

Perceived Organizational Support, Work Motivation, and Organizational Commitment as determinants of Job Performance

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This study explored the extent to which perceived organizational support, work motivation, and organizational commitment predict individual differences in job performance workers. We expected positive relationship between POS, WM, and OC, and their substantial contribution in predicting job performance. 231 male skilled workers (28-45 yrs.) from different units of National Fertilizer Ltd. India participated in the study and completed Perceived Organizational Support Questionnaire, Employees Motivation Schedule, and Occupational Commitment Questionnaire. The job performance of the participants was rated by their immediate superiors through Performance Rating Scale. The findings supported the hypotheses of modest level positive correlation between POS, OC, and WM and their significant contribution in determining job performance. Among all the three classes of predictor variables, POS showed highest correlation with job performance followed by WM measure monetary gains, and affective commitment. Continuance commitment, need for goal achievement and competition, and non financial rewards have shown modest level association with performance. The stepwise regression identified a set of five variables which predicted best the job performance. In close agreement with social exchange views, perceived organizational support appeared to be most potent predictor of job performance. Two components of work motivation, i.e., need for monetary gains and goal achievement and competition were found contributing significantly to the prediction of job performance. It points to the importance of extrinsic sources of motivation for lowly paid industrial workers but at the same time they value intrinsic sources also. Among three components of OC, affective and continuance commitments were the better predictors of JP.

Keywords: Perceived organizational support, Organizational commitment, Stepwise multiple regression.

Recent research in organizational behaviour has paid due attention to the concepts that represent a departure from the traditional approach of studying work place behaviour. Exposition of the reciprocity norm to employee-employer relationship is one in this vein. As per the reciprocity norm an increase in the help delivered to a recipient has been found to increase the aid returned and the liking for the donor (DePaulo, Brttingham, & Kaiser, 1983). In terms of social exchange theory the reciprocation of valued resources fosters the initiation, strengthening, and

approval, affiliation, and esteem, and to determine the organization's readiness to reward increased effort; employees form a general belief concerning the extent to which the organization thinks highly of their contributions and promotes their welfare. Such perceived organizational support (POS) may be encouraged by employees' tendency to ascribe humanlike characteristics to their organizations. On the basis of perceived organizational support, employees infer the organization's commitment to them and readiness to reward greater effort. The POS

also serves to increase the expectation of material resources (e.g., pay, fringe benefits) and symbolic resources (e.g., praise, approval) resulting from increased work effort. One of the important implications of POS is that it may be used by employees as an indicator of the organization's benevolent or malevolent intent in the exchange of employees' effort for reward and recognition. The specificity of POS to a particular exchange partner (i.e., organization) and its malleability due to experience differentiates POS from the durable trait of reciprocation wariness. At low POS, reciprocation-wary employees should work less hard on behalf of the organization than other employees. In contrast, at high POS, reciprocation-wary employees should view the organization as willing to act as a responsible exchange partner, leading such employees to increase their work effort. Therefore, the poor performance of wary employees, stemming from their fear of exploitation in social exchange, may be mitigated by high POS.

Recent work on social exchange theory (e.g., Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Whitener, 2001; Wayne, et al., 2002) suggested that employees form a general perception concerning the extent to which their employer values their contributions and cares about their well being. Such perceived organizational support (POS) may be encouraged by employees' tendency to ascribe human-like traits or characteristics to organizations. It is assumed that the fulfillment of socioemotional needs by the organization should create an obligation to reciprocate with greater work effort. The obligation to repay organizational support with performance is considered to be a motive that drives work performance. Consistent with this view, repayment of POS has been found to be related to the employee's degree of acceptance of the reciprocity norm. The extent of this obligation would also depend on the strength of the employees' socioemotional needs. In this view, the receipt

of resources should be valued more, and create a greater obligation to reciprocate, among individuals with high needs compared with those who have low needs. If this view is applied to the relationship between employees and the work organization, individuals with strong socioemotional needs should find POS very rewarding, thus producing a greater obligation to repay the organization with higher performance.

Work motivation has emerged as one of the important organization behavior that affects performance at work. Interest in work motivation among psychologists and other behavioural scientists who study organizations has escalated dramatically as well (Katzell and Thompson, 1990). There are obvious reasons for it; firstly the dwindling productivity of organizations, secondly demographic changes seem to have accentuated the need for innovative approaches to developing and retaining valuable human resources. As a matter of fact work-motivation may be viewed as a broad construct pertaining to the conditions and processes that account for the arousal, direction, magnitude and maintenance of effort in a person's job. During past two decades extensive empirical research has been done to understand the implications of motivation at work place and a variety of theories have been formulated. Hyland (1988) and Klein (1989) for example, proposed a control-theory in an effort to integrate early motivational theories. Guastello (1987) also offers a new perspective, suggesting that motivation may best be explained using non-linear catastrophe model.

