ORGANIZATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

Effect of organizational socialization on equity sensitivity and proactive behaviour in the context of psychological empowerment perception[1]

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Abstract. *Purpose*. The key purpose of this study was to assess the role of psychological empowerment perception in the effect of organizational socialization on equity sensitivity and proactive behavior. The terms subjected to this study were reviewed within the context of the relevant literature and investigated to which extent they were interrelated. *Study design*. A research model was developed based on the literature review, if organizational socialization practices might boost the level of equity sensitivity and proactive behavior of employees through positive psychological empowerment perception. The data from 261 employees working at A Plus Hospital and Hotel Management Service were analyzed using relevant statistical analysis techniques to test the model. *Findings*. The findings revealed that organizational socialization practices influence employees' equity sensitivity and proactive behavior, with the psychological empowerment perception serving as a mediating factor in these relationships.

Keywords: organizational socialization, psychological empowerment perception, equity sensitivity, proactive behavior.

Introduction

The most significant power in the hands of organizations that are continuously seeking to remain standing in the face of uncertainty and competition is human resources. Human resources open the door to success only when it does transform into a potent human capital for the organization. For this transformation, it is also vital to employ resources effectively; beyond the routine human resource management process, a series of activities centered on quality development that will result in genuine

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commitment should be undertaken. Organizations advancing with a prudential perspective and an ever-growing performance target should recognize that using the power properly is critical rather than having it.

Human resources are devised effectively via comprehending and selecting the best strategies to harmonize them with the organization. Regardless of how experienced the employees are, every new task signifies obscurity; employees learn slowly, much like toddlers beginning to walk, and determine whether their following steps may be conducted safely or not. Beyond the specified activities and roles, employees are expected to contribute to the social and psychological structure of the organization commencing with this initial phase. Organizations, without a doubt, bear significant responsibilities for the actualization of these expectations. Two fundamental notions arise at this point: Organizational socialization and psychological empowerment.

M. Louis defined organizational socialization, the basis of the study, as the learning process of the values, skills, anticipated behaviors, and social knowledge required for an individual to become a member of an organization. Employees learn about the organizations' norms, procedures, policies, and the requirements of their roles through various socialization activities implemented by organizations. Socialization practices, which are of great importance, especially in the new engagement phase, are the activities employees should participate in throughout their professional lives (Louis, 1980).

Another key notion that underpins the basis of this study is psychological empowerment. In principle, G. M. Spreitzer addressed psychological empowerment as the development of individual's self-confidence, as a result of which they find their jobs meaningful, feel competent in their professions, have the authority to make decisions about their jobs, and believe that they have an impact on their responsibilities (Spreitzer, 1995). The pivotal subject on this issue is the employee perception rather than the empowerment provided by the organizations; hence, the employees feel psychologically empowered. In the light of this perceptual process, the term psychological empowerment perception is denoted in the study title.

The term "equity sensitivity" is discussed as a significant outcome of organizational socialization and psychological empowerment in this study. R. C. Huseman with colleagues described equity sensitivity as individuals' varying self-assessments on particular input-outcome ratios (Huseman et al., 1987). Everyone has a unique sensitivity to equity, influencing their attitudes and behaviors. Equity sensitivity is a pivotal factor in determining how people react to situations and what behavior is ethically appropriate. Equity-sensitive individuals constantly pursue the goal of improving their previous performances. The anticipation of equity among all employees in terms of input-output ratio also contributes organizations to building performance evaluation and reward systems properly.

Proactive behavior is another term examined in this study. According to A. Presbitero, it is defined as the individual's ability to anticipate the future and take the initiative in devising a concrete action plan to attain desired outcomes (Presbitero, 2015). Proactive behavior appears to be the most critical component for significant achievements, especially when career management is combined with autonomy and self-determination. An employee must have a thorough understanding of the organization, working environment, and tasks for recognizing opportunities, taking self-initiative, and acting decisively. Yet, providing recruits with certain autonomy in the workplace is necessary for acting proactively. The significance of organizational socialization practices and psychological empowerment notions enter the picture at this juncture. The inclusion of this term in the study resides in the prediction that proactive behavior is considerably affected by the elements indicated.

Theoretical background

Organizational socialization

For several years, psychologists, sociologists, and organizational theoreticians have been interested in how people adapt to new groups, organizations, or societies they have recently integrated. Although the term socialization appears to convey this adaptive process, definitions vary depending on whether the definer is from the era of psychology or sociology (Taormina, 1994). As a result, while some theorists highlighted the individual as the party responsible for adaptation and provided individual-oriented definitions, others emphasized social aspects such as organizations that include rules and limitations. The majority of the organizational theorists appeared to favor the second definition of the socialization term and defined socialization as the process in which an individual acquires the social knowledge and skills required to perform a social or organizational role (Taormina, 1994). Undoubtedly, there must be a harmony between individual aspirations and what the social system offers in order to mention the existence of socialization (Parsons, 2005). Socialization refers to a process a person learns and accepts the commonly accepted procedures and practices of a social group, organization, or society (Kammeyer, Ritzer, Yetman, 1990; Taormina, 1994).

Organizational socialization emerges as one of the concepts that constitute the subset of societal socialization presenting continuity in the society (Maanen, Schein, 1979). The organizational socialization process also objectifies the employee's harmony with the organization, just as it actualizes the integration of the individual into society. Freshly recruited employees are prone to experience high levels of stress and anxiety since they are unaware of the organizational interaction routines, unable to anticipate the reactions of others, and are unintegrated yet with the activities around them. M. Louis defined this initial workplace experience as 'reality shock' because recruits have to reevaluate preconceptions of the people about their reactions to events and have to acquire information about the reasons for their behavior (Cable, Parsons, 2001; Louis, 1980).

What organizations offer to individuals is not just a job; individuals rather experience a lifestyle that has its own workflow, achievements, relationships, demands, and potentials from the start date to the end date of the employment. There are certain differences among organizations in terms of all these elements (Maanen, Schein, 1979). Each organizational culture has its own set of rules, particular languages, ideologies, task-officiating standards, behavioral routines, and even prejudices that reflect the experiences of the individuals who constitute it. As a result, employees should not only acquire the technical aspects of the job sufficiently but also comprehend the social behavioral patterns specific to the organization in order to be recognized and become productive members of the organization (Wanberg, 2012). Learning these patterns is feasible through socialization activities within organizations, and socialization practices also vary among organizations, just as they do among individuals.

