

CORE SELF-EVALUATION AS A PREDICTOR OF MEANINGFUL WORK AND ALTRUISM: PERCEIVED ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT AS A MEDIATOR

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Abstract *With an increasing demand for the educational system, teachers face the challenge of managing present-day students. To meet the change in outlook of students towards education and its purpose, teachers shoulder the responsibility of redefining the pedagogy to improve the quality of education. In this, the ability of teachers as well as the support of schools are important factors. Strong belief in oneself and one's own capability act as a precursor to several positive outcomes. It fosters greater levels of optimism and a totally different outlook on every aspect. It provides deeper insight into one's work, thereby improving its meaningfulness. Extant literature also points towards the fact that belief in one's own ability may act as a predictor in developing a sense of helping others. Along with individual capability and positive behaviours, the support extended by the institution is also highly essential. The present study, thus, attempts to uncover this and understand the relationship of core self-evaluation and meaningful work and altruism and the mediating role of organizational support in these relationships. The study was carried out among 560 school teachers in Kerala. The results indicated that there exists a relationship between core self-evaluation, meaningful work and altruism. It was also found that the perceived organization support acts as a mediator in this relationship between core self-evaluation, meaningful work and altruism. The result focuses on the significance of both individual factors as well as organizational factors in improving the quality of the educational system.*

Keywords: *Core Self-Evaluation, Meaningful Work, Altruism, Perceived Organizational Support, Teachers, Mediating Role*

INTRODUCTION

Transformation in the workplace is absolutely necessary for organizations to achieve sustainable development. For this, organizations require employees who are capable of contributing greatly to the performance of the organization. Only employees who have high assurance in their capability are likely to engage in challenging and valuable tasks. People who doubt their capabilities are unlikely to involve in such tasks because they see them as a threat. Organizations, thus, require employees who believe in their ability to perform the duties and responsibilities efficiently. This particularly applies to teachers, who are vested with the responsibility of grooming future generations to be efficient and to inculcate a strong personality in them. "Teaching is a profession that demands calling and commitment beyond human's limitations" (Kumar, 2018). The behaviour, the style of interaction of a teacher with students and their overall classroom practices greatly impact the students. Lack of capability and commitment from the part of teachers will adversely affect the mind-set of the students resulting in behavioural and developmental issues.

Kerala is among the states in India with highest literacy rate. The state has several motivators of education. The government support to promoting education and educational institutions is one of the factors. Ernakulam, one of the districts of Kerala, is known as the commercial capital. According to the 2011 Census also, Kerala has occupied a place among the top ten highest literate states of India. This study focuses on the teaching community of Kerala.

An effective teacher inculcates an interest in learning among the students and provides timely support for their overall development. The ability of a teacher to positively influence students depends on the belief in their capabilities. A true understanding of oneself is essential in performing the job with sincerity. A self-awareness about one's personality and characteristics are essential. Core self-evaluation (CSE) is a personality trait that consists of a person's evaluation of himself/herself and about their abilities and the capacity to control situation around them. People with high CSE will be more confident compared to people with low CSE. A teacher with high CSE tends to be more positive towards the profession and will be more engaged in work (Conejero, 2017).

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The personality trait CSE will make people more assertive and they will tend to set more ambitious goals. This will lead to perceiving their job and the job-related tasks to be more meaningful, ultimately resulting in greater satisfaction towards their job. Perceiving their job to be meaningful to them and to others is important as it will lead to several beneficial work outcomes. It is the perceived importance of the purpose of work in one's own life and in the life of others. Higher levels of CSE provide greater meaningfulness of work as well as instil a mind-set which recognizes that one's work makes a difference to the lives of others (Zhang et al., 2019). Apart from the belief about the meaningfulness of their, which is based on their core self-evaluation, organization's characteristics can also promote this belief. By helping employees to feel valued and being taken care of, organizations create an obligation for employees. Support offered by organization improves the job performance of employees (Karatepe & Aga, 2016). The feeling of being a valuable part of organization, the employee tends to find their work to be meaningful. An individual with a sense of being capable and competent might have an increased tendency to be empathetic and to help others without a sense of personal gain.

