



Research Paper

Studying the relationship between positive thinking with extra-role behaviors with emphasis on the moderating role of job self-efficacy (Case study: Shiraz Provincial Highway Administration)

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Abstract
The present study aimed to study the relationship between positive thinking and extra-role behaviors with an emphasis on the moderating role of job self-efficacy. The research method was descriptive-correlation. The statistical population of the study consisted of 166 employees of the General Directorate of Roads of Shiraz Province. The sampling method was census. Standard questionnaires of extra-role behaviors by Podsakov et al. (1990), positive thinking by Ingram and Visnicki (1988), and job self-efficacy by Skalvik and Skalvik (2007) were used to collect data. Confirmatory factor analysis was used to determine the validity of the research tool, and Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to confirm the reliability of the research tool. Smart PLS statistical software was used to analyze the data. The research findings showed that all research hypotheses were confirmed. The research results showed that there is a significant relationship between positive thinking and extra-role behaviors, as well as between positive thinking and extra-role behaviors and the moderating role of job self-efficacy.

Keywords: Positive thinking, extra-role behaviors, job self-efficacy.

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## Extended Abstract

### Introduction

The importance of employee cooperation and participation in achieving the organization's goals has long been of concern to organizational managers. In the meantime, most organizations have sought to have employees who cooperate with the organization spontaneously and without coercion, work beyond the prescribed duties specified in their job descriptions, and in fact be good citizens for the organization (Akbari et al, 2020). Individuals' behavior is not always shaped based on facts; most of the time, individuals' perception of reality shapes their behavior. Therefore, understanding individuals' perceptions of reality is considered an entry point for explaining their behavioral consequences. Accordingly, it can be said that employees' perception of their own characteristics and behavior shapes how they behave in the organization (Pour et al, 2017). Extra-role behaviors are called voluntary and spontaneous behaviors (vegetative behaviors) that are not part of the formal duties of individuals and are not directly considered in the organization's formal reward system, but they increase the overall effectiveness of the organization (Kim et al, 2020). al, 2015). Various approaches have emerged to solve psychological problems. Among these new approaches in recent decades, the positive psychology approach can be mentioned (Chang et al, 2020). Over the past decade, positive psychology has become one of the major trends in psychology and has quickly found a suitable place in this field. The speed of this trend in transforming into a pragmatic and evidence-based approach is not comparable to the history of any previous trend. The application of positive interventions to improve the quality of life is greater satisfaction with life, happiness and vitality. Kulilam (2011) considers positive thinking to be a general approach and orientation about life. In other words, having the right internal balance and maintaining calm and composure in the face of problems so that an individual can maintain their personal motivation, take action and feel good about the action they take (Shakerami, 2018).

Job self-efficacy is influenced by motivation and behavior and affects them reciprocally, and high levels of it increase the individual's participation in job tasks and behaviors (Jang & Ko, 2021). (Bandoura, 1993) raises the issue that self-efficacy affects individuals' thought patterns and is effective in increasing or decreasing their performance. In particular, if an individual has a high level of self-efficacy, they are more likely to choose challenging goals and their level of motivation and success will be higher. High levels of self-efficacy help individuals to continue their efforts until they achieve their goals (Mohammadi & Malek Mohammadi, 2016).

Due to the importance of positive thinking in the occurrence of extra-role behaviors and the need for a comprehensive and complete study of this construct, considering its various dimensions and considering the importance of individuals' job self-efficacy in the amount of extra-role behaviors, conducting such a study is important for solving organizational problems. Therefore, by analyzing the dimensions of the stated variables, the researcher tries to provide a framework and suggestions for improving the job performance of employees of the General Directorate of Highways of Qazvin Province. Accordingly, this study attempts to answer the question of whether there is a significant relationship between positive thinking



and extra-role behaviors with an emphasis on the moderating role of job self-efficacy in the General Directorate of Highways of Shiraz Province?

### Theoretical framework

Extra-role behaviors: A review of the theoretical literature shows that there are two basic approaches to defining “extra-role behaviors.” (Organ, 1988) and other early researchers on the subject have studied this type of behavior as extra-role behavior because the activities of individuals in the workplace go beyond the requirements of the role assigned to them, and their behaviors are not directly and openly rewarded through the formal organizational reward system (Pour et al, 2017). Another group of researchers, such as (Graham, 1995), suggest that extra-role behaviors should be considered separately from work performance, because in this case, the problem of distinguishing between role and extra-role performance will not arise. In the aforementioned view, extra-role behaviors should be considered as a global concept that includes all positive behaviors of employees within the organization (Joharipour, 2019).