Organizational socialization, as defined by J. van Maanen and E. H. Schein, refers to the transition of individuals from one role to another, the process they experienced within the patterns established previously by others in the organization and is expressed through the perspective of the role transformation, learning, and adapting to the new situations (Maanen van, Schein, 1979). However, M. Louis defined organizational socialization as the process of gaining values, skills, anticipated behaviors, and social knowledge required for an individual to become a member of an organization (Louis, 1980; Yang, 2008).

Socialization refers to the process by which individuals transition from being outsiders into becoming members of an organization (Danielson, 2004; Reichers, 1987). However, G. T. Chao with colleagues defined socialization as the process of individuals learning and adapting to their roles

in the organization (Chao, Leary-Kelly, Wolf, Klein, Gander, 1994). They also emphasized that the primary goal of organizational socialization is to improve new employees' social interaction with their colleagues to minimize emotional vulnerability (work-related uncertainties, disagreements, anxieties, and stress) and hasten their adaptation to the environment (Yang, 2008, 431).

The organizational socialization process, which reduces uncertainty, does not only refer to the activity of learning how to officiate tasks in the organization but also elucidates acting in a particular manner that is tolerable for the organization. Due to the long-term nature of this process, it is vital to observe the behaviors at issue both in recruits and in current employees of the organization (Taormina, 2004).

Psychological empowerment

Organizations seeking to adapt to compete in a changing environment have realized that empowering individuals is also a critical competitive aspect, besides updating technology, procedures, and systems. Ensuring organizational loyalty through empowering employees is almost a strategy that distinguishes organizations from each other (Rawat, 2011). Empowerment is primarily concerned with achieving organizational goals; it refers to the inclusion of all employees in the organization's success. Since employee empowerment also entails organizational strength, empowerment practices will provide a key commercial advantage to remain competitive (Lashley, 2001). Empowerment activities seem to be a vital fuel source for organizations; thus, progress would be very difficult without it. One of the most fundamental goals of empowerment practices is undoubtedly to improve employee loyalty by allowing them to benefit from a win-win situation. Employees who believe their skills are developed and works are worthwhile will dedicate more to their tasks (Lashley, 2001).

Rosabeth Kanter, who developed the structural empowerment theory, defined empowerment as the ability of the individuals to utilize resources and make decisions to attain their objectives (Kanter, 1977). Opportunity, knowledge (information necessary to conduct work properly), resources (money and equipment required to accomplish work), support (assistance, guidance, and feedback from superiors, subordinates, and colleagues), formal power, and informal power are the six elements of the structural empowerment, according to R. Kanter (O'Brien, 2010, 15). The empowerment term is primarily studied in two different contexts in the relevant literature; structural empowerment and psychological empowerment. While structural empowerment theory focuses on whether empowering conditions exist in the working environment, psychological empowerment theory examines employees' reactions to these conditions (Laschinger et al., 2001).

Psychological empowerment is more of a term related to the orientation of the employees regarding their job role in terms of motivational cognitions (Wang, Lee, 2009). G. Spreitzer also discussed the issue from a psychological standpoint, stating that employees should also experience them psychologically for an organization's empowerment attempts to be successful (Spreitzer, 1995). Empowered employees are the critical component of the success in modern organizations seeking creativity, and psychological empowerment, indicating psychological dimension, encapsulates taking over responsibility in its most basic form and is particularly crucial in modern organizations (Rawat, 2011). According to M. A. Zimmerman, psychological empowerment consists of individuals' interactions with their surroundings and internal empowerment perception (Zimmerman, 1995). However, G. Spreitzer stated that the components determining the empowerment are the perceptions of employees towards these practices rather than the objective facts emerging in the activities conducted to empower employees (Spreitzer, 1995).

In general, G. Spreitzer defines psychological empowerment as the development of one's self-belief, which leads to people finding their job meaningful, feeling competent in their professions,

having the authority to make job-related decisions, and believing that they have an impact on their responsibilities (Spreitzer, 1999). The primary issue at this juncture is the perception of individuals on these components. If there is a negative employee perception of any elements, they fail to consider themselves psychologically empowered. Employees who do not find their work meaningful, for instance, will not regard themselves as empowered, even if they have the authority to make job-related decisions and assess their own skills positively.

G. Spreitzer expanded on J. A. Conger and R. N. Kanungo's (1988) studies on psychological empowerment as internal motivation and defined psychological empowerment within the context of the following dimensions (Conger, Kanungo, 1988; Spreitzer 1995).

Meaning. It is a dimension of the job characteristics model that denotes the alignment between employees' roles and their beliefs, values, and behaviors, suggesting that employees find their jobs meaningful. It reveals the meaning of the value of the job goals when the employee's own will and standards are considered.

Competence. It refers to the confidence level of employees concerning their skills and capacities to perform their duties. This dimension of psychological empowerment reveals a complete personal belief that the necessary job can be achieved without the organization's intervention.

Autonomy. The term refers to employees' ability to decide how to perform their job and have control over it. An employee who has freedom in making decisions feels autonomous since he/she believes that there is no pressure. Employees with autonomy have a high level of responsibility and accountability.

Impact. It is the polar opposite of learned helplessness, and it refers to how much an employee affects strategic, managerial, and operational outcomes. The terms impact and locus of control are confused occasionally; nevertheless, they differ in the following aspects; while the impact is related to the content of the job, locus of control is a personality trait originating from the situations the person encounters.

Equity sensitivity

The first concept that springs to mind is J. S. Adams' Theory of Equity when discussing the perception of justice and equity in organizations. This theory emphasizes that employees demand to be treated equally in their occupational life, and such a demand is a fundamental predictor of their motivation. Employees always collate with others about the rewards or punishments they receive, and such practices build the ground for their justice perception (Huseman, Hatfield, Miles, 1987).

