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The relationship between perceived organizational support and workplace motivation

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Abstract. Human capital is a very valuable resource within any organization. Employee behavior is influenced by several factors. Two of these are motivation at work and perceived organizational support.

This research aims to study the relationship between perceived organizational support and motivation, by verifying the validity of six hypotheses. In five of these, a positive correlation is assumed between perceived organizational support and identification-regulated motivation, material extrinsic motivation, social extrinsic motivation, introjection-regulated motivation, and intrinsic motivation. A hypothesis was also verified in which the existence of a negative correlation between perceived organizational support and amotivation is assumed. In order to obtain the data necessary for the research, we applied to a sample of 51 subjects, the Scale of perceived organizational support and the Multidimensional Scale of motivation at work. The interpretation of the results was done with the help of the SPSS program. I believe that such research is useful both at the organizational level and at the macro level, as an x-ray of the relationship between employees and employers, in a field of activity or in the economy of a state. By identifying the existing situation, social and economic policies can be formulated and applied to regulate the relationship between the two parties, so that it is mutually beneficial.

Keywords. Organizational support, intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, motivation, regulated motivation through introjection, regulated motivation or identification



1. Theoretical foundation

Due to the importance it presents for the evolution of society, the organizational environment and the relationships within it are studied from several perspectives. Among these, the most well-known are the economic, legal, social, political and, last but not least, the psychological. Motivation at work and perceived organizational support are two of the factors that psychologically influence people involved in work relationships. Also, the correlation between these two factors is an important topic of study. A first step in starting the research is the explanation of the two concepts that are the object of the study.

The foundations of the concept of organizational support were laid by Robert Eisenberger, a professor at the University of Houston, United States of America, within the psychology and management department of the Faculty of Business (<http://eisenberger.socialpsychology.org/>). Perceived organizational support refers to the degree to which workers perceive the workplace environment as a setting they can trust, an institution that cares about its members. The existence of perceived organizational support brings advantages to both employees and employers. Salary, additional financial rewards, for harder or more work, support from a supervisor in work problems, working conditions, receiving positive feedback regarding the importance and usefulness of the work performed, are aspects in which organizational support is realized perceived (<https://popeyeandcloudy.com/ro/ce-este-suportul-organizational-perceput>). An explanatory framework for the relationships between different forms of organizational support, job satisfaction and affective commitment to the organization is the social exchange theory (Kapela, D. T., Pohl, S., 2017). According to social exchange theory, workers in a social exchange relationship anticipate the rewards or benefits they will receive in return for their investment in the relationship. Rewards can be intrinsic, such as recognition, or extrinsic, in the form of salary increases. Employees who perceive an imbalance between what they give their employer and what they get in return are professionally dissatisfied. The consequences of such a fact are the decrease in the productivity and creativity of the worker, in the professional activity, and the decrease in the loyalty of the employees, manifested by staff fluctuations. Through reciprocity, employees who perceive that their employer honors their obligations are more likely to do their duty to the organization. They will be more likely to be emotionally attached to the organization and develop an affective commitment to it (Kapela, D. T., Pohl, S., 2017). Affective commitment focuses on members' positive feelings about their involvement in the organization, their expressed sense of loyalty, and their desire to help the organization perform well. A worker who is emotionally engaged in his relationship with his organization strongly identifies with its goals. The research carried out in this regard, showed that perceived organizational support positively influences the employee's work ethic, his loyalty to the company, and reduces absenteeism. It has also been found that organizations with happy workers are more successful in their work (<https://ro.smallbusinessavenues.com/faq/what-is-perceived-organizational-support-how-does-it-affect-the-organization>).