Positive thinking:

(Quilliam, 1990) defines positive thinking as follows: Positive thinking means paying attention to the positive things in life and not paying attention to the negative aspects. Positive thinking is not simply about having specific thoughts, but rather a general approach and orientation about life (Jafari, 2019). Positive thinking means having a good image of ourselves, not always blaming ourselves. Positive thinking means thinking well of others and having good feelings towards them and treating others positively (Bavarsad Salehpour & Attari, 2016).

Job self-efficacy:

Based on Bandura’s concept of self-efficacy, job self-efficacy is defined as an individual’s judgment of their ability to perform the main tasks within a given job and professional framework. This construct has been stated as an influential and important factor in directing resources towards achieving goals (Davoud Abadi Farahani, 2016). Many studies have shown that job self-efficacy beliefs play a fundamental role in the professional development of employees; in other words, job self-efficacy beliefs have a great impact on the choice of jobs and fields by adolescents and young people. Job self-efficacy beliefs refer to individuals' cognitive evaluation of their ability to complete a task (Hwang et al, 2016).

(Svihla & Kachelmeier, 2022), conducted a study titled "The Role of Positive Thinking in the Development of Empathy and Self-Efficacy in Teachers of Non-Governmental Schools in Rome". The results of the study showed that there is a positive and significant relationship between positive thinking, empathy and teachers' self-efficacy. (Sharifinia & Rezaei, 2021) In a study, they examined the effect of positive thinking training on perceived stress and self-efficacy of employees and concluded that training in positive thinking skills had a positive and significant effect on perceived stress and self-efficacy in the experimental group.

### Research Methodology

The present study is applied in terms of purpose and descriptive-correlational in terms of method. The statistical population of the study consists of 166 employees of the General Directorate of Roads of Shiraz Province. Given the limited statistical population, census



sampling method was used. Accordingly, the sample size was equal to the size of the statistical population (166 people). The data collection tools were standard questionnaires for extra-role behaviors by Podsakov et al. (1990), positive thinking by Ingram and Visnicki (1988), and job self-efficacy by Skalvik and Skalvik (2007). Confirmatory factor analysis was used to assess the validity of the research tools, and Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to assess the reliability of the research tools. Smart PLS software was used to analyze the collected data.

### Research Findings

The first hypothesis measures the relationship between positive thinking and extra-role behaviors of employees. The statistical significance between the variable of positive thinking and extra-role behaviors is (13.821), which is greater than the value of (1.96). Also, the path coefficient between these two variables is (0.691), which shows the positive effect of positive thinking on extra-role behaviors. This means that positive thinking has a positive and direct effect on extra-role behaviors. The second hypothesis measures the relationship between positive thinking and extra-role behaviors by considering the moderating role of job self-efficacy. The statistical significance between the variable of "job self-efficacy  $\times$  positive thinking" and "extra-role behaviors" is (2.493), which is greater than the value of (1.96). Therefore, the moderating effect of "job self-efficacy" in the effect of "positive thinking" on "extra-role behaviors" is accepted. Also, according to the path coefficient value (0.076), it is clear that "job self-efficacy" has a positive moderating role in the impact of "positive thinking" on "extra-role behaviors." This means that at high levels of job self-efficacy, the intensity of the impact of positive thinking on extra-role behaviors is stronger and vice versa.

### Conclusion

The first hypothesis measures the relationship between positive thinking and extra-role behaviors of employees. The results of the first hypothesis test are consistent with and supported by the research findings (Alparslan & Kılınc, 2015). They acknowledged that informal communication and perceived organizational support have a positive and significant effect on teachers' positive thinking and extra-role behavior. The result is explained as follows: people who believe in the positive effects of their role in carrying out organizational affairs, base their inter-organizational cooperation on two-way cooperation, make continuous efforts to solve their organization's problems, and correctly apply positive organizational behavior dimensions in the course of performing their job duties can better perform optimally within the framework of organizational norms. The second hypothesis measures the relationship between positive thinking and extra-role behaviors by considering the moderating role of job self-efficacy. The results of the second hypothesis test are consistent with and supported by the research findings (Chhajer et al, 2018). The results of the study showed that the existence of self-efficacy in the job and optimism in carrying out organizational activities leads to the development of employee job participation and promotes positive thinking among them. The result is explained as follows: the institutionalization of self-efficacy in employees creates a sense of duty in them, which leads to positive and constructive organizational behaviors in them. These behaviors, which are referred to as extra-role behaviors, encourage



employees and managers of the organization and make them more motivated to work. In this regard, it is suggested that specific and helpful support measures can be effective in improving employees' positive thinking. If we can promote good personality traits such as positive thinking and reduce negative and destructive personality traits through training, it will help the psychological growth of employees. Managers should increase the sense of optimism in employees by creating a cooperative atmosphere in the organization and give effect to their useful and constructive opinions. By giving feedback on employees' progress, they should inform them of their level of success at work so that they increasingly feel efficient and implement behaviors based on positive thinking.