

Perceived Organizational Support as a Mediator of Job Satisfaction: A Study of the Public Service Commission in Sierra Leone

¹Sophie Allieu, ²Ibrahim Bangura, ³David Yovuwa

¹Private-Consultant & Freelance Researcher, Sierra Leone

^{2,3}Ernest Bai Koroma University of Science and Technology, Sierra Leone

Authors E-mail: sop.allieu@gmail.com, ibrahimbangura258@yahoo.com, davideyovuwa@gmail.com

Abstract - This study examined the relationships between perceived organizational support and job satisfaction in the Public Service Commission in Sierra Leone.

The purpose of this study is to find the correlation and the mediating roles of perceived organizational support on job satisfaction. Perceived organizational support as an intervening variable that also explains the direct relationship between organizational support and job satisfaction. Organizational support has a direct relationship on Perceived organizational support (*caring, forgiving, helping, providing opportunities and considering goals and values of employees*) and then, Perceived organizational support has a direct relationship on job satisfaction.

A case study research design was used to achieve the objective of the research. Quantitative technique and the bounded case research study sample were used. The main variables in the study were used to design a questionnaire in collecting the data; using a sample of 25 out of 27 employees at the Public Service Commission in Sierra Leone which happens to be the staff population. This commission was selected because of the pivotal role it plays in employer -employee relations as a coordinating and supervisory body. As pacesetters it is necessary to know what is happening within their operative, managerial and advisory HR functions from the lens of these variables.

The research questions focused on employees at the public service commission and surveyed via a well-structured questionnaire to collect the data. The results of data analysis show that perceived organizational support (POS) has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction of employees at the Public Service Commission. Based on the results that were obtained, the study deduced implications for both theory and practice and practical implications on how public sector leaders can reduce turnover and increase employee performance; to reduce costs and improve organizational performance.

Managers must understand that every employee has different necessities and expectations which need to be fulfilled; which implies that they should provide support to their employees, including motivated working conditions, which will resultantly enhance job satisfaction. Significant practical recommendations of the results of the study will be disseminated throughout via electronic social and academic platforms, thereby encouraging public management practices that identify key human resource personnels that will establish a chain of influence (organizational support) to foster job satisfaction.

Keywords: Perceived Organizational Support [POS] and Job Satisfaction [JS].

I. INTRODUCTION

Sierra Leone remains among the world's poorest countries, ranking 180th out of 187 countries in the Human Development Index in 2011.

Sierra Leone is located at approximately 8.5°N 12.1°W Coordinates: 8.5°N 12.1°W, between the 7th and 10th parallels north of the equator. It is bordered by Guinea to the north and northeast, and Liberia to the south and southeast.[5] The country has a total area of 71,740 km² (27,699 sq mi), divided into a land area of 71,620 km² (27,653 sq mi) and water of 120 km² (46 sq mi).

(<https://www.sl.undp.org/content/sierraleone/en/home/sustainable-development-goals.html>)

Government commitment to Public Sector Reform has been promising, and a combination of measures bringing together diaspora experts, training and recruiting mid-level technical experts and implementing performance management and performance contracting systems have been complete Sierra Leone's public sector suffered a decline between the 1960s and the early 2002s. It began in 1967 – 1985, during which period the incumbent government undermined the country's public service capacity through autocratic and

corrupt governance practices and an effort to dismantle vestiges of British colonial rule, including the legacy of national public administration. The civil war (1991-2002) further decimated the civil service. When the war ended, Sierra Leone's public sector capacity was virtually non-existent outside Freetown. Mass departure of civil servants began before the civil war and was exacerbated by the conflict. In 1991, the size of the public service was 74,000 public servants. In 2002, this number was reduced to about 62,000 public servants, where over a third of these personnel staffed the education sector.

(<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/27160/730650WPOSLOPu0C0disclosed010040120.pdf?sequence=1>)

Public sector workers are vital components of the public service commission, forming the largest group of professionals in the economy (Kattel, R. et al., 2014). In Sierra Leone, just like many other countries, public sector workers in Sierra Leone are exposed to heavy workloads, undefined responsibilities, shortage of equipment, and low pay (Haja, Mohamed & Sophie, 2016), low social status. The complications of negotiating the gap between theory and practice (Haja, Mohamed & Sophie, 2016) all of which ultimately influence the provision of high-quality service delivery (Haja, Mohamed & Sophie, 2016). These conditions require a willingness to perform tasks beyond the defined duties and responsibilities, a phenomenon referred to as the "concept of organizational citizenship behavior" in the related literature (Çavuş MF, Develi A. 2017; Becton et al., 2017).

Organizational support relates to positive institutional and individual outcomes, such as improving productivity and OCB, job satisfaction, and solidifying managerial efficiency and effectiveness (Blomme et al., 2015). In contrast, these individual and organizational results decrease with employees' dis-engagement (Strom et al., 2014).

Contemporary worldwide business developments and intense competition have raised challenges for service sector organisations. These organisations can adjust to this evolving and competitive market climate by adopting new working approaches (Riaz et al., 2020) and creating a thriving workforce (Spreitzer et al., 2005). Thriving individuals are a source of competitive advantage for organization (Abid et al., 2018).

According to Blau (1964), when a working group performs their job, which is beneficial or valuable for another group, then the other group will endeavour to reciprocate equally, in return. This will establish a reciprocal relationship between leaders and their followers (Strom et al., 2014). Consistently, employees feel more obliged and engaged when

ethical leaders enable them with socio-emotional resources (Bormann, 2017). This may also intensify the positive perceptions of employees for their leaders. Empirical findings showed that job satisfaction exhibits different relations with organizational outcomes, such as performance (Miah, 2018; Rubel & Kee, 2014). It inspires employees to perform well, therefore organization can achieve exceptional success from satisfied employees (Judge et al., 2017) as compared to employees having lower job satisfaction (Ayuningtyas et al., 2018). For that reason, it is taken as a criterion variable in this study.

The article is structured as follows: **Abstract** (summary of the research); **Introduction** (background, problem statement, purpose and objectives of the study and research questions); **Methodology** (procedure; study design, methods used to collect and analyse data); **Findings of the study** (presentation of the data collected with contextual analysis); **Discussion and Conclusion** (discussing and comparing the results, conclusions, implications) **Recommendation** (making suggestions).

1.1 Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

1.1.1 Theoretical Framework

1.1.1.1 Organizational Support Theory

According to OST (organizational support theory), POS (perceived organizational support) strongly depends on employees' attributions concerning the organization's intent behind their receipt of favourable or unfavourable treatment. In turn, POS initiates a social exchange process wherein employees feel obligated to help the organisation achieve its goals and objectives and expect that increased efforts on the organization's behalf will lead to greater rewards. POS also fulfils socioemotional needs, resulting in greater identification and commitment to the organization, an increased desire to help the organisation succeed, and greater psychological well-being.

Organizational support theory is also rooted in social exchange theory (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986). Over time, employees develop a set of perceptions about how their organization treats its employees and appreciates their efforts. These perceptions are based in part on the employee's relationship with their supervisor, and eventually, they develop into universal beliefs about their organization (Eisenberger et al., 1986). Positive perceptions of organizational support have been associated with many positive outcomes, including employee retention, job satisfaction, and organizational loyalty (Eisenberger et al., 2014). Related to the concept of exchange, the employee contributes effort and participation in the achievement of the

organizational goals. At the same time, the organization offers both economic exchange (pay) and social exchange (self-esteem, group membership) (Baran, Shanock, & Miller, 2012).

Organizational support theory is built on three mechanisms: felt an obligation, group identification, and outcome expectancy (Yu & Frenkel, 2013). Felt obligation is defined as an external reward, an organization's expectations, or manager on the employer or employee group. Group identification and outcome expectancy are represented as internal rewards, expectations, and rewards established by the employee or employee group (Yu & Frenkel, 2013). Creativity and extra-role (OCB) activity was observed more frequently when the participants rated themselves as having higher group identification and outcome expectancy (Yu & Frenkel, 2013).

OST invokes social exchange theory wherein employment is viewed as the trade of effort and loyalty by the employee for tangible benefits and social resources from the organisation (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Thus, felt obligation resulting from POS has been found to be positively related to affective organizational commitment (Eisenberger, Armeli, Rexwinkel, Lynch, & Rhoades, 2001).