This study is an attempt to understand the mediating role of perceived organizational support on the relationship between core self-evaluation, meaningfulness of work and altruism.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Educational structure plays a massive role in building an economy. In this structure, teachers are the pillars. Their contribution is of great significance. If they are incapable of playing of their role efficiently, it will result in the collapse of the entire structure. Teachers face a highly demanding situation at work due to the changing scenario. Due to this, teachers ought to be highly competent. As a teacher is moulding a student not just to be academically strong, but also to a complete being, the competence and contribution of teachers is of utmost significance. In this scenario, a belief in one's own efficiency and control over any situation will result in teachers being more inclined towards their work, ultimately resulting in attaching greater meaning to them. This will lead to greater job satisfaction, commitment and engagement. Greater CSE also results in greater emotional stability, which will help them in handling any situation without stress (Judge & Bono, 2001). In making valuable contributions to their profession, the school also has an important role to play. The support extended by the management and the principle will determine the number of value teachers' attach to their profession. Thus, in creating a strong educational system, teachers' self-belief about their own competence along with the support of school is vital. This will aid in uncovering the true meaning and significance of their profession, ultimately leading to a highly competitive educational system for a nation.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Core Self-Evaluation (CSE)

The concept of CSE is the basic analysis one makes about one's own competencies, capabilities and abilities to control environment and the overall value one attaches to oneself (Judge, Locke & Kluger, 1998). It is based on the theory of appraisal which states that people judge things and events based on their beliefs and values (Lazarus, 1991). CSE represents a stable personality trait, which encompasses individuals subconscious, fundamental evaluations about themselves, one's own abilities and the capability to control situations. People who have high CSEs will think positively of themselves and be confident in their own abilities.

CSE is an important personality construct (Chang et al., 2012). CSE is comprised of four traits: self-esteem, neuroticism (emotional stability), locus of control and generalized self-efficacy (Judge & Bono, 2001). Self-esteem is the most basic core evaluation, in that it is the overall value one associates with their person, one's self-worth (Harter, 1990). Self-esteem includes an individual's self-acceptance, self-liking and self-respect (Judge & Larsen, 2001). Locus of control is related to one's ability to control situations and outcomes in their life. Rotter (1966) described the locus of control as the extent to which a person believes he controls the events that take place in his life. Generalized self-efficacy exists at the global level and is defined as how someone sees their ability to utilize motivation, cognitive processes and action to exercise leadership over the events in their life (Judge, Locke, Durham & Kluger, 1998). Neuroticism relates to a negative view of self-esteem and is one of the Big Five personality dimensions. Neurotic individuals tend to be shy, lack confidence, have high levels of guilt and experience anxiety in new situations and environments (Costa & McCrae, 1988). CSE is also found to affect the amount of meaningful one attach to their profession and career.

CSE is an important factor in determining how employees perceive their job and how they behave in their workplace. This will determine the value they will contribute to their job and organization. It is associated with several positive work-related outcomes (O'Neill et al., 2016). Many studies have focused on the consequences of CSE and the majority of them have found a strong positive relationship between CSE and job satisfaction. Individuals with high CSE were found to be highly satisfied with their work (Erez & Judge, 2001). CSE is also found to be related to positivity and positive emotions and results in positive experiences at work (Chang et al., 2001). Positivity arises when people evaluate themselves as positive beings. Individuals with high CSE consider themselves to be highly positive and optimistic. This will directly influence their motivation, engagement and promote beneficial job outcomes. Individuals with

high CSE set goals that are intrinsically challenging and interesting to them, and give more emphasis on these goals that they have set for themselves. The goals set are in accordance with their values and beliefs and they are highly committed to their goals compared to the individuals with low CSE (Bono & Judge, 2003). Also, because they evaluate themselves and their competence highly, they may be more likely to persist in the face of failure and attribute failure to external, temporary causes. Thus, they are likely to achieve higher levels of performance by setting high goals and persisting in goal-directed activities in the face of obstacles. In this regard, core self-evaluations may be an ability factor in some jobs, especially those that require confidence, problem-solving and persistence in the face of a failure (Judge et al., 2002).

