

# Perceived Organizational Support and Organizational Commitment: The Mediational Influence of Psychological Well-Being

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The relationship between employees and their organizations has been studied extensively in the organizational behavior literature (Fuller et al., 2006; Masterson & Stamper, 2003). Organizations help employees cope with social change and personal loss, provide defense against unconscious anxieties (Levinson, 1965), offer an entity that they can identify themselves with, and foster perceptions of comfort and competence (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Employees in turn, develop a sense of belongingness to the organization (Aslege & Eisenberger, 2003; Eisenberger et al., 1986) and internalize its norms and values (Weiner, 1982). As a result of various person and work related interactions with the organization, employees develop certain attitudes towards the organization which guide their behavior. Organizational support theory has found strong evidence of this reciprocal relationship (Eisenberger et al., 2001) where employees reciprocate organizational actions through commitment to the organization.

Extant research suggests that positive work experiences influence the psychological well-being of an individual (Ryff & Keyes, 1995; Ryff & Singer, 2002). The growing literature on positive psychology and/or positive organizational behavior (e.g. Luthans & Church, 2002) also supports the finding that positive psychological state of an individual favorably influences attitudes towards the organization. The present study examines the impact of psychological well-being on the interaction between organization and employees.

#### *Psychological Well-Being (PWB)*

The concept of well-being has been variously interpreted by different researchers. The two dominant perspectives are the hedonic approach, which focuses on happiness and defines well-being in terms of pleasure attainment, pain avoidance, lower stress levels, and life satisfaction (e.g. Diener, 1984; Payne & Morrison, 2002; Siu, 2002; Wright & Hobfoll, 2004), and the eudaimonic approach, where a greater focus is placed on meaning, self-realization and the perception of individual as a 'fully functioning' person (Ryan & Deci, 2001; Ryff, 1989).

The eudaimonic approach is embodied in the interpretation of psychological well-being proposed by Carol Ryff. According to her, the construct of psychological well-being goes beyond defining human well-being in terms of absence of negative emotions or presence of happiness alone (Ryff, 1989). Psychological well-being is not simply an attaining of pleasure but also "the striving for perfection that represents the realization of one's true potential" (Ryff, 1995, p. 100). Psychological well-being consists of six elements that, in combination, indicate whether, and how well an individual is dealing with the existential challenges of life (Ryff, 1989; Ryff & Keyes, 1995). The dimensions of these are *self-acceptance* or positive attitudes toward oneself; *positive relations with others* or the ability to achieve close union with others; *autonomy*, which includes the qualities of self-determination, independence, and the regulation of behavior from within; *environmental mastery* or the ability to engage in, and manage activities in one's surrounding world; *purpose in life* or having a sense of directedness and intentionality; and *personal growth*, which represents one's continual development and striving to realize one's potential to grow and expand as a person.

McGregor and Little (1998) analyzed a diverse set of mental health indicators used by various researchers and found two factors emerging out of these indicators – the

first one reflecting happiness, and the other reflecting a meaningfulness factor. Among the six dimensions of PWB, self-acceptance and environmental mastery were linked to happiness and the other four dimensions tapped into the meaningfulness domain. This study uses the eudaimonic perspective to understand the impact of PWB on organizational commitment. A detailed description of these dimensions is available in Ryff's (1989) work.

Studies have found that PWB has a positive influence both on people's health and attitudes. For example, individuals with a higher sense of well-being are found to be more productive and in possession of greater mental and physical health as compared to those with a low sense of well-being (Ryff & Singer, 2002; Wright & Cropanzano, 2004). Employees with a higher sense of well-being show more positive attitudes and respond better to various situations in life compared to those low on well-being (Ryff & Keyes, 1995).

In contrast, people with lower levels of well-being are more likely to see neutral or ambiguous events as threatening (Seidlitz & Diener, 1993; Seidlitz, Wyer & Diener, 1997) which is likely to cause problems in an organizational setting where change is taking place. Further evidence shows that negative feedback is seen as more hurtful by people with lower PWB and positive feedback produces fewer benefits for them. People with lower PWB also use more contentious interpersonal tactics (e.g. Derryberry & Read, 1994; Larsen & Ketelaar, 1991). Given these findings, it becomes important to understand the impact of well-being on job attitudes.

