

Impact of Employees' Recognition, Rewards and Job Stress on Job Performance: Mediating Role of Perceived Organization Support

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Abstract

Aim - the purpose of this study is to examine the role of employee rewards, recognition, and job-related stress towards employee performance considering the mediating role of perceived organizational support in the call-centers located in Lahore, Pakistan.

Design - The data has been gathered through the survey method of the questionnaire. A simple random sampling technique is used for this study. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structure equation modeling (SEM) techniques have been used for statistical analysis.

Findings - Results showed that employee rewards and recognition have a significant and positive effect on employee performance whereas job stress has a significant and negative effect on employee performance. Findings also revealed that perceived organizational support significantly and fully mediates the relationship between employee rewards, recognition, and job stress and employee performance. So this study puts light on crucial factors that lead to better employee performance.

Implications - Employee rewards and recognition play an important role in overall employee performance. If the companies will not take it seriously, then it might lead to negative consequences. On the other hand, job stress also plays a vital role in employee performance.

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Introduction

Human resource practices are really important for the betterment of the organizations (Hallberg & Schaufeli, 2006; Paul & Anantharaman, 2003). With the changing technologies and demand of customers, it really creates competition among organizations. Therefore, organizations need to implement something different in order to cope with these changes (Fanelli & Medhora, 1998). Human resource is the most valued tool and asset of the organizations to compete with other organizations (Armstrong, 2006). Without proper Human Resource practices, development cannot take place in any organization. Nowadays, the human asset is the most important asset of the organization without which the organization cannot achieve its goals. So it should be seriously practiced in all the organizations. Human resource practices such as employee empowerment and recognition are directly linked with the overall development of the organization (Pardo del Val & Martínez Fuentes, 2003). Through proper HR practices, employees will be more motivated and will produce better results in the future (Andrew & Sofian, 2012; Bakker & Demerouti, 2008). A firm that really wants to flourish and prosper, it needs to have these HR policies in it. Even God has mentioned in the Holy Book that HRM practices should be implemented.

For this research article, the researcher is interested in conducting research on call centers. Call centers industry is of growing importance nowadays. They are emerging day by day in this new era. The importance of call centers is very high as the customers can communicate via e-mail, SMS or even social media. On the other hand, customers' expectations are also rising as they look forward to a better and cheaper service. Basically, call centers are used for marketing purposes for business organizations.

In today's era, different organizations need different tools and techniques to satisfy their employees for gaining maximum work. Therefore, organizations need some rules and standards to do this. For his, different call centers can use our research's results to promote their rewards, recognition and stress factors to motivate the employees and do well.

Job performance is very important for the organizations without which they cannot survive. It is vital for the firms to consider it as their main objective. So they need to take care of their employees and value their works so that they can perform well in their jobs. The researcher wants to know whether job performance in call centers is decreasing or increasing. What are the reasons behind their increase or decrease?

It is being researched and concluded that HR practices for example reward system enhances employees' performance and keep them motivated (Deeprase, 1994; Pratheepkanth, 2011; Qureshi, Zaman, & Shah, 2010). The company rewards its employees for their hard work and enthusiasm. It is being revealed that rewards can influence employee performance by enhancing employee abilities, knowledge, and skills (Ajila & Abiola, 2004). According to (San, Theen, & Heng, 2012), if an organization does not implement proper HR then it will result in low productivity, high turnover, and absenteeism.

On the other hand, the article puts light on job stress that the employees face in an organization. Job stress means when the employee has too much work burden on them. They feel emotional and physical stress. Job stress arises when there is a rise in demand and how an employee has control over this demand. Job stress also arises from fear, anger, and guilt which is seen in many of today's organizations nationally and internationally (Ashkanasy & Daus, 2002). Job stress has an indirect relationship between job stress and overall employee performance. When there is job stress, it will decrease performance.