CSE provides individuals with ample personal resources, which will support them in achieving the desired work-related outcomes (Best et al., 2005). It is found that CSE promotes work engagement, commitment, satisfaction and career success and reduce stress and burnout. In order to be engaged and committed to their work, they need to understand the work completed and this will result in individuals' finding the right meaning of their work. The belief in their own abilities and to control events result from a deep understanding of work and its meaning.

Meaningfulness of Work (MW)

This concept involves having a deep sense of meaning and purpose in one's work. In the words of Srinivas (2008), "one of the ways of fulfilling an individual's needs for meaning and purpose is by providing them a larger cause to work for". This work becomes a means of finding oneself and contributing to the larger community (Mirvis, 1997). "The feeling of working for a higher cause propels employees to connect with themselves, others and humanity at large. Such work provides with meaning and purpose in life, gives enjoyment and energizes action" (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000; Milliman et al., 2003). For many, work is not just meant to be challenging, but also a search for deeper meaning and purpose. It is about living one's dream, expressing one's inner life needs by seeking meaningful work and supporting others (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000). Here, an individual's sense of self-awareness about their ability is critical in considering their work to be meaningful. Studies on employees' work wellbeing suggest that there is a notable role of meaningful work. Meaningful work refers to the perception pertaining to the job role and responsibilities to be noteworthy, valuable and serving some purpose (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). It is principally the evaluation of individual about the work, its purposefulness and importance (Rosso, Dekas & Wrzesniewski, 2010).

Meaningful work is believed to arise when individuals at work have a thorough understanding of their abilities,

expectations and what objectives they are working towards both, company-specific as well as societal ones at large (Steger & Dik, 2009). People experience more meaningful work when individuals experience to view their efforts to be working for a clearly outlined purpose in the organization. Henceforth, meaningful work would occur when people can considerably view their job roles to be playing a significant role and serving some real purpose. It is found that both personal and organizational factors contribute towards promoting the sense of meaning (Rosso, 2010).

Altruism

Altruism is a personality trait that defines an individual's selfless concern for others' well-being. Altruism or altruistic behaviour is understood by researchers as a selfless behaviour of an individual with a focus on enhancing the welfare of others. It brings in a social bonding among people (Wuthnow, 1993). It is a behaviour of an individual without any intention to gain personal benefit. Social exchange is found to be the basis of altruism. It is defined by Berkowitz (1972) as, "an act done to benefit others without any intention to receive any benefit in return from the other people". The only benefit they want in return is the pleasure of knowing that they have helped someone who wanted help or support. Altruism refers to prosocial behaviours that are carried out without the expectation of obtaining external reward (concrete reward or social reward) or internal reward (self-reward).

According to Bandura, emotions and thinking about the behaviour of a person in each situation will depend on his ability to feel. The sense of one's ability and capacity and the belief in being able to control and modify situations will affect their intention to help others. Highly capable people are said to be positive and optimistic. They can also be said to involve in others' issues and be empathetic towards them. Individuals identify their capabilities by knowing more aspects of them and are considered a great help by overcoming psychological pressures by meeting individual and organizational objectives (Bandura, 2006).

Perceived Organizational Support (POS)

The theory of organizational support proves that providing employees with fairness in terms of procedures, supervisor support, organizational rewards and/or positive job conditions (Eisenberger et al., 2002) results in employees increased feelings of being valued and cared for by the organization. This feeling of being cared and valued result in several positive outcomes. POS results in many outcomes including job involvement, engagement, affective commitment and improved performance, to name a few. POS refers to employees' perception concerning the extent to which the organization values their contribution and cares about their well-being. POS has been found to have important consequences employee performance and

well-being. It originated from the social exchange theory, which states that individuals offer their services expecting something in return.

