 1996: 124-125). The outline of the interview consisted of a general list of topics, the general attitude towards performance management and linking it to relevant context of the organization. The interviewees were allowed to answer the questions freely. By using this method all information needed could be collected while still being able to observe what the interviewee perceived as important in the theme area and how they reacted to the questions. The topics and length of the interview were briefly explained and an appointment for interview was arranged before the interview. All persons contacted agreed to the interview. Additional information needed in some cases can be obtained either by e-mail or phone after the actual interviews. The formulation of conclusions took place throughout the research process. However, the final analysis and further managerial application were done after the interviews had been transformed to written form.

4.2.2 Structured questionnaire and data collection of the Survey

The structured questionnaires were designed on the basis of literature review and theoretical framework of the study (refer to figure1.). The questionnaires addressing to the employees from different departments (Financial department, Logistic department, Research & Development department 1-2, and Production management department) within the focused organization, and consequently, improving the reliability and validity of the study. The structured questionnaires were originally written in English, and then translated into Chinese in order to guarantee the fully understanding of business terms and business expressions.

In this study, the questionnaire concerned the real thought and potential expectation for the organization, the main hypotheses of the current study includes the following, such as the model's importance to improve the performance, awareness for managers to create conditions and the way to recognize the performance within the organization and so on. Based on the stated questions and main hypotheses, the quantitative questionnaire was generated, consisting of 16 questions mainly to cover the purposes. Questionnaires were assigned to the employees by email and returned back to me with an anonymous style after being done.

4.3 Data analysis

According to Yin, data analysis consists of examining; categorizing, tabulating, or otherwise recombining the evidence to address the initial propositions of a study (Yin 1994: 102). Accordingly data analysis of the current study relied on the theoretical proposition strategy. In other words, the original objectives and design of the case study presumably were based on such propositions, which in turn reflected a set of research questions, reviews of literature, and new insights (Yin 1994: 103). The major proposition of the current study is the performance cycle model. In this study, the data analysis of the current study began already during the data collection phase. The researcher took the notes with the permission of the informants during the interviews. Right after the interview, the individual case report was generated as an important part of the study database. The information collected via the questionnaire survey was analyzed by using EXCEL software. With the form of graphs and charts, it illustrates the real thought and vision from employees concerning the relevant issues. Based on the basic illustration of the findings, the cross-case conclusions were made adapted the preliminary theory and developed managerial implications.

4.4 Reliability and validity of the Study

In this study, improving reliability was done by designing a distinct interview outline with carefully worded questions, by obtaining background information of the study beforehand, by asking for and providing clarification whenever there was a chance for misunderstanding during the interview situation. By catering to the interviewees' schedule and availability, briefly explained the main definitions and asked for permission of taking notes during the

interview. Based on the narrative notes taken during the interview, the researcher made report of the individual interview right after the interview was done. The reliability of the end-user survey was considered with regards to the proper wordings the questions, the correct understanding of the questions and terms and the willingness to give true answers to the questions. The questionnaires were emailed to the employees and sent back to me with the anonymous style right after being done. In addition, we should take the serious Chinese hierarchical issues into consideration. Some employees are afraid to give the real answer, they are afraid to get the revenge. Moreover the validity was improved by the careful familiarization with both theoretical and practical aspects of the topic. And it was ensured by a positive atmosphere of the interview situation, avoidance of questions concerning very sensitive areas and the needed explanation of possible unclear questions. The interviewer created an open and friendly atmosphere to the interviewees, which further increased the aspiration of them providing truthful data. (The detailed information of interviewees see appendix 4)

5 FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION

5.1 Finding and interpretation from structured questionnaire

When asking the employees of the target company-YingChao, the following data was collected.

1. Manager's commitment

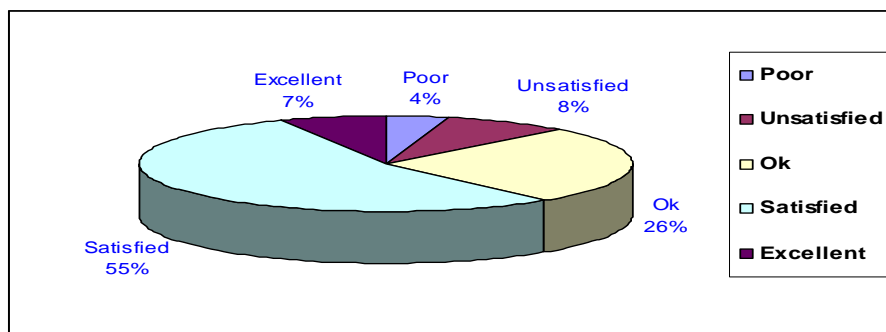


Figure 1: Are your managers highly committed and hard working? (N=72)

The question was to examine the images and impression of managers in the employees' mind. As the above chart shows, more than 62% of employees have the good

impression for their managers; meanwhile 26% of the employees feel ok concerning this question. This could be the potential impetus for employees towards the future reform and contribution. In addition, we should take the serious hierarchical issues in China into consideration. Some employees are afraid to give the real answer, they are afraid to get the reverse revenge. But besides this, the answers to the question are still optimistic and quite acceptable.

2. Employee's capability utilization.

In the question two as indicated in figure, the basic purpose is to test and thus, to indicate how much margin of the employees' potential that for the organization to discover and explore. In total, only 44% of the employees believe their ability is fully used and discovered by the company and among the rest another 24% employees are not satisfied with the condition.

