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Improving Organizational Mechanisms for Enhancing Employee Performance in Food Industry Enterprises

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Abstract: This article examines organizational mechanisms for improving employee performance in food industry enterprises in the Jizzakh region of the Republic of Uzbekistan. The analysis draws on the region's industrial development trends, contemporary human resource management approaches, and survey data collected from 169 employees. The empirical findings indicate relatively strong assessments of technological and labor discipline, quality of work, and timely completion of assigned tasks. At the same time, the results point to areas that require further attention, particularly rapid decision-making in problematic situations, professional development, and training opportunities. Based on these findings, the study proposes an organizational mechanism that brings together five consecutive management stages: assessing performance results, identifying the organizational cause of a problem, selecting an appropriate managerial response, implementing that response, and reassessing the outcome.

Keywords: food industry, Jizzakh region of the Republic of Uzbekistan, employee performance, labor efficiency, organizational mechanism, KPI, professional development, leadership, digital monitoring

1. Introduction

The food industry plays an important role in regional industrial development, employment, and the supply of goods to the domestic consumer market. Industrial production in the Jizzakh region of Uzbekistan has also expanded markedly in recent years. According to official statistics, the region's total industrial output increased from UZS 2,001.2 billion in 2016 to UZS 24,903.7 billion in 2024, while manufacturing output rose from UZS 1,813.0 billion to UZS 24,228.6 billion. Over the same period, food production increased from UZS 568.3 billion to UZS 2,604.2 billion [1].

This expansion has brought a second issue to the fore: how effectively labor resources are being used as production capacity grows. A rise in output does not, by itself, mean that employees have become more effective. For an enterprise, timely completion of tasks, product quality, technological discipline, economical use of raw materials and other resources, and sound decisions in non-routine situations are closely connected dimensions of performance rather than isolated indicators.

Human capital theory treats expenditure on education and vocational training as an investment expected to generate future economic returns [2]. The resource-based view, in turn, regards human resources and organizational capabilities as strategic assets

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capable of supporting sustainable competitive advantage [3]. Together, these perspectives provide a basis for treating employee performance management as a systemic managerial issue that affects enterprise outcomes, rather than merely as a routine control function.

Building on this theoretical foundation, High-Performance Work Systems (HPWS) research treats recruitment, training, incentives, and employee participation in decision-making as mutually reinforcing practices rather than isolated instruments [4], directing attention to the combined effects of work organization, competence, motivation, and participation. Subsequent empirical studies have examined how HPWS translates into individual performance in greater depth: affective organizational commitment has been shown to mediate the relationship between HPWS and employee performance, a finding that distinguishes the formal existence of management practices from the way employees actually perceive them [5]; the manner in which HR systems are implemented, and not merely their formal design, shapes employees' development and engagement at work [6]; the relationship between HPWS and job performance varies according to employees' intrinsic and extrinsic career goals, suggesting clear limits to treating employees as a homogeneous group [7]; and employee ambidexterity — the ability to perform existing tasks effectively while also adapting to new methods — partially mediates the positive relationship between HPWS and work performance, a finding especially relevant to production settings marked by continuous technological change [8].

Studies focused specifically on the food industry reinforce the case for evaluating employee performance through quality, technological discipline, and waste reduction rather than production volume alone, given the sector's close ties between quality and safety and hygiene requirements: a study of Lean Six Sigma practices across 145 food industry firms found a positive relationship with sector performance, while noting that Lean and Six Sigma practices must be adapted to the specific characteristics of the industry [9]. The skill requirements placed on food industry employees are also changing under Industry 4.0: the adoption of digitalization, robotics, artificial intelligence, and IoT technologies increases demand for new professional competencies [10], and evidence from a food-processing company shows that Industry 4.0 technologies affect company outcomes, operational management, human resource management, and strategy alike [11]. Taken together, these studies indicate that technological modernization cannot be effectively separated from employee training and reskilling.

Uzbek researchers have examined the relationship between employee performance and management effectiveness from complementary angles. A study of 352 employees at different levels of youth organizations in Uzbekistan, analyzing 319 valid responses, assessed the effects of pay, work schedules, the internal environment, opportunities for professional growth, relations with colleagues and managers, working conditions, and freedom to make independent decisions on management effectiveness, approaching employee outcomes through a combination of management conditions rather than a single factor [12]. Related work examines the relationship between an organization's management system and work efficiency [13], and discusses KPI, the Balanced Scorecard, HR metrics, artificial intelligence, transformational leadership, and investment in human capital as instruments for improving management effectiveness [14], together supporting an integrated view in which performance assessment is linked to leadership, motivation, development, and information support. Further local studies quantify the relationship between financial motivation mechanisms and employee performance in food industry enterprises [15], trace the development of Uzbekistan's food industry over 2017–2024 through output, employment, labor productivity, investment, and export indicators [16], and argue for an adaptive regional approach to managing the innovative capacity of food industry enterprises [17], together pointing to the interdependence of labor, motivation, technology, and regional conditions within the sector.

