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## Organizational Fear: Barriers to Effective Performance among Malaysian Fresh Graduates' Employees

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### Abstract

The aim of this research study is to determine the factors, i.e., childhood socialization, institutional socialization, cultural socialization, fear of workplace penalty and afraid of getting terminated from work of organizational fear that influence the effective performance among the Malaysian fresh graduate employees. Data were collected from 119 fresh graduate employees who have their jobs in their first year in organization and data was analysed by using statistical analyses. The findings show that all the factors (childhood socialization, institutional socialization, cultural socialization, fear of workplace penalty and afraid of getting terminated from work) have significant relationships with effective performance. Among these, cultural socialization has the strongest relationship with effective performance. The empirical findings highlight factors of organizational fears that might affect the effectiveness of organizational performance. It also provides recommendations for organizations to reduce employee fear for better performance in achieving individual and company goals. This study provides insight into the important factors for organisational fear which ultimately lead to a better understanding to improve performance among fresh graduates' employees in Malaysia.

**Keywords:** Organizational Fear; Barriers to Effective Performance; Fresh Graduates' Employees

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## 1. Introduction

Organizational fear has become a barrier to employees' effective performances. Today, many organizations emphasize the importance of voicing out issues in their workplace for the company's benefit. Many organizations try to encourage their employees to speak up when there is a need to, but only a few have succeeded in doing so. The reality is that even if companies encourage their employees to be proactive and voice out new ideas while working in the organization for better results, most employees remain silent most of the time. Fear is the main cause for employees change in behaviour and it demotivates employees in the workplace. Fear amongst employees results in dysfunctional behaviour and decreased management performance.

Organizational fear is the main root cause in causing the "silence culture" in the organizations and also results in the biggest negative impact in innovation (Morrison and Milliken, 2003). According to a survey conducted by Robert Half Group in 2012, employees always try their best to avoid penalties or take risks by following organization policies. In their research, the list of origin of fears includes 30% of employees who are afraid of making mistakes, 18% of employees who are afraid of being terminated from work, followed by 15% of employees who are afraid of creating conflict with their supervisors, 13% of employees who fear of speaking in the organization and another 13% of employees who are afraid of different opinion with co-workers. Only 3% of employees agree to the statement that they are fearless in the organization. In addition, they mentioned that fear brings the biggest impacts in innovation (William & Scott, 2012).

The increasing competition in the world market today has created job insecurity and organizational fear among employees. Organizations have started to strive for a long-term sustainability. While some have formed merger and have even been absorbed by larger companies, most of the organizations opted to reduce labor cost and increase competitiveness by undergo downsizing, right sizing, layoffs, and restructuring in the organization. In most cases, these activities are carried out without any warning to employees. This phenomenon has heavily affected the mental state of those employees who are under contract employment especially fresh graduates, whose contract period normally ranges from a few months to a year while still under probation. This is mainly because employees who are under probation can be terminated at any time without prior notification as stated in their contracts (Larry et al., 2003). This intermediate termination

has created fear within an organizational especially for contract employees such as fresh graduates. They are afraid of losing job, thus leaving a bad record in their resume which may affect their marketability in the future. Moreover, being terminated from their first job will affect their confidence level in seeking for better opportunity. Thus, this fear of failure will result in employees maintaining status quo or have a low profile in the organization so as not to bring attention to themselves.

Punishment is often used as a main approach to control the employees' behavior. However, conflicts might occur when the penalties and punishment are applied on the employees. Penalties may lead to loss of productivity, loss of trust and loyalty, loss of confidence in the workplace, job dissatisfaction and increase in stress levels (Morrison, 2014, Tangirala & Ramanujam, 2008). Fresh graduates without prior working experience are often afraid of punishment or penalty in the workplaces. The lack of prior working experience will naturally require them to start from the very beginning. To start off on the right note, new employees will be reserved and typically behave conservatively so as not to bring unwanted attention to themselves. To that end, some employees will not take any initiative at the workplace for fear of making mistakes and consequently be punished for it. Fear of punishment makes them miss out on opportunities whenever they present themselves at the workplace (Sufian & Modab, 2015). Consequently, the employees would rather continue working on what makes them feel secure and well. This fear holds a fresh graduate back because they view risks as limits instead of potentially interesting and exciting opportunities.