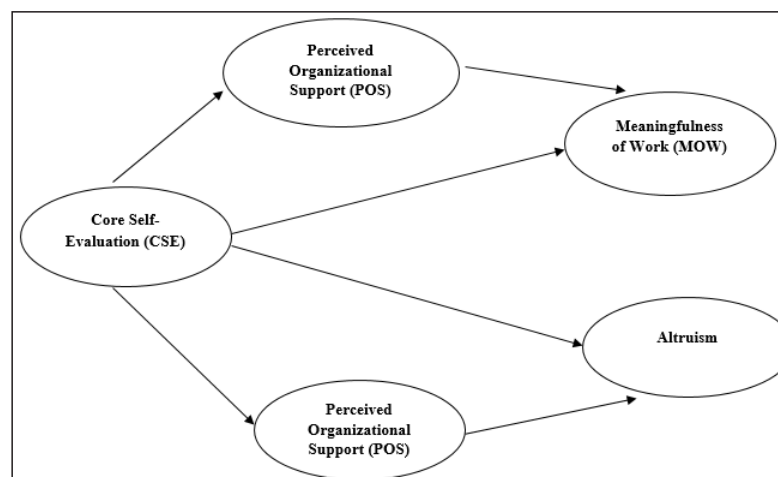
Organizational support literature theorizes that a factor of business success is the extent employees develop beliefs concerning organization orientation to employees' welfare such as the organization valuing employees' contributions and caring about their well-being (Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011). On the one hand, employees develop an organization's identification evaluating the received treatment in the workplace. This perception is important both for business success and employee health (Eisenberger et al., 2002). On the other hand, social exchange theorists argue that receiving increased welfare activities from their organizations might contribute more to success. Specifically, employees compensate their employer with higher work performance (Eisenberger et al., 1986).

The basis of POS is the reciprocal theory. By valuing employees and being considerate towards them, the organization creates an obligation for the employees. The employees become obliged to provide their best at work. The support extended by organization will also result in employees' free from stress and burnout. The environment becomes positive and conducive to produce high performance. The support of the organization will also help employees in creating a meaningful association with their job ultimately leading to them realising the meaningfulness of their work for them as well as the society.

CORE SELF-EVALUATION, MEANINGFULNESS OF WORK AND ALTRUISM - PERCEIVED ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT AS THE MEDIATOR

The evaluation of individuals about their own capability to handle situations and tasks in life and at work and an overall

PROPOSED MODEL OF THE STUDY



assessment about their value gives rise to the feeling of being more attached to their work. This sense of attachment leads to attaching greater importance and meaning to their work. By being attached and engaged in their work, they find themselves to be a good fit for the job and, thus, the true meaning of their work is enhanced. (Tim, Derks & Bakker, 2016). The importance attached to the work will be augmented if organization provide the necessary support and consider them to be valuable contributors. POS promotes the positivity of employees. As far as teachers are concerned, a combination of their ability and self-belief along with the perceived sense of support of the organization helps them to view their profession in a more positive light, helping them to imbibe the true essence and meaning of their profession. Also, when teachers believe in their capability and competence, they feel confident to help their students and become highly involved in their profession. They tend to become more empathetic and start to work without selfish motives. They support students without any thought of a favour in return from either the students or the school. Altruism is an essential characteristic required by a teacher who carries out a noble profession. In facilitating altruistic behaviour, the support of the school is highly necessary. By providing support, the school management helps to create a space for the improvement of altruistic behaviour among teachers.

Based on the above assumptions, the following hypotheses were formulated.

- H₁ – Core self-evaluation have an effect on the meaningfulness of work of the teachers.*
- H₂ – Core self-evaluation have an effect on the altruistic behaviour of the teachers.*
- H₃ – Perceived organizational support has a mediating effect on the relationship between core self-evaluation and meaningful work.*
- H₄ – Perceived organizational support has a mediating effect on the relationship between core self-evaluation and altruism.*

METHODOLOGY AND SAMPLE

The study was conducted among the private school teachers in Kerala. Data was collected using a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was administered to 560 teachers. After data cleaning, 538 questionnaires were found to be usable for the study.

