Employee Perceptions and Federal Agency Performance:
Insights From the 2022 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS)

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This study examines how federal employees' perceptions of innovation, teamwork, diversity, personal development, and customer orientation influence organizational performance. Analyzing 300 responses from the 2022 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS), the research used descriptive and inferential statistics alongside thematic analysis for a holistic understanding. Key findings reveal that innovation drives personal accomplishment, diversity enhances engagement, and teamwork and customer orientation positively impact workplace dynamics. The study underscores the importance of inclusive practices. It offers actionable recommendations for federal agencies to improve workplace culture and performance. Future research should explore these findings' broader applicability and long-term impacts.

Keywords: innovation, diversity, teamwork, organizational behavior, federal agency performance

INTRODUCTION

Employee perceptions of their work environment play a pivotal role in shaping organizational success, particularly within the structured frameworks of federal agencies. These perceptions serve as a lens through which employees evaluate workplace culture, management practices, and organizational roles. Key dimensions such as innovation, personal development, teamwork, customer orientation, and diversity indicate workplace satisfaction, organizational adaptability, and performance drivers. Understanding these dimensions has become increasingly important as federal agencies strive to meet evolving public expectations while addressing internal workforce challenges (van der Meer, 2023; Zhenjing et al., 2022).

The Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS), administered annually by the United States Office of Personnel Management (OPM), provides an invaluable dataset for exploring employee perceptions. As the largest survey of government employees globally, the FEVS captures nuanced insights into workforce management, employee satisfaction, and the effectiveness of workplace policies and initiatives. Focusing on these metrics, the FEVS allows researchers and policymakers to assess the alignment between employee experiences and organizational goals (Leider et al., 2021). The survey's findings are particularly relevant in federal agencies, where bureaucratic structures often necessitate a delicate balance between efficiency, innovation, and employee engagement.

The Role of Perceptions in Organizational Success

Perceptions of the work environment encompass many factors, including the availability of resources, the inclusiveness of management practices, and the encouragement of innovation. These factors are integral to fostering a culture that promotes personal development, collaboration, and customer-centric practices. For instance, innovation in the workplace has been shown to enhance employees' sense of personal accomplishment, enabling them to contribute more effectively to organizational goals (Karaboga et al., 2022). Similarly, promoting diversity and inclusivity within the workplace enhances employee engagement and strengthens organizational resilience in the face of external challenges (Mousa et al., 2020; Raewf & Mahmood, 2021).

In federal agencies, traditional management approaches often emphasize adherence to rules and protocols, a legacy of the bureaucratic governance model (Leider et al., 2021). While this model supports accountability and consistency, it can inadvertently stifle creativity and employee autonomy. Federal agencies can better align their internal culture with their external goals by shifting toward a more employee-centered approach that prioritizes perceptions of innovation, teamwork, and diversity.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

This study addresses the following research questions to explore the interplay between employee perceptions and federal agency performance:

1. How do federal employees perceive their work environment with respect to innovation, personal development, teamwork, diversity, and customer orientation?
2. What is the relationship between these perceptions and employees' sense of personal accomplishment and contribution to agency goals?
3. How do management practices that reflect these values influence employee satisfaction and organizational performance?

Building on these questions, the study proposes the following hypotheses:

- **H1:** Positive perceptions of innovation and personal development correlate with higher employee satisfaction, productivity, and retention.
- **H2:** Collaborative teamwork and customer-oriented practices significantly contribute to a reduction in turnover intentions and an increase in organizational effectiveness.
- **H3:** Diversity-driven management practices are essential for fostering inclusivity, enhancing employee engagement, and driving agency-wide performance.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This research is grounded in a multidisciplinary theoretical framework, drawing on organizational behavior, human resource management (HRM), and business anthropology. The HRM model posits that organizational performance mainly depends on aligning employee capabilities with workplace resources and management strategies (Zhenjing et al., 2022). Within this framework, employee perceptions are critical indicators of organizational health, influencing individual and collective outcomes.