Research consistently shows that public-sector employees have different motivations than private-sector employees (Mostafa, Gould Williams, and Bottomley 2015; Resh, Marvel, and Wen 2018). Public service motivation theory originates from the notion that unique motives are found among public sector employees different from private-sector employees (Perry et al., 2010). Public service motivation is further discussed as a "value or attitude that motivates individuals to engage in behaviours that benefit society" (Gould-Williams, Mostafa, & Bottomley, 2013, p. 3). More broadly defined public service motivation is a reliance on intrinsic rewards versus extrinsic rewards (Wright & Hobfoll, 2014). The most noticeable difference between public and private sector employees is a "sense of accomplishment takes precedence over issues more directly related to monetary incentives such as performance rewards and promotions" among public sector employees (Eisenberger et al., 2010).

1.1.1.2 The Social Exchange Theory

The social exchange theory is one of the most widespread theoretical paradigms for understanding employees' behaviours in the workplace. Social exchange theory states that "mutual reciprocation is the most basic form of human interactions" (Blau, P.M., 1964). In the workplace, this theory speculates about interpersonal behaviours (the relationship between supervisor, coworkers, and organization) in terms of the exchange of costs and rewards: for instance, if the employee perceives leadership behavior as fair, in return, they also show more cooperative behavior (Blau, P.M., 1964).

Studies also indicate OCB in terms of the exchange relationship (Organ, D.W., 1988).

The social exchange theory provides a framework for considering the relationship between an employee and its manager. Blau (1964) explained that social exchange involves "unspecified obligations in which there are favours that create diffuse future obligations, not precisely defined ones," and repaying an obligation is something that "cannot be bargained about," but rather left to the determination of the parties involved (p. 93). Social exchange theory is multidimensional, as there are many kinds of resources that can be exchanged, and the rules for exchanges are unwritten and unspoken, only implied (Colquitt et al., 2013).

Diverse utilisation of social exchange theory: The social exchange theory has served as the foundation for several avenues of study in the arena of human interactions. Studies have been diverse, including business areas, marital relations, and decisions made by teens. Ironically, Surma (2015) found that social exchange increased the use of social media. Consistent with the hypotheses related to reciprocity, the researcher found that users who interacted with others received the most interactions or posts to their messages on Facebook, which reinforced that social behavior in all formats depends on an exchange (Surma, 2015).

The social exchange has recently been studied to create value with customers in service recovery situations. Choi, Lotz, and Kim's (2014) research showed that if the customers felt support and justice from the organization, they felt positive feelings for the organization, even if there was a service breakdown. By offering services over and above the contractual obligation to a client, like OCB, the organization can impress a customer. This can overcome a service gap and recover the previous level of trust and an increased level of affection (Choi et al., 2014).

The opposite effect was reported related to a strong emotional reaction when there is a perceived violation of social exchange (Leary, Diebels, Jongman-Sereno, & Fernandez, 2015). Social exchange requires a high level of trust. The reaction may seem out of proportion to the event. The hypothesis is that an exchange violation is not just a violation of trust at the current time but puts future exchanges at risk. A violation or disappointment calls into question the trust that future exchanges will occur, especially exchanges currently owed (Leary et al., 2015). Blau (1964) noted that trust requires a vulnerability level—both parties must accept the risk that the exchange will not occur as expected. Risk-taking is an essential leadership component.

Social exchange in work settings: Social exchange theory has been utilised extensively as a concept to explain activities

in workplace issues. Shore et al. (2009) stated, "Social exchange theory has gained prominence as a framework for understanding the employee-organization relationship" (p. 289). Social exchange theory has been utilised to study the relationship between employees and their manager, organization, and coworkers. Shore et al. concluded that a robust finding could be perceived between a positive social exchange relationship with an employee and positive outcomes, including stronger employee contributions, higher commitment, decreased intent to quit, noticeable OCB, and better job performance.

1.1.1.3 Person-Environment Fit Theory

The person-environment fit theory can be a useful framework for understanding why some practices of SHRM have the ability to generate employee satisfaction. This theory holds that the degree of fit between employee needs and organizational supplies impacts employees' attitudes. Hence, it is likely that positive job satisfaction arises when the degree of perceived fit between the person and the work environment is high, while negative attitudes would develop when the person-environment adjustment is perceived to be low (Salanova et al., 2012).

1.1.1.4 Perceived Organizational Support theoretical definition:

Four theoretical definitions of perceived organizational support will throw more light into understanding this construct better:

- 1) "An employee's global belief concerning the extent to which the organization values its contributions and cares about their well-being" (Eisenberger et al., 2002, p.567).
- 2) "A measure of an organization's commitment to its employees" (Makanjee et al., 2006, p. 118).
- 3) "Perceived organizational support is the degree to which an employee feels that they are supported by their supervisor" (Gagon& Michael, 2004, p. 173) and.
- 4) Perceived organizational support is an employee's with their relationship with their supervisor and how well they can depend on their supervisor to attend their individual concerns (Lynch, Eisenberger, & Armeli, 1999).

1.1.1.5 Job Satisfaction theoretical definition

These two theoretical definitions of job satisfaction are relevant to understanding this variable of the study:

- 1) "The emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job and as such can be negative, positive, or neutral" (Avery, 1995, p. 273) and

- 2) "The extent to which people like or dislike their job" (Spector, 1997, p. 2).

1.1.1.6 Theoretical Research Framework model

Figure 1 provides a framework model of organizational support impact on job satisfaction. Employees will be asked to indicate their organizational support and their Job Satisfaction perceptions. Therefore, the "perceived organizational support" dimension is used in the model. The theoretical model consists of two main constructs: perceived organizational support and job satisfaction. Hypotheses are raised to test how organisational support affects job satisfaction, and the mediating role of organizational support on the relationship between the support employees perceive they receive from their organisation and the job satisfaction they get.

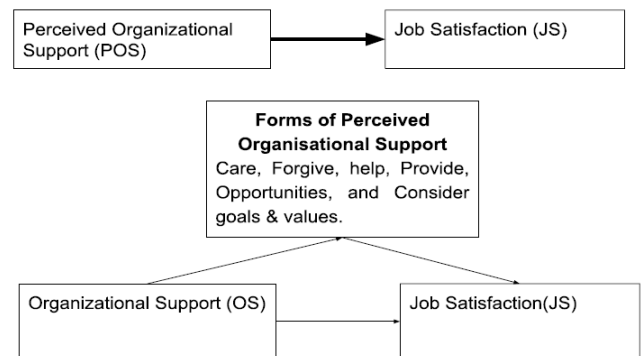


Figure 1: Research Model

Source: Researchers – Sophie Allieu, Ibrahim Bangura & David Yovuwa.

1.1.2 Conceptual Framework

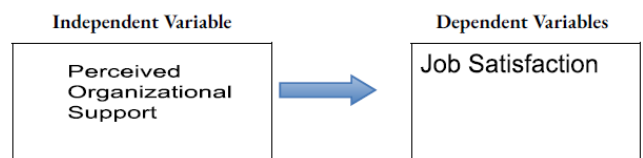


Figure 2: Conceptual Framework

Source: Researchers – Sophie Allieu, Ibrahim Bangura & David Yovuwa.

1.2 Literature Review

Like every other scholarly work, this study is no exception to the fact that it could not be completed without drawing ideas from similar works that already exist. Examining the empirical literature on perceived organizational support, and job satisfaction provides foundation and context for the current study. The literature review is organised into subtopics as presented below:

1.2.1 Public Service Research Literature

Research consistently shows that public-sector employees have different motivations than private-sector employees (Mostafa, Gould Williams, and Bottomley 2015; Resh, Marvel, and Wen 2018). Public service motivation theory originates from the notion that unique motives are found among public sector employees different from private-sector employees (Perry et al., 2010). Public service motivation is further discussed as a "value or attitude that motivates individuals to engage in behaviours that benefit society" (Gould-Williams, Mostafa, & Bottomley, 2013, p. 3). More broadly defined public service motivation is a reliance on intrinsic rewards versus extrinsic rewards (Wright & Hobfoll, 2014). The most noticeable difference between public and private sector employees is a "sense of accomplishment takes precedence over issues more directly related to monetary incentives such as performance rewards and promotions" among public sector employees (Eisenberger et al., 2010).

