

Strengthening strengths and weakening weaknesses

The effect of perceived organizational support for strengths use and deficits improvement on job performance, mediated by self-efficacy and positive affect

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Preface and acknowledgements

This paper functions as the Master thesis for the completion of Human Resource Studies at Tilburg University. Ironically, during my research on the subjects perceived organizational support for strengths use and deficits improvement, positive affect, self-efficacy, and job performance, I learned a lot about my own strengths use and deficits improvement, and how much these affected my feelings of self-efficacy and positive affect. Perhaps not significantly, but definitely personally, I realized how valuable the support of my environment is to my feelings of capableness and my affective state. Therefore, I would like to thank everyone who has been of great support during this Master thesis process.

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And now that this is all said and done, I am curious what the influence of all this support will be on my final performance. Did I just provide a good idea for future research?

– Carmen Nillesen

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Abstract

Many organizations believe that supporting employees in improving their deficits in the workplace will enhance their job performance. Not so long ago, the movement of positive psychology brought along a new perspective on achieving excellent performance, by focusing on strengths. This study is concerned with the question to what extent organizational support for strengths use (POSSU) and deficits improvement (POSDI) influence job performance, and whether self-efficacy and positive affect play a mediating role in this relationship. Several assumptions were made based on the job demands-resources model, the conservation of resources theory, the happy-productive worker thesis, the broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions, and Bandura's theory on self-efficacy through enactive mastery.

Data were collected from 133 employees in one department of a Dutch multinational that focuses on developing, manufacturing, installing, and selling medical scanning devices. Questionnaires were used to learn more about the perceptions of the employee on POSSU, POSDI, self-efficacy, positive affect, and job performance. In addition, questionnaires about the performance of the participating employees were filled out by their colleagues to obtain a peer-rating. The perspective of the organization on the participating employees' performance was obtained by information on their last annual performance appraisal. To measure the effect of POSSU and POSDI on job performance, and to analyze the role of self-efficacy and positive affect as mediators in these relationships, three models were tested using path analysis; a self-rating model, a peer-rating model, and an organization-rating model.

Based on employees' self-ratings it was confirmed that the job resource POSSU leads to enhanced job performance through the reinforcement of the personal resource positive affect. Based on the organization's appraisal of the employee, it was found that POSSU was positively related to job performance, through both self-efficacy and positive affect. Based on the peer-ratings, no significant results were found between POSSU and job performance. We did not find any significant results between POSDI, job performance, and both mediators self-efficacy and positive affect, in none of the three rating models.

The results of this study based on the self and organization ratings suggest that the topic of POSSU and POSDI is interesting to focus on in future research, and organizations could experiment with including a strengths focus in their HR practices. In summary, supporting employees in activities in which they can use their strengths will increase their feeling of capableness and their positivity. Ultimately, employees become better at meeting the formal requirements of their job that directly influence their performance evaluation, and they are more likely to perform better on a social level by helping others and by showing interest in their co-workers.

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1. Introduction

Job insecurity and fierce international competition have forced workers and organizations to pay close attention to their development and performance. These times of insecurity and continuous changes in the environment ask for awareness of what the individual, as well as the organization, is good at and not good at in order to be able to work towards excellent performance (Veestraeten, Van Woerkom, Leroy, & Sels, in progress). Positive psychology brought to the attention by Martin Seligman in 1998 (Meyers, Van Woerkom, & Bakker, 2013), can be used to think of ways to develop people to increase performance. Positive psychology is “a science of positive subjective experiences, positive individual traits, and positive institutions” (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000, p. 5). Positive psychology in the work context means that efforts should be directed towards people’s strengths rather than their deficits. Strengths are those characteristics that allow an individual to perform well or at their personal best. When people use their strengths, they put these characteristics into practice in order to achieve their goals (Wood, Linley, Maltby, Kashdan, & Hurling, 2011). Previous research has shown that the use of strengths is associated with attaining several personal and organizational goals such as better work engagement, increased performance, better subjective and psychological well-being, progress in goal achievement, less turnover, decreased levels of stress, and enhanced self-esteem (Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002; Linley, Nielsen, Wood, Gillet, & Biswas-Diener, 2010; Govindji & Linley, 2007; Stefanyszyn, 2007; Wood et al., 2011).

While these findings should spark organizations’ interest in supporting and improving strengths use, reality shows that organizations often direct their efforts towards identifying and improving employees’ deficits. Deficits are those personal, psychological, behavioral and/or physical aspects that are relevant to a person’s functioning, but get in the way of excellent performance (Buckingham, 2005; Veestraeten et al., in progress). It is understandable that organizations still choose the deficit-based approach to employee development over the strengths-based approach due to the fact that jobs usually do not only consist of strengths/related tasks, but also of tasks that do not fall within the employee’s area of strengths. In addition, this deficiency model has reaped success in the sense that employers and employees notice progress in employee development, which eventually leads them in the direction of achieving personal and organizational goals. After all, an individual’s area of weakness is often thought to be their greatest area of opportunity (Van Woerkom, Oerlemans, & Bakker, in progress; Bouskila-Yam & Kluger, 2011).

What stands out in the research findings on both approaches is that it seems to be important for employees to receive organizational support towards the development of their strengths (POSSU), as well as towards their deficits (POSDI) (Eisenberger, Stinglhamber, Vandenberghe, Sucharski, & Rhoades, 2002; Van Woerkom, Els, Mostert, Rothmann, & Bakker, 2013). Though, in the literature there seems to be no consensus on what approach to follow (strengths-based, deficits-based, combination of both) in achieving human flourishing and exceptional organizational performance. This is because there is limited research on the extent to which organizations support the use of their

employees' strengths and the improvement of their deficits in the workplace (Keenan & Mostert, 2013; Veestraeten et al., in progress; Van Woerkom et al., 2013). Van Woerkom et al. (2013) developed the Strengths Use and Deficit Improvement Questionnaire (SUDIQ) that measures POSSU, POSDI, strengths oriented behavior (SOB) and deficits oriented behavior (DOB), which allows us to address the above literature gap.

In this study we are interested in POSSU and POSDI in relation to job performance, and the underlying process associated with these relationships. Based on the JD-R model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007), the conservation of resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989), the happy-productive worker thesis (Cropanzano & Wright, as cited in Keenan & Mostert, 2013), the broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions (Fredrickson & Losada, 2005), and Bandura's theory on self-efficacy through enactive mastery (Bandura, 1986), we expect that the psychological processes involved in the relationship between POSSU, POSDI and job performance, could be through self-efficacy and positive affect.

The aim of this study is twofold. First of all, we will make an attempt to narrow the gap in the literature about the strengths and deficits approach in relation to job performance. Therefore we will address the relationships between POSSU and POSDI, and job performance. We will include a self-rating, a peer-rating, and an organization-rating to measure job performance, which has not been done before in studies on POSSU and POSDI. A large part of the literature uses self-ratings as the sole source of information. By adding peer-ratings and organization-ratings we expect to gain a broader perspective on organizational support for strengths and deficits improvement in relation to job performance. Secondly, we also include the concepts of self-efficacy and positive affect that have not yet been considered as mediators to these relationships.

This leads us to the following research question:

To what extent do perceived organizational support for strengths use (POSSU) and perceived organizational support for deficits improvement (POSDI) affect job performance, and do self-efficacy and positive affect take a mediating role in this relationship?

2. Theoretical framework

2.1 Strengths use and deficits improvement

A strength can be defined as “a natural capacity for behaving, thinking, or feeling in a way that allows optimal functioning and performance in the pursuit of valued outcomes.” (Linley & Harrington, 2006, p. 39). Wood et al. (2011) define strengths in a less specific way by arguing that strengths are “characteristics that allow a person to perform well or at their personal best” (p. 16), which leaves room to interpret strengths as personal, physical, and psychological characteristics.

Moreover, a distinction can be made between strengths possession and strengths use. Strengths use means that people do not only know that they have certain strengths, but they make actual use of these strengths by putting these into practice in order to achieve their goals. Possessing strengths, but not using them, means that a person has certain strengths, but has not developed the ability, does not have the opportunities, or does not have the intention to use and develop these strengths (Wood et al., 2011). This can be the result of an environment that does not provide a person with the opportunities for strengths use or does not stimulate a person to use his strengths. In their research, Govindji & Linley (2007) found no significant effect between strengths knowledge and both psychological and subjective well-being, whereas strengths use was found to be a significant predictor of both types of well-being. The researchers concluded that simply knowing what your strengths are is not sufficient. It is more important to make actual use of your strengths in the pursuit of personal and organizational goals. The more an individual uses his or her strengths, the stronger these become (Clifton & Harter, 2003). Following the findings of Govindji & Linley (2007) on the effectiveness of strengths use, the focus of this study will be on strengths use and not strengths possession, and we adopt the broader definition of Wood et al. (2011) that leaves room for own interpretation: “strengths are those characteristics that allow a person to perform well or at their personal best.” (p.16).