Individuals make comparisons between organizational processes and systems, behaviors displayed towards them, and tasks and rewards in order to have a perception of whether they are treated fairly in the organization. The fact that this perception is positive or negative results in various critical implications for the organization. Employees also wish to be acknowledged that the organization is aware of their efforts to get the motivation to strive to be more productive every day than the previous day. What creates such a perception between the employer and the employee is not only the wages and other rewards but also the similarities and differences with other employees (Bell and Martin, 2012).

Employees make some contributions to the organization they work for and gain some benefits in return, and they seek a balance between their inputs and outputs rather than just comparing themselves to other employees. It is well established that if an employee feels any inequity in the organization, he/she may reduce or stop contributing. The term 'equity sensitivity' derived from Adams' theory of equity also implies that the views of the individuals on equity perception differ from one another. R. C. Huseman with colleagues emphasized equity sensitivity as individuals' varying self-assessments of particular input-outcome ratios. Each individual has a unique equity sensitivity,

influencing their attitudes and behaviors. Equity sensitivity appears to be a key factor, especially when determining how individuals react to events and what behavior is ethically appropriate (Huseman et al., 1987).

R. C. Huseman defined three types of individuals with varying sensitivity levels on a spectrum within the scope of equity sensitivity, which he developed while studying the reactions of individuals to unequal input-output ratios. At one end of the spectrum, there are "givers", who prefer contributing more to the organization rather than receiving. The degree of satisfaction of these individuals is directly proportionate to their contribution to the organization, and they are prone to develop long-term relationships with their employers (Restubog, Bordia, and Bordia, 2009). Such individuals compromising their own interests for a probable social acknowledgment do not represent the ideal outcome of organizational socialization practices.

The "equity sensitives" in the middle of the spectrum are the individuals who act as more envisaged within the equity theory. Such individuals desire equal contributions and outputs and feel anxious when they receive less and guilty when they receive more. Only these individuals are capable of experiencing both emotions (Huseman et al., 1987).

Finally, there are "receivers" at the other end of the spectrum who are more concerned with the gains they may acquire from the organization. According to M. Cole's definition, it is a childhood predisposition not to be contented with what one has but constantly be engaged with receiving and perceiving the act of receiving as a right in and of itself (Cole, 1977). Givers in organizations tend to assume that their input and output ratios are higher than others; nonetheless, they may also feel anxious when they fail to achieve what they were supposed to receive (Huseman et al., 1987). Among the givers, the key motivation is to advance in their positions progressively and get the maximum gains possible from the organization (Kickul, Gundry, Posig, 2005).

Among the terms in the spectrum, "individual" refers to the person who perceives equity or inequity; 'others' denotes persons or groups being compared; 'input' means components such as education, skills, and experience that the employee contributes to the job, and 'output' means elements such as reward, income, and recognition that the employee attains from the job.

Contemplations about the perception of justice (such as participation, democratic decision-making, and coalition formation) are a prominent issue in the management literature. It seems that the perception of justice, including any other matter related to it, should not be addressed only at the organizational level but also at the level of individual interpretation and perception. Individual differences in equity sensitivity are a primary aspect that sheds light on the organizational management about what kind of behavior employees would display with or without being stressed, especially in circumstances where the appropriate behavior is unclear (Mudrack, Mason, Stepanxi, 1999).

Proactive behavior

Personality is described as all attitudes, abilities, and traits that distinguish an individual from others, and it is widely regarded as the source of the behaviors that individuals display throughout their lives. Individuals respond to situations in ways consistent with their personalities; they are not passive recipients of environmental forces; however, they actively influence their surroundings.

The term proactive is the combination of the two words; pro (forward-looking, prior) and activus (active, effectual), and it adjectively refers to measures taken and changes made beforehand. Proactive personality, however, is the ability of the individual to initiate the necessary changes without being instructed. Individuals with such traits have an active practitioner role. Those with proactive personalities constantly yearn to make changes in their surroundings that they believe will be beneficial.

Being proactive is regarded as displaying behavior acting on principles and values rather than reacting emotionally or circumstantial. Beyond improving the current conditions, a proactive personality encompasses taking the initiative to discover new opportunities and remaining patient until making a substantial change. Extroversion and the desire for high accomplishment are also recognized as proactive personality traits. Proactive people are considered to have strong personalities with independent willpower, high determination, self-discipline, great adaptability, and prescience. According to A. Presbitero, proactivity refers to taking personal responsibility for developing a concrete action plan to predict the future and achieve desired outcomes. When combined with autonomy and determination, proactivity appears to be the key to significant success, particularly in career management (Presbitero 2015).

The most critical factor of proactive behavior is to have a proactive personality. While proactive personality is a personal disposition, proactive behavior refers to the existing roles and extra-role behaviors that an individual engages in at work. J. M. Crant with collesgues directly associated proactive personality and proactive behavior with career success, emphasizing the significance of initiative-taking in achieving success (Seibert, Kraimer, Crant, 2001).

Employees have a range of effects on their working environments, such as using cognitive processes in perceiving and signifying the environment, deciding which specific settings they involve in, and unintentional interferences or intentional manipulation of the working environment. Proactivity, defined as taking responsibility and breaching the pro-organizational rule, appears to have an additional role in shaping employees' workplace environment (Bjorkelo, Einarsen, and Matthiesen, 2010).

Personal traits are just as equally important as organizational conditions, which are critical for employees' success in organizations. Among these traits, proactivity is one of the most central. Employees with active behavioral intentions are considered to have the power to turn opportunities into a competitive advantage. Hence, such power provides organizations with a key to change and adaptation success. Although proactive behavior is likened to organizational citizenship behavior in some studies, F. D. Belschak and D. N. Hartog argued that organizational citizenship behavior does not necessarily include personal traits such as entrepreneurship, future-oriented and proactiveness; contrarily, it contains reactivity due to the loyalty-requiring nature of the organization (Belschak, Hartog, 2010).

