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SATISFACTION OF LEARNING, PERFORMANCE
AND RELATEDNESS NEEDS AT WORK
AND EMPLOYEES' ORGANIZATIONAL
IDENTIFICATION

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Satisfaction of Learning, Performance, and Relatedness Needs at Work and Employees' Organizational Identification

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ABSTRACT

In today's scenario where loyalty can no longer be demanded from employees, the extent of organizational identification of employees predicts outcomes of organizational interest. It is therefore essential for organizations to foster the sense of oneness in employees. Since, need satisfaction lies at the core of human motivation, our purpose is to test if satisfaction of learning, performance, and relatedness needs at workplace could influence employees' identification with the organization. For this purpose, we collected data from 365 professionals representing diverse work backgrounds and analysed it using structural equation modelling approach. Results suggest that organizational identification is positively influenced by satisfaction of these three needs and about 45% of its variance is explained by these needs. Implications of these results and limitations are discussed in the paper.

INTRODUCTION

Organizational identification (OID) concerns the perception of psychological oneness with an organization, of which the person is a member (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). It is believed that identification is a process in which an employee comprehends the signals sent by the organization and establishes a link with the organization after becoming aware of various similarities between self and the organization (e.g., O'Reilly and Chatman, 1986; Cheney and Tompkins, 1987). In opinion of Ashforth, Harrison, and Corley (2008), identification with the organization reflects a fundamental connection that other attachment constructs lack.

In past research, important implications of OID for organizations have been highlighted (Pratt, 1998; Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004). It has been found that OID is positively associated with retention, job performance, job satisfaction, organizational citizenship behaviour, and cooperative behaviour (e.g., Bhattacharya, Rao, and Glynn, 1995; Mael and Ashforth, 1995; van Knippenberg, 2000; Ashforth, 2001; Kreiner and Ashforth, 2004; van Dick et al., 2006; Ashforth et al., 2008; Bartels et al., 2010; Kumar and Singh, 2012; Shen et al., 2014). Due to its valuable outcomes, OID has become an important research topic. Scholars and practitioners are increasingly interested in understanding the ways of fostering OID.

Ashforth et al. (2008) advocate the role of needs in fostering OID. In agreement with Pratt (1998), they state that many of the motivations cited by researchers as reasons for individuals to identify actually touch on fairly basic human needs for safety, affiliation, and uncertainty reduction. However, only a handful of empirical investigations on the role of needs in fostering OID have been done (e.g., Glynn, 1998; Kreiner and Ashforth, 2004; Mayhew, 2007; Wiesenfeld et al., 2001). Our purpose is to contribute in development of a wider understanding of how satisfaction of various needs can influence OID of employees.

Given that researchers have identified many types of needs and addressing them all in one study is not possible, our selection of relevant needs was guided by the ERG theory

(Alderfer, 1972). We believe that various needs can be classified in three broad categories: existence, relatedness, and growth needs (Alderfer, 1972). Needs such as physiological needs (Maslow, 1943), safety needs (Maslow, 1943), predictability and order needs (Hogan and Warremfeltz, 2003), and need for control (Williams, 1997) can be broadly considered as existence needs. Needs such as belongingness needs (Maslow, 1943; Williams, 1997; Vignoles et al., 2006), need for affiliation (McClelland et al., 1953; Atkinson and Raynor, 1974), and need for acceptance and approval (Hogan and Warremfeltz, 2003) can be broadly considered as relatedness needs. Similarly, esteem needs (Maslow, 1943; Williams, 1997; Vignoles et al., 2006), need for achievement (McClelland et al., 1953; Atkinson and Raynor, 1974), efficacy needs (Vignoles et al., 2006), and distinctiveness needs (Vignoles et al., 2006) can be broadly considered as growth needs.