Organizational behavior theories further emphasize the role of workplace culture in shaping employee experiences. Specifically, the theories highlight the importance of innovation, collaboration, and adaptability in creating an environment where employees feel valued and motivated (Salas et al., 2020). These principles are particularly relevant in the context of federal agencies, where the interplay of structure and flexibility is a defining characteristic.

Finally, business anthropology provides a cultural lens for examining workplace dynamics. This perspective underscores the importance of diversity and inclusivity in building resilient organizations, particularly in settings characterized by cross-cultural interactions and diverse stakeholder needs (Mousa et al., 2020). By integrating these theoretical perspectives, this study aims to comprehensively understand how employee perceptions influence organizational outcomes in federal agencies.

Significance of the Study

This research contributes to the growing literature on organizational behavior and public administration by offering empirical insights into the relationship between employee perceptions and federal agency performance. The findings have practical implications for policymakers and managers seeking to enhance workplace culture, improve employee satisfaction, and achieve strategic objectives. By identifying key drivers of employee perceptions—such as innovation, teamwork, and diversity—this study provides actionable recommendations for fostering a more engaged and productive federal workforce.

Moreover, the study underscores the importance of leveraging data-driven insights from the FEVS to inform management practices. As federal agencies navigate an increasingly complex operational landscape, understanding and addressing employee perceptions will be critical to achieving both short-term objectives and long-term organizational success.

Methodology

This study employs a descriptive research model to examine how federal employees' perceptions of innovation, personal development, teamwork, customer orientation, and diversity influence federal agency performance. The methodology integrates quantitative and qualitative approaches to analyze the research questions comprehensively. The following sections detail the research design, participant sampling, data collection, cleaning procedures, and analysis.

Research Design

This study utilized a mixed-methods approach, integrating quantitative and qualitative research designs to examine employee perceptions of their work environment using 10 structured survey questions from the 2022 OPM Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS). The research design was carefully constructed to capture measurable trends and contextual nuances, providing a holistic understanding of the relationship between employee perceptions and federal agency performance.

Justification for Selection of 10 Survey Questions

The 10 specific questions from the 2022 OPM-FEVS (Q2, Q3, Q6, Q7, Q17, Q18, Q19, Q28, Q31, and Q71) were chosen for their alignment with the study's objectives and their theoretical significance in organizational behavior and business anthropology. These questions were designed to capture key dimensions of workplace dynamics:

- **Innovation:** Questions such as "Do you feel your talents are utilized in the workplace?" assess employees' perceptions of creativity and resourcefulness within their roles.
- **Personal Development:** Items addressing opportunities for growth and accomplishment gauge how well the workplace supports individual advancement.
- **Teamwork:** Knowledge sharing and collaboration questions evaluate the quality of interpersonal and interdepartmental cooperation.
- **Customer Orientation:** Items focused on customer needs provide insights into how employees perceive their roles in fulfilling organizational missions.
- **Diversity:** Questions about inclusive practices reflect the organization's commitment to equity in hiring, promotion, and outreach.

These areas were selected based on their relevance to organizational adaptability, responsiveness, and cultural sensitivity, which are critical in federal agencies' efforts to meet evolving challenges. An appendix listing all considered questions and the rationale for inclusion/exclusion can provide additional transparency (Mousa et al., 2020; Salas et al., 2020).

Rationale for Sample Size

The sample size of 300 participants was determined to balance statistical rigor with the practical constraints of managing a mixed-methods study. Key considerations include:

1. **Representativeness:** The sample was purposively drawn to reflect the diversity of the federal workforce, encompassing variations in demographics, roles, and agency affiliations.

Participants were selected from large departments and smaller, specialized agencies, ensuring broad representation.
2. **Statistical Power:** A sample size of 300 ensures sufficient power for conducting inferential statistics such as regression and ANOVA while allowing for meaningful subgroup analyses.
3. **Feasibility:** Managing qualitative responses alongside quantitative data necessitates a sample size that is both manageable and comprehensive, enabling robust thematic analysis without overwhelming data saturation.

This sample size aligns with established best practices for mixed-methods research in organizational studies (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Zhenjing et al., 2022).