Core self-evaluation was measured using the scale developed by Judge et al. (2002). This consists of 12 items that measure the four sub-constructs of CSE. It includes statements including “I am confident I get the success I deserve in life”, “When I try, I generally succeed” and so on.

Meaningfulness of work was measured using the scale developed by Milliman et al. (2002). It consists of five items including statements like “I experience a match between the requirements of my work and my values, beliefs and behaviour”, “I am able to find meaning or purpose at work”, etc.

Altruism was measured using the Altruistic Personality Scale developed by Rushton et al. (1981). It consists of 12 items and included statements like, “I have given money to a charity”, “I have given money to a stranger who needed it (or asked me for it)”, etc.

Perceived organizational support was measured using the scale adapted from Eisenberger et al. (1986). It consists of nine items which include statements like, “The organization values my contribution to its well-being”, “The organization really cares about my well-being” and so on.

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The data was analysed using AMOS. Confirmatory factor analysis was performed for all the four constructs and their fit indices were checked for a well-fitting model.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis for Core Self-Evaluation

The measurement scale for core self-evaluation originally consisted of 12 items. Since the fit indices of the initial model were not satisfactory, the items with lower loadings were deleted and the model was refined. The final model consisted of 10 items, as two items had to be deleted, and the goodness of fit indices values showed to be satisfactorily good.

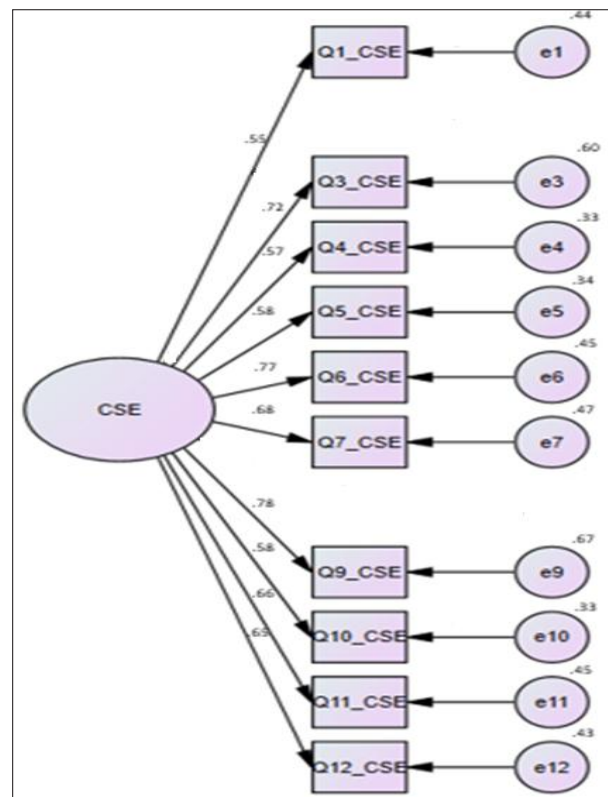


Fig. 1: CFA of Core Self-Evaluation

The goodness of fit indices of the model is given below.

Table 1: Goodness of Fit Indices

	GFI	CFI	RMSEA
CSE	0.98	0.99	0.02

Confirmatory Factor Analysis for Meaningful Work

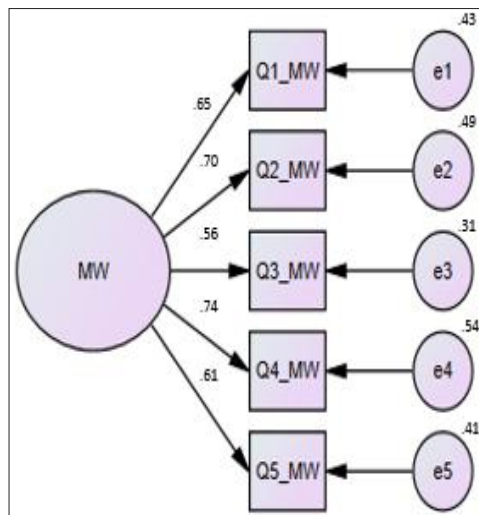


Fig. 2: CFA of Meaningful Work

The measurement scale of meaningful work consisted of five items originally. The values of the fit indices were acceptable as it indicated a well-fitting model. There were no items with low-factor loadings and, hence, all the items were retained. All the five items were taken for further analysis.