Research Objectives

The main purpose of the study is to examine the impact of employees' recognition, rewards and job stress on job performance by considering the mediating role of perceived organizational support study objectives mentioned below:

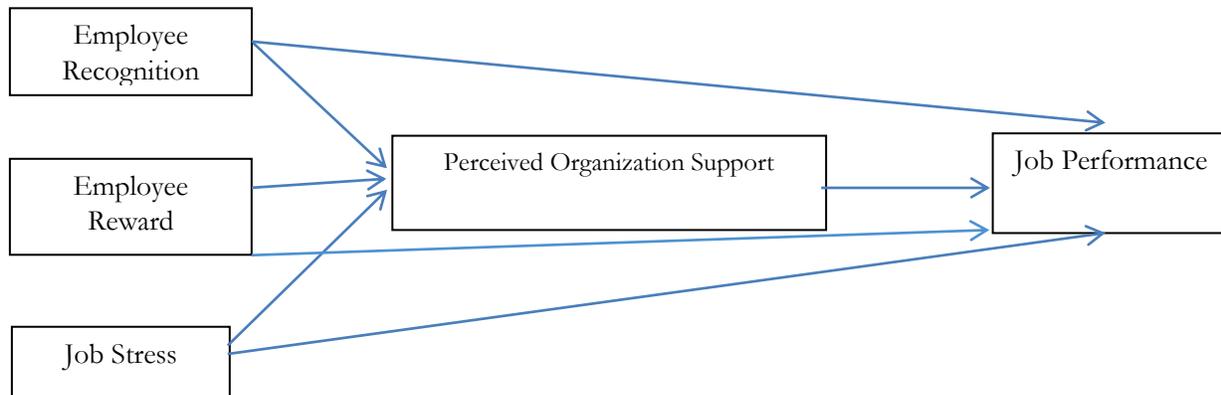
1. To examine the impact of employee rewards on job performance.
2. To explore the effect of employee recognition on job performance.
3. To investigate the impact of job stress on job performance.
4. To verify the impact of perceived organizational support on job performance.
5. To check the mediating role of perceived organizational support between the relationship of rewards and job performance.
6. To determine the mediating role of perceived organizational support between the relationship of recognition and job performance.
7. To identify the mediating role of perceived organizational support between the relationship of job stress and job performance.

Research Questions

Research questions are listed below:

1. What is the effect of employee rewards on job performance?
2. What is the impact of employee recognition on job performance?
3. What is the relationship between job stress and job performance?
4. What is the relationship between perceived organizational support and job performance?
5. Does perceived organization support mediate the relationship between employee rewards and job performance?
6. Does perceived organization support mediate the relationship between employee recognition and job performance?
7. Does perceived organization support mediate the relationship between job stress and job performance?

Theoretical Framework



In the theoretical framework employee recognition, reward and job stress are independent variables. Perceived organization support is a mediating variable and job performance is a dependent variable. All these variables affect job performance positively or negatively.

Hypothesis

From above, we can generate the following hypothesis:

H1: There is a negative relationship between job stress and employee performance

H2: There is a negative relationship between Job Stress and perceived organization support

H3: There is a positive relationship between perceived organizational support and employee performance

H4: There is a positive relationship between Employee Recognition and employee performance

H5: There is a positive relationship between Employee Recognition and Perceived Organization Support

H6: There is a positive relationship between Employee Reward and employee performance

H7: There is a positive relationship between Employee Reward and Perceived Organization Support

H8: Perceived organization support will mediate the relationship between job stress and employee performance

H9: Perceived organization support will mediate the relationship between employee recognition and employee performance

H10: Perceived organization support will mediate the relationship between rewards and employee performance

Literature Review

Rewards can be defined as a person receiving it in exchange for doing some tasks which is beneficial for the company. Reward means anything the company gives its employees in exchange for their contributions (Chiang & Birtch, 2010). They are given to employees for their good performance. If rewards are not given then an unpleasant environment is created. So rewards are extremely important in an organization. The main reason for the rewards is to attract and retain employees. The rewards can be in the form of money which is not a good motivator in the long run (Mossbarger & Eddington, 2003). Other examples of rewards include status, an additional benefit, providing a better working environment and commission. Opportunity, appreciation and manager's attention also means a lot. The employees will perform innovatively if they are rewarded. If the company has a reward system then it will attract more talented employees. This means if the organizations want to attract and retain employees, then they have to practice reward systems. Through this, companies can attract most of the employees. This is due to the fact that reward systems can lead to job satisfaction and hence less employee turnover.

