

# **THE MEDIATING AND MODERATING EFFECTS OF MOTIVATION IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERCEIVED ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT AND EMPLOYEE JOB PERFORMANCE**

**Eugene Saltson** 

Independent Researcher, Ghana

[Esaltson@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:Esaltson@yahoo.co.uk)

**Sharon Nsiah**

Independent Researcher, Ghana

## **Abstract**

*Organizations are always seeking ways to improve the performances of employees. Thus, they keep adopting different strategies to ensure that is achieved. Motivating employees to give their maximum performance is a common strategy. However an employee's perception of organizational support (perceived organizational support- POS) could go a long way to achieve similar results of improved employee performance. Thus this study sought to find the connection between these three variables (motivation, POS and job performance) through five different hypotheses. The study measured motivation as both mediating and moderating variables in the relationship between POS and job performance. Findings showed that POS recorded a positive effect on employee job performance. However, motivation could neither establish mediating effect nor a moderating effect between the relationships. Furthermore, POS recorded no positively significant effect on motivation, and motivation recorded similar results on employee job performance as well.*

*Keywords: Perceived Organizational Support, Motivation, Job performance, Mediator, Moderator, Human Resource*

## INTRODUCTION

The relentless attempts by organizations to invest in their employees welfare is geared at maximising their inputs and ultimately the outcome of the organization. Due to this, the need to show commitment to employee welfare is to create in them an ideal perception of the organization's support for them. Studies such as Mohamed and Ali, (2015) have identified that perceived organizational support (POS) can improve employee job performance. However, the need to find out the concepts that account for the positive association of POS and employee job performance is relevant. This would enable organizations to uphold such concepts during their efforts to sustain the positive relationship between POS and job performance. This is the basis for the study's investigation to determine the role motivation can play in that relationship.

The study would measure the impact of POS on employee job performance to confirm through this research if there exists positive impact of POS on performance. After the latter is established, the study would seek to know if; motivation explains why there is positive impact of POS on employee performance (mediating effect), and whether motivation can determine direction and strength of relationship between POS and employee job performance (moderating effect). Coupled with these, the study would measure effects of POS on motivation, and motivation's effect on employee job performance.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Employee Job Performance

Job performance is defined as the total assessment of how well an employee achieves an organization's expectations (Allen et al, 2003). Jamal (2007) explains job performance as a function that an individual can achieve successfully with available resources and through normal constraints.

Harrison et al (2006) considers job performance as a set of behaviours that a person has control over and impacts the organization's goals. The concept of job performance is complicated and encompasses task-related activities or contextual factors such as benefits of social skills as a determinant of the job performance (Springer, 2011).

Available studies portray performance as a concept that is multidimensional and encompasses: (i) the way somebody behaves, operates, functions, (ii) the way a person performs a task, rated by its effectiveness; and (iii) the act of achieving something such as tasks (Kummerfeldt, 2011). A well-functioning system is not the only means to improve performance but also effective strategies from human resource personnel. Strategies that pertain to recruiting and maintaining a committed and motivated workforce can achieve improved performance (AI-

Ahmadi, 2009). Study by Chaudhary et al., (2012) shows that an employee's performance greatly relies on how the organization treats the employees. Also performance at team level are all influenced by the support and care from the organization body as a whole. It is based on such tendencies that this study measures employee job performance as the dependent variable in the study.

### **Perceived Organizational Support**

Perceived organizational support deals with the employees' perception or assessment of how much their contributions are appreciated by the organization, coupled with how they are cared for. This can be through variables as pay, job enrichment, rewards, promotions, verbal praise etc (Eisenberger, R. et al 1986). Employees consider their employment as an avenue where management and employees have a relationship of reciprocity that demonstrates relative dependence and transcends formal contract (Eisenberger, R. et al 2001). Attitudes of verbal and non-verbal behaviours are the major means through which organizations demonstrate their support to employees (Martin & Fellenz, 2010).

Perceived Organizational Support (POS) has a foundation in the organizational support theory (OST) depicting employee perceptions on how organizations value their input, and how they address their well-being (Eisenberger et al. 2001). Basically, employees tend to react contrary to the organization's expectations when they feel a lack of support from management (Ahmed et al, 2011:784:786). According to Wayne (1997), Positive POS propels employees to: care about the well-being of their organization; commit to organization; contribute to achievement of organizational goals; avoid staying away from work; and increase loyalty to their respective organizations.

Studies from Wann-Yih and Htaik (2011), Mohamed and Ali, (2015) and others, have shown that POS has a positive effect on employee performance. The existing findings propel this study to also verify this position and accounts for the first hypothesis.

