

INVESTIGATING THE INFLUENCE OF PERCEIVED ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT, PSYCHOLOGICAL EMPOWERMENT AND ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING ON JOB PERFORMANCE: AN EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION

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Original scientific paper

The current study explores the influence of perceived organizational support, psychological empowerment, and organizational learning on job performance in the bank industry. A sample of 280 employees was randomly selected from a pool of Iranian banks' employees. The data were collected by the questionnaire and analysed using the structural equation model. The results showed that perceived organizational support influenced positively psychological empowerment, organizational learning, and job performance. In addition, psychological empowerment and organizational learning had a positive influence on job performance. In general, the results of the study suggested that perceived organizational support would play an important role and significantly contribute to psychological empowerment and organizational learning which would in turn improve job performance.

Keywords: *job performance, organizational learning, perceived organizational support, psychological empowerment*

Istraživanje utjecaja uočljive organizacijske potpore, psihološkog osnaživanja i organizacijskog učenja na radnu učinkovitost u bankarstvu: empirijsko istraživanje

Izvorni znanstveni članak

Ovaj rad istražuje utjecaj uočljive organizacijske potpore, psihološkog osnaživanja i organizacijskog učenja na radnu učinkovitost u bankarstvu. Uzorak od 280 zaposlenika slučajno je odabran iz udruženja Iranskih bankarskih zaposlenika. Podaci su prikupljeni iz upitnika i analizirani pomoću modela strukturalnih jednadžbi. Rezultati su pokazali da je uočljiva organizacijska podrška utjecala pozitivno na psihološko jačanje, organizacijsko učenje i izvršenje posla. Osim toga, psihološko osnaživanje i organizacijsko učenje utjecalo je pozitivno na radnu učinkovitost. U cjelini, rezultati studije su pokazali da bi snažna organizacijska potpora mogla igrati važnu ulogu i značajno doprinijeti psihološkom osnaživanju i organizacijskom učenju što bi zatim poboljšalo radnu učinkovitost.

Ključne riječi: *organizacijsko učenje, psihološko osnaživanje, radna učinkovitost, uočljiva organizacijska podrška*

1 Introduction

Performance as a multidimensional concept is defined as (a) the manner in which something or somebody functions, operates, or behaves; (b) the way in which somebody does a job, judged by its effectiveness; and (c) the act of accomplishing something such as a task or action [1]. Similarly, the job performance is a complicated concept which encompasses both task-related and contextual performance factors including the importance of social skills as a predictor of the job performance [2]. The job performance is defined as the extent to which an employee accomplishes the overall performance expectations. Harrison et al. [3] defined job performance as a set of behaviours that is under individual's control and affects the goals of the employing organization. In addition, Jamal [4] defined the job performance as a function that an individual can successfully perform within the framework of normal constraints and available resources. The key to the development and improvement of employees' job performance is identifying different factors impacting on their performance in organizations. Bank's employees face a myriad of concerns specific to their field including low pay, high turnover, and problems with job motivation and job performance. Similarly, some studies showed that there would be a high turnover rate to low pay, heavy workloads, and low job performance and learning, weakness of perceived organizational support (POS) among banks' employees [2]. Numerous researchers have examined separately the correlation between the job performance, perceived organizational support,

psychological empowerment, and organizational learning in many types of organizations [5, 6]. However, combined effects of perceived organizational support, psychological empowerment, and organizational learning among bank employees' performance had not previously been investigated. Reviewing the root causes of the job performance and studying effects of perceived organizational support, psychological empowerment, and organizational learning on the job performance can provide some understanding of problems with the bank's employees along with possible solutions [2]. The remaining parts of this paper are structured as follows: Sections 2, 3, 4, and 5 describe the research framework and hypotheses. Section 6 presents research methodology. In Section 7, conceptual model of research is built. Section 8 presents the results of research. Finally, Sections 9, 10, 11 are devoted to discussion and conclusion, managerial implication, limitations respectively.

2 Organizational learning and job performance

Goh [7] defined the organizational learning as the organization's ability to implement the appropriate management's practices, structures, and procedures that facilitate and encourage the learning. The organizational learning is the activity/process by which organizations eventually reach the ideal learning organization [8]. Also, Garvin [9] defined the organizational learning as a collective learning process taking place in and through interaction with and between a numbers of people.

