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CONTENTS

Sr. No.	TITLE & NAME OF THE AUTHOR (S)	Page No.
1.	IMPACT OF ADVERTISEMENT ON CONSUMERS' BUYING BEHAVIOR: A STUDY ON FMCG PRODUCTS IN LUCKNOW CITY <i>ANKITA SHRIVASTAVA & DR. VIKRAM BISEN</i>	1
2.	KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT: EMERGING PERSPECTIVES <i>DR. P. SUCHITRA</i>	6
3.	SECTORAL PERFORMANCE AND INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITY IN INDIAN EQUITY MARKET: A CASE ANALYSIS OF SIX MAJOR SECTORS <i>DR. SANJAY RASTOGI & R SRINIVASAN</i>	9
4.	CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT AND CUSTOMER LOYALTY IN SERVICE SECTOR <i>MARAJ REHMAN SOFI & DR. IQBAL AHMAD HAKIM</i>	19
5.	AN ANALYSIS OF KEY INDICATORS OF SMALL INDUSTRIES DEVELOPMENT BANK OF INDIA (SIDBI) <i>DR. P. AMIRTHA GOWRI & T. RENUHA</i>	26
6.	MARKETING OF FOOD INDUSTRIES IN ALGERIA: ANALYTIC STUDY ON A SAMPLE OF COMPANIES <i>DR. SULIEMAN IBRAHEEM SHELASH AL-HAWARY & ABDELHAK BENTAFAT</i>	31
7.	A STUDY ON INFLUENCE OF DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS RELATED TO RISK TOLERANCE OF INVESTORS <i>BHUVAN LAMBA & SALONI RAHEJA</i>	39
8.	WHISTLE BLOWING IN INDIA <i>POONAM & ARUSHI MALHOTRA</i>	42
9.	MANAGEMENT OF FUND SOURCES FOR DEVELOPMENT BANK OF CITIES AND THEIR REFLECTIONS ON THE CREDIT FACILITIES FOR THE LOCAL COMMITTEES (2000-2013) <i>DR. GHAZI ABDUL MAJEED ALRGAIBAT</i>	45
10.	IMPACT OF GLOBAL CRISIS IN INDIAN BUSINESS <i>GIRISHA H.J.</i>	53
11.	EVALUATING THE STOCK SELECTION SKILLS AND MARKET TIMING ABILITIES OF INDIAN MUTUAL FUND MANAGERS <i>DIVYA MEHTA</i>	55
12.	CONSUMERS PERCEPTION & ATTITUDES TOWARDS FOREIGN AUTOMOBILE BRANDS IN INDIA <i>DR. SATYA PRASAD VK</i>	62
13.	AN EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION OF ORGANISATION BASED SELF-ESTEEM AND IN-ROLE PERFORMANCE ACROSS DIVERSE OCCUPATIONS <i>HAZRIL IZWAR IBRAHIM, ABDUL HADI ZULKAFLI & KHAIRUL ANUAR MOHAMMAD SHAH</i>	65
14.	INNOVATIVE HR PRACTICES IN EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT <i>M.THAMIZHSELVI</i>	70
15.	CUSTOMER PREFERENCE AND SATISFACTION TOWARDS RETAIL STORES & SHOPPING MALLS IN CHENNAI CITY <i>L.JENIFER</i>	73
	REQUEST FOR FEEDBACK & DISCLAIMER	77

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AN EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION OF ORGANISATION BASED SELF-ESTEEM AND IN-ROLE PERFORMANCE ACROSS DIVERSE OCCUPATIONS

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the present study was to examine the relationship between organization based self-esteem (OBSE) and in-role performance. Co-worker support is included as a moderator. The independent variable is OBSE and in-role performance is the dependent variable. A survey was conducted on 190 respondents randomly selected from diverse occupational background. The results indicate that there is a significant direct relationship between OBSE and in-role performance. The interaction between OBSE and co-worker support also revealed that it has a significant impact on in-role performance. Thus, the study has proven that OBSE with reinforcement from co-worker support plays an important role in influencing in-role performance.

KEYWORDS

Co-worker support, In-Role Performance, OBSE.

