Role of Core Self Evaluation and Acquired Motivations in Employee Task Performance

Syeda Shabana Kirmani
International Islamic University

Saman Attiq
Air University

Haroon Bakari
University of Sindh

Mahreen Irfan
Fuji Fertilizers Company

The study developed and tested a model to examine the influence of personality traits and motivational needs on task performance behavior of university teachers in Pakistan. Using convenience sampling technique, 650 structured questionnaires were administered to faculty members in Pakistani universities. The findings showed that core self evaluations influence acquired-motivational needs that is need for power has positive impact on task performance behaviors than need for achievement, whereas need for affiliation has no impact on task performance behavior. This study has added to existing literature by introducing motivational needs as an important facilitator in the link between core self-evaluations and task performance behavior. This is among first studies that has incorporated core self-evaluations within the acquired needs framework particularly in the Asian context. Major implications of the study were also discussed.

Keywords. Core self-evaluation, need for affiliation, need for power, need for achievement, task performance behavior

Syeda Shabana Kirmani, Department of Faculty of Management Sciences, International Islamic University, Islamabad.

Saman Attiq, Air University School of Management Sciences, Air University, Islamabad.

Haroon Bakari, Department of Business Administration, (Thatta Campus), University of Sindh, Jamshoro.

Mahreen Irfan, Fuji Fertilizers Company (BQP), Islamabad.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Syeda Shabana Kirmani, Department of Faculty of Management Sciences, International Islamic University, Islamabad, Pakistan. E-mail: shabanakirmani@gmail.com

Market conditions in today's era are dynamic and rapidly changing, therefore, in order to cope with these changes and improve employee performance, organizations need to change nature of jobs and organizational structures (Landy & Conte, 2012). This has redirected the focus of industrial-organization research towards the within individual factors in employee personality (Judge, Locke, Durham, & Kluger, 1998). Major work in this regard has been done by Seligman (2002) who emphasized to understand personality factors and enhance positive employee characteristics such as optimism (Seligman, 1998) so that employee performance may be fostered (Barrick, Mount, & Judge, 2001).Though past researches identified the significant impact of Big-Five dispositional traits (McCrae & Costa, 2003) on job performance, so far little attention is paid to examine the way these personality traits influence performance (Ferris et al., 2013). Therefore, Barrick et al. (2001) stressed on the need to develop process models that check the validity of personality-performance link. The link between employee personality and performance has long been acknowledge by researchers through which personality stands an important predictor of employee performance (Mount & Barrick, 1995) as well as academic performance (Debicki, Kellermanns, Barnett, Pearson, & Pearson, 2016).

Judge et al. (1998) coined a new personality construct of core self-evaluation (CSE) and asserted that it is linked with performance mainly through motivation particularly in comparison of Big-Five model. CSE refers to employee's fundamental judgment about their competencies, capabilities and overall organizational self-worth, which profoundly influence their attitudes and behaviors at workplace (Judge & Hurst, 2008) which further reflect in differences in their motivational needs. Individual's motivation is core factor with regard to its influence on job performance (Judge & Bono, 2001). It has been found to predict a variety of outcomes, including safety behaviour (Yuan, Li, & Lin, 2014) and approach/voidance motives (Ferris et al., 2013; Ferris et al., 2011). Researchers found significant direct relationship between CSE and goal-setting motivations or task-motivation (Bono & Judge, 2003), approach and avoidance motivation, (Chang, Ferris, Johnson, Rosen, & Tan, 2012) and indirect effect of CSE and performance through goal orientation (Debicki et al., 2016).