Different theorists identified processes or subsystems that are critical to the organizational learning [10]. For example, Huber [11] identified four contributive processes including knowledge acquisition, information distribution, information interpretation, and organizational memory. In addition, Teo et al. [12] proposed four components for organizational learning procedures including: systems orientation, climate for learning orientation, collecting and implementing of knowledge, and sharing and distributing of knowledge. Moreover, Krishna [10] suggested four components of organizational learning:

Knowledge/information acquisition; interpretation, reflection or sense making; knowledge/information dissemination; institutionalizing or organizational memory. Organizational learning can have a significant impact on the job performance. Therefore, the organizational learning is of great value to the organization. However, there would still be lack of a comprehensive understanding about how the organizational learning could be accomplished. Garvin [13] suggested that the organization's ability to improve performance depends on how it implements the organizational learning process. Limited studies focused on the correlation between the organizational learning and employees' job performance. For example, the results of Hung et al. [14] demonstrated that although the organizational learning culture significantly affected performance, its influence was mediated by dynamic capability. Moreover, Rose et al. [15] investigated the influence of organizational learning on performance among public service managers and results of their study showed that organizational learning had a positive influence on work performance. Wu and Cavusgil [16] also found that employees' organizational commitment is positively relevant to learning intention of a firm which significantly affected the firm performance. Correspondingly, many other studies concluded positive relationship between the organizational learning and the job performance [5, 6, 17]. According to this background the following hypothesis is considered:

Hypothesis 1: Organizational learning influences positively on the job performance.

3 Psychological empowerment and job performance

Psychological empowerment is defined as a motivational process in which inherent characteristics, as well as environment factors, influence persons' abilities to discover the meaning, enhanced competence, and self-determination necessary to impact their environments [18, 19]. The psychological empowerment focuses on the psychological state of employees who experience empowerment and their reaction to the structural empowerment conditions [20]. Psychological empowerment is a four-dimensional construct forming by (a) meaning (b) competence (c) self-determination, autonomy; and (d) impact [19].

According to Spreitzer [19], competency is defined as an individual's feeling leading to performing the work well. In other words, the competency refers to the person's assessment of his/her abilities to perform working activities with proficiency. Meaning is defined as

the degree to which people care about their work. The term of meaning refers to the alignment of an individual's ideals or values with the value of the work. Self-determination is defined as the degree to which workers have control over their work or are free to choose how to accomplish their tasks [19, 21]. Also, the self-determination refers to a person's perception of choice in initiating behaviours and making decisions in the work place. Impact is described as the degree to which people feel they have important influences on their immediate work environments, co-workers, and the organization as a whole. In fact, the impact is perceived to be the degree to which the behaviour is seen as making a difference in terms of accomplishing the purpose of the task [19, 21].

The consequences related to the psychological empowerment are described in the literature as positive behavioural effects leading to the enhanced work performance. One can say that the construct of empowerment explains how and why an employee's job can act as a motivator to energize, direct, and sustain the employee behaviours that ultimately are associated with both task and contextual job performance [22]. Spreitzer et al. [23] indicated that the work performance is enhanced when employees feel autonomy over their work. Many researches noted that the outcomes of the psychological empowerment are the work effectiveness, achievement and successes, improved performance, commitment and satisfaction [24]. For example, Hall [25] examined influences of the psychological empowerment on the strategic business units' management. Hall's [25] results showed that the psychological empowerment influenced positively managerial performance. Fulford and Enz [26] collected data from 297 service employees in thirty private clubs and examined the degree to which self-efficacy, impact, and meaning explained employee's perceptions of satisfaction, loyalty, overall work performance, level of services provided to members, and concern for others. Moreover, Liden et al. [27] showed that individuals who feel more meaning in their work put forth more effort and commitments to their tasks; thus, those people have high performance. According to this background the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 2: Psychological empowerment influences positively on the job performance.

4 Perceived organizational support and job performance

There are various definitions for the perceived organizational support in the literature. The perceived organizational support is the perception of how an employee is treated by the organization, which influences the perception of how the organization feels about the employees' contributions and well-being [28]. In fact, the POS is defined as the degree to which employees believe that their organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being. In other words, the POS is an employee's formation of beliefs of how much the organization cares about their well-being and values their contributions. Positive POS leads employees [29]:

- To care about the organization's well-being,
- To increase commitment to the organization,
- To help the organization accomplish its goals,

- To perform better and reduce their tendency to miss work, and
- To make them to be more loyal to their organizations.