*H1: Perceived organizational support has positive effect on employee job performance.*

### **Motivation**

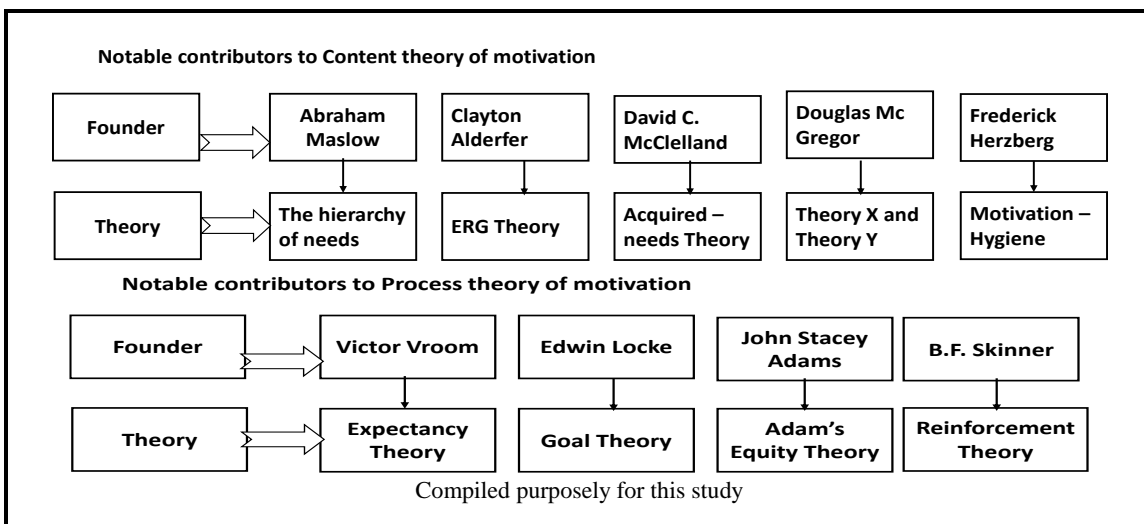
Motivation has been identified as one construct that has gotten many researchers interested in unravelling the concept. This has brought about many definitions. For example, Baron et al (2002) postulate that the term "motivation" originated Latin term "movere", meaning "to move", thus the concept is what moves people to do something. Campbell and Pritchard (1976:78) define it as "a label for the determinants of the choice to initiate effort on a certain task, the choice to expend a certain amount of effort, and the choice to persist in expending effort over a

period of time.”Simply, it is the workplace and personal traits that explain why people behave the way that they do with regards to work (Schultz & Schultz, 1998).

Studies reveal two types of motivation, namely intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. The former is the driving force that comes from within, in a form of awareness about the relevance of the work one is performing. Contrary to this, the latter is the driving force that emanates from outside, in a form of condition that propelled him/her to carry out the work to a higher level, e.g. through high salaries, praise, punishment and others (Nawawi, 2001:359).

There are two general classes of motivation, content and process theories. The content theories are sometimes referred to as ‘need theories’ or ‘psychological theories’ and they touch on the needs of an employee. It dwells on ‘what’ motivates an employee. Whereas process theories focus on the ‘processes’ of motivation and ‘how’ motivation takes place (Uzonna, 2013:202).

Figure 1. Theories of Motivation



Studies have sought to find the relationship between POS and motivation. Hu and Chang (2008) for example, found no significant relationship between POS and motivation. This study tests the same relationship and predicts that:

*H2: Perceived organizational support has positive effect on Motivation.*

Furthermore, motivation has recorded direct impacts on performance in other studies such as Maduka and Okafor (2014), Kiruja E.K. and Muku, E. (2013) etc. Based on this, the study predicts that:

*H3: Motivation has positive effect on employee job performance.*

Also motivation has successfully been able to explain the relationship between certain concepts (mediating role). For example, Barrick and Stewart (2002), and Lee et al (2012) recorded motivation as a successful mediating variable in those studies. Thus this study predicts:

*H4: Motivation mediates the relationship between perceived organizational support and job performance.*

Additionally, motivation has been measured in other studies as a moderating variable to ascertain whether motivation can determine direction and strength of relationships between variables, Roos and Van Eeden (2013), and Soliha et al (2014) are examples. This informs the choice to measure motivation's moderation effect as well:

*H5: Motivation moderates the relationship between perceived organizational support and job performance.*