The public service research literature has demonstrated that public service motivation influences job satisfaction (Resh, Marvel, and Wen 2018; Stritch and Christensen 2016), organizational commitment (Podsakoff et al., 2015; Lim & Loosemore, 2017; Podsakoff et al., 2015), turnover intentions (Mekpor, & Dartey-Baah, 2017), and organizational citizenship behaviours among public sector employees (Ilies, Morgeson, & Nahrgang, 2017). Building on the public service motivation literature and extending the theory to the nonprofit context, this current study can create new knowledge for the field around worker motivations.

1.2.2 Literature Review on Variables

1.2.2.1 Perceived Organizational Support

Perceived organizational support (POS) is the employee's perception of the extent to which the organization respects them and cares for them (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Perceived Organizational Support (POS) is a comprehensive view of employees about how they value their contributions and focus on their well-being. There are two main points to this concept. First, whether employees' feelings about whether the organization values their contribution. Second, employees are concerned about whether the organization is paying attention to their feelings of happiness.

McMillin (1997) complements the literature. He argues that Eisenberger's (1986) POS focuses only on two aspects of support: personal support and respect for help while ignoring other aspects of support. Moreover, he has further refined POS and categorises it with emotional and instrumental support. Emotional support refers to affirming the employees' work and using a positive mood while supporting the employees'

feelings and respect; instrumental support is to meet the requirement of resources during the work. Employees lack the information, training, tools, and equipment needed to complete their work without instrumental support. So instrumental support is essential to the implementation of the work. Service providers, in the absence of the necessary information, material and behavioural support, will lead to poor service delivery and eventually produce anger and frustration.

Measurement of Perceived Organizational Support

One-dimensional Scale

The earliest researcher who studied perceived organizational support was Eisenberger et al., (1986) who stated that perceived organizational support was a one-dimensional construct and developed an organizational support measure scale with a total of 36 items. After factor analysis, Eisenberger et al. (1986) found that the scale supported one-dimensional conception and had good reliability. This scale was the most widely used measure of organizational support in subsequent studies. However, in the specific application, follow-up researchers often selected some of 36 items in order to constitute a separate scale to make their study more convenient. This also reflects the scale of 36 items developed by Eisenberger et al., (1986) has a high internal validity and a good one-dimensional character.

Two-dimensional Scale

McMillin (1997) supplemented the concept proposed by Eisenberger, and stated that organizational support should include, in addition to the organization's concern and respect for employees, tool support such as equipment, information, personnel, etc., necessary for the job staff to work better. The author proposed that organizational support should be composed of social emotional support and tool support and developed a 15-item measurement scale.

Multiple-dimensional Scale

Kraimer and Wayne (2004) divided the sense of organizational support into three dimensions: adaptive support, career support and financial support. In the process of studying the sense of organizational support of expatriates, developed a 12-item scale. Ling et al. (2006) divided perceived organizational support into three dimensions: value recognition, job support and care about interests, and developed a 24-item scale to measure the three dimensions by use of Likert-6 scale, obtaining high reliability and validity. Chen (2006) four-dimension scale (16 items) and nine-dimension scale (56 items) of perceived organizational support. The four-dimension scale includes emotional support,

instrumental support, superior support and colleague support. Nine-dimension scale includes work support, value, competence and ambition, interpersonal support, welfare and job security, tolerance and understanding, fair and reasonable support, concern for respect, and career development. Yuan (2017) developed a five-dimension scale of perceived organizational support. The five dimensions are respectively job support, value recognition, care about interests, emotional support and developmental support with a total of 23 measurement items.

1.2.2.2 Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is defined as a positive or pleasant emotional state resulting from job evaluation (Locke, 1976) and acquired experiences on the job (Makin et al., 2000, pp. 82–83). It is an expression of emotional attitude towards the job and the tasks performed, and an emotional response to the job (Spector, 1985). It is also an emotional response to the performance of tasks and roles, and in crisis situations, employees with higher job satisfaction will have more strength and energy (Rhéaume, 2021; Bańka, 1996, p. 69;).

Job satisfaction refers to an individual's complex attitude towards his job. It is a pleasurable emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job to facilitate the achievement of one's job value. According to Vroom (1964), the term 'job' refers to workers' immediate work task and work role in a particular work organization.

As a generic concept, satisfaction may be described from a behavioural perspective. Individual or organizational behavior is believed to be goal-directed. Each human action has a primary motivation, and most actions are attempts to maximise satisfaction by fulfilling multiple motivations, some of which are identified by Maslow (Maslow, 1943). Accordingly, the meaning of satisfaction in common usage, satisfaction occurs when one gets what he needs, desires, wants, expects, deserves, or deems to be his entitlement.

Research on job satisfaction shows that many factors affect job satisfaction, among them: job quality, employment conditions, colleagues, supervisors, administrative style, job trends, social rights, communication, personality, gender, and type of organization (public or private).

According to Hoppock (1935), "Job satisfaction is any combination of psychological, physiological and environmental circumstances that cause a person to truthfully say I am satisfied with their job." Such a description indicates the variety of variables that influence job satisfaction. Blum (1968) conceptualised job satisfaction as "an attitude which results from a balancing and summation of many specific likes and dislikes experienced in connection with the job." Vroom

(1964) observes that job satisfaction is "the positive orientation of an individual towards all aspects of the work situation."

Locke (1969) defines job satisfaction as a "pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's or job experiences." Based on these definitions, it may be concluded that job satisfaction is a complex set of variables governed to no small extent by the employees' perception and expectations. In the present study, job satisfaction is conceptualised as "a positive attitude or a pleasurable emotional state which results from specific work-related experiences."

It is clearly seen from the above definitions that Job satisfaction is one of the essential factors that have drawn the organization's attention and academics. Given the rising competition resulting from globalization, managers have placed great importance on the construct of job satisfaction. This may be due to many studies' findings that job satisfaction is a significant determinant of organizational commitment. Highly satisfied employees will exert extra effort and contribute positively to the effectiveness and efficiency of their organisations. Job satisfaction will lead to better performance, and the employees will be more committed to their organization.

1.2.2 Workplace Perceptions of Support and Job Satisfaction

There were many factors for consideration regarding workplace behaviours that influenced perceived organizational support and job satisfaction; including employee perception, expectation related to performance rewards, and recognition.

There are two main approaches to measuring job satisfaction: an overall measure of satisfaction and one that relates to specific aspects of satisfaction. The literature recommends measuring not only overall job satisfaction, but also how its individual components are experienced by employees and affect overall satisfaction.

Nicholson (2003) argued that fulfilled expectations and rewards that are relevant to employees might be a source of motivation that may have a significant impact on perceptions of leadership support. It is further suggested that good managers motivate employees by using their personal power of vision and their compelling logic of reasoning. Nicholson concluded that when organisations provided worthwhile incentives and rewards, it was expected that organizational members would voluntarily perform above and beyond the organisations outlined expectations. These findings supported the foundational theme of the social exchange theory.

1.3 Significance of the Study

The importance of this work cannot be downplayed Without any exaggeration that this study is relevant in proving public services in developing nations. This study investigates the impact of perceived organizational support on job satisfaction in public organisations using the Public Service Commission as a case study. This research will build on knowledge gained from studies conducted and expand knowledge based on findings of this study. The information gained from this study has practical implications for public sector leadership and may affect reducing turnover and the associated costs. Gaps exist in the current literature in the public sector relating to the country of study - Sierra Leone.

With the public sector being such a large component of the Sierra Leone economy and workforce, this study can yield implications for public sector leaders and managers; they will have a better understanding of the relationship between perceived organizational support and job satisfaction that will equip them to address issues like high turnover and poor organizational performance which will eventually reduce costs and improve organizational performance.

An important task for public sector leaders is to motivate employees (Fisher, 2019; Vinnecombe & Singh, 2017). Understanding what motivates employees in the public sector is crucial to halting the current "human capital crisis" (Lee and Wilkins, 2017, p. 45) and is a pressing issue for public sector managers (Word & Carpenter, 2014). Unless public organisations endeavour to improve their human resource management efforts, turnover will continue to be a challenge (Kang, Huh, Cho, & Auh, 2014; Word & Carpenter, 2014).