Judge and Ilies (2002) suggested that other motivational mechanism may be explored to better explain the link between core self-evaluation and employee performance. Research suggests that there is dearth of research with regard to McClelland's motivation

theory in this relationship. Therefore, this study has applied McClelland's motivation theory which encourages organizations to develop motivational mechanisms to enhanced requisite behaviour that elicit performance by considering various employee needs and matching these needs to job requirement (Redmond, 2010). CSE theorists Judge and Ilies (2002); thus, urge for further examining CSE-performance relationship with new motivational frameworks (Chang et al., 2012) and to conduct CSE research in diverse cultures in order to assess cultural impacts on self-evaluations. It is also suggested to establish what other characteristics are shared by those individuals who are motivated and thus engage in behaviours aimed at gaining favorable judgements about their performance (Debicki et al., 2016; Richardson, Abraham, & Bond, 2012). The other gaps relate to the nature of jobs and type of industry. Most CSE and job performance studies have focused on the performance of sales persons, managers and university students (Ferris et al., 2011) whereas job performance especially in the context of university teachers was ignored.

Core Self Evaluation

Core self-evaluations (CSE) are defined as fundamental bottom-line evaluations that people make about themselves (Judge, 1997). CSE is a higher order construct that consists of four lower order traits self-evaluative traits representing self-esteem, self-efficacy, locus of control, and neuroticism/emotional stability. According to Judge et al. (1998), these fundamental evaluations represent how people evaluate themselves, others and the world. Thus, an employee's evaluation of one's work may be directly or indirectly influenced by one' own self-evaluation, and of one's colleagues.

Despite inconsistent findings of the qualitative reviews on the CSE sub-traits and performance relationship, substantial theoretically support is witnessed for this relationship. The self-consistency theory posits that people feel motivated to behave in accordance to their self-image; hence people having positive self-image have greater probability to show high performance to maintain their positive self-image (Korman, 1970). The theory of learned helplessness also relates positive self-evaluations with performance positing that individuals with positive self-evaluations stay motivated even when surrounded by unfavorable situations and are less likely to reduce their efforts or exhibit withdrawal or helplessness behaviors in such times (Peterson & Seligman, 1984). The control theory (Lord & Hanges, 1987) relates personality traits with performance positing that additional efforts are exerted by individuals having internal locus of control when they lack

behind their expected performance goals whereas, those with low self-esteem are likely to reduce their expected performance standards or totally withdraw when faced with difficult situations at work (Judge & Bono, 2001). Recent study by Cheung, Herndon, and Dougherty (2016) suggest that CSE has positive relationship with salary attainment and individuals high on CSE with more developing networks and embedded confidence will achieve higher career development than those who are low at CSE. In addition, CSE also significantly influence job burnout (Peng et al., 2016).

It is argued that personality-motivation relationship is more significant among the three factors due to its variability that declarative and procedural knowledge are lacking (Judge & Ilies, 2002). Motivation is the study of reasons underlying behaviors (Kanfer, Ackerman, Elliot, & Dweck, 2005) and serve as cues to employee performance behaviors (Shore & Shore, 1995), whereas performance motivation is defined as a set of psychological processes causing initiation, direction, intensity, and persistence in employee behaviors (Pinder, 2014). Being a complex process motivation differs from person to person, differs in times, in cultures and within cultures. Judge and Ilies (2002) supporting this view assert that difference in performance levels may be found related to the difference in individual motivation that can be traced back to dispositional traits. Moreover, examining the role of motivation as mediating mechanism between personality traits and job performance is called for by the management theorists (Ferris et al., 2011).

Keeping in view the need to search answers for such questions, the present study focused on two core objectives; firstly, to determine the relationship between CSE personality traits and acquired motivational needs of the university teachers. Secondly, to determine the relationship between acquired motivational needs and task performance behaviour of the university teachers.

Motivational Needs

Organizations value highly motivated employee as they indicate high job performance (Redmond, 2010). Therefore, a good grasp of employee motivation can help managers and practitioners align employee efforts with organizational goals (Latham & Pinder, 2005). Hence, Miner (2003) claimed that if someone wishes to create a highly valid theory of performance, which is also constructed with the purpose of enhanced usefulness in practice in mind, it would be best to look into motivational theories. McClelland (1961) presented the Acquired Need Theory representing three motivational needs; that is,

need for achievement, need for affiliation, and need for power as acquired human needs which direct and influence their behavioral outcomes. The three-motive framework is used in a number of studies on individual motivation including studies on managerial success (McClelland & Boyatzis, 1982) and job performance (Redmond, 2010). Basically, performance is the function of traits and motivation (Judge & Bono, 2001). The present study adopts the need-based perspective of motivation to explain the effects of dispositional traits of core self-evaluations on employee task performance behavior. In work settings need-based theories posit that employees strive to gratify various needs through their job. Acquired Needs Theory (McClelland, 1961) is used in the current study to conceptualize link between personality and three specific motivational needs of achievement, affiliation, and power to explain why employee engage in task behavior.