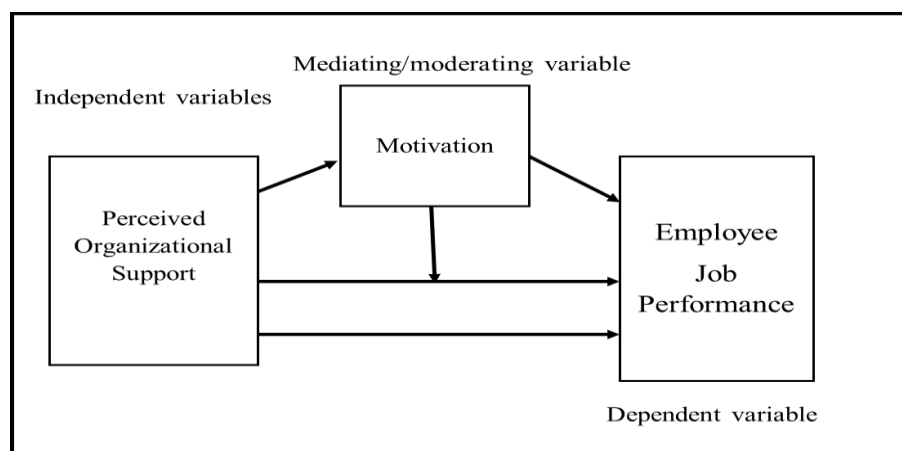
## METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

This research was designed to measure motivation as a mediating and moderating variable between perceived organizational support (POS) and employee job performance through a variety of tests. A total of 130 workers from a logistics company in Ghana formed the respondent pool. Random sampling was used for the selection of these 130 subjects from all departments of the logistics company.

Statistical tests such as factor analysis, independent sample T-test, ANOVA, correlations, (multiple) linear regressions and others, form the bases for the data analyses. The successful analyses of the demographic and hypotheses tests were done with the aid of IBM SPSS Statistics 20.

Figure 2. Research model



The following were used as the hypotheses in the research:

*H1: Perceived organizational support has positive effect on employee job performance.*

*H2: Perceived organizational support has positive effect on Motivation.*

*H3: Motivation has positive effect on employee job performance.*

*H4: Motivation mediates the relationship between perceived organizational support and job performance.*

*H5: Motivation moderates the relationship between perceived organizational support and job performance.*

## **Measuring Variables**

### **POS**

Perceived Organizational Support was measured with an eight-item shorter version of Survey of Perceived Organizational Support (SPOS) developed by Eisenberger et al (1986). The shortened version of the SPOS has recorded high internal reliability in insurance, finance and industrial matters (Eisenberger et al., 1986;  $\alpha = 0.97$ ). Further studies have recorded consistent internal reliability of SPOS to be between 0.74 and 0.97 (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002).

### **Motivation**

This was measured by the Work Extrinsic and Intrinsic Motivation Scale (WEIMS). WEIMS corresponds to six types of motivation postulated by Self-Determination Theory (SDT). They consist of 18 items which depicts good validity and acceptable alpha reliabilities. The items used in this research were sourced from Tremblay et al., 2009:226). A five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) was the measuring scale used.

### **Employee Job Performance**

A self-assessment version of Mahoney et al(1965) was used to measure employee job performance in this research. Although this measuring instrument is based on self-assessment, its establishment is well known and has been used extensively in managerial accounting research (Lau and Lim, 2002). However, the items measuring employee job performance were sourced from Adler and Reid (2008:29). They followed a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (very low) to 5 (very high).

## EMPIRICAL RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### Factor analysis

Table 1. Analyses of the variables

Variables	Items	Factor loading	%	Cronbach's Alpha	No. of items
POS	My general satisfaction at work is important to the organization.	.945	84.79 1	.958	4
	My well-being is really important to the organization.	.936			
	My contribution is valued by the organization towards its growth.	.910			
	The organization is proud of my work accomplishments.	.816			
Motivation	Because it has become a fundamental part of who I am.	.876	66.21 0	.936	9
	Because I derive much pleasure from learning new things.	.831			
	Because I want to succeed at this job, if not I would be very ashamed of myself.	.829			
	Because it allows me to earn money.	.813			
	I ask myself this question, I don't seem to be able to manage the important tasks related to this work.	.800			
	For the income it provides me.	.763			
	Because I chose this type of work to attain my career goals.	.720			
	Because this is the type of work I chose to do to attain a certain lifestyle.	.707			
	Because it is part of the way in which I have chosen to live my life.	.704			
Performance	Supervising staff	.887	60.16 8	.888	4
	Planning for my area of responsibility	.886			
	Investigating issues in my area	.785			
	Evaluating subordinates' activities	.712			

Table 2. Correlation of Variables

Measures	1	2
POS		
Motivation	.399**	
Performance	.899**	.413**

## Demographic analysis

The study had a participant pool of 130 workers from a logistics company in Ghana: 69.231% of the participants represented male respondents while the remaining 30.769% represented the females. Furthermore, 73.077% of the participants were within the age range of 18-32, 19.231% of the participants were between the ages 33-46 and the remaining 7.692% represented the respondents who were aged 47 and above (47+). Additionally, 53.846% of the 130 participants had worked in the company between 0-5 years, 30.769% of the respondents had worked for as long as 6-10 years and 15.385% represented the respondents with 11 years or more work ex.