Employee Rewards and Job Performance

The employees will be well motivated and will perform well if they are rewarded (Markova & Ford, 2011). There is a direct relationship between employee rewards and job performance. If the employees are rewarded, then the performance will increase (Ali, Rehman, Ali, Yousaf, & Zia, 2010; Gerald, 2004; Smith & Stulz, 1985). In this way, the employees think that they are being valued. Rewards systems can attract the right behavior and outcomes in the company (Manas & Graham, 2003). Therefore the employees will adopt that kind of behavior that will lead them to better performance and rewards. As a result, the employees will start

working harder which is very beneficial for the organizations and the workers themselves. So even in the long run, the organizations will generate positive results and gain more (Torrington, 2009).

Employee Recognition

Employees not only want compensation but also need to be valued by their supervisors. It will increase the employees' morale. Employees will be well motivated if they are recognized by the supervisors (Saunderson, 2004). Recognition means valuing and caring about the employees' contributions. It is essential for companies to recognize their employees (McGregor, 1960). Other studies show that it is better to recognize employees rather than give incentives (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Employee recognition involves both monetary as well as non-monetary programs (McAdams, 1995). The example of employee recognition involves writing their names in the company's newsletter, letters of commendation, extra time off and verbal appreciation. This is a form of caring and appraising the employees. The non-monetary awards are more motivating than the financial award. In this way, the employees think that they are being valued.

Employee Recognition and Job Performance

Organizations recognize their employees to keep their self-esteem high and keep them passionate. The employees who are recognized in their organizations are well motivated and perform well. This is because motivated employees perform well which makes one's intent towards certain behavior (Durojaiye, 1976). In this way, organizations achieve their goals. There is a direct relationship between employee recognition and job performance. It is the result of motivation and ability at the job that leads to high performance (La Motta, 1995). Employee recognition boosts employee morale which results in the overall productivity of the firm.

Job Stress

Job stress means mental or physical strain due to not meeting the demands of the company. If the work is well managed then there will be no stress. There is a lot of pressure and burden on employees due to which they feel job stress. Basically, job stress means occupational demands and employees' capacity to meet these demands (Ornelas & Kleiner, 2003; Topper, 2007; Varca, 1999). The job stress may be due to the perceived loss of a job or security. It can occur as a result of several factors which include lack of work information and feedback, technological change, rising demands or when an employee is unable to meet the job requirements (Bashir & Ismail Ramay, 2010). Stressed workers are more likely to be unhealthy, less motivated, less productive and unsafe in the working environment.

Job Stress and Job Performance

Job stress is indirectly related to job performance. If the job stress increases, then there is a fall job performance. In order to maintain quality customer relations, it is important for organizations to implement such practices that reduce job stress. In this way, the overall productivity of organizations will increase. The companies that really care about their employees will implement such practices.

Perceived Organization Support

Perceived organization support means how employees perceive their organization. It is beyond the specific roles of an employee. It means how organizations care about their employee and well-being (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986). The word commitment is very important in today's world. It basically means being bound emotionally and intellectually to someone. It means the relationship between other individuals or organizations. The organizational commitment illustrates the sense of unity and shared values with the organization. It will result in the success of job performance and hence the company. The most

important factor in an organization's success is employee job performance and it can only be done if the company cares about its employees.

Perceived Organization Support and Job Performance

Research shows that there is a direct relationship between POS and job performance which is very beneficial for the organization (Fasolo, 1995). With POS, there is the likelihood that the employee will repeat the behavior in the future. It reinforces employee behavior in the future. The fact that companies want to have a market share and have profits is not a matter of present but of the future. Employee performance is the consequence of perceived organizational support.