Fear not only affects employees' behaviour in the workplace but also plays an important role in employees' effective performance. It is very important to understand how to manage fear and be clear about the impact of how fear can limit the employees' performance. Many researchers (Harting 2005; Morrison, 2014; Nevin et.al, 2011) agreed that knowledge and experience of employees are the main human performance factors, which have the largest effects on effective performance. Moreover, Albrecht and colleagues (2015) supported that the resources especially human resources should be used properly as the competitive advantage for better performance. Fear is the negative emotional process which becomes the main obstacle for effective performance as it influences the cognitive thinking such as decision-making in an organization. Slower and

inaccurate decision-making delay the performance as it slows down the process due to inability to make progress toward goals (Runyun, 2005).

Along with the demands for better and responsive employees, it is increasingly being recognized that employees who are willing to voice up and provide ideas will be the crucial factor in determining the sustainable performance of an organization. In the era of globalization, organizations are increasingly being faced with conflicts and competitors in the industry. It is therefore vital that responsive employees come out with useful solutions to help their organization to solve these complex challenges successfully. Hence, the objective of this study is to determine the critical factors of organizational fear on effective performance among Malaysian fresh graduates' employees.

## **2. Review of Literature**

### *Organizational fear*

Fear in an organization can be perceived as a significant and individually related threat at the workplace and causes huge emotional changes. Fear is an unlikable mental and physical response felt in response to threats and danger (Nevin et.al, 2011; Dobson.D. 2006; Oxford Dictionaries, 2015). Organizational fear occurs when the employees feel fear or are threatened by possible issues at the when voicing out any problems regarding their works. (Nevin et.al, 2011). Fear results in employee silence in an organization (Jennifer et.al, 2009). Senge (1999) and Maria and Dimitris (2005) found that in a working environment with fear, intimidation and silence are the norms. Employees choose to stay in their comfort zone by remaining silent to avoid creating any issues at the workplace. Appelbaum et.al. (2000) and also Maria.V and Dimitris.B (2005) supported that organizational fear is mainly during organizational change, when the employees face work stress during the adjustment period. In addition, Huang (2003) found that organizational fear is mainly due to power distance culture as well as the defensive routines in organizations. Similarly, Lu and Xie (2015) agreed that higher managements' attitudes and beliefs are the main cause of the organizational fear and silence.

*Effective performance*

Goldsmith (2002) and Nevin et.al (2011) mentioned in their studies that fear will eventually affect organizational productivity, two-way communication between employees and supervisors, ability to create, and emotional well-being. Employees with high level of fear in an organization are affected negatively in terms of their personal behavior such as motivation consciousness, perception emotion cognition, action and synergy. Furthermore, high intensity of organizational fear will reduce employee creativity at the workplace, diminish innovation, stifle employees' interpersonal relationships and reduce the fun in their job (Nevin et.al, 2011; Tahmasebi et al., 2013). Also, fears of workplace penalties, termination and culture of socialization potentially affects employee performance. The employees will suffer performance limitations and unable to help the organization increase performance (Coban & Sarikaya, 2016; Nikmaram Et al., 2012; Nevin et.al, 2011). Based on previous literature, the following factors were identified as important determinants of organizational fear towards effective performance of fresh graduate. The following shows the review of the relevant literature.