INTRODUCTION

Job performance can be defined in terms of whether employee behaviours contribute to organizational goals. In-role performance is the behaviours necessary for a person to fulfil their formal organizational role, usually as implied in a job description (Daniels & Harris, 2000). Organizations and individuals, as stakeholders, require efficient and high level of individual performance for growth and to remain competitive. Demonstrating high performance when accomplishing tasks results in satisfaction, feelings of self-efficacy and mastery (Bandura, 1997; Kanfer & Ackerman, 2005). Employees, who are reliable in their in-role performance, regularly exceed role requirements, and engage in creative or innovative activities which are necessary for the continued vitality of organizations (Katz, 1964).

Within the motivational domain, one perspective that has been advanced is that self-esteem level, or one's overall positive or negative evaluation of oneself (Brown, 1993), should be related to job performance (Pierce & Gardner, 2004). Typically such opinions evoke the notion that individuals with high self-esteem are motivated to do well on the job to maintain cognitive consistency with their high self-evaluations (Brockner, 1988), which provides a buffer against role stressors that would otherwise impede workplace motivation and performance belief in the positive power of high self-esteem, empirical research on high self-esteem's beneficial effects has been decidedly mixed. For example, a narrative review suggests main and moderating effects of self-esteem level are weak to non-existent (Baumeister, Campbell, Krueger, & Vohs, 2003); a meta-analysis of the main effect of self-esteem level on job performance similarly noted the relation was highly variable (Judge & Bono, 2001). Such findings have led to suggestions self-esteem deserves to be further researched (Baumeister, Smart, & Boden, 1996).

In the fields of human resources and organization development, in-role job performance is one of the most frequently used variables along with satisfaction, performance, change and innovation (Zafar, 2013). Thus, the purpose of this study is to examine the influence of the organization based self-esteem and co-worker support as the moderator, on employee job performance. Employee performance is undoubtedly the most researched criterion variable in OB and HRM literatures (Bommer et al., 1995). Research has also consistently and persistently tried to explain employee performance by establishing a direct or indirect link between various organizational variables and performance (Gooty et al., 2009; Rego et al., 2012; Walumbwa et al., 2011a; Walumbwa et al., 2011b). This forms the basis for the inclusion of co-worker support as the moderator between OBSE and in-role performance.

LITERATURE REVIEW

IN-ROLE PERFORMANCE

In-role performance refers to the "officially required outcomes and behaviours that directly serve the goals of the organization" (Taris, 2006, p. 323), or as defined by Turnley, Bolino, Lester & Bloodgood (2003, p.189) "the formally prescribed job responsibilities". According to Borman and Motowidlo (1997) in-role job performance refers to activities that are related to employees' formal role requirements and these behaviours are also related to the core-task behaviour. The concept of in-role job performance was proposed by Katz and Kahn (1966) as part of the organizational role theory. Katz et al. define the in-role behavior as a kind of behaviour that was described and defined as one part of employees' work and reflected in the official salary system in the organization. According to Williams and Anderson (1991) the in-role behaviours are necessary for the completion of the responsible work. The standards used to evaluate the employee performance of the in-role behaviours are usually divided into four categories, i.e. the rating, the quality evaluation, the quantity standard, and the document data record, such as the record on the work safety, the record of absence, and the record for the delay of work (Zhu, 2013).

Traditionally, many researchers operationalized the term 'performance' by explicitly categorizing how performance is to be measured. The most commonly used categories of performance measures are subjective versus objective measures (Baker, Gibbons, & Murphy, 1994; Bommer et al., 1995; Hoffman, Nathan, & Holden, 1991). While objective performance measures are more straightforward such as "production or quality indices" (Hoffman et al., 1991), the subjective measures are not as forthright, they are rather, as the name suggests, subjectively evaluated during performance appraisals and are behavioural in nature.

Another important and even better utilized categorization of performance is given in terms of in-role versus extra-role behaviours (Katz, 1964, as cited in Williams & Anderson, 1991). While in-role behaviour are the job duties an employee is required to perform, in contrary, extra-role behaviours are more subjective in nature and mostly refer to the extra efforts made by employees that improve the overall work environment. In summary, in-role performance is related to the tasks and duties assigned by the organizations to their employees. It is a formal and structured behaviour required from the employee, which is relevant for the organization to achieve its objectives.

