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## **STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE EMPLOYEES' WORK EFFICIENCY IN ONE BRANCH OF ABC THAI RESTAURANT**

**ShuYue Zheng<sup>1</sup> Maria Socorro C.L. Fernando<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Master of Management in Organization and Development (MMOD)  
Graduate School of Business and Advanced Technology Management (GS-BATM),  
Assumption University, Thailand Email: shuyuezhengmaggie@gmail.com

<sup>2</sup>Lecturer and Associate Program Director, MMOD, GS-BATM,  
Assumption University, Thailand Email: mlfernando@gmail.com

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study focuses on determining the factors that influence work efficiency in a Thai Restaurant and aims to design strategies to improve employee work efficiency in the workplace. Mixed-method research using qualitative interviews and a quantitative questionnaire was utilized in this study. There were 12 interview respondents from the top management and middle management and 82 respondents for the questionnaire survey. Based on the qualitative analysis from inter-coding, the restaurant should give employees a clear goal and schedule to follow and choose a good leader to improve teamwork. The quantitative results from descriptive and inferential statistical analysis showed the organization needed to improve work efficiency by strengthening teamwork and employee development, such as teamwork training programs and employee development workshops.

**Keywords:** employee development, job satisfaction, leadership, teamwork, work efficiency, work environment

### **Introduction**

Over the past few years, the global market outlook has been cautiously optimistic, reflected in the global restaurant industry. The larger markets of the U.S., Europe, and Asia showed steady positive growth from 2015 to 2017, which continued in 2018. Technomic, which described their findings in late 2017, estimated the international food services market (including U.S. sales) at \$3 trillion. The Asia-Pacific region, including Asia and Oceania, saw a total F&B sales volume of \$1.1 trillion in 2014, with an annual growth rate of nearly 10%, making this market a good opportunity for F&B service operators (Cravy, 2018). In Thailand, economic growth is slower than other Southeast Asian countries but still strong, and urbanization is a crucial factor in the growth of foodservice in Thailand. Sales through full-service restaurants will grow faster than quick-service restaurants because full-service restaurants can target families and offer a quality main meal and service. (Global Data, 2016). In 2018, the food and restaurant industry held the highest share in start-up deals in Thailand, even exceeding the e-commerce marketplace. (Statista Research Department, 2020).

Employees' work efficiency is a very important factor that influences service quality

and organizational performance. Although there are many opportunities for the organizations to strive for sustaining their excellence to stay alive in the market, for the restaurant industry, there are many competitors in the market, so maintaining current customers and attracting new customers is key to success in the food market. Therefore, improving employees' work efficiency is very important to provide better service to customers. Thailand's work efficiency decreased after 2013 (Statista Research Department, 2020). Thailand is a country that focuses on the tourism industry; therefore, improving service quality is very important to them. It is the tourism industry, and that the food industry is also an important reason that attracts people to come and visit Thailand.

### Background of the Organization

The ABC Thai restaurant is a suki and Chinese hot pot restaurant which was established in 1960. The first restaurant was opened at Sapan Lek then moved to China Town in 1970. In 2020, they had 16 branches and 414 employees in different areas of Thailand and planned to extend more; four are in the top management level, ten are at the middle management level, and 400 are employees. The main restaurant is Navanin, Bangkok. The Thai restaurant targets both Thai people and tourists in Thailand. Currently, the management is developing e-commerce by using applications and websites to deliver the food.

**Table 1**

*SOAR Analysis*

<b>Strengths:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Induction training.</li> <li>- Good work environment.</li> <li>- Clear vision and Mission.</li> <li>- Good relationship between employees.</li> </ul>	<b>Weaknesses:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Low work efficiency</li> <li>- Lack of up-down communication.</li> <li>- Poor coordination ability of employees.</li> <li>- Employees has no rights to suggest</li> </ul>
<b>Opportunities:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Customers' requirements on the dining environment are improved</li> <li>- Increasing demand with the local market.</li> </ul>	<b>Threats:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lots of competitors in the market.</li> <li>- Salary and wage are increasing.</li> </ul>
<b>Aspirations (Long Term):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Stable service minded</li> <li>- High work performance</li> <li>- Low turnover rate</li> </ul>	<b>Results (Short Term):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Practice work efficiency strategies</li> <li>- Better employee attitude</li> <li>- Improve service quality</li> </ul>