Rewards and Perceived Organization Support

If the rewards system is good with the perceived organizational support, then it is better for the company. The employees think that they are being rewarded under good relationships with the company. In this way, the employees would come to the job even if they are not feeling well, will be loyal towards the company and even to their coworkers. It is not the part of their job but still, they would do this. When the company rewards its employees in the presence of POS, then they will view the company at a more personal level. A psychological relationship is created (Levinson, 1965). There is a direct relationship between perceived organizational support and job performance (Wang & Noe, 2010). If POS is good, then there will be a better job performance by the employees. There are effective attachment and bonding with regard to POS (Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1979).

Employee Recognition and Perceived Organization Support

Organizations recognize their employees to keep their self-esteem high and keep them passionate. The employees who are recognized in their organizations are well motivated and perform well.

Although, rewards and job recognition contribute to better employee performance the presence of perceived organization support strengthens this relationship. Therefore it acts as a mediating variable. So it is important that organizations practice POS.

Methodology

We all have some basic beliefs and concepts as we see the world around us. In the same way, the world of research is also viewed. Research philosophies are the assumptions about the way we view this world. It also means the nature of knowledge and development of the world. The main three methods of research philosophies are given by (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2007). They are positivism, interpretivism, and realism. For the purpose of this research, the author decided to adopt Positivism approach. According to (Cacioppo, Semin, & Berntson, 2004) positivism is a primary research method for an environment that observes the 'social reality'.

The research approach that the researcher is doing is the deductive approach. In this type of research, you develop the theory. According to (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009) deductive research is based on theory and quantitative research. The deductive approach is based on existing theories.

Research design mentions the elements that build up the research. The researcher has conducted the survey method for his research. In the survey method, the questionnaire is being made and given to the people to fill for hypothesis testing. For the design purpose of the research, the researcher has used the cross-sectional analysis. In the cross-sectional analysis, the same sample size is being used at one point at a time.

The target population of the researcher for his research is the people in the call centers in the Lahore city, Pakistan. The data is being collected from employees of private call-centers based in Lahore. These employees were working in different departments i.e. human resources, finance and Information Technology.

Measures

The measures and instruments were collected from reliable scales. A 5-point Likert Scale was used for the collection of data. In 5-point Likert scale, “5 representing “strongly agree”, 4 representing “agree”, 3 representing “neutral”, 2 representing “disagree” and 1 representing “strongly disagree”.

- Employee recognition: We adopted the scale of (De Beer, 1987) to measure employee recognition and this scale consists of four items. The sample items included “I am praised regularly for my work” and “I get credit for what I do”.
- Employee rewards: We adopted the scale of (Leary, 2004) and this scale consisted of seven items. The sample items included “The rewards are distributed rightfully” and “The rewards match my work effort”.
- Perceived Organization Support: We adopted the scale of (DeConinck & Johnson, 2009) and this scale consisted of four items which included “The benefits that I receive at this company meet my needs”.
- Job stress: We adopted the scale of (Greenberg & Baron, 1986) to measure employee job stress and this scale consisted of five items which included “I have too much workload and stress on me” and “Work-related frustrations reduced the performance level”.
- Employee performance: We adopted the scale of (Rounds, Dawis, & Lofquist, 1987) to measure employee performance and this scale included three items which included “I am satisfied with my performance because it is mostly good”.

Sample and Data Collection

This study was based on primary data. To explore the effect of rewards, recognition and job stress on employee performance under mediation by perceived organization support the survey method was used. The questionnaire method was adopted to use primary data from the employees of call-centers in Lahore, Pakistan. The data were collected from three call-centers in Lahore. The total of 200 questionnaires was distributed among the employees in these three call-centers, the respondents vary in positions and purposefully selected. The 180 questionnaires were received back from respondents.

Demographics

200 questionnaires distributed among the employees of call-centers of Lahore, Pakistan. Only 180 questionnaires were correctly answered. Female and male employees have filled 58 and 122 questionnaires whose percentage is 32.2% and 67.8% respectively. In terms of the age group of the employee, it is noted that 74.4% of them are up to 25 years, whereas 25.6% fall into the 26-45 age group. Moreover, as for the educational level of these respondents is concerned, the 66.7%, 16.7%, 5.6%, and 11.1% belonged to bachelor, master, Ph.D., and some other degree respectively. Additionally, 45.6% of respondents had a length of service up to 1 year, 30% of respondents had between 2-5 years, and 20% and 4.4% respondents had between 6-10 years and 10+ years respectively.