This literature therefore offers substantial evidence on the effects of HR practices, employee competence, commitment, adaptability, and technological conditions on performance, and Uzbek studies in particular provide important findings on motivation, labor productivity, management instruments, and the economic development of the food industry. What remains less developed, however, is an empirical mechanism for food industry enterprises in the Jizzakh region that links a specific employee performance outcome to its organizational cause, selects a managerial response appropriate to that cause, and then reassesses the result. The present study addresses this gap.

Food industry enterprises in the Jizzakh region operate under conditions shaped by continuous technological processes, the specific properties of raw materials, and strict sanitary and quality requirements. Simply recording that an employee has performed poorly is therefore of limited managerial value. It is more important to determine whether the result stems from a skills gap, the way work is organized, leadership practices, technological conditions, or the incentive system.

Against this background, the purpose of the study is to empirically assess the organizational factors affecting employee performance in food industry enterprises in the Jizzakh region and to improve an organizational mechanism that links performance assessment to a specific managerial response.

2. Materials and Methods

The study employs statistical analysis, a systems approach, comparative analysis, grouping, generalization, and a questionnaire survey. Official regional statistics were used to assess industrial development trends in the Jizzakh region [1].

The empirical analysis is based on a survey of employees working in food industry enterprises in the Jizzakh region. A total of 169 respondents participated. Respondents were distributed relatively evenly across the enterprises, providing a workable basis for comparative analysis. Responses were assessed on a five-point Likert scale.

The questionnaire covered work organization, leadership and internal communication, economic incentives, professional development, technological and digital support, and performance assessment. Direct employee performance was examined through five criteria: timely completion of tasks, quality of work, technological and labor discipline, economical use of resources, and rapid decision-making in problematic situations.

The findings represent the assessments of food industry employees in the Jizzakh region who participated in the study. This methodological limitation was retained when interpreting the results; the findings were not automatically generalized to all food industry enterprises.

3. Results

Food production in the Jizzakh region increased from UZS 568.3 billion in 2016 to UZS 2,604.2 billion in 2024, reflecting a substantial expansion in the scale of the sector [1]. This trend, however, should not be treated as equivalent to an improvement in employee performance. The quality of production outcomes also depends on how employees carry out assigned tasks, comply with technological requirements, and use available resources.

The survey did not produce identical assessments across the five core dimensions of employee performance. Technological and labor discipline received the highest mean score, at 4.35. Quality and error-free work was rated at 4.22, while timely completion of tasks received 4.18. Economical use of resources and raw materials averaged 4.05. Rapid decision-making in problematic situations recorded the lowest mean score, at 3.72 (Table 1).

Table 1. Key indicators of employee performance in food industry enterprises in the Jizzakh region

Indicator	Mean score	Standard deviation	Rank
Compliance with technological and labor discipline	4.35	0.71	1
Quality and error-free performance	4.22	0.79	2
Timely completion of tasks	4.18	0.82	3
Economical use of resources and raw materials	4.05	0.91	4
Rapid decision-making in problematic situations	3.72	1.08	5

Source: compiled by the author based on the research findings.

The findings indicate that employees generally perform well in areas governed by established procedures and standards. However, the comparatively lower score for decision-making in problematic situations points to an area that deserves closer managerial attention. This result may be associated with several organizational factors, including the level of decision-making authority given to employees, communication with supervisors, practical experience, and the availability of clear procedures for handling non-standard situations.

The analysis of organizational factors revealed a noticeable gap between professional development and technological support. Respondents rated training and professional development opportunities at 3.58 and opportunities for career and position advancement at 3.65. By contrast, the availability of modern equipment and technologies received 4.18, while the use of digital software and technical tools was rated at 4.25 (Figure 1).

