

The Relationship between Perceived Organisational Support, Perceived External Prestige, Growth Need Strength and Job Satisfaction of Nurses in Pakistan

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Abstract

The purpose of the study is to explore the moderating role of Growth Need Strength (GNS) on the relationship between Perceived Organisational Support (POS), Perceived External Prestige (PEP) and job satisfaction in the healthcare industry of Pakistan. The data was collected from nurses working in the public sector hospitals in Pakistan. After a successful confirmatory data analysis, a multivariate regression analysis was utilised to interpret the results. The results indicate that there is a positive and statistically significant effect of POS and GNS on job satisfaction. However, no statistically significant association is found between PEP and job satisfaction. The findings also reveal that GNS positively moderates the relationship between POS and job satisfaction. Healthcare organisations can utilise these results as a basis for future planning and decision making to retain nurses and to improve their job satisfaction level. These organisations should give preference to employees with high growth needs.

Keywords: *Perceived organisational support, perceived external prestige, growth need strength, job satisfaction, Pakistan*

Introduction

In today's world, organisational processes, relationships with stakeholders and human capital are fundamental pillars of organisational success. Due to its intimate association with value creation, employee job satisfaction is an important consideration for any organisation (Daft, 2015). The satisfaction level of employees with their jobs should be assessed incessantly in order to drive positive actions, feelings and thoughts from them.

Researchers have postulated different definitions of job satisfaction. According to Spector (1997, p. 2), "job satisfaction is related to how people feel, think and perceive their work". Robbins et al. (2013) describe job satisfaction as an employee's attitude and general behaviour towards his or her work. There are several benefits in studying job satisfaction in the workplace. According to Oshagbemi (2013), satisfied employees increase productivity and enhance inherent humanitarian value. Additionally, other advantages like decreased absenteeism (Hardy et al., 2003), decreased counterproductive work behaviour (Meier and Spector, 2013), increased life satisfaction (Judge et al., 2000) and enhanced organisational citizenship behaviours (Organ and Ryan, 1995) can be observed in highly satisfied workers. Eventually, all of these factors lead to superior organisational efficiency.

As it is evident, job satisfaction has an impact on organisational performance, and factors that drive or determine job satisfaction need to be understood. Previous studies propose various individual and organisational factors that could affect job satisfaction. Researchers also separate the variables affecting job satisfaction into soft (less measurable and subjective) and hard (measurable and concrete) categories. Soft variables include individual's perceived value to the organisation, relationships with co-workers and communication; while "hard" variables include employer's commitment, salary and benefits (Speers, 2004). Another categorisation looks at intrinsic factors that are related to the job itself (e.g. control, achievement, success, sense of autonomy and the ability to develop one's skills) and extrinsic factors that are not directly associated with the job (e.g. relationships with colleagues or salaries) (Hann et al., 2010).

There is literature on the determinants of job satisfaction in the context of Pakistan. For instance, researchers evaluate personality traits (Ijaz and Khan, 2015), time pressure, job description, working environment, rewards, supervision, training opportunities (Kumar et al., 2013), employee motivation, positive expectations (Saleem et al., 2012), relationship with co-workers, fairness and job security (Saeed et al., 2013) for their association with job satisfaction. However, there is little evidence on the factors affecting job satisfaction in the health sector of Pakistan. Regardless of restructured healthcare staff salaries and bonuses, Pakistani healthcare sector is still not performing well. A number of cases of health care staff negligence leading to serious complications and even death of patients is observed (Bhutta et al., 2013). This study investigates the determinants of the job satisfaction level of nurses, an important group of healthcare workers in Pakistan.

Health Care Sector in Pakistan

Health care industry in Pakistan is experiencing workforce shortage because experienced staff are moving to developed countries in search of better job prospects, lifestyle and better pay. World Health Report (2006) and a Joint Initiative Report (2004) demonstrate serious workforce shortages in Pakistan (Chen et al., 2004). Thus, workforce retention in Pakistan has become a critical concern for healthcare managers.

