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Developing a Framework for the Drivers of Positive Organizational Behavior

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Abstract

This study aimed to develop and test a model that identifies key antecedents of positive organizational behavior. A correlational research design was used, employing structural equation modeling for analysis. The study participants, selected through stratified random sampling, completed surveys on topics including organization-oriented self-esteem, leader-member exchange, role ambiguity, perceived organizational support, positive organizational behavior, and psychological ownership. Structural equation modeling using the bootstrap method was used to assess indirect effects to evaluate the model. The results indicated a strong fit between the model and the data, indicating significant direct effects of leader-member exchange, psychological ownership, and perceived organizational support on positive organizational behavior. Additionally, indirect effects through organizational self-esteem were confirmed. Based on the findings obtained from the validity of the model and the direct and indirect relationships, it is recommended to focus on the variables affecting positive organizational behavior.

Keywords: Positive organizational behavior, Organizational behavior, Model testing, Antecedents

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Introduction

In the field of organizational behavior and psychology two distinct perspectives—positive and negative—have emerged. One focuses on enhancing people's lives by tapping into and developing their inherent abilities, while the other concentrates on addressing and correcting flaws, dysfunctions, and psychological issues [1, 2]. Over the years, psychologists have recognized the importance of understanding both the negative and positive aspects of human psychology to gain a full understanding of individuals [3]. Since the 1960s, the focus on mental health has shifted from merely treating psychological issues to promoting positive psychological dimensions such as personal growth, well-being, and human potential [4-6].

The field of positive psychology has significantly contributed to this shift by emphasizing psychological well-being, human flourishing, and the realization of human potential. Introduced by Seligman [7], positive psychology aims to focus on the success of individuals rather than their limitations. It is described as the scientific study of optimal human functioning, seeking to identify and encourage the factors that allow individuals and communities to thrive [8, 9]. As organizations increasingly strive to help employees achieve their goals, the importance of cultivating positive attributes and developing employees' strengths, rather than focusing solely on their weaknesses, has become clear. This movement toward positive psychology has increasingly influenced organizational studies [10-12].

Luthans [13] introduced the concept of positive organizational behavior, applying the principles of positive psychology to the workplace. Positive organizational behavior is defined as the study and application of measurable and developable psychological strengths that can enhance employee performance [14]. Key components of positive organizational behavior



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include optimism, hope, resilience, and self-efficacy [1, 15]. Self-efficacy, in particular, plays a crucial role in linking positive organizational behavior with enhanced performance. Stakovich and Luthans define self-efficacy as the belief in one's ability to mobilize cognitive resources and take necessary actions to complete a task successfully in a specific context. Positive organizational behavior leads to better individual and organizational outcomes, emphasizing the importance of fostering these behaviors in the workplace [14].

This behavior results from the interaction of the organizational environment and individual traits directly impacting performance at both individual and organizational levels. The value of understanding positive organizational behavior lies in its ability to promote actions that foster greater appreciation and positive outcomes in the workplace [16]. Numerous studies have highlighted the connection between positive organizational behavior and various organizational variables, such as employee well-being, organizational citizenship behavior, and psychological ownership [17].

In this study, organizational self-esteem is a key variable that plays a mediating role. Organizational self-esteem refers to how individuals perceive their value as members of their organization [18]. Employees with high organizational self-esteem view themselves as important and valuable members of their organization and feel that their contributions are appreciated [19]. These individuals will see themselves as unique and worthy of attention within the workplace. High self-esteem within an organization has been linked to increased motivation, positive attitudes toward work, and higher performance levels, both individually and organizationally [18]. As such, organizational self-esteem is considered an important predictor of positive organizational behaviors. Furthermore, it mediates the relationship between psychological ownership and positive organizational behavior [14].

Psychological ownership is another key factor that contributes to positive organizational behavior. Psychological ownership refers to the emotional attachment and sense of ownership an individual feels toward their work or organization [20]. Employees who feel psychologically invested in their organization or work environment, including their job, workspace, tools, ideas, and colleagues, are more motivated to engage in positive behaviors that benefit the organization [21]. According to Furby [22], individuals with a strong sense of ownership toward an organization are more likely to protect and invest in it. When psychological ownership is tied to emotions, it drives employees to exhibit positive organizational behaviors [14]. Blau's social exchange theory [23] is an effective framework for understanding workplace behavior, emphasizing reciprocal relationships that create obligations between employees and their organizations. Two key elements of this theory are leader-member exchange (LMX) and perceived organizational support (POS) [24].

