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## DESIGNING A MODEL OF ANTECEDENTS OF POSITIVE ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR

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### ABSTRACT

The present study was conducted to design and test a model of some antecedents of positive organizational behavior. The design of the current study was correlation using structural equation modeling. The participants in the research were employees who were chosen using a stratified random sampling method and answered the questionnaires on a leader-member exchange, organization-oriented self-esteem, positive organizational behavior, perceived organizational support, role ambiguity, and psychological ownership. Evaluation of the proposed model was done through structural equation modeling. The bootstrap method was also used to check the indirect relationships in the proposed model. The results showed that the proposed model has a good fit with the data. The findings also indicated the significance of the direct effect of the variables of psychological ownership, leader-member exchange, and perceived organizational support on positive organizational behavior. Indirect relationships through organizational self-esteem were also confirmed. Based on the findings of the present research, which confirms the fit of the proposed research model with the data, as well as direct and indirect relationships, it is recommended to pay attention to the variables affecting positive organizational behavior.

**Keywords:** Organizational behavior, Positive organizational behavior, Testing a model, Antecedents.

### INTRODUCTION

A close look at the development of psychology and organizational behavior shows two types of positive and negative attitudes in this field. One is the security attitude, which sees its goal as finding ways to enrich people's lives and discover and develop their inherent capabilities, and the other is a negative attitude, which spends its efforts on treating diseases and pathologies and eliminating shortcomings and misbehavior (Youssef & Luthans, 2007; Radu, 2023). In recent years, psychologists have concluded that to fully understand people, it is equally important to focus on the positive and negative aspects of the psyche (Ryan & Deci, 2001). Since the 1960s, with the emergence of new perspectives that emphasized the prevention of psychological problems instead of treating them, mental health models focused mainly on positive psychological dimensions, such as human abilities, personal development, well-being, etc. (Sepulveda, 2013; Contreras-Barraza *et al.*, 2021; Carmona-Halty *et al.*, 2022).

From the beginning of its formation, positive psychology has made a significant contribution to changing the focus from illness and pathology to it has the side of psychological well-being and related structures. What is worthy of attention in positive psychology is human flourishing and how human potential is realized. Positive psychology is the science of happiness and human

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flourishing (Compton & Hoffman, 2012). This particular field of psychology, proposed by Seligman (Seligman, 1999), focuses on the success of humans. Positive psychology is the scientific study of optimal human functioning and its purpose is to discover and promote the factors that help individuals, families, and communities to progress and flourish (Gable & Haidt, 2005; Park *et al.*, 2016). Considering that organizations are also looking for a way to help their employees move towards the goals of the organization, they have increasingly understood the importance of positivity and focusing on the development of the potential capabilities of employees instead of focusing on weaknesses. Organizational studies have moved towards positivity (Avey *et al.*, 2009; Jin *et al.*, 2022; Zambrano-Chumo & Guevara, 2024).

Luthans (2002) proposed positive organizational behavior and brought it into the workplace. He defines positive organizational behavior as the study and application of positive psychological capabilities and strengths of human resources that are developable and measurable and can be effectively managed to improve the performance of employees (Pan *et al.*, 2014). The components of positive organizational behavior include hope, optimism, self-efficacy, and resilience (Luthans & Youssef, 2004; Youssef & Luthans, 2007). Among these four constructs, self-efficacy has the greatest effect in the combination of positive organizational behavior and performance. Stakovich and Luthans define self-efficacy as a person's belief and confidence in they have defined the relationship with their ability to mobilize cognitive resources and actions necessary to successfully perform a special task in a specific context and situation. Organizational behaviors are positive, developable, and measurable and can be used to improve employee performance (Pan *et al.*, 2014). At the end of a general survey through brainstorming, behavioral events interview, and Pan's (2008) questionnaire, positive organizational behavior is defined as a specific behavior that leads to the promotion of task performance and the improvement of individual and organizational performance. Two points in this definition are worth noting: 1- The positive behavior of employees is the external behavior that is the result of the interaction of individual characteristics and the organizational environment, and 2- Positive organizational behavior can improve individual and organizational performance (Pan *et al.*, 2014).