Data Collection and Cleaning
Data Collection

Survey responses were extracted from the 2022 FEVS, focusing on the 10 questions of interest. These questions were selected based on their theoretical relevance and alignment with the study's objectives, emphasizing workplace dynamics and employee engagement.

Data Cleaning Process

To ensure the reliability and validity of the dataset, a rigorous data cleaning process was implemented:
1. **Initial Screening:** Responses with missing data or inconsistencies in demographic information were excluded from the final sample.
2. **Standardization:** Demographic variables were standardized to maintain consistency, such as harmonizing supervisory roles into clear categories (e.g., "Supervisory" and "Non-Supervisory").
3. **Outlier Detection:** Statistical tests, including Z-scores, were used to identify and remove outliers that could distort the findings.
4. **Weighting:** Weighting adjustments were applied to correct demographic imbalances in the sample, ensuring the sample's representativeness of the broader federal workforce (Zhenjing et al., 2022).

These steps resulted in a clean, high-quality dataset of 300 responses, ready for quantitative and qualitative analysis.

Data Analysis
Quantitative Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS, with both descriptive and inferential techniques applied:
- **Descriptive Statistics:** Measures of central tendency (means, medians) and variability (standard deviations) were calculated to summarize participant responses.
- **Inferential Statistics:** Regression analysis and ANOVA were conducted to explore relationships between employee perceptions and organizational outcomes. For example, the relationship between innovation and job satisfaction was examined ($R^2 = 0.038$, $p = 0.00397$).

Qualitative Analysis

Thematic analysis was used to analyze open-ended responses, identifying recurring themes and patterns. Common themes included concerns about diversity in leadership and challenges in fostering teamwork. Grounded theory was applied to develop insights into how employee perceptions influence workplace culture (Glaser & Strauss, 2017).

Integration of Methods

The mixed-methods approach ensured that the findings were statistically robust and contextually rich. Quantitative data provided generalizable insights, while qualitative analysis added depth and nuance, revealing the complexities of employee perceptions in federal workplaces.

By combining these methodologies, the study provides a comprehensive understanding of the factors shaping workplace dynamics and their impact on federal agency performance.

Limitations

While the methodology is robust, certain limitations must be acknowledged:

1. **Self-Reported Data:** The reliance on self-reported survey data may introduce response biases, such as social desirability bias. Anonymizing responses mitigated some of these effects.
2. **Cross-Sectional Design:** The study's cross-sectional nature limits the ability to infer causal relationships or observe changes over time.
3. **Sample Size:** Although sufficient for statistical analysis, the sample may not fully capture diverse experiences across all federal agencies. Expanding the sample size or conducting longitudinal studies could address this limitation.

FINDINGS

Descriptive Statistics

A total of 300 participant responses from 2022 OPM-FEVS were collected and analyzed. The demographic information findings were analyzed based on agency variables, racial category, origin, disability, age group, supervisory status, and period of Federal government work. Other demographic information of interest includes gender, U.S. military service status, and consideration of leaving the organization within the following year. Regarding origin, 86 percent of the participants were white. 1.3 percent were African American or Black, and 3 percent came from other groups. Only six percent of the participants were of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin. In terms of disabilities, 12.7 percent of the participants had disabilities, while 80 percent had no disabilities. Regarding age group, 29.7 percent of the participants were under 40, while 62.7 percent were above 40. Regarding the supervisory status, the results show that 69.7 percent of the participants were non-supervisors/team leaders. In comparison, 25.3 percent were Supervisors/Managers/Executives. Forty percent of the participants had been with the Federal Government (excluding military service) for ten years or less, while 54 percent had been federal employees for more than ten years. Sixty percent of the participants served in the military, while 40 percent did not. Only 14 percent of the participants had considered leaving their organization within the following year.