Table 2: Goodness of Fit Indices

	GFI	CFI	RMSEA
MW	0.97	0.99	0.03

Confirmatory Factor Analysis for Altruism

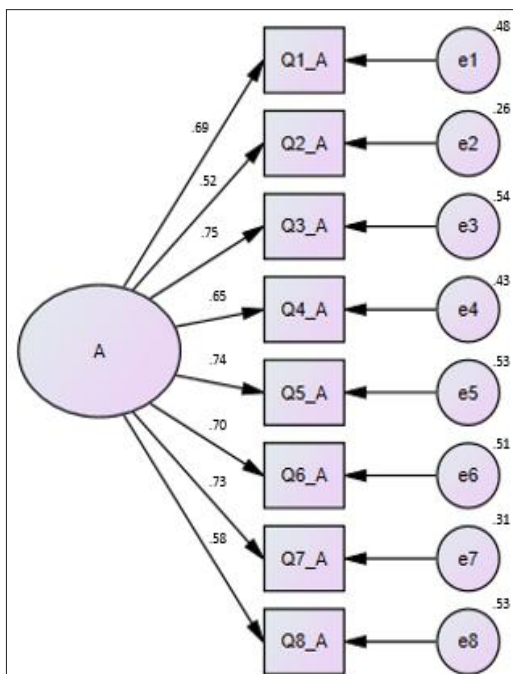


Fig. 3: CFA of Altruism

The measurement scale for altruism originally consisted of 12 items. Due to low-factor loadings, fur items were deleted and the model was refined. The final model consisted of eight items with the acceptable goodness of fit indices.

Table 3: Goodness of Fit Indices

	GFI	CFI	RMSEA
A	0.96	0.98	0.05

Confirmatory Factor Analysis for Perceived Organizational Support

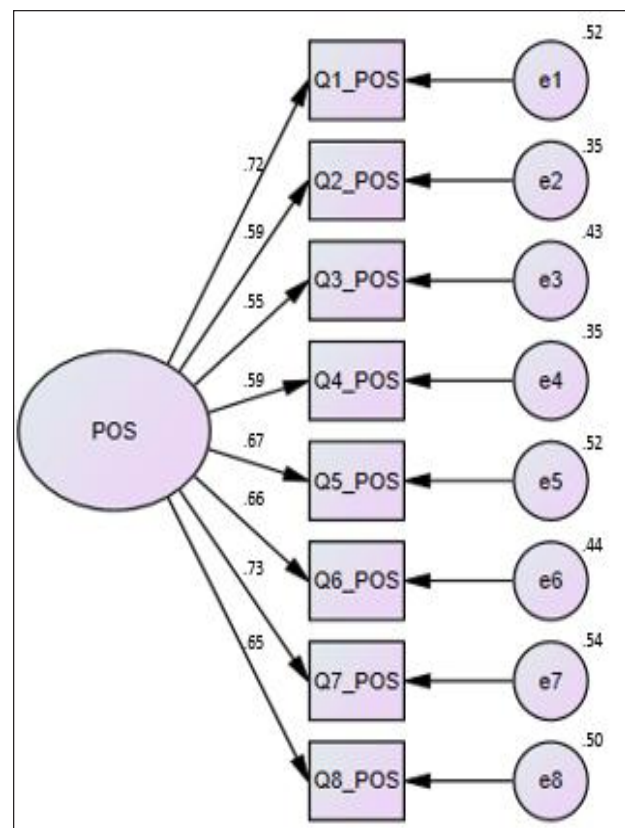


Fig. 4: CFA of Perceived Organizational Support

POS scale consisted of eight items originally. Since all the items have good factor loadings, no items were deleted. The goodness of fit indices showed values of a good model fit. All the items were thus considered for further analysis.

