

The Impact of Perceived Organizational Support on Employees' Work Outcomes in Sri Lanka and the United Arab Emirates

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates how perceived organizational support (POS) impacts the employees' work outcomes in information technology offshoring (ITO) contexts in Sri Lanka and the United Arab Emirates, both collectively and independently. Also, this study endeavours to identify the influence of POS and the scope for its practical application in enhancing work outcomes from the perspective of outsourcees, their employers, and the countries concerned, and to the extent to which the findings can be generalised. The research emphasises theory and interpretation. The research supports many of the key findings in the extensive literature on POS and ITO, and built upon thousands of data points, adds important extensions; (a) specific applications UAE and Sri Lanka, (b) considerations of ethnic and cultural factors, (c) innovative use of Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), (d) an original POS-ITO framework for managers. It also discusses often neglected, but always important issues about the boundaries of global firms.

The research study adopts a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural SEM approach. It was based on a sample of 260 responses to 410 online questionnaires (response rate 63%) delivered to employees from 6 companies each in the United Arab Emirates (141 responses) and Sri Lanka (119 responses). Various media were used including the Zoho survey and LinkedIn. Targeting was aided by contacts built by the researcher's work experience of ITO both in the United Arab Emirates and Sri Lanka. Where necessary the researcher followed up responses with respondents individually.

POS is described as the general perceptions of employees to the degree to which the work organization appraises their work contribution and look-after their well-being (Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002). The theory suggests that this concept acts as a mediator between the way employees perceive their organization and the extent to which their work actions are aligned with its objectives (Aselage and Eisenberger, 2003; Kurtessis et al., 2015). Further, the theory predicts that to the extent they perceive their Organization's support, employees reciprocate by acting in its interests (Bartol, 2007).

Extensive research on POS has been conducted in developed countries. However, there is a paucity of research about POS and its impact in the context of developing countries. This is unfortunate because recent studies (Gyekye, 2009) suggest that the effect of POS is contingent on demographic and socio-cultural parameters. To fill this gap in the literature, this research examines how the POS interacts with demographic and socio-cultural factors and compares how these two factors impact employee work outcomes in Sri Lanka and UAE.

Basing our research on these two nations is especially important for economic and social development, and understanding of the significance of the extension of firm and

management boundaries in an era of globalisation. Sri Lanka's IT offshoring industry was the 6th largest exporter in the year 2010 (Sivalogathan and Xiaobo, 2013), and our research indicates that it is the second-largest Sri Lankan export currently. UAE is seen as the global hub for IT-offshoring in the Middle East (Gartner, 2012). Hence, this research will benefit Sri Lanka's and UAE's IT-offshoring sectors by suggesting ways to improve work outcomes through a better understanding of how employees perceive organisational support. In UAE and Sri Lanka, outsourcing contributes significantly to employees' income growth and well-being in two important ITO countries.

A research outcome was a POS-ITO model was generated from original research and an extensive literature review. The major findings of the research have revealed that, despite ITO organizations adopting organizational support practices for knowledge workers in Sri Lanka and UAE. Hopefully, the research deepens our understanding of the specific impacts of POS. We offer the POS-ITO model as a practical guide and provide specific recommendations to managers. Comparative aspects between UAE and Sri Lanka highlight the sensitivity of POS outcomes to demographic and socio-cultural factors.

Our research indicates that POS is an important contributor to sustainability, particularly in satisfying increasingly important and demanding Corporate Governance requirements. Hence the practical significance of the research and the POS-ITO outcome to leaders, managers, and strategic decision processes.

It is hoped that the analysis will contribute to decision-makers attempting to increase the investment attractiveness not only of the countries and industries we studied but also other emerging nations.

Key Words: POS; Employees' Work outcomes; CFA; Reciprocity; ITO; Socio-cultural Contexts.

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