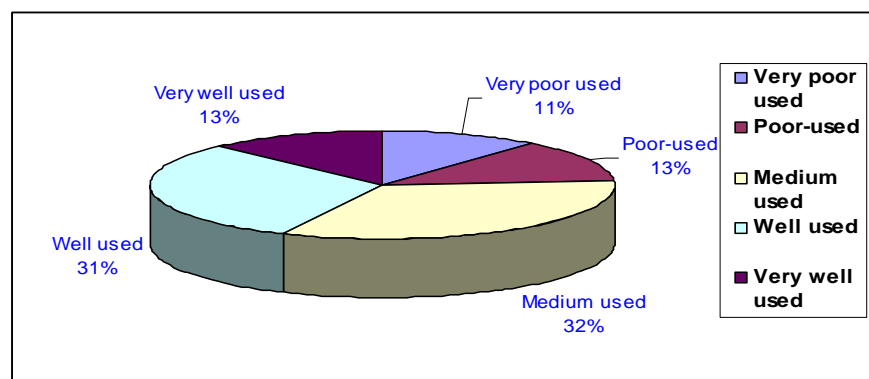


Figure 2: Is your ability and knowledge highly utilized by the organization or managers? (N=72)

According to Walkers (1992), people in an organization are not often being utilized with their full talents because of many factors. The purpose of an organization is a task of management to organize. Motivate, equip, and direct rather ordinary people to perform at their highest possible levels. Behind the question, another indication shows that, the employees want to contribute more to the company, thus leave the challenges and opportunities to the managers, how to discover the possibilities and create the harmonious atmosphere for their employees performance improvement? It leaves a margin for employers to fight.

3. The clarity of job standards before starting job.

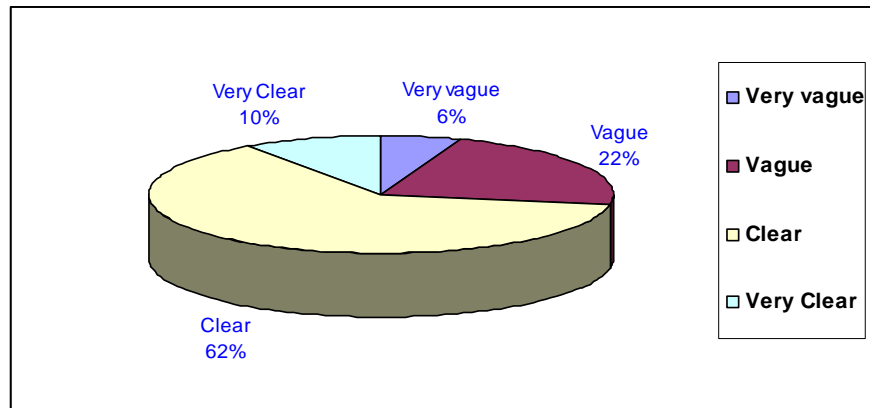


Figure 3: Do you have the clarity of job standards before starting a job in the organization? (N=72)

Referring to the above chart, it shows that the result is not acceptable in a way. Because almost one third of employees (28%) don't have the clear idea and vision towards their future job. In nowadays-competitive organizations, the standards and clarity of job should be set in advance. Thus, it could save a lot of time and energy for both employees and employers. Needless to say, managers hope their employees get to the right track as soon as possible. According to Walkers (1992), it is important for managers to help employees understand and define the structure and content of the job activities for their employees. From the result, it indicates that the company has the deficiency of job design, and lacks of the mutual views and understands between managers and employees before the employees start working.

4.1 The internal communication.

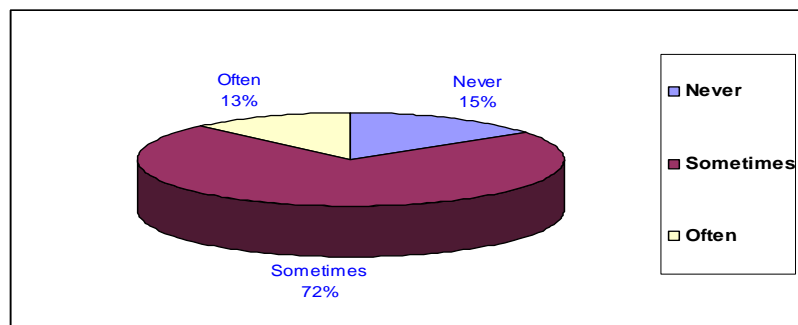


Figure 4.1: Do you communicate your managers? (N=72)

4.2 Communication frequency.

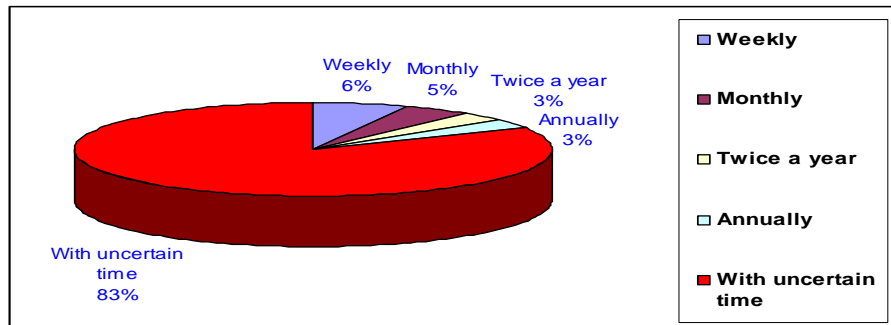


Figure 4.2: If you do, how often? (N=61)

The purpose of the question four is to examine the current communication condition between the managers and employees. Obviously, the condition is not good. 15% of employees never communicate their managers, so how can they have the clear vision of their daily performance, and how managers can recognize their performance. 52 (72%) employees communicate their managers with uncertain time, most likely by coincident chance. Easy to see that, the company doesn't have the communication systems. To create interaction across the organization, it needs the efforts from both employers and employees side. Concerning the long history of the hierarchy in China, in order to turn around the situation, managers need to take more responsibilities and actions.

