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The Effect of Perceived Organizational Support on Affective Commitment and Job Performance: Mediating role of OBSE

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effect of perceived organizational support on affective commitment and job performance, with mediating role of organization-based self-esteem (OBSE). Survey respondents include 318 employees from the National Iranian Drilling Company (NIDC) in Ahvaz, Iran, that were selected by simple random sampling method. Results using structural equation modeling (SEM) showed that perceived organizational support (POS) predicted organization-based self-esteem (OBSE), which in turn predicted affective commitment and job performance. Organization-based self-esteem mediated these relationships. Discussion and implications of results are presented in the study.

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Keywords: POS, OBSE, affective commitment, job performance;

1. Introduction

The concept of perceived organizational support (POS) has received considerable interest among organizational behavior researchers. They have identified the antecedents and consequences of POS and its mediating and moderating roles between many variables (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Riggle, Edmondson, & Hansen, 2009). POS proposed by Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa (1986) as employees' global beliefs concerning the extent that the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being. POS is a positive treatment that influences self-perceived value that individuals have about themselves within an organization context. Consistent with Eisenberger's proposition, research reveals that employees with high levels of POS are more committed to the organizations they work for and more satisfied with their jobs (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Such employees are less likely to be tardy, absent, or resign (e.g., Allen, Shore, & Griffeth, 2003; Eisenberger et al., 1986); and have higher in-role performance (e.g., Armeli, Eisenberger, Fasolo, & Lynch, 1998). However, many researchers examined the direct effects of POS on its consequences and only a few studies have examined the mechanisms that perform mediating role in these relationships. Accordingly, present study tested the mediating role of organization-based self-esteem (OBSE) in the relationship of POS with affective commitment and job performance. Pierce, Gardner, Cummings, & Dunham (1989) introduced the OBSE concept and defined it as the degree to which an individual believes him/herself to be capable, significant and worthy as an organization member. OBSE indicates the quality of the employee-organization relationship (Chen, Aryee, & Lee, 2005). On the

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perspective of organizational support theory, favorable treatments that organization provides to employees contribute to an employee's feeling of competence and worth as an organization member. This feeling engenders sense of obligation to reciprocate the exchange by demonstrating positive work attitudes and behaviors that benefit the organization.

2. The present study and hypotheses

Employees always evaluate the organization treatments. When they assess a treatment as positive and favorable, they would believe that they are capable, significant and valuable members. These treatments communicate the perspective of organization about employees. Chen et al (2005) reported POS to be related to OBSE. They suggested that the positive treatments of organization with employees increase the feeling of self-worth in work place. Thus,

H1: POS is positively related to OBSE.

Organizational support theory holds that POS by meeting employees' socio-emotional needs facilitate the incorporation of employees' organizational membership and role status into their social identity, creating an strong emotional attachment to the organization and fosters affective commitment (Eisenberger, Aselage, Sucharski, & Jones, 2004). On the other hand, when employees perceived organizational support, on the basis of norm of reciprocity, obligate to exhibit behaviors that are beneficial to the organization. Accordingly, POS should increase performance of standard job activities and actions which favorable to the organization (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Therefore, we expect POS to be related to affective commitment and job performance:

H2: POS is positively related to affective commitment.

H3: POS is positively related to job performance.

Consistent with self-consistency theory, individuals will engage in behaviorial roles and possess attitudes which maximize their sense of cognitive balance or consistency. This means that people who have positive images of themselves will engage in behaviors and possess attitudes that reinforce this positive image (Pierce & Gardner, 2004). Thereby, employees with high levels of OBSE are more committed affectively to their organizations and have high job performance that are consistent with and maintain their level of OBSE. Following the preceding logic, we expect OBSE to be related to affective commitment and job performance:

H4: OBSE is positively related to affective commitment.

H5: OBSE is positively related to job performance.

Pierce and Gardner (2004) suggested that OBSE in two areas possess mediating role. One of these areas is organization-individual relationships. POS engenders OBSE in employees and consistent with level of OBSE and on the basis of norm of reciprocity, they would obligate to develop positive attitudes and to exhibit a high level of job performance that benefical for the organization. Chen et al (2005), reported that OBSE was full mediator in the relationship between POS and affective commitment and job performance. The results of Lee and Peccei (2007) study showed that OBSE was a significant mediator of the POS and affective commitment relationship in two Korean banks. Thus we propose that:

H6: OBSE mediates the relationship between POS and affective commitment.

H7: OBSE mediates the relationship between POS and job performance.

Figure 1 shows the proposed model.

