

Antecedents of Employees' Augmented Personal Industry & Reduced Intentions to Quit: A Field Investigation in India

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This study investigates how employees' perceived supervisory support increases their personal industry and reduces their intentions to quit, particularly when such relationships are mediated successively by their levels of psychological empowerment and developmental experiences, respectively. Relevant theories and the literature were reviewed to link the key study constructs assimilated further as a conceptual latent variable model. Complete and useful data, collected from 801 managerial employees working in organizations all over India, were analysed using different statistical techniques including structural equation modeling procedures. Based on the analyses, all the study hypotheses and the empirical form of the conceptual latent variable model were accepted. The study concluded by highlighting its theoretical and practical implications and indicating areas for future research.

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Introduction

According to the extant literature, relationships concerning a supervisor and his/her subordinates are among the most essential in forming work contexts and performance effectiveness (Srivastava et al., 2021). Following the social exchange theory (SET) and from the subordinates' perspective, a favorable relationship with the supervisor, conceptualized as their perceived supervisory support (PSS), stimulates exemplary in-role contributions and also encourages to perform non-mandatory extra-roles in return for the supervisor's empathy (Afzal et al., 2019).

Furthermore, drawing from the self-determination theory, employees in an organization strive to be competent and autonomous while exploring ways to better themselves professionally which gives them a sense of psychological empowerment (PE) at work (Bonau, 2017). However, whether such notions of PE as derived from their PSS influence em-

employees' developmental experiences (EDEs) have remained relatively unexplored in the relevant literature and appears as a possible area for further research (Mittal, 2020). Also, whether the outcome of such linkages between PSS, PE, and EDEs based on supervisory directions and as per the self-evaluation theory is a positive self-appraisal leading to higher levels of employees' personal industry (EPI) would be another area that calls for further exploration (Psomas & Antony, 2019). Also, following the conservation of resources theory, whether such linkages mitigated subordinates' work-related stresses and tensions negating any intentions to quit (ItQs) either their existent employment or subordinate status has not been extensively investigated and remains a research lacuna (Singh, 2020).

PSS, PE & EDEs

As discussed, when subordinates opine their supervisors to regard their actions and encourage individual considerations, it fosters co-creation approaches to employees' in-role responsibilities and nurtures an impetus to fulfill extra-role duties through considerations of autonomy and self-determination culminating in a sense of PE (Oberfield, 2016). The extant research also indicates that employees' PSS and subsequent PE has led to the identification and utilization of work-related resources, personal and organizational growth-directed initiatives, and a marked preparedness for role-related changes all of which may be considered as instances of EDEs (Joo et al., 2021). Based on the discussion

above, the following study hypotheses are postulated.

Hypothesis 1 (H1). Employees' perceived supervisory support shall have a significantly favorable association with their notions of psychological empowerment.

Hypothesis 2 (H2). Employees' psychological empowerment perceptions significantly motivate them to acquire and practice relevant developmental experiences.

EDEs, EPI & ItQs

The existing literature asserts that such EDEs provide role clarity and reduced subjective monotony the consequence of which is an amplification of EPI (Islam & Tariq, 2018). Moreover, when it is felt that in an organization there are ample opportunities *vis-à-vis* EDEs, it would be viewed as a valuable resource that helps employees mitigate professional drawbacks, promotes willingness to remain and eliminates intentions to quit through needs-fulfilment (Uruthirapathy & Grant, 2015). On the basis of the aforementioned deliberations, the following study hypotheses are postulated.

Hypothesis 3 (H3): Employees' developmental experiences forward significantly higher levels of employees' personal industry.

Hypothesis 4 (H4). Employees' developmental experiences significantly restrain their intentions to quit their work covering both, their immediate work group and their employing organization as a whole.

