

## **The Role of Perceived Organizational Support towards Teachers' Work Engagement**

Samra Saeed\* and Abid Hussain Ch.\*\*

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### **Abstract**

This study examined the relationship of Perceived Organizational Support (POS) with Work Engagement (WE) of secondary school teachers. The population was secondary school teachers of 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grades in public schools of Punjab. The multi-stage sampling method was used to draw the sample from population. Sample was comprised 935 teachers (475 = male and 460 = female) to share their perceptions on POS and WE. Reliability of instruments were; perceived organizational support = .792 and work engagement = .846. It was a descriptive survey study and quantitative research type was used. Results showed that there is a positive correlation between POS and WE of secondary school teachers. Simple linear regression analysis revealed POS has positive effect on WE. POS predicted 30.9% of the variance in the work engagement.

**Keywords:** Work engagement, Perceived organizational support; Secondary school teachers

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\*PhD Scholar, Institute of Education and Research, University of the Punjab, Lahore

\*\*Professor, Institute of Education and Research, University of the Punjab, Lahore

## **Introduction**

In human life work has an important place to attain the basic purposes and goals. Organizations are concerned with the attainment of set goals whether they are larger or smaller. Scholars in the field of positive psychology are centering their interest in factors that cushion employees to succeed in their respective professions (Bakker, et al. 2008). Work engagement is one of the factors that affects the employees' performance and productivity of work. Kahn (1990) introduced the concept of work engagement. He included many aspects that affect individual, interpersonal, group, intergroup and organizational factors that shape the personal engagement and disengagement of people in an organization. Through these factors employees define themselves in role performance. Later on, work engagement was defined by Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) as positive, accomplishing and motivational state of mind related to work that is characterized by vigor, dedication and absorption. Vigor is a high level of energy and mental resilience during work. Dedication refers to a strong involvement of one's in work and experiences to find the meaning in his/her work. Absorption is a condition in which employee fully concentrates and happily absorbed in own work. Furthermore work engagement is not a particular state of mind, but a more constant affective-cognitive state since it does not concentrate on any specific object, occurrence, person and actions (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004b). Schaufeli (2012) points that work engagement although emerged in late twenties but still it is a new concept for academics and business world. Burnout, a negative psychological state of mind is direct opposite to work engagement. Amini, Fakhodi and Siyyari (2018) found negative relationship between teachers' work engagement and burnout. Work engagement is not similar to organizational engagement in fact it is employees' feeling of engagement not only with their organization but also in their jobs (Engelberg-Moston et al., 2009). Work engagement has received a considerable attention in last decades e.g. human resource department, psychology and business but academic field received lesser attention (Kim, et al. 2012). Employees in every organization have beliefs about being important for the organization. POS refers to the feelings of workers regarding the respect that their organization gives them regards on contribution and cares about their well-being (Eisenberger, et al. 1986). A meta-analysis by Rhoades & Eisenberger (2002) found that POS was related to a number of outcomes e.g. job satisfaction, positive mood, job performance, organizational commitment and overcome the withdrawal behavior of employees. Support from organization is considered as resource for the work engagement of employees. Resources of work engagement sometimes also called predictors of work engagement.

## **Objectives of the Study**

Following are the objectives to:

1. examine the relationship of POS and WE of secondary school teachers of the Punjab.
2. find the effect of perceived organizational support on work engagement.

## **Literature Review**

### *Perceived Organizational Support and Work Engagement*

According to the Conservation of Resources theory (Hobfoll, 1989) there are four kinds of resources e.g. i) objects, ii) conditions, iii) personal characteristics, and iv) energies. Loss or gain of these resources results in stress or well-being respectively. Murthy (2017) conducted research on employees from nine different organizations and found significant positive relationship between work engagement and perceived organizational support. Bakker et al. (2007) found among Finish Teachers that job resources (job control, supervisor support, organizational climate, information, innovativeness, and appreciation) buffer work engagement and diminished students' misbehavior. Support from organization has significant effect on employees' sense of achieving the organizational goals and show the higher degree of work engagement (Dai & Qin, 2016). POS positively and significantly affects the work engagement of Indonesian employees working in a manufacturing industry (Sitorus, 2017).

Leadership style of principals also creates a feeling of support among teachers in school. Many researches have been conducted on leadership styles of principals with other different variables of teachers. Adeyemi (2010) found that teachers' job performance was better with autocratic leadership style of principals than democratic or Laissez-faire styles. Principals' instructional leadership has an indirect impact on teacher work participation due to the influence of school culture, teacher empowerment, and role characteristics (Adel, Ghodrattollah, Mahdi & Rezaei, 2019). Najeemdeen et al. (2018) revealed in their study that organizational culture and support both positively affect the work engagement of teachers in university levels. Kose (2016) found that perceived organizational support has positive and significant relationship with work engagement of primary and secondary school teachers.

Work engagement has multiple benefits for organizations for instance, Halbesleben (2010) meta-analysis found that work engagement is related to job performance, corporate commitment, general wellbeing of workers, and resolves employee turnover intentions. Gülbahar (2017) found that increasing the work engagement increased the organizational trust and this lead to the outstanding performance of the teachers. It can be the vital to competitiveness of organization to have engaged employees (Macey & Schneider, 2008).