Need for achievement. McClelland, Atkinson, Clark, and Lowell (1958, p. 58) defined the need for achievement as "success in competition with some standards of excellence. According to Lussier and Achua (2007), the need for achievement is the unconscious consideration for excellence; while, Daft (2008) stated that need for achievement is the desire to accomplish something difficult, attain a high standard of success, master complex tasks, and surpass others. Individuals with high need for achievement search for realistic but challenging goals to achieve. It is observed that self-direction and self-motivation are associated with need for achievement. Positive feedback of the manager or supervisor inspires employees with high need for achievement to surpass their expected job-roles (McClelland, 1975).

Need for affiliation. The affiliation need is one of the basic human needs indicating a drive to be related with other fellow beings (McClelland, 1985). High need for affiliation is characterized by a desire for social approval; therefore, people with high need for affiliation are highly sensitive towards being socially accepted or rejected (Hill, 1991). Chusmir (1985) indicating that individuals having less concern for social relationships in organizations find it easy to make quick and tough organizational decisions needed for success (Pinder, 2014) as they are less worried about social approval or rejection. Hence it may be suggested that usefulness of need for affiliation depends upon status or position and the nature of decision-making in an organization and sometimes low affiliation need is more useful in decision-making than the high (Chusmir & Azevedo, 1992).

Need for power. High need for power is characterized by a desire to take control of people, situations, and resources. This need drives people to challenge and confront others and to engage in competition where they anticipate winning (McClelland, 1961, 1985). The power motivation is linked with aggression, assertiveness, culpable behaviors (Winter, 2000). It is positively related with assertiveness in friendships (McAdams, Healy, & Krause, 1984), and risk taking (McClelland & Watson, 1973), while, it is negatively linked with compromising in times of conflict resolution (Langner & Winter, 2001). The acquired needs framework is used in a number of theoretical and empirical studies in organizational research on individual motivation either in form of complete framework or with a single motive (McClelland & Boyatzis, 1982; Redmond, 2010). The affiliation motivation is examined with performance ratings (House & Shamir, 1993), organizational decisions making and feedback (e.g. Pinder, 2014). The power motivation is examined with aggression, assertiveness (Winter, 2000). On the other side, need for power also predicts entrepreneurial intent positively among employees of higher education sector (Ramsay, Pang, Ho, & Chan, 2017). However, the framework of McClelland's need theory is not examined to study the influence of dispositional traits of CSE on various job performance behaviors of employees as yet.

Task Performance Behavior

Employee job performance is referred as the degree to which employee's behaviors are effective in meeting organizational objectives (Campbell, 1990). Task behaviors are directed towards the fulfillment of core job responsibilities and assigned tasks that are essential for the organizational mechanical core (Borman & Motowidlo, 1993; Rotundo & Sackett, 2002). The basic antecedents to the task-behaviors relate to cognitive ability and experience (Borman & Motowidlo, 1993) which are specifically defined in job description (Williams & Anderson, 1991). Literature indicates that performance is the sum of traits and motivation (Judge & Bono, 2001) and both traits and motivation are significantly related to individual difference perspective of performance (Campbell, 1990) such as CSE personality traits and acquired motivational needs. Similarly, positive affect also signifies task performance (Yang et al., 2016); whereas, CSE positively impacted job satisfaction and negatively impacted turnover intentions. High CSE was also found to minimize the negative impact of examined change uncertainty-job attitude relationships (Haynie, Harris, & Flynn, 2016).