Among these three need categories, most salient needs from the perspective of employees' organizational membership are relatedness and growth needs. Only in specific environmental conditions that bring uncertainty to the organizational membership of an employee (e.g., downsizing during recession or due to poor organizational performance, or during mergers and acquisition, etc.) or individual situations such as poor performance or health, existence needs may become salient. However, growth and relatedness needs are likely to be manifested in general situations. We believe that satisfaction of these needs at work will develop a sense of oneness with the organization in employees. For this study, among various types of growth needs, we considered satisfaction of learning needs and satisfaction of performance needs as representatives of satisfaction of growth needs.

In subsequent sections, we discuss the rationale behind hypothesizing the relationships of satisfaction of learning, performance, and relatedness needs with OID and test our hypotheses.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Satisfaction of Learning and Performance Need and OID

Learning need satisfaction (LNS) is defined as perceived presence and consideration of opportunities in the organization to develop one's abilities (based on VandeWaale, 1997). Performance need satisfaction (PNS) is defined as perceived presence and consideration of opportunities in the organization to demonstrate one's abilities (based on VandeWaale, 1997). Research on learning and performance orientations has derived from Atkinson's (1964) theory of achievement motivation (Payne et al., 2007).

When management or supervisor provides an opportunity to work on tasks that one is competent at, need for performance will get satisfied. Similarly, when management or supervisor makes special provisions of resources that help an employee in successful completion of tasks, this may lead to satisfaction of performance needs of the employee. As employees often attribute the actions of their supervisors and management to their organization (March and Simon, 1958; Levinson, 1965), efforts by top management or supervisors towards their PNS conveys to the employee that the organization values the employee's contributions (Fasolo, 1995). This can be considered as a signal to the employee that he or she has 'a bright future with the organization' (Wayne et al., 2002). Also, providing the employee with opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge communicates that the organization is willing to invest in the employee (Allen et al., 2003). The extent, to which individuals believe that the organization provides the chance to engage in developmental activities signals that the organization values the individual's contribution (Allen et al., 2003).

In-fact, goal fulfilment contributes to one's self-esteem (e.g., Parrott and Hewitt, 1978) and self-esteem motive may relate to centrality of an identity (see Vignoles et al., 2006). People seek to have a positive view of themselves (e.g., Brockner, 1988; Steele, 1988) and satisfaction

of growth needs results in self-confidence and a sense of adequacy (Maslow, 1970). Individuals evaluate their status within the organization based upon their assessment of signals or cues indicating that they are 'central, included, valued, and respected within the organization' (Wiesenfeld et al., 2001; Tyler and Blader, 2002). The extraction of status-related cues is central to the identification process (Pratt, 1998).

In organizational context, if one's need for learning is high, one is more likely to focus on the acquisition of knowledge and the perfecting of competence. Hence, one would tend to approach tasks that are challenging for him/her and focus on mastery of these complex tasks. On the other hand, if one's need for performance is high, one is more likely to choose tasks in which he/she believes can excel. Therefore, one would look for opportunities to demonstrate competence and make favourable impression on others. Be it learning or performance needs, presence of opportunities to fulfil the *need to develop or demonstrate ones abilities* is likely to lead to identification with the organization.

Hypothesis 1. *Satisfaction of learning needs will be positively related with OID.*

Hypothesis 2. *Satisfaction of performance needs will be positively related with OID.*

Satisfaction of Relatedness Need and Organizational Identification

Human beings are social animals (Wilson, 1993; Wright, 1994). We have a pervasive drive to form and maintain at least a minimum quantity of lasting, positive, and significant interpersonal relationships (Baumeister and Leary, 1995). Fulfilment of attachments needs helps in formation of a sense of self-identity (Cropanzano et al., 1993; Tajfel and Turner, 1979). Individuals deprived of such attachments tend to become lonely, depressed, and anxious; and over time, they may even display antisocial or psychotic behaviour (Cropanzano et al., 2001).

Maslow conceptualized love needs (belongingness needs) in terms of need for friends, spouses, children, parents, group membership, and the like (see Miner, 1980). In organizational

context this need is expected to be manifested through need to relate with people; organizational members may go beyond hierarchies, departmental and organizational membership to satisfy this need. Alderfer termed it broadly as "relatedness needs", which included safety needs of interpersonal type, love or belongingness needs, and esteem needs of an interpersonal type.