In this view, behavior is explained in terms and variation in either the amount of energy invested in specific goals, the goals themselves, or the organization of the goals. A number of elements which enter into the motivational process at work and affect the usefulness of any particular motivational approach are: the individual, the job, and the

work situation. On the basis of these elements, work-motivation can be thought of at 3 levels. First it is essential for an organization to understand the needs of the employees, their perception of the goal setting process in the organization, and their expectancy about being rewarded for their efforts. If they feel that they perform well but are rewarded poorly, their motivation will be very low. In that case, the organization may do something to raise expectancy and examine why expectancy is low. The second level of work motivation is the employees' devotion to the organization. An organization which is able to increase achievement and self-actualization motivation among its employees will have more committed employees. The third level of motivation is the work satisfaction, which works as feedback or an incentive to the individual. It has been noted that the organizational setting, the nature of the job, the interpersonal relations at the work-place, the employee's needs, the organizational climate reward and personal policies, etc., are likely to affect employee's work-motivation.

Over the past decades, organizational commitment has been the focus of a considerable amount of research. Many major reviews of commitment research and theory have appeared during this period (e.g., Irving and Coleman, 1997; Mathieu, Zajac and Meyer 1999; Meyer & Allen 1991). With the increased attention given to commitment there have been many important developments, two of these are of particular importance. First, it has become apparent that commitment is a complex and multifaceted construct. For many years researchers and theorists have been defining and operationalizing commitment in different ways, as a result, it has been difficult to synthesize the results of the accumulating research. It is now recognized that commitment can take different forms. Second, there has been broadening of the domain within which commitment is studied (Meyer, Allen, & Smith, 1993). Individuals can feel

committed to the organization, top management, supervisors, or the work group. Besides this, commitment has been examined with regard to career (e.g., Blau, 1985), union (e.g., Fullagar and Barling, 1989) and profession (e.g., Morrow and Wirth, 1989).

Therefore, organizational commitment (OC) has been conceptualized and defined in a number of ways. One of the more popular notions of OC is affective attachment (Mowday et al., 1979). More specifically, with affective commitment the individual identifies with the organization and, therefore, is committed to pursue its goals. Another view of OC comes from Becker's (1960) work, i.e., calculative commitment – a reflection of recognized, accumulated interests (e.g., pension and seniority) that bind one to a particular organization. However, Mathieu & Zajac (1990) and Meyer, Allen, & Gellatly (1990) have noted that affective/attitudinal and calculative commitments are not entirely distinguishable concepts, and that the measurement of each contains elements of the other. Allen & Meyer (1990) further differentiated them from another component, i.e., normative commitment. The normative commitment refers to the employee's feelings of obligation to stay with the organization: feelings resulting from the internalization of normative pressures exerted on an individual prior to entry or following entry.

With the continuing research efforts a full fledged three-component model of OC has evolved, and measures of each component have been constructed (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Meyer & Allen, 1991). They described affective commitment as employee's emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organization. Continuance commitment refers to commitment based on the costs that the employee associates with leaving the organization. Finally, normative commitment refers to the employee's feelings of obligation to stay with the organization. In

view of changing career pattern due to global changes in work organization, organization loyalty is reported to be declining as turnover rate increases, average job tenure falls, and employees go “job shopping”. Therefore, a deeper knowledge of occupational commitment is needed to better understand the attitudes and behaviours of the modern workforce.

Rationale for the Study:

A perusal of related literature reveals that the construct occupational commitment (OC) has widely been investigated with reference to its relationship with a number of behaviours favourable to organizational effectiveness. There is an indication of weak and inconsistent relationship between OC and certain outcome variables, like turnover, tardiness, absenteeism and work performance. The disappointing results may be attributable, in part, to the failure in recognizing multidimensional nature of the commitment construct. Reviews of research on OC amply demonstrate that most of the earlier studies have utilized quite different notions of organizational commitment. Now there are accumulating evidences in favour of three general themes, viz. affective, continuance, and normative (Hackett et al., 1994; Meyer and Allen, 1991). These dimensions may correlate differently with work outcome and other consequence variables.