Employees are expected to take more initiative and behave proactively as a result of altering management mentalities over time due to unpredictable economic conditions and competitive environments. Accordingly, the only way to survive in a continually changing, progressing, and adopting competitive environment is to be innovative, anticipate problems ahead of time and take necessary precautions, and take responsibility when it comes to the wind of change (Belschak, Hartog, 2010).

After evaluating the findings of several studies, F. D. Belschak and D. N. den Hartog concluded that while most proactive behaviors have positive aspects, some of them have negative aspects, albeit rarely. Numerous studies have confirmed that proactive behavior results in positive outcomes for high performance, career success, and job satisfaction. Few studies, however, have reported that proactively behaving employees may experience interpersonal conflicts since they are more vocal than others. Furthermore, when faced with high stress, such employees are discovered to prefer quitting their jobs rather than staying and struggling, owing to their self-confidence in seizing a job opportunity. In some cases, however, they take the lead and break the rules due to their personality being prone to initiative-taking (Belschak, Hartog, 2010, 268–269).

Relationship between organizational socialization and psychological empowerment perception

Employees who are in total harmony with the organization are desired for organizational management. Each employee, however, is a unique personality, although organizations are inanimate entities. So, how can a great deal of harmony be achieved between these two parties? Employees try to cope with numerous anxiety and uncertainty when they are particularly new to the workplace. Elimination of such feelings is the first step in systematic formatting in harmonizing both organization and employees. As a result, fear is replaced by trust, and the anxiety of uncertainty yields to dominance on the job for employees who cognize with the organization (norms, culture, policies, and technical procedures) and are conscious of their own functions.

No matter how experienced the employees are, their adaptation process to each new job is akin to children crawling and learning to walk. At this juncture, the term 'organizational socialization' comes into the picture. Organizational socialization can be regarded as a guide for employees, a lantern to illuminate their way, a transition process from outside into the system, and a continuous training plan in which they become acquainted with everything about the organization.

Although employees' genuine interpretation and perception of psychological empowerment is a critical measure of whether all management efforts have paid off, it is widely known that positive psychological empowerment perception is the factor of the significant positive attitudes among employees. Yet, employees become dedicated to the job and the organization if they find their job meaningful, feel competent and effective, and cognize that they can make decisions about their work.

Robert J. Taormina, whose developed organizational socialization scale is used internationally, identified in his study conducted with 166 employees in 2007 that socialization practices are effective on organizational culture. In the light of these data, the following was hypothesized with the idea that organizational socialization activities will improve psychological empowerment perceptions.

H1: The existence of organizational socialization practices in the organizations strengthens employees' psychological empowerment perceptions.

Relationship between organizational socialization and equity sensitivity

Organizational justice and equity perceptions of employees may have significant results both individually and organizationally. The concept of equity sensitivity, which is based on Adam's equity theory, essentially encapsulates individuals' desire to be treated equally with others. Employees also wish to be treated equally throughout their occupational lives, and to that end, they always compare the rewards or punishments they receive with others, which constitutes the basis of justice perception and equity sensitivity.

Diversity in equity sensitiveness is also a critical factor in identifying the reactions and attitudes of employees to events they encounter in organizations. There are three distinctive types defined as part of equity sensitivity; givers, receivers, and sensitives to equity. Individuals desired by organizations are neither givers nor receivers, but they are the individuals categorized in between, known as equity sensitives. Such circumstance allows organizations unprecedented advantages in setting accurate rewarding systems. Equity-sensitive employees strive to deliver sustainable performance and contribute to securing organizational justice.

For employees to make objective equity comparisons, in other words, to acquire equity sensitivity, they should be aware of the inputs and outputs required for their job and that of others. At this point, the value of organizational socialization practices comes into the picture. Employees obtain benchmarking data in this context through organizational socialization, which is defined as the process by which the norms, procedures, culture, working styles, and the skills necessary to perform the job are conveyed to the employees; therefore, they become full members of the organization.

The research conducted by Lee and Joe in 2017 with 185 healthcare professionals in Korea to identify the relationship between organizational socialization and organizational justice perception

revealed that the two subjects had a significant relationship. T. A. Scandura also conducted a study with 197 managers in Australia to examine the relationship between mentoring and organizational justice perception and discovered that mentoring, which is a critical part of organizational socialization, was influential on the organizational justice perception (Scandura, 1997).

With the idea that organizational socialization practices will raise employees' equity sensitivity, the following was hypothesized in the light of all literature above and considering that the concept of equity sensitivity is closely related to the perception of justice.

H2: The existence of organizational socialization practices in the organization increases employees' equity sensitivities.

Relationship between organizational socialization and proactive behavior

When individuals join a new organization, they need to interpret their surroundings constantly. Organizational socialization is the systematic operation of such signifying practices by the organization. Identifying how organizational socialization practices encourage employees is perhaps one of the critical issues to consider while analyzing these practices. For instance, do such activities develop the capacity of employees who have a good grasp of the rules, functioning, and role behaviors of the organization they work for so that they foresee and take the necessary steps before anyone else; in other words, do the ability of employees to act proactively increase?

Beyond the proactive personality, employees can foresee opportunities before arising, take active initiatives on the subject, and be competitive by having a comprehensive grasp of organizational practices. Uncertainties may prevent employees from taking the necessary steps; however, employees who can recognize and interpreting the organization's procedures, surroundings, and their own professions can be free from the boundaries of the sense of uncertainty.

J. A. Gruman with colleagues investigated the impact of organizational socialization tactics on proactive behavior in 140 students who completed their internship (Gruman, Saks, Zweig, 2006). They reported that organizational socialization enhanced employees' proactive behavior levels. A. Griffin with colleagues also indicated that organizational socialization strengthens proactive behavior, especially among recruits (Griffin, Colella, Goparaju, 2000).

With the assumption that organizational socialization practices will strengthen employees' proactive behaviors, the following was hypothesized according to the mentioned studies and data above, which may provide evidence for the relationship between organizational socialization and proactive behavior.

H3: The existence of organizational socialization practices in the organization increases employees' proactive behavior levels.

