



Investigating the role of perceived organisational support on flourishing and turnover intention in Namibia

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ABSTRACT

Organisational support plays a critical role in the execution of work roles and job attitudes of employees. Resources and support should be aligned with the needs and expectations of employees. This study investigated the role of perceived organisational support (POS) on flourishing and turnover intention of selected organisations in Namibia. Organisational support is instrumental in fostering health and wellbeing of employees. Organisational support reduces employee's intention to leave but is at times misdirected or perceived as cumbersome. Applying quantitative research, a total of n=446 employees were sampled, making use of a questionnaire (survey) to collect data. A unique negative relationship was found between perceived organisational support and flourishing. Perceived organisational support reported a positive relationship with turnover intention. This study recommends open and healthy communication platforms between employees and management; enhance the match between support provided and the needs of employees; provide training related to interpersonal relations, and emotional intelligence. Team-building sessions and conflict resolution training may be offered. This study adds to the understanding of perceived organisational support, flourishing and turnover intention within the Namibian workplace.

Keywords (05 words): Perceived Organisational Support; Flourishing; Turnover Intention; Wellbeing; Namibia

JEL Codes: I12; I31; L21; L84; M10; Q13

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1. INTRODUCTION

Organisations are created to develop products or for service delivery to society. These organisations consist of employees; thus, employees need to be supported to be productive for the organisation (Ahmed et al., 2015). An employee's perception that the organisation is concerned about them and appreciates their contribution is known as perceived organisational support (POS) (Kurtessis et al., 2017). POS mediates the relationship between employee's perception and alignment of activities related to organisational goals (Cohen & Wills, 2011). Rockstuhl et al. (2020) indicated that POS depicts how much the organisation cares for the employee, their contributions and the benefits from the organisation. Organisations need to establish healthy relationships with employees and encourage excellent service.

The manner in which employees are treated by the organisation influence how the employees would feel about the organisation (Janse van Rensburg et al., 2017). The level of POS helps employees gauge their worth as perceived by the organisation and this view may be skewed (Levy, 2013). Organisations may assume that the support provided is what the employees regard as important or needed (*"we are here to help you"*).

Employees benefit from POS, they feel accepted, valued and a sense of belonging which assist with coping during stressful times. According to Swanzy (2020), the guidance, assistance and feedback that employees receive from their supervisors has been found to help with difficult situations that lead to occupational stress and impacts employees' psychological wellbeing.

Perceived organisational support positively impacts flourishing of employees. These employees are being taken care of, emotionally, psychologically as well as physically (Rothmann, 2013). Flourishing represents a broader conceptualisation of psychological wellbeing and human development which manifests in employees functioning effectively (Rothmann, 2013). Nguyen and Tran (2021) found that perceived organisational support (leadership support, collegial support) significantly influenced employee engagement. The support from the organisation creates a desire to reciprocate the efforts from colleagues (Nguyen & Tran, 2021). The support from supervisors and colleagues acts as a resource enhancing competence in employees. The guidance and feedback received from these employees may also enhance the competency and engagement of employees (Nguyen & Tran, 2021). The social exchange theory supports this relationship between employees and the organisation (Wayne et al., 2015). Shamsi et al. (2021) found that perceived team support significantly influenced work engagement while Pieters et al. (2022) found that work engagement reported a negative relationship with turnover intention.

According to Janse van Rensburg et al. (2017), supervisor support predicts employees' flourishing at work since it leads to a favourable employee point of view of their jobs. Employees that flourish are less likely to have intentions to leave. Employees who are not emotionally, psychologically, or socially healthy, on the other hand, will want to leave their positions, which is known as turnover intention.

When the level of perceived organisational support is insufficient, the level of employee flourishing in the organisation reduces, leaving employees with intentions to leave. Wayne et al. (2015) explained that turnover intention is influenced by a lack of POS and the inability to flourish within that organisation. Salama et al. (2022) state that high turnover intention is bad

for an organisation and is presumed expensive as it threatens the quality of work. The constant need for new employees to be hired and trained has a negative impact on meeting customer needs and providing satisfactory service. Employee turnover cost is calculated at three fundamental components such as training costs, replacement costs and separation costs (Salama et al., 2022). Pieters (2017) noted that the negative implications of turnover and impact on employee morale remains in the organisation long after these employees have left.