*Childhood socialization*

During beginning of childhood life, parents and teachers always provide the mindset to their children that challenging authority is something that must be avoided and to be feared (Bornstein 2006). Children have been introduced to social rules just as they learn talk along with the consequences and punishments if they violate them (Cummins, 2005). Parents always train their children to be obedience using the approach of fear. During childhood education, parents may also unintentionally communicate with their children by providing some real-life examples of negative impacts or consequences of challenging authority, demonstrating that it is something that should be avoided (Olsson & Phelps, 2007). Moreover, parents might also punish their children whenever they did not follow instructions, implementing the fear of challenging authority in them (Field et.al., 2001; Schleider et al., 2016). Therefore, childhood socialization may become a source during child development embedding the fear of voicing out when there is a need, especially in front of authority. On the other hands, less conservative parents will provide a different education to their children, lessening the fear of challenging authority. These includes encouraging their children to use their own judgment for each decision they make and

encourage them to ask questions about their doubts for better understanding, provided them with a mindset for leadership (Haimovitz & Dweck 2016; Gunderson et al. 2013).

Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Childhood socialization has a positive effect on effective performance.

### *Institutional socialization*

Institutional socialization is formed by representations that develop a mysterious world of myths and symbols to guide the behaviour of everyone in the organization in curious and seemingly unexplainable way (Denhardt, 1987). Organizational interactions and communications among top management or supervisor and employees can play a significant role in forming organizational fear and directly influence the effective performance of employees in achieving individual and organizational' goals (Kandlousi et al.,2010) Organizational silence occurs when supervisor have unspoken beliefs such as employee untrustworthiness to organizational principles like organizational culture that foster these beliefs. Also, supervisor's attitudes and beliefs develop institutional socialization as supervisors with lack of openness will fear of negative feedback eventually creating a silent culture. Employee fear development will result in culture of silence in an organization which is the direct response to organizational fear. Bagheri, et al. (2012), Morrison and Miliken (2000), Pinder et.al (2001) and Van et.al (2003) argued that employees will respond based on the injustice of the supervisors and results in individual employee silence by holding back their genuine opinion regarding organizational issues even though they have the capability to cause change. In addition, some supervisors employ informal tactics to silence the employees in order to manage them likened to a "double bind leadership" (Hennestad, 1990). This can be done by telling the employees they do not have enough experience, lack the authority to know more information and to act accordingly, are not "team players" and their actions will only create trouble and do not benefit the organization, to make employees feel bad among themselves (Panahi, et al. 2012). Consequently, the supervisor creates a silent culture where employees do not feel appreciated in an organization and therefore will not speak up since the organization does not appreciate and give credit to the employee's feedback and ideas (Dickson and Roethlisberger, 1996). Moreover, employees do not

want be categorized as “troublemakers” and suffer from potential negative repercussions that might affect their career. As such, we propose the following hypothesis:

H2: Institutional socialization has a positive effect on effective performance.

#### *Cultural socialization*

Culture socialization plays a vital role in influencing employees’ organizational fear by creating an atmosphere of fear of challenging authority (Edwards et.al, 2009; Morrison et.al, 2009). Cultural socialization is developed through individuals learning in a particular society and environment and is shown in different ways such as childhood development, education from families and school, workplace organizations, and society environment (House et.al., 2004). Cultural socialization in high power distance dimension countries such as Singapore and India result in acceptance of different levels in organizational positions. Conversely, low power distance dimension countries such as United States and Netherlands are obviously less willing to accept the different levels in the organizations (Jennifer et.al., 2009). Thus, organizational fear is higher in Eastern countries compared to Western countries as the employees in high power distance cultures are more afraid to challenge authority compared to low power distance cultures. Both Liew et al. (2011) and Lu and Xie (2013) reported that Eastern graduate students are more afraid of their boss compared to Western graduate students, they have a higher level of organizational fear. Hence, supervisors have greater influence upon fresh graduates and are also greater social threat. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3: Culture socialization has a positive effect on effective performance.

