

The Relationship between Positive Organizational Behavior with Job Satisfaction, Organizational Citizenship Behavior, and Employee Engagement

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Abstract

The concept of positive organizational behavior (POB) was introduced several years ago as a way to create competitive advantage. Therefore, organizations pay more attention to Positive Organizational Behavior due to the changing and competitive nature of organizations. And it becomes a major focus area for theory building, research, and application in psychology and now organizational behavior. This paper introduces the emergent concept of POB and its role in organizational work-related performance, and determines its relationship with job satisfaction, OCB, and employee's engagement.

Statistical population of this survey includes the employees of a public organization in Iran, that a sample (N=108) of them were tested of the POB different states of hope, optimism, and resiliency and overall psychological capital. The findings generally support that POB has strong relationship with job satisfaction, OCB, and employee's engagement, and these relationships will be stronger when POB is high. This study adds to our understanding of positive organizational behavior's key-role in organization and work-related performances.

Keywords: POB, job satisfaction, OCB, employee engagement

1. Introduction

The workplace is increasingly becoming a place of success and survival which forces organizations to compete with others in order to gain a competitive advantage. But, how can organizations be survived and succeed? Since competitive condition is under high pressure, it's not easy to answer this.

Current researchers have turned their attention to Positive Psychological Capital (PsyCap) as a source for competitive advantage (Hodges, 2010) and positive organizational behavior becomes important for all organization. The concept of positive organizational behavior (POB) was introduced several years ago (Luthans, 2002a, 2002b; Wright, 2003) as a way to focus on bringing positive psychology (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) to the workplace (Luthans & Avolio, 2009). It can be linked to several workplace outcomes including performance and satisfaction, (Luthans et al., 2007a), job satisfaction, organizational commitment, (Larson & Luthans, 2004), decreases in stress and turnover, (Avey, Luthans, & Jensen, 2009), reduced absenteeism (Avey et al., 2006), performance, and organizational citizenship behaviors (Gooty et al., 2009).

Luthans (2002b) defines POB as "the study and application of positively oriented human resource strengths and psychological capacities that can be today's workplace" (p. 59). Or he state POB is an individual's positive psychological state of development that is characterized by: (1) having confidence (self-efficacy) to take on and put in the necessary effort to succeed at challenging tasks; (2) making a positive reference (optimism) about succeeding now and in the future; (3) persevering toward goals and, when necessary, redirecting paths to goals (hope) in order to succeed; and (4) when beset by problems and adversity, sustaining and bouncing back, and even beyond (resilience) to attain success (Luthans et al., 2007b). The constructs of hope, resilience, optimism, and self-efficacy have been considered components of POB.

Luthans and colleagues brought *hope* research to the work environment (Norman et al., 2010, p. 381). Within

positive psychology, hope is identified as an activating force that enables people, even when faced with the most overwhelming obstacles, to envision a promising future and to set and pursue goals (Helland & Winston, 2005). Hope is comprised of three components; goals, agency thinking (will-power), and pathways (way-power) (Avey, et al., 2006). It also relates to the workplace outcome. For example, it is associated with profitability (Adams et al., 2002), satisfaction and retention (Peterson & Luthans, 2003), job performance (Peterson & Byron, 2007), management (Snyder, 1995) performance, job satisfaction, work happiness, and organizational commitment (Youssef & Luthans, 2007).

Resilience is based on the research initiated by Masten and colleagues and is viewed generally as a positive reaction or adaptation in the face of risk or adversity (Norman et al., 2010, p. 381). Luthans (2002a) defines resilience as “the developable capacity to rebound or bounce back from adversity, conflict, failure or even positive events, progress, and increased responsibility” (p. 702). Workers’ resilience has been positively related to their level of job satisfaction, commitment, and happiness (Norman et al., 2010, p. 381).