This study aims at investigating the relationship that perceived organisational support has with flourishing and turnover intention of employees in Namibia. Prioritising employees in the organisation has a major impact on how the employees will flourish, and it reduces the turnover intention in the organisation. Coetzee and Oosthuizen (2017) noted that investigating the relationship between these variables under investigation has not been exhausted. Murangi et al. (2022) investigated flourishing; Janik (2012) conducted research on organisational support and turnover intention while and Pieters et al. (2022) investigated turnover intention within the Namibian context. Different studies focused on a combination of some of the variables however, based on the researcher's knowledge, this will be the first study that collectively focus on perceived organisational support, flourishing and turnover intention of employees in Namibia. This study aims to fill the gap in literature within the Namibian context and emphasise the importance of applicable organisational support. This study follows a positivistic epistemology.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The association between perceived organisational support, flourishing and turnover intention has been broadly but not exhaustively studied (Coetzee & Oosthuizen, 2017). Based on the researcher's knowledge, this will be the first study in Namibia focusing on these variables collectively. There are many factors that fuel employees' ideas to quit, which may result in turnover which can be defined as an employee's desire to leave an organisation to contribute towards the success of another organisation. These factors are related to organisational, employee, environmental, regional and policy characteristics. Role ambiguity and burnout are some of the main drivers of turnover intention (Alblihed & Alzghaibi, 2022). Suong (2020) noted that time pressure, work pressure and relationship pressure (work stress) influence turnover intention via job dissatisfaction. Badhe and Dewi (2021) found an indirect link between work stress and turnover intention via job satisfaction. This highlights the importance of job satisfaction whilst experiencing similar work stressors.

Perceived organisational support is critical when trying to understand flourishing and turnover intention (Paul, 2020). Organisational support is associated with support employees receive from the organisation regarding duties performed, consideration for concerns raised, concern for wellbeing of employees and completion of work duties which reduce turnover intention (Janse van Rensburg et al., 2017).

According to Janse van Rensburg et al. (2017), flourishing is the ultimate form of psychosocial functioning in life. Rothmann (2013) indicated that flourishing is related to psychological, emotional and social aspects of wellbeing. Flourishing will also be defined in this study based on emotional, psychological and social wellbeing. Employee wellbeing has a major influence on job performance, absenteeism and turnover intention (Paul, 2020). Employees that receive support from their organisations typically experience less absenteeism,

work-related stress and lower turnover intention (Paul, 2020). It was noted that organisational culture, which is related to organisational support, impact performance of employees (Boyce et al., 2015). Lambert (2014) noted that one of the organisation's important goals is to ensure that employees needs are catered for, ensuring that employees willingly achieve their utmost levels of productivity. Organisations should prioritise employee flourishing for better production. Employee work-related wellbeing has become the focus for many organisations post the Covid-19 pandemic (Shamsi et al., 2021).

Pieters et al. (2019) found a positive relationship between autonomy and affective commitment of employees. When employees are included in decision making and consulted about aspects that influence their work directly or indirectly, they are more likely to want to stay at the organisation. These employees are more likely to contribute to the success of the organisation. Pieters et al. (2022) found that when affective commitment goes up, turnover intention would decrease. Affective commitment was also a significant negative predictor of turnover intention. Pieters et al. (2019) found that affective commitment predicted work engagement of employees. Enhancing satisfaction regarding the need for autonomy, employees become more committed to the organisation and choose to stay and actively engage in the work of the organisation.

According to Amin and Akbar (2013), turnover intention can be reduced if the organisation has met the employees needs by improving psychological wellbeing. Amin and Akbar (2013) found a negative correlation between psychological wellbeing and turnover intention (Amin & Akbar, 2013). In a study conducted by Naim and Ozyilmaz (2023), trust in management moderated the relationship between psychological wellbeing (flourishing) and turnover intention. Janse van Rensburg et al. (2017) investigated flourishing at work and intentions to leave. Janse van Rensburg et al. (2017) found that employees that are flourishing experienced lower turnover intention levels. Coetzee and Oosthuizen (2017) conducted a study and found that employees reported reduced levels of turnover intention with psychosocial flourishing. In a study by Brunetto et al. (2012), emotional intelligence leads to wellbeing that has a positive relationship with employee engagement and organisational commitment which reduce turnover intention.