There is a very high nurse to population ratio (1:3,043) in Pakistan (Hamid et al., 2014). There is a comparatively low nurse to population ratios in developed countries, such as Singapore (1:154), Canada (1:129), England (1:172) and Scotland (1:126) (Atefi et al., 2014; Ong, 2013). There are almost 965 largely urban-based hospitals in Pakistan, but there is a severe shortage of skilled nurses. This shortage can also be assessed based on the doctor to nurse ratio in Pakistan (i.e. 2.7:1) (Nishtar et al., 2013).

Kumar et al. (2013) report that the satisfaction level of healthcare professionals in Pakistan is 41 percent with 14 percent reporting high levels of dissatisfaction. Ghazali et al. (2007) investigate the satisfaction level of Pakistani doctors and find that almost 56 percent of doctors were not happy with their income level and almost 92 percent were not satisfied with their career prospects and present service structure. Most of them look for opportunities to work in developed countries. Despite the high job dissatisfaction level of nurses in Pakistan, very little work has been done in this domain (see Aziz et al., 2015; Hamid et al., 2014; Kumar et al., 2013).

Bhatnagar and Srivastava (2012) show that job satisfaction of healthcare workers can be improved if they perceive the care of patients as being vital to their job. Utriainen and Kyngäs (2009) find that appropriate rewards for efforts, a balanced workload and defined roles and duties are associated with a high level of job satisfaction in nurses. On the other hand, poor job satisfaction and burnout in nurses is caused by inadequate empowerment at work, poor leadership, dissatisfaction with the quality of work and high patient to nurse/doctor ratio (Miller, 2011). Other factors found to be associated with poor job satisfaction of nurses are inadequate financial rewards, improper supervision, the lack of training opportunities, time pressure, and poor job descriptions (Kumar et al., 2013).

Literature Review and Hypotheses

There are a number of factors that could influence employee work behaviour and attitude (Armstrong-Stassen, 1998), one of which is Perceived Organisational Support (POS). According to Eisenberger et al. (1986, p. 501), individuals tend to “form global beliefs concerning the extent to which the organisation values their contributions and cares about their well-being.” The perceptions and beliefs emerging from the connections between the organisation and employees are called POS.

Studies reveal that high POS could lead to high satisfaction level among employees (Bogler and Nir, 2012; Burke, 2003; Hakkak et al., 2014; Karatepe, 2012; Peterson, 2015). Studies carried out on different types of employees, including part-time employees (Cropanzano et al., 1997), salespeople (Stamper and Johlke, 2003) and nurses (Filipova, 2011), show that POS and job satisfaction are positively related because employees trust and believe that their organisation will reward and recognise their work. Spence et al. (2012) and Eisenberger et al. (1986) found that POS is important in making employees satisfied, leading to increased organisational commitment and fulfilment of organisational goals. POS also enhances employee loyalty (Purang, 2011) and employee performance (Bagherzadeh and Mofidi, 2015). These findings are consistent with social exchange theory, which postulate that when employees perceive the organisation to be caring about their well-being and values their contribution to the workplace, they are likely to get involved and participate in the activities that could enhance organisational productivity (Eisenberger et al., 1986).

Thus, in the light of prior literature and theory, the following hypothesis is formulated.

H1: There is a positive impact of POS on job satisfaction.

There is no research on the impact of POS on job satisfaction in the healthcare sector in Pakistan. Previous studies on Pakistan pay limited attention to the relationship between POS and job satisfaction.