Further low correlations reported in occupational commitment - work outcome literature may be due to the selection of outcome related variables. Generally researchers have explored more or less a standard set of dependent variables, e.g., tardiness, absenteeism, intent to turnover and turnover itself. Other behaviours favourable to organizational effectiveness, e.g., voluntary participation, work accomplishment and quantity, sharing and value of time and resources have been studied on a less frequent basis. The widely investigated

variables like turnover absenteeism etc., may not been seen by employees as important expressions of occupational and organizational commitment. Thus the OC - work outcome relationship needs to be explored in more details taking into consideration multidimensional model of occupational commitment and more specific job related expressions of work outcome.

Although numerous studies have demonstrated an impressive positive relationship between various measures of work motivation and work outcome, studies relating the role of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation have revealed ambivalent findings (e.g., Keaveney & Nelson, 1993). Mahmood and Hall (2001) observed that better performance and true satisfaction of the workers come from intrinsic motivations. On the other hand, Kelley (1967) maintained that if an organization offers intrinsic motivators while extrinsic rewards remain deficient, the personnel are not likely to give good performance. Conflicting findings regarding relationship between certain components of motivation and work outcome may be partially attributed to the job positions of subjects, which differ study to study. This state of enigmatic findings stimulated the present investigation with multivariate approach to work motivation covering both intrinsic and extrinsic aspects.

Further, recent years have witnessed a growing convergence of theory and research on the influential role of perceived organizational support (POS) in performance accomplishments and other outcome related behaviours. Different lines of research reviewed show that higher the level of POS higher the employee's commitment to work and organization and lower the stress and emotional arousal. Though there is no evidence of direct link between perceived organizational support and work performance, there is clear indication for possible mediating

role of this organizational variable in the relationship of occupational commitment and work motivation with work performance.

In view of the above indications the present study was designed to examine the relationship between POS, WM, and OC, and their contribution in predicting job performance. We expected positive relationship between POS, WM, and OC, and their substantial contribution in predicting job performance.

Method

Sample:

The study was conducted on a sample of 231 male skilled workers randomly drawn from seven units of National Fertilizer Ltd located in Punjab, India. All the selected subjects were the regular skilled workers with a minimum tenure of five years in the same organization. The age of the subjects ranged between 28 and 45 years with a mean of 33.6 years. Minimum educational qualification of the subjects was matriculation.

Selected employees were contacted individually in their respective work units and their willingness to participate in the study was sought. After their voluntary consent they were administered the measures of perceived organizational support, organizational commitment, and work motivation. The immediate superiors of the selected workers rated their job performance.

Measures:

Occupational Commitment Questionnaire: Organizational commitment of the employees was assessed through Allen and Meyer's (1990) Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ). The questionnaire based on three-component model (Meyer & Allen, 1987) taps three dimensions of organizational commitment, viz. Affective, Continuance and Normative. The OCQ consists of 24 items, eight items for each dimension. Allen and Meyer (1990) noted that

these dimensions of organizational commitment are factorially distinct, though correlated to some extent. The authors of the scale have reported alpha coefficients of .87, .75, and .79 for AC, CC, and NC scales, respectively.

Survey of Perceived Organizational Support: (SPOS; Eisenberger et al., 1986) measures the extent to which employees perceived that the organization values their career, contribution and concerned about their well being. It comprises 36 items referring to evaluative judgments attributed to the organization, which include satisfaction with the employee as a member of the organization. It has provided evidence for the high reliability and factorial validity. The analysis resulted in reliability coefficient (Cronbach's alpha) of .97, with item total correlations ranging from .42 to .83. (Eisenberger et al., 1986).

Employee's Motivation Schedule: Shrivastava's (1981). It has been developed in order to assess the level of work motivation generated by various needs of the individual operating in context of various production and non-production organizations. It consists of 70 items pertaining to 7 different areas of work motivation. The author of the scale has reported split-half reliability coefficients ranging between .72 and .81. The test-retest reliability coefficients ranged from .79 to .86 for different scales.

Job Performance Scale: (JPS) developed by Singh and Pestonjee (1988) is a Likert-type scale consisting of 14 items with five response alternatives. The immediate superior is required to rate how a particular subordinate was doing on various job areas. The authors of the scale established a fairly high Cronbach's alpha, i.e., .89.