Data Analysis and Findings

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Table 1 showed the factor loadings, composite reliability, and average variance. It is said to be convergent when items loadings highly (> 0.50) and findings revealed that values of factor loadings are greater than 0.50. The value of AVE for all the variables is above 0.50, and composite reliability is greater than 0.8, indicating that convergent validity of all constructs except job stress and rewards has been established.

Table 1 - Factor Loadings

Constructs		Loadings	Alpha	AVE	CR
Employee Performance	EP1	0.889	0.767	0.679	0.863
	EP2	0.826			
	EP3	0.750			
Job Stress	Jobstress1	0.521	0.541	0.622	0.750
	Jobstress4	0.986			
POS	POS1	0.422	0.714	0.548	0.821
	POS2	0.858			
	POS3	0.796			
	POS4	0.803			
Recognition	Recognition1	0.832	0.710	0.631	0.837
	Recognition2	0.799			
	Recognition3	0.751			
Rewards	Rewards1	0.545	0.558	0.547	0.778
	Rewards6	0.810			
	Rewards7	0.829			

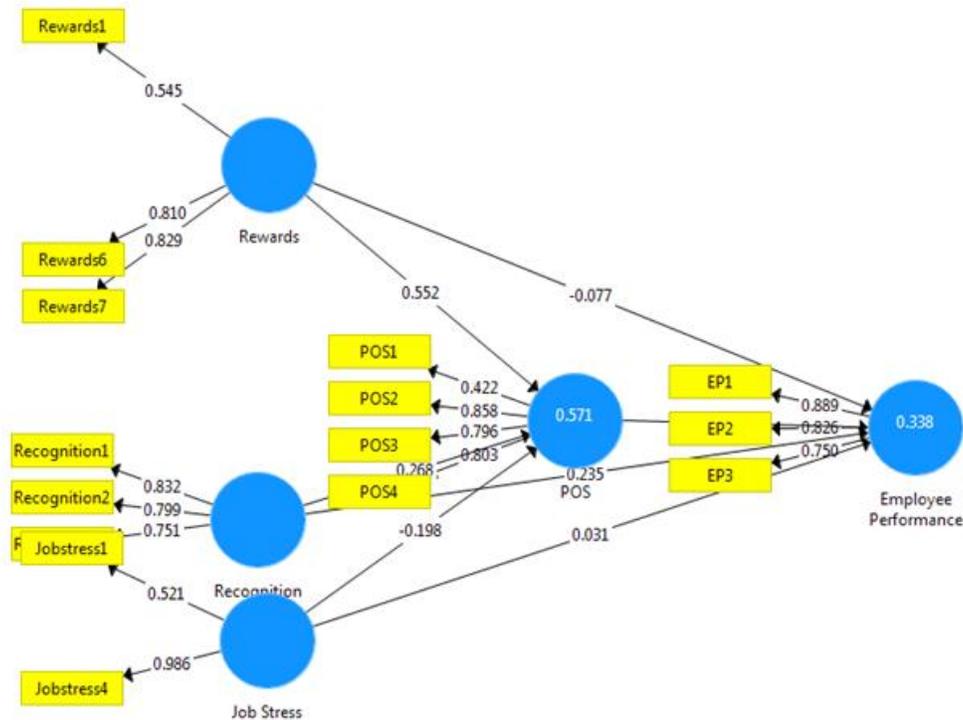


Figure 1 - Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Table 2 shows the outcomes of discriminant validity evaluation of the variables. Along the diagonal, the result shows the square root of AVE for all constructs.