Saks (2006) and Kurtessis et al. (2015) discovered a positive relationship between POS and work engagement, implying that higher levels of work engagement are a result of POS. Though, there is a handful studies to date that considered perceived organizational support as antecedent of work engagement.

Job Demand-Resource (JD-R) model developed by Bakker and Demerouti (2007) depicts that job resources have positive relationship with motivation that consequently lead to organizational outcomes. On the base of this model later on Bakker and Demerouti (2008) developed the JD-R model for work engagement according to that model job resource and personal resources are predictors of work engagement.

Recognition is very important for employees to enhance their work and productivity. Employees are motivated to achieve their best results and productivity when they are recognized. It is usually given in the form of feedback on one's work success and effectiveness (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Organizational environment is also very important to enhance the employees' satisfaction for work. Employees' optimistic behavior towards organization for positive atmosphere at workplace reduces negative moods (Bledow, et al. 2011).

The level of work engagement rises as principals integrate teacher input into decisions and offer opportunities for growth and development (Bakker & Bal, 2010). Due to individuals differences it is possible that genders might have effect on their work engagement and available support from organization.

According to Rothbard (1999) there are some variations between men and women employees in terms of engagement in their work. Gulzar and Teli (2018) reported that female teachers in higher level of education have shown higher levels of work engagement than that of male teachers. This difference in levels of work engagement between the two genders are statistically significant. Nevertheless, it is need to explore the relationship of POS and work engagement of teachers especially in Pakistani Context.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Bakker and Demerouti (2008) developed the JD-R model for work engagement based on Conservation of Resource Theory (COR). According to theory Job resources are predictors of work engagement. Researcher used this work engagement model in present study to explain the relationship among the variables.

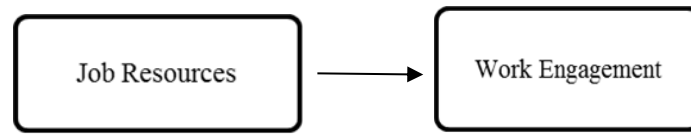


Figure 1.

### Following are research Hypotheses:

H1: Perceived organizational support significantly correlates with work engagement.

H2: Perceived organizational support has significant effect on work engagement.

### Significance of the Study

Study on the subject of teachers' work engagement is still essential to fully explore the levels of work engagement among teachers. Greater the demands for the quality in teaching and learning justifies the need for more engaged teachers. Administrators/principals may take help that organizational support as an intangible resource is very important to enhance teachers work engagement along with the other tangible/physical resources in institutions.

### Research Methodology

Descriptive survey study was conducted by using quantitative research type. Correlation technique was used to analyze the data.

**Population of the Study:** Population was consisted on all secondary school teachers in the Punjab.

**Sampling** the multi-stage sampling technique was used to select the sample size for survey. Data were collected from nine districts of the Punjab and 935 secondary school teachers was sample.

**Instrumentation two instruments:** i-Perceived Organizational Support survey was developed by Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchinson, & Sowa (1986). Original scale was contained 36 items. Researcher made four categories (leadership style, recognition, information and school climate) to measure the perceptions of teachers about their organizational support. Reliability of researcher's developed scale on Perceived Organizational Support was Chronbach' alpha =.792. ii-Utrecht Work Engagement scale was developed by Schaufeli and Bakker in 2004 containing 17 items on three dimensions of work engagement (vigor, dedication and absorption). The reliability of the Work Engagement scale for present study was Chronbach's alpha = .846. All these scale were free to use for academic purposes and adapted according to the context of Pakistan. The instrument was also translated into Urdu language due to context and language understanding.

**Data Collection, Analysis and scoring Procedure:** Quantitative data were analyzed through both descriptive and inferential statistics. Mean, Standard deviations, frequencies were calculated. Pearson Product Moment Correlation and linear regression were applied.

**Findings**

Table 1  
*Demographic characteristics of Participants*

		Frequencies	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	475	51
	Female	460	49
Age	20-30	238	25.4
	31-40	350	37.4
	Above 40	347	37.1
Faculty	Arts	470	50.3
	Science	451	48.2
Teaching Experience	1-5	188	20
	5-10	236	25
	10-15	127	14
	More than 15	383	41

There are 475 male secondary teachers in study that is the 51% of the sample and 460 female secondary teachers which is 49% of the sample. Those participants whose age ranges between 20 to 30 are 238 (25.4%). Participants' ages between 31 to 40 are 350 (37.4%) and above 40 are 347 (37.1%). Arts faculty is 470 (50.3%) and science faculty is 451 (48.2%). Participants who have 1 to 5 years of teaching experience are 188 (20%) of the sample. Participants who have 5 to 10 years of teaching experience are 236 (25%). Those participants who have 10 to 15 years of teaching experience are 127 (14%) and 383 (41%) participants have more than 15 years of teaching experience.

**Objective no. 1.** to examine the relationship of perceived organizational support and work engagement of secondary school teachers of the Punjab.