Regarding work motivation, it represents the summation of factors of an economic, social, personal and environmental nature that determine the employees of an organization to fully dedicate themselves, in all aspects, to the professional objectives to the fulfillment of which they must contribute. The individual's motivation can be intrinsic, when it is closely related to the employee's values, independent of material advantages, or extrinsic, when it is given by the possibility of obtaining some rewards (good salary package, promotion). There are often situations in which, in the same employee, the two types of motivation coexist. A notion



that follows from that of motivation is commitment. It implies loyalty to the organization, high degree of involvement in its activities, attachment. There is no commitment in the absence of motivation. The motivation and commitment of the employed staff are directly proportional to the evolution of the employing company. A company will achieve greater benefits when workers are motivated. Demotivation of workers has negative effects in terms of the company's activity. At the same skill level, a motivated worker will be more productive than a demotivated one.

A study conducted at the public university of Warwick, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, showed that motivated workers are 10% more productive than unmotivated workers, have much lower absenteeism and higher loyalty (time spent, in years, as employees of the same company). A plus for the employing company is the decrease in the expenses that they would have incurred with the recruitment of staff and with the training of the newly hired staff. Two of the motivating factors in the workplace are gratitude and autonomy. The first refers to the appreciation of the work by the manager, but also by colleagues. This can be verbal (praise, encouragement), material (salaries, bonuses, better working conditions) or both. In terms of autonomy, an employer that will encourage decision-making and assumption will have workers with a high level of intrinsic motivation who will identify their own goals with those of the company. „Personal autonomy is a personality trait that consists, on the one hand, in the individual's capacity for self-determination, in his ability to make decisions about his own life and in his ability to carry out these decisions, by initiating, organizing, supervising and reviewing one's own actions without being controlled by external forces or constraints, evaluating the existing options and taking into account one's own interests, needs and values, and on the other hand, in the feeling that the person has that he has both the ability to make choices regarding the direction of his actions, as well as the freedom to carry out these choices. Or, in short: personal autonomy consists in the ability to control one's own life together with the feeling that there is the possibility to exercise this control. (Albu, M., 2006)”. A study conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, at the Chinese Wuhan Jinyintan Hospital, on a sample of 242 nurses, showed that there is a link between autonomy, optimism, work commitment and civic behavior. The independence and freedom to make decisions at work causes nurses to work in a positive affective-motivational state that facilitates the achievement of objectives. Autonomy as a job resource gives nurses the authority to choose the distribution of workloads and collaborators. Such an environment has the effect of activating optimism and achieving excellent performance (Zhang, H., et al. 2020).

A third motivational factor is given by interest, on the one hand, and a sense of mission, on the other. In other words, the more the employer is interested in the employee's values, needs and aspirations, the better he will match the work tasks, so that his skills are valued and develop his intrinsic motivation, dedication to work on which also does it for the organization (<https://www.coachhub.com/fr/blog/7-facteurs-de-motivation-au-travail/>). The material conditions offered to the employee and the atmosphere at the workplace influence his motivation. Also, an important role, in this sense, is played by the quality of management.

A demotivating factor is boredom at work. This negatively influences yield. A person will be bored at work when the opportunity for career development is limited, their skills are not valued and their aspirations are not taken into account.

As a conclusion of the theoretical explanations, I will briefly centralize the meaning of the six types of motivation as they appear in the Multidimensional Scale of Motivation at Work and in the hypotheses. Thus, it is identification-regulated motivation when there is congruence



between personal values and those of the organization. The concept of amotivation can be explained by the lack of motivation. As for intrinsic motivation, it is related to the pleasure of doing an activity, while extrinsic motivation is related, rather, to the feedback received or expected. Intrinsic motivation is particularly helpful in achieving performance and developing creativity. It is related to the „optimal experience”, as defined by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi: „the state in which people are so deeply involved in an activity that nothing else seems to matter; the experience itself is so pleasant that people would repeat it at any cost, just for the pleasure of doing it” (Csikszentmihalyi, M., trans. Lungu, M., 2015, p. 13). Intrinsic motivation is also the foundation of meaning in life, as defined by the Japanese concept ikiga: „that thing that makes you wake up happy every day” (Garcia, H. et. al, 2019) or „that thing for which it's worth living” (Garcia, H. et. al, 2019). Extrinsic motivation helps social integration, being related to obtaining social or material benefits or avoiding sanctions.