Table 2 - Discriminant Validity

	Employee Performance	Job Stress	POS	Recognition	Rewards
<i>Employee Performance</i>					
<i>Job Stress</i>	0.213				
<i>POS</i>	0.656	0.330			
<i>Recognition</i>	0.611	0.108	0.736		
<i>Rewards</i>	0.556	0.296	1.061	0.795	

Heterotrait – Monotrait Ratio

Table 3 described the HTMT ratio. According to this criterion, all the ratio values are greater than the minimum threshold which is less than 0.85 and that is the evidence of discriminant validity. Only in the case of rewards and POS_, the value is 1.061 which does not support the criterion.

Table 3 - Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio

Variables	Employee Performance	Job Stress	POS	Recognition	Rewards
Employee Performance					
Job Stress	0.213				
POS_	0.656	0.330			
Recognition	0.611	0.108	0.736		
Rewards	0.556	0.296	1.061	0.795	

Structure Equation Modeling

To understand the relationship in the constructs, SEM PLS structural model analysis was done. The study used bootstrapping to assess the significance of path coefficients. Results identified that job stress, employee performance and POS are significantly and negatively related to performance ($\beta_{jp} = 0.031$, $t = 2.40$; $\beta_{jpos} = -0.198$, $t = 1.723$; $\beta_{posp} = 0.478$, $t = 4.781$) respectively and supported to H1, H2 and H3. Moreover, findings also revealed that employee rewards, recognition, and POS are also significantly and positively related to employee performance and supported to H4, H5, and H6. Results also showed that there is no multicollinearity issue with data as VIF value is less than 5 as suggested by (Hair et al., 2011).

Table 4 - Path Modeling

Hypothesis	Relationship	Std. Beta	S.E.	t-Value	Decision	R2	F2	VIF
H1	Job Stress ->Employee Performance	0.031	0.810	0.240	Supported	0.338	0.001	1.092
H2	Job Stress ->POS	-0.198	0.085	1.723	Supported		0.091	1.001
H3	POS->Employee Performance	0.478	0.000	4.781	Supported		0.148	2.333
H4	Recognition->Employee Performance	0.235	0.025	2.248	Supported	0.571	0.055	1.509
H5	Recognition ->POS	0.268	0.000	4.676	Supported		0.125	1.342
H6	Rewards->Employee Performance	-0.077	0.376	0.887	Supported		0.004	2.054
H7	Rewards->POS	0.558	0.000	8.230	Supported		0.530	1.342

Mediation Analysis

Results showed that POS significantly and fully mediates the relationship between job stress and employee performance ($\beta = -0.069$, $t = 1.713$) and supported to H8. Similarly, POS also significantly mediates the relationship between recognition and employee performance ($\beta = 0.128$, $t = 3.838$) and supported to H9. Moreover, it was also revealed that POS mediates the relationship between rewards and rewards ($\beta = 0.264$, $t = 3.713$) and H10 is supported.

Table 5 - Mediation Analysis

Hypothesis	Relationship	Sample		T Statistics	Lower Limit	Upper Limit	Decision
		Mean (M)	(STDEV)				
H8	Job Stress ->POS-> Employee Performance	-0.069	0.055	1.713	-0.094	0.087	Supported
H9	Recognition -> POS->Employee Performance	0.128	0.033	3.838	0.128	0.000	Supported
H10	Rewards -> POS->Employee Performance	0.264	0.071	3.713	0.264	0.000	Supported

Conclusion

In the global scenario, we find that rewards, recognition and job stress play an important role in boosting employee performance and hence the overall company performance. We concluded that while rewards and recognition both have a positive effect on employee performance, job stress has a negative effect on performance. Thus the model helps to improve things in the call-centers like employee rewards, recognition and job stress. This study elaborates how companies can increase the above factors for their overall betterment. The study shows that employees are always very much concerned about these factors.

The main purpose of the study is to examine the effect of employee rewards, recognition and job stress on employee performance considering the mediating role of perceived organizational support in the call-centers of Lahore, Pakistan. For this purpose, the survey questionnaire method was used. Data were collected by using simple random sampling technique from the call-centers in Lahore. After applying all the tests in SPSS and Smart PLS, we found out that employee rewards, job stress, and recognition have a strong influence on employee performance.