#### *Fear of workplace penalties*

Penalties have been used widely in most of the organizations as a means of control due to acceptance of society back in the time and considered as one of the oldest ways of controlling individual behavior. Penalty is known as a learning progress for the employees and to eliminate inappropriate activities in an organization. Penalties are major cause of behavioral changes among employees as it used to deal with and control undesirable behavior (Agboola & Salawu, 2011). As results, penalties will create side

effects such as fear among the employees. Additionally, penalties do not have to be experienced to develop fear. The fear of penalties can be developed through observation in an organization or sharing the experience of colleagues or friends (Reiss, 1980). Atwater et al. (2001) and Peterson (2014) argued that implement of workplace penalty not only proves to be ineffective for workplace performance but will also produce negative feeling such as aggression and fear in employees and results in loss of trust and loyalty in the organization. Moreover, this organizational fear will reduce individual performance, job satisfaction, and increase stress level at the workplace (Bashir & Ramay, 2010; Fritz et al., 2013). Also, over afraid of penalties will cause frustration which is able to cause an individual to react abnormally such as withdrawing from their works, absenteeism, turnover and abandoning their goals even when action is expected to be taken by an organization. Even though workplace penalty has been proven to be effective tool in controlling employees' behaviour for effective performance, however, superior that under conditions of stress may implement penalty rules upon the employee. So, employees will develop the feeling of fear and behaviour so that they do not experience any form of penalty. Hence, we propose:

H4: The fear of workplace penalty has a positive effect on effective performance.

*Fear of being terminated from work.*

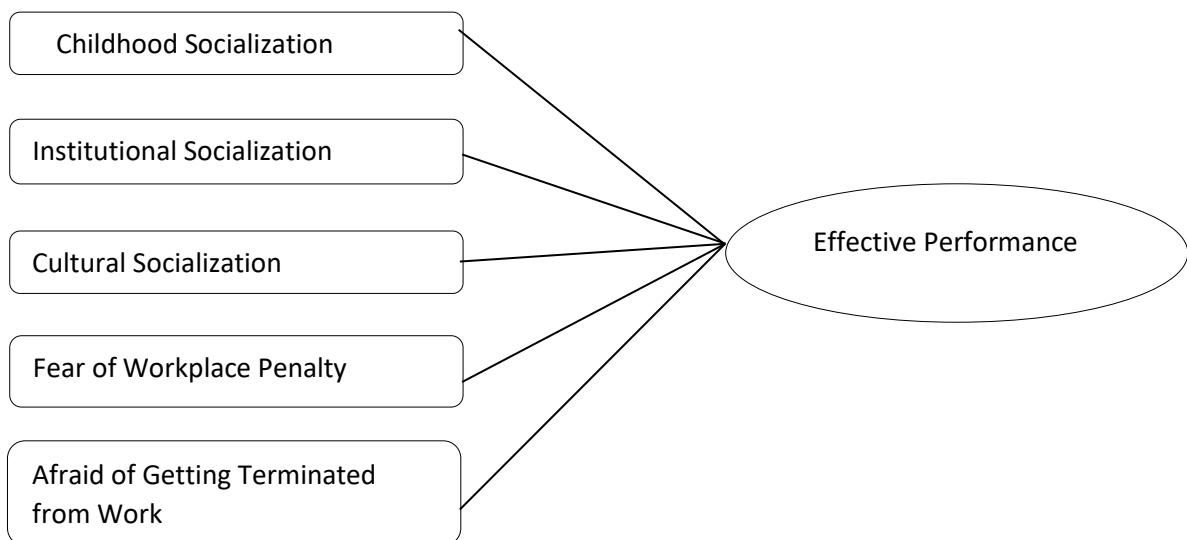
Employees no longer have job security that was once strong in the past since technology, economy, politics, and social norms have dramatically changed and this results in layoffs becoming more frequent in each organization (Ronald Karren, 2012). According to English & Sutton (2001), employees with positive qualities such as knowledge, skills, and experience but rapidly change work environment is insufficient to work effectively if they are not able to handle and face their own organizational fear (English & Sutton, 2001). Employees who are unable to meet the requirements and be fast changers might face termination from the workplace especially during downsizing for cost cutting in an organization (Craig and Hall, 2006; Ronald Karren, 2012). Employees not only face job security issues in an organization, but the fear of mass layoffs in an organization may cause high levels of uncertainty, anxiety in employees and most likely will affect employee's performance (Greenberg et.al., 2010). However, organizational fear has