5. The significance of work support from managers.

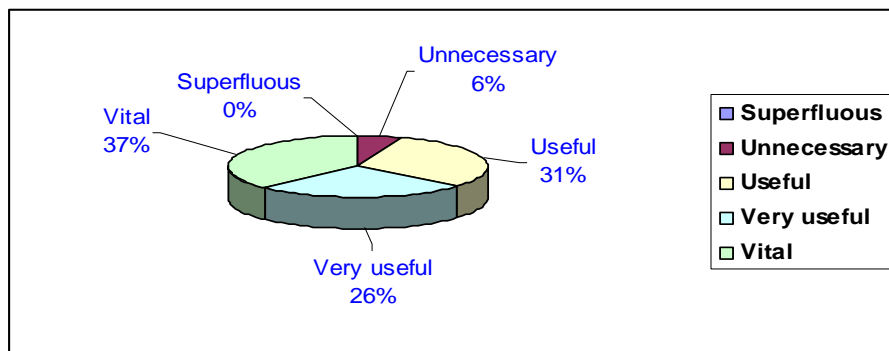


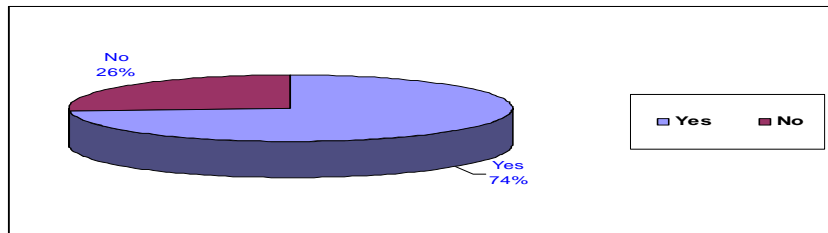
Figure 5: How significant of the support from your managers and organization that impact your work? (N=72)

The result of question five shows that the majority of employees in the focused company think the support from the managers are useful and even vital. While the employees are on the track to perform and achieve their performance, that doesn't mean managers get nothing to do except standing aside. On the contrary, the managers retain a key enabling

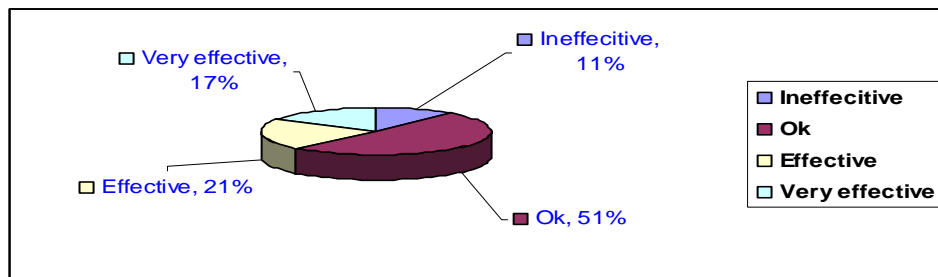
and supporting role. The support from organization is definitely useful and even vital. In this stage, support can not be understood in many ways such as, by providing constructive feedback to employees, by providing the needed resource to employees, by providing the opportunities to employees to achieve future job requirement, by coaching employees within the organization and so on.

6. Manager’s support issue.

6.1: Do managers support employee performance in your organization?



6.2: If managers do support, how effectiveness of it? (N=53)



The purpose of the question six is to examine the current situation of the managers’ support in the focused company. Unfortunately, the result is not acceptable. 26% of employees (19 out of 72) never get support from the managers. Among the rest, another 11% of the employees perceive the managers’ support is ineffective. Referring to the previous result, the importance of support from manager has been recognized by the majority of employees. Thus, in order to improve competitiveness and profitability, to recognize the importance of the support and put it into action from managers is imperative; otherwise it might worsen the organizational atmosphere, and decrease the employee moral.

7.1 Redesign and restructure the job.

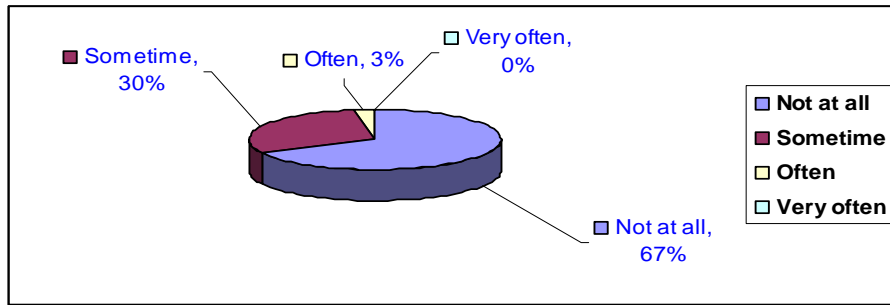


Figure 7.1: Do your managers redesign or restructure your job periodically? (N=72)

7.2 Frequency of redesign a job.

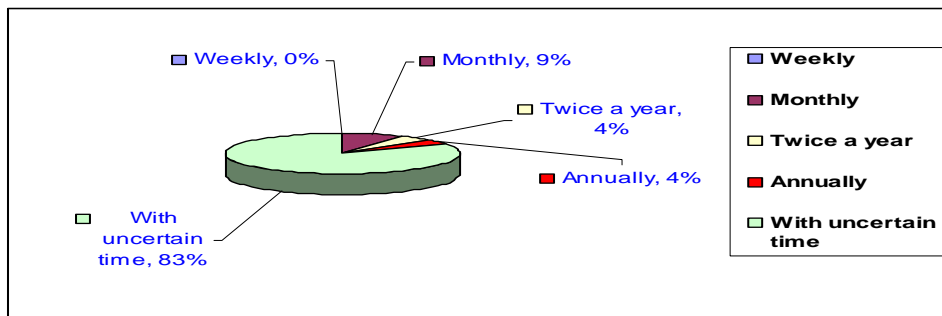


Figure 7.2: If they do, what is the time frequency? (N=23)

Redesign and restructure the job for employees within an organization are one way from managers to support employees. For an organization, how to use the limited resources and employees effectively and efficiently is vital for the organization's success. According to James (1992), one of the important ways is to eliminate from employees' jobs the least productive tasks. By redesigning the work to continually strengthen and refocus activities on the most valuable tasks, managers help employees to make the highest possible performance contribution, and to maximize profitability.

Unfortunately, the result from the question 7 is quite shocking and quite disappointing. 67% of employees never get this support from managers, and in another group, 83% of employees get this occasionally. Certainly it can be seen that the company lacks the redesign system, or the idea is not rooted in the managers' mind at all.