Besides strengths, people also have deficits (or weaknesses), which are those personal, psychological, behavioral and/or physical aspects that are relevant to a person’s functioning, but get in the way of excellent performance (Buckingham, 2005; Veestraeten, et al., in progress). It is important to address organizational and individual shortcomings in order to attain goals and facilitate growth and to move towards a more favorable or desired state (Stander & Mostert, 2013). Not addressing these insufficiencies may eventually lead to learned behaviors that hinder the achievement of organizational goals and are very difficult to change (Linley, Woolston, & Biswas-Diener, 2009). In the past, it has been proven that people are able to improve their deficits through training and development to increase business performance (Abdullah, Ahsan, & Alam, 2009;).

2.2. Perceived organizational support for strengths use and deficits improvement

Perceived organizational support (POS) follows from employees' beliefs about the extent to which the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being (Eisenberger et al., 2002). Employees have the tendency to project human qualities upon organizations based on their feelings about the people in the organization that are important to them (Levinson, 1965). As a result, employees believe that the organization has a general positive or negative orientation towards them that determines the organization's degree of recognition of employees' contributions and the organization's care for their welfare (Eisenberger et al., 2002). If employees feel that their organization treats them well in terms of recognition of their efforts and cares about their well-being, employees can be expected to devote greater effort towards helping the organization in achieving its goals (Settoon, Bennett, & Liden, 1996; Masterson, Lewis, Goldman, & Taylor, 2000).

The concept of POS has often been studied, and many conceptualized it as a job resource (Karatepe, 2009; Jackson, Rothmann & Van Vijver, 2006; Saks, 2006; Van Woerkom et al., 2013; Stander & Mostert, 2013). Following the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model, job resources are those physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects of the job that are either/or functional in achieving work goals, reduce job demands and the associated physiological and psychological costs, and stimulate personal growth, learning and development. The JD-R model is often used to explain how job resources and demands affect employees' work engagement and burnout levels (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007).

Although several types of POS have repeatedly been studied, such as perceived organizational support for innovation, perceived organizational support for creativity and perceived organizational support for personal development (Eisenberger, et al., 2002; Henkin & Holliman, 2009; Zhou & George, 2001; Hung & Mondejar, 2001), little empirical research has been conducted on the extent to which employees perceive that their organization is supportive of them using their strengths in the workplace (Van Woerkom et al., 2013, p. 4; Keenan & Mostert, 2013). To address the latter, Van Woerkom et al. (2013) developed a measure which they call 'POSSU', perceived organizational support for strengths use. As discussed earlier, the use of strengths can lead to many positive personal and organizational outcomes (e.g. enhanced self-esteem and increased performance), because employees will feel good about themselves and organizations will be able to spend less time on training employees with new skills and competencies, which frees up time to direct efforts to other purposes (Van Woerkom et al., 2013). Yet, it is essential that employees are provided with opportunities to apply their strengths in the workplace (Keenan & Mostert, 2013). Van Woerkom et al. (2013) argue that organizational support for strengths use is crucial in this respect, and that there are many ways in which an organization can facilitate strengths use. Managers can play an important role in this. One way for managers to support strengths use is by trying to discover what is unique about each person and then capitalize on this uniqueness. In this way managers can create complementary

teams in which all employees can excel in their own way while balancing out each other's weaknesses (Buckingham, 2005).

Though, the stimulation of strengths use has not been the predominant approach to employee development. For decades, the improvement of employees' deficits has been the conventional approach within organizations. "The extent to which employees perceive their organization to be supportive of them improving their deficits in the workplace" is what Van Woerkom et al. (2013, p. 4) call 'perceived organizational support for deficits improvement (POSDI)'. In an attempt to enhance employee performance, managers, leaders, and supervisors have been using many techniques to support employees in identifying and improving their weaknesses, such as performance appraisals, development plans, feedback, training, and on the-job-practice (Buckingham, 2005; Keenan & Mostert, 2013; Van Woerkom et al., 2013). When employees feel that their organization helps them rather than abandons them when their performance gets compromised due to certain weaknesses, employees are more willing to extend themselves for the organization (Wood & De Menezes, 1998), they are more satisfied (Lee & Bruvold, 2003) and more committed to the organization (Tansky & Cohen, 2001) and their intentions to leave the organization are reduced (Lee & Bruvold, 2003).

Seemingly, both POSSU and POSDI are important in reaching desired personal and organizational states. Using strengths is associated with goal attainment and performance (Clifton & Harter, 2003; Linley et al., 2010), so it seems that the use of strengths can function as a buffer against stress that was caused by job demands (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2000; Khosla, 2006; Proctor, Maltby, Linley, 2011). The same process goes for POSDI; when individuals experience organizational support for improving their weaknesses, they will experience personal growth, learning and development that lead to prospects of better performance (Abdullah et al., 2009). Reducing demands in the workplace and stimulating employee development and growth are characteristics of job resources as described by Bakker and Demerouti (2007). Therefore, POSSU and POSDI can be classified as job resources that spark a motivational process towards personal and organizational goals (Keenan & Mostert, 2013; Van Woerkom, et al., 2013).

2.3. POSSU, POSDI and self-efficacy

According to Demerouti and Bakker (2011), job resources foster the development of personal resources. Personal resources are self-beliefs of resiliency, that combat stress (Xanthopoulou, 2009; Hobfoll, 1989). According to Hobfoll's (1989) conservation of resources (COR) theory, it is important for people to strive, retain, protect and build resources, in order to achieve self enhancement, pleasure and success. When people are low on resources, it will affect their vulnerability to stress and depression (Hobfoll, 1989). In the work context, personal resources can assist individuals in dealing with challenges and stressors within their particular work environment (Pearlin & Schooler, 1978). Presuming that organizational support for strengths use and deficits improvement are job resources, it

can be expected that this support helps employees to gain and accumulate personal resources. One such personal resource is self-efficacy (Demerouti & Bakker, 2011). Self-efficacy refers to people's judgments about their capability to perform particular tasks effectively (Bandura, 1986). In other words, people must feel capable to be able to perform certain behaviors (Parker, 2000). Self-efficacy towards work related tasks can be referred to as occupational self-efficacy: "the competence that a person feels concerning the ability to successfully fulfill the tasks involved in his or her job" (Rigotti, Schyns, Mohr, 2008, p. 239). Employees that feel self-efficacious will perform particular tasks better and will also keep trying to perform these tasks even though problems occur (Barling & Beattie, 1983). Self-efficacy can thus function as a strong personal resource (i.e. self-beliefs of resiliency) (Xanthopoulou, et al., 2009).

Bandura (1986) proposes that one of the sources that nurture self-efficacious feelings is 'enactive mastery'. Enactive mastery means that people's self-efficacy is fueled by the number of successes that they achieved in the past. If this sense of self-efficacy has strongly been build up, failures are unlikely to have much effect on judgments of one's capabilities. Even if a failure has some impact, highly self-efficacious people will attribute the failure to faulty strategies rather than inability. Once established, people tend to generalize self-efficacy to other situations and as a result their functioning improves across a wide range of activities (Bandura, 1986).

Perceived organizational support can contribute to peoples' feelings of competence by caring about their well-being and efforts at work (Eisenberger, Armeli, Rexwinkel, Lynch, & Rhoades, 2001). This makes it reasonable to expect that employees' feelings of competence grow when the organization supports employees by providing them the opportunities to engage in activities that develop their strengths and improve their deficits. These development activities that will help employees to experience mastery, which means increasing the number of successes at work, will increase their feelings of self-efficacy.

Hypothesis 1a: Perceived organizational support for strengths use is positively related to self-efficacy.

Hypothesis 1b: Perceived organizational support for deficits improvement is positively related to self-efficacy.

2.4. POSSU, POSDI and positive affect

Another personal resource that can be developed through job resources is positive affect. Positive affect, or positivity, represents pleasantness and can be defined as the extent to which a person feels enthusiastic, active, alert, grateful and upbeat. When an individual scores high on positive affect it means that he is in a state of high energy, full concentration, and pleasurable engagement.

Low scores on positive affect is associated with sadness and slowness. Positive affect can function as a buffer that helps employees to combat stress that is caused by job demands (Fredrickson & Losada, 2005; Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988).