#### *Perceived Organizational Support (POS)*

Positive work experiences provide employees with perceptions of organizational support. POS reflects perceptions of an organization's commitment to its employees (Shore & Wayne, 1993). It is a set of global beliefs that employees develop concerning the extent to which the organization values their contribution and cares about their well-being (Eisenberger et al., 1986). Organizations may develop these global beliefs by fulfilling employees' socioemotional needs thereby creating in them a feeling of obligation to care for the organization's welfare and/or by increasing the effort-reward expectancy, thereby strengthening the employee's belief that the organization recognizes and rewards performance (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Donald et al. (2005) found that almost 25% of the variance in reported levels of productivity was predicted by PWB, the perceived commitment of the organization to the employee, and the availability of resources and communication to employees.

POS manifests itself in various ways such as the opportunity for advancement and growth and supportive work conditions (Eisenberger et al., 1986). Supportive work conditions have been found to foster feelings of competence (Eby et al., 1999) and to lead to a feeling of accomplishment and of being valued (Allen & Meyer, 1990; O'Reilly & Caldwell, 1980). POS has been found to help in the fulfillment of self-esteem and affiliation needs (Armeli et al., 1998); to foster positive moods (Eisenberger et al., 2001); to reduce negative moods at work (George et al., 1993); to reduce stress (Cropanzano et al., 1997); and to encourage feelings of trust (e.g. Whitener, 2001). POS has also been found to be positively related to work attitudes and behaviors such as affective commitment, job satisfaction, perceptions of justice,

and organizational citizenship behavior (Eisenberger et al., 1997; Eisenberger & Rhoades, 2002; Shore & Tetrick, 1991).

Supportive actions from the organization lead a person to infer that the organization is proud of their accomplishments and trusts them to perform their task well, thus enhancing their feelings of competence and worth (Eisenberger et al., 2001, George & Brief, 1992). Employees feel a sense of identification (Knippenberg & Sleebos, 2006) and a sense of pride (Fuller et al., 2006) in their organization. Work experiences that provide meaning to individuals' lives contribute to their well-being by fulfilling various needs of the employees (McGregor & Little, 1998). Perceptions of support seem to foster positive emotions in employees and may be strongly associated with their psychological well-being (Ryff & Singer, 1998). It is expected that:

*H1: Perceived organizational support will be positively related to psychological well-being*

#### *Organizational Commitment (OC)*

Organizational commitment is perhaps one of the most widely researched concepts in organizational behavior literature (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). It has been described as “a psychological state that binds the individual to the organization (i.e., makes turnover less likely)” (Allen & Meyer, 1990, p. 14). It characterizes the employee's relationship with the organization and has implications for the decision to continue or discontinue membership in the organization (Meyer and Allen, 1991). Depending on how it develops, commitment to the organization may take forms such as affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Employees with affective commitment to the organization continue with their employment because they *want to*, those with continuance commitment feel that they *need to*, and those with normative commitment feel that they *ought to* remain in the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1991). An organization that wishes to enhance employee's commitment to the organization needs to understand how each of these attitudes is formed. Various studies have tested for and found a significant impact of POS on the development of OC. The same results are expected in this study.

Meta-analytic reviews (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Meyer; et al., 2002) have shown that organizational commitment is influenced by situational as well as dispositional factors. While many studies have explored the linkage between organizational commitments, other work related attitudes, and contextual factors, very few studies have explored the role an individual's disposition and psychological state plays in the formation of commitment. It is equally important to understand the impact of individual characteristics on commitment since these factors will partially explain the formation of commitment. Organizational commitment has also been described as a mindset that influences the behavior of an individual and binds the individual to a particular course of action (e.g. Meyer & Allen, 1991; Scholl, 1981). Therefore, it becomes important to understand possible psychological factors leading to the development of a particular mind-set.

Affective commitment (AC) has been found to correlate with a need for

achievement, affiliation and autonomy, higher order need strength, self-efficacy and locus of control (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Meyer et al., 2002). These components also overlap with the conceptualization of PWB (e.g., self efficacy is an integral part of environmental mastery). Employees who have confidence in their abilities and achievements tend to develop greater AC than those who are less confident (Meyer & Allen, 1997). It has been argued that a person with a higher PWB would be better able to deploy his or her technical and managerial skills (Wang, 2002) which in turn can lead to higher perceived personal competence. Such perceptions of well-being and competence will be strongly correlated with affective commitment.

Thus, it is expected that:

*H2 a): Psychological well-being will be positively related to affective commitment to the organization*

Eby et al. (1999) presented a model of affective commitment wherein they proposed that intrinsic motivation mediated experiences related to work and organizational commitment. Intrinsic motivation has been conceptualized as the experience of positive internal feelings that an employee has while on a job. Citing earlier research, Eby et al. (1999) proposed that jobs that motivate an individual sense of competency and mastery in that person. The present study suggests that jobs that motivate would also enhance the psychological well-being of an individual. It is expected that supportive working conditions will enhance the well-being of employees and motivate them to develop positive attitudes towards the organization. The fulfillment of various needs that are important to the well-being of the individual will lead to the development of commitment to the organization.