LMX focuses on the quality of the relationship between employees and their direct supervisors, recognizing that these relationships are unique and not uniform across all subordinates [25]. This theory highlights the importance of the leader-employee interpersonal dynamic and how it influences organizational outcomes [26]. Another key concept, perceived organizational support, describes employees' beliefs about the extent to which the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being [17]. Randall *et al.* [27] emphasize that organizations that provide strong support are seen as appreciative of their employees, compensating them fairly and addressing their needs.

There is considerable evidence that both perceived leader-member exchange and organizational support positively influence organizational behaviors. Additionally, role ambiguity, a stressor that occurs when employees are unclear about their job responsibilities and performance expectations, can impact organizational behavior and job performance. In light of these factors, this research seeks to create a model that explores the antecedents of positive organizational behavior, such as role ambiguity, organizational self-esteem, psychological ownership, perceived organizational support, and leader-member exchange. Within this model, organizational self-esteem is hypothesized to mediate the relationships between these variables and positive organizational behavior.

Materials and Methods

Research approach, population, and sample

This study utilized a descriptive correlational design with structural equation modeling (SEM) for analysis. The target population consisted of 2,358 employees, from which a sample of 350 participants was selected using stratified random sampling. A total of 322 questionnaires were gathered, achieving a response rate of 92%. According to SEM recommendations, Anderson and Gerbing [28] suggest a minimum sample size of 150, while Chou and Bentler [29] recommend at least 200 participants. Among the respondents, 75% were male. The average age was 39.86 years ($SD = 8.7$), and the average tenure was 15.24 years ($SD = 9.6$). In terms of educational qualifications, 65 participants held a diploma or associate degree, 197 had a bachelor's degree, and 60 had a master's degree or higher.

Measurement instruments

Positive organizational behavior questionnaire (POBQ)

The POBQ developed by Nguyen and Nguyen [30], was used to measure positive organizational behavior. This tool contains 13 items, rated on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), and includes four subscales: resilience (three items), hope (three items), self-efficacy (four items), and optimism (three items). In this study, the reliability of the POBQ was determined using Cronbach's alpha, which yielded a coefficient of 0.71. The results of confirmatory factor analysis revealed that all items significantly loaded onto the construct of positive organizational behavior.

Organizational self-esteem questionnaire (OBSEQ)

OBSEQ was assessed using the scale developed by Pierce *et al.* [19], which consists of 10 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale. Pierce *et al.* [19] reported a Cronbach's alpha of 0.91 and a retest reliability of 0.75. In this study, the reliability of the scale was found to be 0.76 based on Cronbach's alpha, and 0.72 when assessed using the halving method. A correlation with a general question resulted in a reliability coefficient of 0.67.

Leader-member exchange (LMX) questionnaire

LMX was evaluated using a 7-item scale created by Graen and Uhl-Bien [31], employing a 5-point Likert scale. The scale has shown Cronbach's alpha values ranging from 0.80 to 0.90 in previous studies by Graen and Uhl-Bien [31]. In this research, the reliability of the LMX scale was found to be 0.89, with a test-retest reliability of 0.87, and a correlation with a general question of 0.81.

Psychological ownership questionnaire

Psychological ownership was measured using the 7-item scale by Van Dyne and Pierce [21]. This questionnaire includes 5 items regarding organizational psychological ownership and 2 items focused on job-based ownership. Responses were rated on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The reliability of the organizational ownership dimension was reported as 0.93, and 0.84 for job-based ownership in the original study. In this research, the reliability coefficients were 0.72 for both dimensions, with a validity coefficient of 0.72 based on correlations with a general question.

Perceived organizational support questionnaire (POSQ)

To measure perceived organizational support, the short form of the POSQ, developed by Rhoades and Eisenberger [32], was used. This tool contains 8 items, scored on a 7-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). In this study, the reliability coefficient of the POSQ was 0.73 based on Cronbach's alpha, with a validity coefficient of 0.71, confirmed through a correlation with a general question.

Role ambiguity measurement

Role ambiguity was assessed using items 1 to 6 from the scale developed by Rizzo *et al.* [33]. The full scale consists of 14 items: 6 items (1-6) measure role ambiguity, while the remaining 8 items (7-14) assess role conflict. The responses to the questionnaire are based on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (not true at all) to 4 (completely true). In the original study, Rizzo *et al.* [33] reported a reliability coefficient of 0.81, with validity estimated at 0.86. In the current study, the reliability coefficient was found to be 0.75 using Cronbach's alpha, and 0.57 when measured through correlation with a general question.