Table 4: Goodness of Fit Indices

	GFI	CFI	RMSEA
POS	0.99	0.99	0.05

The loadings of all the factors indicated a value of above 0.50. The composite reliability values of all the variables were found to be well above the threshold value of 0.70 and also the AVE values were above the threshold value of 0.50 (Hair, Anderson, Tatham & Black, 1998). These values suggest that all the variables are suitable for further analysis

Table 5: Results of Factor Loading, Composite Reliability and Validity of the Model

Variable	Items	Outer Loadings	CR	AVE
Core Self-Evaluation	01_CSE	.52	.82	.87
	03_CSE	.75		
	04_CSE	.61		
	05_CSE	.52		
	06_CSE	.79		
	07_CSE	.71		
	09_CSE	.74		
	10_CSE	.62		
	11_CSE	.64		
	12_CSE	.68		
Meaningful Work	01_MW	.68	.87	.88
	02_MW	.73		
	03_MW	.54		
	04_MW	.77		
	05_MW	.65		
Altruism	01_A	.65	.84	.87
	02_A	.55		
	03_A	.71		
	04_A	.63		
	05_A	.72		
	06_A	.73		
	07_A	.69		
	08_A	.62		
Perceived Organizational Support	01_POS	.76	.85	.90
	02_POS	.62		
	03_POS	.53		
	04_POS	.63		
	05_POS	.70		
	06_POS	.62		
	07_POS	.70		
	08_POS	.69		

Table 6: Reliability Values of the Variables

Variable	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Core Self-Evaluation (CSE)	10	.84
Meaningful Work (MW)	5	.81
Altruism (A)	8	.83
Perceived Organizational Support (POS)	8	.86

The reliability values show that all the constructs have a Cronbach's value of 0.70, thus indicating that all the constructs in the study are highly reliable.

Direct Effects

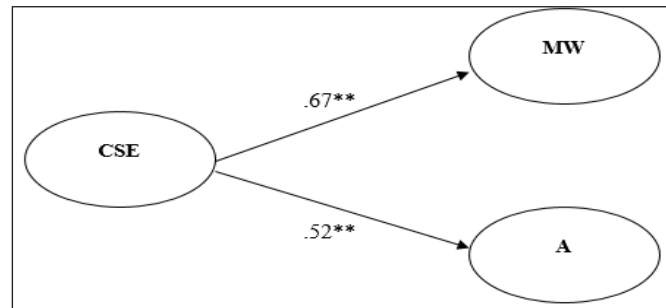
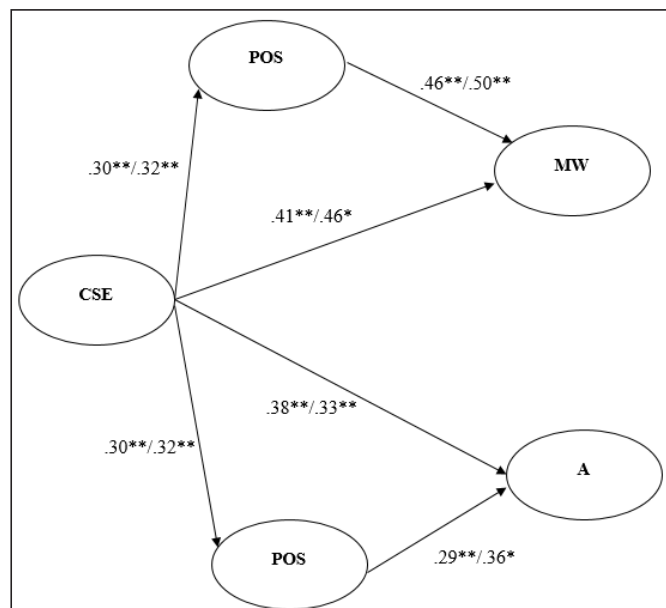


Fig. 5: Showing the Direct Effect of CSE on Meaningful Work and Altruism

The results of the direct effects show that CSE is significantly related to meaningful work ($\beta = .67, p < 0.05$) and altruism ($\beta = .52, p < 0.05$). Since there is a significant relationship between the independent and dependent variables, the mediation analysis can be performed.

