



Empowering Employees For Thriving: The Interplay Between Perceived Organizational Support, Leader-Member-Exchange, Job Autonomy And Agentic Behaviour

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ARTICLE INFO ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to investigate the impact of perceived organizational support on employee thriving at work as well as the role of leader member exchange and job autonomy on thriving. Social exchange theory builds a strong foundation for this study. Literature review indicates that perceived organizational support, along with job autonomy and cordial relationships with leaders makes an employee to focus their behaviour to achieve their given responsibilities and reaching out for the new ways of working and contributing more to the organization success. Also making them to thrive at workplace. An appropriate hypothesis was formulated. To investigate the formulated model, the study conducted a survey from employee in IT sector. Convenience sampling technique was used. Validated questionnaire was used for a survey. Structural equation modelling with partial least squares was used to test the hypothesis. Results indicates that perceived organization support influence job autonomy. This leads to employee being more flexible to make choices about how to approach their work, to schedule their work which in turn feel the employee more confident taking initiatives at work. The findings evidently shows that perceived organizational support has a significant indirect effect on thriving through Job autonomy, agentic work behaviour and leader member exchange.

Keywords: Agentic behaviour, job autonomy, leader-member-exchange, perceived organizational support, social exchange theory, thriving.

INTRODUCTION

In modern civilization, globally companies are focusing on developing their companies with heavy competition over barriers in information technology sectors. India is one of the most fast-growing countries in IT sector. The employee those who work in IT sectors may feel stressed out, problem in work relationship and work pressure in every stage of their work life, eventually it will negatively impact their personal life. Mental health and environment at workplace are an essential one for both employees and organization. To foster positive atmosphere and energy at work place, thriving plays a significant role. Thriving defines as a positive psychological state of mind and it creates experience of vitality and learning at their job (Spreitzer et al;2005). Vitality means employee feel energetic and active at their work while learning states that employee acquire to learn more and use his/her own skills to perform their work. Based on survey report, most of the Indian employees are stressed at their work therefore they are not thriving at work. 40% of the employees admitted that they are not thriving at their workplace are plan to switch their job. Globally, only 25% of workers are thriving at the workplace. Based on generations, in India, 20% of Gen Z thrive at work compared to 24% of millennials and 27% of Gen-X. Another report found that “only 24 per cent of employees in Indian organisations experience high levels of wellbeing at their workplaces and the majority of three-quarters of all workforces reported a low level of thriving, very few employees are thriving at work in India”. This shall may due to poor leadership issues. To address this gap, this study made an effort to learn more insights on perceived organizational support, job autonomy, agentic behaviour and leader member exchange which may or may not influence thriving at work place. The structure of the paper as follows, theoretical background and hypothesis development followed by methodology, data analysis and techniques, finally results and discussions, managerial implications, limitations and future scope.

Theoretical background and Hypothesis development

Social exchange theory (SET) describes in terms of exchanging relationship and its outcome [3]. "An individual who supplies rewarding services to another obligates him, to discharge this obligation; the second must furnish benefits to the first in turn" [3]. The primary theme behind social theory exchange is the concept of "reciprocity". "Reciprocity" mean interchange of an idea or things at consensus. In simple words, if an individual gain benefit from other party it should continue to reciprocate it with something valuable, [3]. Social exchange theory fosters the relationship between the employee and the employer. Social exchange theory strongly laid the foundation to build the study. This theory builds the relationship between the perceived organizational support, job autonomy and leader-member exchange which fosters thriving through individual agentic behaviour. Employee would thrive more when employee feel that they have good social exchange of relationship with their organization. Employee with high POS, would definitely experience social exchange with their organization, in turn it fosters increase productivity, good relationship between leader and team, employer and employee lead to attain organizational goal which enhance employee to thrive at their work [1].