Results

Pearson correlations among all the twelve variables are displayed in Table 1. Here, correlation between POS and WP is of

special interest. As predicted, POS is substantially correlated with WP ($r=.39$, $p<.001$). Further, POS has yielded positive correlations with all the measures of work motivation, correlations range between .16 and .38. Highest correlation is with competence and self improvement ($r=.38$, $p<.001$). Its correlation with non-financial reward ($r=.25$, $p<.01$) and autonomy and self actualization ($r=.24$, $p<.01$) is of modest degree. The correlations between POS and three components of OC are positive and relatively strong. POS correlates .36 ($p<.001$) with affective commitment, .27 ($p<.001$) with continuance commitment, and .23 ($p<.01$) with

normative commitment. In general, the correlations between the measures of WM and OC are low, though many of them are significant and positive. As expected, all the three components of OC correlate positively with work performance, the correlations are .35 ($p<.001$) for AC, .30 ($p<.01$) for CC, and .25 ($p<.01$) for NC. Correlations between the measures of WM and job performance are of modest degree, by and large. WM measure monetary gains correlates highest with JP ($r=.32$, $p<.001$) followed by high production-competition and non-financial rewards (both .25, $p<.01$).

Table 1: Intercorrelation Matrix (N= 231)

| Var | AA | AB | SC | MG | NFR | SAF | SA | POS | AC | CC | NC | JP |
|-----|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| AA | - | .58 | .24 | .24 | .25 | .18 | .47 | .38 | .10 | .19 | .13 | .19 |
| AB | | - | .29 | .12 | .38 | .10 | .44 | .16 | .21 | .09 | .06 | .25 |
| SC | | | - | .20 | .27 | .06 | .32 | .21 | .21 | .15 | .02 | .15 |
| MG | | | | - | .17 | .32 | .07 | .21 | .18 | .26 | .17 | .32 |
| NFR | | | | | - | .21 | .28 | .25 | .28 | .22 | .24 | .25 |
| SAF | | | | | | - | .35 | .24 | .32 | .24 | .10 | .16 |
| SA | | | | | | | - | .18 | .30 | .09 | .17 | .23 |
| POS | | | | | | | | - | .36 | .27 | .23 | .39 |
| AC | | | | | | | | | - | .31 | .33 | .35 |
| CC | | | | | | | | | | - | .41 | .30 |
| NC | | | | | | | | | | | - | .25 |
| JP | | | | | | | | | | | | - |

: $r = .14$ $p < .05$; $r = .18$ $p < .01$

Multiple Regression

Stepwise multiple regression was worked out to examine the extent to which weighted combination of certain variables predicts performance at work. The stepwise regression has an advantage over standard regression in the sense that it takes only the significant contributor in the equation. Regression analysis was performed with

parameters p of F-to-enter = .05, and p of F-to-remove = .10, and minimum tolerance = .001. These above criteria allowed entry to 5 predictors. All the five predictors jointly contributed a multiple R of .53 with a probability level of .0001, indicating that the set of 5 variables is a stronger predictor of job performance.

Table 2: Summary of Stepwise Regression Analysis

| Step | Variables | Multiple R | R ² | F (Eq) | p |
|---------------------------|-----------|------------|----------------|----------|--------|
| 1 | POS | .39 | .15 | 41.63 | .00001 |
| 2 | MG | .46 | .21 | 16.91 | .0001 |
| 3 | AC | .50 | .25 | 11.18 | .001 |
| 4 | AB | .52 | .27 | 5.77 | .02 |
| 5 | CC | .53 | .28 | 4.02 | .05 |
| Final Statistics | | | | | |
| Multiple R | .53 | ANOVA | df | SS | MS |
| R square | .28 | Regression | 5 | 4902.84 | 980.57 |
| Adjusted R square | .27 | Residual | 225 | 12425.92 | 55.23 |
| Standard error | 7.43 | F | 17.76 | p< | .00001 |
| Variables in the Equation | | | | | |
| Variables | B | SE of B | t | p | |
| POS | .54 | .14 | 3.78 | .0002 | |
| MG | .58 | .18 | 3.23 | .001 | |
| AC | 1.12 | .43 | 2.57 | .01 | |
| AB | .39 | .16 | 2.48 | .02 | |
| CC | .89 | .44 | 2.00 | .05 | |

Results in Table 2 show that POS contributed maximum to the prediction of job performance and it entered the equation at step one with a multiple R of .39 ($p < .00001$). POS alone accounted for 15 percent of the variance in the dependent variable. Monetary gains, a measure of work motivation, entered the equation at step two and contributed a multiple R of .46 ($p < .0001$) along with POS. These two predictors accounted for 21 percent of the variance in JP. At step three affective commitment (AC) was selected for entry into the equation. It contributed to the prediction of the work performance with an F-to-enter 11.18 at .001 probability level. Multiple R increased to .50 with the entry of affective commitment in the equation. Need for achievement (AB), a dimension of work motivation, appears to be another potent predictor of job performance, which took entry into the equation at step four. Multiple R increased to .52 with the entry of AB in the equation. The F-ratio for this variable equals to 5.77 which is significant at .02 probability

level. Continuance commitment was the last significant predictor to enter the equation and marked an increase of one percent in variance already accounted by four variables in the equation.