8 The freedom, power and authority issue.

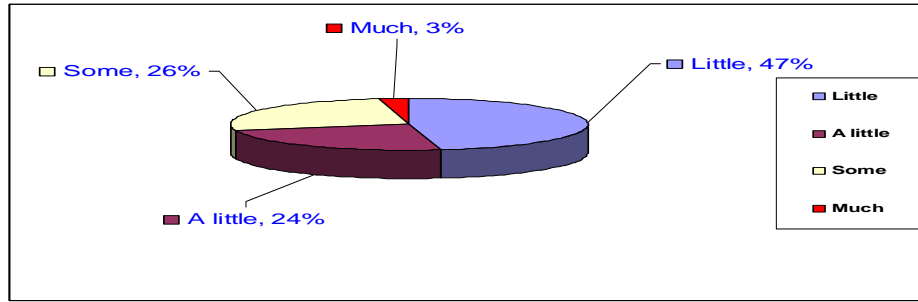


Figure 8 Do you have freedom, power or authority to deal with working issues without manager's permission? (N=72)

It is a sad fact. 47% of employees don't have the freedom, power and authority to deal with working issues without the managers' permission at all. The consequent result of it is employees become less responsible; fewer opportunities to develop themselves produce the "fear of failure" and reduce "risk-taking". Empower employees is a way to improve productivity has been widely recognized. According to Randall S (1995), organizations seeking to improve product and service quality go to great lengths to get their employees involved. There are many ways that managers can do to help employees get the empowerment to perform effectively and efficiently. Such as, provide the needed resources to employees; give employees the authority and responsibility to act and to manage them. Further, can help employees to build lateral relationships thus, assist their problem solving and learning issues across the organization.

9 Working resource issue.

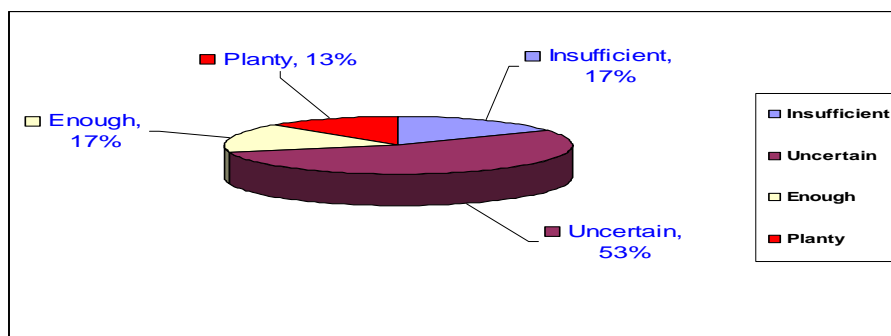


Figure 9 Do you have enough resources to perform your job?(N=72)

The result from question nine shows that only 30% of employees are satisfied with the resources provided by the organization. Resources are useful and sometimes are

essential for employees' performance. According to the chart, the explanation in another way can be understood that, most of the employees are confident that they can perform better if they get the needed enough resources. A better communications and wise plans could facilitate better performance definitely.

10 Satisfaction with current performance.

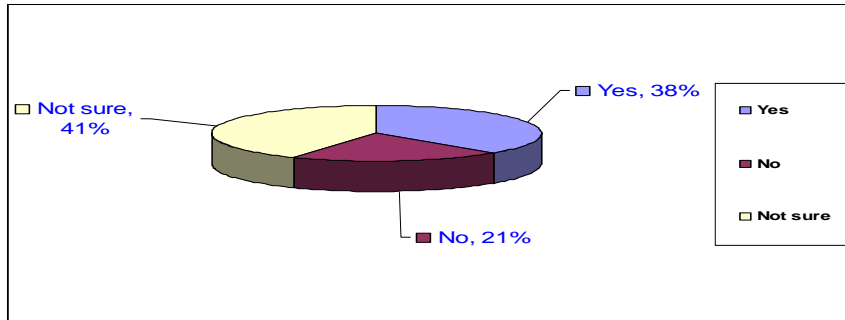


Figure 10 Are you satisfied with your current performance based on your ability?(N=72)

11.1 Possibility to improve performance.

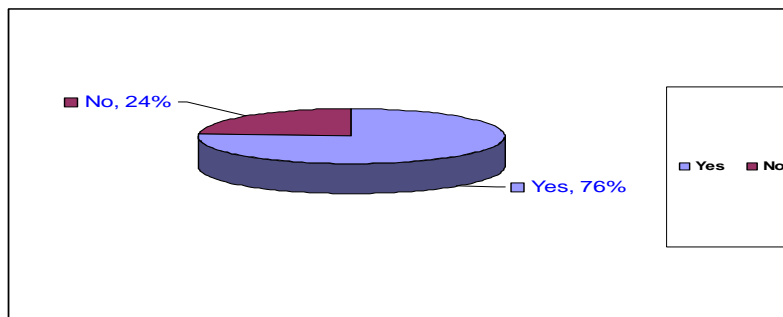


Figure 11.1 Do you think there is room to improve your current performance? (N=52)

11.2 Potential to improve performance.

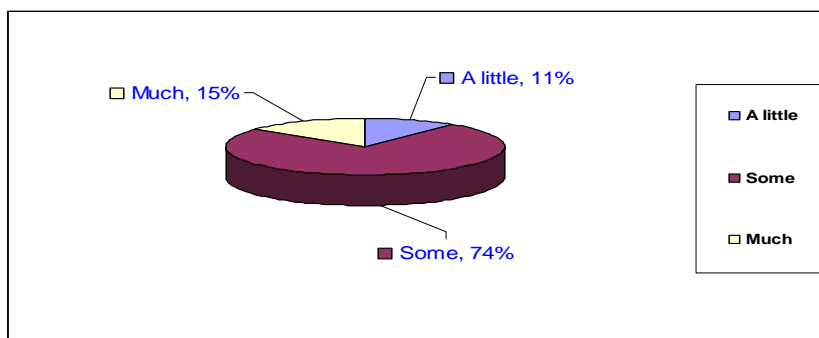


Figure 11.2 If yes, how much you think you can improve the performance. (N=55)

Question 10 and question 11 are related to each other with performance somehow. According to the result of question 10, 21% of employees answer the question quite

frankly and honestly. They are not satisfied with their current performance based on their ability. Later, more than 76% of employees think there is room to improve their performance. And within that group, another 89% of the employees think they can improve their performance to a considerable high level. But from another point of view, this can be also interpreted that employees want to perform at a higher level, and want to be recognized. But the current conditions and situations hinder them from performing better. It is such an extensive issue. It might include the lack of resources, lack of authority for them to perform, lack of training opportunity and so on.