As mentioned earlier, POS is expected to contribute to work experiences fostering feelings of PWB. Meyer and Allen (1997) have argued that AC mainly develops through personal fulfillment. Employees, who associate their well-being with the organization, are likely to form affective attachment with the organization. Hence, PWB would mediate the relationship between POS and AC such that in the absence of PWB, employees would not develop an affective attachment to the organization even if perceptions of support from the organization were high. Therefore,

*H2 b): Psychological well-being will mediate the relationship between perceived organizational support and affective commitment.*

Very little work has been done to understand the construct of normative commitment. While attitudes alone have been found to predict behavior in an individualist context, norms and attitudes have been found to predict behavior in a more collectivist context (Suh et al., 1998). Additionally, research in collectivist societies suggests that normative commitment (NC) may be associated differently with other constructs (Yao & Wang, 2006) as opposed to a North American context where NC seems to follow the same associations as AC (Bergman, 2006). Since several studies have characterized India as primarily a collectivistic society (Sinha et al., 2002), it is important to include normative commitment in this study. In addition to

studying the relationship between POS, PWB and AC, an exploratory analysis was carried out to test the relationship between POS, PWB and NC.

Similar to AC, a sense of well-being also has an expected association between NC and the organization. Employee's PWB would influence the acceptance of prevalent norms and attitudes. So it is expected that,

*H3 a): Psychological well-being will be positively related to normative commitment to the organization.*

*H3 b): Psychological well-being will mediate between perceived organizational support and normative commitment.*

It is expected that employees low on PWB will have a lower sense of competence in their jobs. As a result, the cognition of side bets or lack of available alternatives may lead to feelings of frustration and dissatisfaction among employees (Shore & Barksdale, 1991). Employees with low well-being may have a greater cognition of the sacrifices involved in leaving the organization. They will perceive fewer alternatives available to them in the case of leaving the organization, will lack the confidence to find alternative employment, and will feel tied to the organization out of necessity. Hence it is expected that,

*H4 a): Psychological well-being will be negatively related to perceptions of HiSac*

*H4 b): Psychological well-being will be negatively related to perceptions of LoAlt*

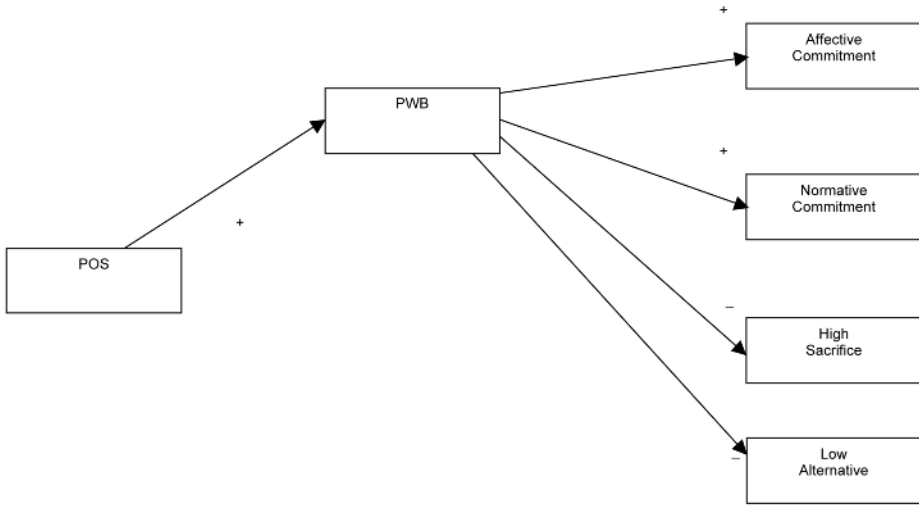
Employees with perceptions of organizational support would be less likely to seek out and accept jobs in alternative organizations (Eisenberger et al., 1990). In support of this, POS has been found to have a negative relationship with the intention to quit (Wayne, Shore & Liden, 1997) and turnover behavior (Rhoades, Eisenberger & Armeli, 2001). This may partly be because the attachment that employees form with the organization gives them a feeling of happiness and accomplishment.