brought in negative effects such as employee silence, the main reason for stopping employees from speaking up mainly due to fears of basic existence or related losses in their career such as fear of being terminated from work, lost promotion opportunities, or reputational harm (Gulluce & Erkilic, 2016; Pope, 2015). Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H5: The afraid of getting terminated from work has a positive effect on effective performance. Figure 1 shows the research framework for this study.

**Figure 1: Research Framework**



### **Research methodology**

This research applies quantitative approach and questionnaire was used for data collection. Questions with interval scale ranged from strongly disagree (scale 1) to strongly agree (scale 5) were used to measure both the independent variables and the dependent variable. As for demographic factors, direct questions using nominal scale were delivered through questionnaire. The questions were adapted from several studies of previous literature. (Baumeister et al., 2001; Jennifer, 2009; Liew et al., 2011; Maria et al., 2005; Nervin et al., 2011) and has undergone a pilot testing which involved 30 fresh graduates' employees as respondents. Questionnaires with a total 39 items were

delivered through email and face to face to 200 fresh graduates' employees working in Selangor. 119 responses were received, representing a response rate of 59.5 percent. Fresh graduates' employees who have their jobs in their first year in organization were the target respondents because they directly reflect the organizational fear of fresh graduate employees who just finished their studies and have just begun interacting with the real-world working environment in Malaysia. Purposive sampling method was used as the target respondents were fresh graduates who were working as their first job in their career life.

## Findings

Table 1 shows that respondents comprised 56.3% (67) males and 43.7% (52) females. As for the highest level of education of respondents, 68.9% (82) of the total respondents are bachelor's degree holder, followed by 18.5% (22) of the respondents who are master's degree holder. Besides that, 10.9% (13) of the respondents are diploma holder. PhD holder and others education level each consists of 0.8% (1) of the total respondents. Most of the occupation of respondents is professional or technical expertise, as there are 66.4% (79) of the total respondents. Then, there are 12.6% (15) workings as part of the office administration. Also, there are 9.2% (11) of the respondents working as "others" category. A total of 7.6% (9) respondents working as academicians and 4.2% (5) working with government sector in Malaysia.

**Table 1 Demographic profile**

	Frequency	Percentages (%)
<b><i>Gender</i></b>		
Male	67	56.3
Female	52	43.7
Total	119	100.0
<b><i>Highest Level of Education</i></b>		
Diploma	13	10.9
Bachelor's degree	82	68.9
Master's degree	22	18.5
PhD	1	0.8
Others	1	0.8
Total	119	100.0
<b><i>Occupation</i></b>		
Professional/Technical Expertise	79	66.4

Government Sector	5	4.2
Office Administration	15	12.6
Academicians	9	7.6
Others	11	9.2
Total	119	100.0

Table 2 illustrates the mean and standard deviation of all the independent variables and dependent variable. Among the five independent variables, childhood socialization has the highest score mean value with a mean of 3.3902 and standard deviation of 0.81763. Workplace termination also indicated high men value (mean=3.3866; standard deviation=1.00374). This is then followed by cultural socialization (mean=3.3445; standard deviation=0.96110) and penalty (mean=3.3046; standard deviation=1.09077). Institutional socialization scored the lowest mean value among other independent variables (mean=3.1924; standard deviation=0.92993). Besides, the mean score of the dependent variable, effective performance of fresh graduate employees is 3.3056, with the standard deviation of 0.86827.