The results point to a clear difference between technological provision and opportunities for employee development. The score for the use of digital software and technical tools is 0.67 points higher than the score for training and professional development, while modern equipment and technology is rated 0.60 points higher. This gap suggests that technological renewal needs to be coordinated more closely with the development of employees' professional competencies. The finding is consistent with earlier evidence emphasizing growing competency requirements in the food industry under Industry 4.0 [10], and with research examining the implications of digital transformation for human resource management [11].

Other dimensions of organizational management were also assessed positively, although not to the same degree. Communication with managers averaged 4.12, clarity of assigned tasks 4.02, and management openness 3.91. These results suggest that internal communication is generally viewed favorably, while there remains room to improve openness in management.

Table 2. Areas identified by respondents as priorities for improving employee performance

Priority area	Number of respondents	Share, %
Fair and transparent link between pay and KPI results	72	42.6
Equipment modernization	48	28.4
Training and professional development	32	18.9
Improvement of social package and working conditions	17	10.1
Total	169	100.0

Source: compiled by the author based on the research findings.

In the open-ended responses, 42.6% of participants identified a fair and transparent link between pay and KPI results as the most important priority. Equipment modernization was selected by 28.4%, training and professional development by 18.9%, and improvements to the social package and working conditions by 10.1%. These responses indicate that economic incentives, technological conditions, and professional development should be connected to performance outcomes rather than managed as unrelated areas (Table 2).

The analysis also shows that similar weak performance outcomes may arise from different organizational causes. Delays in task completion may stem from poorly distributed workloads; lower quality may be related to competence gaps or equipment conditions; and excessive resource use may reflect unclear standards or insufficient practical skills. For this reason, identifying the cause of an outcome should follow the assessment stage.

On this basis, an organizational mechanism is proposed for food industry enterprises in the Jizzakh region. It follows a sequence of assessing performance results, identifying the cause of the problem, selecting an appropriate managerial response, implementing the measure, and reassessing the result (Table 3).

Table 3. An improved organizational mechanism for enhancing employee performance

Observed condition	Possible organizational cause	Recommended managerial response	Reassessment criterion
Delayed task completion	Unclear task allocation or workload distribution	Clarify tasks and review workload allocation	Compliance with deadlines
Decline in work quality	Competence gap or technological problem	Targeted training and review of the technological process Define responsibilities and strengthen monitoring	Quality and error rate
Discipline problems	Unclear boundaries of responsibility	Clarify consumption standards and apply Lean elements	Discipline indicator
Excessive resource use	Unclear standards or insufficient practical skills	Clarify authority boundaries, practical training, and mentoring	Raw-material and resource consumption
Weak independent decision-making	Limited authority or experience	Develop an individual development plan	Speed of problem resolution
Slow professional development	Episodic training system		Growth in competence

Source: compiled by the author based on the research findings.

Within the proposed mechanism, assessment is not treated as a final judgment; it serves as the starting information for the next managerial decision. If, for example, resource-use performance declines, managers should first examine raw-material quality, equipment condition, consumption standards, employee competence, and the organization of work. An appropriate response can then be selected, followed by reassessment of the same indicator after a defined period.

This logic avoids reducing employee performance management to rewards or disciplinary action. Instead, it brings employee results, the organizational conditions affecting those results, and managerial decisions into a single process. In this respect, the proposed mechanism is consistent with the HPWS perspective on interconnected HR practices [4], empirical findings on employee commitment and performance [5], and research on technological and competency changes in the food industry [9].

4. Conclusions

The study shows that improving employee performance in food industry enterprises in the Jizzakh region does not end with defining assessment criteria. The central managerial task is to connect an observed result to its underlying cause and to choose a response that addresses that cause.

In the survey of 169 respondents, technological and labor discipline received a mean score of 4.35, quality of work 4.22, and timely task completion 4.18. Rapid decision-making in problematic situations was rated lower, at 3.72. The comparatively weaker assessments of professional development and training opportunities relative to technological support also indicate the need to align modernization with the development of employee competencies.

Based on the findings, food industry enterprises in the Jizzakh region should assess employee performance using criteria related to timeliness, quality, technological discipline, resource efficiency, and decision-making in problematic situations; identify the organizational cause of weak performance separately; connect KPI results with incentive and professional development decisions; assess required competencies before introducing new technologies; define employees' authority more clearly; and reassess outcomes after managerial measures have been implemented.

In the proposed organizational mechanism, an assessment result is not the endpoint of a management decision but the information from which that decision begins. This approach allows managers to respond to the actual cause of a performance problem rather than applying a generic intervention. In practical terms, assessment, development, incentives, leadership, and technological support can therefore operate as interconnected elements of a single management process.

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