The Job Demands-Resources theory (JD-R theory) has been used to explain the interaction between job demands and resources (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014; Schaufeli, 2013). Bakker and Demerouti (2014) noted that the job characteristics can be divided into job demands or job resources. The JD-R theory also explains health impairment and motivation outcomes at work. Job demands play a significant role in the health and engagement of employees. Shamsi et al. (2021) found that mental load predicted work engagement. Perceptions and experiences by employees about job demands and expectation could result in distress or eustress. Schaufeli (2013) noted that job demands should match the job resources at work. If a mismatch is experienced, employees could experience burnout rather than work engagement. Chitambu and Pieters (2021) noted that high job demands increase work stress. Higher levels of perceived work stress increase absenteeism, active disengagement and turnover intention.

Bakker and Demerouti (2014) discussed the Job-Demands Resources theory which extended on the work stress and job design theories. It was noted that some employees may become bored or fully-engaged in the same tasks at work. Bakker and Demerouti (2014) noted

the benefit and importance of job resources (organisational support) to facilitate motivation and work engagement. The balance between job demands and job resources has been emphasised over the years explaining a significant part of the difference between burnout and work engagement amongst employees. The J-DR theory will be used to explain the two outcomes experienced at work (health impairment or motivation outcomes).

Based on the literature discussed above, the following hypotheses are assessed in this study.

Hypothesis 1: There is a positive association between perceived organisational support and flourishing.

Hypothesis 2: There is a negative association between perceived organisational support and turnover intention.

Hypothesis 3: There is a negative connection between flourishing and turnover intention.

The study will thus test the following theoretical model:

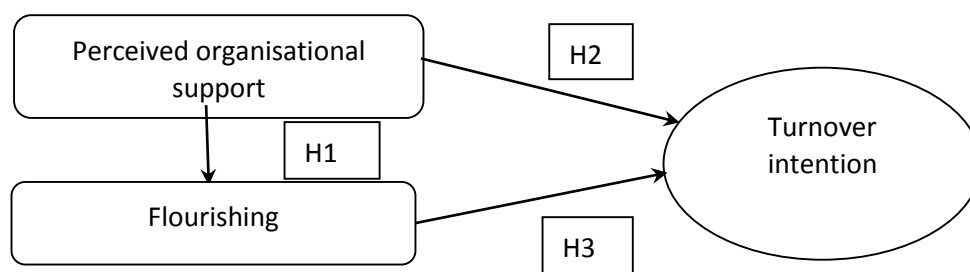


Figure 1.Theoretical Model (Adapted from Paul, 2020; Pieters et al., 2022)

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research approach

This study made use of a quantitative correlational research design (Maree, 2016). The study aims to assess the relationship between perceived organisational support, flourishing, and turnover intention without interfering with the variables. Survey research (Maree, 2016) was used for this study making use of an identical electronic and paper-and-pen questionnaire.

3.2. Participants

This study made use of employees employed within the Khomas and Omusati regions. The study made use of the employees employed in different industries working (three different state-owned enterprises) in Windhoek (n=289) and farm and factory employees (agriculture) from the Omusati Region (n=157). This gives a total of 446 respondents and the total population size is unknown. The different state-owned enterprises were selected at random considering concerns raised regarding the performance of employees. The agricultural farm was selected considering, based on the researcher's knowledge, that no study has ever been conducted on these employees (new knowledge). Printed questionnaires were delivered to the offices of the employees. The link to the electronic survey was emailed to supervisors and shared via email. Making use of availability sampling (Creswell, 2003), the employees who were available were approached and requested for consent. Availability sampling ensures that a larger sample is gathered and that all employees that are available and willing can become part of the study. The sample mostly consisted of female employees (n=219, 49.1%); between the ages 24-28 years (n=118, 26.5%); with a Grade 12 as the highest obtained qualification (n=151, 33.9%) and

working for less than a year ($n=.86$, 19.3%). See Table 1 for a summary of the biographical data.