Association between Perceived Organizational support, job autonomy, agentic behaviour and thriving

Perceived organizational support is refers to the extent that employee believe that organization supports them, value the employee, recognize their work in terms of giving rewards and appreciation, care about their personal needs and providing constant support whenever they are in need. Author defined as "the degree to which workers perceived the organization values their input and cares about their well-being" [4]. Based on theoretical framework, social exchange theory posits that in workplace if employee felt receiving high perceived organizational support, under obligation he/she reciprocates to be more commitment to their work, performing high to achieve organizational goals, in return organization may grant employees to make their own choices to plan their task, giving freedom to take initiatives to carry out their task which results in high job autonomy. Job autonomy is defined as the extent to which employee has the authority and freedom to choose the way they perform their task. Job autonomy give an opportunity for people at workplace to be in control and make decisions about how to perform their work [16]. Earlier review has proven the relationship between perceived organizational support and job autonomy [17]. Keeping above as a reference, the study developed the hypothesis,

H1: Perceived organizational support has positive significant on Job Autonomy.

Employee who has high level of job autonomy would have more control over to make decisions on how to plan their task, have freedom to perform the way they do their job, making an own decision related to their job. When people at work place are energetic, they are said to act as agent behaviour [18]. In the context of social exchange theory, the reciprocation plays a major role between employer and employees. When employee feel autonomous, employee seek new challenges, learnings, opportunities, helping to their co-workers when they are in tough situation and also concentrates more on their work which lead to increase the organization effectiveness, ultimately both organization and employee get benefit on each other. Thus, the study formulated the hypothesis,

H3: Job autonomy positively influence Agentic behaviour.

In this study, individual agentic work acts as an engine to thriving. The three agentic behaviours that contribute towards thriving are task focus, exploration and heedful relating. When workers feel autonomous and have the abilities to become skilled at their work, they act energetic and constantly in thinking and concentrate on their work [20], which results the employee to be more creative and are likely to find new opportunities, information, resources and looking for new or alternate way to perform their job [1]and risk taking in their job which is said to be exploration [1]. Heedful relating takes place when individuals are aware of people who are around them and coordinating with others [21]. When employee feel they are heedful, they actively help their co-workers and provide support to them [22]. It fosters sense of learning. Earlier review stated that a significant interaction with co-workers will lead to experience vitality [23]. With the above review, the study proposed a hypothesis,

H5: Agentic behaviour positively influences thriving

Mediating effects: Job autonomy mediates the relationship between perceived organizational support and agentic behaviour

When employee get to know that organization value their work, caring their welfare supporting them at workplace, in turn, employee will work more to gain competitive advantage to their organization, job satisfaction would be high, commitment towards their job, willing to perform their duties, to reciprocate, organization may grant employee with high autonomy at their workplace like taking their own initiative to perform their duties, allowing to plan their work as they want, choosing the methods to complete their job which encourage employee to seek new opportunities, helping their colleagues and spending more time on completing their job, which is said to be agentic behaviour. Thus, the study framed the hypothesis,

H7: Job autonomy mediates the relationship between perceived organizational support and agentic behaviour.

Mediating effects: Agentic behaviour indirectly effects on Job autonomy and Thriving

When employee feel freedom at their workplace, to make their own decisions to plan or schedule their work, taking judgement in carry out their job, to make their own choice on how to perform their task which enhance the individual to act actively at their workplace, having good inter-relations with their co-workers, focusing more on to their duty, completing the job on-time, which helps employee to learn more and be energetic at workplace, which results thriving at workplace. The study formulates the hypothesis:

H8: Agentic behaviour indirectly effects on Job autonomy and thriving.

H11: Perceived organizational support affecting indirectly job autonomy and agentic behaviour which positively influence thriving, individual employee perceive organizational support will exhibit thriving.

Association between Perceived Organizational support, Leader-member-exchange, agentic behaviour and thriving

Eisenberger [6] and team proposed perceived organizational support to explain the employee commitment towards the organization. They defined as “employees develop global beliefs concerning the extent to which the organization values their contributions and care about their well-being” here they mentioned global beliefs as perceived organizational support. High level of perceived organizational support creates feelings of obligation, employee not only feel committed towards their employers, in return the employee commit to work to achieve their organizational goals [24]. Perceived organizational support focused on exchange between employer and the employee. Leader-member-exchange is defined as the leaders and subordinates develop relationship based on their social exchanges within an organization which influence employee performance [25]. LMX states that effective leaders form two-way relationship with their team members which benefits the overall all performance [26]. LMX focuses on exchange between manager and the employee. LMX related to norms of reciprocity. Past reviews found that employee was treated positively by others, he/she feels sense of commitment to response positively [27]. Perceived organizational support theory and LMX theory suggest that fair treatment and rewards might influence these exchanges [25]. Henceforth, perceived organizational support and leader-member-exchange are conceptually different but they are reciprocally related. Past review, empirically supported the reciprocity relationship between perceived organizational support and leader-member-exchange [24].

