

The role of job support, creativity, and Accountability in predicting job performance of education department estaff

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the present study was to determine the role of job support, creativity, and Accountability in predicting job performance of education department staff. The statistical population of this study was all employees of the Education Department of Zahedan District 1, numbering 85 people, and since the size of the population was limited, this number was considered as a sample. This study was conducted in 2022. To collect data, Spooner's Job Support Questionnaire (2004), Patterson's Job Performance (1992), Gilbert's Accountability (2010), and Job Creativity by Pezhe et al. (2003) were used. Simultaneous regression test was used in SPSS-21 software to analyze the data. The results of the study showed that creativity, Accountability, and job support directly and significantly affect employee job performance and can predict job performance, with creativity having the greatest prediction of job performance.

Introduction

One of the most crucial elements for achieving progress and development lies in the effectiveness of organizations that can fulfill their responsibilities with both efficiency and productivity. The development of any organization largely depends on the optimal utilization of its human resources. Therefore, a key focus in human resource management is the motivation and support of personnel to enhance work quality. Each individual's job should fulfill a part of their material, psychological, and social needs (Ahmadi, 2020).

Organizations require continuous performance improvement to sustain and thrive, with human resources serving as fundamental assets and the source of innovation. Within this framework, the educational systems of most countries hold the largest share of human resources and job positions among public organizations. Job performance, as a significant construct, has held a central position in organizational behavior studies. Job performance refers to the efficiency and effectiveness in performing assigned tasks, as well as other personal factors such as accident-proneness, adaptability, and work pace (Nazir & Zamir, 2015).



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One of the most impactful factors on organizational performance is job support. The term job support was first introduced into organizational literature by Eisenberger et al. (1986). These researchers define job support as the employees' perception of the extent to which the organization values their participation, well-being, and welfare (Guan et al., 2014). Job support reflects individuals' general sense that the organization values its members' cooperation, offers assistance, and cares about their well-being and future. As a construct rooted in social exchange theory, job support suggests that employees develop overall beliefs about the degree to which the organization supports their needs and values, which is shaped through interactions with organizational representatives (Stinglhamber & Ohana, 2016). Higher levels of perceived job support positively impact employee performance, increasing efficiency and enhancing job retention. Job support also reduces work-related stress and turnover intentions (Chen et al., 2022; Ahmadi 2020; Ramazani et al., 2018; Soltaninezhad et al., 2017; Sadegh Kheiji (2018) and Hamidian & Mahbubi, 2014).

Job support theory asserts that for an effective organizational environment, three encouraged behaviors must exist, namely fairness, supervisory support, and organizational rewards. To positively influence employees, the organization must prioritize these factors. Accountability is another critical factor that significantly impacts organizational performance. Accountability is essential for any organization, as it influences its sustainability or decline. Cultivating responsible and committed individuals is one of the most fundamental goals of any educational system. Training responsible individuals who internalize values and act conscientiously is a key element of a country's growth and advancement. Stable character development that resists the influence of external situations and adheres to personal values and standards is a priority for educational systems (Ahmadi, 2020). Accountability is an important concept in organizational life which drives individuals to be responsible for their choices and actions. Employees with high accountability tend to perform in ways preferred by companies. The importance of employee accountability is even more critical in an era of rapid global change, where uncertainty is high. In that situation, members of organizations need to be able to rely on each others' performance, suggesting the critical role of employee accountability. Employee accountability is defined as "perceived expectation that one's decisions or actions will be evaluated by a salient audience and that rewards or sanctions are believed to be contingent on this expected evaluation" (Natria et al., 2023). Sitter (2013) believes that organizations need individuals who possess a high degree of accountability and the ability to make choices. Such individuals are capable of planning based on their needs rather than conforming to externally imposed plans. Since accountability is linked to job performance, the more accountable employees are, the more their job performance improves, thereby increasing their productivity and enhancing their retention (Gao et al., 2021; Najafzadeh et al., 2021; Ghaznachai et al., 2019; Nasiri, 2014).

Today's individuals need to assume greater responsibility for their lives and futures, harnessing accountability to drive creativity. Numerous successful organizations worldwide are directing their goals and orientations toward creativity. Such organizations prioritize environments that foster creativity and innovation, encouraging individuals' talents. Educational institutions are no exception, as employee creativity has emerged as a key focus within organizational sciences. Creativity involves transcending standard frameworks while building on previous models and developing new ones (Akgunduz & Alkan, 2018). As competition intensifies, many organizations seek employees who can work creatively, improving the quality of services provided. Workplace creativity contributes to organizational effectiveness and long-term sustainability, as a creative workforce drives employee performance and enhances service quality and customer satisfaction. Job-related creativity involves proposing novel ideas to improve and increase the quantity or quality of organizational activities (Timothy, 2015).