Table 1 shows the SOAR analysis of the restaurant. The strength includes induction training for new employees when the restaurant provides orientation training to provide better service. This restaurant is a known brand in Thailand, with a good physical ambience. The ambience and safe work environment motivate employees to work better. The employees also know the vision and mission of the restaurant. According to the interview, all levels of

employees have good relationships with other colleagues. For the weakness, they are in the restaurant industry and are a family business, with many employees at the lower-level but fewer high-level employees; this makes career path difficult to implement. The higher-level employees, especially top management, lack communication with lower-level employees. Although the relationship between employees is good, their coordination ability is silo such that workers lack an effective way to communicate and cooperate between their tasks. Because this is a family business, only the owner and managers can make decisions; the lower employees do not join the meeting. For the opportunities, with the improvement of life quality, customers are more inclined to eat in a good dining environment. The restaurant can take this opportunity to win more customers, such as tourists in Thailand. The increasing wages in the service industry threaten employees to leave the restaurant if their salaries and wages are not standardized or competitive with other companies. The management aspires to develop a service mind and high service quality, high work performance, job satisfaction to reduce turnover rate. Their short-term wishes are to practice work efficiency strategies after this research to improve employees' attitude and service quality through practice work efficiency strategies.

### **Statement of Problem**

Considering the company's situation analysis and aspiration to provide better service in the restaurant, this study focuses on designing strategies to improve employees' work efficiency in the workplace. This is a case study of one of the branches of The ABC Thai Restaurant.

### **Research Objectives**

- 1) To diagnose the current situation of The ABC Thai Restaurant on enhancing employees' work efficiency
- 2) To determine the influence between job satisfaction and employees' work efficiency
- 3) To identify the influence factors on job satisfaction
- 4) To design strategies to improve work efficiency based on the findings

### **Definitions of Terms**

Work Efficiency refers to the quality of work or tasks completed in a single workday by a single employee or by the work completed by a department or team at each time; namely, staff can respond promptly when guests need help.

Job Satisfaction refers to the extent to which an employee feels self-motivated, content, and satisfied with his/her job in which employees are happy with their work and are motivated.

Teamwork refers to how employees cooperate to serve customers and distribute the work and collaborative effort of a group to achieve a common goal or complete a task effectively and efficiently.

Employee Development refers to a process where the employee, with the support

of his/her employer, undergoes various training programs to enhance his/her skills and acquire new knowledge and skills to improve their service quality.

Work Environment refers to safety to employees, job security, good relations with co-workers,

Leadership refers to the art of motivating a group of people to achieve a common goal. They are the group that possesses personality and leadership skills to make others want to follow their direction, including how the management level distributes work to staff and motivates staff.

## **Literature Review**

Herzberg proposed a hypothesis that job satisfaction and dissatisfaction are affected by two different sets of factors, so satisfaction and dissatisfaction cannot be measured reliably on the same continuum (Stello, 2011). Herzberg's theory is the most important theory used for job satisfaction. Job satisfaction research determines which factors in the employee's work environment caused satisfaction or dissatisfaction (Alshmemri et al., 2017). The main factors that affect employee performance include supervision and relationship with colleagues. These factors are non-work factors that, if met, can reduce dissatisfaction and maintain productivity and efficiency. Motivation factors related to the work itself or the work's content include achievements, appreciation, meaning, and challenge of the work itself, sense of responsibility, promotion, and development. If these factors are satisfied, they will generate great momentum.

Workplace efficiency is defined by an individual employee's work or tasks within a workday or by the work done by a department or team within each period. Work efficiency usually refers to the ratio of work input and output. It is the ratio of achievement to time, energy, and money. When the output is greater than input, there is positive efficiency, while output with output less than input results in negative efficiency. Work efficiency is an important indicator for assessing workability and performance (Yuexin, 2019). Efficient employees work hard to get things done, which means the company gets more done hourly. If employees are bored with their work or have no motivation to complete the task, the office may be less productive, which means that deadlines may be pushed back. Improving office productivity focuses on employee disruption and encouraging professional motivation (Jane, 2002).