12 Performance appraisal.

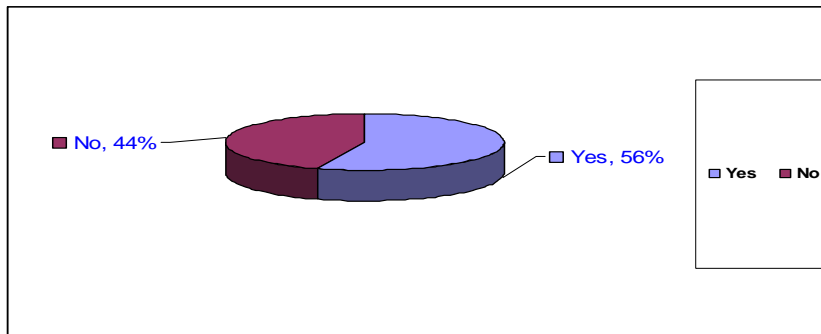


Figure 12 Do you want to have a performance appraisal? (N=72)

In a way, performance appraisal is important for employees because it answers their basic question. To reassure their contribution, recognize the importance and value of their performance, to measure the adequacy of performance in terms of quality, quantity and speed. In another way, it is also important for organization, because it can help the company to set new expectation or action plans during the business period, establish the performance plan for the coming period and affirm behavior that should be continued, and thus, facilitate and assist the companies future developmental issues. Refer to the result of the question, the majority of employees would like to have the performance appraisal system, they want their contribution to be recognized. In addition, to establish an effective performance evaluation system is a kind of win-win situation for both managers and employees.

13.1 Regular, formal feedback.

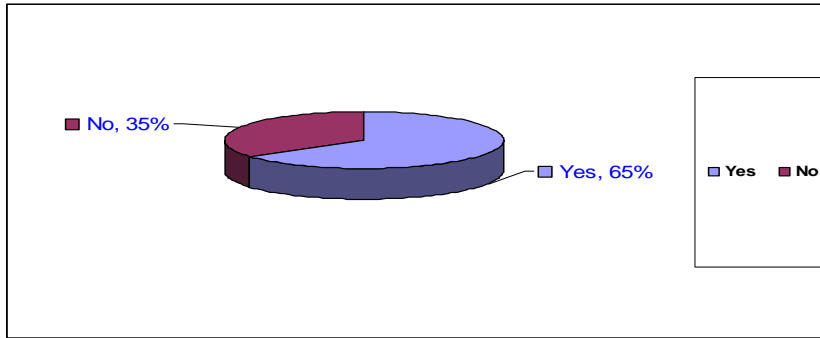


Figure 13.1 Do you want to have regular, formal feedback on your job? (N=72)

13.2 Frequency of the feedback.

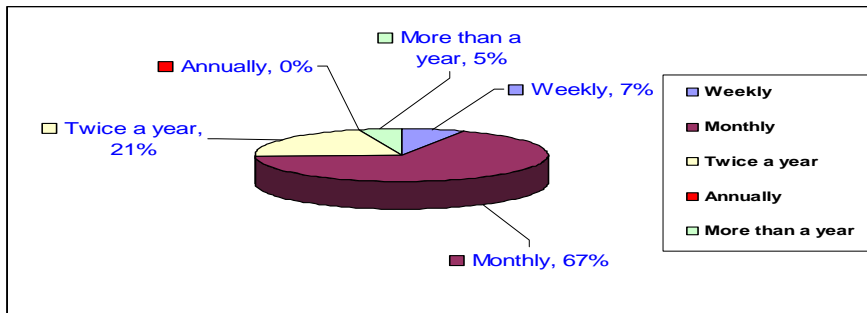
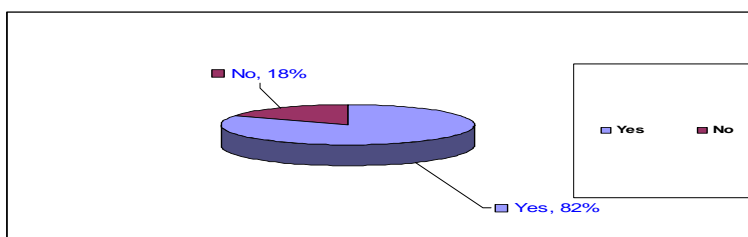


Figure 13.2 How often do you want it? (N=47)

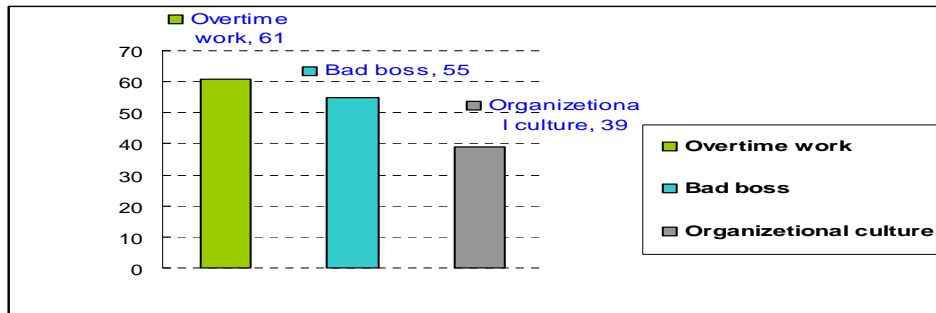
The question 13 examines the desire of the regular, and formal feedback. 65% of the employees want to have it regularly and formally. But by the common sense, it is understandable, because feedback is not necessarily related to the promotion and punishment, but performance appraisal does. Apparently, the company does not have such a system to provide feedback to their employees regularly and formally. A positive approach of using feedback can result in reinforcement, future oriented instruction and encouragement. By using feedback, employers can raise employees' self-esteem and confidence, meanwhile, reinforces the things employers want them to do again, and it is the best way to get employees' attention. According to the result found above, monthly feedback is the most proper and suitable way for this company.