Data collection and analytical procedures

After selecting participants through stratified random sampling and obtaining their consent, the questionnaires were given to the employees. Once the completed questionnaires were collected, any incomplete responses were discarded. The data analysis was performed using SEM, with the AMOS software, version 22.

Results and Discussion

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	-	-	-	-	-	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 < 0.05, **P < 0.01

Descriptive statistics, including the mean, standard deviation, and correlation matrix of the research variables, are presented in **Table 1**. To assess the proposed model, SEM was applied. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS version 23 and AMOS version 21 software. To evaluate the goodness of fit for the proposed model, a set of fit indices was employed: chi-square (χ^2), normalized chi-square (χ^2/df), adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI), normalized fit index (NFI), goodness-of-fit index (GFI), incremental fit index (IFI), Tucker-Lewis index (TLI), comparative fit index (CFI), and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA). Before analyzing the structural coefficients, the model fit was evaluated. The fit indices for the proposed model are summarized in **Table 2**.

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

Indicator	χ^2	df	χ^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

The path coefficients demonstrate the significance of all the relationships in the model. To assess the significance of indirect effects, the bootstrap method was applied. The results of the bootstrap analysis for the indirect paths through organizational self-esteem for psychological ownership, perceived organizational support, leader-member exchange, and role ambiguity are provided in **Table 3**.

Table 3. Bootstrap results for indirect effects.

Path	Data	Boot	Bias	Standard error	Lower limit	Upper limit	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	-	-	0.0007	0.0217	0.0925	0.0048	0.001

The bootstrap intervals are set at a 95% confidence level, with 5,000 resampling repetitions performed.

The study aimed to design and validate a model for identifying the antecedents of positive organizational behavior. The findings suggest that the proposed model fits well with the data, supporting the results of previous studies by Pan *et al.* [14] and Pierce *et al.* [19]. Additionally, the study confirms the direct link between psychological ownership and positive organizational behavior, consistent with Pan *et al.*'s [14] research. When employees perceive themselves as psychologically owning the organization, they experience a stronger sense of belonging, motivating them to invest more energy and effort into their work. This behavior promotes the emergence and growth of positive organizational behavior.

The current study confirmed the direct link between leader-member exchange and perceived organizational support with positive organizational behavior. This result aligns with the findings of Rhoades and Eisenberger [32] and Cropanzano and Mitchell [24]. This can be explained by Blau's social exchange theory [23], which suggests that when the supervisor-subordinate relationship is reciprocal and constructive, employees are more likely to engage in positive behaviors that enhance performance. In essence, employees who enjoy strong relationships with their supervisors view this interaction as a form of exchange. According to Randall *et al.* [27], a supportive organization values its employees, offers fair compensation, and attends to their needs. Employees interpret this as a sign of the organization's good intentions. When employees perceive organizational support, they feel loyal and committed to the organization. They are more motivated to contribute to organizational goals and reciprocate the support they receive from the organization.

The direct relationship between perceived organizational support and organizational self-esteem can also be understood in this context. The organization's evaluation of its employees, as conveyed through perceived organizational support, plays a pivotal role in enhancing the employees' self-esteem. When employees feel valued by the organization, they are more likely

to feel good about themselves. High levels of organization-oriented self-esteem fulfill an important social-emotional need for employees, resulting in a stronger attachment to the organization.

Since perceived organizational support reflects how competent and valuable employees are viewed within the organization, it fosters positive self-perceptions, leading to the development of organization-oriented self-esteem. Based on these positive self-assessments, employees are motivated to perform tasks in alignment with the positive image of themselves. The findings of this study revealed a positive correlation between positive organizational behavior and organization-oriented self-esteem, which is consistent with Pan *et al.* [14].

This can be explained by the idea that self-esteem, shaped by how the organization perceives the individual's worth, boosts motivation and positive attitudes towards work, which in turn drives the performance of positive organizational behaviors. Employees with high organization-oriented self-esteem willingly invest their energy, time, and skills into the organization.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to create and evaluate a model addressing the factors that influence positive organizational behavior. The analysis revealed that the model aligns well with the data. The results emphasized the importance of direct influences from leader-member exchange, psychological ownership, and perceived organizational support on positive organizational behavior. Additionally, the study confirmed the indirect effects of organizational self-esteem. In light of these findings, it is recommended that organizations pay close attention to the factors that contribute to positive organizational behavior, as they are essential for improving performance and fostering a supportive work environment.

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