Optimism is most closely associated with Seligman (Seligman & Schulman, 1986) who described optimism as an attribution that is measured based on explanatory styles. Several researchers have noted potential benefits of optimism in establishing career plans (Lucas & Wanberg, 1995; Marko & Savickas, 1998; Savickas et al., 1984) and later success in leadership roles (Campbell, 1998). Much of the research on optimism has addressed health-related topics including adjustment to chronic disease (Rasmussen et al., 2006), and heart surgery (Fitzgerald et al., 1993)

Self-efficacy is based in large part on Bandura’s (1997, 1998) research, he have clearly shown through research and subsequent application in the workplace how confidence can be developed. Stajkovic and Luthans (1998, p. 66) define confidence (or self-efficacy) as the “individual’s conviction...about his or her abilities to mobilize the motivation, cognitive resources, and courses of action needed to successfully execute a specific task within a given context”. Self-efficacy has a significant positive relationship with work-specific performance (Norman et al., 2010, p. 381). Several field studies have leveraged the power of self-efficacy and its facilitating cognitive processes to impact work-related performance.

Since POB has become important for organizations and researchers have applied positive psychological behavior in work place, they have become aware of its role. The object of this study is to investigate POB’s role in work-related performance and to determine its relationship with job satisfaction, OCB, and employee’s engagement. In this paper, we begin with an explanation of our variables and developing our hypotheses, followed by hypotheses testing. We conclude the study with implications and directions for future research.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1 POB and Job Satisfaction

Locke (1976) defined Job satisfaction defined as “a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one’s job or job experiences”. According to him that Job satisfaction is an internal state with some degree of favor or disfavor based on assessing the job and job-related experiences and job-related experiences (Mehboob & Bhutto, 2012, p. 553) and JS comprise of task satisfaction, employment satisfaction, and market satisfaction. Increasing the level of JS increases the performance in the job; therefore, JS plays a critical role since it affected the behavior of employees which in turn has an influence on the performance and functioning in the organization (Swaminathan & Jawahar, 2013, pp. 71-72).

A number of factors have been identified as having moderating effect on job satisfaction. According to Armstrong (2003), job satisfaction is influenced by both intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors. These factors are further termed motivational and hygiene factors by Herzberg (Chiboiwa et al., 2011, p. 2912). In addition, job satisfaction is influenced by positively-inclined organization’s behavior. For example, employees with higher level of PsyCap may also be more satisfied with their jobs and their leaders (Luthans et al., 2007a, p. 551).

Psychological capital was significantly better predictor of the workers’ satisfaction and commitment than their measured human and social capital (Larson & Luthans, 2004). According to the research conducted (Youssef & Luthans, 2007). There is a relationship between the Psychological Capital and performance and job satisfaction. On the one hand, the workers’ positive states of hope, optimism, and resiliency, separately and when the three were combined into a core construct of psychological capital, significantly correlated with their performance (Luthans et al., 2005) on the other hand, these four facets are as a composite higher-order factor predicted work performance and satisfaction (Luthans et al., 2007a).

All four component’s POB related to job satisfaction. For example, Luthans (2003) found managers’ level of

hope correlated with financial performance of their unit, employee retention, and job satisfaction and factory workers' resiliency related to their job satisfaction. Moreover, Youssef and Luthans (in press) reported that employees' optimism related to their performance evaluations, their job satisfaction, and work happiness (Avey et al., 2007). Van Dyne and Pierce (2004) also found that psychological ownership for the organization was positively related with employee's levels of organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and organization-based self-esteem, as well as work behavior and performance.

In general, employees who exhibited higher levels of hope were found to be more satisfied perhaps because through their jobs they were enabled to have both the motivation and a plan to make the best of their situation (Youssef & Luthans, in press). Even higher satisfaction may occur when such hope is accompanied by optimism and/or self-efficacy in doing that job and the resilience to respond favorably to any setbacks. Because of the proposed higher-order nature of the four components when taken together, PsyCap should be related to employee performance and satisfaction above and beyond each individual construct's bivariate relationships with performance and satisfaction (Luthans et al., 2007a, p. 551).