PE & EDEs as Mediators

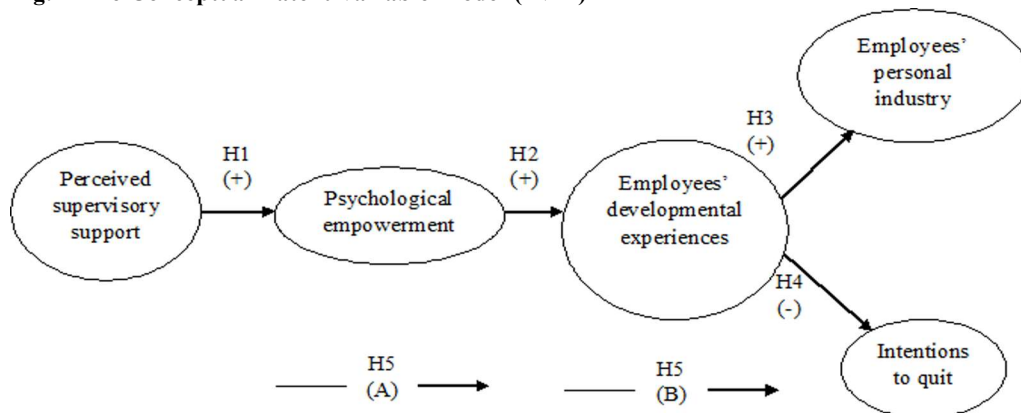
As per literature PE, an organization's human resources (HR) through continuous support provided by those immediately responsible for the delegation of responsibilities that is PSS leads to employees' self-cognition and self-development reinforced by EDEs and demonstrated by their EPI (Zheng et al., 2021). At the same time, considering their conducive association with the organization in general and their supervisor in specific, they are discouraged from demonstrating any ItQs (Memon et al., 2014). As per the exposition above, the following study hypotheses are conjectured.

Hypothesis 5A (H5A): Psychological empowerment intervenes significantly between perceived supervisory support and its consequence, namely, employees' developmental experiences.

Hypothesis 5B (H5B): Employees' developmental experiences significantly mediate the relationships between psychological empowerment as the preceding factor for outcomes, such as, employees' personal industry and their intentions to quit.

All the study hypotheses elucidated above are collated as a conceptual LVM in Fig. 1 and are advanced for further empirical verification.

Fig. 1 The Conceptual Latent Variable Model (LVM)



Sample & Procedures

With exact data not available for the workforce population, the sample size was approximated using the method when the population is infinite (Liu, 2014). At first, the Indian Yellow Pages Business Directory was consulted to randomly select 38 organizations operating from India and comprising employees who were Indian by descent and solicited their approval for data collec-

tion. 11 out of the 38 organizations allowed their employees to participate in the study survey that followed. Of these 11 organizations, six belonged to the manufacturing sector and the remaining were from the service sector. Subsequently, a list of voluntary participants was prepared among whom about 1900 questionnaires were administered of which 801 completed and usable ones were returned. Thus, the response rate for this study was 42.16 percent.

The average age of the respondents was 37.38 years and they had an average work experience of 13.27 years. Of the 801 respondents, 419 belonged to the manufacturing sector and the remaining 382 belonged to the service sector organizations. Further, 187 of the respondents were from the senior, 313 were from the middle, and 301 participants were from the junior levels of management in their respective organizations. Finally, 507 of the respondents were males while the remaining 294 were females.

Measures

All the five study constructs namely, PSS, PE, EDEs, EPI, and ItQs were measured on a five-point scale from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. PSS was measured using the nine-item perceived supervisory support scale developed and reported by Greenhaus et al., (1990). A sample of the items used was 'My supervisor gives me helpful feedback about my performance'. The reliability index for this measure was .92.

Four factors namely, meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact comprising three items each and sourced from Spreitzer (1995) were employed to measure employees' understanding of their PE. A sample item from this measure was, 'The work I do is meaningful to me'. The internal consistency reliability of this scale was .76.

Four items as per the scale recorded by Wayne et al., (1997) were used to measure EDEs. An example of this scale

was 'In the positions that I have held in this organization, I have often been given additional challenging assignments'. The reliability of this measure as per its Cronbach's alpha value was .82.

Four items as reported by Moorman and Blakely (1995) were adapted to measure EPI. A sample item was 'Employees in my organization perform their duties with unusually few errors'. The Cronbach's alpha reliability index of this scale was .85.

Conceptualized as voluntary plans to quit their present employment, employees' ItQs were measured using the four-item intentions to quit scale developed by O'Reilly et al., (1991). One of these four items was 'I would prefer another, more ideal job, than the one I am now engaged in'. The reliability index for this measure was .74.

Control Variables

As per research similar to the present one (Kim et al., 2020), for all subsequent analyses, respondents' age, work experience, the sector to which their organization belonged (1 = manufacturing and 2 = services), their sex (1 = male and 2 = female), and the level of management (LoM) (1 = senior, 2 = middle, and 3 = junior) were treated as control variables.

Common Method Bias

A common latent variable model (CLVM) associating the indicators of all the study variables was tested against the

measurement model of the conceptual LVM as proposed earlier to inspect differences in model fit (Siemsen et al., 2010). The comparative-fit-index and the incremental-fit-index of the proposed model were .96 and .96, respectively whereas they were .72 and .72 for the CLVM. As such, the CLVM could not be accepted and this eliminated the risk of common method bias in the proposed LVM.