2. The research objective and hypotheses

This study aims to identify a correlation between perceived organizational support and employee motivation at work.

The objective pursued is the following:

Establishing the state of affairs regarding the existence of a correlation between the perceived organizational support and the motivation of employees at work, among the people in the surveyed sample.

In order to operationalize the objective, we have formulated, in order to verify them, the following hypotheses:

1. It is assumed that there is a positive correlation between perceived organizational support and identification-regulated motivation;
2. It is assumed that there is a negative correlation between perceived organizational support and amotivation;
3. It is assumed that there is a positive correlation between perceived organizational support and material extrinsic motivation;
4. It is assumed that there is a positive correlation between perceived organizational support and extrinsic social motivation;
5. It is assumed that there is a positive correlation between perceived organizational support and introjection-regulated motivation;
6. It is assumed that there is positive correlation between perceived organizational support and intrinsic motivation.

3. Presentation of the sample and the assumptions used

3.1. Sample description

The sample consists of 51 subjects, employed in the private system. Of these, 29 (56.86%) are male and 22 (43.13%) are female. All subjects have higher education. In order to ensure the ethical aspects of the research, the subjects expressed their agreement to participate in this study, by answering „yes” to the first question in the applied questionnaire. The research was conducted both physically and online. The personal data of the participants were secured by coding their identity (last two digits of the year of birth, day of birth, initials of first names).



3.2. Description of the tools used

Two questionnaires were used in this research. One of these is the Perceived Organizational Support Scale. The tool contains 17 items aimed at evaluating the subject's perception of how he feels appreciated by the employer, how much trust and security the organization offers him, how much importance is given to his needs, goals and values. The answers are evaluated on the Likert scale, from 1 to 7, where 1 means „strong disagreement” and 7 means „strong agreement”, in the case of direct scoring, the meaning being the opposite, in the case of reverse scoring.

The second test applied is the Multidimensional Scale of Motivation at Work. It contains 19 items, with the help of which motivation, social extrinsic motivation, material extrinsic motivation, motivation regulated by introjection, motivation regulated by identification and intrinsic motivation are evaluated. For scoring, the Likert scale is used, from 1 to 7, where 1 means „not at all” and 7 „totally”.

4. Interpretation of the results

The verification of the research hypotheses was done by correlating the data in the SPSS program. The objective being the establishment of the factual situation regarding the existence of a correlation between perceived organizational support and employees' motivation at work, we successively verified the existence of a correlation between the scores obtained for perceived organizational support and the scores obtained for each dimension that makes up motivation (extrinsic motivation material, extrinsic social motivation, motivation, introjection-regulated motivation, identification-regulated motivation, intrinsic motivation).

A first step in the interpretation of the results was to check the normality of the distributions. Following the application of the Kolmogorov - Smirnov normality test, we obtained sig values. greater than 0.05, corresponding to normal distributions, for the perceived organizational support (sig. 0.095) and material extrinsic motivation (sig. 0.200) dimensions.

For the other dimensions, the distributions are not normal, the sig value. being less than 0.05, as follows: amotivation sig. < 0.001; extrinsic social motivation sig. < 0.001; introjection-regulated motivation sig. < 0.001; motivation regulated by identifying sig. = 0.004; intrinsic motivation sig. = 0.40.

Table 1 - Calculation of the normality of the score distribution

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Perceived organizational support	.114	51	.095	.970	51	.220
Motivation	.263	51	<.001	.803	51	<.001
Extrinsic social motivation	.174	51	<.001	.948	51	.027
Extrinsic material motivation	.088	51	.200*	.966	51	.148
motivation regulated by introjection	.192	51	<.001	.938	51	.010
Motivation regulated by identification	.153	51	.004	.908	51	<.001
intrinsic motivation	.127	51	.040	.940	51	.013

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction



Hypothesis number 1: It is hypothesized that there is a positive correlation between perceived organizational support and identification-regulated motivation.