ORGANISATION BASED SELF-ESTEEM (OBSE)

The word 'self' is complex and multidimensional because it reveals diverse attributes and abilities, some of which are manifested in external objects such as the body and others are internal consisting of perception and beliefs. Organization based self-esteem determine the self-perceived value that an employee has for himself as organization member acting within an organizational context (Shahbaz & Shakeel, 2012). According to self-verification theory (e.g. Swann, 1983), self-esteem – and, by extension, OBSE – basically serves a self-regulatory function. This theory states that 'people are motivated to verify, validate and sustain their existing self-concepts' (Leary, 2007: 324). La Pointe, Vanderberghe and Panaccio (2011) citing Stinson et al. (2010) as an example of the operation of self-verification theory, where, Stinson et al. (2010) demonstrated that when the environment's feedback (e.g. feedback concerning one's relational value to others) is consistent with one's self-esteem, people experience feelings of authenticity, control and certainty. In contrast, when the feedback is inconsistent, feelings of discomfort are generated, resulting in efforts to solve the discrepancy between feedback and self-esteem. Over time, these efforts ultimately draw on one's emotional resources. Furthermore, self-verification has been shown to operate the same way with OBSE as with generalized self-esteem (Wiesenfeld et al., 2007). The sociometer theory considers self-esteem to be essentially a psychological meter, or a gauge that monitors the quality of people's relationship with others (Leary, 1999). Researchers regard the maintenance and enhancement of self-esteem as a primary motive of human behaviour (Brown and Dutton, 1995). Building upon the notion that self-esteem is a hierarchical and multifaceted phenomenon, and Coopersmith's (1967) observation that self-esteem indicates the extent to which the individual believes him/herself to be capable, significant, and worthy; Pierce, Gardner, Cummings and Dunham (1989) introduced the concept of organization-based self-esteem. OBSE is defined as the degree to which an individual believes him/herself to be capable, significant, and worthy as an organizational member (Pierce & Gardner, 2004). Dyne et al. (2000) argues that OBSE is the self-perceived value that individuals have of themselves within a specific organizational context. It reveals people's sense of their own value and how they view themselves in the organizational settings and how their level of self-esteem changes while working for the said organization. The employees with high self-esteem think of themselves as 'valuable' for the organization (Alam, 2009).

According to Qureshi et al. (2011) self-esteem is the basic appraisal one makes of oneself, as it concerns the overall value that one places on oneself, as a person. Creed et al. (2001) argues that belief in one's capacity to change one's own situation is a major determining factor in the level of self-esteem. The basic underlying theoretical tenet is that individuals will develop attitudes and behave in ways that will maintain their level of self-esteem. Moreover, self-esteem can also be defined as 'a construct expressing the global relations toward the self' (Classen et al., 2007)

Korman's (1970) view that an individual's self-esteem is shaped by one's experiences, it can be hypothesized that the experiences one has within the organization will consequently have an impact on one's level of OBSE and the attitudes that are developed as a result of how they perceive they are treated by the organization. Studies have indicated that the organizational context as a whole influence OBSE (Pierce et al, 1989, 1993). This conclusion seems to reinforce Korman's view (1970) that the environment in which an individual works in does in fact influence the beliefs that an individual has about his or her value and worth in the organization (Elloy & Patil, 2012).

The construct holds considerable importance in an organizational context. At the individual level, research has shown that persons high in OBSE have greater work motivation and intrinsic motivation (Hui & Lee, 2000), and achieve higher performance ratings (Van Dyne & Pierce, 2004; Pierce et al., 1993; Gardner, Pierce, Van Dyne, & Cummings, 2000; 1992; Marion-Landais, 2000) than do persons low in OBSE. Concerning the organizational level, scholars have also discovered that OBSE correlates negatively with turnover intentions and with turnover (Gardner & Pierce, 2001). Some studies have examined the relationship between OBSE and stress and found a negative relationship (Tang and Ibrahim, 1998). Jex and Elacqua (1999) in their study found that OBSE was negatively related to frustration and depression and physical strain.

According to Kanning and Hill (2012) OBSE is an important psychological construct as shown in various studies. For instance, positive correlations were proven between self-esteem and intrinsic performance motivation, performance at the workplace, general job satisfaction as well as identification with and commitment to one's own organization (Gardner & Pierce, 1998; Kanning & Schnitker, 2004; Tang & Gilbert, 1994). Persons with high organization based self-esteem show a stronger career orientation or are less interested in slowing down on the job than people with low self-esteem (Carson, Carson, Lanford & Roe, 1997).