In a competitive market, creativity and innovation stand as primary avenues for achieving superior performance compared to rival organizations, improving service quality, enhancing customer satisfaction, and increasing customer loyalty. For these reasons, organizations often strive to create conditions that encourage employees to foster creativity and innovation in their work. Research shows that individuals tend to avoid environmental uncertainty, risk-taking, and the potential for failure that might arise from efforts to innovate in their work. Consequently, they resist change, preferring to follow established

procedures and reduce exposure to creative challenges. Studies by researchers highlight the positive role of creativity on job performance (Gok et al., 2017; TabatabaeiFar, 2021; Bameri Niyafar & Farokhinezhad, 2018).

A country's development is fundamentally tied to its educational system. Employees in a successful educational system play a vital role. The education sector, due to social changes, advancements in science, technology, and industrial progress, has evolved into one of the most complex and expansive social institutions. It is deeply intertwined with social, cultural, and economic growth, transforming from a simple system to a complex organization. Today, education has become a global priority, with its scope and responsibilities being a key measure of societal growth. The effectiveness of this system lies in developing individuals who are capable, healthy, balanced, and mature, while simultaneously meeting the human resource needs of various sectors, including cultural, social, and economic fields (Zare et al., 2017).

Employees play an important and vital role in the education department, and in a sense, the performance of the organization is affected by the performance of its employees. One of the main problems of the Zahedan Education Department is the poor performance of the existing human resources in the organizations. Poor performance leaves significant negative effects on leadership, employees, teachers, and even students, which is unpleasant for employees and students. Unfortunately, the current knowledge about how managers deal with poor employee performance is very small. It is obvious that poor employee performance should be corrected if observed, and measures should be taken to increase their efficiency and the effectiveness of the organization. Lack of attention to human resources causes the organization to face many challenges. Since employees of the Education Department have a direct relationship with teachers as personnel of this department, they directly affect the way teachers work, and this effect, whether positive or negative, is transferred to students. Therefore, the purpose of the present study was to determine the role of job support, creativity, and responsibility in predicting the performance of Zahedan education staff.

Method

Sample and Sampling

The statistical population of this study was all employees of the Education Department of Zahedan District 1, numbering 85 people, and since the size of the population was limited, this number was considered as a sample. This study was conducted in 2022.

Tools Used

Job Performance Questionnaire

Developed by Patterson in 1922, this questionnaire contains 15 questions rated on a 4-point Likert scale: "Rarely" (0 points), "Sometimes" (1 point), "Often" (2 points), and "Always" (3 points). Scores range from 0 to 45, where a score between 0 and 15 indicates poor job performance, 15 to 22 reflects moderate job performance, and scores above 22 signify strong job performance. The questionnaire's reliability was reported as 0.86 using Cronbach's alpha in the study by Aslanpour Jokandan et al (2011). (Reza poor Mirsaleh, 2018)

Job Support Questionnaire

Created by Spooner in 2004, this questionnaire includes 12 items covering two areas: coworker support and supervisor support. It is rated on a 5-point Likert scale: "Always" (5 points), "Sometimes Agree" (4 points), "Neither Agree nor Disagree" (3 points), "Sometimes Disagree" (2 points), and "Never" (1 point). Final scores are categorized as follows: 12-21 (No support), 22-31 (Low support), 32-40 (Moderate support), 41-50 (High support), and 51-60 (Very high support). The reliability was recorded as 0.92 by Shahnazdouost et al. (2011) using Cronbach's alpha.

Accountability Questionnaire

Designed by Gilbreth in 2010, this 28-item questionnaire uses a 5-point Likert scale ranging from “Very Low” (1) to “Very High” (5). A score of 28 represents the lowest level of accountability, while a score of 140 represents the highest. The questionnaire assesses four dimensions: economic responsibility, legal responsibility, ethical responsibility, and precautionary responsibility. Gilbreth (2010) reported a Cronbach’s alpha reliability of 0.82, indicating an acceptable level of reliability.

Job Creativity Questionnaire

Developed by Jozi et al. in 2003 in Iran, this questionnaire consists of 37 items scored on a 3-point Likert scale: “Disagree” (1), “Uncertain” (2), and “Agree” (3). This questionnaire lacks subscales and measures only the single factor of job creativity, with a score of 37 indicating low creativity and 111 indicating high creativity. Jozi et al. reported the reliability of this questionnaire as 0.85 using Cronbach’s alpha.

Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to achieve the research objectives. Mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the data, and Pearson correlation coefficient and simultaneous regression were used to test the hypotheses. All statistical calculations were performed using SPSS version 21 software.

Results

Descriptive Findings of the Study Variables

The descriptive analysis of the variables was conducted using the mean and standard deviation, as detailed below:

Tables

Table 1-Description of research variables.

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Job Support	45.81	9.72
Job Performance	55.05	7.65
Accountability	105.63	17.64
Job Creativity	88.4	11.10

Table 2- Examination of the Normality of Research Variables.