Therefore, PsyCap is one more important factor in predicting the organization performance that leads to job satisfaction and organizations with more satisfied employees tended to be more effective than organizations with less satisfied employees. (Whaitman et al., 2010). Thus, our first hypothesis is that:

H₁: There is a relationship between positive organizational behavior and job satisfaction.

2.2 POB and OCB

Organizational Citizenship Behaviors (or 'contextual performance') of workers would serve to improve overall organizational performance (Borman & Motowidlo, 1993). Bateman and Organ (1983) were the first who use the term "Organizational Citizenship Behavior" (OCB) (Ahmed et al., 2012, p. 100). According to Organ's (1988) definition, OCB represents "individual behavior that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and in the aggregate promotes the efficient and effective functioning of the organization" (pp. 4). OCBs were originally categorized as falling into one of two categories: altruistic behaviors or generalized compliance. *Altruistic behaviors* are intended to help another individual. Such behavior would include helping a coworker with an assignment, covering for a coworker while the coworker is away from the office, and similar behaviors aimed at helping a coworker that are not formally a part of the helper's recognized duties. *Generalized compliance behaviors* include those behaviors that comply with or support organizational policies, norms, and procedures. These behaviors may include such things as being on time to work or supporting organizational policies Behaviors (Norman, 2010, p. 382). Its Dimensions include altruism, conscientiousness, civic virtue, sportsmanship, and courtesy (Luthans & Youssef, 2007, p. 338).

The literature on OCB is diverse; however, Organ's (1988) five-dimensional model has the greatest amount of empirical research. Colleagues have provided a reliable and valid measure of Organ's five dimensions (Babcock-Roberson & Strickland, 2010, pp. 317). A special classification was projected by Williams and Anderson (1991) which distinguished behaviors directed towards individuals (OCBI) and behaviors directed towards the organization (OCBO) (Zeinabadi & Salehi, 2011, p. 1473).

OCB is influenced by different variables in organization. For example, using a sample of 296 pairs of hotel staff members, Chiu and Tsai (2006) found that burnout was negatively related to OCB. In addition to the logic related to burnout, OCBs also can be linked to work engagement through organizational commitment (babcock-Roberson & Strickland, 2010, pp. 317-318) or PsyCap is positively related to OCB directed toward the organization and individuals higher in PsyCap would seem to be more likely to engage in OCBs than would those with lower PsyCap (Norman et al., 2010).

Recent empirical studies support the interaction between individual-level positive personality traits and states in predicting both the frequency and consistency of engaging in OCBs (Ilies et al., 2006). According to Norman and others (2010), there is a relationship between positive psychological capital (emerged from the study of POB) and organizational identity on employee deviance and organizational citizenship behaviors that organizational identity mediates the relationship between psychological capital (PsyCap) and both employee deviance and organizational citizenship behaviors. PsyCap is generally oriented toward goal success through one's ability to find various (path) ways (i.e., hope) to success, as well as. Van Dyne and Kostova (1995) have shown that psychological ownership was positively related to extra role/organizational citizenship behaviors. Lee and Allen (2002) also classified, OCBs as being positively oriented toward the organization, it is reasonable to consider positive PsyCap as a precursor to OCBs. Thus, our second hypothesis is that:

H₂: There is a relationship between positive organizational behavior and OCB.

2.3 POB and Employee Engagement

Work engagement can make a true difference for employees and may offer organizations a competitive advantage (Bakker et al., 2008b, p. 188). Kahn (1990) described employee engagement as physical, emotional, and cognitive participation of employee with his work or in other words employee's psychologically presence with high motivation in performing their organizational jobs (Ahmed et al., 2012, p. 101). The dimensions of employee engagement are vigor, dedication, and absorption. Vigor is feeling oneself highly energetic and willing to work even in the face of difficulties. Dedication is feeling a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge and pertains to strong involvement. Absorption is characterized by being fully concentrated and deeply engrossed in one's work. When feeling absorbed one becomes insensible of time and has difficulties with detaching oneself from work (Schaufeli et al., 2002).