Providing resources that support employees in using their strengths may elicit positive affect. In the process of developing from good performance to excellent performance due to building on strengths (Van Woerkom et al., in progress), employees may feel enthusiastic and energized from progressing and being successful. They are happier, feel good about themselves and are more motivated towards fulfilling their potential (Linley & Harrington, 2006). A study that shows that it is wise to stimulate POSSU and to proactively use your strengths in order to experience positive affect is the study of Wood et al. (2011). The researchers studied the relationship between strengths use and well-being, in which they included measures of positive affect as a representation of the emotional component of well-being. Wood et al. (2011) conducted a longitudinal study in which they asked participants to fill out a questionnaire measuring strengths use, positive and negative affect, perceived stress, self-esteem and vitality, at three points in time: at baseline (T1), after three months (T2) and after six months (T3). In general, results showed that strengths use led to increased well-being. In detail, strength use led to increased positive affect, as part of well-being, after three months and after six months, compared to the first moment of measurement (T1) (Wood et al., 2011; Van Woerkom et al., in progress).

While POSSU motivates and energizes people, POSDI on the other hand could have the potential to motivate people and to increase one's energy and enthusiasm by seeing small progress and successes through mastery, but it could also have the potential to demotivate people as they have to invest time and effort in progressing from poor performance to average performance (Van Woerkom et al., in progress). This does not mean that POSDI leads people to feel aversive mood states such as anger, fear and nervousness. These are characteristics of high negative affect which is a more unpleasant state (Fredrickson & Losada, 2005; Watson et al., 1988). Supposedly, continuously improving weaker aspects of oneself may not excite people and takes away their active and alert attitude that otherwise could have helped them to stay motivated. People would rather experience sadness, distress and un-pleasurable engagement during activities that should improve their deficits. Sadness, distress and un-pleasurable engagement are characteristics of low positive affect (Fredrickson & Losada, 2005; Watson et al., 1988), and therefore it is hypothesized that POSDI leads to low positive affect.

Hypothesis 2a: Perceived organizational support for strengths use is positively related to positive affect.

Hypothesis 2b: Perceived organizational support for deficits improvement is negatively related to positive affect.

2.5. Self-efficacy and positive affect

The conservation of resources (COR) theory not only suggests that people should retain, protect and build resources, but also that their resources facilitate the development and use of other resources. Resources tend not to exist in isolation, but rather aggregate. This aggregation of resources can be referred to as a ‘resource caravan’ that tends to hold its impact across time and different circumstances. For example, individuals with high self-esteem will also possess a stronger sense of mastery and have better functioning social support systems (Hobfoll, 2002).

In this study it is expected that self-efficacy and positive affect bundle together in a resource caravan. Building self-efficacy based on successes gained through mastery experiences creates optimistic feelings towards achieving next goals. When facing difficulties during the achievement of these goals, highly self-efficacious people are more likely to pull through and deal with these effectively (Bandura, 1986; Avey, Wernsing, Luthans, 2008; Rego, Sousa, Marques, Cunha, 2012). In this way they will attain valued outcomes that will make them feel content, thus experiencing higher levels of positive affect (Avey, et al., 2008; Rego, et al., 2012; Snyder, 2002). Isen, Daubman and Nowicki (1987) suggest: “the most important way of inducing good feelings may be by allowing workers to achieve a sense of competence, self-worth, and respect.” (p. 1129).

Hypothesis 3: Self-efficacy is positively related to positive affect.

2.6. Self-efficacy and job performance

Several studies have shown that self-efficacy is positively related to performance in many different domains (Bandura & Locke, 2003; Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998). Supposedly, there are three processes that are instigated by self-efficacy that lead to job performance (Lunenborg, 2011). First of all, self-efficacy influences the goals that employees choose for themselves. This implies that employees with high levels of self-efficacy dare to challenge themselves by setting high personal goals. Research indicates that people perform at levels consistent with their self-efficacy beliefs (Lunenborg, 2011). Secondly, self-efficacy influences learning as well as the effort that people exert on the job. People with low levels of self-efficacy are likely to cease their effort prematurely to the task, because they are not entirely sure whether they will succeed. People with high levels of self-efficacy believe that they will produce successful outcomes and will therefore activate sufficient effort (Lunenborg, 2011; Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998). Thirdly, self-efficacy influences the persistence with which people attempt new and difficult tasks. Employees with high self-efficacy are confident that they can learn and perform and therefore they will continue even though problems occur, whereas people with low self-efficacy give up learning and performing a certain task more easily when it gets too difficult (Lunenborg, 2011).

There is a growing body of research that supports the influence of self-efficacy on performance (Bandura & Locke, 2003; Chen, Casper, & Cortina, 2001; Walumbwa, Mayer, Wang, Wang, Workman, Christensen, 2010; Walumbwa & Hartnell, 2011). For example, a meta-analysis by Stajkovic and Luthans (1998) including 114 studies on 21,616 participants revealed that self-efficacy was positively related to work-related performance ($r = .38$). Based on the above it is expected that self-efficacy is positively related to job performance.

Hypothesis 4: Self-efficacy is positively related to job performance.

2.7. Positive affect and performance

It is argued that employees that are happier in their work are also more productive, show higher levels of organizational citizenship behavior and have lower tendencies to leave the organization (Losada & Heaphy, 2004; Lyubomirsky, King & Diener, 2005; Wright & Staw, 1999). This is because the positively valenced emotions and qualities of positive affect stimulate employees' motivation to perform (Bouckennooghe, Raja, Butt, 2013). The theory underlying this process is the broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions, which explains the psychological mechanisms through which positivity influences human flourishing (Fredrickson & Losada, 2005). This theory holds that positive emotions have a broadening effect. Broadening means that these emotions widen people's momentary thought-action repertoires. The array of thoughts and actions is broader and curiosity and behavioral flexibility increase, leading to more exploratory behavior and to involvement in approach behaviors that encourage individuals to engage in particular activities. Positive affect leads people to building their resources, such as social connections, better coping strategies and knowledge about the environment (Fredrickson & Losada, 2005; Cacioppo, Gardner, & Berntson, 1999; Carver & Scheier, 1990; Clore, 1994; Elliot & Thrash, 2002; Lyubomirsky, 2001; Botha & Mostert, 2014). For example, experiencing positive affect may broaden employees thoughts on opportunities for extra activities and stimulates them to take on new projects that eventually will enhance their performance.

This corresponds with the well-known happy-productive worker thesis which entails that there is a positive connection between positive affect and performance for which there are several underlying motivational mechanisms, such as the relationship with the manager and social support (Cropanzano & Wright, 2001, as cited in Keenan & Mostert, 2013; Wright & Staw, 1999). Staw and Barsade (1993) examined the relation between an individual's positive affective state and managerial performance. The findings supported the "happier-and-smarter" hypothesis which means that positive affectivity was associated with several desired outcomes such as good decision making, high peer rankings of performance, strong quality of participation, strong leadership, and high overall ratings of managerial potential. Another study that shows that positivity is associated with job performance is a study of Côté (as cited in Côté, 1999). The author asked salespersons to report the number of sales

they achieved and the number of calls they made to prospective buyers for an entire month, and also their experience of positive affect at the end of every work day. This showed that pleasant affect was positively associated with the number of sales achieved and the number of calls made, indicating the link between positive affect and job performance (Coté, as cited in Coté, 1999).

One of the reasons that employees with high levels of positive affect are more likely to be high performers on the job is that they are less likely to show “job withdrawal”, such as absenteeism, turnover, and job burnout (Donovan, 2000; Locke, 1975; Thoresen, Kaplan, Barsky, Warren, & De Chermont, 2003; Lyubomirsky et al., 2005). Furthermore, high positive affect may also lead to better performance through persistence, enhanced cognitive functioning, and altruism in the employee, as well as through interpersonal attraction, halo, and increased social influence on others (Van Yperen, 2003; Fox & Spector, 2000; George & Brief, 1992; Judge, Thoresen, Pucik, & Welbourne, 1999). Notable is the halo effect associated with the positive affect-job performance link. Supervisors tend to evaluate employees that score high on positive affect more favorable than employees that score low on positive affect (Staw, Sutton, & Pelled, 1994). Based on the happy-productive worker thesis we expect positive affect to be positively related to job performance.

Hypothesis 5: Positive affect is positively related to job performance.

2.8. Self-efficacy as a mediating variable

As discussed earlier, POSSU and POSDI can be considered as job resources. It is argued, based on the JD-R model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007) and the COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989), that job resources have a motivational character (Salanova, Agut, & Peiró, 2005; Bakker & Demerouti, 2008; Linley & Harrington, 2006). In their study on the role of service climate as a mediator between organizational resources and work engagement on the one side, and perceived employee performance and customer loyalty on the other side, Salanova et al. (2005) revealed that job resources indeed induce a motivational process that leads to excellent performance. When employees receive support in the form of resources provided by the organization, employees are more motivated to perform and work towards achieving goals (Meijman & Mulder, as cited in Drenth & Thierry, 1998; Salanova et al., 2005). Hence, it can be expected that organizational support for strengths use and deficits improvement may be motivational to employees and in this way may increase their performance level (Salanova et al., 2005). In addition, individuals working in a resourceful work environment are likely to increase their beliefs in their own capabilities, to feel more valued by their organization, and to be optimistic that they will meet their goals. Consequently, employees develop a positive attitude towards their own capabilities and as a result they experience goal self-concordance (Luthans & Youssef, 2007) that intrinsically motivates them to pursue these goals. This motivational process that follows from job resources such as POSSU and POSDI, may lead to higher levels of performance, via the

personal resource self-efficacy (Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2007). A study of Xanthopoulou et al. (2009) showed that employees are more self-confident, more engaged and perform better on days with available job and personal resources.