Hypotheses

Based on literature review following hypotheses were formulated:

1. Core self-evaluation has positive relationship with acquired motivational needs (affiliation, power, and achievement).

    1a. Core self-evaluation has positive relationship with need for affiliation.

    1b. Core self-evaluation has positive relationship with need for power.

    1c. Core self-evaluation has positive relationship with need for achievement.

2. Acquired motivational needs has positive association with employee task performance.

    2a. Need for affiliation has positive relationship with task performance behavior.

    2b. Need for power has positive relationship with task performance behavior.

    2c. Need for achievement has positive relationship with task performance behavior.

Method

Sample

The service industry of higher education in Pakistan is selected for this study. Population includes male and female university teachers in five major cities of Pakistan. These cities are the hub of universities and include Lahore, Peshawar, Karachi and Quetta, while the fifth city is the federal capital city of Islamabad. The descriptive study design with convenience sampling technique is used. The data for study was collected by floating 650 questionnaires among university teachers (male and female).

The valid questionnaires were 455 while, male respondents' ratio was 316 (69.5%) and 139 (30.5%) were females. Model value is 1 for gender that show more males than females and standard is 0.46. On the basis of age, 177 (38.9%) lie between 25-30 years and 126 (27.7%) were between the age range of 30-35 years. Respondents varied in their education with 205 (45.1%) respondents had 16 years' education and 169 (37.1%) had 18 years of education.

Measures

The current study has used the 12 items Core Self-Evaluation Scale developed by Judge, Erez, Bono, and Thoresen (2003) which measures four high order traits of generalized self-efficacy, locus of control, self-esteem and neuroticism which are significantly interrelated under a single construct of CSE. McClelland (1961) theory represents three motivational needs indicating need-for-achievement, need-for-affiliation, and need-for-power as acquired human needs which direct and influence their behavioral outcomes (McClelland, 1961). This variable is measured on three distinctive but related factors that are further assessed by using Turner and Tajfel (1982) 15-item scale, five items for each. The last variable, Employee's Task Performance Behavior was assessed by using Williams and Anderson (1991) 7-item scale.

Procedure

The questionnaires were distributed personally in universities where the researchers have personal and professional relationships in order to ensure convenient follow-up and recovery of the questionnaires. The confidentiality of information provided by the teachers was maintained by giving them option to mention or not mention their names on the given questionnaire. For the purpose of distribution of questionnaires, the researchers contacted a focal person who would inform the time when majority of the staff is available in the university. Distribution and recollection process among the university teachers in five different cities took approximately two months.

Results

To test normality of demographic data, skewness and kurtosis were tested. Results denoted that the data is normal as values of skewness and kurtosis fall in acceptable range of -2 to +2. Correlation analysis was performed to test relation among study variables. Results of correlation analysis presented that all variables have positive relation with each other. Need for achievement and need for power have strong positive relation. In same way, core self-evaluation and task performance behavior also have strong positive relationship. Correlation analysis was performed to test relation among study variables. Results show that all variables have positive relation with each other (see Table 1).

Table 1
Correlation Matrix for All Study Variables

Variables	1	2	3	4	5
1.Core Self Evaluation	-	.69[*]	.65[*]	.71[*]	.74[*]
2.Need for Achievement		-	.64[*]	.68[*]	.69[*]
3.Need for Power			-	.69[*]	.68[*]
4.Need for Affiliation				-	.68[*]
5. Task Performance Behavior					-

[*]$p < .001$.

Similarly, need for achievement and need for power have strong positive relationship with each other; while, core self-evaluation is positively linked with and task performance behavior

Testing of Measurement Model

Confirmatory factor analysis was conducted for the measurement model. Valuation of factor loading and squared multiple correlations was employed to check reliability of every item and problematic observed error. Hu and Bentler (1999) Recommended that value of factor loading below 0.50 with squared multiple correlations value below 0.20 then that item is excluded from study.