This research may guide the development and implementation of required training programs, based on the findings of this study. This study's findings can inform the development and implementation of human resource management, improvement efforts in the public sector to address and foster key work attitudes associated with low turnovers, such as job satisfaction and perceived organizational support.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The daily increase of employees' contribution to value creation in a dynamic competitive business system has led to a change in managers' look to employees from a single source of production to an organizational citizen (Jafari & Majidi Moghadam, 2013). In place of this, this research's broader objective is to explore the relationship between perceived organizational support and job satisfaction.

Given the general goal, the specific objectives of the study are:

- 1) To determine how perceived organizational support predicts employees' job satisfaction.
- 2) To evaluate the relationship between perceived organizational support and employees' job satisfaction.
- 3) To assess to what extent does perceived organizational support have a direct relationship with employees' Job satisfaction.

1.5 Research Questions

This research will ask the following questions:

- 1) How can perceived organizational support predict employees' job satisfaction?
- 2) Why is there a relationship between perceived organizational support and employees' job satisfaction?
- 3) What extent is perceived organizational support a mediator of Job satisfaction?

1.6 Innovative Contribution

The study contributes to the literature review in three different ways.

First, it enabled us to determine whether employees' perceived organizational support and job satisfaction are strengthened by leadership style within the institutions' culture; for example, to what extent is this leadership style successful in reassuring certain work behaviours in the government or public sector in Sierra Leone.

Second, this research strengthens the present literature by seeking innovative contexts typical of the public service, which might positively impact followers' outcomes. We attempted to design a contributory mechanism of how perceived organizational support works to promote job satisfaction.

Third, this research contributes to literature and theory related to POS by suggesting and confirming the positive association between POS (i.e., a characteristic where working behavior of individuals and attitudes are influenced by an individual's perception of the main phenomenon that describes their organization) and job satisfaction (among thorough researched constructs in management research/organizational behavior). Using social exchange theory, we contend that POS can exert mediating effects and can be linked with job satisfaction.

Lastly, the construct, perceived organizational support will become familiar as it is not known or used by many in my country Sierra Leone.

Although some other studies used different mediators to test this relationship, for example, organizational Justice (Amna, Sajjad, Imran, 2018) and trust (Xu et al., 2016). Yet to the best of our knowledge, no research has explicitly investigated the relationships between perceived organizational support and job satisfaction and perceived organizational support as a mediator of job satisfaction specific in the African context and particularly for public sector organisations in Sierra Leone.

1.7 Hypothesis Development

1.7.1 Perceived Organizational Support

Conversely, employees in general also pay attention to organisation commitment to them. Appreciation by organisations in several areas such as approval, respect, salary and promotion, and access to information are important (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). When a person is well treated by an organization, norms require them to be kind to the organization in return. Therefore, the hypothesis reads:

Hypothesis 1: Perceived Organizational Support (POS) has a positive and significant influence on Job satisfaction.

1.7.2 Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is considered a significant indicator of organizational commitment (Top & Gider, 2013). Another definition states that job satisfaction is a positive or negative attitude and employee perceptions of work and work environment (Pool & Pool, 2007).

Therefore, organisations need to pay attention to employee job satisfaction, because satisfied employees tend to exhibit positive attitudes and behaviours toward the organization (Su et al., 2013). This positive attitude can be demonstrated by a high level of organizational commitment. So, this article hypothesised that:

Hypothesis 2: Job satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction of employees in public service.

1.7.3 Linking Perception of Organizational Support (POS) with Job Satisfaction

POS is described as the level to which people assume that their well-being is essential (Eisenberger et al., 1986) while Job satisfaction is typified by Miah (2018) as a pleasurable emotional condition of individuals that results from their job evaluation as achieving or encouraging the attainment of their job values. This paper theorised that POS and employee job satisfaction would be positively linked. For example, studies (Miao, 2011; Miao & Kim, 2010; Ayuningtyas et al., 2019; Qaiser et al., 2021; Günay, 2017) affirmed that POS is a strong contributor to job satisfaction. Employees will enhance

their individuals' personal resources (Hobfoll, 2001) with the perception of strong organizational support. So, our hypothetical statement is:

Hypothesis 3: Perceived organizational support has a direct relationship on employees' job satisfaction.

II. METHODS

This section starts to elaborate the philosophical foundations and methodological choices adopted in the study.

This study is case study research. Understanding the definitions and descriptions of a case study research will help justify the researchers' choice of methods and methodology.

YIN's two-part definition (2014) focuses on the scope, process, and methodological characteristics of case study research, emphasising the nature of inquiry as being empirical, and the importance of context to the case. On the other hand, STAKE (1995) takes a more flexible stance and while concerned with rigour in the processes, maintains a focus on what is studied (the case) rather than how it is studied (the method). For STAKE, case study research is "the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances" (p.xi). MERRIAM (2009) includes what is studied and the products of the research when defining case study as: "... an in depth description and analysis of a bounded system" (p.40). Like STAKE, MERRIAM emphasises the defining feature of case study research as being the object of the study (the bounded system; i.e., the case) adding that case study research focuses on a particular thing and that the product of an investigation should be descriptive and heuristic in nature.

Quantitative research technique was employed to examine the proposed link between perceived organizational support and job satisfaction.

Owing to the nature of the study, the data is in longitudinal form as the aim of this study is to examine the extent to which the above-targeted variables influence job satisfaction using the 25 staff of the public service commission in Sierra Leone as case study. The questionnaires were given out using probability sampling methods to choose respondents in the commission. The target sample from the population is 27 from the public service commission in Sierra Leone of which 2 staff were on leave and did not fill the online questionnaire sent to them. The questionnaire data collected using one type of questionnaire designed by Survey Planet.

The commission plays a supervisory and coordinating role to all public service institutions and the researchers

rationale is that, if the commission gets it right there is the probability that the supervised agencies would.

The survey considered Section A - demographic demographic information of respondents (age, educational level, and staff level/cadre) and Section B - the instruments comprising the main constructs/variables of the research. Consequently, the participants of this study formed employees in the public service commission of Sierra Leone.

2.1 Research Design

This study utilised a self-administered, web-based, cross-sectional survey design. The survey design has many advantages including low cost and fast turnaround time (Creswell, 2009; Lin & Van Ryzin, 2011; Newcomer & Triplett, 2015). In a review of 50 empirical studies published in issues of the Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly (NVSQ), more than half utilised survey data of some kind, and web-based surveys and mail surveys were the most frequently used methods for examining public organisations (Lin & Van Ryzin, 2011).

Web-based surveys allow researchers to create complex surveys with the ability to create skip patterns and recall information from previous questions (Newcomer & Triplett, 2015). Web-based survey provides key reports from responses from surveys which enables quicker analysis. Although mail surveys elicit a higher response rate than web-based surveys for nonprofits, if supplementary measures are implemented it is possible for web-based surveys to attain higher response rates than traditional mail surveys.

2.2 Study Area

The Public Service Commission (PSC) of Sierra Leone was established in 1948 by publication in the Sierra Leone Royal Gazette No. 4112 of 16th September, 1948. It assumed the functions of two committees which were then in existence: the Promotions & Transfers Committee and the Appointments Committee. The then PSC was a non-executive entity with limited executive powers, serving primarily as an advisory body to the then Governor on matters of appointment, promotions and transfers until Independence in April 1961 when it gained Executive status. It is the oldest Commission in Sierra Leone and one of only four Constitutional Commissions as at 1991.

Specifically, sub-section (1) of Section 152 of the 1991 Constitution vests in the PSC “the power to appoint persons to hold or act in offices in the public service (including power to make appointments on promotion and to confirm appointments) and to dismiss and to exercise disciplinary control over persons holding or acting in such offices...” Under

the provisions of sub-section (2) of Section 152, the PSC can perform Executive appointment functions delegated to it by His Excellency the President as the Chief Executive of Sierra Leone and Minister for the Public Service.

In sub-section (5) of Section 152, the Constitution, with some exceptions, also empowers the PSC “to transfer persons holding or acting in offices in the public service from one department of Government to another, where such transfer does not involve promotion...”. Section 152 (10) empowers the PSC to delegate its functions to any other authority or body. A good example of this occurred in 2008 when the PSC delegated the appointment to Grade 1-5 positions in the Civil Service to the Human Resource Management Office (HRMO), the successor organ to the Establishment Secretary’s Office.

