

Perceived Organizational Support as a Buffer Between Work Pressure and Employee Withdrawal Behaviors in a Nigerian Manufacturing Firm.

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Abstract

Employee withdrawal behaviors, including absenteeism, lateness, and reduced work engagement, remain persistent challenges for organizations operating under intense work pressure, particularly within manufacturing environments. Grounded in Organizational Support Theory, this study examines the relationship between work pressure and employee withdrawal behaviors and investigates the mediating role of perceived organizational support (POS). A quantitative cross-sectional research design was employed, and data were collected from 150 employees of Gwagwalada Industrial Manufacturing Ltd., Nigeria. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was used to analyze the data. The findings reveal that work pressure has a significant positive effect on employee withdrawal behaviors, while perceived organizational support has a significant negative effect on such behaviors. Furthermore, POS partially mediates the relationship between work pressure and withdrawal behaviors, indicating that supportive organizational practices can buffer the negative behavioral consequences of excessive job demands. This study contributes empirical evidence from a developing economy context and offers practical insights for manufacturing organizations seeking to mitigate withdrawal behaviors through strategic organizational support initiatives.

Keywords: Work Pressure; Perceived Organizational Support; Employee Withdrawal Behaviors; Manufacturing Sector; Nigeria

1. Introduction

Manufacturing organizations increasingly operate in demanding environments characterized by tight production schedules, performance pressures, and continuous efficiency requirements. These conditions often expose employees to excessive workloads, time pressure, and role overload, collectively described as work pressure. When such pressure persists without adequate organizational support, employees may experience psychological strain that manifests in withdrawal behaviors such as absenteeism, lateness, and reduced work engagement.

Work pressure has been widely recognized as a critical antecedent of negative employee outcomes, including stress, burnout, and disengagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2022). In labor-intensive manufacturing contexts, withdrawal behaviors can disrupt production flow, increase operational costs, and undermine organizational performance. Consequently, understanding mechanisms that

mitigate the negative effects of work pressure remains a central concern in organizational and human resource management research.

Perceived organizational support (POS) represents employees' beliefs regarding the extent to which their organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being (Eisenberger et al., 2020). POS functions as an important psychological resource that enhances resilience and commitment, particularly in high-pressure work environments. Employees who perceive strong organizational support are more likely to remain engaged and committed despite demanding job conditions.

Although prior studies have examined work pressure and organizational support, empirical evidence from developing economies particularly within manufacturing sectors remains limited. Nigerian manufacturing firms operate under challenging conditions marked by infrastructural constraints, economic volatility, and intense productivity

expectations. This study addresses this gap by examining the mediating role of perceived organizational support in the relationship between work pressure and employee withdrawal behaviors in a Nigerian manufacturing firm.

1. Problem Statement

The intensification of work demands in manufacturing organizations has heightened concerns regarding employee withdrawal behaviors. While work pressure is often unavoidable in competitive production environments, unmanaged pressure can significantly undermine employee well-being and organizational effectiveness. In developing economies such as Nigeria, manufacturing firms frequently operate with limited resources, which can exacerbate work pressure and increase employees' vulnerability to stress-induced disengagement.

Although recent studies suggest that perceived organizational support can reduce the adverse effects of workplace stressors, limited empirical research has examined its mediating role between work pressure and withdrawal behaviors in manufacturing contexts within developing countries. This lack of context-specific evidence constrains both theoretical advancement and managerial decision-making.

Without a clear understanding of how organizational support mechanisms influence employee responses to work pressure, organizations risk adopting ineffective human resource strategies. This study therefore seeks to empirically examine whether perceived organizational support buffers the relationship between work pressure and employee withdrawal behaviors in a Nigerian manufacturing firm.

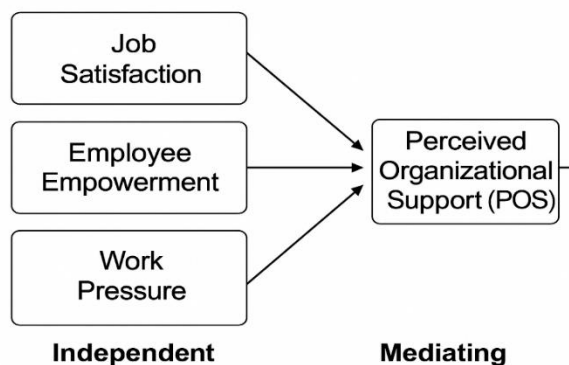


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

2. Literature Review

3.1 Work Pressure

Work pressure refers to employees' perceptions that job demands exceed their available time, energy, or resources. It typically arises from excessive workloads, tight deadlines, role conflict, and performance monitoring (Cooper et al., 2019). Sustained exposure to work pressure has been linked to psychological strain, fatigue, and burnout, which negatively influence employees' attitudes and behaviors (Bakker & Demerouti, 2022).