H2: Perceived organizational support positively influences Leader-member-exchange.

High level of LMX providing autonomy, support, opportunities to learn and grow to their team members which make employee to work more, increase job satisfaction and committed to the organizational goal. Employee those who engage in such relationship with leaders, they feel motivated and pay lot of attention on their duties, actively engage in helping their team members those who are overloaded with their work, seeking challenges in their current situation. Thus, LMX relationship fosters employee to engage actively in agentic behaviour.

H4: LMX significantly influence on agentic behaviour.

H6: Leader-member-exchange indirectly influence perceived organizational support and agentic behaviour.

When employee positively experience the leader member exchange relationship which encourage employee to take initiative to spend more time to complete their job as well as they actively seek for new challenges. When an employee is relating heedful, he/she provides support to others [28] at their workplace. Heedful relating always promote employee to learn and positive interaction with their team members make employee energetic or vitality [23] which make employee thrive at their workplace.

H9: Agentic behaviour mediates the relationship between LMX and thriving.

H10: Perceived organizational support affecting indirectly Leader member exchange and agentic behaviour which positively influence thriving.

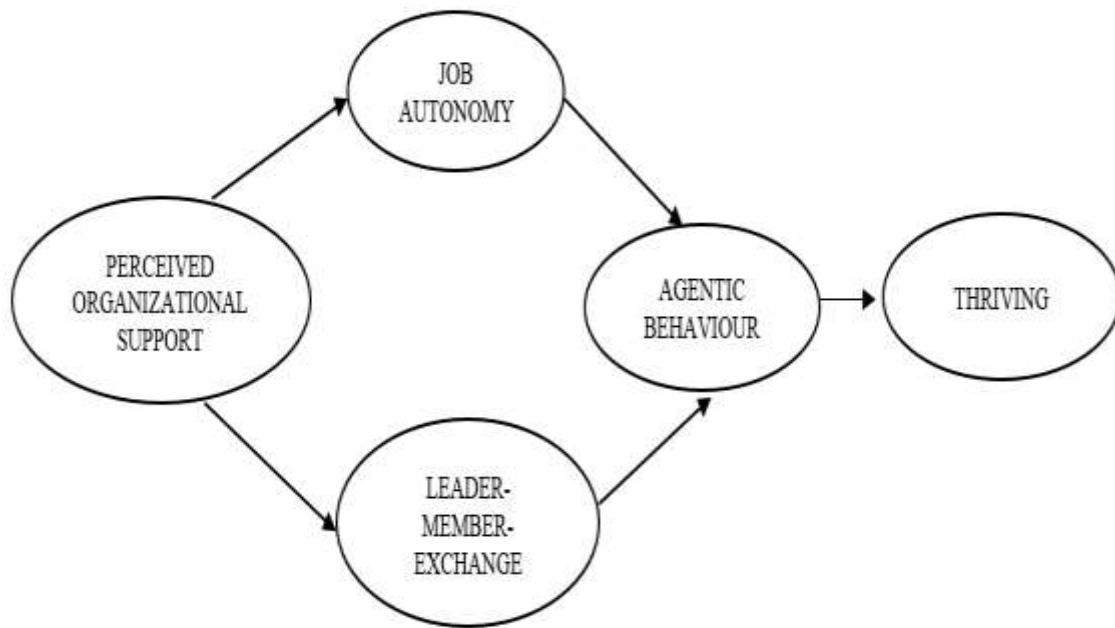


Figure 1: Research Framework

METHODS AND MATERIAL

Sample and data collection

The target population for this research is employee working from Information Technology sector with irrespective of any department. The study employed convenience sampling technique to reach the sample. Sample size for this research were 200 employees. The sample includes from all level of employee. Based on study, questionnaire was formulated. Data collection was done in the combination of google form and survey method, it took minimum six- eleven minute for them to complete the survey. Survey was measured on five-point Likert scaling, range from 5 to 1, strongly agree to strongly disagree.