A good work environment is one of the most important factors for employees to feel good to produce efficient work (Working Environment, 2019). Effective teamwork produces greater results than the sum of individual members' contributions (Stagl et al., 2006) and is driven by team processes to organize tasks to realize the collective goal activities. (Marks et al., 2001). Most enterprises ignore the organization's internal working environment, which harms employees' performance (Spector, 1997). According to him, the work environment includes employee safety, job safety, good relationships with colleagues, recognition of good performance, motivation for good performance, and participation in its decision-making process. He says that once employees realize that the company thinks they

are important, they will have a high level of commitment and ownership.

Oh (2020) mentions that leadership is key to the future of individuals, organizations, communities, and countries. Many organizations in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors move from traditional management functions to people-participant-employee empowerment models based on various leadership models. Leadership means many things to many people. Although everyone seems to have an opinion about what leadership is and why it matters, the idea of leadership has been a subject of debate among philosophers for centuries. Nevertheless, leadership not just about management leadership; it is about leadership in all aspects of life. Although we use a lot of management literature, we apply these ideas to various situations and people. Our goal is to find ideas and tools to help people understand, reflect on, and develop leadership skills. (Oh, 2020).

Moreover, employee development plans are useful to improve organizational performance (Jacobs & Washington, 2003). The general premise is that organizations that offer many learning opportunities enable employees to execute their work better and make the organization better able to execute. A development plan's commitment may lead to more loyal, dedicated, and productive employees (Lipman, 2013). Employee development involves "the expansion of an individual's ability to function effectively in his or her present or future work and in the organization where he or she works" (McCauley & Hezlett, 2001). Development activities include formal education, work experience, professional relationships, and assessment of personality, skills, and abilities that contribute to an employee's career development (Noe et al., 2014). Formal development plans include classroom instruction, online courses, college degree programs, and mentoring programs, systematically designed with specific goals, learning goals, assessment tools, and expectations (Chen & Klimoski, 2007). The literature generally agreed that these types of programs would produce employees capable of meeting human capital needs.

Job satisfaction is a key concept in industrial and organizational psychology and is associated with many positive variables, for example, job performance, organizational employee behavior, work motivation, and life satisfaction (Heller et al., 2002). Job satisfaction measures differ in how much employees feel about their jobs (Thompson & Phua, 2012). Hussein et al. (2013) noted that job satisfaction is an important factor in all sectors, as it is expected to achieve higher labor retention rates and better service quality. Besides, employees seem to view their work in a disadvantageous and favorable light; this is the level of satisfaction and pleasure associated with the job. If employees strongly like their jobs, they will get higher job satisfaction, while employees who dislike them will feel dissatisfied (Aswathappa, 2008). A thriving organization is usually satisfied and satisfied with its employees, and a lack of satisfaction can paralyze the organization. Job satisfaction puts pressure on organizational managers and leaders, affecting important organizational performance (Sinha & Shukla, 2012). As discussed by De Grip et al. (2009), found that employees were satisfied and satisfied with their highest level of work. Therefore, employee job satisfaction is considered to be an important factor in an organization.

This study also uses Appreciative Inquiry to conduct interview questions using the Appreciative inquiry 4D process, namely :

**Discovery:** During this stage, participants reflect on and discuss the best concerning the

object of inquiry. Sometimes it is the "positive core" (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2001), where an attempt is made to catalog the signature strengths of the organization (Ludema et al., 2003). Such as: Have you found any highpoint experience when you manage your restaurant?