3.3.Measuring instruments

The questionnaire used for this study was made available in an electronic and printed format. The researchers collected information from the employees about the different biographical variables such as sex, age, highest qualification obtained and tenure (Section A). Section B of the questionnaire focused on perceived organisational support using the 8-item scale. The Survey of Perceived Organisational Support developed by Eisenberger et al. (1986). The scale assessed employees' perceptions of the degree to which the organisation values their contribution and cares about their wellbeing. Sample items include, "The organization values my contribution to its well-being". The response format ranged from 0 strongly disagree to 6 strongly agree. Worley et al. (2009) found the instrument to be reliable (.93). Janik (2012) found reliability of .86 for a Namibian sample.

To assess flourishing, this study made use of the Flourishing at Work Scale (FAWS-17 items) by Rautenbach and Rothmann (2017). The scale focused on the emotional, psychological and social wellbeing of employees starting with the following statement: "During the past month, how often did you...; Example items include, "...feel happy?" (Emotional wellbeing); "...find yourself learning often?" (Psychological wellbeing), and "...feel you really belong to this organisation?" (Social wellbeing). The responses ranged from 1 never to 6 everyday. Redelinghuys et al. (2019) found acceptable reliability of above .75. Murangi et al. (2022) found acceptable reliability for a Namibian sample (ranging between .80 to .88). The researchers used the Turnover Intention Scale (3 items) developed by Michaels and Spector (1982) to assess turnover intention of employees. Example items include, "I intend to quit my current job." Participants selected response options from 1 strongly disagree to 6 strongly agree. Janik and Rothmann (2015) reported a Cronbach alpha of .75. Pieters et al. (2022) found acceptable reliability for another Namibian sample (.69).

Table 1. Biographical Details of Sample

Category:	Item:	Frequency:	Percentage:
SEX:	Male	204	45.7
	Female	219	49.1
	Missing values	23	5.2
AGE:	Below 24 years	102	22.9
	24-28	118	26.5
	29 -31	64	14.3
	32-35	54	12.1
	36-40	39	8.7
	41-45	19	4.3
	46-50	22	4.9
	51 and older	24	5.4
	Missing values	4	0.9
YEAR	IN Less than 1 year	86	19.3
PROFESSION:	1-2	52	11.7

	3-4	65	14.6
	5-6	60	13.5
	7-8	54	12.1
	9-10	51	11.4
	11-15	30	6.7
	16 and more	43	9.6
	Missing values	5	1.1
QUALIFICATIONS:	Grade 12	151	33.9
	Certificate	36	8.1
	Diploma	43	9.6
	Degree	89	20.0
	Honours Degree	88	19.7
	Master's Degree	27	6.1
	PHD	5	1.1
	Missing values	7	1.6
TOTAL		446	100

3.4. Research procedure

Ethical clearance was obtained from The University of Namibia; Decentralised Ethics Committee (DEC) [PS-SoAHS-FHSVM-2022/2]. The researchers contacted organisations via email and in person to obtain permission to conduct the study. The aims of the study were discussed with all participants. Participants demonstrated their willingness by signing/ticking the consent form, no names of participants were requested. Participants were informed that they may withdraw from the study at any time.

No coercion was used in the study, participation was voluntarily. After the dissemination of questionnaires, completed questionnaires were collected days later. Participants had the choice between the electronic or paper and pen survey (identical questionnaire). Making use of these two formats allowed for choice, participant convenience and to allow for greater access to participants. Employees that completed the electronic survey were required to read a brief background of the study and select an option, indicating that they had read the background of the study and wanted to participate in the study willingly. An electronic survey link was shared with supervisors and managers to share with the rest of the employees within the different departments and organisations. The questionnaires are locked away in a cabinet for at least five years and confidential information was not disclosed to any person outside the research group.

3.5. Data analysis

The data was analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS). Descriptive statistics was used (Mean, Standard Deviation) and inferential statistics to assess the relationship between the variables. The reliability of the instruments was assessed before Pearson correlational analyses were undertaken to assess the relationship between the variables. Resi and Judd (2000) noted that acceptable levels of reliability should be above .60 for research within social sciences. Emotional wellbeing (flourishing) did not meet these requirements and were excluded from further analysis.

4. RESULTS

4.1. Descriptive statistics

Table 2 below depicts the mean, Standard Deviation (SD), Cronbach's alpha and correlation between the variables.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics and Pearson Correlation Coefficient.