The POS is essentially a reciprocal social exchange relationship between the employer and the employee focusing on the quality of the relationship [30]. For example, when managers provide supportive climate and vindicate employees' rights and needs, they are more likely to compensate by increasing positive and decreasing negative behaviours in doing their duties. The level of perceived organizational support felt by an individual is related to such variables as pay, rank, job enrichment, organizational rewards, promotions, verbal praise, and one's influence over organizational policies [31]. Accordingly, the POS was found to be related to the employees' felt obligation to aid the organization, this relationship being greater among employees who strongly endorse the norm of reciprocity as applied to the employee-employer relationship [28]. The norm of reciprocity obligates employees to receive increased benefits from their organization to compensate for their employer with higher work performance. If employees perceive that the organization favourably supports and cares for their well-being, they would be encouraged to return this favour. In fact, one could expect employees that have support to show increased or heightened in-role performance behaviours [32]. Moreover, Monnastes [33] indicated if employees feel supported by the organization they will feel obligated to care about that organization's well-being and put forth effort to help the organization to succeed and achieve its goals.

Limited research focused on the correlation between the perceived organizational support and the job performance. However, study of Randall et al. [34] showed that perceptions of organizational support are related to in-role job performance. Also, Noruzi et al. [35] investigated relationship between organizational justice, and organizational citizenship behaviour (extra-role behaviours) through examining mediating role of perceived organizational support. Results of their study showed that perceived organizational support influenced directly and significantly the organizational citizen behaviour and perceived organizational support had meditating role between organizational justice and organizational citizenship behaviour. Similarly, Eisenberger et al. [28] showed that the POS was related to extra-role performance. Also, Rhoades and Eisenberger's [36] meta-analysis found a small relationship between the POS and the performance and a moderate relationship between the POS and the extra-role behaviours. Regarding this background, the following hypothesis is considered:

Hypothesis 3: Perceived organizational support influences positively on the job performance.

5 Perceived organizational support, psychological empowerment and organizational learning

As discussed, the perceived organizational support refers to the degree to which an employee believes that their organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being. There is limited evidence about

the correlation between the perceived organizational supports and the psychological empowerment. However, Walton [37] argued that organizational support facilitates mutual trust between the organization and employees which enhances employee's sense of confidence (self-determination) and increases his impact at the work place. Ahmad et al. [38] discussed that when employees feel organizational support, they would be more confident that they have required resources and rewards for their efforts and organizational affiliation in their actions. This support enables employees to develop their self-efficacy, to maintain impact at workplace and to remain self-determined while performing their organizational tasks. Other empirical studies showed that the perceived organizational support has positive and significant effect on the psychological empowerment [39]. On the other hand, Serrat [40] stated that OL process depends upon encouraging interests and motivations for learning and sharing the gained knowledge among employees, increasing learning capabilities, providing opportunities for distribution of knowledge, and creating supportive climate from learning. Results of Montes et al. [41] showed that the supportive leadership behaviour encourages and influences the teamwork cohesion and organizational learning. Other scholars reported positive relationship between the perceived organizational supports and the organizational learning [40]. Following the above background, hypotheses 4 and 5 are proposed as follows:

Hypothesis 4: Perceived organizational support influences positively on the psychological empowerment.

Hypothesis 5: Perceived organizational support influences positively on the organizational learning.

6 Methods

In this section, research methodology of the present study is presented as follows.

6.1 Sample and procedure

Statistical population of the present research includes the bank's employees. A sample of 280 employees was randomly selected from employees of Iranian banks. We contacted with employees and invited them to participate in the study. In addition, the bank's employees were provided with an explanation of the study, the survey, and questionnaire through e-mail contacting. The identity of the respondents was kept entirely confidential as the survey contained no place for participants to mention a name or any other identifying factor. All subjective measures used in the research were gained through the use of self-report questionnaires.

6.2 Instruments

Job performance: the job performance was measured using Avkiran [42] survey. The instrument included 15 statements related to the customer service based on following fundamental factors:

- Staff conduct,
- Credibility,
- Communication and

- Access to teller services.

The coefficient alpha for this scale was 0,85.