Evaluation of the Measurement Model

The measurement model was tested by scrutinizing its reliability and validity as the main criteria of assessment

(Ramayah et al., 2011) and all results of the related analyses are provided in Table I. The composite reliability values ranged from .74 to .89 thus establishing construct reliability while the average variance extracted (AVE) values varied between .55 and .79 demonstrating convergent validity. The squares of the intercorrelations between the study variables were less than the AVE values which provided evidence of discriminant validity (Koufteros, 1999). Additionally, using the heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) method (Henseler et al., 2016) and with values ranging from .30 to .67, further substantiation of discriminant validity was provided.

Table I Evaluation of the Measurement Model

Variables	CR	1	2	3	4	5
1. PSS	0.84	.64				
2. PE	0.77	0.40 (.43)	.68			
3. EDEs	0.75	0.14 (.48)	0.18 (.61)	.79		
4. EPI	0.74	0.03 (.30)	0.07 (.42)	0.24(.57)	.63	
5. ItQs	0.89	0.10 (.67)	0.06 (.37)	0.02 (.62)	0.05 (.53)	.55

Note. $n = 801$; CR is 'Composite reliability'; The diagonal values of the matrix represent the average variance extracted while the off-diagonal values are the squares of the inter-correlations between the study variables; Off-diagonal values in parentheses are results of the heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) analysis; 'PSS' is 'Perceived supervisory support', 'PE' is 'Psychological empowerment', 'EDEs' is 'Employees' developmental experiences', 'EPI' is 'Employees' personal industry', 'and 'ItQs' is 'Intentions to quit'.

Configural Invariance Tests

Before carrying out further analyzes, the proposed model was tested for configural invariance using the grouping variables namely, sector, gender, and LoM. As per the results, the measures used were found to be invariant between these groups and therefore, the results obtained were equally applicable to all

groups considered in the present study. The results of these analyzes are presented in Table 2.

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Table 2 Configural Invariance Tests

Grouping Variable	Unconstrained Model		Fully Constrained Model		No. of Groups	$\Delta\chi^2$	“df	p-value	Invariant
	χ^2	Df	χ^2	Df					
Sector	1788	271	2002.2	542	2	214.2	271	0.995	YES
Sex	1788	271	2019.7	542	2	231.7	271	0.960	YES
LoM	1788	271	2259.3	813	3	471.3	542	0.987	YES

Note. *n* = 801; LoM is ‘Level of management’.

Descriptive Statistics, Intercorrelations & Internal Reliabilities

Table 3 presents the means, standard deviations, intercorrelations, and Cronbach’s alpha reliability indices of the key study variables. As expected, PSS

correlated significantly and positively with PE ($r = .63, p d^{TM} .01$) as did PE with EDEs ($r = .43, p d^{TM} .05$). Moreover, there was a significant positive ($r = .49, p d^{TM} .01$) and a significant negative ($r = -.14, p d^{TM} .05$) correlation between EDEs and EPI and EDEs and ItQs, respectively.

Table 3 Descriptive Statistics, Inter-correlations, & Cronbach’s Alpha Reliability Indices

Values (→) Variables (↓)	Mean	S.D.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Age	37.38	10.81	1.00									
2. Work experience	13.27	8.77	0.79	1.00								
3. Sector	1.53	.50	0.32	0.32	1.00							
4. Sex	1.12	.32	-0.22	-0.14	-0.09	1.00						
5. LoM	1.96	.65	0.13	0.18	0.12	-0.04	1.00					
6. PSS	3.61	.64	0.07	0.07	-0.02	0.01	-0.02	(.92)				
7. PE	3.83	.62	0.06	0.07	-0.05	0.00	0.01	0.63**	(.76)			
8. EDEs	3.49	.69	0.06	0.04	0.01	0.07	-0.03	0.38**	0.43*	(.82)		
9. EPI	3.57	.79	-0.02	-0.04	-0.01	0.03	-0.06	0.18*	0.27**	0.49**	(.85)	
10. ItQs	3.43	1.22	-0.05	-0.07	0.00	0.01	0.01	-0.32**	-0.24*	-0.14*	-0.23**	(.74)

Note. *n* = 801; * $p d^{TM} .05$, ** $p d^{TM} .01$; SD, Standard Deviation. Cronbach’s Alpha reliability indices are reported in parentheses on the diagonal; short-forms are as mentioned in the previous table(s)

Path Analyses Result for the Proposed Model

The paths connecting the main study variables were tested through simultaneous regression as per structural equation modeling (SEM) procedures. Ac-

cordingly, PE regressed significantly and positively on PSS (standardized $\beta = .87, p d^{TM} .01$) as did EDEs on PE (standardized $\beta = .57, p d^{TM} .01$) thus supporting H1 and H2, respectively. Moreover, EPI regressed significantly and positively on EDEs (standardized $\hat{a} = .41, p d^{TM} .01$)

leading to the acceptance of H3. Finally, ItQs regressed significantly and negatively on EDEs (standardized $\beta = -.19$, $p < .01$) resulting in the acceptance of H4. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 4.