Table 2 - Correlation between perceived organizational support and identification-regulated motivation

			Perceived organizational support	Motivation regulated by identification
Spearmanes	Perceived	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	,356*
	organizational	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.010
	support	N	51	51
	Motivation	Correlation Coefficient	,356*	1.000
	Regulated by	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.
	Identification	N	51	51

*Correlation is significant at the 0,05 level (2-tailed)

In order to examine the link between employees' perception of the support offered by the organization and their level of authenticated motivation, it was decided to calculate the Spearman coefficient, chosen for its non-parametric nature, appropriate in the context of the uneven distribution of authenticated motivation.

The result of this coefficient is 0.356, suggesting a modest association between the two variables, as shown by the placement of the coefficient in the 0.2 - 0.4 range, specific for correlations of low intensity. This finding suggests that although there is a link between perceived organizational support and identification-regulated motivation, it is not predominant or very strong.

Hypothesis number 2: It is assumed that there is negative correlation between perceived organizational support and amotivation.

Table 3 - Correlation between perceived organizational support and amotivation

			Perceived organizational support	Amotivation
Spearmanes	Perceived	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-,772**
	organizational	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.001
	support	N	51	51
	Amotivation	Correlation Coefficient	-,772**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.
		N	51	51

**Correlation is significant at the 0,01 level (2-tailed)



In order to analyze the relationship between the perception of the support offered by the organization and the level of amotivation, the calculation of the Spearman correlation coefficient was performed, its choice being motivated by the irregular distribution of the data related to amotivation. The result obtained, a coefficient of -0.772, indicates a strong but negative correlation between the two variables. This coefficient, located in the range 0.6 - 0.8, shows that as perceived organizational support increases, the level of amotivation tends to decrease significantly. This finding underscores the importance of organizational support in reducing feelings of demotivation among employees.

Hypothesis number 3: It is assumed that there is a positive correlation between perceived organizational support and material extrinsic motivation. In the surveyed sample, there is no correlation between perceived organizational support and material extrinsic motivation, as the Pearson correlation coefficient has a value of -0.165.

Table 4 - Correlation between perceived organizational support and material extrinsic motivation

			Perceived organizational support	Extrinsic material motivation
Spearmanes	Perceived organizational support	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-,165
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.248
		N	51	51
	Extrinsic material motivation	Correlation Coefficient	-,165	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.248	.
		N	51	51

Within the studied group, it is found that there is no significant relationship between the level of organizational support perceived by employees and their extrinsic motivation oriented towards material rewards. This observation is supported by the Pearson correlation coefficient value, which is -0.165. This value indicates a very weak, tendentially negative correlation between the two variables. In other words, employees' perception of how much the organization supports and values them does not seem to directly influence their desire to obtain material benefits such as bonuses or other financial rewards. This suggests that the factors that motivate employees to aspire to material rewards may be independent of their sense of support and value within the organization.

Hypothesis number 4: It is assumed that there is a positive correlation between perceived organizational support and extrinsic social motivation. The Pearson correlation coefficient (the two distributions are normal) has a value of 0.024, which indicates a very weak, almost non-existent, correlation.



Table 5. Correlation between perceived organizational support and extrinsic social motivation

			Perceived organizational support	Extrinsic social motivation
Spearmanes	Perceived	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	,024
	organizational	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.868
	support	N	51	51
	Extrinsic	Correlation Coefficient	-,024	1.000
	social	Sig. (2-tailed)	.868	.
	motivation	N	51	51

The value of the Pearson correlation coefficient, recorded at 0.024 in the context of two normal distributions, reflects an extremely low, practically negligible association between the examined variables. This value close to zero suggests that, within the studied sample, there is no clear connection or significant mutual influence between the two analyzed variables. Basically, the presence or variation of one variable does not seem to determine or reflect consistent changes in the other variable, thus indicating a notable independence between the two in the given context. This observation suggests that, for these variables, other factors may be responsible for any changes or trends observed in the data.