When a sense of well-being is factored in, employees may continue their association with the organization out of desire rather than out of the need to do so. However, in the absence of well-being, supportive actions from the organizations may not be perceived positively and may not lead to a decrease in feelings of frustration and entrapment. An exploratory analysis will be carried out to test for mediation by PWB between POS and the two components of continuance commitment. It is hypothesized that,

*H5 a): Psychological well-being will mediate between perceived organizational support and HiSac.*

*H5 b): Psychological well-being will mediate between perceived organizational support and LoAlt.*

The proposed research model is presented in Figure 1.

**Figure 1:** Proposed Relation between POS, PWB, AC, NC, HiSac and LoAlt

## Method

### *Sample and procedure*

The sample consisted of managerial level employees in India from two large manufacturing organizations based in the same geographic location and owned by the same parent organization. The questionnaires were personally administered to 800 employees. Respondents voluntarily completed the questionnaires either during office hours or by taking them home. To encourage candid responses, both verbal and written assurances of confidentiality were given to potential respondents. On average, it took each respondent 45 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

We ran the analyses separately and together for both organizations. We found the results of one organization being reflected in the other organization. Type of organization was found to moderate the strength of relationships, but not the direction of the relationships, so for the sake of parsimony, it was decided to combine the data. A total of 540 responses (67.5%) were received from the two organizations, of which 513 responses were usable. The respondents were predominantly men (approx. 92%). These respondents were categorized into senior level (94), middle level (302), and lower level (98) employees as per the organizations' nomenclature. The average age of the respondents was 42.68 years (SD = 10.34). Average tenure in the current organization was 17.7 years (SD = 11.36) and total work experience was an average of 19.67 years (SD = 10.93).

### *Measures*

The questionnaire consisted of 119 items presented in two parts. The first part contained items of the PWB measure, and the second part consisted of items from the OC and POS measures as described below. The sets of measures described below were presented to all subjects in identical order.



### *Perceived organizational support*

POS was measured with the 17-item short version of Eisenberger et al.'s (1986) Survey of Perceived Organizational Support (SPOS). The 17-item scale has been shown to be unidimensional with internal reliability estimates (Cronbach's alpha) of 0.90 and higher (Eisenberger et al., 1997; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). However, an exploratory analysis of responses in this study showed that the negatively worded items loaded onto a separate factor. As a result, the analysis was carried out using the 10 positively worded items of the POS scale (Eisenberger, 2004). Items were rated on a 7-point Likert scale with anchors ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. A sample item from the scale was 'My organization cares about my opinions'. The 10 item scale had high reliability (0.9228).

### *Psychological well-being*

PWB was measured by the 84-item version of the PWB scale developed by Ryff (1989). The PWB scale was comprised of six subscales that measure self-acceptance, purpose in life, environmental mastery, autonomy, personal growth, and positive relationships with others. In the case of the PWB scale it was also found that negatively worded items tended to form a separate factor. Since the reliability of the positively worded scale was high (0.9013), the analysis was carried out using the 44 positively worded items of the PWB scale. Items were rated on a 6-point Likert scale with anchors ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. A sample item from the Autonomy scale was 'I have confidence in my opinions, even if they are contrary to the general consensus.' Sample items from the other scales included – Environmental Mastery – 'In general, I feel I am in charge of the situation in which I live', Personal Growth – 'I think it is important to have new experiences that challenge how you think about yourself and the world', Positive Relations with Others – 'People would describe me as a giving person, willing to share my time with others', Purpose in Life – 'Some people wander aimlessly through life, but I am not one of them', and Self-Acceptance – 'I like most aspects of my personality'. Apart from the autonomy scale, all of the subscales of the PWB had adequate reliability (Table 3).

### *Organizational Commitment (AC, NC, HiSac, and LoAlt)*

Employees' organizational commitment was assessed using the 18-item revised commitment scales developed by Meyer, Allen and Smith (1993). Affective, Continuance and Normative commitment were each represented by six items. For our study, continuance commitment was divided into high sacrifices and low alternatives, represented by 3 items each. Items were rated on a 7-point Likert-type scale with anchors ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. A sample item from the AC scale was 'I would be happy to spend the rest of my career in this organization.' A sample item from the CC scale was 'I feel I have too few options to consider leaving this organization'. A sample item from the NC scale was 'I do not feel any obligation to remain with my current employer'.