*H1:* Perceived organizational support significantly correlates with work engagement.

Table 2  
*Pearson Product Moment Correlations between POS and WE*

Variable	N	r-value	p-value	Hypothesis
POS	935	.45	.000	Supported
WE	935			

Note:  $p < .05$ , POS=Perceived Organizational Support, WE=Work Engagement

Correlation coefficient between POS and WE is .45 and statistically significant  $p < .05$ . There is a positive moderate relationship between the perceived organizational support and work engagement of secondary school teachers. Research hypothesis is supported.

Table 3

*Pearson Product Moment Correlations among Sub Factors of POS and WE*

Sub Factors	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Instructional Leadership						
2. Recognition	.54**					
3. Information	.49**	.52**				
4. School climate	.55**	.52**	.60**			
5. Vigor	.39**	.35**	.27**	.39**		
6. Dedication	.32**	.40**	.20**	.32**	.47**	
7. Absorption	.52**	.21**	.15**	.23**	.48**	.44**

\*\*Correlation is significant at 0.01 level

The above table shows the correlation among all sub factors of study. Instructional Leadership has statistically significant positive moderate relationship with all other sub factors ( $p < .05$ ). Recognition has statistically significant moderate positive relationship with all sub factors but it has positive weak relationship with absorption ( $r = .21, p < .05$ ). Information has statistically significant positive moderate relationship ( $p < .05$ ) with leadership, recognition and school climate but positive weak relationship with vigor, dedication and absorption  $r = .27, .20$  and  $.15$  respectively. School climate has statistically significant moderate positive relationship ( $p < .05$ ) with vigor and dedication  $r = .39$  and  $.32$  respectively. Whereas school climate showed positive weak relationship with absorption  $r = .23$  ( $p < .05$ ). Three dimensions vigor, dedication, and absorption showed statistically significant moderate relationship among them ( $p < .05$ ). It is concluded that all sub factors have statistically significant positive relationships among them. All correlations are statistically significant  $p$ - value is less than  $.05$ .

**Objective no. 2** to find the effect of perceived organizational support on work engagement.

*H2*: perceived organizational support has significant effect on work engagement.

Table 4

*Regression Analysis*

Regression weights	Beta Coefficient ( $\beta$ )	R <sup>2</sup>	F	t-value	p-value	Hypothesis
POS_WE	.556	.309	223.059	15.233	.000	Supported

Table 3 presenting the results of linear regression analysis. POS significantly predicted WE,  $F(1,231) = 223.059$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $t = 15.233$ . These results indicated that POS positively affects the work engagement of secondary school teachers  $\beta = .556$ ,  $p < .05$ . Moreover, the  $R^2 = .309$  indicates that the model explains 30.9% of the variance in work engagement.

## Discussions

This study examined the relationship of perceptions of teachers about organizational support and their work engagement and differences of variables on the bases of gender. The relationship is moderate positive between WE and POS of the teachers and statistically significant. Results of present study support literature on relationship of work engagement and perceived organizational support. Murthy (2017) conducted research on employees from nine different organization and found significant positive relationship between work engagement and perceived organizational support. Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) who defined work engagement and also examined significant relationship between job resources and work engagement among four different resources. Instructional leadership style of principals has positive moderate relationship with work engagement. Recognition has positive moderate relationship with vigor and dedication but weak positive with absorption dimension of work engagement. Information has weak and positive relationship with vigor, dedication and absorption. School climate has moderate and positive relationship with vigor and dedication but has weak and positive relationship with absorption. This positive relationship is verifying the Job Demand Resources model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008) of work engagement in which job resources are graphically depicted to have a positive impact on work engagement. Finally, engaged workers not only perform well, but are able to create their own resources that can then promote engagement over time. Linear regression results revealed that POS significantly affects the WE. Work engagement was accounted for 30.9% of the variance in the model. This finding is similar to the study by Hasnida, Samosir, Novliadi (2019) they reported that POS has positive effect on work engagement and 13.69% of the variance was accounted. Najeemdeen et al. (2018) found in their study that organizational support positively affects the work engagement of university teachers.

## Conclusions

From this study it is concluded that positive relationship exists between POS and WE. This relationship is significant because alpha value is less than .05. Linear regression results reveal that POS has positive effect on WE and model explains 30.9% of the variance on WE. This Relationship shows that organizational support is very important factor to enhance the work engagement of teachers.



## Recommendations

Following are recommendations:

1. Intangible resources are cost-free way to increase the work related engagement among teachers. Support in terms of recognition, feedback, sharing information, etc. might be increased by principals and colleagues to increase the work engagement of teachers.
2. Teachers' circles might be formulated to share their experiences of teaching from senior teachers and learn new approaches from fresh teachers.
3. Policy makers can formulate the policies of training for principals in which ways of improving organizational support might be incorporated.

## Future Calls for Research

1. Future research may examine the effect of tangible resources i.e. salary and incentives etc. in relationship with work engagement.
2. Future research might be conducted on relationship of resources and work engagement with the presence of job demands.

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