Perceived Organizational Support: the POS was measured using the questioner developed in Eisenberger et al. [31]. The survey measured factors: in role performance, extra role performance, employee’s perception of organizational support, and concern of the employee’s overall well-being. The coefficient alpha value for this scale was 0,88.

Organizational learning: the organizational learning scale [43] was used to assess the organizational learning construct. The scale comprised four items. Each item was answered using a five-point response anchor numbered from 1 to 5 (from strongly disagree = 1 to strongly agree = 5). The value of Cronbach’s α reliability was 0,79 for the organizational learning.

Psychological Empowerment: the psychological empowerment was assessed using the Spreitzer’s [19] questionnaire. The psychological empowerment survey is of a 16-item scale compiled by Spreitzer [19] using four items to measure each of the four cognitive dimensions as interval data on a 5-point Likert scale from very strongly disagree to very strongly agree. The four dimensions are:

meaning, competence, self-determination and impact which each domain including 4 items. The value of coefficient alpha for this scale was 0,91.

7 Proposed model

Based on literature, we proposed a model including five hypotheses about relationship among research variables. Fig. 1 illustrates the proposed model.

8 Results

Table 1 shows descriptive statistics and correlations for all the measured variables. Results showed that the organizational learning was positively correlated to the POS, psychological empowerment and job performance ($p < 0,01$). Also, the perceived organizational support was positively correlated to psychological empowerment and job performance. Finally, the psychological empowerment was found to have positive correlation with the job performance. Among all the variables, the psychological empowerment had the strongest correlation with the organizational learning ($\gamma = 0,82; p < 0,01$).

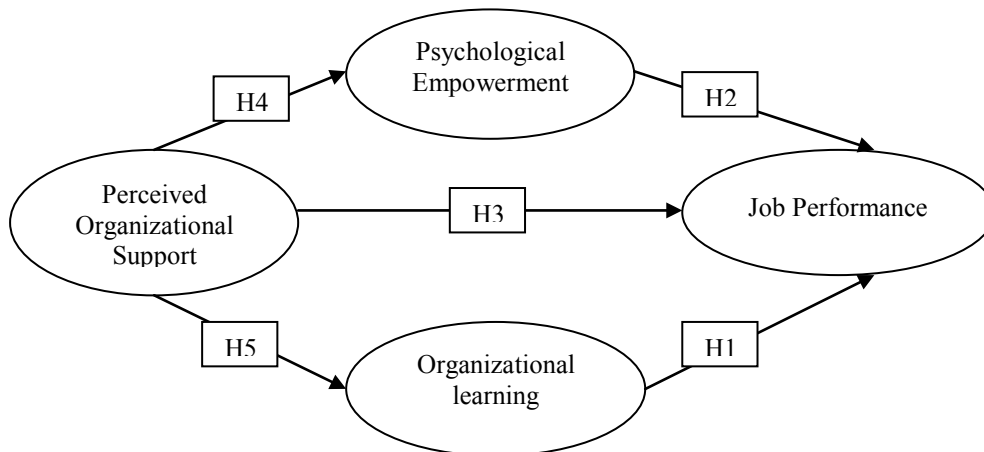


Figure 1 The proposed model and hypotheses

Table 1 Mean, standard deviation, and correlation

Variables	MD	SD	1	2	3	4
1. Organizational Learning	13,05	3,68	1			
2. Psychological Empowerment	13,01	3,61	0,82**	1		
3. POS	12,44	3,51	0,34**	0,24**	1	
4. Job Performance	12,77	4,66	0,44**	0,39**	0,29**	1

* $p < 0,05$ and ** $p < 0,01$

Fig. 2 shows the fitted model of the study. Scores printed on the paths are standardized parameters.

Tab. 2 indicates the direct, indirect, and total effects and their significant level between the predictor and dependent variables in the final model. With respect to the predicted paths, our hypotheses were generally supported. The job performance was significantly and positively predicted by the perceived organizational support ($\beta = 0,17; t = 2,22; p < 0,01$), the psychological empowerment ($\beta = 0,19; t = 2,53; p < 0,01$) and the organizational learning ($\beta = 0,29; t = 4,41; p < 0,01$).