**Table 1:** Mean, standard deviation, scale reliability and zero order correlations among the variables under study

	Mean	Standard Deviation	POS	PWB	AC	NC	HISAC	LOALT
POS	4.99	1.17	<b>0.9228</b>					
PWB	4.85	0.47	0.322*	<b>0.9013</b>				
AC	5.65	1.86	0.581*	0.287*	<b>0.8158</b>			
NC	4.84	1.26	0.598*	0.210*	0.608*	<b>0.8047</b>		
HISAC	4.82	1.54	0.161*	0.013	0.218*	0.356*	<b>0.7389</b>	
LOALT	3.89	1.44	-0.119*	-0.213*	-0.066	0.052	0.365*	<b>0.6088</b>

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

## Analyses and Results

Table 1 presents the means, standard deviations, scale reliabilities, and intercorrelations (in bold along the diagonal) among the variables used in this study. Except for LoAlt, all the scales were found to have an internal consistency reliability (Cronbach alpha) greater than 0.70 ( $N = 513$ ). Since the combined scale of CC had acceptable reliability of 0.718, the researchers decided to use the LoAlt scale, even though the reliability is slightly below the acceptable level. The reliability could be low due to the scale having only three items. The data was tested for normality and other assumptions of multivariate data analysis, and no deviations were found (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001).

In order to test the hypotheses, the demographic variables of age, tenure and organizational level were controlled in the regression equation. A strong correlation was found between age and tenure indicating overlap. Since organizational tenure has been found to influence the link between POS and various components of organizational commitment (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Meyer et. al., 2002), it was decided to drop age and control only for tenure.

Controlling for organizational tenure and organizational level, POS was found to be significantly associated with PWB providing support for Hypothesis 1 (standardized  $\beta = 0.316$ ,  $t = 7.146$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). This suggests that employees look for both happiness and meaning in their work. Opportunities for growth and advancement are as important to employees as relations with other organizational members. Both tenure and organization level were found to have an insignificant impact on PWB ( $\Delta R^2 = 0.001$ ,  $F[1, 476] = 0.767$ ,  $p > 0.1$ ), supporting earlier findings that demographic factors have been found to account for low levels of variance in the different well being indexes (Ryff & Keyes, 1995).

Hypothesis 2a, 3a, & 4b also garnered support. PWB was strongly related to AC (H2a, standardized  $\beta = 0.286$ ,  $t = 6.799$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), NC (H3a, standardized  $\beta = 0.191$ ,  $t = 4.459$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and LoAlt (H4b, standardized  $\beta = -0.206$ ,  $t = -4.743$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). However, PWB was found to have an insignificant correlation with HiSac thus

rejecting hypothesis 4a (standardized  $\beta = -0.011$ ,  $t = -0.242$ ,  $p > 0.5$ ).

#### Test for Mediation

PWB was expected to mediate the relationship between POS and AC (H2b), NC (H3b), HiSac (H5a) and LoAlt (H5b).

To test the above hypotheses, we used the general procedure for testing mediation outlined by Baron and Kenny (1986). This approach has been extensively used in previous research (e.g. McAllister & Bigley, 2002; Tepper & Taylor, 2003). According to Baron and Kenny, for mediation to exist, three conditions must be met. First, the independent variable (i.e., POS) must be shown to be related to the mediator (PWB). Results relevant to this were reported above (H1). POS was significantly related to PWB.

Next, it must be demonstrated that the independent variable is related to the outcome variables. Consistent with prior research, POS was found to be significantly associated with AC and NC (standardized  $\beta = 0.560$ ,  $t = 15.256$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ; standardized  $\beta = 0.548$ ,  $t = 14.983$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and moderately correlated with HiSac (standardized  $\beta = 0.111$ ,  $t = 2.454$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) and LoAlt (standardized  $\beta = -0.139$ ,  $t = -3.122$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). These results also support the replication of this reciprocal relationship in the Indian context.

Third, the mediator (PWB) must be related to the outcome variables. While PWB was found to be associated with AC (H3a), NC (H4a) and LoAlt (H6b), its association with Hi Sac was found to be insignificant ( $\beta = -0.011$ ,  $p > 0.5$ ). Thus, Hypothesis 6a could not be tested.

Lastly, if these conditions all hold in the predicted direction, then the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable must be less in the third equation than in the second equation. Table 2 presents the results of mediated regression analysis.

