Job Performance: Mediate Mechanism of Work Motivation

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Abstract

This study examines the mediating influence work motivation on the relationships between job involvement and perceived supervisor support and the work outcomes of job performance. This was a cross-sectional-descriptive study. Participants of this research were 226 employees of an organization who were selected via multistage random sampling and then completed the research instruments. Three questionnaires were chosen to gather data: Work Motivation (Robinson; 2004), Performance self-assessment (Patterson) and two subscale of Organizational Culture Survey (OCS; Glaser, Zamanou & Hacker; 1987) include Involvement and Supervision. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) through AMOS-16 and SPSS-17 software packages were used for data analysis. Findings and Results: SEM analysis supported model also fitting with data. Following goodness-of-fit indices were used to assess the model-fitting: A chi-square of 3.5 on 2 degrees of freedom, GFI= .97, CFI= 0.99, NFI= 0.99, RFI= 0.97, TLI= 0.99 and RMSEA= 0.05. As expected, work motivation measure was significantly and positively correlated to supervision (r = 0.30, P= 0.001) and involvement (r = 0.27, P= 0.001), and work motivation correlated to job performance (r = 0.67, P= 0.001). The results revealed that work motivation fully mediated the relationship between job involvement and PSS with job performance.

Keywords: job performance, work motivation, supervision, involvement

1. Introduction

Supervisors are considered as the first level of management who are given major duties and responsibilities to lead work groups in organizations (Elangovan & Karakowsky, 1999). During the past two decades, scholars have conducted numerous studies on leadership effectiveness. Among them, many studies have focused on the relationship between supervisor behavior and employees’ work outcomes (e.g., Douglas, 2012; Fry, Hannah, Noel & Walumbwa, 2011; Hannah, Avoilio, Luthans & Harms, 2008; Jung, Yammarino & Lee, 2009; Levay, 2010; Mehra, Smith, Dixon & Robertson, 2006; Osborn & Marion, 2009; Piccolo & Colquitt, 2006; Zhu, Avoilio, Riggio & Sosik, 2011). Research from the social and organizational support literature indicates that when supervisors are supportive of subordinates, this treatment leads to favorable outcomes for the employee and the organization such as reduced work stress and enhanced performance (see Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; and Viswesvaran, Sanchez & Fisher, 1999, for reviews). Perceived Supervisor Support (PSS) is defined as the beliefs that employees adopt concerning
the degree to which their supervisor values their contribution and cares about their well being (Kotte & Sharafinski, 1988).

The role of supervisor support has been of particular interest to researchers (Cakmak-Otluoglu, 2012; Casper, Harris, Taylor-Bianco & Wayne, 2011; DeConick, 2010; Shanock & Eisenberger, 2006; Straub, 2012; Swanberg, McKechenie, Ojha & James, 2011; Willemse, Jonge, Smith, Depla & Pot, 2012). The construct of supervisor support captures the essence of social exchange in employment relationships. “Social support is information that leads a person to believe that s/he is cared for, esteemed and valued and belongs to a network of communication and mutual obligation”. One can distinguish between several types of employee support mechanisms. Non-work based support is related to support from family and friends and work based support relates to support from one’s supervisor, co-worker, or the organization at large (Lim, 1996).

Although both types of support have not yet been examined on their association with job performance, this research merely examines the potential effect of two work based support mechanism, i.e. perceived supervisor support (PSS). This choice is based on the assumption that support mechanisms provide larger opportunities to be influenced by the organization than non-work based mechanisms. PSS relates to a variety of individually and organizationally relevant outcomes (Chen & Chiu, 2008; Eschleman, 2009; Griffin, Patterson & West, 2001; Pazy & Ganzach 2006; Shanock & Eisenberger, 2006). Based on prior research and the motivating potential of the leadership techniques enjoyed by high PSS, we expect PSS to be positively related to job performance.

The other variable is job involvement. The term of job involvement (JI) can be described as “the degree to which one is cognitively preoccupied with, engaged in, and concerned with one’s present job” (Paullay, Alliger & Stone-Romero, 1994). These kinds of employees can be recognized by the level they feel that the job is an important aspect of their self definition. This statement and the construct is a popular term and widely used in the literature of employee performance (such as khan & saboor, 2011; Robinson et al., 2004).

In previous years, a lot of interest was developed in the term job involvement. Many researchers claimed that the employee involvement clearly forecast employee outcomes, organizational performance and organization success (Bates, 2004; Baumruk, 2004; Richman, 2006). Job involvement is described by Kahn in a way that developing a behavior in the employee that connect him to work and to other actively with personal presence (physical, emotional and cognitive) leads to full performance (1990: 700).

Much of the research that has examined the work outcomes of supervisor support has adopted a main effect approach in that, this research has failed to explicate how and why supervisor support is related to the work outcomes examined. We first must demonstrate PSS relates to work motivation to demonstrate a mediating role for work motivation.