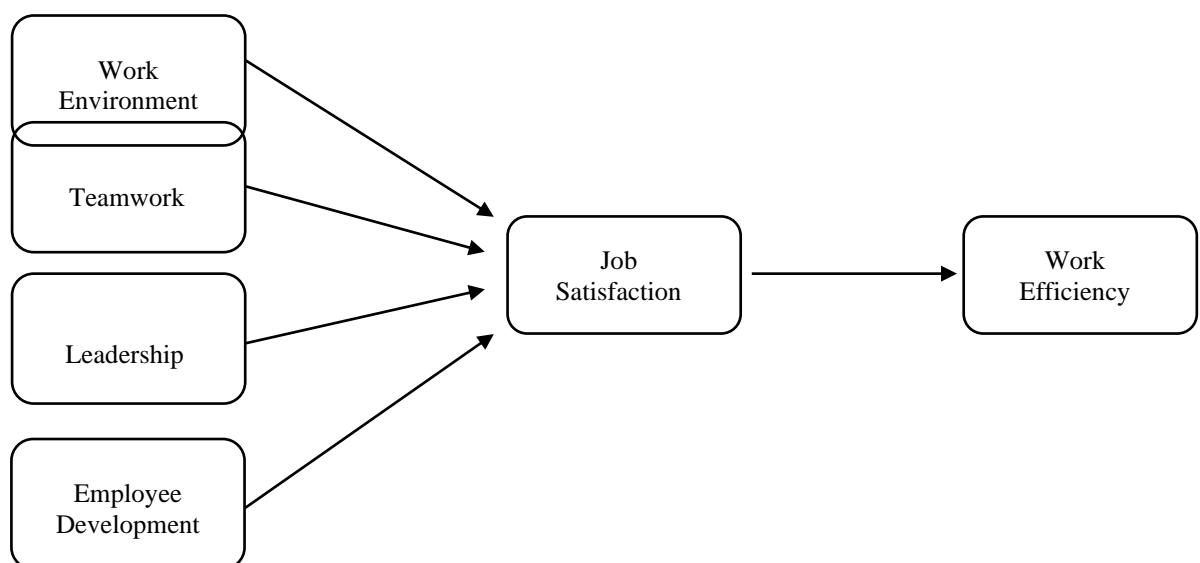
**Dream:** Creating a results-oriented vision based on discovered potential and questions of higher purpose. (Whitney, 2004.). Such as: What do you want to improve in your organization.

**Design:** With a Shared dream, participants are asked to formulate specific proposals for a new organizational state. Initially, Cooperrider called these "provocative propositions" - phrases related to the generative theory that still appear in some models. More commonly, a social architectural process uses a design element model to identify categories for participants to organize and create change Suggestions (often referred to as possibility statements or design statements). (Mohr et al., 2003). Such as: Do you have any strategies to achieve your dream?

**Destiny:** Strengthening the whole system's affirmative capability enables it to build hope and sustain momentum for ongoing positive change and high performance. (Whitney, 2004).

**Figure 1**

*Conceptual Framework of the Study*



Jane (2002) stated that efficient employees work hard to get things done, which means the company gets more done hourly. If employees are bored with their work or not be motivated to complete the task at hand, the workplace service may be less productive, and deadlines may be pushed back. The study of Nahideh, Maryam, and Elshan (2015) presented four independent variables: work environment, teamwork, leadership, employee development, one intervening variable: job satisfaction, and the dependent variable, which is work efficiency. These variables are utilized in this research.

Figure 1 shows the independent variables: work environment, teamwork, leadership, employee development; the mediating variable is job satisfaction, and the dependent variable is work efficiency.

### **Hypotheses of the study**

- H1o: Work environment has no significant influence on job satisfaction.
- H1a: Work environment has a significant influence on job satisfaction.
- H2o: Teamwork has no significant influence on job satisfaction.
- H2a: Teamwork has a significant influence on job satisfaction
- H3o: Leadership has no significant influence on job satisfaction.
- H3a: Leadership has a significant influence on job satisfaction.
- H4o: Employee development has no significant influence on job satisfaction.
- H4a: Employee development has a significant influence on job satisfaction.
- H5o: Job satisfaction has no significant influence on employees' work efficiency.
- H5a: Job satisfaction has a significant influence on employees' work efficiency.

## **Research Methodology**

### **Research Population**

The mixed-method research was utilized in this study. The qualitative data was collected from the all the top and middle management (N=12) by online meeting interviews. The quantitative data were collected using online questionnaires from all levels of employees in the branch under study (N= 82) . The study included the total population of all the management and employees in one branch of the restaurant.