Hypothesis 6a: The relationship between perceived organizational support for strengths use and job performance is mediated by self-efficacy.

Hypothesis 6b: The relationship between perceived organizational support for deficits improvement and job performance is mediated by self-efficacy.

2.9. Positive affect as a mediating variable

Assuming, based on the JD-R model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007), that the motivational character of job resources leads to building personal resources, we expect that positive affect may be generated in this process. When high levels of positive affect are being experienced due to the motivational and demands reducing character of job resources, it is argued based on the happy-productive worker thesis that high job performance levels may be reached (Cropanzano & Wright, 2001, as cited in Keenan & Mostert, 2013). We expect that positive affect mediates the relationship between POSSU and job performance, and POSDI and job performance. As discussed earlier POSSU may lead employees to feel excited and energized from progressing and being successful which obviously are signs of high levels of positive affect, and in this way these resources will motivate employees to fulfill their potential and reach high levels of performance (Van Woerkom, in progress; Wood et al., 2011). However, while POSDI may energize people based on the progress they make in improving their weaknesses, it may also have a demotivating effect as employees have to invest time and effort in becoming good at something they are not good at (Van Woerkom et al., in progress). Employees may experience low positive affect which may lead to lower scores on performance.

Hypothesis 7a: The relationship between perceived organizational support for strengths use and job performance is mediated by positive affect.

Hypothesis 7b: The relationship between perceived organizational support for deficits improvement and job performance is mediated by positive affect.

2.10. The conceptual model

To summarize, in this section we have provided some theoretical ground for the expected relationships. In Figure 1 the conceptual model of the mediating role of self-efficacy and positive affect in the relationship between POSSU, POSDI and job performance is presented.

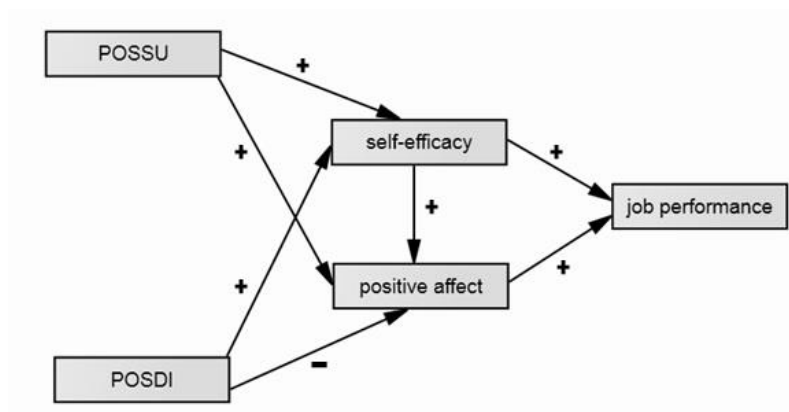


Figure 1. Conceptual model

3. Research methods

3.1. Research design

To answer the research question a quantitative survey research was conducted. In this cross-sectional study dyads of employees were formed through convenience and snowball sampling. The survey consisted of two questionnaires (Appendix 1 and Appendix 2). One was to be filled out by employee X and the second was to be filled out by a colleague that had been appointed by employee X. The purpose was to obtain data reflecting self and peers' perceptions of the performance of employees. In addition, we were also interested in the organization's perception of the employee's performance. For this reason two questions about the results of the employee's last performance appraisal were included in the employee self-rating survey. Employees providing a self-rating received a survey concerning POSSU, POSDI, positive affect, self-efficacy, job performance and several other concepts not used for this particular study. Peer surveys concerned only job performance. All questionnaires were in English and filled out in paper-pencil form. After consent of the HR department, data were collected in one department of one particular organization. Participants were informed about the purpose and process of the study by the researcher, as well as through an explanatory letter enclosed with the questionnaire. Participation was voluntary. The surveys were distributed by the researcher and afterwards the completed surveys were collected by the researcher. Total anonymity of the respondents was guaranteed and the data were treated confidentially.

3.2. Description of the respondents

Subject to this study is a multinational organization situated in the Netherlands that develops, manufactures, installs and sells devices, systems, and services for medical applications. The data was collected within a department that focuses on developing, manufacturing, installing and selling medical scanning devices. Subject to study are researchers, clinical scientists, software and hardware engineers, field service engineers, customer service employees and support staff. This department consists of approximately six hundred employees (including manufacturers who did not participate in the study). In total, 163 employees received a questionnaire of which 133 were completed. This means that a response rate of 81.6% was achieved. Of the 133 employees who completed a self-rating, 94.0% could be connected to a completed peer-rating. Table 1 provides an overview of the characteristics of the participating employees. The majority of the employees consisted of males (79.7%). Employees' age ranges between 18 and 65 years old, with an average age of 43.5 years old. A total of 89.4% of the participants were highly educated of which 38.3% completed higher education and 51.1% graduated on an academic level. Employees' average tenure at the organization was fourteen years. An overview of the participating peers' characteristics can be found in Table 2. Of the 125 peers the majority are male (78.9%) and the age of the peers ranges between 26 and 63 years old, with an average age of 42.3 years old. Peers' level of education is similar to the employees' educational level; 89.4% of the

peers are highly educated of which 36.6% completed higher education and 52.8% earned a university degree. Peers' average tenure at the organization was 13.3 years.

Table 1

Characteristics of respondents - Employees

Characteristics	Mean / %
Age (in years)	43.5 (SD=10.9)
Male	79.7%
Female	20.3%
Academic education	51.1%
Higher education	38.3%
Organization tenure	14.0 (SD=11.9)

Table 2

Characteristics of respondents - Peers

Characteristics	Mean / %
Age (in years)	43.5 (SD=10.9)
Male	78.9%
Female	21.1%
Academic education	52.8%
Higher education	36.6%
Organization tenure	13.3 (SD=11.2)

3.3. Instruments

Based on previous literature, several existing scales were selected to be used to measure the variables relevant to this research. All questionnaire items were in English. Principal Component Analysis (PCA) was used to check the factor structure of the scale. The criteria used to determine the number of factors were based on the Eigenvalues ≥ 1.00 rule (Kaiser, 1960) and the scree plot.

3.3.1. Perceived organizational support for strengths use (POSSU)

Perceived organizational support for strengths use (POSSU) was measured using the Strengths Use and Deficits Improvement Questionnaire (SUDIQ) (Van Woerkom et al., 2013; Keenan & Mostert, 2013; Stander & Mostert, 2013). The POSSU scale consists of eight items and has a Likert-type response format consisting of the following: (1) almost never, (2) rarely, (3) occasionally, (4) sometimes, (5) frequently, (6) usually, and (7) almost always. An example item: "This organization ensures that I can apply my strong points in my job.". In this study the Cronbach's Alpha for the scale

has been found to be $\alpha = .96$, which is in accordance with the alpha value of $\alpha = .96$ that was found in previous studies (Van Woerkom et al., 2013; Keenan & Mostert, 2013; Stander & Mostert, 2013). For the POSSU questionnaire, the Kaiser-Meyer-Oklin (KMO) value was .95, which is amply above the minimum level of .60, and the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity reached statistical significance ($p = .000$), which means that factor analysis is appropriate (Pallant, 2007). PCA revealed, as expected, that the eight items of the POSSU scale loaded on one component based on the Kaiser criterion and the scree test. The POSSU factor with an eigenvalue of 6.35 explained 79.37% of the variance.

3.3.2. *Perceived organizational support for deficits improvement (POS DI)*

To measure perceived organizational support for deficits improvement (POS DI) eight items of the SUDIQ (Van Woerkom et al., 2013) were used with a response format consisting of the following: (1) almost never, (2) rarely, (3) occasionally, (4) sometimes, (5) frequently, (6) usually, and (7) almost always. One of the eight items is: "This organization emphasizes the development of my weak points". Scale analysis revealed a Cronbach's Alpha value of $\alpha = .88$, which is a bit below but close to the alpha value of $\alpha = .93$ found in previous research (Van Woerkom et al., 2013). The POS DI scale was subjected to factor analysis, which showed a KMO of .84 with a significant result on the Bartlett's Sphericity test ($p = .000$), supporting the factorability of the correlation matrix for the variable POS DI. PCA reported that the eight items all loaded on the same underlying factor with an Eigenvalue of 4.52 that explained 56.49% of the variance.

