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**Influence of Positive Characteristics on Organizational Commitment and Job Satisfaction of Indian Middle Managers**

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**Influence of Positive Characteristics on Organizational Commitment and Job  
Satisfaction of Indian Middle Managers**

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## **Abstract**

It has been proposed that some organizationally relevant positive psychology constructs such as hope, resilience, optimism, subjective well being, and self-efficacy would be able to explain positive outcomes such as positive attitudes and positive behaviors among employees in organizations. However, empirical validity of the claim is yet to be established. Hypotheses for relationships between positive characteristics and organizational commitment and job satisfaction were postulated. The hypotheses were tested on mid-level managers working in Indian organizations. All positive characteristics showed significant positive

**Influence of Positive Characteristics on Organizational Commitment and Job Satisfaction of Indian Middle Managers**

Recent discussions on positive psychology have generated interest in the academic and practice communities to verify the age-old claims of the benefits of being positive,

Vandenberg, Self, & Seo, 1994). *Affective* commitment refers to emotional attachment, identification with and involvement of an employee in the organization; i.e. an employee intrinsically desires to continue in the organization. *Continuance* commitment arises out of knowledge about costs associated with leaving the organization; i.e. the employee thinks that it is his or her need to continue working in the organization. Finally, *normative* commitment reflects a feeling of obligation to give back to the organization and an employee high on normative commitment would continue because he or she ought to do so.

Research has mainly focused on controllable external factors influencing organizational commitment such as modification of HRM policies and practices (Paul & Anantharaman, 2004), increasing socialization (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990), improving compensation (Mowday et al., 1982; O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986), leadership and interpersonal dynamics (Tu, Raghunathan, & Raghunathan, 2001), and hygiene factors (Balaji, 1985; Khokle, 1998). Very few dispositional characteristics have been tested for their influence on an individual's organizational commitment. The Big-5 personality characteristics (openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism) has been found to explain small but significant variance in commitment (Erdheim, Wang, & Zickar, 2006; Raja, Johns, & Ntallianis, 2004). Interestingly, dispositional characteristics were found to influence affective, normative and continuance commitments differently. For example extraversion and agreeableness influenced normative commitment; continuance commitment was influenced by extraversion, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness to experience; and affective commitment was influenced by extraversion and conscientiousness (Erdheim et al., 2006; Raja et al., 2004). In addition, self-monitoring, equity sensitivity, locus of control, and self-esteem were found to influence affective commitment (Jenkins, 1993, Raja et al., 2004), and dispositional affectivity has been found to impact organizational commitment (Cropanzano, James, & Konvosky, 1993).

## Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is a function of expectations and achieved outcomes on the job. It is understood to be a sum of cognitive, affective and evaluative reactions resulting from

## Hope

Hope has been conceptualized as “the sum of perceived capabilities to produce routes to desired goals, along with the perceived motivation to use those routes (Snyder, 2000: 8).” Accordingly, a more hopeful person would mentally find more routes and be motivated to tread these routes to reach the desired goal than a less hopeful person.

Hope has been found to be helpful in predicting positive outcomes in stressful situations (Mishra & Spreitzer, 1998) and has led to increased satisfaction, profitability, and lesser turnover (Luthans & Jensen, 2002; Peterson & Luthans, 2003). The findings have been verified in different contexts that include sports, leadership, entrepreneurship, and labor intensive work situations. It was also found to have a moderating effect on burnout (Rodriguez-Hanley & Snyder, 2000) and handling pressure to secure jobs (Snyder, 1994). In the context of mergers and acquisitions, feeling hopeful about the situation was found to be positively related to normative and continuance organizational commitment (Ozag, 2006). Hopefulness was found to be positively related to organizational commitment (a unidimensional construct) and job satisfaction (Youssef & Luthans, 2007). Based on Youssef and Luthans (2007) study it is not possible to explain how hopefulness influences affective, normative and continuance commitment individually.

*Relationship between Hopefulness and Organizational Commitment and Job Satisfaction*





Optimists have also been found to treat personal failures as temporary (Carver & Scheier, 2003; Peterson, 2000). In organizational setting, dispositional optimism has been found to influence coping with change, better planning and focus on problems (Scheier, Weintraube, & Carver, 1986); performance and stay in the organization (Seligman, 1998); positive leadership (Wunderley, Reddy, & Dember, 1998).