CO-WORKER SUPPORT

Kwok and Wai (2005) state that the literature on social support that has accumulated over the past two decades suggests that social support can have a direct impact on psychological well-being (e.g. Billings and Moos, 1984; Holahan and Moos, 1981). Beehr and McGrath (1992) define co-worker's social support as co-workers willingness to help one another (e.g., caring, friendly, warm relation, empathy, cooperation, no back biting and gossiping, appreciation, respect and support) in performing daily tasks and handling of upsetting and threatening situations to create healthy environments in the workplace (Frone *et al.*, 1997; Mansor *et al.*, 2003). As Hodson (1997) convincingly argued, the social relations of the workplace may make a key contribution to employees' job satisfaction, productivity and well-being.

The current study emphasis on co-worker support refers to co-workers assisting one another in their tasks when needed by sharing knowledge and expertise as well as providing encouragement and support (Zhou & George, 2001). In an environment where co-worker support is high, employees are able to discuss ideas more openly and honestly and there is a positive relationship to job satisfaction (Bateman, 2009).

However, there are contradictory views regarding to the positive effects of co-worker support on employees, where, co-workers behaviours may be viewed as political or self-enhancing and therefore it may not always be associated with constructive work attitudes. Accepting support from co-workers may also suggest incompetence on behalf of the person accepting the support (Bateman, 2009). According to Ng and Sorenson (2008) the negative views regarding co-worker support stems from the perception that, because peers are usually regarded as equal, support from co-workers may suggest a lack of ability or independence. Despite this, there is overwhelming evidence that co-worker support has many positive effects in the work place (Babins & Boles, 1996).

Social relationships are important in maintaining an individual's self-esteem, as it fosters a sense of social support. According to House, Umberson and Landis (1988) social support is the quality of social relationships as perceived by an individual and it is distinct from concepts such as social integration, social network structure and social regulation. Functional social support refers to behaviours, such as emotional and instrumental support, that are exchanged between individuals. Emotional support conveys such as caring and empathy, while instrumental support is concerned with providing assistance with problem solving or information exchange (Semmer, Elfering, Jaconshagen, Perrot, Beehr & Boos, 2008). Both types of support are equally important, as they form the dimensions in co-worker support.

A study in Malaysia by Teoh and Afiqah (2010) using 200 university students, through a questionnaire survey, examined whether personality traits and social support are associated with self-esteem. Their findings revealed that all the personality and social support factors were associated with the level of self-esteem.

HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Based on the on the above literature review, relationships between innovative behaviour and job satisfaction has been established. Previous studies revealed that organizational culture plays a role in influencing innovative behaviour in the organizations, for e.g. Brown (1993) and Pierce & Gardner (2004). Thus, these hypotheses are proposed:

H1: OBSE is significantly related to in-role performance.

H2: Co-worker support moderates the relationship between OBSE and in-role performance.

METHODOLOGY

This paper outlines research into the experience of OBSE, co-worker support and in-role performance within a diverse set of occupations. OBSE is the independent variable and in-role performance is the dependent variable in this study. The moderation effect of co-worker support is tested by analysing the effect of the interaction between OBSE and co-worker support on in-role performance. Data for the survey was collected from a random sample of 190 individuals. Data was analysed using the hierarchical regression properties of the SPSS version 20. The population of our study consists of 190 employees working in private enterprises and public organisations in Penang, Malaysia. A summary of this information is presented in Table 1. The entire population was used in order for the sample to be representative, random and as large as possible. Respondents were chosen randomly and the survey was conducted to collect primary data using self-administered questionnaire.

QUESTIONNAIRE SCALES

Organization Based Self Esteem: Pierce et al. (1989)'s measurement of organizational-based self-esteem contained ten items and displayed a good reliability ($\alpha = .91$), was used for the purpose of data collection. Respondents were asked to indicate from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) for the items about organizational-based self-esteem. An example item of Pierce et al. (1989)'s ten-item instrument using a seven point Likert scale includes "I count around here".