This set of predictors accounted for an aggregated 24 % of the variance in job performance. The perceived organizational support affected also the job performance indirectly ($\beta = 0,010$) through the mediation of the

psychological empowerment and the organizational learning. In addition, the perceived organizational support had positive and direct effect ($\beta = 0,40$) on the psychological empowerment. Moreover, the perceived organizational support had positive and direct effect ($\beta = 0,47$) on organizational learning.

Table 2 Structural model’s results (direct, indirect, total effects and R^2)

Path	Direct effect	Indirect effect	Total effect	R^2
To Job Performance from:				
Psychological Empowerment	0,19**	--	0,19**	
Organizational Learning	0,29**	--	0,48**	
POS	0,17**	0,010*	0,18**	0,24
To Organizational Learning from:				
POS	0,47**	--	0,47**	0,22
To Psychological Empowerment from:				
POS	0,40**	--	0,40**	0,16

* $p < 0,05$, ** $p < 0,01$

Tab. 3 shows goodness of fit indices for the examined model. In Tab. 3, χ^2/df score 1,52 lies within the

acceptable range. Additionally, the RMSEA score 0,059 is lower than the acceptable range (0,08).

Table 3 The measures of model fit

Measures	χ^2/df	GFI	CFI	NFI	NNFI	RMSEA
Acceptable level	$\leq 5,00$	$\geq 0,90$	$\geq 0,90$	$\geq 0,90$	$\geq 0,90$	$\leq 0,08$
	1,59	0,91	0,96	0,90	0,95	0,055

Scores for NFI, NNFI, GFI and CFI are 0,90; 0,95; 0,96 and 0,96, respectively. These values reveal the acceptability of these scores for the model. Therefore, it can be claimed that the examined model has an appropriate fitness.

9 Discussion and conclusion

The present study aimed to strengthen and expand the previous findings through evaluating the interrelationship among the perceived organizational support, the psychological empowerment, the organizational learning, the job performance, and the combined effects of perceived organizational support, psychological empowerment and organizational learning on job performance in the banking industry. That the POS aids to improve the job performance is the first main contribution of the current study. This finding is in accordance with researchers such as Eisenberger et al. [28] and Monnastes [33]. Employees' POS would lead to various consequences regarding the performance. In fact, employees with a heightened sense of POS exhibit increase in their role performance. In addition, the results showed that the organizational learning had a positive

influence on the work performance. The present result supports the findings of earlier studies [5, 6, 14, 15, 17]. Improvement in the organizational learning activities among employees increases knowledge, improves capabilities and skills thereby enhances their work performance. On the other hand, organizational learning facilitates behavioural change, increases efficiency and effectiveness of the workforce and facilitates the achievement of organizational goals and objectives [15]. Also, the results showed that psychological empowerment had positive influence on the job performance. Empowered employee could perform better than those less empowered employees [27]. The psychological empowerment increases the effort, intensity of effort, persistence, and flexibility of employees which all consequently lead to high job performance. Moreover, if employees perceive themselves to be competent and find meaning in their work, their performance is likely to be reflective of such thinking. As expected from previous research [37, 38], the POS influenced positively on the psychological empowerment. When employees perceive the organizational support, their feeling on self-efficacy, impact and self-determination would increase. In other words, when employees feel organizational support they will be more confident that they have the required resources, skills and ability (self-efficacy) and authority (impact) to complete organizational tasks [38]. Moreover, employees' positive perception about the organizational support makes them to give value to the organizational learning, thus, employees who reported higher levels of perceived organizational support were committed to learning from outside and inside of the organization.