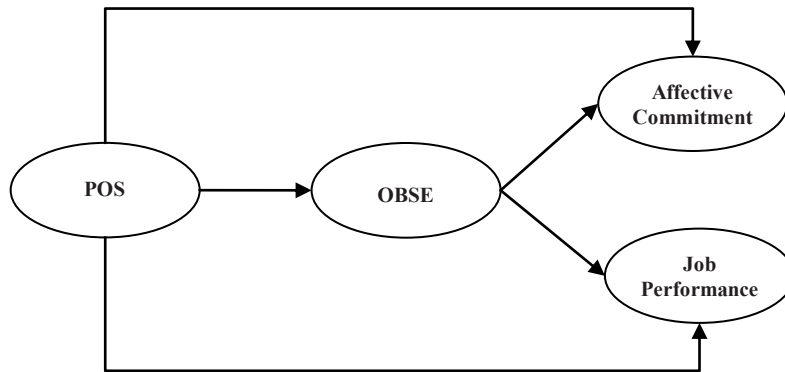


Figure 1. Proposed model of the relationship between research variables

3. Method

3.1. Participants

Participants include 318 employees of an industrial organization in Iran, who were selected by simple random sampling method. For this sample 69.5% were men, 73% were married, the average age was 34.72 years, and the mean organizational tenure was 10.66 years.

3.2. Measures

Perceived Organizational Support Scale. POS was measured with an 8-item scale (1= strongly disagree to 7= strongly agree) developed by Eisenberger, Cummings, Armely, & Lynch (1997). The alpha coefficient in this study was .80.

OBSE Scale. A 10-item scale (1= strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree) developed by Pierce et al. (1989) was used to measure OBSE. The alpha coefficient in this study was .96.

Affective Commitment Scale. An 8-item scale (1= strongly disagree to 7= strongly agree) developed by Allen & Meyer (1990) was used to measure affective commitment. The alpha coefficient in this study was .83.

Job Performance Scale. For measuring job performance, we used a 10-item Graphic Rating Scale developed by Paterson (1922). The alpha coefficient in this study was .79.

4. Results

4.1. Descriptive statistics

Means, standard deviations, and correlations among the variables are presented in table 1. The results for correlations showed that all variables were significantly related to each other.

4.2. Structural model

The initial analysis of the structural equation modeling (SEM) achieved a good model fit ($\chi^2/df=1.85$, $GFI=.97$, $CFI=.95$, $TLI=.89$, $NFI=.98$, and $RMSEA=.06$). The results showed that POS significantly related to OBSE, that providing support for hypothesis 1 ($\beta=.8$, $p<.001$). In support of hypotheses 2 and 3, POS significantly influenced affective commitment ($\beta=.38$, $p<.001$) and job performance ($\beta=.27$, $p<.001$). We also showed that OBSE related positively to affective commitment ($\beta=.55$, $p<.001$) and job performance ($\beta=.47$, $p<.001$), which provide support for hypotheses 4 and 5. Bootstrapping procedure was used to test the indirect effects. Tables 2 and 3 indicate the results for bootstrapping analysis. The results showed that OBSE is a significant mediator in the relationship of POS with affective commitment (H6), and job performance (H7).

Table 1. Descriptive statistics and inter-correlations for study variables

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3
1. POS	24.97	8.14	-	-	-
2. OBSE	33.72	10.19	.87**	-	-
3. Affective Commitment	26.04	7.90	.86**	.86**	-
4. Job Performance	37.40	6.36	.62**	.63**	.66**

** $p<.01$

Table 2. Results for bootstrapping analysis for indirect of POS on affective commitment

Data	Boot	Bias	SE	Lower limit	Upper limit
.4415	.4373	-.0042	.0382	.3683	.5224

Table 3. Results for bootstrapping analysis for indirect of POS on job performance

Data	Boot	Bias	SE	Lower limit	Upper limit
.3070	.3022	-.0048	.0523	.2060	.4043

5. Discussion

This study examined the mediating role of OBSE in the relationship of POS with affective commitment and job performance in an organization in Iran. The findings revealed that POS positively influenced OBSE. We suggest that the favorable treatment that employees receive from organization, form the sense of self-worth and competence in them as an organization member. Consistent with social exchange theory (SET), when employees perceived organization as a supportive institute which satisfy their socio-emotional needs and provide favorable job conditions for them, they will obligate to reciprocate the organization care by forming a psychological attachment relationship with it. This is consistent with our result about positive effect of POS on affective commitment. Our findings also suggest that when employees perceive the organization be highly supportive, increase their job performance to benefit the organization in the exchange relationship. We showed that OBSE positively influence affective commitment and job performance. This result is consistent with this perspective that high OBSE individuals maintain positive job attitudes and exhibit high levels of job performance to be compatible with their self-worth.

Our hypotheses regarding mediating role of OBSE in the relationship of POS with affective commitment and job performance were significant. Consistent with organizational support theory, POS will satisfy the socio-emotional needs such as need to approval and self-esteem and leading employees to feel self-worth and competence. According to self-consistency theory, individual are motivated to engage in behaviors and possess attitudes that are consistent with their self-image. Therefore high OBSE employees have tendency to promote their level of job performance and develop positive attitudes such as affective commitment, which are compatible with their self-

worth as an organization member. Our results showed the positive outcomes of POS. Thus, organizations should find ways to promote higher POS beliefs among employees.

This study has some limitations. First, we drew our samples from staff employees. This limits the generalization of our results to other samples. Second, given the cross-sectional design of this study, causal relationships among the variables cannot be established. Longitudinal studies should be employed to test the hypotheses. Finally, all the questionnaires which we used in this study were self-reports. It is better to use a combination of self-report questionnaires and objective assessments.

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