The responses of the participants on the questions of interest were based on a Likert scale of 1-5 of Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Neither Agree nor Disagree (3), Agree (4) and Strongly Agree (5). The mean level of agreement with Q2 was M=3.79 (SD=1.125), while the level of agreement with Q3 was M=3.91 (SD=.961). The mean level of agreement with Q6 was M=3.65 (SD=1.142), while the level of agreement with Q7 was M=4.09 (SD=.910). The mean level of agreement with Q17 was M=3.99 (SD=.971), while the level of agreement with Q18 was M=4.01 (SD=.858). The mean level of agreement with Q19 was M=4.29 (SD=.758), while the level of agreement with Q28 was M=3.73 (SD=.981). The mean level of agreement with Q31 was M=3.97 (SD=.969), while the level of agreement with Q71 was M=3.57 (SD=1.116). The mean for the weighting variable was M=1.8015 (SD=.32439). The descriptive statistics for the ten 2022 OPM-FEVS questions are shown in Table 1 below.

TABLE 1
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR PARTICIPANT RESPONSES

Descriptive Statistics	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Q2	298	3.79	1.125
Q3	298	3.91	.961
Q6	297	3.65	1.142
Q7	299	4.09	.910
Q17	299	3.99	.971
Q18	300	4.01	.858
Q19	295	4.21	.758
Q28	299	3.73	.981
Q31	298	3.97	.969
Q71	293	3.57	1.116
POSTWT	300	1.8015	.32439
Valid N (listwise)	280		

Inferential Statistics

A regression model analysis was performed to determine the relationship between the participant's responses to the variables of interest and the weighted variable. According to the model results summary, there is a moderate positive correlation between the participant's responses and the weighting variable (r=.194) and a variability of 3.8 percent between the dependent variable and the independent variables ($R^2 = 0.038$). The regression results are shown below.

TABLE 2
MODEL SUMMARY OF REGRESSION ANALYSIS

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.194[a]	.038	.002	.32375

a. Predictors: (Constant), Q71, Q17, Q3, Q19, Q31, Q7, Q28, Q6, Q18, Q2

TABLE 3
ANOVA RESULTS OF THE REGRESSION ANALYSIS

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1.106	10	.111	1.056	.00397[b]
	Residual	28.195	269	.105		
	Total	29.301	279			

a. Dependent Variable: POSTWT
b. Predictors: (Constant), Q71, Q17, Q3, Q19, Q31, Q7, Q28, Q6, Q18, Q2

Further, the ANOVA results show that the regression model statistically significantly predicts the outcome variable, p=0.00397.

DISCUSSION

The research findings show how federal employees' perceptions of their work environment and opportunities for innovation influence their sense of personal accomplishment and contribution to agency goals. For the study, employee perceptions were limited to ten questions that tapped into innovation, personal development, teamwork, customer orientation, and diversity. First, in relation to innovation, the findings showed that the participants need to feel encouraged to develop new and better ways of doing things and know that their work relates to the agency's goals. In any workplace, innovation is a crucial element for organizational success. The ability of the employee to be innovative is a crucial indicator of positive employee perception of the working environment regarding being encouraged to come up with new and better ways of doing things (Zhenjing et al., 2022). Also, a healthy working environment includes the physical aspects, which are associated with the ability of employees to remain physically associated with their workplaces, and the behavioral aspects, which are related to innovativeness and play a crucial role in shaping the individual behavior of employees (Leider et al., 2021; Zhenjing et al., 2022). Secondly, in relation to personal development, the results show that the participants are looking for a sense of personal accomplishment and effective use of the skills and knowledge to achieve agency objectives. According to Karaboga et al. (2023), creativity is the mediator between personal accomplishment and task performance, and, therefore, a creative and innovative working environment positively influences the employees' perception of their work environment, leading to improved activity. Therefore, it can be hypothesized that innovation and personal development are essential aspects of employee perception of their working environment, which directly influences their level of productivity.