**Table 2: Results of Mediated Regression Analysis (N = 513)**

Equation	Independent Variable	$\beta$ of Mediator (PWB)	$\beta$ of Dependent Variable	R <sup>2</sup>
Hypothesis 3b Step 1	POS and AC		AC 0.560**	0.380
Step 2	POS and PWB	0.316**		0.101
Step 3	POS, PWB		0.519** 0.127*	0.395
Hypothesis 4b Step 1	POS and NC		NC 0.548**	0.383
Step 2	POS and PWB	0.316**		0.101
Step 3	POS PWB		0.540** 0.025	0.384
Hypothesis 6b Step 1	POS and LoAlt		LoAlt -0.139*	0.083
Step 2	POS and PWB	0.316**		0.101
Step 3	POS PWB		-0.082 -0.181**	0.113

\*  $\beta$  significant at  $p < 0.01$  level, \*\*  $\beta$  significant at  $p < 0.001$  level

In addition to Baron and Kenny's (1986) test, the Sobel (1982) test reveals that the indirect effect of POS and AC via PWB ( $Z = 5.07, p < .001$ ), POS and NC via PWB ( $Z = 4.08, p < .001$ ), and POS and LoAlt via PWB ( $Z = -4.13, p < .001$ ) were all significantly different from zero.

As Table 2 suggests, support was found for mediation for all three of the hypotheses. The effects of POS on AC and NC declined in magnitude from the effects in Step 1 (from  $\beta = 0.560$  to  $\beta = 0.519$  and from  $\beta = 0.548$  to  $\beta = 0.540$ ), after regression with the mediator indicating the presence of a mediation effect. The impact of POS on AC and NC remained significant despite introducing the mediator variable. These results indicate partial mediation.

While the effect of POS on NC declined in magnitude after introducing PWB in the equation, PWB itself became insignificant ( $\beta = 0.025, p > 0.1$ ).

The effects of POS on LoAlt declined in magnitude from the effects in Step 1 (from  $\beta = -0.139$  to  $\beta = -0.082$ ), after regression with the mediator. This result indicates the presence of a mediation effect. Specifically, the results suggest that, due to the presence of the mediator, the magnitude of the effect of POS on LoAlt became insignificant ( $\beta = .082, p > .10$ ), which suggests that PWB completely mediates this relationship.

#### Post Hoc Analysis

While PWB was explored as a single construct in this study, it was also decided that it would be worthwhile to explore the association of various dimensions of PWB with POS and OC. Since no theoretically-driven assumptions regarding the order of entry of the predictors was made, a *post hoc* analysis using stepwise regression was utilized (Koydemir & Demir, 2008). Table 3 shows the descriptive statistics for the various dimensions of psychological well-being. The possible range for all subscales was from 1 to 6. Table 4 presents the zero order correlations among the variables under study.

**Table 3:** Mean, standard deviation and scale reliability of dimensions of PWB

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Scale Reliability
Positive relations with others (REL_O)	4.60	0.68	0.8134
Autonomy (AUT)	3.93	0.61	0.6756
Environmental mastery (ENV_M)	4.47	0.62	0.7717
Personal growth (PG)	4.92	0.58	0.7775
Purpose in life (PL)	4.73	0.61	0.7656
Self acceptance (SA)	4.37	0.65	0.7722

**Table 4:** Intercorrelations Among the Dimensions of PWB and Variables Under Study

	POS	AC	NC	HISAC	LOALT	REL_O	AUT	ENV_M	PG	PL
REL_O	0.246**	0.254**	0.168**	-0.48	-0.323**					
AUT	0.035	0.001	-0.076	-0.222**	-0.279**	0.394**				
ENV_M	0.301**	0.288**	0.196**	-0.029	-0.294**	0.616**	0.432**			
PG	0.171**	0.260**	0.117**	-0.097*	-0.324**	0.599**	0.403**	0.590**		
PL	0.292**	0.374**	0.231**	0.045	-0.292**	0.608**	0.339**	0.645**	0.698**	
SA	0.332**	0.347**	0.255*	-0.032	-0.348**	0.640**	0.458**	0.703**	0.617**	0.679**

\*\* =  $p < 0.01$ , \* =  $p < 0.05$

#### Impact on Affective Commitment

AC was set as the criterion variable. The predictor variables used were PL, SA, ENV\_M, PG and REL\_O. Results indicated that purpose in life (standardized  $\beta = 0.256$ ,  $t = 4.618$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and self acceptance (standardized  $\beta = 0.173$ ,  $t = 3.122$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) contributed significantly to the variance explained in AC. The  $R^2$  was 0.156. Purpose in life accounted for the highest variance in AC (14%) followed by self-acceptance with a change in  $R^2$  of 0.016.

As mentioned earlier, McGregor and Little (1998) found that the dimensions of PWB correlated strongly with two main factors of well being – one reflecting happiness and the other meaningfulness. Of these, purpose in life correlates with the meaningfulness factor, while self-acceptance correlates with the happiness factor.