As Pakistan is a developing country, people have a low level of income. The practices such as employee rewards and recognition are not always considered important in organizations. This study depicts that these factors are really important for a company (Javed, Rafiq, Ahmed, & Khan, 2012). This study showed that job stress was indirectly related to employee performance. When there is a dynamic environment, stress also increases (Huff, Huff, & Thomas, 1992). This study puts light on to how the companies can motivate employees by giving them rewards for their hard work, give value to their efforts by recognizing them and taking steps to lower down job-stress related issues.

The previous studies also revealed almost the same kind of results and showed how the above factors influence employee performance negatively or positively (Carsten & Spector, 1987; Cherniss, 1980; Deery, Iverson, & Walsh, 2002; Poddar & Madupalli, 2012; Schwab, Jackson, & Schuler, 1986). As far as the mediation is concerned, POS does motivate the relationship between employee rewards, recognition, and job stress and employee performance.

Limitations and Future Directions

There are some limitations to this study. They are about performing the analysis and data collection methods. The sample for the study was taken only from one city and there was a time-constraint in collecting data during their working time. The results can be better by taking into consideration the sample from more cities. On the other hand, all the items in the questionnaire were in the English language. All of the respondents were not able to answer it accurately. The researcher did not translate them in the Urdu language which is the local language. To overcome this issue, the researcher gave respondents the choice of contacting him if they faced any difficulty in filling the questionnaires. Furthermore, there are a number of limitations that the researcher can take into account for future studies. The researcher may include other factors in enhancing employee performance e.g. training and leadership. Also, the researcher only used a five-point Likert scale for data collection which may cause a decrease in the validity of the study. The study only used cross-sectional data analysis which means that the data is collected at one point of time only. So the variable analysis was restricted to a particular time.

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Questionnaire

Section 1

Gender:	1. Male	2. Female		
Age Group:	1. Up to 25	2. 26-45	3. 46-55	4. 56+
Education:	1. Bachelor's	2. Master's	3. Ph.D.	4. If other please specify
Nature of employment:	1. Contractual	2. Permanent	3. Others _____	
Length of service:	1. up to 1 yr.	2. 2-5yrs.	3. 5-10yrs.	4. 10+yrs.

Section 2

Key:	1 Strongly Disagree	2- Disagree	3- Neutral	4- Agree	5- Strongly Agree
Rewards: (Leary, 2004)					
The rewards are distributed rightfully	1	2	3	4	5
The rewards match my work effort.	1	2	3	4	5
I am satisfied with the quality/quantity of the rewards	1	2	3	4	5
I am ready to increase my work efforts in order to gain rewards	1	2	3	4	5
Employees work more as a team in order to gain rewards	1	2	3	4	5
The rewards have a positive effect on the work atmosphere	1	2	3	4	5
The rewards motivate me to perform well in my job	1	2	3	4	5
Recognition: (De Beer, 1987)					
I am praised regularly for my work	1	2	3	4	5
I receive constructive criticism about my work	1	2	3	4	5
I get credit for what I do	1	2	3	4	5
I am told that I am making progress	1	2	3	4	5
Job Stress: (Greenberg & Baron, 1986)					
I have too much workload and stress on me	1	2	3	4	5
Work-related frustrations reduced the performance level	1	2	3	4	5
Do you think your work can affect your health?	1	2	3	4	5
I have too little time in which to do what is expected of me	1	2	3	4	5
Do you think management performs some activities in order to reduce the stress level of employees?	1	2	3	4	5
Perceived Organizational Support: (DeConinck & Johnson, 2009)					
The benefits that I receive at this company meet my needs	1	2	3	4	5
This company has a culture that allows me to develop my professional skills	1	2	3	4	5
This company provides me with the tools I need to help me grow and navigate my career	1	2	3	4	5
The company provides fair compensation and benefits in return for my contributions in it	1	2	3	4	5
Employee Performance: (Rounds et al., 1987)					
My performance is better than that of my colleagues with similar qualifications	1	2	3	4	5
I am satisfied with my performance because it is mostly good	1	2	3	4	5
My performance is better than that of employees with similar qualifications in other organizations	1	2	3	4	5