3.3.3. *Self-efficacy*

Perceptions of general self-efficacy were measured using the New General Self-Efficacy Scale (NGSES: Chen, Gully, & Eden, 2001) consisting of an 8-item scale with a 5-point response scale: (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) neutral, (4) agree, (5) strongly agree. An example item is "I am confident that I can perform effectively on many different tasks.". A Cronbach's Alpha of $\alpha = .79$ was obtained in this study, which is lower than the alpha values of previous studies that ranged between $\alpha = .85$ and $\alpha = .88$ (Chen, Gully, & Eden, 2001). However, this study's Cronbach's Alpha value of $\alpha = .79$ is still more than sufficient. PCA disclosed a KMO of .80 with a significant value on the Bartlett's Sphericity test ($p = .000$). Factor analysis showed, based on the Kaiser rule, that the NGSES questionnaire was measuring two constructs (Eigenvalues: 3.31, 1.10; variance explained: 41.31%, 13.63%). However, due to the frequency in which this scale has been used with a one factor solution and the considerable low Eigenvalue of 1.10 on the second factor, we have decided to force a one factor solution. The component matrix showed that all items load quite strongly (above .4) on this one component, which suggests that a one factor solution is appropriate (Eigenvalue: 3.31; variance explained: 41.31%).

3.3.4. *Positive affect*

To measure the extent to which participants experience positive affect, the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS) developed by Watson et al. (1988) was used. In this study we are only interested in the extent to which participants experience positive affect and not negative affect and therefore only the PA scale was included. This scale consists of a number of words that describe feelings and emotions. For PA these are: interested, excited, strong, enthusiastic, proud, alert, inspired, determined, attentive, and active. Participants were asked to indicate to what extent they feel these feelings and emotions “in general” on a 5-point scale: (1) very slightly or not at all, (2) a little, (3) moderately, (4) quite a bit, and (5) extremely. Reliability assessment of the scale showed a Cronbach’s Alpha of $\alpha = .85$. This is close to the alpha value of $\alpha = .88$ in previous research (Watson et al., 1988). The PA part of the PANAS questionnaire was subjected to factor analysis, which showed a KMO of .85 with a significant result on the Bartlett’s Sphericity test ($p = .000$), supporting the factorability of the correlation matrix for PA. The Kaiser criterion and the scree plot showed an unexpected two factor solution with Eigenvalues of 4.39 and 1.46, explaining respectively 43.85% and 14.62% of the variance. However, because the PANAS is an existing, frequently used scale that was found to be made up of two separate components, PA and NA, we decided to force a one factor structure for PA. The component matrix revealed that all items load strongly (above .5) on this one component, which suggests that a one factor solution can be adopted (Eigenvalue: 4.39; variance explained: 43.85%).

3.3.5. *Job performance*

Since job performance is a comprehensive concept and our objective is to gain a broader perspective on the concept, we included several scales for the different raters. To get a better understanding of the organization’s perspective on the employee’s performance, the job performance measure was based on the employee’s last performance appraisal assessed by the organization. During this appraisal employees were evaluated based on “results” and “behavior”. The organization’s view on employee performance was therefore measured with two scales of one item. Both scales were included in the employee questionnaire. The item on the first scale was: “What was your score on behavior during the last performance appraisal round?”. The response format consisted of three possible outcomes of behavior: (1) improvement required, (2) valued player, and (3) role model. The item on the second scale was: “What was your score on results during the last performance appraisal round?”. The response format consisted of three possible results: (1) partially meets, (2) solid results, and (3) exceptional results. The lowest score will be (1) partially meets/improvement required, which means that the employee is underperforming. The highest score will be (3) exceptional results/role model, which means that the employee is a top performer.

Three other scales were used for the self and peer-ratings. Participants were asked to evaluate their own performance using Wright and Staw’s (1999) global performance measure which consists of

only 1 item: “Overall, how would you rate your performance at this time?”. Colleagues were asked the same question about their colleague the participating employee: “Overall, how would you rate your colleague’s performance at this time?”. Participants and colleagues were asked to respond on a 10-points scale ranging from (1) ‘poor’ to (10) ‘excellent’. Additionally, job performance was measured with scales used by Williams and Anderson (1991). According to Williams and Anderson (1991) there are three distinct types of job performance, namely ‘in-role behavior (IRB)’, ‘organizational citizenship behavior towards the organization (OCBO)’, and ‘organizational citizenship behavior towards individuals (OCBI)’. IRB can be seen as traditional performance that is task related and formally expected of the employee. OCB represents individual behavior that is discretionary and not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system. OCBO-behaviors are behaviors that benefit the organization in general, for example by notifying the organization in case of illness. OCBI is behavior that immediately benefits other individuals and indirectly the organization, for example through having a personal interest in other employees (Williams & Anderson, 1991). In this study only IRB and OCBI are relevant and will be included, because these mostly address individuals rather than the organization. The IRB scale consists of seven items of which one of the items addressing the participant is as follows: “I perform the tasks that are expected of me.”. Reliability assessment of the scale based on data retrieved from the self-ratings revealed a Cronbach’s Alpha value of $\alpha = .77$. The Cronbach’s alpha based on peer-rating data was found to be $\alpha = .78$.

The OCBI scale consists of seven items and an example item addressing the participant is: “I assist the supervisor with his/her work (when not asked).”. Colleagues are asked the same questions about the participating employee. Both scales have a 5-point Likert-type response scale ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree. Scale analysis based on self-rating data showed a Cronbach’s Alpha of $\alpha = .62$ for this study, which is low but sufficient. All items were maintained, since deleting items would not increase reliability. Cronbach’s Alpha concerning the OCBI scale based on peer-rating data revealed $\alpha = .77$ for this study.

PCA resulted in a KMO value of .70 with a statistical significant Bartlett’s Sphericity test result ($p = .000$). When subjecting the IRB and OCBI questionnaires to factor analysis using oblimin rotation, a four factor solution appeared (eigenvalues: 3.55, 1.98, 1.49, 1.18; variances explained: 25.34, 14.17, 10.64, 8.46), though a two component structure was expected. Therefore the number of extracted factors was set as two with ultimately a supporting result for our assumption. The pattern matrix showed that the seven items measuring IRB clustered as the first factor (Eigenvalue: 3.55; variance explained: 25.34) and that the seven items measuring OCBI clustered as the second factor (Eigenvalue: 1.98; variance explained: 14.17), with all loadings well above .4.

3.4. Data Analysis

The SPSS program version 20.0 and the Amos program version 18.0 were used to conduct the statistical analyses. Firstly, SPSS was used to perform factor analyses for data reduction, and to

determine the reliability of the scale. Secondly, because Amos is intolerable towards missing data, SPSS was used to replace missing values by the mean score of the scale for both the self-, peer-, and organization-rating data. In this way cases that would have been eliminated could still be included in the study and contribute to the variables for which these cases did not report any missings, without influencing scale scores on variables for which respondents did not provide an answer.

Thereafter the hypothesized model was analyzed using path analysis. By using path analysis an estimation could be made of all hypothesized paths including direct and indirect effects. As advised by Kline (2005), the goodness of model fit was evaluated through several fit indices namely, the χ^2 statistic, the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR), the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), and the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA). The χ^2 statistic represents the (mis)fit between the observed covariance matrix and the estimated covariance matrix. Ideally, the difference between the two is as small as possible, which means χ^2 statistic should be low and non-significant (Kline, 2005). The SRMR is a measure of the mean absolute correlation residual, the overall difference between the observed and predicted correlations. Values for the SRMR range from zero to 1.0. Well-fitting models obtain values less than .05, and values as high as .08 are considered to indicate acceptable fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Hooper, Coughlan, & Mullen, 2008). The values for CFI and TLI are recommended to be greater than .90 for acceptable fit (Hoyle, 1995; Byrne, 2010). For RMSEA a value of .05 or less indicates good model fit, a value between .05 and .08 indicates sufficient model fit, and a value larger than .08 indicates insufficient model fit (Browne & Cudeck, 1992). Although these are all acceptable fit indices, it should be taken into account that the TLI and RMSEA values tend to overreject true-population models at small sample size (Hu & Bentler, 1999). Considering the small sample size of this study, the emphasis in our analysis will be on the CFI and SRMR. Furthermore, modification indices were computed for those paths in the model that are constrained to zero, in order to potentially add these to improve model fit.

Bootstrap analyses were used to test the mediation hypotheses. A variable functions as a mediator when it meets certain conditions: (1) variations in levels of the independent variable (X) significantly account for variations in the presumed mediator (M) and (2) variations in the mediator (M) significantly account for variations in the dependent variable (Y) controlled for the effects of the independent variable (X) (MacKinnon, Fairchild, and Fritz, 2007).