Competition for limited resources could provide a powerful stimulus to forming interpersonal connections (Baumeister and Leary, 1995). Organizational members are likely to look out for close ones to plan their activities together, to share their success and failure with others and likewise. Presence of opportunities for relatedness need satisfaction (RNS) is likely to foster OID of employees. In support of this argument, Epitropaki and Martin (2005) found that OID was higher for employees who experienced connectedness with their organization as compared to employees who experienced separateness with their organization.

Hypothesis 3: *Satisfaction of relatedness needs will be positively related with OID.*

METHOD

Sample and Procedures

Data were collected from 365 professionals with diverse work backgrounds, who participated in various executive programs at a premier (among top 10) Indian B-school in a span of one year. Of the 365 respondents, 75.9% were males and 68.5% were married. Mean age of respondents was 27.73 years (SD = 4.69) and average organizational tenure was 31.41 months (SD = 37.87).

In order to overcome the issue of common method variance associated with self-report surveys, we adopted some of the suggested procedural remedies (e.g., Podsakoff, MacKenzie, and Podsakoff, 2012), like : a) keeping the participation voluntary; b) promising anonymity of responses; c) explaining in the cover story that there were no right or wrong answers; d)

promising that the aggregated feedback will be shared with the participants; and e) eliminating proximity effects by splitting the survey in multiple pages.

Measures

Learning Need Satisfaction

Five items of learning orientation dimension of Goal Orientation Instrument (VandeWalle, 1997) were adapted to measure LNS. A 5-point Likert-type response format was used, with *strongly disagree* (1) and *strongly agree* (5) as the anchors. A sample item of this scale is, "I am able to get challenging and difficult tasks at work in this organization where I enjoy learning new skills". Cronbach's alpha coefficient for this scale was 0.87.

Performance Need Satisfaction

Four items of performance orientation dimension of Goal Orientation Instrument (VandeWalle, 1997) were adapted to measure PNS. A total of 4 items were used for the same. A 5-point Likert-type response format was used, with *strongly disagree* (1) and *strongly agree* (5) as the anchors. A sample item of this scale is, "My concern for being able to showcase better performance than my co-workers gets addressed in this organization". Cronbach's alpha coefficient for this scale was 0.79.

Relatedness Need Satisfaction

10-item scale by Leary, Kelly, Cottrell, and Schreindorfer (2013) was used to measure RNS. A 5-point Likert-type response format was used, with *strongly disagree* (1) and *strongly agree* (5) as the anchors. A sample item of this scale is, "There are people in this organization to whom I can easily turn to in times of need". Cronbach's alpha coefficient for this scale was 0.77.

Organizational Identification

Five items from Mael and Ashforth's (1992) scale were used in this study. A 5-point Likert-type response format was used, with *strongly disagree* (1) and *strongly agree* (5) as the anchors. A sample item of OID is, "When I talk about my organization, I usually say 'we' rather than 'they' ". Cronbach's alpha coefficient for this scale was 0.82.

Control Variables

In a meta-analysis, Riketta (2005) found that demographic variables like tenure and age relate with OID. Although, gender and education level were not related with OID in the same meta-analysis, we have considered the above four demographic variables along with marital status as control variables in this study to make sure our findings hold irrespective of these variables. We controlled for demographic factors such of age (in years), educational level (1=undergraduate; 2=post graduate; 3=higher degree), gender (1=male; 2=female), marital status (1=single; 2=married), and tenure (in months).

Data Analysis

To begin with, we determined the extent of common method variance by conducting Harman one-factor test using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (Podsakoff et al., 2012). All the items were included in a one-factor model and estimated using IBM® SPSS® AMOS™ 22. If the results indicate that one-factor model fits the data well, then common method variance is a powerful force in the study. Otherwise, the problem is not prevalent.

In the next step, we conducted CFA for all the constructs to confirm their dimensionality and identify the sources of misspecification (Andrews and Kacmar, 2001). Subsequently, we computed correlations among the constructs.