### **Quantitative Research**

An online structured survey questionnaire was used to collect primary data. The questionnaires were designed in English and translated into Thai. The first part included the scale measurement question on the study variables, namely teamwork, work environment, leadership, employee development, job satisfaction, and work efficiency, which used a 6-point Likert scale. The demographic data questions were included in the 2<sup>nd</sup> part of the questionnaire. Seventy questionnaires were sent to one Thai restaurant branch intended for all the employees, eight managers, and four top management. The survey was conducted online due to the COVID-19 situation. Hypothesis testing utilized multiple and simple linear regression analysis.

### **Qualitative Research**

The focus group interviews were conducted in the form of an online meeting. The management level was separated into three groups, one group for four top management and another two groups with four middle managers.

The focus group interview guide designed using Appreciative Inquiry questions included the following questions :

- What does work efficiency mean to you?
- What is your best experience when you felt the most efficient in your work? Can you tell me your story about your best experience?



- What made it possible to improve work efficiency?
- What are the three wishes in the future to improve work efficiency?

Content analysis using Inter Coding was used for data analysis of the interview data.

## Results and Discussion

The data analysis shows quantitative data results and qualitative data results.

In conclusion, the discussion part will discuss the findings of the research.

**Table 2**

*Cronbach Alpha Results (n=30 respondents)*

Variables	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Reliability
Work environment	5	0.813	Reliable
Teamwork	5	0.694	Reliable
Leadership	5	0.862	Reliable
Employee Development	5	0.794	Reliable
Job Satisfaction	5	0.763	Reliable
Work Efficiency	5	0.832	Reliable

Table 2 presents the results of the reliability test using Cronbach's alpha. The accepted rule is that  $\alpha$  score higher than 0.6 indicates acceptable reliability. (Griethuijsen, 2014). The Cronbach's alpha results are higher than 0.6, which means that questions are reliable and have internal consistency.

**Table 3**

*Results of Data Analysis using Multiple Linear Regression*

	Standardized Coefficients	Sig.
	Beta	
Work environment	-.184	.134
Teamwork	.386	.001
Leadership	-.065	.570
Employee Development	.662	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Job Satisfaction

Table 3 presents the results from multiple linear regression showing that teamwork and employee development has a significant influence on job satisfaction with  $p$ -value less than .05. Employee development has a higher impact with a standardized beta coefficient (.662) which means that for every show that one unit of change in employee development, there is a 66.2% change in job satisfaction.

**Table 4**

*Results of Data Analysis using Simple Linear Regression*

	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	Sig.
	Std. Error	Beta	
Job Satisfaction	.082	.659	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Work Efficiency

Table 4 shows that job satisfaction has a significant influence on work efficiency with  $p$ -value < .05. The impact of job satisfaction on work efficiency on the standardized beta coefficient shows a 65.9% change in work efficiency for a one-unit change in job satisfaction.

### Qualitative Data Analysis Results

**Table 5**

*Interview Results Based on Inter-Coding*

Questions	Common Theme
1.What does work efficiency mean to you?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- have more time to do their things.</li> <li>- provide better service.</li> <li>- make customers satisfied with dining in their restaurant.</li> </ul>
2.What is your best experience when you felt the most efficient in your work? Can you tell me your story about your best experience?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- get good feedback</li> <li>- high tips</li> <li>- have more repeat customers.</li> <li>- customers satisfied with our service.</li> </ul>
3.What made it possible to improve work efficiency?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- concentrated on work.</li> <li>- clear goal to achieve</li> <li>- a good leader that knows how to distribute the work to save time.</li> <li>- a good work environment.</li> <li>- set a schedule.</li> </ul>
4.What are the three wishes you have to improve work efficiency?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- clear goal that employees can follow.</li> <li>- serve customers quickly.</li> <li>- set a schedule.</li> <li>- choose a good leader.</li> </ul>

Table 5 shows the qualitative data results from interviews, and the following are the

common themes from focus group interviews after inter-coding.

Interview data shows that employees perceive work efficiency means they can have more time to do their task; customers perceive a good service, and their work efficiency results in customer satisfaction.

Interviews showed that their best experience included getting good feedback from the customers and high tips. Their work efficiency provided better service to the customers, who were highly satisfied and gained more repeat customers.