*Relationship between Optimism and Organizational Commitment and Job Satisfaction*

Optimists would expect best outcomes in all situations because of their disposition. Thus, they are likely to show high commitment because of their feelings attached to the organization, tendency to give their best. They would show optimism in continuing with the same job even if there are no other alternatives or even if they have to make large sacrifices in the present organization. Therefore, it is hypothesized that,

It has been found that SWB is largely determined by dispositional characteristics of a person and is stable over time (Diener, 2000; DeNeve & Cooper, 1998)

Few studies have looked at SWB in the workplace. A meta-analysis of 34 studies covering nearly 20,000 data points reported that job-satisfaction and life-satisfaction are positively related ( $r = .44$ ) (Tait, Padgett, & Baldwin, 1989). Judge and Hulin (1993) and Judge and Wantanabe (1993) concluded that SWB could predict job satisfaction five years later. It has also been found to influence efforts made to attain an agreed upon goal (Diener, Oishi, & Lucas, 2003).

#### *Relationship between SWB and Organizational Commitment and Job Satisfaction*

Given that studies in the past have shown a relationship between subjective well being and job satisfaction (Tait et al., 1989), this relation would confirm the same in Indian context in this study. Also, satisfaction with life is expected to result in stronger affective and normative commitment since satisfaction with life would mean staying in the organization out of volition (Meyer et al., 1993). Therefore while there would be low positive relationship with affective and normative forms of organizational commitment, continuance commitment is expected to show negative relationship with subjective well being. It is hypothesized that,

*Hypothesis 3(a) SWB of an individual would be positively related to affective and normative forms of organizational commitment.*

*Hypothesis 3(b) SWB of an individual would negatively related to continuance commitment of an individual.*

*Hypothesis 3(c) SWB of an individual would be positively related to his or her job satisfaction.*

#### Generalized Self-efficacy

Generalized self-efficacy (GSE) is understood to be a belief about oneself in executing some course of action to deal with future situations (Bandura, 1982:122). It can

also be defined as “individuals’ perception of their ability to perform across a variety of different situations” (Judge, Erez, & Bono, 1998, p. 170). In this study the generalized form of self-efficacy is meant as reflecting people’s belief in successfully accomplishing tasks across a wide variety of achievement situations (Chen, Gully, & Eden, 2001; Sherer, Maddux, Mercadante, Prentice-Dunn, Jacobs, & Rogers, 1982). This generalized form is a more stable, trait-like form that could be viewed as a dispositional characteristic.

#### *Relationship between GSE and Organizational Commitment and Job Satisfaction*

Clear positive linkages have been found between generalized self-efficacy and task performance and coping with change (Judge, Thoresen, Pucik, & Welbourne, 1999; Stajkovic

environmental vagaries in long and short term (Klohn, 1996). It is therefore, “a class of phenomena characterized by patterns of positive adaptation in the context of significant adversity or risk” (Masten & Reed, 2002, p.75). Resilient people are seen as resourceful and capable of understanding a situation and solving a problem (Block & Kremen, 1996).

Resilience of individual members has been found to impact resilience of the family (Hawley & Deehan, 1996, as cited in Greeff & Ritman, 2005), found to be an important characteristic of positive leadership (Avolio, Gardner, Walumbwa, Luthans, & May, 2004), influential in increasing commitment to leadership and organization (McCarthy, 2003), and playing a role in an organizations’ growth (Luthans, 2005).

*Relationship between Resilience and Organizational Commitment and Job Satisfaction*

individual and his or her affective and normative forms of commitment. Following hypotheses are proposed for resilience of an individual,

*Hypothesis 5(a) Resilience of an individual would be positively related to affective and normative forms of organizational commitment.*

*Hypothesis 5(b) Resilience of an individual would be negatively related to continuance commitment of an individual.*

*Hypothesis 5(c) Resilience of an individual would be positively related to his or her job satisfaction.*

## Method

### *Respondents*

Respondents were practicing middle managers attending different management development programs over two months in a management institute in western India. The respondent's participation was voluntary and they did not receive any credit in their coursework for participation. A total of 159 usable responses were collected. 91% respondents (146) were males. One respondent did not provide information about gender. Average age of the respondents was 41.1 years with average work experience of 18.47 years of which an average of 11.3 years were spent in the current organization. All respondents were Indian nationals from manufacturing and service activities.