Three separate models were tested. The first model, presented in Figure 2, was based on employees' self-ratings and included the independent variables 'POSSU' and 'POSDI', the mediators 'self-efficacy' and 'positive affect', and the dependent variables 'overall job performance', 'IRB performance', and 'OCBI performance'. Hereafter this model will be referred to as the self-rating model (SR-model).

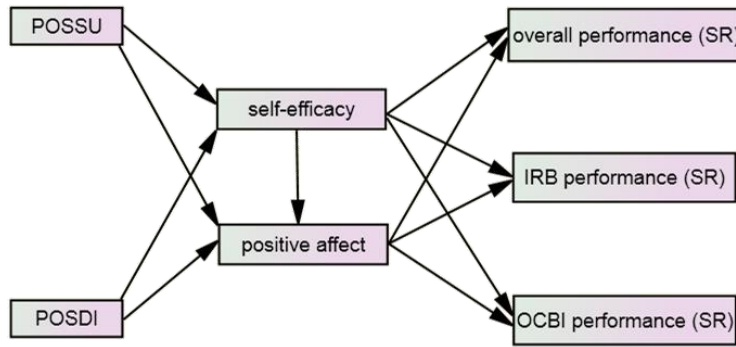


Figure 2. Self-rating model

The second model, illustrated in Figure 3, was based on colleagues' peer-ratings and included the same independent and mediator variables as the SR-model, though the dependent performance variables were rated by the peer. Hereafter this model will be called the peer-rating model (PR-model).

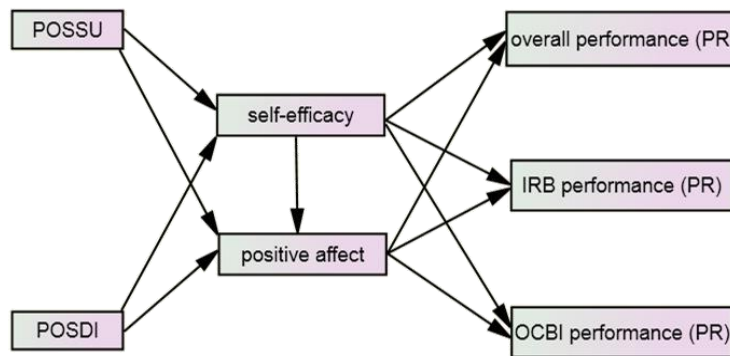


Figure 3. Peer-rating model

The third model, shown in Figure 4, was based on the results of the performance appraisal by the organization. This model includes the same independent and mediator variables as the SR-model, but the dependent variables were 'behavior performance' and 'results performance'. Hereafter this model will be referred to as the organization-rating model (OR-model).

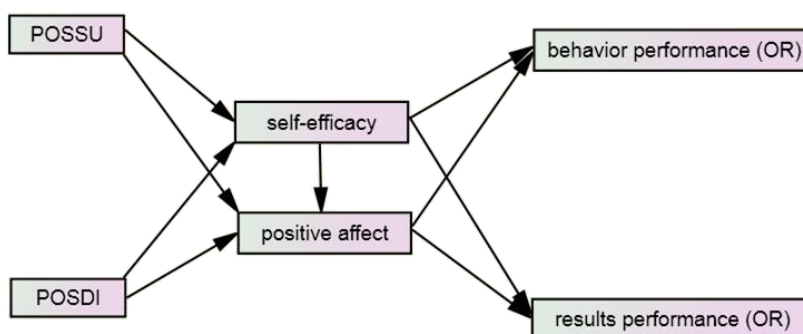


Figure 4. Organization-rating model

4. Results

4.1. Correlation analysis

Table 3 provides an overview of the means, standard deviations, correlations and reliabilities of the variables of interest. The matrix shows that the strongest significant correlation is between self-efficacy and IRB performance rated by the self ($r = .62$, $p < .01$), whereas the relationship between IRB performance rated by the self and IRB performance rated by the peer ($r = .18$, $p < .05$), is the weakest significant relationship. The means of the variables were computed and are depicted in Table 3.

Table 3

Means, standard deviations, correlations and alpha reliabilities

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. POSSU	4.88	1.10	(.96)											
2. POSDI	4.10	.97	.345***	(.88)										
3. Self-efficacy	3.92	.43	.344***	.129	(.79)									
4. Positive affect	3.63	.51	.530***	.291***	.468***	(.85)								
5. Overall performance (SR)	7.49	.85	.308***	.086	.475***	.304***								
6. IRB performance (SR)	4.16	.45	.405***	.192*	.621**	.416***	.475***	(.77)						
7. OCBI performance (SR)	3.95	.42	.196*	.205*	.236***	.329***	.132	.231**	(.62)					
8. Overall performance (PR)	8.05	.90	.004	-.032	.114	.003	.282***	.190*	-.057					
9. IRB performance (PR)	4.14	.47	-.010	-.082	.123	-.013	.091	.180*	-.097	.478***	(.78)			
10. OCBI performance (PR)	3.82	.49	-.141	-.039	-.052	-.046	-.034	-.050	.202*	.234**	.102	(.77)		
11. Behavior performance (OR)	2.14	.47	.163	.036	.175*	.239**	.127	.243**	-.045	.259**	.100	.119		
12. Results performance (OR)	2.15	.52	.143	.022	.267**	.183*	.302***	.331***	-.011	.261**	.160	-.020	.323***	

Note. Cronbach's Alpha is indicated between brackets.

N = 133

* $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .01$; *** $p \leq .001$ (2-tailed)

4.2. Overall model fit self-rating model

Firstly, the overall model fit of the hypothesized self-rating model was assessed. Results showed a significant χ^2 of 18.53 on 9 degrees of freedom and a RMSEA value of .09 indicating insufficient fit with the data. However, the other fit indices reported good model fit with a CFI of .956, a SRMR of .05, and a TLI of .897 approaching the cutoff level of .90. The results of the model are depicted in Figure 5.

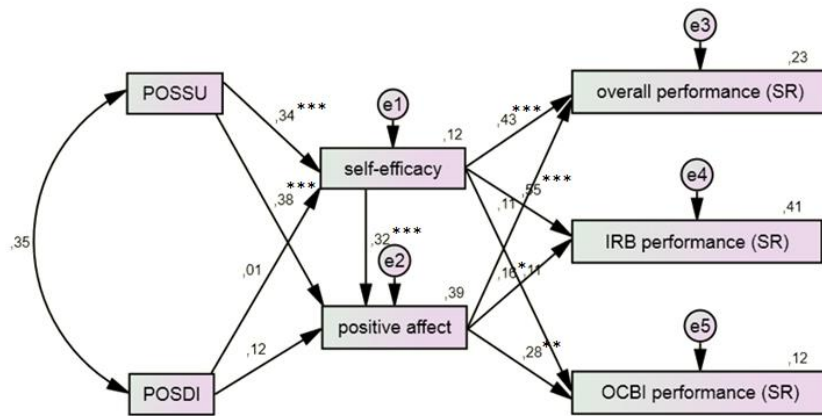


Figure 5. Results for the hypothesized self-rating model.

Note. Standardized estimates. N = 133. * $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .01$; *** $p \leq .001$.

Additionally, a comparison self-rating model was assessed to see whether the model could be simplified and whether model fit could further be improved. Attempts were made to improve model fit by eliminating paths that did not reach statistical significance, namely the relationship between POSDI and self-efficacy, the relationship between POSDI and positive affect, the relationship between self-efficacy and OCBI performance, and the relationship between positive affect and overall performance. Relationships that did show statistical significance were retained. First of all, POSSU was positively related to self-efficacy ($\beta = .34$, $p \leq .001$). Secondly, the relationship between POSSU and positive affect was statistically significant ($\beta = .38$, $p \leq .001$). Thirdly, self-efficacy was positively related to positive affect ($\beta = .32$, $p \leq .001$). Fourthly, self-efficacy was positively related to overall job performance ($\beta = .43$, $p \leq .001$) and IRB performance ($\beta = .55$, $p \leq .001$). Lastly, results confirmed a positive relationship between positive affect and IRB performance ($\beta = .16$, $p \leq .05$) and positive affect and OCBI performance ($\beta = .28$, $p \leq .01$). These paths formed the modified model, SR-model 2. Based on the results of the χ^2 and the RMSEA value it could be said that the model shows insufficient fit with the data ($\chi^2 = 18.73$, $df = 8$; RMSEA = .101). Nevertheless, based on the fit indices that are more relevant to small sample sizes, it can be concluded that this model fits the data sufficiently (CFI = .946; SRMR = .07; TLI = .899). These results are illustrated in Figure 6.