Perceived External Prestige (PEP) is another factor influencing job satisfaction. Organisational image and prestige are considered an intangible asset (Newell and Goldsmith, 2001). It has a positive influence on stakeholders. A firm's reputation affects the attitude of customers towards the products and services offered by it (Johnson and Grayson, 2005). Organisations with a good reputation and positive image can hire highly skilled employees (Greening and Turban, 2000). Similarly, the decision of employees to leave or stay with a firm can also be influenced by the organisations' prestige (Herrbach et al., 2004). Not only there is a positive relationship between firm value and good corporate reputation (Balmer and Gray, 1999; Roberts and Dowling, 2002; Vergin and Qoronfleh, 1998) the survival of organisations depends on its reputation (Roberts and Dowling, 2002). If an organisation has a good reputation, then employees are less likely to feel dissatisfied because the organisation is likely to be acting in the best interest of its stakeholders.

While prior studies find a positive effect of PEP on job satisfaction (Helm, 2013; Jonason et al., 2015; Kang et al., 2011), this relationship has not been studied in a Pakistani setting. Herrbach et al. (2004) argued that PEP affects job satisfaction in three ways: (1) individuals evaluate PEP as a job facet along with other factors such as pay, personal relations with co-workers or working conditions; (2) PEP acts as a cognitive bias in the process of evaluating employees' contentment with the job; (3) PEP acts as an affective bias that effects employees perception of the job. Stronger PEP could have a positive effect and a perceptual bias for employees.

Accordingly, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H2: There is a positive impact of PEP on job satisfaction.

This study considers Growth Need Strength (GNS) as a moderating variable on the relationship between POS, PEP and job satisfaction. GNS can be defined as the desire of employees to grow and to be challenged on the job or their need for personal development, learning and accomplishment on the job (Hackman and Oldham, 1980). According to Tosi et al. (1986), GNS refers to the ability of an individual to achieve or advance in a challenging job. It is also argued in prior studies, that every individual has a basic GNS, but it can vary from weak to strong along with the nature of the job and organisation.

It is usually believed that individuals with higher or stronger growth needs, respond to demands in their jobs more positively than those who possess weaker growth needs (Champoux, 2010). Job characteristics theory characterises GNS as an important moderator of the relationship between psychological states and job characteristics (Hackman and Oldham, 1975). Prior studies have considered the GNS as a moderator between various job characteristics and job satisfaction (De Jong et al., 2001; Graen et al., 1986; Sarkawi et al., 2016; Tiegs et al., 1992). It is posited that GNS could moderate the relationship between POS, PEP and job satisfaction because individuals with strong potential and greater growth needs could be more satisfied with their job in the presence of high POS and PEP.

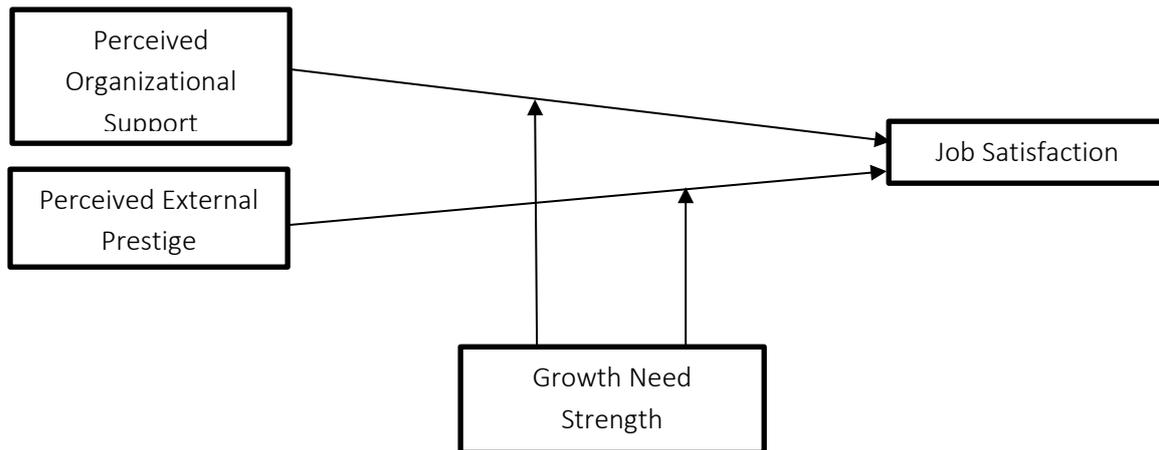
Thus, the following hypotheses are developed:

H3: There is a positive moderating effect of GNS on the relationship between POS and job satisfaction

H4: There is a positive moderating effect of GNS on the relationship between PEP and job satisfaction

Figure 1 shows the hypothesised relationships between POS, PEP, job satisfaction and GNS.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



Methodology

Sample

This study is based on a questionnaire survey administered to nurses working in public hospitals in Pakistan. According to Pakistan Economic Survey (2016-2017), there are 99,228 registered nurses in Pakistan. According to the table of Krejcie and Morgan (1970), a sample size of 382 is considered adequate for a population of 99,228. A total of 400 questionnaires were distributed. Nurses working in public hospitals were selected for this study for several reasons. First, almost half of the population in Pakistan is living under the poverty line, so they cannot afford treatment in private hospitals. Second, the performance of public hospitals in Pakistan is not up to scratch, as there are only four government hospitals among the top 20 hospitals in the country (Junaidi, 2016). There have been reports regarding unhygienic conditions, rude behaviour of staff and over-crowding of patients in public hospitals in Pakistan. As a result, job satisfaction of employees in public hospitals is important to improve healthcare standards for the general population in Pakistan.

Data Collection

The researchers first approached the public hospital administration for consent to conduct the study. Nurses in the public hospitals were called individually for data collection where they were informed about the rationale for the research, anonymity of their responses and their right to withdraw. After the consent forms were signed and the participants agreed to cooperate, they were provided with a questionnaire.

The questionnaire was designed in English, but due to low English language proficiency among nurses in public hospitals in Pakistan, it was translated into Urdu (national language of Pakistan). In order to

enhance the readability among the respondents, the services of a professional translator were utilised. Prior studies also indicate the importance of translating questionnaires to ensure their reliability while administering it in different cultures (Bates and Khasawneh, 2005; Velada et al., 2009).

After data screening, the final sample for this study comprised of 324 nurses. The average age of the respondents is 35 years. The majority of the nurses (n=221) served in public hospitals for a duration between one and five years. The rest (n=103) served more than five years.

Variable Measurement

Job Satisfaction

Researchers have used the measurement scale developed by Spector (1985; 1994; 1997) to measure employee job satisfaction. Spector (1985; 1994; 1997) conceptualised employee job satisfaction as emotional and affective feedback to a certain portion of the work. Previously, many researchers have utilised this scale and found it to be reliable. For example, previously, Sabri et al. (2011) employed this scale to examine job satisfaction among Pakistani teachers and found a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.95. There are 23 items in this scale. The items are ranked using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

Perceived Organisational Support

POS was evaluated using the 16-item Survey of POS developed by Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002) which is a revised version of the 36-item Survey of POS developed by Eisenberger et al. (1990). The source publication reported reliability of a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.75. (Eisenberger et al., 1990). The survey items are ranked using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

Perceived External Prestige

This study utilised the 8-item scale developed by Mael and Ashforth (1992) to measure PEP. Mael and Ashforth (1992) reported a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.79 when they administered this scale. The meta-analysis of Riketta (2005) shows an average reliability estimate of 0.84 for this scale. The survey items are ranked using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

Growth Need Strength

GNS is used as a moderator in this study. Previous studies examined GNS as a factor affecting core job dimensions. This study uses the 6-item scale of Hackman and Oldham (1980) to measure GNS. Hackman and Oldham (1975) found the internal consistency and the discriminant validity of this scale to be satisfactory. The survey items are ranked using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

Results

Measurement Results

In order to ensure reliability of the scales, a pilot study was conducted. Results showed that the internal consistency of scales is satisfactory, as Cronbach's alphas of all four scales were above 0.7 (Hair et al., 2011). Moreover, many diagnostic tests should be performed before conducting multivariate analysis. The normality of the data was tested through multivariate kurtosis value (Vermeeren et al., 2011). A small deviation from normality was observed in the GNS scale. However, Hair et al. (2010) argue that non-normality issue is less likely to affect results in case of large samples. The outliers were identified through Mahalanobis distance (Kline, 2005). There was only one observation, which exceeded the critical χ^2 -value. This observation was eliminated. There was no issue of multicollinearity because none of the correlation coefficients was above 0.9 (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007).