Measures

The questionnaire has six sections and an instrument was adopted from various authors, which consists of questions. The demographic variable is a first section of an instrument. Perceived organizational support scale was adopted from [5], say for example (“My organization strongly considers my goals and values”). The validity for this construct was 0.936. To measure thriving at work scale, the study used 10-item scale which was developed by [2]. The sample of the instrument (“I feel very energetic”; “I continue to learn more and more as time goes by”). Cronbach’s range is 0.953. To assess Leader-member-exchange scale from [26] with 11-item. For instance, “My supervisor would defend me to others in the organization if I make an honest mistake”. The coefficient alpha value is 0.955. To examine job autonomy, the research utilised 9-item scale which was proposed by [7]. The indicators used in this study like (“The job allows me to decide on the order in which things are done on the job”; “the job gives me a chance to use my personal initiative or judgment in carrying out the work”). The reliability value is 0.953. To assess individual agentic behaviour, the study asses task focus, study adopted [9] scale, consists of 4-item scale with sample item “I spend lot of time thinking about my work”. To measure heedful relating, study used [10] with 3-item scale, for instance, “I help others when they are overloaded with their work” and to evaluate exploration from [8] with 3-item scale, for an example, “Everywhere I go, I am out looking for new things or experiences”. The internal consistency value is 0.942.

Data analysis and techniques

To investigate and to predict the complex relationship between variables, study used structural equational modelling- partial least square, version 4.0. It evaluates the measurement and structural model of the study. The measure model is used to assess the convergent validity and discriminant validity. The Structural model used to assess the relationship between the variables in the given model. It is a variance based sem model, it will extract the maximum variance from the independent variable which can able to show the effect on

dependent variable. The hypothesised model of this study is a reflective model, all the indicators used for this model are affected by the latent variables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Measurement model/ Outer model

The outer model is help to assess the following areas: (a) to measure the consistencies of all the variables which in other words to evaluate the reliability of the constructs. (b) to find the outer loading of all given constructs. (c) To assess the convergent validity. (d) To analyse the discriminant validity, following this, the results of the measurement model are given in a table which are discussed below.

Table 1 showcase the internal consistencies of the variables for the given model. Since the type of research is quantitative, it is important to analyse the consistencies of all the variables for the study. "Cronbach's α is not a statistical test but coefficient of an item's reliability and consistency" [12]. The reliability value shall be higher than the Cronbach alpha value. Author [11], suggested CR value is > 0.70 , mean it has a strong convergent validity [15]. Table 1, evidently shows that Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability for all the construct is ranging from 0.93 to 0.953. It clearly proven that all variables are met the threshold value of .70 which signifies all variables has a strong reliability.

Table 1: Convergent Validity

Variable	Cronbach alpha	Composite reliability
AB	0.942	0.945
JA	0.953	0.954
LMX	0.955	0.957
POS	0.936	0.938
Thriving	0.953	0.955

Note: AB – Agentic behaviour; JA – Job Autonomy; LMX-Leader-member-exchange; POS–Perceived organizational support

Table 2, display the outer loading of all the variables in the study. Since, the hypothesis model is a reflective model, the outer loading determines the correlation between constructs and the indicators. It assesses whether all indicators are contributed to its assigned construct. The threshold value for outer loading >0.70 . Average variance extract helps to assess the convergent validity. Based on average variance (AVE) the study can conclude that whether the constructs are converged or not. The threshold value for AVE is >0.50 . Table 2, showcased, AVE value of all variables is $>.50$ which decides that all the constructs are converged in the given model. The outer loading of all the constructs and indicators for the given model are $>.70$, which infer that all indicators are contributed to its assigned construct.