Currently, organizations expect their employees to be proactive and show initiative, take responsibility for their own professional development, and to be committed to high quality performance standards. Thus, they need employees who feel energetic and dedicated, and who are absorbed by their work, that is, who are engaged with their work (Bakker et al., 2008a, p. 147). POB can be helpful in increasing employee's engagement level.

There is relationship between POB and work-related performance. Relevant prior research by Staw and colleagues (1994) has found that employees who report more frequent levels of positive emotions tended to be more socially integrated in the organization, thus likely leading to higher engagement and citizenship than those who reported fewer positive emotions (Avey et al., 2008). Avey, Wernsing, and Luthans (2008) also found that employees with higher levels of PsyCap experienced more positive emotions, which were in turn related to their engagement and cynicism during organizational change (Gooty et al., 2009, p. 355) As a result, there is a relationship between positive organizational behavior and employee engagement and showed that an optimistic worker tends to be an engaged worker. (Burns & Gunderman, 2008, p. 566). Engaged employees have high energy and self-efficacy (Bakker, 2008b, p. 210) and self-efficacy can be effective and have a positive impact on intentions to engage in initiatives that foster a positive diversity climate (Combs & Luthans, 2007, p. 112).

It generates a hopeful, trusting, optimistic increases commitment, job satisfaction, engagement, and a sense of meaningfulness resulting in productive job performance through extra effort and the diminished presence of withdrawal behaviors (Helland & Winston, 2005). Thus, our third hypothesis is:

H₃: There is a relationship between positive organizational behavior and employee engagement.

Figure 1 outlines a conceptual framework to aid my discussion of POB, satisfaction, OCB, and engagement. As seen in Figure 1, there is a relationship between the POB, job satisfaction, OCB, and employee engagement.

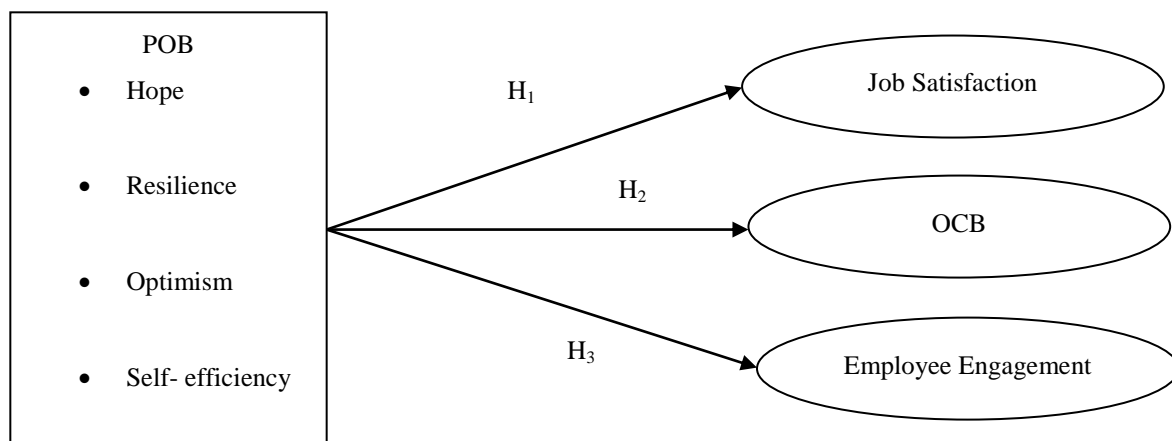


Figure 1. Conceptual model of research

3. Research Method and Data Analysis

3.1 Sample

Data of this study was collected from various departments in public organization. The sample was comprised of 108 employee, senior managers, and supervisor. To enhance external validity of the results, the sample was drawn from multiple departments. It composed of 30% women and 70% men with an average age of 33.5 years.