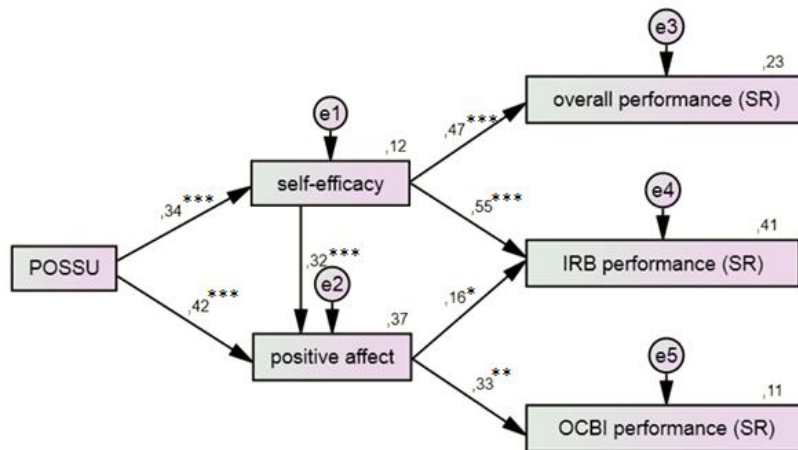


Figure 6. Results for the modified self-rating model, SR-model 2.

Note. Standardized estimates. N = 133. * $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .01$; *** $p \leq .001$.

Comparing the hypothesized model SR-model 1 and the comparison model SR-model 2, it can be concluded that there is only a small difference between the fit indices of the two models. Except for the TLI, all fit indices indicate better fit for our hypothesized model SR-model 1. An overview of this comparison can be found in Table 4.

Table 4

Fit statistics for the hypothesized and comparison self-rating models

Model	χ^2	<i>df</i>	CFI	SRMR	TLI	RMSEA
Model 1	18.53	9	.956	.05	.897	.09
Model 2	18.73	8	.946	.07	.899	.101

χ^2 = chi-square; *df* = degrees of freedom; CFI = Comparative Fit Index; SRMR = Standardized Root Mean Square Residual; TLI = Tucker-Lewis Index; RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation

The SR-model includes presumed mediating roles of self-efficacy and positive affect in the relationships between both POSSU and POSDI and the performance variables overall job performance, IRB performance and OCBI performance. Though, no significant direct relationships were found between POSDI and any of the mediators, which means that mediation is out of the question. The results indicated significant direct effects between POSSU and both positive affect and self-efficacy, and between the mediators and the job performance variables. For these relationships mediation was assessed using bootstrap analyses based on 2000 re-samples with a confidence interval of 95%. Bootstrap analyses revealed a significant mediation effect of self-efficacy between POSSU and positive affect (95% CI: from .043 to .215). Furthermore, it was found that self-efficacy mediates the relationship between POSSU and overall job performance (95% CI: from .083 to .328), and

positive affect mediates the relationship between POSSU and OCBI performance (95% CI: from .073 to .294). Lastly, both self-efficacy and positive affect significantly mediate the relationship between POSSU and IRB performance (95% CI: from .144 to .388).

4.3. Overall model fit peer-rating model

The second step was to evaluate the overall fit of the peer-rating model. A significant χ^2 of 43.93 on 9 degrees of freedom signaled insufficient fit. This poor result was supported by the other fit indices (CFI = .723; SRMR = .10; TLI = .354; RMSEA = .171). This means that all hypotheses that were tested at once using path analysis should be rejected. We did not find a model that fits the data. This means that there were no further significant results and following the assumptions of mediation suggested by MacKinnon et al. (2007) (X should be significantly related to M, M should be significantly related to Y), no bootstrap analyses were performed. Results of the model can be viewed in Figure 7.

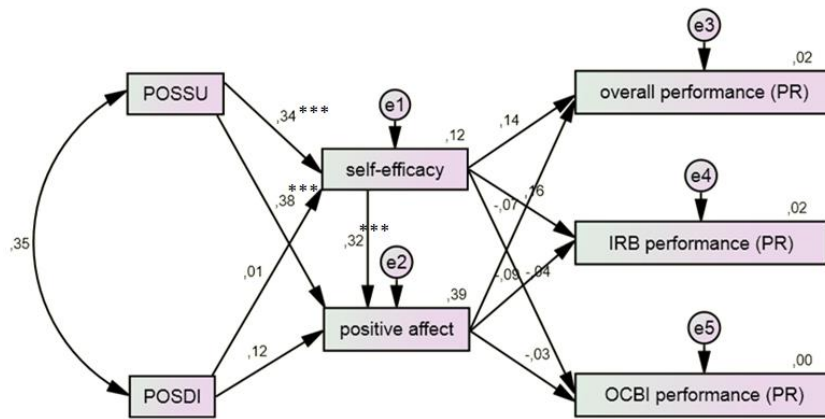


Figure 7. Results for the hypothesized peer-rating model.

Note. Standardized estimates. N = 133. * $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .01$; *** $p \leq .001$.

4.4. Overall model fit organization-rating model

Lastly, the model fit of the organization-rating model was evaluated. Results indicated a significant χ^2 of 11.68 on 5 degrees of freedom, a RMSEA of .101, and a TLI of .823 which implies poor fit. However, based on fit indices that are more representative for small sample sizes like this study, it can be concluded that the organization-rating model fits the data well (CFI = .941; SRMR = .06). Figure 8 shows the results of the OR-model evaluation.

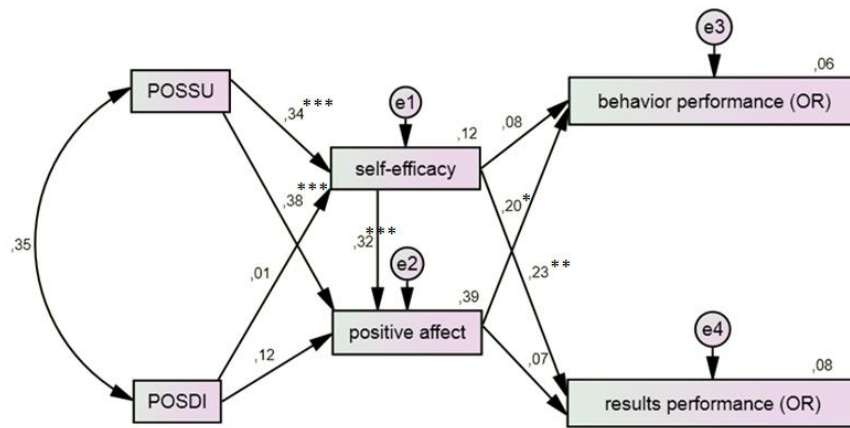


Figure 8. Results for the hypothesized organization-rating model.

Note. Standardized estimates. $N = 133$. * $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .01$; *** $p \leq .001$.

Again, a comparison model was assessed to see whether the model fit could further be improved by eliminating paths that did not reach statistical significance. The relationships between POSDI and all of the mediator and dependent variables were removed from the equation. Furthermore, the expected relationship between self-efficacy and behavior performance turned out to be non-significant, and the same result was found for positive affect and its assumed relationship with results behavior. Relationships that did result in statistical significance were retained, namely the relationship between POSSU and self-efficacy ($\beta = .34$, $p \leq .001$), the relationship between POSSU and positive affect ($\beta = .38$, $p \leq .001$), the relationship between self-efficacy and positive affect ($\beta = .32$, $p \leq .001$), the relationship between self-efficacy and results performance ($\beta = .23$, $p \leq .01$), and finally the relationship between positive affect and behavior performance ($\beta = .20$, $p \leq .05$). This modified OR-model, OR-model 2, is illustrated in Figure 9. Results for OR-model 2 showed a significant χ^2 of 12.65 on 5 degrees of freedom, a RMSEA value of .108, and a TLI of .845, indicating poor fit. The other fit indices indicated acceptable fit with a CFI of .922 and a SRMR of .08.

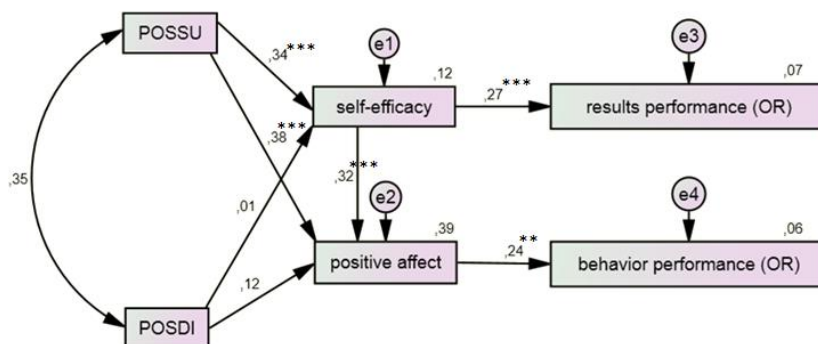


Figure 9. Results for the modified organization-rating model, OR-model 2.

Note. Standardized estimates. $N = 133$. * $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .01$; *** $p \leq .001$.