**Table 2 Descriptive statistics of variables**

	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
<b><i>Dependent Variable (DV)</i></b>			
Effective Performance	119	3.3057	0.86827
<b><i>Independent Variables (IV)</i></b>			
Childhood Socialization	119	3.3902	0.81763
Institutional Socialization	119	3.1924	0.92993
Cultural Socialization	119	3.3445	0.96110
Fear of Workplace Penalty	119	3.3046	1.09077
Afraid of Getting Terminated from Work	119	3.3866	1.00374

Based on Table 3, Cronbach's alpha value is range from 0.835 to 0.927. The termination Cronbach's alpha is 0.835; following by childhood socialization with the Cronbach's alpha of 0.844, and the cultural socialization Cronbach's alpha is 0.862. Moreover, the Cronbach's alpha of effective performance is 0.890. Besides that, the Cronbach's alpha of penalty is 0.907. Institutional socialization has the highest reliability as the Cronbach's alpha is 0.927. Thus, the result shows the reliability test is acceptable as the items of each of the variables have relatively high internal consistency.

**Table 3 Reliability Analysis**

	<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>	<b>N of Items</b>
<b><i>Dependent Variable (DV)</i></b>		
Effective Performance	0.890	8
<b><i>Independent Variables (IV)</i></b>		
Childhood Socialization	0.844	7
Institutional Socialization	0.927	10
Cultural Socialization	0.862	4
Fear of Workplace Penalty	0.907	4
Afraid of Getting Terminated from Work	0.835	3

Table 4 shows the Pearson correlation analysis. The Pearson Correlation of childhood socialization (0.763), institutional socialization (0.764), cultural socialization (0.772), penalty (0.751), and termination (0.667) proved there is positive relationship with the effective performance. The highest correlation is between the cultural socialization and effective performance which is 0.772. The lowest correlation is between the termination and the effective performance (0.667). Moreover, all of the correlation are significant. This proves that effective performance has a positive relationship with all the independent variables (childhood socialization, institutional socialization, cultural socialization, fear of workplace penalty and afraid of getting terminated from work).

The regression analysis as shown in Table 5 shows the adjusted R square of this model is 0.730 with the R square value as 0.742. This means that the linear regressions explained 74.2% of the variance in the data. In other words, 74.2% of variation in effective performance can be interpreted by childhood socialization, institutional socialization, cultural socialization, fear of workplace penalty and afraid of getting terminated from work. In addition, it shows that the cultural socialization has the largest beta coefficient ( $\beta$ ) which is 0.259. This indicates that the cultural socialization is the factor which has the greatest impact on effective performance. This is followed by institutional socialization (0.226), penalty (0.210), termination (0.159) and lastly childhood socialization (0.139). In addition, there is no issue of multi-collinearity as all the VIF values are less than 10.

**Table 4 Pearson Correlation Analysis**

**Correlations<sup>a</sup>**

	Performance	Childhood	Institutional	Cultural	Penalty	Termination
Performance Pearson Correlation	1	.763**	.764**	.772**	.751**	.667**
Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
Childhood Pearson Correlation	.763**	1	.781**	.782**	.706**	.616**
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000
Institutional Pearson Correlation	.764**	.781**	1	.704**	.712**	.619**
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000
Cultural Pearson Correlation	.772**	.782**	.704**	1	.719**	.602**
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000
Penalty Pearson Correlation	.751**	.706**	.712**	.719**	1	.606**
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000
Termination Pearson Correlation	.667**	.616**	.619**	.602**	.606**	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

a. Listwise N=119

**Table 5 Regression Analysis**

**Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.861 <sup>a</sup>	.742	.730	.45096

a. Predictors: (Constant), Termination, Cultural, Institutional, Penalty, Childhood