The assessment of the four measures (Job satisfaction, POS, PEP and GNS) for construct validity (discriminant and convergent validity) and model fit was made in a single measurement model based on the values for SRMR, RMSEA, CFI and χ^2/df . In a strong model, the SRMR should be less than 0.1, RMSEA should be less than 0.08, CFI should be greater than 0.95 and χ^2/df must be less than 2 (Hair et al., 2010). In addition, the value of average variance extracted (AVE) should be greater than 0.5, and the loading estimate should be higher than 0.5 and statistically significant in order to evaluate good construct convergent validity. This study also assessed discriminant validity of the constructs by evaluating if the square roots of AVE estimates of every construct are higher than their inter-construct correlations (Hair et al., 2010).

Table 1 shows standardised measurement coefficients from confirmatory Factor Analysis. The items with loading estimates of less than 0.5 were eliminated from the model. Accordingly, nine items from job satisfaction, five items from POS and one item each from both PEP and GNS constructs were dropped from further analysis. After the elimination of insignificant items, final measurement model fit indices yield acceptable outcomes (SRMR= 0.035; RMSEA= 0.052, CFI= 0.961, TLI= 0.918, χ^2/df = 1.819). Moreover, all indicators were statistically significant - AVE values of all constructs were higher than 0.5 and α -values of all constructs were higher than 0.7, as recommended by Hair et al. (2010). Table 2 exhibits the descriptive statistics and correlation matrix for all variables incorporated in this study. All correlations were lower than 0.9, indicating the absence of multicollinearity. Furthermore, the means range from 3.9 to 4.84, and the standard deviations range from 0.49 to 0.69.

Table 1: Standardised measurement coefficients resulting from Confirmatory Factor Analysis

	JS	POS	PEP	GNS
Cronbach's α	0.71	0.88	0.76	0.84
Composite reliability	0.72	0.88	0.77	0.84
AVE	0.55	0.64	0.51	0.58
<i>Item Abbreviation</i>				
JS1	0.592			
JS2	0.844			
JS4	0.726			
JS5	0.773			
JS6	0.823			
JS8	0.699			
JS10	0.793			
JS12	0.811			
JS13	0.565			
JS14	0.791			
JS16	0.638			
JS17	0.719			
JS21	0.829			
JS22	0.834			
POS2		0.626		
POS4		0.619		
POS5		0.547		
POS7		0.631		
POS8		0.539		
POS9		0.721		
POS11		0.866		
POS12		0.747		
POS14		0.635		
POS15		0.526		
POS16		0.508		
PEP1			0.824	
PEP2			0.771	
PEP3			0.628	
PEP5			0.568	
PEP6			0.639	
PEP7			0.536	
PEP8			0.796	
GNS1				0.861
GNS3				0.637
GNS4				0.502
GNS5				0.563
GNS6				0.753

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Matrix

Variable	Mean	S.D.	1	2	3
Job Satisfaction	3.9	0.49			
POS	4.84	0.52	0.56***		
PEP	4.21	0.62	0.62	0.66***	
GNS	4.52	0.69	0.43*	0.74	0.68

Note: * $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.001$

Results of Hypotheses Tests

Hierarchical linear regression analysis is utilised to obtain insight into effect size transformations with the addition of the moderator or interaction variable. In order to mitigate the possibility of multicollinearity among interaction terms, this study has centred predictor variables as suggested by Cohen and Cohen (1983). Table 3 shows the division of results into three different models. In the first model, the direct effects of POS and PEP are tested. The second model adds the direct effect of GNS. Finally, interaction terms are added in the third model.