Table 4 Regression Analyses Result for the Conceptual LVM

Values (→) Paths(↓)	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized β estimates	C.R. [†]	Remarks
	b	Standard Error			
PSS → PE	1.20	.09	.87	13.81	H1 accepted
PE → EDEs	1.06	.08	.57	12.75	H2 accepted
EDEs → EPI	1.61	.39	.41	4.09	H3 accepted
EDEs → ItQs	-1.02	.08	-.19	-13.17	H4 accepted

Note. $n = 801$; short-forms are as mentioned in the previous table(s) and in the text; 'LVM' is 'Latent Variable Model'; †C.R. is 'Critical Ratios', a recommended basis for testing the statistical significance of SEM components. C.R. $\geq \pm 1.96$ indicates significance at the 95% level and C.R. $\geq \pm 2.58$ indicates significance at the 99% level.

Mediation Analyses Through Competing LVMs

The influence of mediation in the proposed conceptual model (Fig. 1) was examined by adopting a sequential mediation using the SEM approach. For this purpose, four competing LVMs were assessed using three absolute and four comparative fit indices. Following the suggested cut-offs (Byrne, 2001), a model could be accepted for further analyses if only it met these minimum acceptable threshold values.

As stated, four competing LVMs were tested and these were labeled as LVM1, LVM2, LVM3, and LVM4. LVM1 comprised PSS as the latent exogenous variable and EPI and ItQs as the latent endogenous variables excluding PE and EDEs thus exemplifying a model without mediation. LVM2 included PE and LVM3 considered EDEs as the only mediator between the exogenous PSS and the endogenous EPI and ItQs,

respectively. Finally, LVM4 represented the conceptual model proposed in Fig. 1 with PE as the first- and EDEs as the second-order mediator between PSS as the antecedent and EPI and ItQs as the consequences. While inspecting the absolute and the comparative fit indices of the four LVMs only those related to LVM4 were found to be above the recommended threshold and having the best fit. The results of these analyses are presented in Table 5.

Additional Mediation Analyses for the Accepted LVM

To preclude problems of correlated measurement errors, it was decided to conduct the Sobel's (1982), the Aorian's (1944), and the Goodman's (1960) tests as per the z-prime method (MacKinnon et al., 2002). Also, the ratios of the indirect to the total effects were computed and labeled as 'percentage of mediation'. These results are presented in Table 6.

Table 5 Analysis of Competing LVMs

Values (→) Models(↓)	Fit Indices						
	Absolute Fit Indices			Comparative Fit Indices			
	Normed χ^2	GFI	RMSEA	CFI	IFI	NFI	RFI
LVM1 (<i>no</i> mediation)	5.98	.91	.08	.90	.90	.89	.87
LVM2 (mediation with the first-order mediator only that is, PE)	6.25	.88	.11	.87	.87	.84	.82
LVM3 (mediation with the second-order mediator only that is, EDEs)	6.78	.87	.12	.85	.85	.83	.81
LVM4 (mediation with all mediators)	2.86	.97	.05	.96	.96	.95	.93

Note. $n = 801$; short-forms are as mentioned in the previous table(s) and in the text; Minimum acceptable values of the fit indices are as mentioned in the text.

Further, two conditions of mediation were checked namely: (i) whether the direct paths from the primary antecedent to the final consequent variables were greater than the indirect paths through the designated mediators and (ii) whether the direct paths remained significant under conditions of mediation (MacKinnon et al., 1995). Since the answers to both these questions were in the affirmative, all mediators in the accepted LVM that is, LVM4 were considered *quasi*-mediators as stated in Table 6.

A final test of mediation was performed on LVM4 using the AMOS 24.0 plugin for indirect effects (Gaskin & Lim, 2018). According to the results of this analysis, all mediated paths in LVM4 were found significant which led to the acceptance of H5(A) and H5(B). The results of this test are presented in Table 7.