The results of regression analysis have revealed that five of the independent variables contributed significantly to the prediction of job performance of industrial workers. The independent variables, perceived organizational support, monetary gain, affective commitment, need for achievement, and continuance commitment jointly account for 28% of the variance ($R^2 = .28$) in job performance. The regression coefficients of these variables are entered in lower portion of Table 2. It is clear from the results that the regression coefficients of all the four variables are also significant. The values of regression coefficients indicate the extent to which one unit change in predictor variable causes change in the job performances score. By using complete regression equation we can predict one's scores on job performance by entering his scores on the measures of POS, MG, AC, N-Ach, and CC. However, the score predicted so is likely to deviate with in the limit of ± 14.56 ($SE = 7.43$) from the obtained score at 95% confidence level.

Discussion

In general, the findings of the study provide ample support to most of the predictions and pertinent theoretical models. Some of the findings of earlier studies have also been substantiated by the present data. The present study is one of the few that specifically focuses on the role of perceived organizational support in job performance. Although the analysis most pertinent to the research objectives is regression analysis, bivariate correlations also throw light on the nature of various predictors and their relationship with work performance. The results pertaining to the measures of occupational and organizational commitment point to the acceptance and generalizability

of Meyer et al.'s (1993) three component model across occupations and cultures. The three component model describes the relationship between commitment and job performance in better than Mowday, Steers, and Porter's (1979) unidimensional construct of commitment.

Like Meyer et al.'s (1993) findings, the present data indicated clearly that three components of organizational commitment are differentially related to work performance and other variables. In tune with the prediction all the three components of occupational commitment correlated significantly and positively with work performance. More so, confirming some of the earlier studies (e.g., Irving & Coleman, 1997) affective commitment (AC) has emerged as a stronger correlate of work performance among all the three conceptions of OC. These results of significant relationship between organizational commitment and job performance are in agreement with a number of earlier studies (DeCottis & Summers, 1987; Irving & Coleman, 1997; Meyer et al., 1993; Mowday et al., 1974; Munene, 1995).

All the seven components of work motivation correlated positively with job performance. Motivational components monetary gains, non-financial rewards and n-achievement have shown modest degree but significant association with work performance. In overall, the correlations of extrinsic motivators are slightly higher with work performance as compared to intrinsic motivators. This finding provides empirical support to Maslow's (1943) theory of need hierarchy. The results point to the importance of distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (e.g., Herzberg, 1966). It may be seen that like some of the earlier studies (e.g., Kalleberg, 1997; Katz & VanMaanan, 1977) intrinsic and extrinsic rewards appear to be complementary to each other. Interestingly, POS has yielded relatively higher correlation with job performance as compared to other

measures included in the study. It clearly supports the prediction from social exchange interpretations of employer-employee relationship. Armeli et al. (1998), Blau (1985), Eisenberger et al. (1986) and Rousseau and Parks (1993) also believe that workers trade effort and loyalty to their organizations for certain tangible incentives such as pay and fringe benefits and such socioemotional benefits as esteem, approval and caring results in better performance.

More precise impact of POS, OC, and WM appears in the results of regression analysis. Almost fifteen percent of the variance in performance of workers is accounted for by POS alone. These results, like those of Armeli et al (1998), and Eisenberger et al. (1986) suggest that POS affects performance at work by conveying to employees the organization's propensity to notice and reward increased performance. Consistent with Eisenberger et al (2001) view, POS works the same way as perceived support from friends and relatives, which may fulfill socioemotional needs in interpersonal relationships. Similar to Hill (1987) observation motivation for social contact and several such needs included in the present study are the major sources of influence on behaviour at work. Among various components of work motivation monetary gain emerged as most potent factor in performance followed by need for Achievement. Contrary to Kelley's (1967) observation both extrinsic and intrinsic motivators need to be taken care of in boosting work outcome. Among the measures of organizational commitment, affective commitment contributed significantly toward job performance. In most of the literature on OC-job performance relationship affective commitment has been reported to be highly associated with performance at work (e.g., Meyer et al., 1993; Mowday et al., 1982; Sood, 2002; Wayne, Shore, & Liden, 1997). It is so because affectively committed people have emotional bond to their organization and feel

obligation to care about the organization's welfare and help the organization reach its objectives. POS attempt to fulfill their indebtedness through greater AC and increased efforts to aid the organization.

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Received: August 26, 2009

Revision received: September 29, 2009

Accepted: November 16, 2009

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