The value of such knowledge is that it promotes activities as well as higher levels of appreciation for others (Ramlall *et al.*, 2008). In several studies, the relationship between positive organizational behavior and organizational variables such as organizational citizenship behavior, employee well-being, and psychological ownership has been shown (Avey *et al.*, 2010).

Organization-based self-esteem is another important variable that plays a mediating role in this study. The perception that people have of their worth as a members of the organization is called organizational self-esteem (Pierce & Gardner, 2004). People who score high on this construct consider themselves important and valuable and deeply believe that they are an important member of their organization (Pierce *et al.*, 1989). People who have high organization-oriented self-esteem are more likely to believe that they are unique, worthy of attention, and valuable in the workplace and organization. At the same time, the self-esteem that is formed in the workplace and organization is a determining factor about motivation and job attitudes, individual and organizational performance (Pierce & Gardner, 2004). Organization-oriented self-esteem significantly affects the motivation and attitude of employees and increases positive organizational behaviors, which leads to improved job performance; therefore, organizational



self-esteem is a strong predictor of positive organizational behavior. Organizational self-esteem plays a mediating role between psychological ownership and positive organizational behavior (Pan *et al.*, 2014).

Another important variable that is a strong predictor of positive organizational behavior is psychological ownership. According to Pan (2008), psychological ownership is a kind of awareness or attitude through which a person considers something as part of himself. Psychological ownership in the organization refers to the conditions in which employees develop a sense of ownership towards each of the different areas of the organization, jobs, workspace, tools and equipment, ideas and suggestions, and group members (Van Dyne & Pierce, 2004). Furby (1991) states that a person who has a sense of ownership towards an issue (organization) is ready to protect it. A sense of ownership that is involved with people's emotions will motivate them more to show positive organizational behavior (Pan *et al.*, 2014). Blau's social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) is one of the most important behavioral models for understanding employee behavior in the workplace. Although there are different views on social exchanges, theorists agree on the point that social exchanges include mutual relationships that create obligations for the parties of the relationship. Two of the concepts proposed in social exchange theory are leader-member exchange (LMX) and perceived organizational support (POS) (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005) consider leader-member exchange (LMX) as one of the management practices that emphasize the quality of the relationship. Leader-member exchange (LMX) is defined as the quality of the working relationship between employees and their immediate supervisor and indicates the two-way relationship between the employee and the leader or supervisor. According to Dansereau, Graen, and Haga (1975), one of the limitations of leadership research is the implicit belief that the subordinates of a supervisor are homogeneous and homogeneous, and each supervisor uses the same method to manage all subordinates.

According to Dansereau *et al.* (1975), supervisors' relationship with each subordinate is different. In the leader-member exchange (LMX) theory, the focus is mostly on the leader-member interpersonal relationship and the leader's personality (Ferris *et al.*, 2009). Perceived organizational support is another variable that is related to social exchange theory. Perceived organizational support is used to describe the general beliefs of employees about the extent to which the organization values their work participation and is concerned about their well-being and comfort (Avey *et al.*, 2010).

According to Randall *et al.* (1999), a supportive organization takes pride in its employees, pays them fairly, and pays attention to their needs. Research has shown that there is a significant positive relationship between perceived organizational support and leader-member exchange with positive organizational behavior. Role ambiguity is also a role stressor that has a strong relationship with job performance and organizational behavior. Role ambiguity occurs when a person has insufficient information about his work role, in other words, the role of a person is not clear and ambiguous about what the tasks require and on what basis the performance is evaluated. According to what has been said, the present research aimed to design a model of some antecedents (role ambiguity and organization-oriented self-esteem, psychological ownership of leader-member exchange, and perceived organizational support) of positive organizational behavior and to test it. Also, in this model, organization-oriented self-esteem



plays a role as a mediator of the relationship between psychological ownership, perceived organizational support, leader-member exchange, and role ambiguity with positive organizational behavior.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### *Research Method, Statistical Population, and Sample*

The method of the current study is a description of the correlation type through structural equation modeling (SEM). The statistical population of the research includes all the employees in the number of 2358 people, and 350 people from this population were selected as sample members using a stratified random method. Among the questionnaires distributed among the participants, 322 questionnaires were returned (92% return rate). In the background related to structural equation modeling, suggestions have been made to determine the number of sufficient sample sizes. The minimum sample size according to Anderson and Gerbing (1988) is 150 people, and according to Chou and Bentler (1995) is 200 people. Among the participants in the research, 75% were men. Mean  $\pm$  SD of age and service history were respectively 39.86 years with a standard deviation of 8.7, and 15.24 years with a standard deviation of 9.6. Also, 65 people have a diploma and associate degree, 197 people have a bachelor's degree, and 60 People have a master's degree or higher.