Relationship between psychological empowerment and equity sensitivity

Employees constantly compare their efforts and achievements in organizations, particularly between themselves and other employees who make equal efforts. As a result, they expect to be treated equally. Some employees' comparisons and expectations on equity may differ from others; consequently, having such equity-sensitive employees is always advantageous for organizations as it makes establishing a fair rewarding system easier. Employees that are equity sensitive require some organizational support in addition to their personalities. One of the most crucial of these is psychological empowerment.

Employees that are psychologically empowered find their jobs meaningful and consider that they have an impact, competence, and autonomy on their occupations. An employee who believes that his / her job is meaningless, ineffective, and incompetent will not compete with himself / herself or any other employee. Such an employee does not attempt to surpass his/her previous performances or compare it with other employees' achievements who have equal inputs. To establish a sense of

justice and equity sensitivity, such employees should feel that their jobs are meaningful, competent, and effective.

Literature on the perception of justice was also included in the scope of hypothesis tests since there was limited research on equity sensitivity. Indeed, B. A. Scott and C. A. Jason reported a relationship between equity sensitivity and perception of justice in their study conducted with two separate business department student groups, in which they discussed the links between the perception of organizational justice and individual variables (Scott, Jason, 2007). In their study, H. Zhang and N. C. Agarwal established that psychological empowerment practices increase the perception of distributive justice (Zhang, Agarwal, 2009). The following was hypothesized based on the research findings and data, with the idea that positive psychological empowerment perception increases employees' equity sensitivity.

H4: The existence of a positive psychological empowerment perception strengthens employees' equity sensitivity.

Relationship between psychological empowerment and proactive behavior

Proactive employee behavior refers to the tendency of personnel to go beyond the job description, develop themselves, take the initiative, make predictions, and receive feedback to acquire positive influence on themselves and their surroundings. J. M. Crant with colleagues directly associated proactive behavior with career success and emphasized the essence of initiative-taking to achieve success. However, being able to take initiative corresponds directly with the autonomy dimension of psychological empowerment. In the model he developed for proactive behavior in organizations, J. M. Crant discussed organizational culture and organizational support as essential organizational variables that reveal proactive behavior (Saibert, Kraimer, Crant, 2001).

Psychological empowerment practices allow employees to more readily temporize change, be more innovative, and be less afraid of innovations. While empowered employees believe that they have control over their job, they may be more advanced in initiative-taking and attempting to take the necessary steps promptly. In his study investigating the impacts of psychological empowerment, G. Spreitzer discovered that employees participate more actively in fulfilling their job roles with the help of psychological empowerment practices (Spreitzer, 1995). K. W. Thomas and B. A. Velthouse also identified that psychological empowerment boosted employees' energy to concentrate more on the task, improved mobility, increased control flexibility for task success, initiated new jobs when opportunities arose, maintained motivation resiliently against obstacles under uncertainties, developed such similar circumstances (Thomas, Velthouse, 1990).

According to research conducted by Parker in 2006 to examine the indicators of proactive behavior in the workplace, there was a positive relationship between work autonomy, supportive management, and proactive behavior. According to a few studies, psychological empowerment demonstrated improvement in innovativeness (Knol, van Linge, 2009; Spreitzer, 1995). In the light of the data provided and the studies assessed, the following was hypothesized with the assumption that positive psychological empowerment perception strengthens employees' proactive behaviors.

H5: The existence of a positive psychological empowerment perception increases employees' level of proactive behavior.

Mediating role of psychological empowerment in the relationships between organizational socialization and proactive behavior and equity sensitivity

The literature review on the direct relations of the variables reciprocatively discussed in the research projected that there might be positive relationships between the variables of organizational socialization, equity sensitivity, and proactive behavior. Similarly, the literature review also

emphasized that psychological empowerment, which is considered a mediator variable within the scope of the study, might also have positive links between equity sensitivity and proactive behavior.

In a study conducted with 103 participants of an apprenticeship program in France to analyze the mediating role of organizational support perception in the effect of organizational socialization tactics on some socialization practices, S. Perrot with colleagues found that the perception of organizational support, which is similar to empowerment perception, played a mediating role in the effect of outcomes of the organizational socialization (Perrot et al., 2014). Based on the concept relationships and studies examined, the following two hypotheses were developed on the mediating role.

H6: The psychological empowerment perception plays a mediating role in the effect of organizational socialization on employees' equity sensitivity.

H7: The psychological empowerment perception plays a mediating role in the effect of organizational socialization on employees' proactive behavior.

Methodology

Research model

The research model was designed to assess the role of psychological empowerment perception in the effect of organizational socialization on equity sensitivity and proactive behavior.
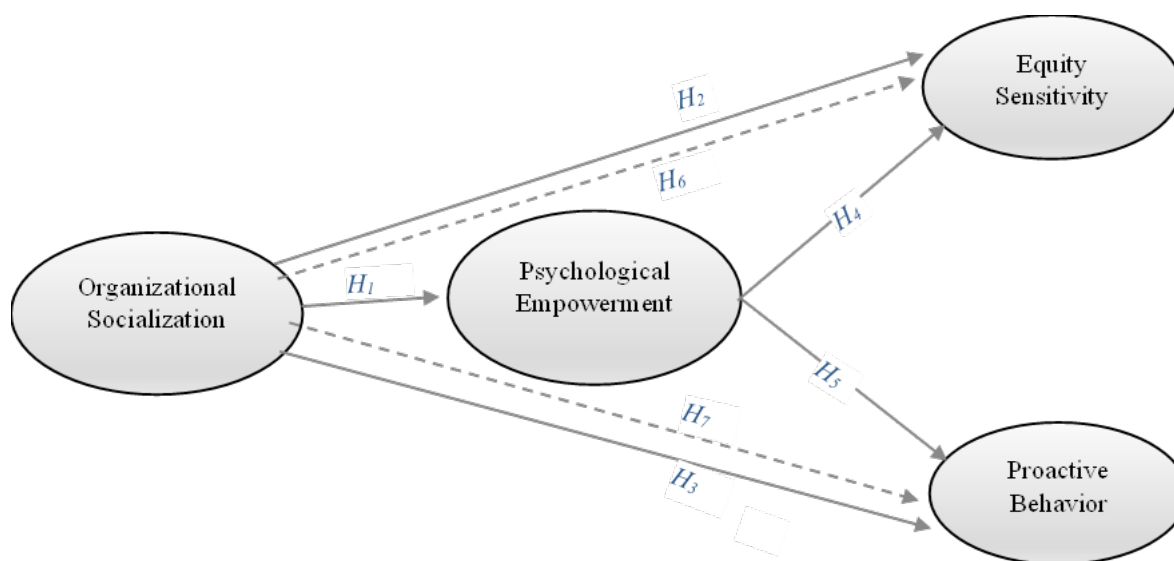