These results provide support to the eudemonic perspective of well being. Our respondents regard the meaningfulness of the job as more important than happiness and reciprocate respectively. To further explore the relationship between individual and organization, POS was introduced into the stepwise regression equation. Along with POS (standardized  $\beta = 0.491$ ,  $t = 13.240$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), autonomy, which had insignificant zero order correlation, became a significant negative predictor of AC (standardized  $\beta = -0.134$ ,  $t = -3.414$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Table 5 shows the variance in the model explained by each subsequent factor.

**Table 5:** Stepwise Regression using Affective Commitment as Criterion Variable

Model	Variables Entered	$R^2$	$\Delta R^2$	Sig. F Change
1	POS	0.337	0.337	0.000
2	PL	0.383	0.046	0.000
3	AUT	0.393	0.010	0.005
4	SA	0.398	0.005	0.035

The negative relation of autonomy with AC raises concerns towards a general recommendation of increasing autonomy for employees. Without the attendant structures, culture, and norms in place, it is possible that autonomy is likely to make

people feel less confident in the organization. Given the unexpected results that emerged, it was decided to continue with the analysis using POS as one of the predictor variables.

#### *Impact on Normative Commitment*

NC was set as the criterion variable. The predictor variables used here were POS and the six dimensions of PWB. Results indicated that POS (standardized  $\beta = 0.556$ ,  $t = 14.892$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), autonomy (standardized  $\beta = -0.161$ ,  $t = -4.078$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), and self acceptance (standardized  $\beta = 0.145$ ,  $t = 3.447$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) contributed significantly to the variance explained in NC. The  $R^2$  was 0.382. POS accounted for the highest variance in NC (35.8%), followed by autonomy with a change in  $R^2$  of 0.09 and thereafter by self-acceptance with a change in  $R^2$  of 0.014.

The significance of autonomy as a factor is again brought out in the inverse relationship it has with NC. It appears that presence of autonomy may actually reduce the sense of obligation or purpose that employees have towards their jobs. It is possible that autonomy may reduce the forces that bind individuals to their organization and individuals may become more committed to doing their jobs well. It would be interesting to explore the impact of autonomy on commitment to profession. The presence of self-acceptance again suggests that along with meaningfulness, employees also seek happiness in their jobs. While it is important to provide opportunities for growth and advancement to individuals, it is also important to ensure subjective well-being among the employees.

#### *Impact on High Sacrifice*

HiSac was next set as the criterion variable. The predictor variables used here were POS and the six dimensions of PWB. Results indicated that unlike AC and NC, autonomy was the strongest predictor of HiSac (standardized  $\beta = -0.228$ ,  $t = -5.366$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) followed by POS (standardized  $\beta = 0.169$ ,  $t = 3.966$ ,  $p < 0.051$ ). The  $R^2$  was 0.078. Autonomy accounted for the highest variance in high sacrifice (4.9%) followed by POS with a change in  $R^2$  of 0.028.

This negative relationship between autonomy and high sacrifice needs to be interpreted with caution. While on the one hand, it may suggest that greater autonomy may reduce feelings of sacrifice and increase affective commitment; it could also mean that with greater feeling of autonomy, employees may become more self-centric and less organization-centric. They may become detached from the organization. It is suggested that future research is required to understand the impact of autonomy on organizational commitment.

#### *Impact on Low Alternatives*

LoAlt was next set as the criterion variable. The predictor variables used here were POS and the six dimensions of PWB. The results were again very different from the other components of OC. POS was removed from the equation and only three components of PWB were left. Self-acceptance (standardized  $\beta = -0.195$ ,  $t = -3.604$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), personal growth (standardized  $\beta = -0.152$ ,  $t = -2.880$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and autonomy (standardized  $\beta = -0.128$ ,  $t = -2.753$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) contributed significantly to the variance

explained in LoAlt. The  $R^2$  was 0.153. Self-acceptance accounted for the highest variance in LoAlt (12.1%) followed by personal growth with a change in  $R^2$  of 0.019 and thereafter by autonomy with a change in  $R^2$  of 0.013.

Employees with a higher sense of well-being may have higher perceptions of competence and control of the environment around them. This may reduce the feeling of entrapment and give them the confidence that if necessary, they will be able to find alternative employment elsewhere. The inverse relationship between the happiness dimension of SA suggests that happier employees are less likely to feel frustrated and trapped in the organization.