Theoretical Implications

The acceptance of the H1 corroborates with the leader-member exchange (LMX) theory which affirms the strength and quality of the relationship between in-group members and their supervisors implying its emphasis on collaboration, assistance, and self-determination (Hill et al., 2014). Further, the acknowledgment of H2 implies the attestation of the mindset theory whereby employees who sense PE are more likely to attain personal well-being and professional accomplishments and subsequently, higher levels of EDEs (Mrazek et al., 2018). The corroboration of H3 has connotations for the self-esteem theory which suggests that EDEs, which include learning and development opportunities, promote estimations of the self-image and persuade individuals to act in ways that express EPI (Jahanzeb & Newell, 2022). With regards to the affirmation of the H4,

Table 6 Additional Analysis of Mediation *vis-à-vis* LVM4

Values (→)Paths (↓)	Additional Mediation Tests			Path Analyses			
	Sobel's test	Aorian's test	Goodman's test	Percentage of mediation	Whether regression estimate of (direct paths) > (paths under mediated condition)?	Whether regression estimate of (paths under mediated condition) is significant?	Results of the additional mediation analyses
PSS à PE à EDEs	9.40**	9.39**	9.41**	33.39	YES	YES	All variables designated as mediators fulfill the <i>quasi</i> -mediator role
PE à EDEs à EPI	3.94**	3.93**	3.95**	20.03			
PE à EDEs à ItQs	-9.19**	-9.17**	-9.20**	30.52			

Note. $n = 801$; * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$; short-forms are as mentioned in the previous table(s) and in the text.

EDEs, providing positive social cues concerning one's enhanced status and group acceptance reduce employees' ItQs as validated by the sensemaking theory (Reynolds-Kueny & Shoss, 2021).

The confirmation of the H5(A) has implications from the viewpoint of the dynamic capability view theory whereby PSS, resulting in PE, drives EDEs through self-motivated learning to keep abreast of changes in the work environment (Matsuno et al., 2014). Finally, the espousal of the H5(B) illustrates its implication for the information processing theory where individuals would selectively retain and apply those EDEs derived from their notions of PE that result in higher levels of EPI and diminished levels of ItQs (Grant & Berry, 2011).

Practical Implications

In so far as the acceptance of the H1 is concerned, supervisors may provide support in the goal-setting process and concurrently grant their subordinates autonomy and self-determination in orchestrating resources providing them with notions of PE. With regards to the acceptance of the H2, managers should endeavor to increase developmental feedbacks to clarify their subordinates' role-related requirements.

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Regarding H3, by advocating for their subordinates' efforts and provid-

Table 7. Specific Indirect Effects for LVM4

Indirect Path	Unstandardized Estimate	p-Value	Standardized Estimate
PSS → PE → EDEs	.73	.001	.48***
PSS → PE → EDEs → EPI	.63	.001	.45***
PSS → PE → EDEs → ItQs	-.23	.000	-.18***
PE → EDEs → EPI	.69	.001	.59***
PE → EDEs → ItQs	-.17	.000	-.16***

Note. *n* = 801; ****p* < .001; short-forms are as mentioned in the previous table(s) and in the text.

ing them professional assistance, managers may not only contribute to EDEs but also, in turn, may merit their subordinates' trust and loyalty reciprocated by a proactive display of EPI. The acceptance of H4 suggests that, supervisors should develop a caring environment and instigate their subordinates' emotional commitment towards their organization as well as their unit resulting in their decremental ItQs.

Moreover, by inspiring their subordinates to take up additional responsibilities, confront challenges using self-arranged means, and through constructive interactions supervisors would give practical credence to the accepted H5(A). Finally, by explaining the contextual relevance of assigned tasks supervisors can propel the acquisition of developmental experiences and demonstrate the same through amplified EPI and repressed ItQs as implied by the empirical attestation of H5(B).

Limitations & Future Research

The results and findings of this study and the ensuing deliberations should be inferred within the confines of certain justifiable limitations. First, this study was conducted among managerial ex-

ecutives in Indian organizations and themselves Indians by origin. As such, it neither covers all grades of employees in an organization nor does it make the study feasible for cross-national comparisons. Also, the cross-sectional nature of the research design prohibits generalizations regarding the hypotheses between the key study variables over time. As such, it is suggested that future studies may adopt a longitudinal approach while reproducing this research.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study was concerned with the outcomes of PSS in terms of EPI and ItQs when mediated first, by employees' PE and then by EDEs. For this purpose data were collected and subjected to various quantitative analytical procedures including SEM techniques. These procedures validate and established the hypothesized linkages among the study variables and led to the acceptance of the proffered conceptual LVM operationalized as LVM4. Subsequently, the theoretical and practical implications of the empirical findings were noted. Notwithstanding certain limitations, the study concluded by outlining scope for future research.

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