Figure 1. Research model

Sampling process

While selecting the research universe, a population where organizational socialization practices exist and, concurrently, their impacts are measurable was prioritized. The prerequisite of the personnel with psychological empowerment perception and organizational socialization practices necessitated conducting the study in the private sector. Therefore, "A Plus Hospital and Hotel Services" operating in Istanbul was chosen as the research universe after preliminary research and interviews.

"A Plus Hospital and Hotel Management Services" was established as the participatory organization of the Acıbadem Healthcare Group in 2006. It delivers services in fields such as cleaning (hospital, school, office, building, etc.), catering and cafe services, and hospital textile washing, being the first integrated factory in Turkey, both within the country and abroad in several sectors, including the health and several others. Quality management systems, continual training programs, and customer satisfaction-oriented business structure have been adopted in all service

areas. Socialization practices are implemented in four different steps in A Plus Hospital and Hotel Management Services:

1. Orientation training. The three-week training includes activities such as meeting with the main-office staff, process training, technical training, and teaching of specific publications.
2. Work process at the location. It entails providing umbrella training, such as regular result-oriented management training after determining the professional and technical needs.
3. Progressive group. It covers the training of individuals who wish to be trained as manager candidates and some advanced training such as leadership.
4. Social activities. It refers to some social activities held regularly to promote the cohesion of the staff.

The research universe consisted of 340 individuals (main-office staff, operation manager, operation executive, and supervisor) working in the specified organization. The calculated sample size to be drawn from the population was 181, with an error margin of 5% within a 95% confidence interval (http://www.surveysystem.com/sscalc.htm). Only 261 of the distributed questionnaires were returned. The questionnaire return rate was 76.6%. Participants were informed about the survey questions and the study's objectives in advance for the questionnaire to be answered impartially and by the purpose. Participants were also ensured that the survey would only be utilized for scientific research purposes.

Measures

The research scales were adapted from the studies shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Research scales

Scales	Adapted from
"The Organizational Socialization Inventory"	R. Taormina (1994)
"The Psychological Empowerment Scale"	G. M. Spreitzer (1995)
"The Equity Sensitivity Instrument"	K. S. Sauley and A. G. Bedeian (2000)
"Proactive behavior scale"	M. Salanova and W. Schaufeli (2008)

All the scales were measured with the 5-point Likert scale ("5" — "Totally agree", "1" — "Strongly disagree"). In the analysis of the relevant data, descriptive statistics, reliability, exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis, structural aquation modeling and mediating analysis were used.

Results

Sample characteristics and descriptive statistics

This section of the study covered the distribution and percentages of the answers given to the questions about the personal and occupational information of the managers who agreed to participate in the research and worked in the organization (A Plus Hospital and Hotel Management Services) selected as the research universe. While 57.1% of the participants were male, 42.9% were female. Most of the participants (54.0%) ranged from 25–34 ages, and 38.3% of the population belonged to the 35–44 age group.

Considering the educational statuses, 39.8% of the participants were secondary education graduates, while 36.0% and 20.7% were university and high school graduates, respectively. In addition, 39.5% and 31.0% of the participants had 2–5 and 6–10 years of occupational experience in their current jobs, respectively. However, the distribution and percentages of employees' current positions were as follows: 33.3% were supervisors, 24.5% were operations managers, 22.2% were main-office staff, and 19.9% were operations executives.

Reliability, exploratory, and confirmatory factor analysis

Firstly, reliability analysis of each scale were tested. After reliability analysis, exploratory factor analysis was applied in order to determine the sampling adequacy of each scale. Only factor loads of 0.40 and above were considered. According to these analysis results, organizational socialization has three factors and psychological empowerment has three factors. Lastly, confirmatory factor analysis for each scale was applied to determine whether the factors were compatible with the sample. The results of each analysis are shown in Table 2, and the fit index values are shown in Table 3.

Table 2. Exploratory factor analysis results

Scales	Cronbach alpha	Explained variance	Total variance	Factor loadings (Range from)
Organizational socialization				
1.Education	.904	25.483	25.483	.490 − .785
2.Understanding Organization	.803	18.599	44.072	.601 − .760
3.Friendship Support	.836	17.405	61.477	.734 − .813
Psychological empowerment				
1.Meaning	.834	27.593	27.593	.713 − .870
2.Competence	.819	21.500	49.093	.701 − .828
3.Autonomy	.836	21.222	70.315	.555 − .844
Equity Sensitivity	.741	47.605	47.605	.551 − .788
Proactive Behavior	.743	66.061	66.061	.757 − .835

Table 3. Fit index values of scales

Scales	CMIN / df	GFI	AGFI	CFI	NFI	RMSEA	SRMR
Organizational socialization	2.788	.863	.819	.907	.863	.083	.062
Psychological empowerment	2.640	.948	.902	.969	.951	.079	.049
Equity sensitivity	1.893	.996	.964	.997	.993	.059	.015
Proactive behavior	.084	.997	.999	1.00	1.00	.000	.003