In-role job performance: The self-rated in-role job performance was measured by the five-item scale developed by Podsakoff and MacKenzie (1989) (e.g. "I fulfill all responsibilities required by my job"). All the five items were rated by the respondents on a seven-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Co-worker support: The Social Support scale designed by O'Driscoll (2000) was used to measure co-worker support. This scale has a reliability of 0.89 (O'Driscoll, Brough & Kalliath, 2004). An example of an item is, "indicate how often your co-workers provide you with clear and helpful feedback". Respondents were asked to indicate from 1 (never) to 5 (always). This scale consists of four items. A higher score indicates higher levels of co-worker support.

RESULTS

TABLE 1: FREQUENCY OF RESPONDENTS

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Bank Officers	16	8.4
Teachers	79	41.6
Engineers (Manufacturing)	75	39.5
Nurses	17	8.9
Supervisors (Manufacturing)	1	0.5
Technician	1	0.5
Sales Executive	1	0.5
Total	190	100

Table 1 shows that 41.6% of the respondents are teachers, 39.5% respondents are engineers in the manufacturing sector, 8.9% respondents are nurses, 8.4% respondents are bank officers, 0.5% respondents are supervisors, 0.5% respondents are technicians and 0.5% of the respondents are sales executives.

TABLE 2: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS ACCORDING TO OCCUPATIONS

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
In-Role Performance	2.29	5.00	3.9421	0.4609
OBSE	2.30	5.00	3.728	0.4419
Co-worker Support	1.50	5.00	4.0289	0.6422

Table 2 indicates that the minimum value for in-role performance is 2.29 and the maximum is 5.00, with mean of 3.9421 with a standard deviation of 0.4609. The minimum value for OBSE is 2.30 and the maximum is 5.00, with mean for OBSE are 3.728 with a standard deviation of 0.4419. The minimum value for co-worker support is 1.50 and the maximum is 5.00 and the mean for co-worker support is 4.0289 with a standard deviation of 0.6422. By comparing the mean value this signifies that the value for Co-worker support is the highest among the three variables.

TABLE 3: RESULTS OF REGRESSION

Variables	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	ANOVA Sig.
OBSE	.443	.069	.425	6.437	.000*
OBSE* Co-worker Support	.017	.013	.121	1.286	.000*

Dependent variable: In-Role Performance, $R^2: .181$; $R^2\Delta: .179$

Table 3 presents the result of the direct relationship and the moderated relationship between the variables. The result of the regression between OBSE and in-role performance shows that the R^2 for the above regression is .181; meaning OBSE explained 18.1% of the variance in in-role performance. The ANOVA column indicated statistical significance (p value: .000, $p < 0.05$). This is further supported by Beta = .425, t value = 6.437. The result indicates that OBSE is significantly related to in-role performance. Thus, Hypothesis 1 is accepted.

As seen from table 3, the result of the hierarchical regressions between OBSE and in-role performance with co-worker support included as the moderator shows that the R^2 change is .179 meaning the interaction has added an additional 17.9% of the variance in in-role performance. The ANOVA column indicated statistical significance (p value: .000, $p < 0.05$). This is further supported by Beta = .121, t value = 1.286. The result indicated that the interaction between OBSE and co-worker support has significantly impacted in-role performance. Thus, Hypothesis 2 is accepted.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The result clearly indicates that OBSE has a positive and significant impact on in-role performance. Therefore, it can be stipulated from the results of the study that individuals who experience higher levels of self-esteem; who perceived themselves to be a valued member of the organization will be much more positive and more willing to carry out the roles and responsibilities assigned to them by their respective organizations. When OBSE is combined with co-worker support, it also brings in elements such as caring, empathy and instrumental support such as, assistance in problem solving or information exchange. Thus, this consequently leads to employees having higher level of positivity and self-esteem and these impacts positively on their job performance. The result is a clear indication of the importance of OBSE in influencing job performance of employees.

This study provides evidence that variables such as OBSE, co-worker support and in-role performance are a global phenomenon. It also highlights that employees whether in Malaysia or in the Western hemisphere share similarities. This study indicates that Malaysian employees have similar understanding and perception of OBSE, co-worker support and in-role performance as in the West. This could be an indication the co-worker support enhances the effect of OBSE on the employees' performance. Clearly, this study has provided evidence that where co-worker support creates an environment where one's self-esteem is favourably impacted; hence, the employees will develop positive attitudes and engage in behaviours which are favourable to the organizations.

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