To test our hypotheses, we followed structural equation modelling approach using IBM® SPSS® AMOS™ 22. Model fit was assessed using indicators, like overall model chi-

square measure, Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) (Hooper, Coughlan, and Mullen, 2008). Relative χ2 ($\chi2/df$) less than 3; RMSEA less than 0.08; CFI greater than 0.95; SRMR less than 0.08; and NNFI greater than 0.95 were taken as acceptable threshold levels (Hooper et al., 2008; Kline, 2005).

Results

We first specified the one-factor model in which all the items used in the study were loaded on a common factor. This model revealed a bad fit to the data in absolute sense (see Table 1). Next, we specified a two-factor model in which all the items pertaining to various needs loaded on one factor and items measuring OID loaded on another factor. This model revealed a fair fit to the data in absolute sense (see Table 1). In comparison with model 1, Model 2 was a better fit to the data on account of a significant chi-square difference test ($\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = 313.12, p<0.01). Further, we specified a four-factor model in which all the items loaded on their respective latent factors. This model fit the data well in absolute sense (see Table 1). A significant chi-square difference suggested that Model 3 had a better fit to the data as compared to Model 2 ($\Delta\chi^2$ (5) = 261.94, p<0.01). Moreover, in Model 3, all the items loaded significantly (p<0.01) on to their respective latent factors. Therefore, Model 3 was retained as the final measurement model. The superiority of Model 3 (four-factor model) over Model 1 (one-factor model) provides some evidence of convergent validity (Bagozzi and Yi, 1988).

Table 1 Results of the Model Tests

Model	χ2	Df	RMSEA	SRMR	NNFI	CFI
Model 1	1050.42	252	0.09	0.08	0.73	0.76
Model 2	737.30	251	0.07	0.06	0.85	0.85
Model 3	475.36	246	0.05	0.05	0.92	0.93

Model 1: 1-factor model (all the items loading on one factor)
Model 2: 2-factor model (all the items related to various needs loading on one factor and items related to organizational identification loading on the second factor)
Model 3: 4-factor model (all the items loading on their respective latent factors)

Next, we computed the correlations between the constructs. As presented in Table 2, all correlations were significant (p<0.01) and strong. Moreover, composite reliabilities (Fornell and Larcker, 1981) of all the constructs (reported along the diagonal in Table 2) were above the cut-off of 0.7 (Hair et al., 2010).

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4
1. Organizational identification	3.40	0.87	**0.82**			
2. Learning need satisfaction	3.46	0.96	0.54	**0.87**		
3. Performance need satisfaction	3.51	0.86	0.57	0.85	**0.79**	
4. Relatedness need satisfaction	3.53	0.59	0.62	0.67	0.73	**0.78**

All correlations are significant at p<0.01 (two-tailed)
Values in the diagonal (in **BOLD**) are the composite reliability estimates

For testing the substantive relationships between the constructs, we specified the hypothesized relationships in a structural model. In this model, paths from LNS, PNS, and RNS to OID were specified. In addition to this, co-variances between all the three exogenous variables (LNS, PNS, and RNS) were allowed because these variables belong to the same domain and are found to correlate highly in literature as well as this study. Finally, paths from control variables to OID were specified. This model (Model A) revealed a good fit to the data

(refer Table 3). However, in Model A, paths from LNS and PNS to OID were insignificant (p>0.05).

The insignificant paths from LNS and PNS to OID despite high correlations among them could be attributed to the high covariance between the three need factors. In response to this result, a further investigation was done. As LNS and PNS measures were based on the Goal Orientation Instrument (VandeWalle, 1997) in which these two needs are treated as first order factors of the overall goal orientation construct, we checked for the possibility of a second order factor in our model.