### *Procedure*

At the end of a session participants were asked if they would like to participate in a study that would require about 20 minutes of their time. Volunteering participants were asked to sit on alternate chairs to ensure personal space. The instructions for the two part questionnaire in English were read out to them by either author. They were explained the scoring scheme. To ensure that mid-point response was not a reflection of lack of

understanding about the item, the participants were urged to mark 6 (Can't say) only after

scale was used for measuring generalized self-efficacy (Chen et al., 2001). Chen et al. (2001) have reported discriminant and convergent validity of the NGSE scale. Cronbach's alpha for the scale was .857. Resilience was measured using 14-item Ego Resiliency Scale (ER-89, Block & Kremen, 1996). The scale was used as a single construct. Cronbach's alpha for the resilience scale was .807. Satisfaction with life scale (SWLS, Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985) was used to measure SWB of the respondents. The scale has been validated (*see*, Pavot & Diener, 1993). Cronbach's alpha for the scale was .765.

Regression analysis was done to test for relationships between positive characteristics and job satisfaction and organizational commitment. The data was checked for assumptions of linearity and normality and was found to satisfactorily meet the standards.

## Results

Table 1 presents the mean, standard deviations, correlations and reliability values for various constructs and scales.

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Insert Table 1 about here  
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Table 2 shows the Adj. R<sup>2</sup> value and the significance level for the regression coefficient.

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Insert Table 2 about here  
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### *Hope and Attitudes*

Hopefulness of an individual showed a significantly positive relationship with affective commitment ( $r = .327, p < .001$ ) and normative commitment ( $r = .213, p < .01$ )

with explained variance being 10.1% and 3.9% in affective and normative commitment respectively. The correlation coefficients between hope and LoAlt and HiSac forms of continuance commitment were nearly zero indicating that there is no relationship between hopefulness and continuance commitment. These results therefore supported hypotheses 1(a), 1(b) and 1(c). Job satisfaction of an individual showed a positive and significant relationship with hopefulness of the person ( $r = .349, p < .001$ ). Hope could explain nearly 12% variance in job satisfaction, indicating support for hypothesis 1(d).

### *Optimism and Attitudes*

It was hypothesized that optimism would be positively related to all forms of organizational commitment and job satisfaction of an individual. Results in Tables 1 and 2 show a significant and positive relationship of optimism with affective commitment ( $r = .230, p < .01, \text{Adj. } R^2 = 4.7\%$ ), normative commitment ( $r = .270, p < .001, \text{Adj. } R^2 = 6.7\%$ ), continuance commitment due to lack of alternatives ( $r = .211, p < .01, \text{Adj. } R^2 = 3.8\%$ ), and high sacrifice involved in change of job ( $r = .222, p < .01, \text{Adj. } R^2 = 4.9\%$ ). The results therefore supported hypothesis 2 (a).

Optimism was also positively and significantly related to job satisfaction ( $r = .169, p < .05, \text{Adj. } R^2 = 2.8\%$ ). The results however supported hypothesis 2 (b).

### *Subjective Well-being and Attitudes*

Results showed that SWB of an individual was positively related to affective commitment of an individual ( $r = .344, p < .001, \text{Adj. } R^2 = 11.3\%$ ) and his or her normative commitment ( $r = .276, p < .001, \text{Adj. } R^2 = 7.0\%$ ). The results therefore supported hypothesis 3(a) completely. Both continuance commitment dimensions of lower alternatives and high

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SWB of an individual showed positive and significant relationship with job satisfaction ( $r = .347, p < .001, \text{Adj. } R^2 = 11.5\%$ ) lending support to hypothesis 3(c).

#### *Generalized Self-efficacy and Attitudes*

GSE of an individual showed positive and significant relationships with affective commitment ( $r = .176, p < .05, \text{Adj. } R^2 = 2.5\%$ ) and normative commitment ( $r = .158, p < .05, \text{Adj. } R^2 = 2.5\%$ ) of an individual indicating support for hypothesis 4 (a). Continuance commitment due to lack of alternatives showed somewhat positive but not significant relationship with GSE ( $r = .083, ns$ ), and so did continuance commitment due to high sacrifice ( $r = .053, ns$ ). As a negative relationship was expected to be found, the results showed only partial support to hypothesis 4 (b). GSE showed a positive and significant relationship with job satisfaction of an individual ( $r = .193, p < .05, \text{Adj. } R^2 = 3.1\%$ ) in support of hypothesis 4 (c).