According to the interview, the employees indicated that to improve work efficiency, they need a good leader who knows how to distribute the workload, but the right people with competencies in the right positions. Interviews also indicated that they want to set a schedule and a good work environment to improve work efficiency.

The informants' three wishes include clear goals that employees can follow, additional staff for each task/duty, and set a schedule that will enable them to serve customers quickly.

### Conclusions of the Study

This chapter presents the conclusion and recommendation based on the findings.

**Table 6**

*Summary of Hypothesis Testing*

No.	Hypotheses	MLR (Beta)	Level of Sig	Conclusion
H1	<b>H1o:</b> Work environment has no significant influence on Job Satisfaction. <b>H1a:</b> Work environment has a significant influence on Job Satisfaction.	-.184	.134	Failed to Reject: H1o
H2	<b>H2o:</b> Teamwork has no significant influence on Job Satisfaction. <b>H2a:</b> Teamwork has a significant influence on Job Satisfaction.	.386	.001	Rejected H2o
H3	<b>H3o:</b> Leadership has no significant influence on Job Satisfaction. <b>H3a:</b> Leadership has a significant influence on Job Satisfaction.	-.065	.570	Failed to Reject: H3o
H4	<b>H4o:</b> Employee development has no significant influence on Job Satisfaction. <b>H4a:</b> Employee development has a significant influence on Job Satisfaction.	.662	.000	Rejected: H4o

	Hypothesis	SLR(Beta)	Level of Sig	Results
H5	<b>H5o:</b> Job satisfaction has no significant influence on employees' work efficiency. <b>H5a:</b> Job satisfaction has a significant influence on employees' work efficiency.	.659	.000	Rejected: H5o

Table 6 shows that teamwork and employee development have a significant influence job satisfaction based on multiple linear regression. When using simple linear regression, results show that Job satisfaction has a significant influence on employees' work efficiency. (p value < 0.05) Therefore, H2o, H4o, and H5o are rejected.

**Table 7**

*Juxtaposed Quantitative and Qualitative Data Results utilized for Designing Strategies*

Hypotheses that have a significant impact (1)	An item with the highest mean (2)	Qualitative interview key points result (3)	Strategies
Employee development has a significant influence on job satisfaction	I learned how to provide better service in this organization	Clear goals that employees can follow.	Clear job descriptions and organization goals that allow employees to achieve and provide better service. Conduct an employee development program
Teamwork has a significant influence on job satisfaction	I enjoy working as a team.	Set a schedule.	Training to improve teamwork; set clear time schedules
Job Satisfaction has a significant influence on work efficiency	I can talk to my leader directly about job-related matters anytime.	A good leader that knows how to distribute the work to save time.	Develop leaders and managers who know how to put the right person into the right place. Allow the staff to talk to the leader to share their ideas

Based on Table 7, employees strongly agree that they enjoy having teamwork in the workplace. They expressed that they want to improve the quality of their teamwork by conducting training. Effective teamwork allows teams to produce outcomes greater than the sum of individual member's contributions (Stagl, Shawn Burke, & Pierce, 2006).

They also expressed the need to have a reliable team leader to share the work reasonably. Employee perceived support from leaders enhances good work attitude, job satisfaction, organization commitment, and job involvement (Cropanzan, 2008).

A training program can be conducted to improve teamwork, and the training program can include team activities to develop trust, role play, and participative evaluation. The company can also offer a standardized induction training program to ensure all staff get the same quality of training and provide the same quality to the customer's Employee development programs are believed to make positive contributions to organizational performance (Jacobs & Washington, 2003). Organizations offering opportunities enable

employees to perform better in their jobs.

The researcher further presented the findings and recommendations to the top management who plan to implement the recommendations to improve work efficiency in the restaurant along with the challenge of operations within the COVID 19 situation.

The results of Adjusted  $R^2$  indicate that four independent variables (work environment, teamwork, leadership, and employee development) can explain job satisfaction by 55.2%, while job satisfaction can explain work efficiency by 43.5%. Therefore, future research can utilize other variables related to job satisfaction strategies to improve work efficiency. These variables may include employee engagement, employee rewards, and work life balance. Further research may also look at the impact of work efficiency service quality.

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