Motivation is a basic psychological process. A recent data-based comprehensive analysis concluded that competitiveness problems appear to be largely motivational in nature (Miner, Ebrahimi, and Wachtel, 1995). Along with perception, personality, attitudes, and learning, motivation is a very important element of behavior. Nevertheless, motivation is not the only explanation of behavior. It interacts with and acts in conjunction with other cognitive processes. Motivating is the management process of influencing behavior based on the knowledge of what make people tick (Luthans, 1998). Luthans (1998) asserts that motivation is the process that arouses, energizes, directs, and sustains behavior and performance. Luthan (1998) asserts that motivation should not be thought of as the only explanation of behavior, since it interacts with and acts in conjunction with other mediating processes and with the environment. Luthan stress that, like the other cognitive process, motivation cannot be seen. All that can be seen is behavior, and this should not be equated with causes of behavior. While recognizing the central role of motivation, Evans (1998) states that many recent theories of organizational behavior find it important for the field to re-emphasize behavior. The level of performance of employees relies not only on their actual skills but also on the level of motivation each person exhibits (Burney et al., 2007). Motivation is an inner drive or an external inducement to behave in some particular way, typically a way that will lead to rewards. Employee motivation is one of the strategies of managers to enhance effective job performance among workers in organizations.

Much of the research on PSS and outcomes has been based on US samples. Although the scant research on PSS based on non-US samples in collectivistic cultures has shown PSS to be a relevant construct. In the other hand We could not find previous research studies addressing similar issues. This paper also tries to shed light on ways to
influence performance decisions under informal contracts. Actual human behavior within organizations is most likely influenced by social support, social norms and intrinsic motivation. In this research the following is addressed: The direct effect of PSS job performance. In addition, it will be tested whether work motivation mediates the relation between PSS and job performance.

H: work motivation mediates the relationship between perceived supervisor support and job performance.

2. Method

This was a cross-sectional-descriptive study. Participants of this research were 240 employees of an organization who were selected via multistage random sampling and then completed the research instruments. Four questionnaires were chosen to gather data: two subscales of Organizational Culture Survey (OCS; make by Glaser, Zamanou & Hacker; 1987) include Supervisor and Involvement, Work Motivation (Robinson; 2004), Performance self-assessment (Patterson). All questionnaires had validity and reliability. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) through AMOS-16 and SPSS-17 software packages were used for data analysis. Fit indices include the Chi-Square statistics divided by the degree of freedom ($x^2 / df$); Relative Fit Index (RFI), Normed Fit Index (NFI), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Tucker-Lewis coefficient (TLI), and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA).

3. Result

Table 1 presents the means, standard deviations, and correlations among the research variables.

| variables     | Mean | SD  | 1   | 2   | 3   | 4   |
|---------------|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 1 Involvement | 13.57| 3.8 | 1.00|     |     |     |
| 2 Supervision | 30.44| 6.9 | .67 | 1.00|     |     |
| 3 Work motivation | 44.86| 6.1 | .48 | .49 | 1.00|     |
| 4 Job performance | 42.5 | 4.7 | .32 | .33 | .67 | 1.00|

SEM analysis supported model fitting with data (table 2). Following goodness-of-fit indices were used to assess the model-fitting: A chi-square of 3.5 on 2 degrees of freedom, GFI= .99, CFI= 0.99, NFI= 0.96, RFI= 0.99, TLI= 0.99, IFI= 0.97 and RMSEA= 0.05.

| Model          | CMIN | DF  | P   | CMIN/DF | GFI | NFI | RFI  | IFI   | TLI  | CFI   | RMSEA |
|----------------|------|-----|-----|---------|-----|-----|------|-------|------|-------|-------|
| Default model  | 3.5  | 2   | .17 | 1.75    | .99 | .96 | .99  | .97   | .99  | .99   | .05   |

As expected and see in figure 1, supervisor support and involvement were significantly and positively correlated to work motivation and their correlation coefficients were respectively 0.3 and 0.27, and also work motivation to job performance ($r = 0.67$, $P= 0.001$). Square multiple correlations ($R^2$) was 0.45 that indicate variables explain 45% of job performance’s variance. Also, indirect effect of supervisor support on job performance by mediating work motivation was 0.21 ($P= 0.01$) and involvement on job performance by mediating work motivation was 0.17 ($P= 0.01$).
4. Discussion

This study has investigated the influence of supervisor support, job involvement and work motivation on employees’ performance in oil industry of Iran. It was revealed that all independent and mediator variables jointly and relatively contributed to employees’ performance. Hypothesis was supported. Consistent with our prediction, PSS relates to work motivation. Work motivation mediated the relationship between supervisor support and job performance. Some of the findings of earlier studies have also been substantiated by the present data (Eschleman, 2009; Pazy & Ganzach, 2006; Shanock & Eisenberger, 2006).

Performance is strictly a return for pay in terms of economic exchange, whereas in terms of social exchange it is part of a wider, less tangible reciprocation process. In this process, organizations that treat employees favorably induce in them a feeling of obligation. Performance is thus a specified as a non-specified return for concern and support in the social exchange framework (Blau, 1964). Thus Employee perceptions of supervisory support have a high correlation to positive job outcomes (performance, satisfaction, intent to stay, organizational commitment, and citizenship behavior).

Consist with findings, Darolia, Kumara and Darolia (2010) found that work motivation related with job performance. Oluseyi and Ayo's (2009) study also strongly supported these findings. When people are motivated in the workplace, performance is enhanced. The quality and relationship between a supervisor and the group members serves as a motivator for the group. Employee motivation is also a vital ingredient to achieving business progress, overcoming problems and achieving business goals. Other researches may find a strong mediating effect of motivation on employee’s performance in any future research. Findings on work motivation are supported by Darolia, Kumara and Darolia (2010), and Oluseyi and Ayo (2009) that work motivation is strongly correlated with employees’ performance in the workplace.

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