	M	SD	α	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
1. POS	13.02	16.01	.73	-				
2. FL_PWB	13.85	16.42	.69	-.04	-			
3. FL_SWB	9.14	11.18	.65	-.05*	.67++	-		
4. FL_TOTAL	59.08	27.13	.71	-.05*	.91++	.84++	-	
5. TI	9.99	14.93	.97	.74++	-.04	-.04	-.04	-

* Statistically significant: $p \leq 0,05$

+ Practically significant correlation (medium effect): $0,30 \leq r \leq 0,49$

++ Practically significant correlation (large effect): $r \geq 0,50$

1. POS= Perceived Organisational Support
2. FL_PWB= Psychological Wellbeing
3. FL_SWB= Social Wellbeing
4. FL_TOTAL= Flourishing
5. TI= Turnover Intention

The mean (13.02) and standard deviation (16.01) for perceived organisational support was recorded and for psychological wellbeing the mean score is 13.85 and SD of 16.42. Social wellbeing reported a mean score of 9.14 and SD of 11.18. A mean of 59.08 was recorded for flourishing, 9.99 for turnover intention. SD scores were recorded for flourishing (27.13) and turnover intention (14.93).

A Cronbach's Alpha of .73 was reported for perceived organisational support; .69 for psychological wellbeing and .65 for social wellbeing. Cronbach's Alpha for flourishing is .71 and .97 for turnover intention.

4.2 Inferential statistics

Perceived organisational support reported a negative relationship with psychological wellbeing (flourishing) ($r = -0.04$, $p < 0.05$; almost no effect), with social wellbeing (flourishing) ($r = -0.05$, $p < 0.05$; small effect); and flourishing (total) ($r = -0.05$, $p < 0.05$; small effect). Perceived organisational support reported a positive relationship with turnover intention ($r = 0.74$, $p < 0.05$; large effect).

Psychological wellbeing (flourishing) reported a positive relationship with social wellbeing (flourishing) ($r = 0.67$, $p < 0.05$; large effect); and flourishing (total) ($r = 0.91$, $p < 0.05$; large effect). Psychological wellbeing (flourishing) reported a negative relationship with turnover intention ($r = -0.04$, $p < 0.05$; almost no effect). Social wellbeing (flourishing) reported a positive relationship with flourishing (total) ($r = 0.84$, $p < 0.05$; large effect). Social wellbeing

(flourishing) reported a negative relationship with turnover intention ($r = -0.04$, $p < 0.05$; almost no effect). Flourishing (total) reported a negative relationship with turnover intention ($r = -0.04$, $p < 0.05$; almost no effect).

5. DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study investigated the relationship between perceived organisational support, flourishing and turnover intention. *Hypothesis 1* of this study postulated a positive relationship between perceived organisational support and flourishing. Janse van Rensburg et al. (2017), Paul (2020), and Swanzy (2020) indicated that organisational support improves wellbeing of employees. This study found a negative relationship between perceived organisational support, psychological wellbeing (statistically insignificant), social wellbeing and flourishing (total). The findings of this study reject *Hypothesis 1* (There is a positive association between perceived organisational support and flourishing of employees). The authors are of the view that the negative relationship between organisational support and flourishing could stem from the mismatch between the support provided and the needs or expectations of employees. Organisational mismatch is a phenomenon that has been studied with organisational behaviour for some time (Pasiieczny & Sitnicki, 2019). Organisational mismatch refers to a mismatch between the expectations from management and employees; compensation for service delivery; and mismatch between organisational goals and the understanding and execution of these goals (Pasiieczny & Sitnicki, 2019). It is thus recommended that management have open and frank discussions about the support needs and provision. Employees should be able to raise concerns about a lack of required support. When the support provided by management does not align to the needs and expectations of employees, it may be futile to organisational success. To facilitate this open communication and interaction between management and employees, it is suggested that interpersonal skills should be enhanced to ensure harmonious interaction amongst employees and management. Management needs to understand that to harness the best levels of productivity, they need to be open and comfortable with feedback from employees. Employees need to understand that if their views are not shared, limited to no changes can be made. The effectiveness of these platforms, if in existence, should also be effective in terms of allowing for open dialogue, conveying concerns to senior management and providing feedback/resolutions about these discussions.