Table 3. Demographic Information Summary

Variables	Number of people	Percentages (%)
<b>Age</b>		
18-32	95	73.077
33-46	25	19.231
47+	10	7.692
<b>Sex</b>		
Male	90	69.231
Female	40	30.769
<b>Tenure</b>		
0-5	70	53.846
6-10	40	30.769
11+	20	15.385

There was no significant difference in performance for males ( $M=13.7$ ,  $SD=2.92$ ) and females ( $M=13.2$ ,  $SD=3.24$ ) in the independent samples T-test:  $t(128)=.871$ ,  $p=.386$ . There was no statistically significant difference at the  $p<.05$  level in performance for the three age groups [ $F(2, 127)=.166$ ,  $p=.848$ ]. Also, tenure did not record any significant difference within the three groups [ $F(2, 127)=1.523$ ,  $p=0.222$ ].

## Hypotheses Testing

### Hypothesis 1

Regression analysis done on the study led to the acceptance of hypothesis 1, revealing a statistical significance of  $B: 0.252$ ;  $F(1, 128) = 7.993$ ,  $R^2 = 0.063$ ;  $P(0.000) < 0.05$ .

Table 4. Hypothesis 1 test summary

R <sup>2</sup>	Ad. R <sup>2</sup>	F	p(ANOVA)	Beta	t	Sig. (p)
0.360	0.360	0.355	0.000	0.600	8.481	0.000



### Hypothesis 2

This hypothesis was rejected based on the results B: 0.252;  $F(1, 128) = 7.993$ ,  $R^2 = 0.063$ ;  $P(0.189)$ .

Table 5. Hypothesis 2 test summary

$R^2$	Ad. $R^2$	F	p(ANOVA)	Beta	t	Sig. (p)
0.013	0.006	1.747	0.189	0.116	1.322	0.189

### Hypothesis 3

This hypothesis recorded no statistically significant difference [B: 0.114;  $F(1, 128) = 1.672$ ,  $R^2 = 0.013$ ;  $P(0.198)$ ], thereby rendering the hypothesis unacceptable.

Table 6. Hypothesis 3 test summary

$R^2$	Ad. $R^2$	F	p(ANOVA)	Beta	t	Sig. (p)
0.013	0.005	1.672	0.198	0.114	1.293	0.198

### Hypothesis 4

To establish motivation as a mediating variable, a four step approach consisting of series of regression analyses must be conducted: the IV predicts the DV; the IV predicts the mediator; the mediator predicts the DV; the interaction of IV and mediator predicts DV (Baron and Kenny 1986:1177). The following were the results of the mediation analysis:

Table 7. Mediation steps and results

Steps	F	t	B	P (coefficient)	Decision
IV predicts the DV	71.928	8.481	.600	.000	Accepted
the IV predicts the mediator;	1.747	1.322	.116	.189	Rejected
mediator predicts the DV	1.672	1.293	.114	.198	Rejected
interaction of IV and mediator predicts DV	35.987	.624	.045	.534	rejected

Also the Sobel test was conducted to confirm the above findings. The Sobel test determines whether a mediator variable significantly carries the influence of an independent variable to a dependent variable. The test recorded a Test statistic of 1.559;  $P=0.119$ , and thus statistically insignificant. Based on the findings, there was no mediation by motivation in the relationship between perceived organizational support and job performance, hence hypothesis 4 was rejected.

### Hypothesis 5

This hypothesis was analysed with multiple regression after the variables were standardised and the results led to the rejection of the hypothesis [B: -.042; F (2,127) = 35.938, R<sup>2</sup> = 0.361; P (0.569)].