14 Have you ever heard “karoshi” phenomenon?



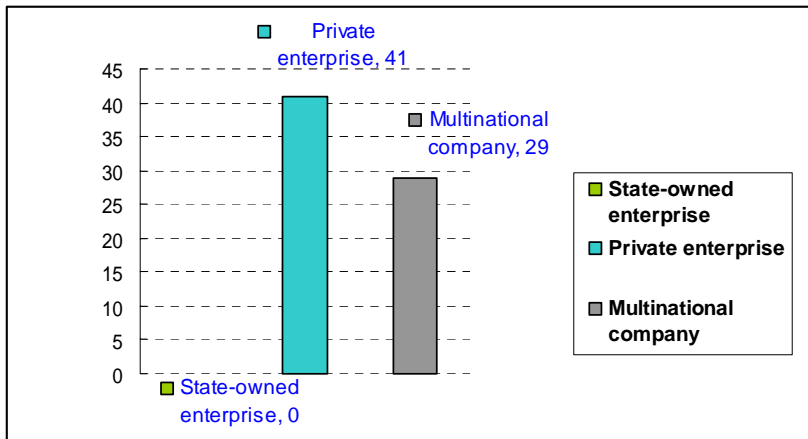
15 What is the main reason to cause the Karoshi? (Mul)

- Overtime work
- bad boss
- Organizational culture
- others please specify _____



16 What kind of enterprise that “karoshi” likely happened? (Mul)

- State-owned enterprise
- Private enterprise
- multinational company
- self-business
- others



Question 14,15 and 16 related the issue of “Karoshi”, it’s used to viewed as Japanese phenomenon, yet it sadly happened in China two decades later. From the employees’ perspective in the targeted company, “Karoshi” phenomenon is attributed to overtime work, bad boss and unhealthy organizational culture, remarkably finding from question 16 shows no one perceive it might happen in state owned enterprise, it leads to the difference of organizational culture from state owned enterprise from others. With the increasing competition both domestically and internationally, employees try to have a “satisfied” work place even sacrifice their health, it leaves a dilemma to managers how to create a healthy working atmosphere meanwhile guarantee their expectation towards profitability in contemporary China.

5.2 Finding and interpretation from interviews

First of all, the big picture comes from the interview is, that, all the interviewees consider company's profitability and development as their most important responsibilities. They treat their own development and interest strongly attached with company's development.

Secondly, interviewees somehow recognize that there is a need to do something from them to employees. Under their observation and according to their experience, they found that the employees' moral and motivation are decreasing gradually. Managers are eager to find out the possibilities to discover and explore the employees' performance improvement. Yet some of them admit that the environment is changing, possibilities and choices are available both for organizations and employees. Employees become more realistic and totally different from the situation in decades before. That means in a sense, notwithstanding they don't like their employees move to another company, but they all have the preparation at least in their mind.

Although they do believe their employees are honest, committed, and hard working. But with the external environment changing, fierce competition force them to struggle in order to survive in today's business world. In addition, managers all believe there is a room for employees to improve their performance, thus benefit the company and enhance the competitiveness. Thirdly, there is no formal system to the employees work process periodically. Little time was spent interacting with their subordinates, the quality communication was lacking, and there were vague shared understanding to both sides. Fourthly, there is no formal system to review and recognize the employees' performance. Consequently, it caused the difficulties for managers to support administrative decision, such as, payment, promotions, contract terminations and other relevant actions. In addition, company hardly gets the proper data for future development. Besides the contents mentioned above, all the interviewees know the phenomenon of "karoshi", and feel sorry about that. But they all admit that, treating such sensitive issue, managers might not take the vital role to avoid the tragedy but the law and the implementation of the law. Since most of managers only consider their profitability and in order to survive, company always ignore the employees' right, yet on the other side, due to the pressure of limited working place, employees try to get the working position even sacrifice

their time and even health. Finally all the interviewees expressed their expectation to build-up sound and healthy working environment which leads to the organizational culture. They perceive that would be win-win situation, but not one win, one sacrifice situation.

6 CONCLUSION AND MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Conclusions

Today, with the changing environment both internally and externally. The organizations face extremely high levels of competition, rapid technological advances, dynamic legal, political, and social realities, changing values, educational qualifications and the increasing demands from consumers. In order to be competitive in the world today, the organizations need their people to be as effective as possible. And “effective people” means people who are adaptable, committed, motivated, skilled/re-skilled, possessing high energy levels, good performers in diverse employee groups and good team players. The challenges and demands facing organizations today are causing a serious reexamination of ways to manage the business, in doing so; companies are discovering that a key way is through the effective management of human resource. Organizational objectives and goals need to be carried out by employees, in another word; employees’ performance is becoming crucial and vital for organization’s success.

The theoretical framework of the current study – performance model cycle consists of three main aspects:

Planning performance means setting performance expectations and goals for employees to channel their efforts toward achieving organizational objectives and goals. Getting employees involved helps them to understand what needs to be done, why it needs to be done, and how well it should be done.

Supporting and enabling performance means that managers ensure jobs are structured appropriately, that employee talents and energies are utilized appropriately, and that employees have training, information and other resources they need. In order to achieve the performance objectives, managers need to view coaching as a primary and active activity and spend more

time in it. Also need to maintain contacts with employees.

Reviewing performance shows the ways in which managers recognize employees' performance, and thus to focus employee's attention and energies on performance improvement. Through the process, employees identify areas needing improvement, generate improvement ideas, formalize and implement plans, and review progress.

Based on the theoretical framework, and the findings from two research approaches (qualitative research techniques and quantitative survey), the preliminary performance cycle model used in the study can be applied to the practice. However, the managers should take the Chinese culture context into account in order to understand, and thus utilize the cycle model effectively to improve the employees' performance.

It also needs to mention that, the focused case company is mainly a human-capital-intense company, which differs from the labor-capital-intense company. The former style company requires managers to pay more attention to their employees, to maintain the relationships; to retain the competitive staffs has more critical effects than in the later style company.