Participants' tenure with the organizations ranged from 1 year to 20 years, with an average tenure of 8.45 years.

3.2 Measures

POB was measured by the 24-item POB questionnaires (Luthans, Avolio et al., 2007). This instrument includes 6 items for each of the four components of hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale. Sample items are as follows: efficacy—"I feel confident analyzing a long-term problem to find a solution;" hope—"There are lots of ways around any problem;" resilience—"I usually take stressful things at work in stride;" and optimism—"I approach this job as if "every cloud has a silver lining." This eight-item OCBO instrument demonstrated adequate internal reliability ($\alpha = .85$).

OCB were measured by using William and Anderson's (1991) OCB instrument, which uses 13 items for individual and organizational OCB. An example item is "I convey useful information to colleagues". Internal reliability for this instrument was $\alpha = .94$.

Engagement was measured with 12 items ($\alpha = .65$) from Rich (2006). Satisfaction were measured with 5 items ($\alpha = .77$) from Smith and others (1969). Ratings were on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from hardly, if ever to frequently, if not always.

3.3 Analyses and Results

Means, standard deviations, and bivariate correlations can be seen in Table 1. As it shows, efficacy, hope, resilience and optimism were related to job satisfaction (with $r = .19$, $p < .05$, $r = .38$, $p < .01$, $r = .25$, $p < .05$, $r = .45$, $p < .01$), OCB (with $r = .331$, $p < .01$, $r = .415$, $p < .01$, $r = .483$, $p < .01$, $r = .25$, $p < .05$) and Engagement (with $r = .47$, $p < .01$, $r = .63$, $p < .01$, $r = .45$, $p < .01$, $r = .48$, $p < .01$), respectively. These results suggest support for the main effect hypotheses in our study. We also used regression analyses to test effects of POB on job satisfaction, OCB, and engagement.

Table 1. Intercorrelations among study variables

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Efficacy	3.96	.601		.589**	.516**	.330**	.199*	.331**	.478**
2. Hope	3.85	.601			.549**	.440**	.389**	.415**	.633**
3. Resilience	3.75	.487				.451**	.252*	.483**	.459**
4. Optimism	3.41	.512					.451**	.252*	.483**
5. Satisfaction	3.34	.835						.503**	.418**
6. OCB	3.57	.434							.598**
7. Engagement	3.92	.740							

N = 108, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$.

Hypothesis 1 predicted that POB would be positively related to job satisfaction. As it is clear in Table 2, there is a significant and positive relationship between POB and Job Satisfaction ($\beta = 0.397$, $t = 4.30$ and $p = P < .01$). R^2 value is 0.158 which means 15.8% of the variation can significantly be explained by the independent variables. Thereupon, POB is the most important predictor of Job satisfaction can prediction model is represented as follows:

$$\text{Equation 1: } Y = 0.544 + 0.751 X_1$$

Table 2. Regression analysis between POB and job satisfaction

Model	B	Std. Error	β	t	Sig.
Constant	0.544	0.659		0.825	.000.
POB	0.751	0.174	0.397	4.30	.000
R²	0.158				
Adjusted R²	0.149				
F value	18.52				

Dependent Variable: Job satisfaction.

H₂ argues that there's a positive relationship between POB and OCB. Multiple regression is used to analyze the hypothesis. As seen in Table 3, there is a significant and positive relationship between POB and OCB ($\beta = 0.533$, $t = 6.27$ and $P < .01$). R² value is .285 which means 28.5% of the variation can significantly be explained by the independent variables. Thereupon, POB is the most important predictor of OCB can prediction model is represented as follows:

$$\text{Equation 2: } Y = 1.553 + .539 X_1$$

Table 3. Regression analysis between POB and OCB

Model	B	Std. Error	β	t	Sig
Constant	1.53	0.324		4.79	.000
POB	0.539	0.086	0.533	6.27	.000
R²	0.285				
Adjusted R²	0.277				
F value	39.36				

Dependent Variable: OCB.