The Public Service Commission is responsible to fill vacancies in various Ministries, Departments, and Agencies through its competitive recruitment procedures. Their jurisdiction is to perform an explicitly regulatory and oversight role in the management of HR issues across the Public Service.

As at the period of the research, the commission has 27 staff.

2.3 Population and Sampling

This research is Case Study Research. Sociologists and anthropologists investigated people's lives, experiences, and how they understood the social and cultural context of their world, with the aim of gaining insight into how individuals interpreted and attributed meaning to their experiences and constructed their worlds (JOHANSSON, 2003; SIMONS, 2009).

Typically, case study research has a sample of one - the bounded case.

The Public Service Commission has a total of 27 staff nationwide. 2 staff per regional offices (North, West, East and South) 8 staff; and the rest of the 19 staff are in the secretariat based in the capital city - Freetown. Only 2 staff from the secretariat could not participate because they were on leave and never responded to communications sent to them.

The researchers selected the population based on the functions as stated in 2.2 above. If they as a regulatory, supervisory and an oversight body got the application of the constructs/variables of the research wrong or right is very key in further assessment of the Ministries, Departments and Agencies they serve.

The rationale for choosing this population is embedded in the fact that a case study provides a comprehensive

understanding of a 'bounded unit' which in this case is the Public Service Sector. It further helps whoever reads this work to be able to examine this case so he or she can learn from it. Also allowing others to apply the principles and lessons learned in this case study to other cases or situations and leads to transferability. Managers, employers, supervisors, HR personnel etc of institutions will be able to apply this case to another situation using perceived organizational support as a mediator of job satisfaction.

2.4 Sources of data collection

A web-based, cross-sectional survey design - the Survey Planet application. Survey Planet is an online survey tool that allows users to create and design surveys, share them online, and review results. It enables more targeted survey responses from a pre-screened pool of qualified participants. The researchers made use of various measures to increase the response rate of the web-based survey: sent survey link via email, whatsapp; used referral/recommendation by senior colleagues of the case study so that participants who had tendencies to be uncooperative could cooperate with researchers; frequent reminders through email and whatsapp, and frequent visits.

The Primary data was collected from all levels of employees at the public service commission in Sierra Leone through the administering of questionnaires. This survey questionnaire is designed to evaluate employees' perception of their leaders and their job satisfaction and citizenship behavior. A Likert Scale was used to measure the responses, which used a 5-point response scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). 25 out of 27 questionnaires administered were collected.

The researchers were also provided with secondary data - e.g. annual reports, staff list etc.; which helps in the desk review to generate information for other areas of the research report like: about the case study, population etc.

2.5 Data collection instruments

As stated above, the researchers utilised the survey planet platform to develop a web-based survey Questionnaire. Surveyplanet is a survey solution that provides an easy-to-use interface for both making your surveys and exporting data. It is a free-to-use platform with additional Pro features available! SurveyPlanet is on-demand software for creating surveys and collecting survey results in the cloud. You can use SurveyPlanet to create a robust research project, collect qualitative & quantitative data, screen potential new hires, gather valuable customer feedback, and manage RSVPs and much more. SurveyPlanet offers four main result views: (1)

Survey Results Summary (2) Question Results Details (3) Participant Summary List (Detailed Participant)

Results of the survey consisted of 2 sections -A&B; 38 items; multiple choice. Section A - Demographic information (Gender, Age, and Education and Marital status) was obtained through 18 items. Section B - 20 items were scaled in the research literature measuring views of participants on variables: perceived organizational support and job satisfaction. See Appendix for the full survey instrument.

2.5.1 Validity and Reliability of the Research Instrument

The instrument adequately covers all the content that it should with respect to the variables and equivalently assessed through inter-rater reliability which included testing for qualitatively determined level of agreement between two or more participants.

Just as not every scientist will find every research question interesting enough to study, not every scientist will consider the same effect sizes interesting enough to study, and different stakeholders will differ in which effect sizes are considered meaningful (Kelley & Preacher, 2012).

The instrument was tested before being administered.

2.6 Method of Data Analysis

2.6.1 Analysis by Survey Planet

The survey planet; a virtual data analysis software was used to analyse the completed online survey items. It has an automated analysis system. The likert scale of 1 to 5 was used to gauge responses from respondents. The average of the scale is 3, obtained by finding the mean items of the likert scores i.e 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5. Items whose average fell below 3 are said to disagree with, while items above 3 are said to be upon. Items with an exact mean of 2.5 are said to be indecisive.

The mean of each item are obtained using the formula:

Where,

\bar{x} is mean

$\sum x$ sum of the total responses

n is the total number of items

Each questionnaire was evaluated and counted to ensure that all required fields were properly answered by the respondents. Questionnaires also recounted to verify the minimum sample size achieved for the given population. Various analyses performed from the captured data.

2.6.2 Descriptive Statistics/Analytics/Categorical & Numerical Data

Frequency tables listing items and utilised tally marks to record the number of times they occurred; computed in the form of frequency tables and percentages to obtain the profile of the sample and to describe the basic features of the data. with numbers summarising the variables also called summary statistics or aggregations.

2.6.3 Approach to Qualitative Analysis

To ascertain the influence of the mediator variable - perceived organizational support on job satisfaction, Conceptual Graph Analysis Technique was used wherein the data arising from research technique were modelled and integrated into a diagrammatic structure . (Gordon, S. & Grill 1993). Conceptual graphs are a representational medium used to integrate and organise knowledge obtained from documents, verbal protocols, question probes, and observation of task performance. It focuses on cognitive elements such as knowledge, perceptions and attitudes of participants from which discussions, conclusions and recommendations of the research are made.

2.6.4 Level of Measurement for Variables

Nominal, Ordinal levels of measurements were used for variables to provide categorical information to asked respondents; to rank responses in order of categories and to measure the data on a continuous scale and where possible, with mathematical/statistical formula. Because of the use of Likert scale, many psychometricians would argue that they are interval scales because, when well constructed, there is equal distance between each value.

III. RESULT

The data, extracted from the responses in the questionnaires administered to staff at the Public Service and Commission, 25 out of 27 questionnaires administered by researchers were filled; translating to a 93% response rate. According to Babbie (2002), any response of 50% and above is adequate for analysis and therefore, the response rate of 93% is adequate.

The empirical data are presented in both tabular and graphical forms.

The demographic characteristics of respondents are presented in percentages:

Note: Percentage (%), is defined by $P = \frac{x}{N} \times 100$,

Where,

x is Number of frequency for each item, and N is Total Number of items under consideration.

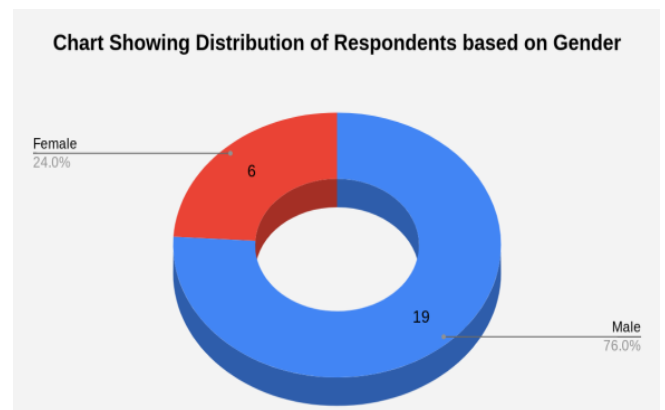
3.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

3.1.1 Gender Distribution of Respondents

Table 1: 3.1.1 showing age distribution of respondents

Responses	Frequency	CF	Percentage
Male	19	19	76%
Female	6	25	24%
Total	25	---	100%

Source: Research Data 2022



Source: Research Data

Figure 3: 3.1.1 Showing Gender distribution of Respondents

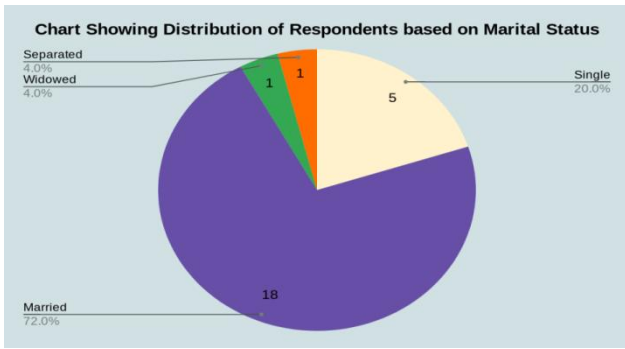
The above Table and Figure 3.1.1 show the distribution of respondents based on gender. Results revealed that 19 out of 25 respondents are male and this constitutes 76.0% of the total respondents; while 06 out of 25 respondents are female and this constitutes 24.0% of the total respondents. We can therefore conclude that there are more male than female respondents in the survey outcome.