3.2 Employee Withdrawal Behaviors

Employee withdrawal behaviors involve actions through which employees distance themselves physically or psychologically from their work roles. These behaviors include absenteeism, lateness, reduced effort, and mental disengagement (Zhang et al., 2022). Withdrawal behaviors are often coping responses to unfavorable work conditions and are associated with job stress and dissatisfaction, particularly in high-pressure manufacturing environments.

3.3 Perceived Organizational Support

Perceived organizational support is grounded in Organizational Support Theory, which posits that employees develop global beliefs regarding how much their organization values their contributions and cares for their well-being (Eisenberger et al., 2020). High POS fosters trust, emotional attachment, and a sense of obligation, encouraging employees to reciprocate with positive attitudes and behaviors. Recent empirical studies link POS to lower stress levels, reduced withdrawal tendencies, and improved performance (Singh et al., 2023).

3.4 Work Pressure and Employee Withdrawal Behaviors

Empirical evidence consistently demonstrates a positive relationship between work pressure and withdrawal behaviors. Excessive job demands deplete employees' psychological resources, prompting disengagement as a self-protective strategy (Bakker & Demerouti, 2022; Rana & Sharma, 2020).

3.5 Perceived Organizational Support as a Mediator

Perceived organizational support serves as a key buffering mechanism that weakens the negative

impact of work pressure. Supportive organizational practices such as recognition, fair workload allocation, and access to resources enhance employees' coping capacity and reduce withdrawal behaviors (Khan et al., 2023; Singh et al., 2023). Accordingly, POS is expected to mediate the relationship between work pressure and employee withdrawal behaviors.

3. Methodology

4.1 Research Design

This study adopted a quantitative, cross-sectional survey design to examine the relationships among work pressure, perceived organizational support, and employee withdrawal behaviors.

4.2 Population and Sample

The study population comprised all full-time employees of Gwagwalada Industrial Manufacturing Ltd., Nigeria (N = 285). Based on Krejcie and Morgan's sampling guidelines and SEM requirements, a sample size of 150 employees was considered adequate (Hair et al., 2019).

4.3 Instrumentation

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire consisting of validated scales measuring work pressure, perceived organizational support, and employee withdrawal behaviors. Responses were measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

4.4 Data Analysis Technique

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) using AMOS was employed. Model fit was assessed using Chi-square/df, CFI, TLI, RMSEA, and SRMR. Mediation effects were tested using bootstrapping procedures.

4. Data Analysis and Results

5.1 Preliminary Data Screening

Data were screened for missing values, outliers, and normality. No significant missing data were observed. Skewness and kurtosis values for all constructs were within ± 2 , confirming suitability for SEM analysis.

5.2 Measurement Model Assessment

Composite Reliability values ranged from 0.79 to 0.91, exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70. Convergent validity was confirmed as factor loadings exceeded 0.60 and AVE values were above 0.50. Discriminant validity was established using the Fornell–Larcker criterion.

5.3 Structural Model and Hypothesis Testing

Model fit indices indicated good fit ($\chi^2/df < 3.0$, CFI > 0.90 , TLI > 0.90 , RMSEA < 0.08 , SRMR < 0.08). Work pressure had a significant positive effect on employee withdrawal behaviors ($\beta = 0.48$, $p < 0.01$). Perceived organizational support had a significant negative effect on withdrawal behaviors ($\beta = -0.41$, $p < 0.01$).

5.4 Mediation Analysis

Bootstrapping results revealed a significant indirect effect of work pressure on withdrawal behaviors through POS ($\beta = -0.19$, $p < 0.01$). The direct effect remained significant, confirming partial mediation.

5.5 Discussion

The findings demonstrate that perceived organizational support weakens the negative impact of work pressure on employee behavior. In the Nigerian manufacturing context, POS plays a crucial psychological buffering role, supporting recent studies on organizational support in high-pressure work environments.

5. Conclusion and Implications

This study confirms that work pressure significantly contributes to employee withdrawal behaviors in Nigeria's manufacturing sector. However, perceived organizational support plays a vital buffering role by mitigating these negative outcomes. Manufacturing organizations should prioritize supportive HR practices, including fair workload distribution, recognition systems, and open communication. The study extends Organizational Support Theory within a developing economy context and provides practical guidance for reducing withdrawal behaviors.

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