The hypotheses regard the effects of the positive organizational behavior on job satisfaction and OCB. Hypothesis 3 predicted that POB would be positively related to employee Engagement, Based on the data in Table 4, there is a significant and positive relationship between POB and employee Engagement ($\beta = 0.667$, $t = 8.85$ and $p < .01$). R² value is 0.444 which means 44.4% of the variation can significantly be explained by the independent variables. Thus, the prediction model can be demonstrated as follows:

$$\text{Equation 3: } Y = .299 + 1.130 X_1$$

Table 4. Regression analysis between POB and employee engagement

Model	B	Std. Error	β	t	Sig
Constant	0.299	0.482		0.621	.000
POB	1.13	0.128	0.667	8.85	.000
R²	0.444				
Adjusted R²	0.432				
F value	78.366				

Dependent Variable: employee Engagement.

4. Discussion and Conclusions

The study examined the relationship between positive organizational behavior and job satisfaction, employee, OCB, engagement, and a sample of in public organization workers an test of the POB states of hope, optimism, and resiliency and overall psychological capital.

The supporting evidence that POB is related to satisfaction, employee OCB and engagement and that it may provide unique capabilities for various organizational; for example, POB make job satisfaction and organizational commitment, (Larson & Luthans, 2006), make decreasing in stress and turnover, (Avey, Luthans, & Jensen, 2009), reduced absenteeism (Avey, Patera, & West, 2006), and increased performance and organizational citizenship behaviors (Gooty et al., 2009).

The results of the study indicated that POB has strong relationship with job satisfaction. Result supports the findings of Larson and Luthans (2004) in which they reported psychological capital was a significantly better predictor of the workers' satisfaction and commitment. Luthans and others (2007) also noted there is a

relationship between the Psychological Capital, performance, and job satisfaction. Similarly, Youssef and Luthans (in press) reported that employees' optimism related to their performance evaluations, their job satisfaction, and work happiness. Recent research supports our findings. Because employees who exhibited higher levels of POB were found to be more satisfied, we suggest that POB is a predictor of job satisfaction and it is important for increasing job satisfaction level.

All hypothesized relations were supported by the data. As it was expected, POB was significantly positively related to OCB. This finding was consistent with that of Van Dyne and Kostova (1995) (who found psychological ownership was positively related to extra role/organizational citizenship behaviors) and with that of Norman and others (2010) (who found there is a relationship between positive psychological capital and organizational identity on employee deviance and organizational citizenship behaviors). Therefore, POB increased OCB. Individuals higher in POB would seem to be more likely to engage in OCB than would those with lower POB.

The results also showed there is a relationship between POB and employee's engagement. This result supports the findings of Avey and others (2008) and Burns and Gunderman (2008) who report more frequent levels of positive emotions tended to be more socially integrated in the organization, thus likely leading to higher engagement and citizenship than those who reported fewer positive emotions and an optimistic worker tends to be an engaged worker.

This study adds to the understanding of key-role positive organizational behavior in organization and work-related performance. As a result, POB is a significant predictor of job satisfaction and the relationship would be stronger when POB was high. Similarly, there are the positive relationships between POB, OCB, and employee engagement and those relationships would be stronger when POB was high. Therefore, POB plays an important role in organization and it is a way for making competitive advantage.

5. Limitations and Directions for Future Studies

There are several potential limitations to the present study, which we see as opportunities for future research. First, the sample in the current study was small in size; rather than a more working sample of employees, the reason is that they weren't available (because of the distance) and time is limited to send questionnaire to all of them. Including large sample size could enrich our research. Therefore, future studies should attempt to include a wider range of sample. Second, this study was implemented in public organization. A future study should be implemented in private organization to compare the findings. Time is another limitation from which this study suffers. We couldn't examine relationship between components of POB (hope, optimism, etc.) with job satisfaction, OCB and employee's engagement separately. Future researchers should consider the relationships between components of POB (hope, resilience, optimism, and self-efficacy) and work-related performance.

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