Core self-evaluation is first latent variable and 7 items were included. Included items conceded factor loading and Squared Multiple Correlations values between .55 - .77 and .30 - .59, respectively. Need for achievement is second latent variable and 4 items were included. For detail of all latent variables (see Table 2).

Lastly, goodness of model fit presented satisfactory results as that is, CMIN/DF = 2.85; GFI = 0.90; AGFI = 0.85; CFI = 0.93; RMSEA = 0.06. Measurement model also presented the additional convergent validity qualities (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). A satisfactory level of convergent validity was found during measurement model testing because as internal consistency predictor Cronbach's alpha or internal consistency ranged among .68 and .85, Composite reliability ranged between .82-.91 and Average Variance Extracted ranged between .40-.72. R^2 also calculated as it explains variability of responses about their means.

Table 2

Measurement Model

Item	Factor Loadings				
Number	CSE	NACH	NPOW	NAFF	TPB
CSE1	.67				
CSE2	.63				
CSE4	.56				
CSE5	.77				
CSE6	.66				
CSE7	.55				
CSE8	.55				
NACH1		.86			
NACH2		.76			
NACH3		.83			
NACH4		.83			
NPOW1			.74		
NPOW2			.83		
NPOW3			.75		
NPOW4			.84		
NAFF1				.84	
NAFF2				.91	
NAFF3				.88	
NAFF4				.74	
TBP1					.51
TBP2					.93
TBP3					.56
TBP4					.81
TBP5					.77
TBP6					.78
TBP7					.78

Note. CSE = Core Self-evaluation; NAFF = Need for Affiliations; NPOW = Need for Power; NACH = Need for Achievement; TPB = Task Performance Behavior.

Table 3

Verification of Convergent Validity

Latent Variables	R^2	SMC Range	St. Factor Loading Range	Cronbach Alpha
1. TCSE	-	.30-.59	.55-.77	.78
2. TNACH	0.48	.57-.74	.76-.86	.77
3. TNPOW	0.42	.55-.71	.74-.84	.68
4. TNAFF	0.51	.55-.83	.74-.91	.79
5. TTPB	0.65	.25-.64	.50-.80	.85

Note. TCSE = Core Self-Evaluation; TNAFF = Need for Affiliations; TNPOW = Need for Power; TNACH = Need for Achievement; TTPB = Task Performance Behavior.

Testing of Structural Model

Structural model also encompassed of five latent variables with twenty-six observed variables. Conceptual model contained one exogenous variable that is core self-evaluation (TCSE), and four endogenous variables, that is, Need-for-achievement (TNACH), Need-for-power (TNPOW), Need-for-affiliation (TNAFF), and task performance behavior (TTPB).

According to first hypothesis, which stated a significant relation exist between CSE and motivation. All hypotheses result presented that value of standardized regression coefficient .86, $p < .05$; .81, $p < .05$ and .80, $p < .05$, respectively which are presenting significant and positive relationships exist among core self-evaluation and motivational-needs. According to second hypothesis, there is significant relationship existing between motivational-needs and task-performance. As H2a, result exemplified that there is non significant relationship between need for affiliation and task-performance behavior. On the other side, H2b and H2c, result presented that value of regression coefficient .62, $p < .05$; .32, $p < .05$ which are presenting positive relationships among need for power, need for achievement and task performance behavior.

Figure 1. Structural Model.

Note. TCSE = Core Self-Evaluation; TNAFF = Need for Affiliations; TNPOW = Need for Power; TNACH = Need for Achievement; TTPB = Task Performance Behavior.

For structural model, goodness of model fit indices was also examined which showed satisfactory results that is CMIN/DF = 3.35; GFI = 0.89; AGFI = 0.82; CFI = 0.90; and RMSEA = 0.07.

Table 4

Structural Model for all Study Variables

Hypotheses		Paths		Standard Regression Weights
H1a	TCSE	→	TNACH	.86[*]
H1b	TCSE	→	TNPOW	.81[*]
H1c	TCSE	→	TNAFF	.80[*]
H2a	TNAFF	→	TTPB	ns
H2b	TNPOW	→	TTPB	.62[*]
H2c	TNACH	→	TTPB	.32[*]

Note. TCSE = Core Self-Evaluation; TNAFF = Need For Affiliations; TNPOW = Need For Power; TNACH = Need For Achievement; TTPB = Task Performance Behavior

[*]$p < .05$.