Many researchers have already said that China is stepping on the same road as Japan already did decades ago in a sense. Due to the relatively same culture background and racial issue, Chinese and Japanese are pretty same in terms of the way of perceiving life, and also can be expanded into business life. The "karoshi" tragedy has already appeared in mainland China, it corroborate the fact that the emphasis on the spirit of sacrifice, loyalty to company (leaders) etc within these two Asian countries. Employers try to maximize the company's profitability thus to push or even exploit their employees, meanwhile employees try to get or hold their working position to sacrifice their health. The reasons cause this tragedy is not from one side, both government and enterprises all should take responsibilities towards it in China's transitional period.

From the government side:

- The government should put more effort to publish the law to protect employees (more effort on the implementation of the law after it's published)
- The government should publish relevant policies and regulations towards the

enterprise, especially the private enterprises and foreign, joint venture enterprise(see the questionnaire-question 16) in order to avoid the karoshi tragedy

- Educate the employees to waken their consciousness to protect their human right
- Regulate the labor market, enable the labor has more freedom and choice
- Strengthen the market supervision system

From the enterprise side:

- Build the fair and square appraisal system, promotion and salary not based on the length of working time but the working performance
- Build-up the sound and healthy working environment, in today's China, with the emphasis of building harmony society, enterprises should create a more harmonious atmosphere for their employees.
- Attach more importance to their employees' sustainable development but not exploit then by overwork.
- Build up the healthy organizational culture

As mentioned in the part 1.1, this research mainly focus on the application of performance model cycle, yet it cannot be treated that performance model cycle is the whole to improve employees' performance. Due to the limited space, the following issues such as rewards & compensation, sound organizational culture build-up etc could be the further research fields. The current study research is just a part of the long process.

In sum, the performance cycle model is just the first step of the long march for managers. After recognizing, understanding, and fulfilling, the consequent steps need to be taken into account as well, such as reward and compensation systems, motivational theories etc. Because these all play important roles in human resource management process to improve the employees' performance, thus, increase organization's competitiveness and profitability.

6.2 Managerial implications

In an organization, a manager is viewed variously as a mentor, consultant, facilitator, teacher, friend, partner, boss, navigator, ambassador, initiator, and even the father of the company. In

the flexible organization, the manager is first and foremost a coach. Coaching narrowly implies training, instructing, or guiding, but it is more than that. It is caring, listening, nudging, encouraging, advising and nurturing others as they strive to achieve results. Good managers are an essential feature of effective management in a high performing, flexible organization.

For decades, managers have been encouraged and trained to be more effective motivators of people-to adopt management practices that help employees to perform. Planning, supporting & enabling, reviewing high performance remains an elusive goal. What are required are intensified and better-integrated management efforts. Empowering employees to act-giving them authority and accountability for their work-is essential and is widely pursued.

The performance cycle model approach was chosen to be the framework for the empirical part of the study, and the structured questionnaire survey and structured questions for interview were all based on the theoretical framework-performance model cycle. After understanding the theoretical framework, and after using two research approaches to examining the current situation of selected case company. Some deficiencies have been found in the current managing ways through employers to employees in the selected company. As mentioned above, in order to manage the employees and run the company effectively and efficiently. A lot of efforts and work are required, namely, it is a big project not only include performance model cycle. According to the questionnaire survey and semi-structured interviews, some basic steps and actions that managers could take to turn around the current situation. Thus, comes to the following managerial applications for managers:

- Set the clear and objective job standards, use specific objectives with a timescale for completion in addition to generic tasks, it can give employees a very much clear idea of performance expectation and enable them to focus on the priorities.
- Establish a periodical revision system to check, later on redesign and restructure employees' job to eliminate least productive tasks from their job, because by doing this, the work can be continually strengthened and refocus on the most valuable tasks, meanwhile, save resource, cost and energy. Future activities questionnaire can be made in this stage (detailed information refers to the part 3.2.1)
- Help the employees to get the empowerment to perform effectively and efficiently in terms of providing the needed resources to employees, giving the authority and

responsibility to employees. Furthermore, can help employees to build lateral relationships thus assist their problem solving and learning issues across the organization.

- Spend more time on coaching employees, listen to employees and responds with encouragement and suggestions for improvement. Try every possibility to establish happy working environment within the organization, and try to read employees' mind to find out crucial issues affect their performance, such as lack of needed resources.
- Based on the company's situation, set an effective performance evaluation approach. It is considered more effective when it is objective, uses appropriate techniques, actively involves employees, well understood, and involved managers' responsibilities.
- Attach more importance to their employees' sustainable development but not exploit them by overwork.
- Build up the healthy organizational culture

Further more, in China's transitional period, all the employers from HRM department lack of the advanced knowledge according to the interview. Further study or invite human resource experts to come to the company for lessons are valuable as well. After the basic steps and actions taking, the consequent steps need to be followed as well in order to complete the reform. Such as, organizational culture buildup, compensation and rewarding system, motivational theories etc.

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Appendix 1 Questionnaire

- 1 Are your managers highly committed and hard working? (Sin)
 Poor unsatisfied ok
 satisfied excellent
- 2 Is your ability and knowledge highly utilized by the organization or managers? (Sin)
 Very poor used poor-used medium used
 well used very well used
- 3 Do you have the clarity of job standards before starting your job in the organization? (Sin)
 Very vague vague clear
 very clear
- 4.1 Do you communicate your managers? (Sin)
 Never sometimes often
- 4.2 If you do, how often? (Sin)
 Weekly monthly twice a year
 annually with uncertain time
- 5 How significant of the support from your organization or managers that impact your work? (Sin)
 Superfluous unnecessary useful
 Very useful vital
- 6.1 Do managers support employee performance in your organization? (Sin)
 Yes no

- 6.2 Under the managers' support, how effectiveness of it? (Sin)
- Ineffective ok
- Effective very effective
- 7.1 Do managers redesign or restructure your job periodically to reduce the duplicate or unnecessary part in order to improve the performance contribution? (Sin)
- Not at all sometimes
- Often Very often
- 7.2 If they do, what is the time period? (Sin)
- Weekly monthly twice a year
- Annually with uncertain time
- 8 Do you have the freedom, power or authority to deal with working issues without managers' permission? (Sin)
- Little a little
- Some much
- 9 Do you have the enough resources to perform your job? (Sin)
- Insufficient uncertain
- Enough plenty
- 10 Are you satisfied with your current performance based on your ability? (Sin)
- Yes no not sure
- 11.1 Do you think there is room to improve your current performance? (Sin)
- Yes no
- 11.2 If yes, how much you can improve the performance? (Sin)
- A little some much
- 12 Do you want to have a performance appraisal in your company? (Sin)
- Yes no
- 13.1 Do you want to have regular, formal feedback on you job? (Sin)
- Yes no
- 13.2 How often do you want it? (Sin)
- Weekly monthly twice a year
- Annually more than a year
- 16 Have you ever heard "karoshi" phenomenon?
- Yes no
- 17 What is the main reason to cause the Karoshi? (Mul)
- Overtime work bad boss
- Organizational culture others please specify_____
- 16 What kind of enterprise that "karoshi" likely happened? (Mul)
- State-owned enterprise Private enterprise
- multinational company self-business
- Others please specify_____

Appendix 2

Semi-structured interview for managers (English version)

Participants are assured of the confidentiality of their responses.