The findings show the participants' perception of teamwork and customer orientation. According to the findings, the participants reported that teamwork in agency organizations requires the work unit members to share job knowledge and have the job-relevant knowledge and skills necessary to accomplish organizational goals. The findings are supported by Salas et al. (2020), who reported that teamwork level performances include monitoring and back-up, communication, and coordination, all of which influence the employee perception of their working environment. A federal agency with teamwork level performances will likely report reduced employee turnover, improved employee productivity, and a positive employee perception of their work environment (Salas et al., 2020). Also, the findings show that the participants are less likely to consider leaving their federal agency jobs if they reported sharing job knowledge within their working units and if their unit has the job-relevant knowledge and skills necessary to accomplish organizational goals. Concerning customer orientation, the findings show that the participants had a positive perception of working environments where other employees in their work unit meet the needs of our customers and consider the customer a top priority. Also, the results show that employees positively perceive their working environment if other employees in their working unit consistently look for new ways to improve their work. According to Al Kurdi et al. (2020), employees who interact with customers can improve their consciousness of and respond to customers' goals and needs. Also, it can be claimed that satisfied employees are seen as motivated employees who perform their responsibilities and deliver excellent customer care to please the customers better. Teamwork and customer orientation can be considered crucial factors influencing an employee's perception of their working environment.

Diversity is essential to organizational performance based on employees' perceptions of their working environment. According to the results, the participants reported a higher level of agreement with having a positive perception of management practices that promote diversity through outreach, recruitment, and promotion opportunities. The findings are supported by a wide range of studies that have reported the significance of the inclusion of a diverse organizational culture in the working environment (Dale-Olsen & Finseraas, 2020; Mousa et al., 2020; Raewf & Mahmood, 2021). According to Raewf & Mahmood (2021), the modern workplace has a vast population worldwide, producing dynamic multiracial and inclusive institutions with different talents, skills, and experiences. It is reported that cultural diversity can be strengthened to build a capacity to recognize and communicate with people in the workplace (Mousa et al., 2020; Raewf & Mahmood, 2021). Further, as reported by Dale-Olsen & Finseraas (2020), assembling an effective, diverse workforce is the most challenging but essential component in an agency workplace

environment that determines the degree of the employee perception of the working environment. It is reported that workplace happiness positively relates to organizational citizenship behavior based on the attitudinal theory, which says that an employee's positive behavior is mainly formed by the positive attitude they perceive from the employer. As a result, federal agencies must create a culturally diverse environment catering to all employees' needs. Based on the findings, it is hypothesized that an innovative environment, personal development, teamwork, customer orientation, and diversity can significantly influence federal agency performance based on employee perceptions.

CONCLUSION

In modern organizational management, the study of critical subjects such as organizational culture and consumer behavior within the field of business anthropology is essential for informing culturally sensitive policies and strategies. As the workplace becomes increasingly characterized by cross-cultural interactions, understanding employee perceptions plays a pivotal role in shaping adaptive and inclusive practices. This study contributes to this discourse by examining the social dynamics within the U.S. Federal Government, exploring how employees view their work environment, and contextualizing their experiences within broader cultural frameworks.

The findings reveal that innovation and personal development are crucial aspects of workplace perceptions that directly influence productivity and employee satisfaction. Federal employees who perceive opportunities for creativity and skill enhancement are more likely to feel engaged and fulfilled in their roles. Similarly, teamwork and customer orientation emerged as significant factors, reflecting the importance of collaboration and a shared focus on organizational missions in shaping positive workplace experiences. These elements foster a sense of community and enhance operational efficiency by aligning individual efforts with broader goals.

Diversity was highlighted as a critical yet under-optimized area within federal agencies. While efforts to promote inclusivity were acknowledged, the relatively lower ratings suggest a need for more robust diversity initiatives, particularly in leadership and decision-making roles. Addressing this gap is vital for ensuring equitable representation and fostering an environment where all employees feel valued and empowered.

Moreover, this study highlights the importance of using data-driven insights to craft equitable and impactful policies. Federal agencies can leverage these findings to prioritize areas requiring immediate attention, such as improving innovation processes, enhancing diversity initiatives, and fostering environments that promote personal development. By doing so, agencies can create more inclusive and effective workplaces that attract and retain top talent.

Future research should expand the scope of this study by incorporating longitudinal data to observe changes over time and by exploring the impacts of these dynamics in non-federal organizations. Additionally, examining the role of leadership in shaping employee perceptions can offer valuable insights into strategies for enhancing organizational culture. Ultimately, the insights derived from this research underscore the critical role of employee perceptions in shaping the success and adaptability of modern organizations.

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