Discussion

The study develops integrated model to examine the impact of personality traits of core self-evaluations on employee task performance through the process of acquired motivational needs in the context of university teachers in Pakistan. It was proposed that core self-evaluations personality traits have relationship with acquired-motivational needs. The results showed a significantly positive impact of core self-evaluations personality traits on acquired-motivational needs, supporting H1. This result is consistent with the findings of the Boon, Low, Lim, Ng, and Wong (2011) who found positive relationship of core self-evaluations with individual motivation to continue higher education. Judge and Ilies (2002) established that an individual's personality traits influence performance through the channel of motivation. This positive relationship revealed that if teachers make positive evaluations about themselves then they are more inclined towards need for achievement, need for affiliation and need for power. For instance, if teachers feel confident, self-determined and satisfied then they are motivated for hardworking and perform their task in a better way. Favorable evaluations regarding their capabilities and competencies develop an urge to win best performance award as well as to help other employees set goals and achieve them. Apart from extrinsic rewards such as best teachers' award, teachers need some amount of intrinsic rewards such as

autonomy, recognition, promotion growth and other benefits which enhance their social status, self-esteem and self-respect.

Moreover, it was hypothesized that acquired-motivational needs has relationship with employee task performance. From the results it is evident that acquired-motivational needs (need for achievement and need for power) has a positively significant influence on employee task performance. The significant influence of motivation on performance is strongly persuaded by Judge and Bono (2001) suggesting that all behaviors need motivation. Thus, motivation lies in the heart of employee task behaviors and also provides a mechanism to explain the influence of personality traits on performance. Shore and Shore (1995) observed that motivation serve as cues to the direction and nature of employee performance.

The motive-based perspective (Yen & Niehoff, 2004) also offers a venue to link personality with performance (Organ, 1994). Employees in an organization exhibit a dominant desire to have control and authority over others and thus engage in behaviors that help them to fulfill this need. In a work situation, the power need is fulfilled by gaining those competencies and skills that can be translated into high task performance and in turn result in attainment of powerful positions (Albert Bandura, 1997; A. Bandura & Locke, 2009). The findings of the present study showed significant correlation between need for achievement and an employee task performance behavior. Lee, Sheldon, and Turban (2003) argue that certain personality traits such as autonomy and control may influence task performance through helping individuals in setting goals.

Limitations and Suggestions

The current research has adopted a cross-sectional design which resulted in compromising on the continuing and pervasive influences of task and non-task behaviors such as better career opportunities, upward career trajectory, work life satisfaction, and optimal wellbeing. It has developed a parsimonious framework of research to test key influences of variables on employee job performance behaviors. Theoretical framework of this study is supported by the data. However, more research is required for developing detailed framework of employee job performance. The framework will extend guidance and help to researchers for examining the influences of various moderators besides helping to explain any interactional influences of the variables studied. The current study has not included the moderating effects of variables such as age, gender and experience

to examine employee job performance and may offer significant avenues to be investigated.

Conclusion and Implications

Generally, it is observable that employees who are motivated to achieve and excel also show high level of performance in the disbursement of their assigned duties and tasks. Thus, an employee who has a high need to excel and to surpass normal performance standards is more determined to exhibit high competence and proficiency to complete assigned jobs. The findings and results of the study also verify the above relationship that need for achievement significantly influences employee task performance. Conversely the findings also indicate that employees with low achievement need show low level of task performance. Leaders and managers of the organizations need to develop an environment where employee core self-evaluations can be developed and different needs such as need for power and achievement may be enhanced. Such an environment will help organization in increasing employee task performance resulting in financial and non-financial benefits. Moreover, Pakistani organizations must also consider core self-evaluations and needs in selection and promotion of employees.

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