### *Research Tool*

#### *Positive Organizational Behavior Questionnaire (POBQ)*

In the present study, the Positive Organizational Behavior Questionnaire (POBQ) was used by Nguyen and Nguyen (2012) to measure positive organizational behavior. This questionnaire has 13 items and its answers are scored on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (completely disagree) to 5 (completely agree). This questionnaire has 4 dimensions resilience (3 items), hope (3 items), self-efficacy (4 items), and optimism (3 items). In the present study, the reliability of this questionnaire was determined by Cronbach's alpha method and 0.71, respectively. Also, checking the validity of the questionnaire on positive organizational behavior using confirmatory factor analysis showed that all items of the questionnaire significantly loaded on the structure of positive organizational behavior.

#### *Organizational Self-Esteem Questionnaire (OBSEQ)*

To measure organization-oriented self-esteem, Pierce *et al.*'s (1989) questionnaire was used. This scale has 10 items and the answers are evaluated on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (completely disagree) to 5 (completely agree). Pierce *et al.* (1989) using Cronbach's alpha method have reported the reliability of this scale to be 0.91 and 0.75 in retesting. In the present study, the reliability was calculated using two methods, Cronbach's alpha and halving, respectively, 0.76 and 0.72, and the reliability coefficient using correlation with a general question was calculated as 0.67.

#### *Leader-Member Exchange Questionnaire (LMX)*

To measure the leader-member exchange, the Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) questionnaire was used. This questionnaire has 7 items or a 5-point Likert scale. Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995)



reported Cronbach's alpha of this questionnaire between 0.80 and 0.90. In the current study, the reliability of the leader-member questionnaire was calculated as 0.89 and 0.87 by Cronbach's alpha and 0.87, respectively, and 0.81 by correlating with a general question.

#### *Psychological Ownership Questionnaire*

The 7-item questionnaire of Van Dyne and Pierce (2004) was used to measure psychological ownership. Out of these 7 articles, 5 articles refer to determining psychological ownership based on the organization and 2 articles refer to determining psychological ownership based on job. The answers to this questionnaire are graded on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (completely disagree) to 5 (completely agree). Using Cronbach's alpha method, Van Dyne and Pierce (2004) reported the reliability of this questionnaire in the organization-based psychological ownership dimension of 0.93 and the job-based psychological ownership dimension of 0.84. The reliability of this questionnaire in the present study was obtained by using Cronbach's alpha method and 0.72 and 0.72, respectively, and its validity coefficient was 0.72 by correlating with a general question.

#### *Perceived Organizational Support Questionnaire (POSQ)*

To measure perceived organizational support, the 8-item short form of the perceived organizational support questionnaire was used by Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002). The answers to this questionnaire are graded on a 7-point Likert scale from 1 (completely disagree) to 7 (completely agree). The reliability of this questionnaire in the present study was obtained using Cronbach's alpha method and 0.73 and 0.73, respectively, and its validity coefficient was obtained by correlating with a general question of 71.

#### *Role Ambiguity Questionnaire*

To measure role ambiguity, items 1 to 6 on the scale of Rizzo *et al.* (1970) were used. This scale generally includes 14 items, 6 items (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6) measure role ambiguity, and 8 items (7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14) measure conflict. Answers to the questionnaire items are determined based on a 4-point Likert scale from 1 (not true at all) to 4 (completely true). Rizzo *et al.* (1970) have calculated the reliability coefficient of this questionnaire using Cronbach's alpha method as 0.81 and its validity as 0.86. In the present study, the reliability of this questionnaire was obtained by two methods of Cronbach's alpha and 0.75, respectively, and 0.57 by correlating with a general question.