Table 2: Outer loading of all constructs with Cronbachs value and Average variance extract

Variable	Indicators	Outer loadings	CR Value	AVE
Agentic behaviour	AGBEX1	0.841	0.942	0.659
	AGBEX2	0.800		
	AGBEX3	0.840		
	AGBHR1	0.811		
	AGBHR2	0.846		
	AGBHR3	0.844		
	ABGTA1	0.863		
	ABGTA2	0.790		
	ABGTA3	0.786		
	ABGTA4	0.804		
Job Autonomy	JAD1	0.801	0.953	0.726
	JAD2	0.884		
	JAD3	0.840		
	JAS1	0.829		
	JAS2	0.859		
	JAS3	0.856		
	JAW1	0.865		
	JAW2	0.857		
	JAW3	0.874		
	LMX1	0.930	0.955	0.690
Leader-Member-exchange	LMX2	0.832		
	LMX3	0.853		
	LMX4	0.764		
	LMX5	0.857		
	LMX6	0.808		

	LMX7	0.741		
	LMX8	0.800		
	LMX9	0.892		
	LMX10	0.876		
	LMX11	0.873		
Perceived Organizational Support	POS1	0.829	0.936	0.758
	POS2	0.885		
	POS3	0.844		
	POS4	0.905		
	POS5	0.863		
	POS6	0.894		
Thriving	T1	0.744	0.953	0.703
	T2	0.856		
	T3	0.771		
	T4	0.810		
	T5	0.848		
	T6	0.850		
	T7	0.895		
	T8	0.872		
	T9	0.858		
	T10	0.870		

Discriminant Validity - Fornell-Larcker Criterion

It is used to assess the discriminant validity of an outer model. The square root of the average variance extracted by the variable shall be higher than the correlation with the other constructs. The square root value of AVE of constructs are at diagonals. The square root of AVE should be higher than the correlation in the below row variables. Table 3, shows that AVE values are higher than all the constructs below the variables, it infers that all the constructs has achieved the discriminant validity.

Table 3: Discriminant validity – Fornell-Larcker criterion

Variable	Agentic behavior	Job autonomy	Leader-member-exchange	Perceived organizational support	Thriving
Agentic behavior	0.812				
Job autonomy	0.685	0.852			
Leader-member-exchange	0.610	0.709	0.831		
Perceived organizational support	0.570	0.746	0.656	0.870	
Thriving	0.723	0.666	0.539	0.642	0.838

Structural Model

The structural model is used to assess the association between the latent variables of a given model. Figure 2 showcase the outcome of the inner model of the study, which aim to examine the hypothesis and impacts among the constructs. Author [13] states that the path and the R² coefficient of the endogenous variable shall be greater than 1. R² value does not exists for exogenous variable. Evidently, it shows in Figure2, R² value for dependent variable are higher than 1. Since, perceived organizational support is exogenous variable which doesn't have R² value.