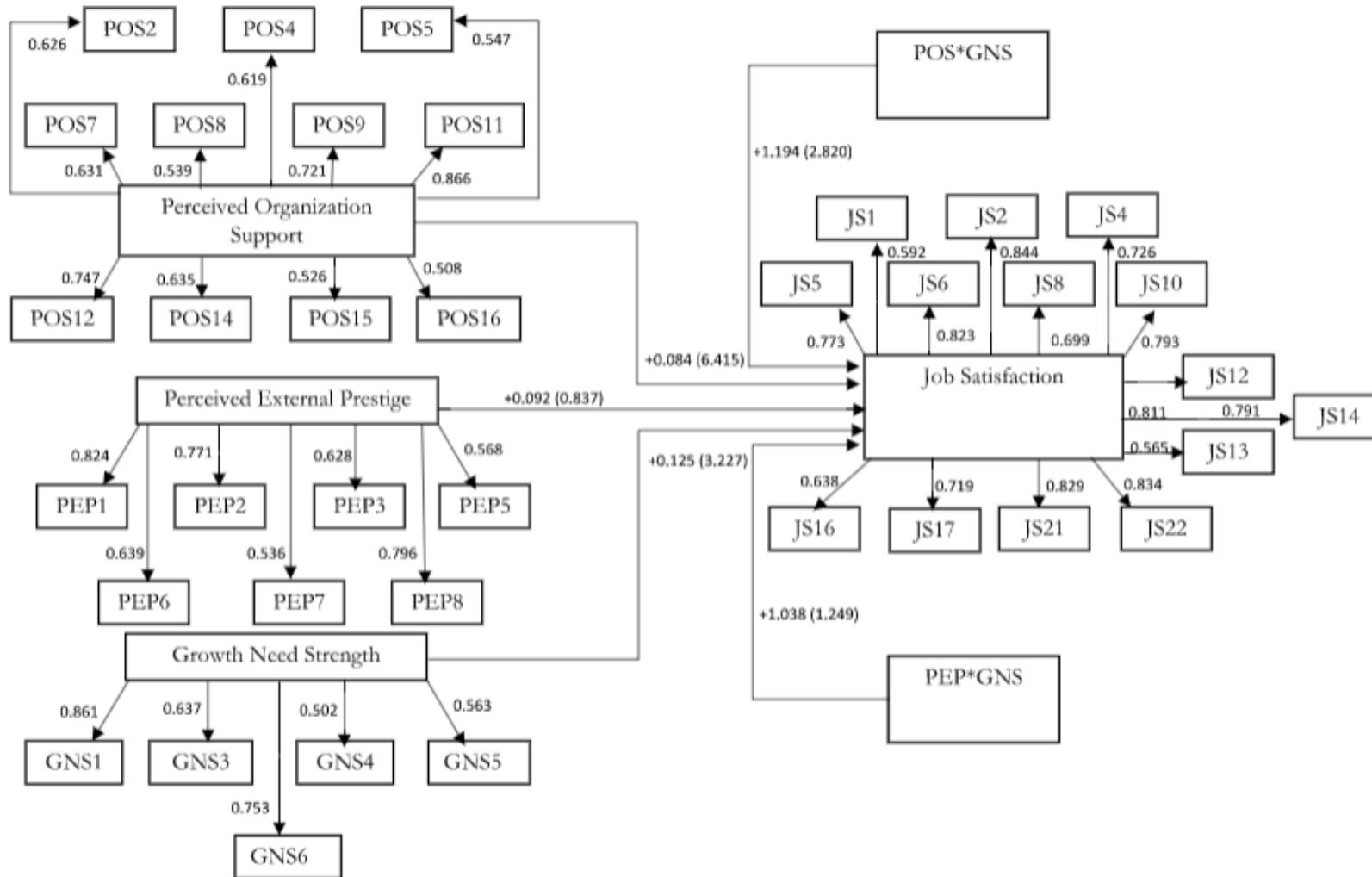
Table 3: Hierarchical Regression Results