#### *Implementation Method and Analysis*

After selecting the employees by stratified random method and after obtaining their satisfaction, the questionnaires were distributed among them. After collecting the completed questionnaires and discarding the incomplete ones, statistical analysis was done on the data. Structural equation modeling (SEM) and AMOS software version 22 were used for data analysis.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Descriptive findings related to the mean, standard deviation, and matrix of correlation coefficients of research variables are shown in **Table 1**.



**Table 1.** Mean, standard deviation, and matrix of correlation coefficients of research variables.

| No. | Variable                                      | Mean  | SD   | 1       | 2       | 3       | 4       | 5        | 6        | 7      | 8     | 9      | 10 |
|-----|---|-------|------|---------|---------|---------|---------|----------|----------|--------|-------|--------|----|
| 1   | Positive organizational behavior              | 55.99 | 3.62 | 1       |         |         |         |          |          |        |       |        |    |
| 2   | Organization-oriented self-esteem             | 42.50 | 3.65 | 0.60**  | 1       |         |         |          |          |        |       |        |    |
| 3   | Organizational support member-leader exchange | 30.53 | 3.02 | 0.47**  | 0.38**  | 1       |         |          |          |        |       |        |    |
| 4   | Perceived                                     | 38.47 | 3.88 | 0.45**  | 0.33**  | 0.45**  | 1       |          |          |        |       |        |    |
| 5   | Psychological ownership                       | 29.45 | 3.24 | 0.43**  | 0.31**  | 0.60**  | 0.39**  | 1        |          |        |       |        |    |
| 6   | Role ambiguity                                | 10.18 | 2.82 | -0.27** | -0.30** | -0.09** | -0.18** | -0.214** | 1        |        |       |        |    |
| 7   | Efficacy                                      | 17.57 | 1.49 | 0.69**  | 0.41**  | 0.3**   | 0.23**  | 0.25**   | -0.16**  | 1      |       |        |    |
| 8   | Hope  | 12.97 | 1.39 | 0.60**  | 0.30**  | 0.25**  | 0.36**  | 0.30**   | -0.28**  | -0.031 | 1     |        |    |
| 9   | Optimism                                      | 12.74 | 1.26 | 0.63**  | 0.40**  | 0.34**  | 0.39**  | 0.31**   | -0.145** | -0.039 | 0.058 | 1      |    |
| 10  | Resilience                                    | 12.69 | 1.37 | 0.68**  | 0.46**  | 0.30**  | 0.20**  | 0.27**   | -0.126** | -0.049 | 0.059 | 0.33** | 1  |

\*P&lt; 0.05, \*\*P&lt;0.01

To evaluate the proposed model, structural equation modeling (SEM) was used. Analyzes were performed using SPSS23 and AMOS version 21 software. To determine the adequacy of the proposed model's fit with the data, a combination of fit indices was used as follows: chi-square



( $\chi^2$ ), normalized chi-square index ( $\chi^2/df$ ), adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI), goodness-of-fit index (GFI), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Normalized Fit Index (NFI), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), Incremental Fit Index (IFI), and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA). Before examining the structural coefficients, the fit of the proposed model with the data was checked. **Table 2** shows the values of the fit indices of the proposed model with the data.

**Table 2.** The values of the fit indices of the proposed model with the data.

| Indicator          | $\chi^2$ | df | $\chi^2/df$ | GFI   | AGFI  | IFI   | TLI   | CFI   | NFI   | RMSEA |
|--------------------|----------|----|-------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Suggested template | 32.371   | 11 | 2.943       | 0.973 | 0.932 | 0.953 | 0.908 | 0.952 | 0.930 | 0.078 |

Path coefficients indicate the significance of all paths. The bootstrap method was used to specify the significance of indirect relationships. **Table 3** shows the bootstrap results for the indirect paths of psychological ownership, perceived organizational support, leader-member exchange, and role ambiguity to positive organizational behavior through organizational self-esteem.