**ANOVA<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	65.980	5	13.196	64.889	.000 <sup>a</sup>
	Residual	22.980	113	.203		
	Total	88.959	118			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Termination, Cultural, Institutional, Penalty, Childhood

b. Dependent Variable: Performance

**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	.334	.183		1.830	.070		
	Childhood	.147	.097	.139	1.517	.132	.274	3.653
	Institutional	.211	.078	.226	2.685	.008	.324	3.091
	Cultural	.234	.076	.259	3.078	.003	.324	3.089
	Penalty	.167	.062	.210	2.697	.008	.378	2.646
	Termination	.138	.057	.159	2.431	.017	.533	1.877

a. Dependent Variable: Performance

**Discussion**

The findings of this study show that cultural socialization plays a vital role in influencing employees' organizational fear (Liew et.al, 2011; Edwards and Greenberg, 2009; Morrison and Rothman, 2009). Cultural study helps individuals to learn the rules and responses in different environment. For example, accepting the status difference for power distance dimension cultures (Stets and Turner, 2008). People from Eastern countries are used to be more afraid of authority and fear of negative evaluation compared to their Western countries counterparts (Liew et.al, 2011; Ma and Han, 2009; Jennifer eat.al, 2009).

The top management as well as supervisors' attitude plays an important role in forming the employees' behaviour and communication opportunities, as they are perceived by the individuals in an organization. Silent culture in an organization will highly affect employee performance especially in achieving the company goals. This finding is supported by Maria (2005) and Morrison and Milliken (2000). Employees often suffer from organizational fear especially fresh graduate who are without working

experiences and not sure what are the appropriate and inappropriate actions in workplaces. Thus, institutional socialization plays an important role in providing guidance for them to eliminate organizational fear to perform more effectively at the workplace. Fresh graduate often fears negative consequences and being labelled as “troublemakers” especially during their first jobs. This situation happens especially when the upper management and supervisors lack openness in communication and are unsupportive which results in silent behaviour among employees (Maria, 2005). This result in employees failing to express their ideas, disagreements, and feedback due to organizational fear. Previous studies support the finding whereby the supervisor and employee’s relationship has high influences on employee effective performance, career development, communication and so on (Dixon Kheir, 2001).

In addition, the conduct of penalty elicits fear within employees. Thus, penalty is often used by companies to control their employees’ behaviour and activities in an organization (Simpson, 2002). Even though penalty is effective tool in preventing the employees from conducting inappropriate activities in the organization, it also brought about negative impacts on employee performance. Workplace penalties will affect the effective performance of employees by causing them to feel frustration, aggression, fear and loss of trust and loyalty in the organization. This can further result in low individual performance, job dissatisfaction and increase stress level in workplace (Challagalla and Shervani, 1996).

Fear occurs within employees if they have insecurities about their job security since economy, politics, and social norms have dramatically evolved throughout the years. In addition, the number of fresh graduates keep increasing as the layoffs have become more frequent in each organization due to little mistakes that are made (Ronald and Karren, 2012). Moreover, organization hash requirement on employees causes them to face the stress and fear of being unable to meet the requirements and increase the chances of being layoff by the organization (Craig and Hall, 2006; Ronald and Karren, 2012). The effective performance of employees is highly limited by anxiety in workplace (Greenberg et.al, 2009). Fresh graduate employees with fewer skills will most likely maintain a low profile and remain silent in an organization to prevent any mistakes due to being afraid of job termination (Ronald and Karren, 2012; Detert, 2003).

**Implications for Practice**

Organizations must be effective in manage employee fear with skills and knowledge by encourage employees to be courageous and face their own fear. As an employee, working with no fear enable them to central their effectiveness at work. Organization can initiate a mentor-mentee program for their employees especially fresh graduates who are without working experience and require help and consultation advice from seniors who are helpful and willing to provide guidance for them to cope with organizational fear and reach an understanding of the organizational environment. A mentor's primarily role is to coach mentees in technical knowledge. Besides that, mentors also pay attention to mentees' inner mindset and should show concern about their emotions as well as to reduce their fear toward the organization to increase their performance. Mentors are required to sort out the mismatch of the expectation and reality at the workplace and guiding fresh graduate employee mentees to slowly accept the new environment which is different from colleges or universities. To consult and guide mentees, mentors are first required to create a secure and supportive space for the mentees. A close relationship between mentors and mentees enables the mentees to open and discuss their issues and doubt in a safe environment. For example, the mentors can achieve this by sharing some of their own doubts and experiences during own beginnings at the workplace.