3.1.2 Marital Status Distribution of Respondents

Table 2: 3.1.2 showing marital status distribution of respondents

Responses	Frequency	CF	Percentage
Married	18	23	72%
Single	5	5	20%
Widowed	1	24	4%
Separated	1	25	4%
Divorced	0	23	0%
Total	25	---	100%

Source: Research Data



Source: Research Data

Figure 4: 3.1.2 showing marital status of respondents

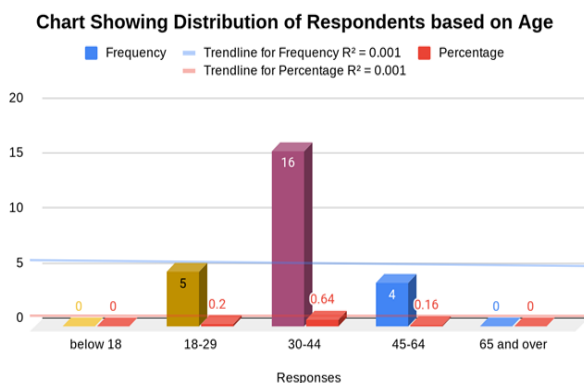
The above Table and Figure 3.1.2 show Results that 18 out of 25 respondents are married which constitutes 72.0% of the total respondents; 5 out of 25 respondents are single constituting 20.0% of the total respondents; 1 out of 25 respondents is separated which account for 4.0% of the total respondents; whilst 1 out of 25 respondents also is widowed, accounting for 4.0% of the total respondents. Zero entry for participants that are divorced, representing 0%, hence, none of the respondents are divorced. We can therefore conclude from our analysis that there are more married, than single and separated respondents in the research outcome.

3.1.3 Age Distribution of Respondents

Table 3: 3.1.3 showing age distribution of respondents

Responses	Frequency	CF	Percentage
below 18	0	0	0
18-29	5	5	20%
30-44	16	21	64%
45-64	4	25	16%
65 and over	0	25	0%
Total	25	---	100%

Source: Research Data



Source: Research Data

Figure 5: 3.1.3 showing age distribution of respondents

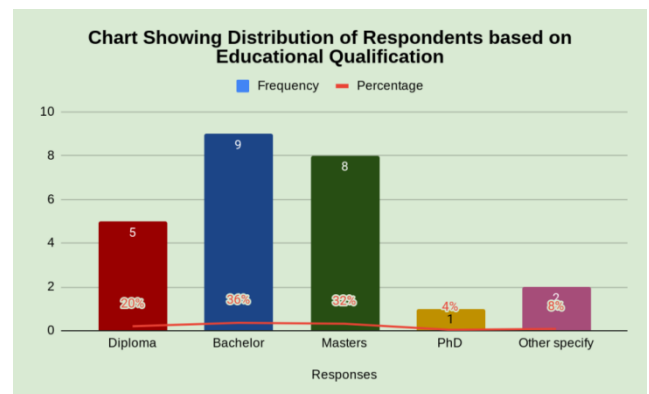
The Table and Figure 3.1.3 above reveal that 0 out of 25 respondents are less than or equal to the age of 18 years and this represent 0% of the total respondents; 5 out of 25 respondents are between the age 18-29 years and this represent 20.0% of the total respondents; 16 out of 25 respondents are between the age 30-44 years and this constitute 64.0% of the total respondents; 4 out of 25 respondents are between the age 45-64 years and this constitute 16.0% of the total respondents; while also 0 out of 25 respondents are less than or equal to the age of 65 years and above representing 0% of the total respondents. We can therefore conclude that there are more respondents between the ages 30-44 years in the survey outcome.

3.1.4 Educational Qualification of Respondents

Table 4: 3.1.4 showing educational qualification distribution of respondents

Responses	Frequency	CF	Percentage
Diploma	5	5	20%
Bachelor	9	14	36%
Masters	8	22	32%
PhD	1	23	4%
Other specify	2	25	8%
Total	25	----	100%

Source: Research Data



Source: Research Data

Figure 6: 3.1.4 showing educational qualification distribution of respondents

The results as shown in Table and Figure 3.1.4 above reveal that 5 out of 25 respondents have Diploma qualification, and this gives 20.0% of the whole respondents; however, 9 out of 25 respondents have Bachelor degree qualification, and this represent 36.0% of the whole respondents; 8 out of 25 respondents have Master's degree qualification and it gives 32.0% of the total respondents; while

only 1 out of 25 respondents has a PhD degree qualification and it gives 4% of the total respondents and 2 respondents with other qualifications (certificates) that translated to 8.0% of the total respondents. We can therefore conclude that respondents with Bachelor’s degree qualifications are more in the research outcome than the other qualifications.

3.2 Presentation of Results and Discussion

These responses based on the constructs are presented in tabular form:

Note: Mean, is defined by $\bar{x} = \Sigma x/n$,

Where,

\bar{x} is mean

Σx is sum total of numbers of Likert Scale used (1 to 5)

n is the total of Likert Scale numbers used

These presentations are subsequently analysed and interpreted with reference to the stated research questions and hypothesis of the study.

The mean calculation of the LikertScale 1 to 5 points is 3, below 3 indicates disagreement, above 3 agreement and 3 neutrality.

The survey planet software application used to design the instrument provided an already automated calculated average in its result.

3.2.1 Result based on Perceived Organizational Support

Table 5: 3.2.1 showing mean responses of respondents on Perceived Organizational Support

S/N	Choice	Score	Average
1.	The organization strongly considers my goals and values	88	3.52
2.	Help is available from the organization when I have a problem	86	3.44
3.	The organization really cares about my wellbeing	92	3.68
4.	The organization would forgive an honest mistake on my part	91	3.64
5.	The organization is willing to help me when I need a special favor	74	2.96
6.	If given the opportunity, the organization would take advantage of me	66	2.64
7.	The organization shows very little concern for me	63	2.52
8.	The organization cares about my opinions	85	3.4

Source: Research Data

Discussion on Result based on Perceived Organizational Support

Table 3.2.1 shows the mean responses of respondents on Perceived Organizational Support. The table revealed that not all participants agreed to the 8 listed items. 5 out of 8 items got the affirmation of respondents (items 1-4 &8). The participants disagreed with items 5,6&7 (5. *The organization is willing to help me when I need a special favor*; 6. *If given the opportunity, the organization would take advantage of me* and 7. *The organization shows very little concern for me*) which got a mean responses of 2.96, 2.64 and 2.52 respectively.

3.2.2 Result based on Job Satisfaction

Table 6: 3.2.2 Result based on Job Satisfaction

S/N	Choice	Score	Average
1.	The company clearly conveys its mission to its employees	96	3.84
2.	There is good communication from managers to employees	96	3.84
3.	I have the tools and resources I need to do my job	96	3.84
4.	I have the training I need to do my job	95	3.8
5.	I feel underutilised in my job	71	2.84
6.	The amount of work expected of me is reasonable	79	3.16
7.	It is easy to get along with my colleagues	104	4.16
8.	The morale in my department is high	93	3.72
9.	Overall, my supervisor does a good job	103	4.12
10.	My supervisor promotes an atmosphere of teamwork	98	3.92
11.	My supervisor provides me with actionable suggestions on what I can do to improve	101	4.04
12.	When I have questions or concerns, my supervisor is able to address them	98	3.92

Source: Research Data

Discussion on Result based on Job Satisfaction

Table 3.2.2 shows the mean responses of respondents on job satisfaction. From the results, 11 out of 12 items (**items 1-4,6-12**) have a mean response of more than the average scale of 3 (3.16, 3.72, 3.8, 3.84, 3.92, 4.04, 4.12, and 4.16) 3.92 occurred twice and 3.84 occurred thrice. This means that most respondents affirm the listed items on job satisfaction; but for **item 5** (*I feel underutilised in my job*) with a 2.84 average showing a disagreement.