**Table 3.** Bootstrap results for indirect paths.

| Routes  | Data    | Boot    | Bias   | Standard error | Lower limit | Upper limit | The significance level |
|---|---------|---------|--------|----------------|-------------|-------------|------------------------|
| Psychological ownership → organization-oriented self-esteem → positive organizational behavior          | 0.1817  | 0.1831  | 0.0014 | 0.0363         | 0.1165      | 0.2632      | 0.001                  |
| Leader-member exchange → organization-oriented self-esteem → positive organizational behavior           | 0.2255  | 0.2260  | 0.0005 | 0.0390         | 0.1482      | 0.3051      | 0.001                  |
| Perceived organizational support → organization-oriented self-esteem → positive organizational behavior | 0.1580  | 0.1593  | 0.0013 | 0.0274         | 0.1086      | 0.2132      | 0.001                  |
| Role ambiguity → organization-oriented self-esteem → positive organizational behavior                   | -0.0462 | -0.0454 | 0.0007 | 0.0217         | 0.0925      | 0.0048      | 0.001                  |

There are four indirect paths in the current research and their significance as a result. The confidence level for these intervals is 95 and the number of bootstrap resampling is 5000.

This research aimed to design and test a model of some antecedents of positive organizational behavior. The findings of the present study indicated a good fit of the proposed research model with the data. This finding is consistent with the results of Pan *et al.* (2014) and Pierce and

Gardner (1989). The results of the present study confirmed the direct relationship between psychological ownership and positive organizational behavior. This finding was consistent with the results of Pan *et al.*'s study (2014). In explaining this finding, it can be said that if the employees consider themselves psychologically the owners of the organization, they will feel belonging to the organization, and as a result, they will devote more time and energy to their organization, and this will lead to the emergence and expansion of positive organizational behavior.

The present study supported the direct relationship between perceived organizational support and leader-member exchange with positive organizational behavior. This finding was consistent with the research results of Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002) and Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005). In explaining this finding, we can refer to Blau's social exchange theory (Blau, 1964). According to this theory, if the relationship between supervisor and subordinate is a two-way and constructive relationship, employees will be more inclined to apply positive behaviors and behaviors that lead to improved performance. In other words, employees who have a better relationship with their supervisors view this two-way relationship as an exchange. According to Randall *et al.* (1999), a supportive organization takes pride in its employees, pays them fairly, and pays attention to their needs. Employees consider this support as a sign of the organization's benevolent intentions. When employees feel that the organization is concerned about their well-being, they will feel loyalty and adherence to the organization. When employees perceive organizational support, they consider themselves obliged to participate more in achieving the organization's goals and compensate the organization's support for themselves. In explaining the confirmation of the direct relationship between perceived organizational support and organizational self-esteem, it can be said that the organizational environment is an important reference for employees; as a result, the organization's evaluation of employees, which is reflected in the form of perceived organizational support, plays a key role in increasing the self-esteem level of the illustrated organization of employees. Therefore, the more the employee feels that the organization values his cooperation, the more he feels valued. High levels of organization-oriented self-esteem are satisfying for employees as the satisfaction of one of the social-emotional needs, and this satisfaction leads to an increase in people's attachment to the organization.

Considering that the perceived organizational support is an indicator of the competence and value of employees in the organization, this perception leads to positive self-evaluations of the individual as a capable and valuable member of the organization, or in other words, the formation of organization-oriented self-esteem. Based on the perception of positive evaluations of himself, which is the result of the organization's attention towards him, the individual tries to complete the tasks in a way that is consistent with this perception of self-esteem. The results of the present study showed that there is a positive relationship between organization-oriented self-esteem and positive organizational behavior. This finding is consistent with the research results of Pan *et al.* (2014).

In explaining this finding, it can be said that self-esteem, which is caused by the perception of the individual's worth by the organization, can create motivation and positive attitudes towards work in the organization and lead to the implementation of positive organizational behaviors by employees and improve their performance. Employees who have high organization-oriented self-esteem voluntarily devote their time, energy, and skills to the organization.



**CONCLUSION**

The present study was conducted to design and test a model of some antecedents of positive organizational behavior. The results showed that the proposed model has a good fit with the data. The findings also indicated the significance of the direct effect of the variables of psychological ownership, leader-member exchange, and perceived organizational support on positive organizational behavior. Indirect relationships through organizational self-esteem were also confirmed. Based on the findings of the present research, which confirms the fit of the proposed research model with the data, as well as direct and indirect relationships, it is recommended to pay attention to the variables affecting positive organizational behavior.

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