Hypothesis number 5: It is assumed that there is a positive correlation between perceived organizational support and introjection-regulated motivation.

Table 6 - Correlation between perceived organizational support and introjection-regulated motivation

			Perceived organizational support	Motivation regulated by introjection
Spearmanes	Perceived	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	,302*
	organizational	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.031
	support	N	51	51
	Motivation	Correlation Coefficient	,302	1.000
	Regulated by	Sig. (2-tailed)	.031	.
	introjection	N	51	51

*Correlation is significant at the 0,05 level (2-tailed)

It is hypothesized that there is a positive, albeit not very strong, relationship between the perception of organizational support and introjection-regulated motivation. This hypothesis is supported by the Pearson correlation coefficient value, which is 0.302. This indicates a low but still positive correlation between the two variables, as reflected in the placement of this value in the 0.2 - 0.4 range. Although there is an association between perceived organizational support and employees' intrinsic motivation, it is not strong enough to suggest a major or decisive influence. In other words, although better organizational support appears to be



associated with an increase in introjection-regulated motivation, this relationship is not strong enough to be considered a dominant factor.

Hypothesis number 6: It is assumed that there is a positive correlation between perceived organizational support and intrinsic motivation.

Table 7 - Correlation between perceived organizational support and intrinsic motivation

		Perceived organizational support	Intrinsic motivation
Spearmanes	Perceived	1.000	,535**
	organizational	.	<.001
	support	51	51
	Intrinsic	,535**	1.000
	motivation	<.001	.
	N	51	51

*Correlation is significant at the 0,01 level (2-tailed)

It is considered that between the level of organizational support perceived by employees and their degree of intrinsic motivation there is a positive relationship, of medium intensity. This assumption is reinforced by the Pearson correlation coefficient value, which is 0.535. This value is in the range of 0.4 - 0.6, thus indicating a moderate correlation between the perception of support within the organization and the level of intrinsic motivation of employees. Although not extremely strong, this correlation suggests that there is a significant link between how employees perceive organizational support and their own motivation to perform tasks out of an internal desire for self-improvement and job satisfaction, without the need for external incentives. This finding highlights the importance of a supportive organizational environment in cultivating employees' intrinsic motivation.

Conclusions

Data analysis and Pearson correlation coefficients revealed various nuances of the relationships between perceived organizational support and different forms of workplace motivation. Overall, the results highlight the complexity of the dynamics between employees' perceptions of their organizational environment and how these perceptions influence different types of motivation.

First, it was observed that there is no significant correlation between perceived organizational support and material extrinsic motivation. The Pearson correlation coefficient value was -0.165, indicating a very weak, trending negative relationship. This suggests that employees' perception of organizational support is not a major determinant of their motivation to obtain material rewards. This result may reflect that material extrinsic motivation is influenced more by direct reward policies and less by subtle factors such as general perception of organizational support.

On the other hand, a positive correlation was found between perceived organizational support and introjection-regulated motivation, although this was categorized as weak, with a coefficient of 0.302. This indicates that although there is a link between perceived support and



introjected motivation, it is not strong enough to be considered predominant. This type of motivation, which involves the internalization of organizational values and goals, appears to be influenced to some extent by organizational support, but also by other individual or contextual factors.

The analysis also revealed a moderate correlation between perceived organizational support and intrinsic motivation with a correlation coefficient of 0.535. This indicates a significant, but not extremely strong, relationship between how employees perceive organizational support and their intrinsic motivation. This finding suggests that a perceived supportive work environment can help stimulate employees' intrinsic motivation, motivating them to perform their tasks out of an internal desire for self-improvement and job satisfaction.

In conclusion, these findings emphasize that the relationship between perceived organizational support and different types of motivation is nuanced and complex. Although there are positive correlations between organizational support and certain forms of motivation, the intensity of these correlations varies. This suggests that while creating a supportive work environment is important, other factors that may influence employee motivation must also be considered. Furthermore, the results indicate that different types of motivation may have various sources of influence, and organizational strategies should be tailored to address these differences.

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