3.3 Analysis of Main Results based on Research Questions

The Survey Planet online application used to design the questionnaire on a Likert Scale of 1-5 was able to generate results and analysis to which assumptions of statistical methods planned to utilise were met as presented above and further analysis done on results of research questions.

3.3.1 Analysis of results from Research Question 1: [How can perceived organizational support predict employees' job satisfaction?]

Findings of researchers in recent years (e.g. Podsakoff et al., 2010; Watt and Hargis, 2010), showed a significant influence of POS on both intrinsic and extrinsic teacher satisfaction; the findings imply that teachers who consider their school a place that values their contribution and cares about their well-being are more likely to be satisfied both intrinsically and extrinsically. In this respect, the current study strengthens previous findings, which revealed that POS is a vital factor in affecting organizational outcomes (Hochwarter et al., 2006), helping behavior (Choi, 2006), and role-based performance (Wallace et al., 2009). Our results supported the findings of (Alcover et al 2018) that: the positive role of POS on job satisfaction is persistent in case, when individuals perceive that their organization assesses their participation to the organizational goals favourably and are conscious about their welfare. Resultantly, they experience job satisfaction.

5 (items 1-4 &8) out of the 8 listed items with statements on perceived organizational support have an affirmative response above 3 points, showing agreement: *'The organization strongly considers my goals and values'*; *'Help is available from the organization when I have a problem'*; *'The organization really cares about my wellbeing'*; *'The organization would forgive an honest mistake on my part'*; and *'The organization cares about my opinions'*. But for item 5,6 & 7: *"The organization is willing to help me when I need a special favor; If given the opportunity, the organization would take advantage of me and The organization shows very little concern for me"* which got a mean responses of 2.96, 2.64 and 2.52 respectively, showing disagreement by the respondents.

The 3 versus 5 items in disagreement is a significant number showing how Perceived Organization Support can predict employees job satisfaction.

3.3.2 Analysis of results from Research Question 2: [Why is there a relationship between perceived organizational support and employees' job satisfaction?]

Many previous studies have shown that perceived organizational support was positively associated with levels of job satisfaction, high level of perceived organizational support resulted higher level of job satisfaction (Burke & Greenglass, 2001; Burke, 2003; Stamper & Johlke, 2003; Armstrong-Stassen, Cameron & Horsburgh, 1996). In other words, factors such as salary and benefits, job stability, fair and proper distribution of bonuses and the existence of job opportunities and job promotion and cause the employees to see themselves as active members of the organization and in addition to moral committal to remain in the organization, they feel belonging to it and their loyalty to improve organization enhances.

Results of this study support previous research Fitzgerald et al. (1994 in Crossman, and Bassem, 2003) revealed that job satisfaction is a positive emotion that results from the comfortable feeling of every employee when carrying out the work.

As evident in this research result that reads as thus: *'The company clearly conveys its mission to its employees'*; *'There is good communication from managers to employees'*; *'I have the tools and resources I need to do my job'*; *'I have the training I need to do my job'*; *'The amount of work expected of me is reasonable'*; *'It is easy to get along with my colleagues'*; *'The morale in my department is high'*; *'Overall, my supervisor does a good job'*; *'My supervisor promotes an atmosphere of teamwork'*; *'My supervisor provides me with actionable suggestions on what I can do to improve'*; and *'When I have questions or concerns, my supervisor is able to address them'*.

Responses of 11 out of the 12 items were above 3 points with the lowest being 3.16 and the highest 4.16 showing that, of the 5 point scale, 91.7% agree with the item statements on job satisfaction. Only a small number of respondents disagree with item 5 - *'I feel underutilised in my job'* with a score of 2.84.

However, the 92% in agreement with 11 out 12 statements on Job satisfaction gives an affirmation that: satisfied employees are likely to speak positively about organization, help co-workers, and make their performance beyond normal estimates, more than that, the satisfied employees are more obedient to duty call, because they want to repeat the experience - their positive experiences (Robbins,

2006). The results of research accomplished show that perceived organizational support and job satisfaction both positively affect each other. The results also found a significant positive relationship between perceived organizational support and job satisfaction.

3.3.3 Analysis of results from Research Question 3: [To what extent is perceived organizational support a mediator of Job satisfaction?]

The perceived organization support is taken as mediators which will also affect the job satisfaction level of employee's. Findings of (Biswas, S., & Bhatnagar, J. 2013) like the results of this research suggest that when individuals perceive positive levels of organizational collaboration, they are intrinsically encouraged towards exerting considerably higher levels of effort. The notion that Person-Organization-fit deals with the congruence between employees personal values and those of the organization makes for greater meaningfulness and psychological safety leading to higher levels of employee satisfaction.

As has been supported in past research, undoubtedly, when employees' expectations and needs are met, they are more engaged in their tasks. This fulfilment of expectations and needs by the organization in turn translates into their satisfaction not only with their jobs, but also with being in an organization that cares about them (Qing et al., 2020).

Thus, our study demonstrated POS as a mediator. The relationship showed statistical significance for all these factors based on the affirmation got from the statements: *'The organization strongly considers my goals and values'*; *'Help is available from the organization when I have a problem'*; *'The organization really cares about my wellbeing'*; *'The organization would forgive an honest mistake on my part'*; *'The organization cares about my opinions'*; *The company clearly conveys its mission to its employees'*; *'There is good communication from managers to employees'*; *'I have the tools and resources I need to do my job'*; *'I have the training I need to do my job'*; *'The amount of work expected of me is reasonable'*; *'It is easy to get along with my colleagues'*; *'The morale in my department is high'*; *'Overall, my supervisor does a good job'*; *'My supervisor promotes an atmosphere of teamwork'*; *'My supervisor provides me with actionable suggestions on what I can do to improve'*; and *'When I have questions or concerns, my supervisor is able to address them'*. This accounts for 16 out of the total of 20 statement items on the instrument; which gives 80% agreement on POS statements relating to job satisfaction.

IV. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The main objective of this study was to explore the relationship between perceived organizational support and job satisfaction; how perceived organizational support predicts employees' job satisfaction and the extent to which perceived organizational support has a direct relationship with employees' job satisfaction.

To increase job satisfaction, managers could provide education to upgrade employee's job skills and enhance self-confidence to reduce emotional exhaustion; provide a comprehensive orientation program to assist workers in forming a clear idea of their job role and a more complete understanding of the environment in which they work; and promote a sense of community to help create support from both peers and supervisors (Kalliath & Morris, 2012). Job satisfaction influences employee attitude. When the organization focuses on employee support, the results will take a positive trend. There is evidence available in literature defining the strong relationship between perceived organizational support and job satisfaction.

It is shown that high levels of perceived organizational support create feelings of obligation. Consistent with social exchange theory, there is a form of reciprocity; employees are satisfied based on organizational treatment. The results of the research further provide a rather new insight to help explain the positive relationship between perceived organizational support and job satisfaction. In addition, the results show the mediating role of perceived organizational support in the relationship between job satisfaction and subsequently high job performance. This means that the higher the level of the variables on perceived organization support in turn leads to higher levels of satisfaction. Thus, the findings draw attention to the relevance of perceived organizational support in job satisfaction.

Having this discussion from a hypothetical perspective, the results of the study provide ample support for the research model [Figure 1]. Considering the hypotheses vis-à-vis the empirical outcomes as presented in the findings of this study. Our first-two hypotheses (hypothesis 1&2) postulated a positive and significant influence and effect of POS on job satisfaction. The results of the data analysis support such a postulation. Contractual relationships are not just enough; organisations need to go beyond that, provide their employees with economic, emotional and psycho-social support so as to extract optimum efforts. The third hypothesis, postulated that Perceived organizational support has a direct relationship on employees' job satisfaction. Our results are consistent with this hypothesis. Implicitly, when individuals experience a certain level of support from their organisation, they find their

work to be more fulfilling and satisfying. As a result, they perceive their employers or organization being supportive; providing them a pleasant work environment in the form of care, forgiveness, being helpful, providing opportunities and considering their goals and values. Consequently, they are more satisfied with their job. This line of reasoning is corroborated by previous research of (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Sonnentag, 2003).