Hypothesis 2 of this study investigates the hypothesised negative relationship between perceived organisational support and turnover intention. Zainudin (2012) noted that employees may decide to leave an organisation because of factors influencing job dissatisfaction. Lack of organisational support may result in job dissatisfaction. Janse van Rensburg et al. (2017) found that a lack of organisational support reduces flourishing and increases turnover intention. This study found that perceived organisational support is positively associated with turnover intention. The results thus reject *Hypothesis 2* of this study. The findings of this study (*Hypothesis 2*) support the recommendations made in line with the results of *Hypothesis 1*. The large effect between perceived organisational support and turnover intention may signify that the support being provided stems from the frame of reference of management and not that of employees. The results may also highlight the level of frustration that comes with the current organisational support. It could be that platforms exist aimed at facilitating dialogue between management and employees; however, they remain ineffective. It is likely that the sampled

employees have tried to remedy a situation and became frustrated thus the large effect between perceived organisational support and turnover intention. Employees are likely going to try out different approaches, air their concerns, wait for things to change, engage in counterproductive behaviour, stay but do not contribute effectively to the organisation or leave if things do not change (Farrell, 1983). It was further elaborated that when employees experience organisational support, they would be encouraged to apply useful behaviour that is in line with organisational goals (Janse van Rensburg et al. 2017; Rothmann, 2013; Swanzu, 2020). The results of this study indicate that the perceived organisational support increase turnover intention instead of reducing it.

Paul (2020) concluded that when employees are experiencing support, they are less likely to be absent, experience work-related stress, burnout or experience turnover intention. This study found a negative statistically insignificant relationship with psychological wellbeing, social wellbeing, flourishing (total) and turnover intention. The results of this study reject *Hypothesis 3* of this study (There is a negative connection between flourishing and turnover intention). Lambert (2014) indicated that one of the vital goals of an organisation is to safeguard and advance the health and wellbeing of employees since healthy employees significantly contribute more to the productivity of the organisation.

Interpersonal skills training may enhance the way employees interact with each other, the way management interacts with employees and the social wellbeing experienced by employees (Mérida-López & Extremera, 2017; Rothmann, 2013; Testa & Sangganjanavanich, 2016). Social wellbeing may also be enhanced by team-building activities aimed at social awareness, individual diversity and relatedness. When employees interact in more healthy ways, they feel considered and part of the organisation (Mérida-López & Extremera, 2017; Testa & Sangganjanavanich, 2016). Relatedness and social wellbeing may influence work engagement, organisational citizenship behaviour, organisational commitment and reduce turnover intention (Amin & Akbar, 2013; Brunetto et al., 2012; Coetzee & Oosthuizen, 2017; Nguyen & Tran, 2021; Paul, 2020; Pieters, 2017; Pieters et al., 2019; Pieters et al., 2022).

6. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS

The study was cross-sectional in nature; thus, no cause-effect relationship may be established, and these outcomes are not established over time. It is thus recommended that future studies make use of a longitudinal approach. To contribute to the current findings of this study, future studies could also adopt a qualitative approach to better understand these results that contradict some of the literature.

This study focused on employees from four different organisations in Namibia, the sample size and characteristics do not allow for the findings to be generalised to all employees in Namibia. To allow for generalisability, future studies may focus on a more representative sample of Namibian employees. The sample primarily consisted of younger, lower level rank employees with lesser working experience. Future studies could focus on a more representative sample.

Due to the nature and size of the project, this study focused on three variables within the workplace. It is evident that other factors may also play a role in the understanding turnover

intention. It is thus recommended that future studies focus on aspects such as job satisfaction, basic psychological needs and organisational culture to mention a few.

7. CONCLUSION

This study aimed to assess the role of perceived organisational support on flourishing and turnover intention of employees in Namibia. It was interesting to note a negative association amongst perceived organisational support and flourishing as well as a positive relationship between perceived organisational support and turnover intention. These findings reject hypothesis 1 and 2. A negative relationship was found between flourishing and turnover intention (insignificant), supporting hypothesis 3. There seems to be a mismatch between the needs and expectations of employees and the support provided by the organisations. Different recommendations are made to help these organisations. Organisational support may be a catalyst for improved performance and positive job attitudes at work.

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