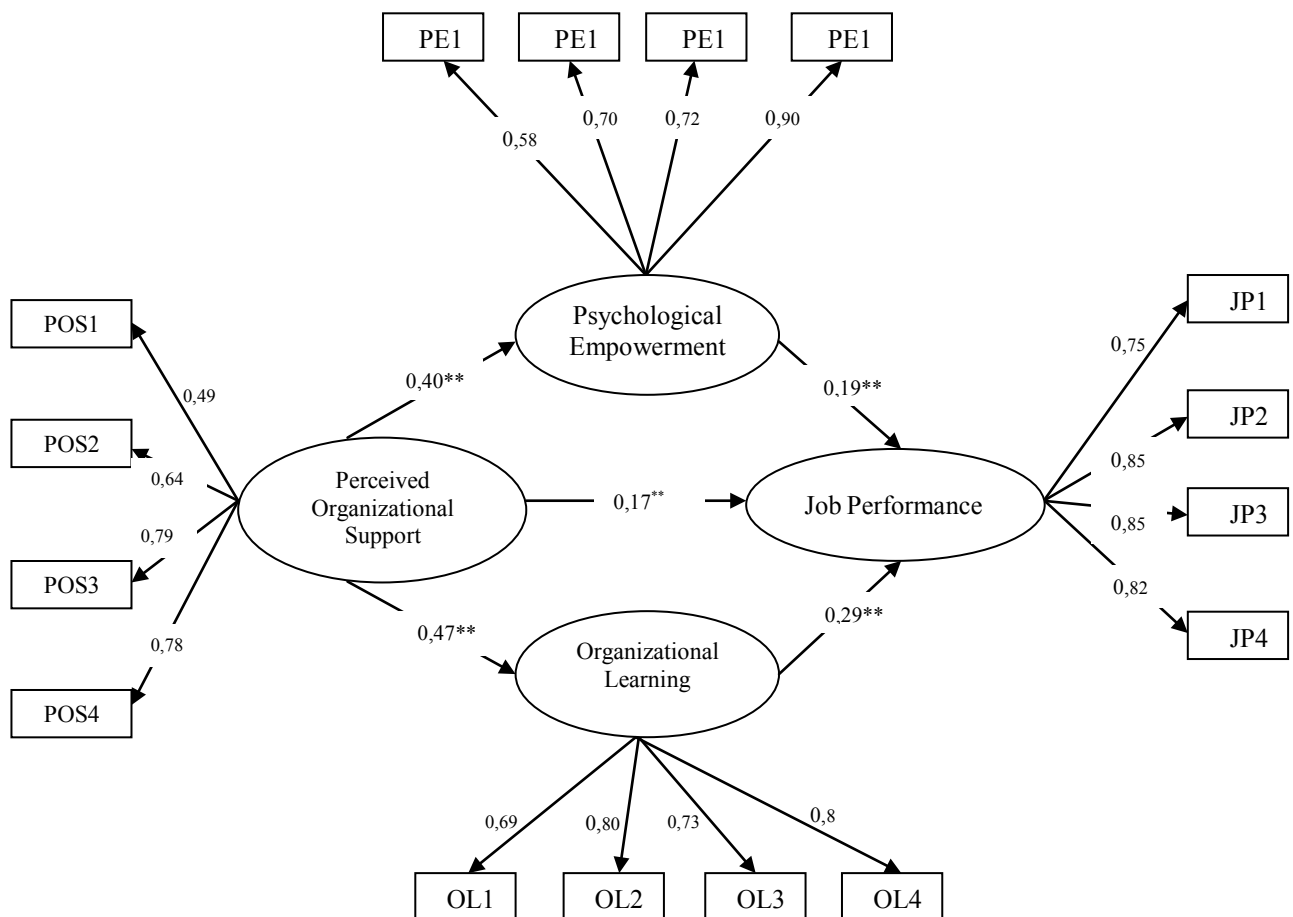


Figure 2 Results of the structural equation model

10 Managerial implication

In the present research, the organizational support, the psychological empowerment, and the organizational learning were found the key factors which influenced the development and improvement of employees' job performance. With regard to these results, bank's managers needed to understand the motivations of their employees, what skills and abilities they would bring with them, their commitment's level to the organization, and employees' perceived organizational support for improving the job performance. Moreover, the psychological empowerment was a motivational process in which inherent characteristics, as well as environmental factors influenced persons' abilities to discover the meaning, enhanced competence, and self-determination necessary to impact their job performance [44, 45]. Therefore, the bank's managers should consider leadership strategies that aim to improve employees' feelings of meaning, competency, impact and self-determination. Also, the learning is the key element to success and survival in today's organizations and bank's managers could encourage the bank staff to contiguously learn from external and internal knowledge sources and finally share and implement the gained knowledge. Thus, it is necessary to support and energize organization, people, knowledge, and technology for learning [40, 45].

11 Limitations

There existed two major limitations in the present study. First, since the convenience sample was specific to the employees of Iranian banks, the results might not be generalizable to other industries or non-Iranian banks. Second, the survey participants might not understand the complete scope of the research and their responses might not reflect their current job situation in its entirety.

12 References

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