Our study provides theoretical implications and builds on the theoretical conjecture provided by Rhoades & Eisenberger (2002) that POS is the extent to which the organization respects them and cares for them. Further, the study is consistent with Eisenberger's (1986) theory that POS focuses on personal support, respect, emotional and instrumental support. It also provides empirical support to job satisfaction and its linkage with perceived organizational support. This study supports earlier work carried out in the Western context, on the emerging importance of perceived organizational support in the West African context. Job satisfaction is an emotional response to the performance of tasks and roles, and in crisis situations, employees with higher job satisfaction will have more strength and energy (Rhéaume, 2021; Bañka, 1996, p. 69;).

HR practitioners may experiment with tools such as workplace alienation scale (Nair & Vohra, 2009) to zero in on the exact remedial measures and customised OD interventions.

The findings of this study provide several practical implications on how public sector leaders can reduce turnover and increase employee performance; to reduce costs and improve organizational performance. Managers must understand that every employee has different necessities and expectations which need to be fulfilled; which implies that they should provide support to their employees, including motivated working conditions, which will resultantly enhance job satisfaction. An important policy implication emerging from this study is that public administrators should not underestimate the power of perceived organizational support in influencing employees' job satisfaction in an organization. The study results are expected to provide managerial implications for the Public Sector and the Public Service Commission. Most important implications that can be obtained from this study are: (1) Managers have the role to inspire their subordinates, to create comfortable work conditions, so employees do not only improve individual performance but also increase help among employees or individuals. (2) It is important for organisations to be able to consider factors that can increase JS because Job satisfaction is able to improve employee performance. The higher employee performance, the higher organization performance. (3) Organization Leaders need to increase job satisfaction,

create comfortable work conditions that will enhance perceived organizational support and create a sense of high harmonisation to create mutual helping behavior among individuals.

Overall, our results indicate that workplace well-being positively correlates with employee satisfaction.

The conclusion of the study defines the importance of perceived organizational support and how it can be influenced by all aspects of the organization's treatment of employees, which in turn will affect the employee's interpretation of the organization's potential motivation for treating employees. Organizational support includes the organization's possible response to the employee's future illnesses, errors, and high performance, as well as the organization's willingness to pay a fair salary to make the employee's work meaningful and interesting. In addition, the role of perceived organizational support in promoting positive employee attitudes, behavior and performance indicates two phenomena. One is employees need organization's support for the sake of both benefits of employees and employers. Organizational support is one of necessary needs in today's business, because employees may gradually exhaust their energy backup and might eventually burn out when job demands are high, additional effort must be exerted to achieve the work goals, and when recovery is inadequate or insufficient (Schaufeli, 2013). It is worth noting that employees tend to reward organizational positive treatment for the sake of mutual interests of employees and employers. Based on the principle of reciprocity, when they feel the beneficial treatment of the organization, employees will have a general obligation to organize and help the organization to achieve its goals, and thus demonstrate an attitude and behavior conducive to the organization. The lack of statistical significance for (those items that scored below average) does not in any way negate those variables in the study. In fact, research shows that people who score low on the absorption dimension do not have difficulty detaching themselves from it and forgetting everything going on around them, including time (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003).

This research contributes to literature on perceived organizational support and job satisfaction in the public service context. This research will help the public service on how to foster job satisfaction to evoke better performance, as employees base their satisfaction on the fair treatment by the organisation. Hence, the mediation effect of POS indicates a strong link based on the norm of reciprocity. The findings of the effort can be useful for researchers, practitioners, and the public service. The researchers believe that this effort will contribute towards understanding the relationship between the two variables which has been known for a while but its understanding has not been well defined. This research work

will contribute a lot towards managing competitive institutions of public service in the 21st century.

As a conclusion, perceived organizational support has a more positive impact on employees' job satisfaction in public service in Sierra Leone.

V. RECOMMENDATION

The study provides some recommendations that:

- 1) The public service must have organizational support packages valuable to the employees and should be based on realistic and reliable standards. They must be clearly identified and meaningful to the employees.
- 2) Managers are trained in appropriate support implementation to achieve employees' job satisfaction and ultimately better job performance.
- 3) Academics and managers should promote organizational support by raising awareness and by keeping employees satisfied.
- 4) The strategies for optimizing perceived organizational support link the employee-organizational relationship to supportive HR practices.
- 5) The HR department needs to understand the measures which can improve employee perception of organizational support, formulate organizational support programs before employment, constantly monitor the level of perceived organizational support of employees and take corrective actions when needed, so as to make sure favourable organizational outcomes.

Being happy and fulfilled at work is a function of the multiplicity of work experiences in an organization. (Crede et al., 2007).

REFERENCES

- [1] Harrison, Helena; Birks, Melanie; Franklin, Richard & Mills, Jane, "Case Study Research: Foundations and Methodological Orientations [34 paragraphs]. "Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research", 18(1), Art. 19, <http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0114-fqs1701195>, (2017).
- [2] Roberta Heale, Alison Twycross. "Validity and reliability in quantitative studies":. 10.1136/eb-2015-102129
- [3] Victor Codocedo, Amedeo Napoli, "Formal Concept Analysis and Information Retrieval – A Survey". International Conference in Formal Concept Analysis - Nerja, Spain. pp.61-77, ff10.1007/978-3-319-19545-2_4ff. fihal-01186196f ICFCA 2015, (June 2015).
- [4] Karatepe, O.M., "Perceived organizational support, career satisfaction, and performance outcomes: A study

of hotel employees in Cameroon", International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, Vol. 24 No. 5, pp. 735-752. (2012).

- [5] MacKinnon DP, Fairchild AJ, Fritz MS., "Mediation analysis. Annu Rev Psychol.", 2007;58:593-614. doi: 10.1146/annurev.psych.58.110405.085542. PMID: 16968208; PMCID: PMC2819368.
- [6] Gordon, S. E., Schmierer, K. A., & Gill, R. T., "Conceptual Graph Analysis: Knowledge Acquisition for Instructional System Design." Human Factors, 35(3), 459-481. <https://doi.org/10.1177/001872089303500305>, (1993).
- [7] Alcover CM, Chambel MJ, Fernandez JJ, Rodriguez F, "Perceived organizational support-burnout-satisfaction relationship in workers with disabilities: the moderation of family support", Scand J Psychol 59:1–11, (2018).
- [8] Barbara Sypniewska., Małgorzata Baran., Monika Kłos, "Work engagement and employee satisfaction in the practice of sustainable human resource management - based on the study of Polish employees", 19:1069–1100. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11365-023-00834-9>, (2023).
- [9] Biswas, S., & Bhatnagar, J. Mediator Analysis of Employee Engagement: Role of Perceived Organizational Support, P-O Fit, Organizational Commitment and Job Satisfaction. Vikalpa, 38(1), 27-40. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0256090920130103>, (2013).
- [10] Li Sun (corresponding author) Lecturer, School of Foreign Languages, "Perceived Organizational Support: A Literature Review Nanyang Institute of Technology", No. 80 Changjiang Road, Nanyang 473004, China E-mail: sunli_lizhi@163.com Received: June 12, 2019 Accepted: July 10, 2019 Online published: July 15, 2019 doi:10.5296/ijhrs.v9i3.15102 URL: <https://doi.org/10.5296/ijhrs.v9i3.15102>
- [11] <https://doi.org/10.1108/09596111211237273>
- [12] <https://statehouse.gov.sl/new-public-service-commission-chairman-and-commissioners-take-oath-of-office/>

Citation of this Article:

Sophie Allieu, Ibrahim Bangura, & David Yovuwa. (2024). Perceived Organizational Support as a Mediator of Job Satisfaction: A Study of the Public Service Commission in Sierra Leone. *International Research Journal of Innovations in Engineering and Technology - IRJIET*, 8(8), 138-155. Article DOI <https://doi.org/10.47001/IRJIET/2024.808016>