## Discussion and Implications

The above results support the hypothesis that perceptions of organizational support influence the sense of well-being of employees. Extant research suggests that organizational contextual factors and responsiveness to members' needs influences an employee's belief about his or her value to the organization, thus impacting their self-esteem and contributing to their social psychological development (Frost, 1999; Korman, 1970; Pierce et al., 1993; Wicks et al., 1994). Organizational factors thus seem to contribute to employees' perceptions of self worth and sense of well-being.

Consistent with earlier studies (Eisenberger et al., 2001), in the present study too, POS were found to be strongly associated with AC. The mediation by PWB between POS and AC has implications for both the theory and practice of management. The study's results suggest that enhancing the 'well-being' quotient of an organization will increase the well-being of individuals working within the organization and lead to increased affective reactions towards work and ultimately influence important outcomes such as turnover and absenteeism. Therefore, organizations seeking AC from their employees would need to look for ways and means to increase the employees' sense of PWB.

PWB was found to be moderately associated with the NC of an individual. A sense of well-being in employees may influence their sense of obligation to an entity for beneficial actions towards them. An individual with a higher sense of well-being may be better able to respond to normative pressures to reciprocate to the organization. The results for test of mediation indicate a complex relation between PWB and POS where NC is concerned. This result suggests that the normative pressures on an individual become internalized to the extent that employees feel an obligation to respond to the organization, irrespective of their state of well-being.

Both POS and PWB were found to be negatively associated with the LoAlt component of CC. POS provides employees with perceptions of competence and makes them feel valued by the organization thereby increasing their sense of self worth (George et al., 1993). Employees with a higher sense of well-being may have higher perceptions of competence and control of the environment around them. This may reduce the feeling of entrapment and give them the confidence that if needed, they will be able to find alternative employment elsewhere. If an employee is low on PWB, supportive actions from the organization may not help in reducing his/her feeling of entrapment.

Total mediation by PWB between POS and LoAlt suggests that there may be some employees for whom organizational interventions may not provide the desired results. For instance, a study by Ryff and Heidrich (1997) suggests that difficult life experiences contribute to positive psychological functioning and provide an individual with a sense of competence and mastery. However, persons low on well-being may not view challenges thrown at them by the organization as a reflection of organization's confidence in their abilities or as opportunities to grow and advance. These challenges may be perceived as barriers that reinforce lack of competence perceptions or lack of control for the employees. Such employees may feel trapped and tied down by the organization, despite opportunities provided by the organization to perform. In such cases, psychiatric help and counseling may be required for the employees before they can be brought back into the organizational mainstream. Such counseling has been found to increase the individual's sense of well-being (Ryff & Singer, 2002).

The results of stepwise regression support the Indian perspective of importance of meaningfulness over happiness (Saklani, 2004). AC, NC and HiSac were far more impacted by the meaningfulness dimensions of PWB, such as purpose in life and autonomy, than by happiness. Only in the case of LoAlt did happiness take precedence over meaningfulness.

The percent variance explained by each of the dimensions of well-being in the various foci of commitment is small (19% in AC, 12.7% in NC, and 8% in CC) and may possibly have been inflated by the fact that both measures were based on self-report. This is especially true given that most studies (Dormann & Zapf, 2001; Meyer et al., 2002) have found that individual characteristics explain small but significant variance in attitudes such as commitment, satisfaction, etc. These results add to the current literature on impact of individual characteristics on job attitudes.

## Conclusion

While sharing the limitations characteristic of any cross sectional research, this study contributes to the field of organizational research by demonstrating the importance of studying individual variables in the organizational context. Earlier studies have explored the relationship between commitment and hedonic well-being (Harris & Cameron, 2005; Meyer & Allen, 1997). They have also proposed and found support for committed employees being more satisfied with life and with themselves. The current study brings in the eudaimonic perspective of psychological well-being and demonstrates its impact on commitment. The results also help to explain the underlying psychological processes linking POS and OC. They help to understand why some employees may need a minimal show of support from the organization to increase their commitment whereas for other employees, considerable effort may be required to influence their attitude towards the organization. The study shows that organizations need to target their support efforts judiciously in order to influence employee commitment to the organization.

While AC, NC and HiSac were far more impacted by the meaningfulness dimensions of PWB, LoAlt was more impacted by the happiness dimension of self-acceptance. Since AC has a greater impact on workplace attitudes and behaviors (Meyer



et. al., 2002), it is more important for organizations to provide meaning to the work that employees do. Lastly, given the negative relation of autonomy with all four components of commitment it is suggested that this issue be explored in greater detail to gain an increased understanding of the level to which autonomy provides meaning to an employee's job.

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