Noticing a very high correlation between these two factors in our data (r = 0.85), we specified a second order factor (named 'Growth Need satisfaction') with LNS and PNS as its first order factors. In Model B, we specified paths from growth need satisfaction and RNS to OID. Model B revealed a good fit to the data in absolute sense (Table 3). In comparison, an insignificant value of chi-square difference test suggested that the fit of Model A was not superior to Model B ($\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = 0.11, p>0.05). But, as per the principle of parsimony, Model B was better than Model A. In Model B, paths from growth need satisfaction and RNS were significant (p<0.01).

Further, considering the possibility that all the three factors representing various needs may represent a common concept, we specified an alternate model (Model C) in which all the three need satisfaction factors were loaded on a common second order factor. We specified a path from the second order factor to OID. Model C revealed a good fit to the data in absolute sense and the substantive path was significant (p<0.01). However, a significant chi-square difference ($\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = 14.88, p<0.01) indicated that Model B was a better fit to the data as compared to Model C. Therefore, Model B was considered as the final structural model.

Overall, all the predictors in this model explained 45% variance in OID as compared to 43% and 44% variance explained in Models C and A, respectively.
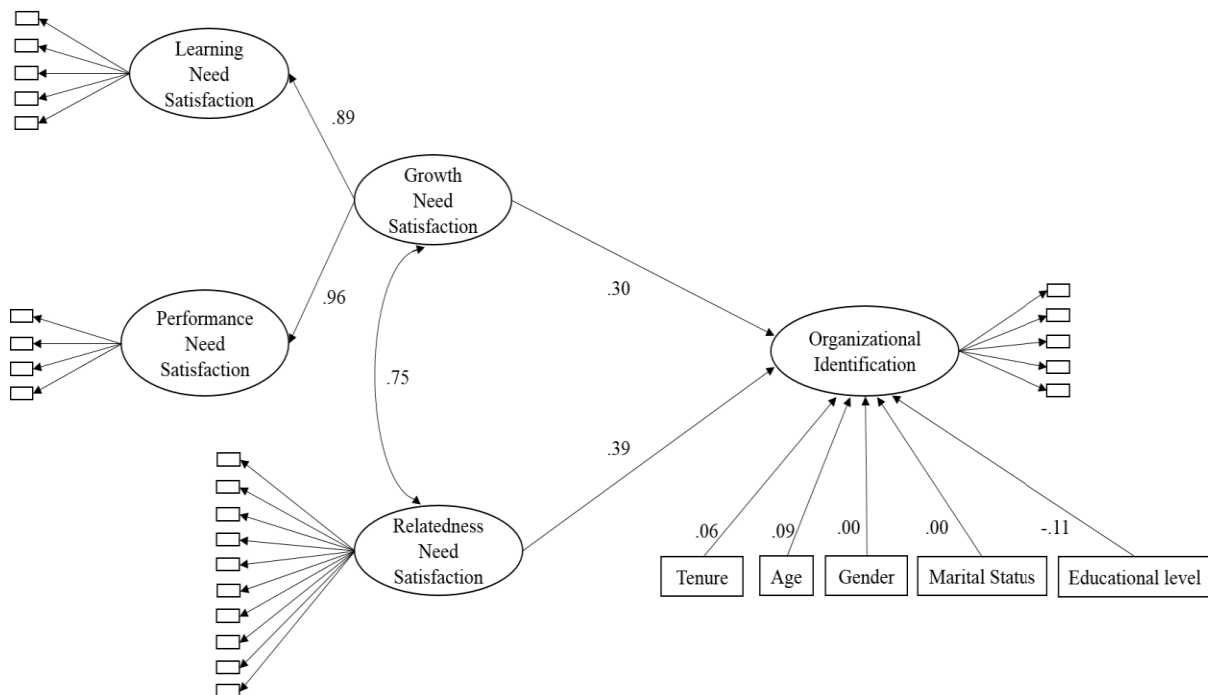
Table 3 Structural Model Tests

Model	χ2	Df	RMSEA	SRMR	NNFI	CFI
Model A	593.25	361	0.04	0.05	0.92	0.93
Model B	593.36	362	0.04	0.05	0.93	0.94
Model C	608.24	363	0.04	0.05	0.93	0.93

Model A: Hypothesized model
Model B: Model with second order factor for LNS and PNS
Model C: Model with second order factor for LNS, PNS, and RNS

Figure 1 Structural Model

This is a representative model. For ease of visibility, error terms & indicator level details are not presented
All paths in this model (barring those with demographic variables) are significant at p<0.01.