Table 8. Hypothesis 5 test summary

R <sup>2</sup>	Ad. R <sup>2</sup>	F	p(ANOVA)	Beta	t	Sig. (p)
0.0361	0.351	35.938	0.000	-.042	-.571	0.569

Table 9. Findings summary Table

Hypothesis	Result
H1: Perceived organizational support has positive effect on employee job performance	Accepted
H2: Perceived organizational support has positive effect on Motivation	Rejected
H3: Motivation has positive effect on employee job performance	Rejected
H4: Motivation mediates the relationship between perceived organizational support and job performance	Rejected
H5: Motivation moderates the relationship between perceived organizational support and job performance	Rejected

## DISCUSSION

The study had male and female respondents recording no difference in performance. Similarly, the ages and the tenure of the employees recorded similar results of no significant difference on performance. However, the main relationship of the study predicting a positive effect in performance by the employee's perception of organizational support was accepted. This reaffirms the findings by other researchers such as Moahmed and Ali (2015) that, a worker will contribute his or her maximum effort to an organization that demonstrates support to the employee's wellbeing.

In efforts to test the mediating and moderating roles of motivation, the study conducted tests to verify; effects of POS on motivation (H2) and motivation on employee job performance (H3). Unfortunately, findings of both hypotheses suggested contrary views. Firstly findings of H2 testing suggests that an employee's perceived support from the organization cannot influence positively his level of motivation towards his/her work. Additionally, H3 test results postulated

that motivation is not enough to affect employee performance positively which is contrary to the results of other studies such as Zameer et al (2014).

Finally, motivation failed to explain the relationship between POS and employee job performance (H4), neither did it show a direction and strength of relationship between the two variables (H5). This suggests that job performance resulting from employees' perception of organizational support cannot be attributed to motivation as causative or influential element.

## **CONCLUSION**

The attempt to establish motivation as a determinant (mediator/moderator) in the relationship between an employee's perceived organization support and job performance led to the unravelling of other findings. Though conclusively the moderating and mediating effects of motivation were not established, organizations should not be quick to overlook the role of motivation. This is because the study showed that an employee's perception of support from the organization positively affects the job performance. And conceptually, POS has an undertone of motivation embedded in it which makes an employee perceive a sense of organizational support.

## **LIMITATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCHES**

The limited availability of similar researches makes it difficult to compare and make other analyses on the study. The occasion where variables are used as both the moderator and mediator in the same study is not common and thus limited to few literature reviews to guard the study. Also, a larger participant pool other than the 130 participants could have impacted the research to some extent. Nevertheless, these limitations do not negate and impact the findings.

Future researches can combine both the qualitative and quantitative methods of analyses to test similar hypotheses to enhance the study in different dimensions. They can replace motivation with other variables to check for similar effect. Also, other performance tests could be administered instead of a self-assessment performance test.

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## APPENDIX

### Questionnaire

Which of the following corresponds to how you feel

(1:strongly disagree, 2:disagree, 3:neither, 4:agree to 5:strongly agree).

1. My contribution is valued by the organization towards its growth.
2. My well-being is really important to the organization.
3. My general satisfaction at work is important to the organization.
4. The organization is proud of my work accomplishments.
5. Any additional effort from me is not appreciated by the organization.
6. Complaint from me is ignored by the organization.
7. The organization would not recognise it even if I achieved the best results.
8. The concern for my well-being is very little in the organization.

Indicate to what extent each of the following items corresponds to the reasons why you are presently involved in your work (1:strongly disagree, 2:disagree, 3:neither, 4:agree to 5:strongly agree).

1. Because this is the type of work I chose to do to attain a certain lifestyle.
2. For the income it provides me.
3. I ask myself this question, I don't seem to be able to manage the important tasks related to this work.
4. Because I derive much pleasure from learning new things.
5. Because it has become a fundamental part of who I am.

6. Because I want to succeed at this job, if not I would be very ashamed of myself.
7. Because I chose this type of work to attain my career goals.
8. For the satisfaction I experience from taking on interesting challenges
9. Because it allows me to earn money.
10. Because it is part of the way in which I have chosen to live my life.
11. Because I want to be very good at this work, otherwise I would be very disappointed.
12. I don't know why, we are provided with unrealistic working conditions.
13. Because I want to be a "winner" in life.
14. Because it is the type of work I have chosen to attain certain important objectives.
15. For the satisfaction I experience when I am successful at doing difficult tasks.
16. Because this type of work provides me with security
17. I don't know, too much is expected of us
18. Because this job is a part of my life.

How would you rate your performance on the following items?

Very low, low, neither, high, Very high

- (1) Planning for my area of responsibility 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- (2) Coordinating my area's activities 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- (3) Evaluating subordinates' activities 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- (4) Investigating issues in my area 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- (5) Supervising staff 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- (6) Obtaining and maintaining suitable staff 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- (7) Negotiating 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- (8) Representing the interests of my area 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- (9) Overall performance 1 2 3 4 5 6 7