Variable	Z	Sig
Job Support	0.724	0.671
Job Performance	0.967	0.307
Accountability	1.185	0.120
Job Creativity	1.153	0.140

The results in Table 2 show that the Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z statistic for the variables Job Support (0.724), Job Performance (0.967), Accountability (1.185), and Job Creativity (1.153) indicate that the

significance level for each Z statistic is greater than 0.05. When the significance level for the Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z statistic is above 0.05, the assumption of data normality is confirmed. Given that the significance levels obtained for all variables exceed 0.05, it can be concluded that the normality assumption for these variables is met. based on the data in the tables below, we will examine the relationship of each variable with job performance.

Table 3- Correlation matrix of variables.

Variable	1	2	3	4
Job Support	1			
Job Performance	0.322**	1		
Accountability	0.295**	0.371**	1	
Job Creativity	0.219**	0.367**	0.386**	1

Table4- Summary of Regression Analysis for the Direct Effect of Job Support on Job Performance.

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	F	β	T	Sig
Job Performance	Job Support	0.322	0.104	0.093	9.633	0.322	3.104	0.003

According to Table 3, the correlation coefficient between job support and job performance is 0.104 ($F = 9.633$, $p < 0.003$), indicating a statistically significant relationship between these two variables at the research significance level of 0.05

Table 5-Summary of Regression Analysis for the Direct Effect of Creativity on Job Performance.

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	F	β	T	Sig
Job Performance	Creativity	0.386	0.149	0.139	14.386	0.386	3.793	0.000

According to Table 4, the correlation coefficient between creativity and job performance is 0.149 ($F = 14.386$, $p < 0.000$), showing a statistically significant relationship between these variables at the research significance level of 0.05.

Table 6- Summary of Regression Analysis for the Direct Effect of Accountability on Job Performance.

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	F	β	T	Sig
Job Performance	Accountability	0.371	0.138	0.128	13.283	0.371	3.645	0.000

In Table 5, the correlation coefficient between Accountability and job performance is 0.138 ($F = 13.283$, $p < 0.000$), which is also statistically significant at the 0.05 level, indicating a meaningful relationship between responsibility and job performance.

Discussion

The findings from this study indicate that job support has a direct impact on job performance among employees in District 1 of Zahedan's Department of Education. These results align with Ahmadi's (2020)

findings, which showed a significant relationship between organizational support and employees' job performance, as well as with Soltaninezhad et al. (2018), who demonstrated that organizational support significantly affects organizational citizenship behavior (as a mediating variable) and job performance. Furthermore, Sadegh Kheiji (2018) found a meaningful relationship between various aspects of organizational support—such as managerial support, employee training, rewards, employee empowerment, and service-related technology—and job performance. This evidence underscores the crucial role of organizational support in shaping employees' work behaviors. When employees perceive that the organization supports them, they feel reassured that they will not be left without assistance during challenges. Based on social exchange theory, employees tend to reciprocate this organizational support by improving both the quantity and quality of their work. Additionally, managers can foster this exchange by providing feedback on employees' abilities and competencies. Similarly, Accountability has a direct effect on job performance among employees in District 1 of Zahedan's Department of Education. These findings align with those of Hosseini et al. (2021), who reported a significant positive correlation between job performance and responsibility in sports federations, as well as Najafzadeh et al. (2021), who observed a meaningful relationship between job performance and the social responsibility of academic faculty members. Responsible employees often demonstrate ethical integrity and self-motivation, exerting all efforts to use their full potential to fulfill assigned tasks and responsibilities. An employee with a strong sense of responsibility tends to achieve increasing levels of success and rewards associated with it. Such individuals avoid confusion in their work, effectively solve problems, strive for advancement, and deliver enhanced organizational performance.

Lastly, job creativity also has a direct impact on job performance among employees in District 1 of Zahedan's Department of Education. This finding is consistent with Tabatabaei Far's (2021) study, which demonstrated that organizational creativity positively and significantly impacts job performance among employees of the Export Development Bank of Iran, as well as Bameri Niyafar and Farokhi Nezhad (2018) study, which showed that creative employees positively influence company performance. Creativity among employees leads to the efficient utilization of resources, maximizing overall company performance and market share. Elements associated with job creativity, such as innovation, analytical skills, abstract thinking, visionary capabilities, and the introduction of novel ideas, not only enhance job responsibilities and competencies but also improve organizational activities and operations. Original ideas act as a driving force, preventing stagnation and decline. Creativity thus serves as a significant factor in boosting productivity and effectiveness, leading to organizational growth, improved service quality, and heightened employee motivation.

The results of the study showed that creativity, Accountability, and job support directly and significantly affect employee job performance and can predict job performance, with creativity having the greatest prediction of job performance.

The present study has all the limitations of this method due to the use of a questionnaire. Also, this study was conducted on employees of the Zahedan Education Department, so caution should be observed in generalizing it. Considering the results, it is recommended that educational managers and officials take steps to improve employees' job performance by increasing the level of organizational support and paying attention to the needs of employees to improve creativity and Accountability.

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