

**PRIOR RELATED WORK EXPERIENCE AND CURRENT JOB PERFORMANCE:
MODERATION EFFECT OF PERSONALITY AND ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE**

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ABSTRACT

With rapid rise in employees' mobility across organizational boundaries specifically in high business growth environment like that of India, it is important to understand what employees bring with their previous work experience and how it affects their performance in the current organization. While recruiters continue to hire on the basis of time spent gaining relevant work experience expecting higher job performance, theorists are struggling to establish a perfect notion.

In contrast to the conventional belief, recent studies have presented a negative or insignificant relationship between prior related work experience and current job performance. And in order to justify theoretically inconsistent results the researchers suggestively attributed them to individual factors such as adaptability and self efficacy and organizational factors such as culture fit and prestige. The current work is an attempt to understand and resolve the existing theoretical ambiguity.

Contrary to recent explications, I hypothesized a positive relationship between prior related work experience and current job performance. Prior related work experience is a multi dimensional construct measured in terms of time spent in related industry, related occupation and current organization. Further I hypothesized that the aforementioned relationship is moderated by individual factors such as personality traits and perceived organizational cultures.

I also investigated effect of fit between personality traits and perceived organizational culture on the relationship between prior related work experience and current job performance. To study fit between personality traits and perceived organizational culture I extended the theory of organizational attractiveness. Theory of organizational attractiveness suggests that the applicants get attracted towards an organization if they perceive the culture of the organization to

suit their personality. Therefore I hypothesized a moderation effect of the fit between personality traits and perceived organizational culture on the relationship between prior related work experience and current job performance.

The study is based on a sample from Indian life insurance sector. The sector was found suitable for the study for following reasons. First, due to its specific knowledge based human resource requirements, employees with related experience are preferred. Second, since the sector has recently been liberalized, many new organizations have come up which are continuously engaged into poaching experienced employees from their competitors. Therefore it is important to explore whether prior related work experience adds to current job performance of the employees in this sector.

On the basis of 451 sales employees of 11 life insurance organizations, I have found a strong and positive relationship between prior related work experience and current job performance. The study shows that current job performance improves with increase in industry and occupational experience. Further, among big five personality traits openness and conscientiousness moderated the relationship positively whereas neuroticism moderated the relationship negatively. None of the perceived organizational cultures have shown direct moderation effects on the relationship. However, in combination with personality factors such as conscientiousness and neuroticism all perceived organizational cultures influenced the relationship between prior related work experience (both prior industry and occupational experience) and current job performance. Higher fit between conscientiousness and perceived innovation and perceived bureaucracy cultures moderated the relationship positively. However conscientiousness was not found to fit with perceived supportive culture. Neuroticism did not

show fit with any of the cultures and together negatively moderated the relationship primarily due to its negative polarization.

The findings of the study not only broaden the theory but also have significant practical implications. The study includes the factors that explain the theoretically ambiguous relationship between prior related work experience and current job performance. Organizations can also benefit from the study. While it suggests recruiters to give importance to work experience, it lays emphasis on the most basic human requirement of a suitable context to perform.

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