- 1 Describe the situations at work in which you have succeeded and have failed.
 - What kind of skills and knowledge you have used in these situations?
 - What kind of skills should you have to prevent the failure?
- 2 What are the most important responsibilities of your job?
- 3 What kind of skills your job will request in the future?
- 4 Do you have any knowledge about HRM?
 - If you do, where did you gain it? School, work practice or other aspect?
 - If you do not, do you think the advanced HRM knowledge could help you to deal with the daily issues within an organization?
- 5 Do you check the employees' work process every certain period in order to improve the utilization of the work?
- 6 What is kind of performance your employees take currently? Are you satisfied with it? Do you think there is room to improve it?
- 7 Do you think the support from manager side would work to improve the employees' performance?
- 8 Could something be done in other way in your job?
- 9 Have you ever heard the word-karashi(death due to overover)? Have you ever heard the case of Huawei? What do u think about it?
- 10 Could you tell me what is the organizational culture in your organization? What is weight of managers' role in leading the healthy organizational culture?
- 11) Do you have a clear idea about the future competition or expectation?
Something else that arises from the discussion?

Appendix 3 Profile of case company-YingChao

Following the outline of building Beijing into fashion city, Yingchao and Beijing Clothing & Textile trade association jointly set up Beijing clothing research and design center with the purpose of introducing advanced technology, administration model, management concept and

talents of high-quality to the capital. This center goes about its work aiming at serving government, industries and enterprises and building Beijing into research and design center, information release center, fashion show center, trade center of choice goods, clothing industry center and industrial chain integration center guiding the development of China clothing industry.

The production base is located in the Beijing economic and technological development area close to north five-circle and airport highway provided with traffic advantages. It has an area of 33097.16 square meters, covering casual clothing factory no. 1 and no. 2, knitting fashion factory and top-grade fashion factory; the main construction covers an area of 230 thousand square meters, the affiliated 60 thousand square meters, 50 designer studios and 50 format creators studios are also included.

Yingchao International Clothing Industrial garden is exclusive state economic and technological development area that Beijing municipal government gives priority support to in eleventh five-years" project. Presently it owns a research and design center made up of 100 plus designers and research staffs and possesses well-equipped supplementary measures such as the ability to R&D, design, production, trade and foreign exchange and cooperation.

Yingchao international clothing industrial garden with eight functions of R&D, designing, releasing, exhibition, show, trade, logistics, and settlement incorporated, has the feature of modernization, intellectualization and information.

The establishment of the industrial garden with the general function will furnish China clothing industry, the pillar industry among foreign trade, with top-class research and design center, platform for production, effective exchange links, perfect fashion exhibition culture, efficient distribution channel and management. As the technology core of this line of business, the industrial garden will perform fully general function as the window of exploiting market, the platform of cooperation and exchange, the magnetic field of allocating resources, the base of radiating hatch and the heart of clothing industry etc and achieve win -win in collaboration and production value added through elevating the professional level of each link of China

clothing industry chain. Along with the growth of economic level, the improvement of economic constructor and expanding of the foreign trade cooperation, Processing and Assembling Business with Imported Materials gradually becomes into the important export form and new increasing point of expanding the export. According to the development policy of “go out” and “please come in”, we establish the Europe corporation ltd. (No.1 fashion) in Britain together with Britain Xiyuan Management Corporation. The range of operation covers the fashion design, production, final-period settlement, sorting out and flow of goods, sale and reexport etc. The optimal fashion atmosphere in Europe and the foresight idea of design will set up a platform for the spread of abroad market.

Economic globalization and entering into WTO offer a wider platform for the growth of international trade in China. Yingchao, as the center of Beijing fashion Research and design industry will become a focus of attention in attracting funds from the oversea brand corporation into clothing industry in China.

Appendix 4 Interviewee information

Interviewee No. 1 Mrs. Nina Lee

(1) Age:37; (2) Gender:Female ; (3) Educational background: Beijing United University (4) Profession: Financial department Manager : (5) Years working in target company 1 year: (6) Monthly salary 4500RMB (7) Interview place: Office (8) Interview form: personally interview (9) Working department: Financial department (10) Interview time: October 27 2006

Interviewee No. 2 Jane Lee

(1) Age: 36 ; (2) Gender: Female ; (3) Educational background: Beijing University ; (4) Profession: Logistic department Manager (5) Years working in target company: 7 years (6) Monthly salary 7000 RMB (7) Interview place: Office (8) Interview form: personally interview(9)Working department: Logistic department (10) Interview time: October 27 2006

Interviewee No3 Lan Ma

(1) Age: 32 ; (2) Gender: Female; (3) Educational background: Beijing Cloth College ;

(4) Profession: R&D Center Manager (5) Years working in target company: 5 years
(6) Monthly salary 8500 RMB (7) Interview place: Office(8) Interview form:
personally interview (9) Working department: R&D department (10) Interview time:
November 10 2006

Interviewee No. 4 XiaoBo Wang

(1) Age: 42 ; (2) Gender: Female ; (3) Educational background: Capital of Economy
and Commerce University; (4) Profession: Production management department
Manager (5) Years working in target company: 13years (6) Monthly salary
10000RMB (7) Interview place: Office (8) Interview form: personally interview (9)
Working department: Production department (10) Interview time: November 17 2006