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
POS	0.023*	0.036*	0.084*
PEP	0.004	0.052	0.092
GNS		0.186***	0.125*
POS*GNS			1.194*
PEP*GNS			1.038
Model <i>F</i>	3.242**	7.032***	8.145***
Adjusted R^2	0.325	0.430	0.558

Note: * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$. Standardised Beta Coefficients are considered

The results of the study indicate a positive effect of POS on job satisfaction in all models ($\beta = 0.084$, $p < 0.05$). This suggests that as employees feel their organisation to appreciate and value them their job satisfaction increases. Accordingly, the results support H1 of the study. However, the results do not show a statistically significant association between PEP and job satisfaction. Consequently, H2 of the study is rejected. Finally, it is found that GNS positively moderate the relationship between POS and job satisfaction ($\beta = 1.194$, $p < 0.05$), but GNS has no significant moderating effect on the PEP-job satisfaction relationship. Accordingly, the results support H3, but rejects H4. The Structural Equation Model results illustrated in Figure 2 further validates the main results.

Figure 2: Structural Equation Model



Note: Figures are factor loadings followed by critical ratio values. The minimum critical ratio value of 1.960 is required for the factor loading to be significant. POS - Perceived Organisational Support; PEP – Perceived External Prestige; GNS – Growth Need Strength; and JS – Job Satisfaction

Discussion

This research provides evidence that POS is positively associated with job satisfaction of nurses in Pakistan. This outcome is consistent with various studies that also find a positive relationship between POS and job-satisfaction (Bogler and Nir, 2012; Hakkak et al., 2014; Peterson, 2015). Consistent with organisational support theory, it is purported that if nurses in Pakistan can establish a belief that their institution cares for their well-being and appreciates their contribution, then they will most likely be satisfied with their job (Eisenberger et al., 2004).

Contrary to expectations and prior research, such as Tuna et al. (2016), the results show that PEP does not directly affect job satisfaction. Although high PEP could lead a person to feel proud as suggested by Bartels et al. (2006), it does not seem to contribute directly towards the satisfaction level of Pakistani nurses.

The direct effect of GNS on job satisfaction is also significant and positive. This result supports the argument that individuals with the need for personal development, learning, accomplishment and desire for challenging work could respond more optimistically towards their jobs (Hackman and Oldham, 1980). In terms of the moderating effect of GNS, results show that GNS can fortify the relationship between POS and job satisfaction. Thus, if a person possesses high GNS and perceives his/her organisation to be supportive, then he/she will be more satisfied with his/her job. Nonetheless, the results do not demonstrate any significant moderating effect of GNS on the relationship between PEP and job satisfaction.

Conclusion

Ensuring job satisfaction of nurses in Pakistani public hospitals is essential for the well-being of the public who access the healthcare system. This study focused on the determinants of nurses' job satisfaction in Pakistan. The results support that POS and GNS positively affect job satisfaction of nurses. However, there is no direct significant relationship between PEP and job satisfaction. Therefore, this relationship should be investigated with other interactions in the context of public hospitals in Pakistan. Results also reveal that GNS positively moderate the relationship between POS and job satisfaction. Nonetheless, GNS has no moderating effect on the relationship between PEP and job satisfaction.

Limitations of the Study

Data for this study were collected from nurses of public hospitals located in the city of Lahore. Job satisfaction level could vary by city. Unfortunately, in a country like Pakistan, the general population does not take research activities seriously. They are less willing to participate in research projects due to lack of understanding and time. Owing to our limited research budget, researchers were unable to provide given incentives to potential respondents. Such incentives could have increased the participation rate and sample size.

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