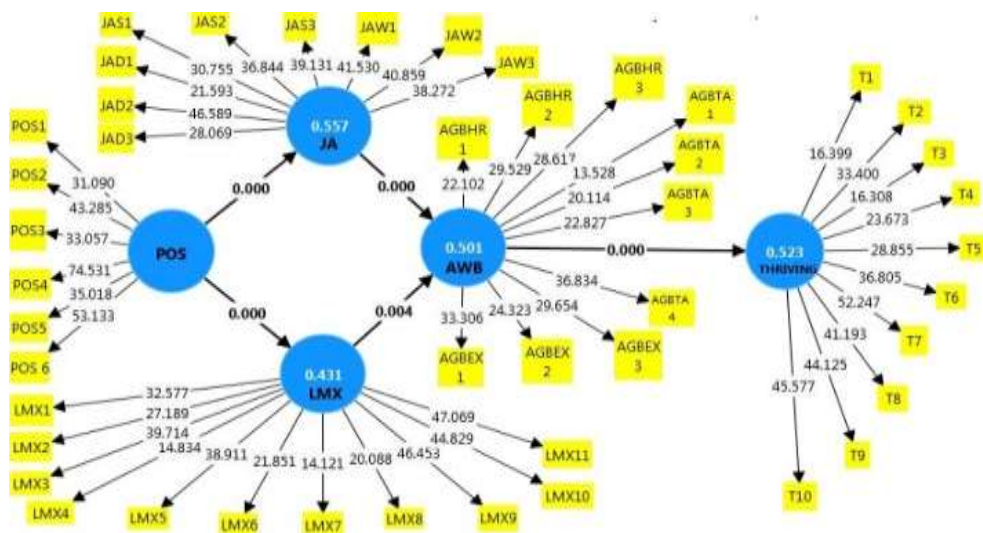


Figure 2- Structural Model of the study

Note: POS-Perceived Organizational Support; JA-Job Autonomy; LMX-Leader-member-exchange; AWB- Agentic work behavior

Table 4: summary of hypothesized verification

Hypothesis	Variable	t-value	P-Value	Outcome
H1	Perceived Organizational Support -> Job Autonomy	23.45	0.000	Accepted
H2	Perceived Organizational Support -> Leader-member-exchange	11.92	0.000	Accepted
H3	Job Autonomy -> Agentic Behaviour	6.07	0.000	Accepted
H4	Leader-member-exchange -> Agentic Behaviour	2.90	0.004	Accepted
H5	Agentic Behaviour ->Thriving	15.37	0.000	Accepted

The study also analysed the indirect effects of perceived organizational support, leader-member exchange and job autonomy on thriving through agentic work behaviour. Table-5, evidently shows that agentic work behaviour performed as a mediator between the leader-member exchange, perceived organizational support, thriving, job autonomy.

Table 5: Indirect effects of structural model

Hypothesis	Path	t-value	P-Value	Outcome
H6	Perceived Organizational Support ->Leader-Member-Exchange ->Agentic Behavior	2.703	0.007	Accepted
H7	Perceived Organizational Support -> Job Autonomy -> Agentic Behavior	5.729	0.000	Accepted
H8	Job Autonomy -> Agentic Behavior -> Thriving	5.353	0.000	Accepted
H9	Leader Member Exchange -> Agentic Behavior -> Thriving	2.860	0.004	Accepted
H10	Perceived Organizational Support -> Leader Member Exchange ->Agentic Behavior -> Thriving	2.657	0.008	Accepted
H11	Perceived Organizational Support->Job Autonomy->Agentic Behavior-> Thriving	4.997	0.000	Accepted

Discussion

The study investigated the employee empower thriving the way in which one or more variables like perceived organizational support, job autonomy, leader-member-exchange and agentic behaviour have an effect on each other. To execute the hypothesized model, the study adopted social exchange theory which helps to build the hypothesised model. social exchange theory is the norms of reciprocation, when employee feels that their company is providing constant support, taking care of their well-being, value them, appreciate and recognize their work, giving rewards to employee, in return employee get committed to the employer, working more actively to achieve organizational goal, then employer reciprocate by providing autonomous work environment, where employee can work with freedom of choosing their own way or method to carry out their work. This encourages individual employee to take initiatives in performing their job, reach out new ways of working, meaningful interactions would lead to a sense of learning and vitality. Past studies suggests that task focus increase the vitality of an employee at workplace [14]. When employee thrive at work, they would be proactive in their work and looking for an opportunity to learn thing at workplace [1]. Leader- member-exchange is a distinct concept from perceived organization support, if company provides rewards to employee, in turn, employee create trust and mutual respect between leader and employee. Again here, social exchange theory supports leader-member-exchange.

I. Managerial Implications

The managerial implication in this study, if organization dint provide support to employees or care about their well-being, the employees do not thrive at the workplace which increase turn over, low organization effectiveness. Employee can't learn or feel energetic to perform their job at their workplace. Employee thriving is an essential aspect for organizational effectiveness and to gain competitive advantage.

II. Limitations and future scope

The present study has some limitations that should be avoided further, a high sample size would do better understanding of the model. The scope of the research can further extend to find the relationship with job crafting, job performance. It may give different perspective of the research. Job crafting and job performance are highly recommended variables to examine further. This study uses convenience sampling technique, further different probability sampling methods can be used. The study suggests to explore demographic variables which make a study in a different dimension. For example, to investigate either female or male employee fosters thriving at workplace.

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