Mediation Analysis

In promoting positive feelings and outcomes from employees, the organization plays a tremendous role. The support and encouragement of organization is an essential element in helping employees to exhibit positive work behaviours. If employees feel that their organization is supporting them, they tend to contribute more and this also gives rise to a sense of empowerment.



* indicate that β is significant at 0.001 level. ** indicate that β is significant at 0.05 level.

Fig. 6: Mediation Analysis

The results of the analysis indicate that perceived organizational support plays a significant mediator role in the relationship between core self-evaluation, meaningful work and altruism. In the relationship between CSE and MW ($\beta = .46, p = 0.03$), POS plays a significant mediating role. Also, in the relationship between CSE and altruism ($\beta = .33, p < 0.001$), POS is seen to be playing a significant mediator role.

The analysis to understand whether POS acts as a partial or a full mediator was performed and the result is presented below.

Table 7: Mediation Effects

Effect	Variables	P-Value	Mediation Effect
Direct Effects	CSE → MW	Significant	
	CSE → A	Significant	
Indirect Effects	CSE → POS	Significant	Partial Mediation
	CSE → MW	Significant	
	POS → MW	Significant	
	CSE → POS	Significant	Partial Mediation
	CSE → A	Significant	
	POS → A	Significant	

The relationship between CSE and meaningful work and CSE and altruism is still found to be significant even after adding the mediator POS. And, the relationship between POS and meaningful work and POS and altruism were also found to be significant indicating a partial mediation of POS in the two relationships. The analysis thus proved all the four hypotheses. The sense of belief in one's own ability is an essential element. It is important to believe in oneself and to have a sense of control over personal and professional life. It will improve the level of self-esteem, which provides several benefits to the individual as well as the organization (Alavi & Askaripur, 2003). As far as teachers are concerned, this is a highly significant trait that allows them to be effective in their teaching as well as in supporting students in every aspect. Teachers' behaviours and attitudes have a great influence on the students' character formation. Thus, it is important for teachers to be positive. Higher CSE levels are found to be associated with stronger inclination towards positive information. This helps in discovering deeper meaning as well as improved interest in sharing knowledge and helping others (Zhang et al., 2019). The feeling of being supported by their institution promotes their willingness to be involved in activities beneficial for them as well as their school, thereby promoting the occurrence of several positive outcomes (Podsakoff et al., 2010).

IMPLICATIONS OF THE RESEARCH AND CONCLUSION

The study provides a slightly different view of the outcomes of core self-evaluation. Several other job outcomes of CSE were studied, including job satisfaction, engagement, etc.

But little research was carried out in understanding whether CSE can provide a different outlook for individuals' towards their job. The study also focused on exploring if CSE will result in improving the helping mentality of individuals. The present research combines both individual and organizational factors that would lead to beneficial aspects for individuals and their organizations.

This throws light on the significance of a strong recruitment process for teachers to test their efficacy, competence and self-belief, and awareness which will enhance their attachment towards their profession. A proper selection process to test both their aptitude and attitude is highly essential. Good and confident teachers will positively influence the students and the nation at large. The study also points towards the importance of the support from the part of the school in order to elicit several positive actions from teachers. As always said, confident teachers are the strong pillars of an education structure.

The study emphasizes on the significance of organizational support in eliciting positive and beneficial behaviours from the employees. Capable and confident teachers are the need of the hour. Support from organization is equally important as personal characteristics of employees. Educational institutions must focus on hiring teachers with higher CSE so that the quality of educational system can be enhanced. Uncovering the true meaning of one's work and understanding how this can be used for the benefit of others, and to help others, is an essential element. Through this, the true potential of an individual can be unleashed and this will help in the sustained existence of any organization.

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