#### *Resilience and Attitudes*

The results showed that resilience of an individual was related positively to his or her affective commitment ( $r = .284, p < .001, \text{Adj. } R^2 = 7.5\%$ ) and normative commitment ( $r = .257, p < .001, \text{Adj. } R^2$

normative commitment were positively related to all five positive characteristics while continuance commitment showed a positive relationship only with optimism of an individual. Thus, this study takes the understanding of relationship of types of commitment and positive characteristics, as compared to organizational commitment as a single construct (Youssef & Luthans, 2007) to the next level of conceptual improvement. This is expected to contribute to theory building attempts in this area of study.

The results indicated that higher hopefulness impacted the ability to handle diverse

on comparatively similar South East Asian sample. As Luthans and colleagues reported commitment as a single score, the results of this study for organizational commitment are not directly comparable. The confidence of an individual in his or her ability is a contributor to his or her innate desire to continue with the organization rather than continue under pressure or duress is evident from this study. The results of this study also support the finding that GSE is positively and significantly related to job satisfaction (Judge & Bono, 2001).

Ability to adapt (resilience) indicated greater ability in handling diverse situations at the job and meeting demands from various quarters of the organization, peers and superiors. This adaptability was reflected in higher job satisfaction and no relationship with continuance commitment of either form. Also, affective and normative commitment was high for more resilient people.

The results therefore supported the conjecture that positive characteristics would be related to organizationally relevant positive attitudes .0036ypin his -5.3(c)10.4oytmp91.5e(nt)3.8(va)5(o)2.7nd (a)



would also allow for control of situational variables that could have influenced attitudes within the sample.

Another concern is that data on independent and dependent variables was collected for the same person. This could have resulted in common source variance and therefore the observed relationships may be artifactually high (Podsakoff & Organ, 1986). However, it is

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Table 1

Mean, S. D. and Correlations of Variables (N = 159)

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Affective	8.676	1.659	(0.84)									
Normative	7.475	1.935	.634**	(0.69)								
LoAlt	5.372	2.435	0.099	.350**	(0.70)							
HiSac	4.916	2.61	0.101	.363**	.793**	(0.81)						
JS	8.476	1.519	.752**	.533**	0.067	0.088	(0.74)					
Hope	8.925	1.111	.327**	.213**	0.044	-0.028	.349**	(0.79)				
Optimism	8.285	1.381	.230**	.270**	.211**	.222**	.169*	.438**	(0.69)			
SWB	8.04	1.548	.344**	.276**	0.099	0.022	.347**	.539**	.364**	(0.77)		
GSE	8.914	1.212	.176*	.158*	0.083	0.053	.193*	.783**	.471**	.525**	(0.86)	
Resilience	8.261	1.185	.284**	.257**	0.003	-0.009	.283**	.676**	.455**	.516**	.694**	(0.81)

Maximum score for all variables except for Tenure was 11.

Alpha reliability coefficient of the scale is shown in parentheses.

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 2

*Correlation, Adjusted R-Square and Significance of Relationships (N = 159)*

		Hope	Optimism	SWB	GSE	Resilience
Affective	Adj. R Sq.	0.101	0.047	0.113	0.025	0.075
Commitment	Sig.	0.000	0.004	0.000	0.027	0.000
Normative	Adj. R Sq.	0.039	0.067	0.070	0.019	0.060
Commitment	Sig.	0.007	0.001	0.000	0.046	0.001
Continuance	Adj. R Sq.	-0.004	0.038	0.003	0.001	-0.006
Commitment (LoAlt)	Sig.	0.585	0.008	0.217	0.299	0.968
Continuance	Adj. R Sq.	0.001	0.049	-0.006	-0.004	-0.006
Commitment (HiSac)	Sig.	0.729	0.005	0.784	0.510	0.909
Job	Adj. R Sq.	0.117	0.028	0.115	0.031	0.074
Satisfaction	Sig.	0.000	0.033	0.000	0.015	0.000