Research model testing

Structural equation modeling was used to analyze whether the relationships between the variables in the study were statistically significant. For this purpose, The AMOS program was used to examine the structural model of the research, which was established by the theoretical framework. The results of the fit index were considered to quantify the validity of the structural model.
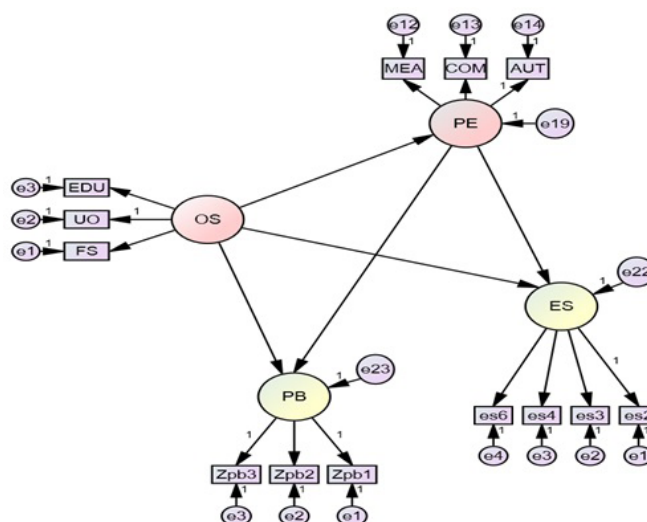

Figure 2. Equation model of research

The significance of the direct and indirect relationships between the variables was analyzed in line with the developed research hypotheses. The indirect relationships between the variables were determined using R. M. Baron and D. A. Kenny's four-stage method, and partial or complete mediation was determined based on the analysis result (Baron, Kenny, 1994). Consequently, the bootstrap method was used to reveal if the indirect effect of the exogenous (via the mediating variable) factors on the endogenous variables was significant enough to be able to refer to it as an intermediary effect. The sample was enlarged by 1000, the confidence intervals were retained at 95%, and the boot-factor value was set to 1 during the implementation of the bootstrap method.

Table 4. Fit İndex Values of Equation Model

Index	CMIN / df	GFI	AGFI	NFI	IFI	TLI	CFI	RMSEA	SRMR
	2.146	.931	.896	.895	.941	.922	.940	.066	.071

Table 5. Estimate Results of the Model

Variables	Std. β	Std. Error	X^2 (CR)	p
OS → PE	.608	.079	6.793	.000
OS → ES	.379	.062	3.749	.000
OS → PB	.527	.104	5.458	.000
PE → ES	.627	.084	6.652	.000
PE → PB	.766	.158	8.376	.000

Testing the mediating effect of psychological empowerment

Within the scope of the study, it was assumed that psychological empowerment has a mediating effect on the relationship between organizational socialization and equity sensitivity and between organizational socialization and proactive behavior. The results are given in Table 6.

Table 6. Mediating effect analysis results of equation model

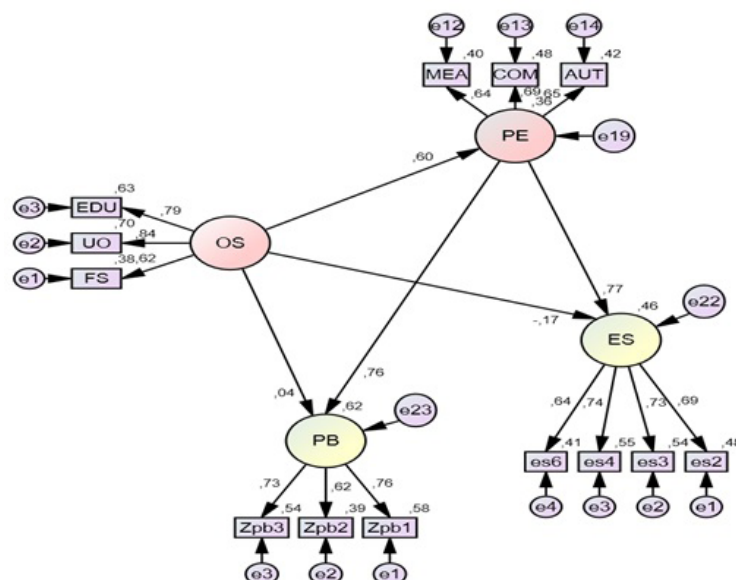| Relations between variables	Direct effects without mediating variable (std. β)	Direct effects with mediating variable (std. β)	Baron & Kenny model	Meaningfulness of indirect effects with bootstrap method
OS → PE → ES	.379	−.197	Accept /	Accept
	$p < .001$	.051	Full Mediator	$p < .01$
OS → PE → PB	.527	.037	Accept /	Accept
	$p < .001$	.690	Full Mediator	$p < .01$

Figure 3. Regression coefficients between variables

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Conclusion

This study aimed to assess the role of psychological empowerment perceptions in the effect of organizational socialization practices on employees' equity sensitivity and proactive behavior levels. Organizational socialization, psychological empowerment, equity sensitivity, and proactive behavior variables were analyzed sequentially, and attempts were made to interpret their associations with each other in the sample population.

The level of the relationship between the variables in the research model was determined using correlation analysis. These analyses proved a positive relationship between organizational socialization, psychological empowerment, equity sensitivity, proactive behavior, and their sub-dimensions. The results of the analyses also revealed that organizational socialization had positive relationships with psychological empowerment (r = .514), equity sensitivity (r = .251) and proactive behavior (r = .389) at the 0.99 confidence level. Similarly, the relationship between psychological empowerment and equity sensitivity (r = .371) and proactive behavior (r = .526) was positive at the 0.99 confidence level.

The data analyses revealed that organizational socialization practices had a favorable and substantial impact on employees' psychological empowerment perceptions. Accordingly, it was found that organizational socialization affected psychological empowerment significantly and positively. Therefore, the *H1* hypothesis was supported. The fact that the employees participating in the research find their occupations meaningful and feel competent and effective is strongly related to their prompt empowerment regarding their job responsibilities. Employees familiar with both technical and social aspects of their jobs may also feel more productive at work.

The model analysis ascertained that organizational socialization practices influenced employees' equity sensitivity positively and significantly. The findings suggested that organizational socialization had a significant and positive impact on equity sensitivity. Therefore, the *H2* hypothesis was supported. Considering this fact, thanks to organizational socialization, which refers to the process by which the norms, procedures, culture, working styles, the skills required for the job are transferred to the employees so that they become full members of the organization, employees were identified to acquire comparison data.