Moreover, two-way communications within top management and employees are important to sort out the problems and obstacles in an organization. To increase effective performance for fresh graduate employees in Malaysia, it suggests that upper management and the supervisor attitude is the main key to create a working atmosphere. Employees perform more effectively when they are satisfied with their job and work without organizational fear. This can be done by implementing a healthy institutional socialization atmosphere such as the upper management and supervisors encouraging free exchange of ideas and feedback, handling conflict well within employees, and paying attention to the employees and accepting feedback from them and so on. As the upper management and supervisors are more open and willing to listen and support their employees in discussions and decision making, employees will be more respectful and willing to respect and engage themselves in "voice" behaviour to achieve effective performance. According to Maria (2005), employees tend to be more willing to involve themselves in the organizational change process and contribute themselves more to the



performance effectiveness whenever they are satisfied and supported by their top management and supervisors.

Upper management groups within an organization and supervisor should learn to trust their employees who have their own inherent powers and strengths in order to achieve their individual and organizational goals. Supervisors who trust and treat their employees as fully innovative and capable workers will only able to assist employees in finding and delivering their finest at the workplace for better effective performance. Whenever the upper management and supervisors truly believe and trust in their employees, they are likely to receive power from their supervisors and this provides employees with better confidence in working and reduce their fears in new environment. Also, the power and trust given by the employers encourage employees to speak up their ideas, give feedback in the organization and increase their effective performance as well.

Another factor for organizational fear is “penalties”. To reduce fear cause by workplace penalties, organizations should manage their employees through guiding principles instead of controlling them through policies and rules of the organization. As the organizational principles consists of mutual respect between employers and employees, belief in each individual’s capability, trust between both the upper management and employees, loyalty of the employees to their organization by not doing something that disobeys the laws, courage to voice out their ideas, provide feedback to others, gratitude and commitment to the organization. Throughout these principals, employees no longer fear the possibility of mistakes in workplaces and have more courage to make their own decisions and take it as their responsibility in workplaces.

Organizations are required to provide clear information on job scope and expectation for their employees. Fresh graduate who are inexperience at the workplace might not have a clear picture about what to initiative, as colleges and universities in Malaysia usually provide instructions in each project or course. So, they are more likely require more instructions and guidance at first to reduce mistakes at the workplace and slowly adapt to the working environment. Therefore, both the supervisors and employees need to have a clear, shared model of job and provide constant updates for their project in order to achieve effectiveness performance and reduce the chances of making mistakes. Moreover, the organizations must provide employees clear job roles and job

descriptions for them to understand what roles they should play in the organization to achieve organizational goals and individual goals.

In addition, to reduce organizational fear among fresh graduate employees, organizations should organize training programs for new employees to experiment the reality of working life. As before employees create, they must learn to experiment, or else fearful employees can never try things out before failure. The purpose of the program is to encourage employees to create and try out new approaches by developing a trust-filled environment for each individual and team. From the lessons learnt from the program, fresh graduate can have a better understanding of the fact that one can only earn from mistakes. However, in normal culture, fresh graduates often refuse to experiment due to being afraid of mistakes and prefer to remain silence at the workplace.

### **Conclusion**

As a conclusion, fresh graduates' employees will be less fearful and more secure in their new environment by having full support and appreciation from their upper management and supervisor. This positive energy will be able to assist them in reducing organizational fear and perform more effective at the workplace by fully utilizing their innovation, passion and energy to achieve individual goals and company goals.

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