DISCUSSION

Through this paper, we address the dearth of research on the relationship between need-satisfaction and OID particularly in the Indian context. In this study we found support for the positive relationship of growth need satisfaction (second order factor of LNS and PNS) and RNS with OID of members.

With respect to the dimensionality of the needs, we got interesting results. The paths from PNS and LNS to identification became insignificant in presence of RNS, when we treated them as three separate factors. This could possibly be on the account of cultural context of India. As per GLOBE study, India has high score on in-group collectivism (the extent to which members of a culture show pride in the groups they belong). Therefore, need for relatedness/attachment (with individuals and groups) emerged as more salient in comparison to needs of learning and performance. In view of the literature wherein goal orientation has been represented by dimensions of learning and performance orientations (Dweck, 1986), when second order factor (growth need satisfaction) of LNS and PNS was specified, the overall effect of growth need satisfaction became salient along with RNS.

This research has strong implications for practice. Given the importance of identification in today's work context, it is imperative that fulfilment of needs of employees has to be seriously looked into if organizations want to benefit from the outcomes of identification. Managers should provide members with opportunities to prove their abilities, make appropriate resource available for goal achievement by members, and promote learning at workplace. It is important to note here that these opportunities of learning and performance have to vary as per the individual needs, i.e. the challenge for managers lies in finding congruence between individual needs and opportunities of satisfying the needs. Therefore, organizations must take a lead in training their managers in identifying individual differences in levels of needs and customizing their support as per the individual.

14

In addition, organizations must promote an inclusive culture where people coming from diverse backgrounds can relate with others. Sensitizing people, especially managers, to treat all individuals equally and provide a discrimination free work environment, is very important for satisfying relatedness needs of individuals. Diversity management practices have a strong role to play in driving the perception of organization's support (Jauhari and Singh, 2013) and ensuring RNS of individuals. This holds true, especially, in a diverse workplaces of India.

Limitations and Scope for Future Research

Despite the contributions discussed above, there are a few limitations that must be noted. Firstly, the role of identifications at different levels (e.g., professional identification, work-group identification, and supervisor identification) has not been accounted for in this study. Future research needs to consider foci of identification as OID is very likely to give different results than other foci of identification (for e.g., see Das et al., 2008; Oldham et al., 1986; Ullrich et al., 2007).

Secondly, the results can suffer from common-source bias and common-method bias. These biases can inflate or attenuate the effect sizes. Although some researchers do not believe that the results are always damaging (Ploy hart, 2008), we made efforts to minimize the effect of bias.

Thirdly, the research design of this study prohibits statements of causality. Thus, we suggest that future studies may adopt experimental designs as useful extension of this study.

Finally, among various types of growth needs, we considered only learning and performance needs in this study. Future studies can consider other needs for building a more comprehensive understanding. Also, in a suitable context, it would be interesting to study the differential effect of existence, growth, and relatedness need satisfaction on OID.

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Title:	
SATISFACTION OF LEARNING, PERFORMANCE, AND RELATEDNESS NEEDS AT WORK AND EMPLOYEES' ORGANIZATIONAL IDENTIFICATION	

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Abstract:

In today's scenario where loyalty can no longer be demanded from employees, the extent of organizational identification of employees predicts outcomes of organizational interest. It is therefore essential for organizations to foster the sense of oneness in employees. Since, need satisfaction lies at the core of human motivation, our purpose is to test if satisfaction of learning, performance, and relatedness needs at workplace could influence employees' identification with the organization. For this purpose, we collected data from 365 professionals representing diverse work backgrounds and analysed it using structural equation modelling approach. Results suggest that organizational identification is positively influenced by satisfaction of these three needs and about 45% of its variance is explained by these needs. Implications of these results and limitations are discussed in the paper.

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