Another result of the model analysis demonstrated that organizational socialization practices had a favorable and substantial impact on employees' proactive behaviors. The results suggested that organizational socialization significantly and positively influenced equity sensitivity. Therefore, the *H3* hypothesis was supported. These findings also demonstrated that implementing organizational socialization practices to minimize employees' level of uncertainty encourages them to behave proactively and assertively to acquire the necessary information. Beyond proactive personalities, having full command of organizational practices allows employees to anticipate opportunities before they arise, take active initiatives on the subject, and be competitive.

The model outcomes corroborated that positive psychological empowerment perception has a favorable and substantial influence on employees' equity sensitivity. Therefore, the *H4* hypothesis was supported. These findings proved that when employees perceive psychological empowerment, their equity sensitivity improves. Employees that are psychologically empowered find their occupations meaningful and believe they have an impact, competence, and autonomy over their jobs. An employee who finds his / her job worthless and feels unproductive and incompetent at it will fail to compete with other employees. It makes no effort to surpass its previous performance each time or to compare itself to other employees with similar inputs. Employees who feel competent and effective in their job have a better-developed sense of justice and equity sensitivity.

The model's analysis outputs revealed that employees' perceptions of psychological empowerment had positive and substantial effects on proactive behaviors. As a result, the *H5* hypothesis was supported. Considering these findings, it is safe to say that the proactive behavior levels of the employees participating in the study have increased through initiative-taking and autonomy provided by psychological empowerment. It should be emphasized that organizational support is one of the most critical compounds that spring proactive behavior. Employees that are empowered psychologically are more open to change, more innovative, and less fearful of innovations.

When the mediating variable of psychological empowerment was included, the model tested whether the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variables became meaningless (fully mediation) or reduced its impact (partial mediation).

According to the findings, organizational socialization had an impact on equity sensitivity positively and significantly. This result demonstrated that the first prerequisites to measure the mediating effect has met. In the second stage, psychological empowerment was included in the model to test whether there was any change in the influence of organizational socialization on equity sensitivity. The effect of organizational socialization on equality sensitivity became insignificant when psychological empowerment was included in the model. The full mediating role of psychological empowerment was determined based on R. M. Baron and D. A. Kenny's approach. However, the bootstrap method was employed to identify whether the mentioned mediating role is significant or not. When the significance levels of the indirect effects obtained by the Bootstrap method are given in the tabular form, are analyzed, the full mediating role of the psychological empowerment is significant at the *p* < 0.01 significance level.

The final data revealed that organizational socialization had a favorable and substantial effect on proactive. It proved that the first prerequisites to measure the mediating effect has met. In the second stage, psychological empowerment was added to the model to test whether there was any change in the impact of organizational socialization on proactive behavior. When included, the effect of organizational socialization on proactive behavior became insignificant. Accordingly, the fully mediating role of psychological empowerment was determined based on R. M. Baron and D. A. Kenny's approach, while the bootstrap method was utilized to analyze whether the mentioned mediating role is significant or not. Therefore, it is possible to argue that the full mediating role of psychological empowerment is statistically significant at the *p* < 0.01 significance level when analyzing where the significance levels of the indirect effects attained by the Bootstrap method are given in the tabular form.

General assessment and recommendations

This study was conducted to contribute to the literature on the terms under consideration. An attempt was made to form a unity and generate ta research model for this purpose via compiling the concepts of organizational socialization, psychological empowerment, equity sensitivity, and proactive behavior. Although the mentioned terms have been analyzed extensively by associating them with each other or with different variables, the relationship network proposed in this research was explored for the first time, providing it with a unique nature. The findings of the study model, which determines the relationships between variables, are discussed in a way that they may contribute to the related literature.

Since the employees participating in the research operate in a very dynamic business line and a constantly changing and competitive environment, it is vital to have a multidimensional perspective while evaluating their perceptions. The research model generated with such a concept allows making assessments from various frameworks with the contribution of elements that may be related

to each other. Given these considerations, it should be noted that the conclusion of this study cannot constitute a generalization for employees working in different industries. Within the framework of these constraints, the followings may be assessed about the employees who participated in the current research:

Employees who participated in the survey were recognized to have a positive perception of organizational socialization practices in general. Such a constructive aspect was a significant factor for employees to have a desirable level of equity sensitivity and proactive behavior. Yet, all the above outcomes had a critical impact on employees' having strong psychological empowerment perceptions; in other words, they found their jobs meaningful and felt effectual, competent, and autonomous in their occupations. In addition to the effects listed separately, organizational socialization also strengthened the mentioned outcomes through psychological empowerment. The results projected when constructing the conceptual framework were also identified by the research. In this context, it is safe to say that the current study's findings are confirmed by the literature-based predictions of the research model.

With the concepts that are the subject of the research, it is possible to make comparisons by considering different sectors in future studies, adding new and current variables to the model, and in this way, generating original research on the related literature.

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Влияние организационной социализации на чувствительность к справедливости и активное поведение в контексте восприятия психологических возможностей

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Аннотация. *Цель*. Основная цель этого исследования состояла в том, чтобы оценить роль восприятия расширения психологических возможностей (*psychological empowerment*) в том, как организационная социализация влияет на чувствительность к справедливости (*equity sensitivity*) и проактивное поведение. Переменные, оказавшиеся в фокусе исследования, были рассмотрены в ходе анализа соответствующей литературы, а затем было эмпирически проверено, в какой степени они взаимосвязаны. *Методология*. Модель исследования была разработана на основе обзора литературы, предполагая, что методы организационной социализации могут повысить уровень чувствительности к справедливости и активного поведения сотрудников за счёт положительного восприятия расширения психологических возможностей. Эмпирические данные, полученные на выборке из 261 сотрудника, работающего в компании «*A Plus Hospital and Hotel Management Service*», были обработаны с использованием соответствующих методов статистического анализа для проверки модели. *Результаты*. Результаты показали, что организационная практика социализации влияет на чувствительность сотрудников к справедливости и проактивное поведение, при этом восприятие расширения психологических возможностей выступает в качестве опосредующего фактора в этих отношениях.

Ключевые слова: организационная социализация; восприятие расширения психологических возможностей; чувствительность к справедливости; проактивное поведение.