A comparison of the hypothesized model OR-model 1 and the comparison model OR-model 2, leads to the conclusion that OR-model 1 fits the data better than OR-model 2 based on all fit indices. An overview of this comparison can be found in Table 5.

Table 5

Fit statistics for the hypothesized and comparison organization-rating models

Model	χ^2	<i>df</i>	CFI	SRMR	TLI	RMSEA
Model 1	11.68	5	.941	.06	.823	.101
Model 2	12.65	5	.922	.08	.845	.108

χ^2 = chi-square; *df* = degrees of freedom; CFI = Comparative Fit Index; SRMR = Standardized Root Mean Square Residual; TLI = Tucker-Lewis Index; RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation

A bootstrap analysis based on 2000 re-samples with a confidence interval of 95% was performed to check for mediation. No significant direct relationships were found between POSDI and any of the mediators, and therefore bootstrap was not performed for these relationships. The results indicated significant direct effects between POSSU and both positive affect and self-efficacy, and between these mediators and the job performance variables. Bootstrap analyses revealed a significant mediation effect of self-efficacy between POSSU and positive affect (95% CI: from .043 to .215), and POSSU and results performance (95% CI: from .020 to .222). Positive affect significantly mediated the relationship between POSSU and behavior performance (95% CI: from .037 to .231).

5. Discussion

It was argued that both the improvement of employees' deficits and the use of employees' strengths are important to people and organizations. However, it seems that in both research and practice more attention is being paid to the improvement of employees' deficits and less to employees' strengths use. To address this gap in the literature, the central question that we were concerned with in this study is to what extent perceived organizational support for strengths use (POSSU) and perceived organizational support for deficits improvement (POSDI) affect job performance. Furthermore, we were curious whether the two personal resources self-efficacy and positive affect took a mediating role in this relationship. To answer this research question, we gathered information on the subjects through a questionnaire at one point in time, which was filled out by 133 employees. The 133 questionnaires also provided information on the organization's evaluation of the employee, based on their last performance appraisal results. Ultimately, 125 of the 133 questionnaires could be connected to peer-ratings. By using three different sources to gain information, our study contributes to the literature, because this approach has not been used before in research on organizational support for strengths use and deficits improvement in relation to job performance. In addition, no other study on the topic of POSSU and POSDI related to performance included the concepts self-efficacy and positive affect as mediators to this relationship. To assess how well our hypothesized model fits the data, the model fit was evaluated using path analyses. The expected relationships that included a mediation variable were tested using bootstrap analyses.

First of all, we tested our theory based on the information provided by the self-raters (Figure 2). Results revealed that our hypothesized adequately model fit the data. Furthermore, results confirmed a significant mediation effect for self-efficacy in the relationship between POSSU and overall performance, and between POSSU and in-role performance. It became clear from our sample that feelings of self-efficacy were increased when employees perceived that their organization is supportive of their strengths use. Subsequently, it was expected that self-efficacy would enhance job performance (Lunenburg, 2011). It was found that employees who are more self-efficacious feel that their overall job performance gets a boost and they also show higher in-role behavior, which means that they are better at performing their formal tasks. Additionally, it was expected that the job resource POSSU leads to enhanced job performance through the reinforcement of the personal resource positive affect. More specifically, it was confirmed that in-role performance and organizational citizenship performance towards the individual were positively influenced by POSSU through positive affect. This implies that supporting employees in activities in which they can use their strengths will increase their positivity and ultimately employees become better at meeting the formal requirements of their job that directly influence their performance evaluation, and they are more likely to perform better on a social level by helping others and by showing interest in their co-workers.

Moreover, it cannot be left unnoticed that we did not find significant support in this study for the relationship between POSDI, both mediators self-efficacy and positive affect, and job

performance. One of the reasons for the non-significant result of the relationship between POSDI and performance mediated by self-efficacy could be that POSDI cannot be perceived as a job resource, because instead of reducing demands it may add additional burdens to an employee's work situation. As discussed earlier, getting support of the organization to improve your performance by working on your weaknesses may be mentally draining rather than motivating (Van Woerkom et al., in progress). Instead of feeling energized, employees may be demotivated to work on their weaknesses, because usually individuals do not like to be confronted with what they are not good at, and because they may not always see actual improvement towards good results. In future research, POSDI could be considered as a job demand rather than a job resource.

In line with the previous notion, being supported by the organization to focus on your limitations could be frustrating and therefore may negatively influence your affective state, thus it will not boost your positivity. It was hypothesized that POSDI would be negatively related to positive affect, which entails that when employees perceive that their organization is supportive of them improving their weaknesses, employees would experience slowness and sadness, rather than feeling energized and concentrated. However, no significant results were found for this relationship. Taking the latter into consideration, it might not be low positive affect that people are experiencing when they have to work on their weaknesses to improve performance, but perhaps they experience emotions that are associated with high negative affect, such as anger, fear or nervousness, or with low negative affect such as calmness and serenity (Fredrickson & Losada, 2005; Watson et al., 1988). In some cases, frustration and other negative affective states may even lead people to continue in searching for creative ways to overcome difficulties and pursue desired goals (Zhou & George, 2001; Rego et al., 2012). Research should further investigate the possible role of negative affect in the relationship between POSDI and performance. To further test our theory, we assessed the peer-rating model (Figure 3). This model indicated poor fit with the data. There were no significant relationships between any of the variables, except for the relationships between POSSU and self-efficacy and POSSU and positive affect. Though, information on these concepts were solely from an employee perspective, thus not rated by the peer, and these relationships were already tested and found to be significant while testing the SR-model. There could be several explanations for not finding support for the expected relationships based on the peer-ratings. One of the reasons could be that the peer had too little information on the participating employee's performance. During the data collection it was pointed out by a number of participants that they had difficulties appointing a peer who could evaluate their performance. This may suggest that the peer that was eventually rating the participating employee, may not have been fully capable to properly rate the participating employee's performance. It could be expected that if there would be a person who was fully capable of providing this evaluation, the participating employee would have been able to easily appoint such person. Difficulties in finding an adequate peer for the performance evaluation may have been because their colleagues were not present at the day of data collection or, as some participants indicated, because the colleague that would know

best was no longer working at the organization. Another possible explanation for not finding significant relationships between positive affect and self-efficacy and any of the job performance variables for the PR-model could be, that the peer-rating of performance was based on a specific experience rather than the individual's general task and behavioral performance on the job. It could refer to only those tasks and behaviors that were expected to be performed during this specific experience. In other words, few experiences may not be representable for general task and behavioral performance. Nevertheless, these hypotheses could further be investigated in future research.

Our theory was further tested by assessing the organization-rating model (Figure 4). Results showed that our hypothesized OR-model fit the data sufficiently. When the employee perceives the organization to be supportive of him or her using strengths at work, the individual experiences more positivity and subsequently it is more likely that the organization gives the employee the status of role model, which is the highest possible rating on the behavior performance scale. To elaborate a bit more on this finding, the effect of positive affect on job performance could be explained in two ways. Firstly, it could be that positive affect makes people more productive because they are more persistent and motivated to perform and work hard, as suggested by the happy-productive worker thesis (Cropanzano & Wright, as cited in Keenan & Mostert, 2013). Secondly, managers tend to evaluate employees that show that they are in a positive affective state more favorable than others who are not in that state. This is known as the halo effect in employee rewarding (Staw, Sutton, & Pelled, 1994).

On top of that, it is interesting to find that positive affect shows a stronger relationship to a more behavioral, socially interactive concept of job performance, whereas self-efficacy seems to be related to a more formal, result driven, goal directed concept of job performance. The influence of positive affect goes beyond the motivational aspects of task performance (Wright & Staw, 1999). People who score high on positive affect are more likely to be offered social support, basically because people are more attracted to positive people than negative people (Ganster, Fusilier, & Mayes, 1986). Simultaneously, positive affect stimulates liking for others and thinking positively about others (Gouaux, 1971; Veitch & Griffitt, 1976) and it increases helping and generosity (Isen & Levin, 1972; Jones & George, 1998). Positive affect then manifests itself in interpersonal cooperation and teamwork and strong desires of team members to contribute to the common good. Thereupon, positive people will define their roles broadly taking into account whatever tasks they are capable of performing that contribute to these common goals and in this way organizational citizenship behavior can be enhanced (Jones & George, 1998). With regards to self-efficacy and its relation to a more formal concept of job performance, it could be that high self-efficacious people feel confident enough to set high goals for which they will persevere to achieve them. These goals are usually new and difficult tasks (Lunenburg, 2011) rather than goals that relate to social situations and helpfulness.

6. Limitations and Future research directions

This study contains several limitations and therefore it is recommended to further develop research on the topic in the future. First of all, data was gathered in one department of one organization. Due to the fact that the organization under study is a large multinational with a great number of departments, we cannot claim that the department under study is representative for the entire organization. Therefore, further investigation is needed before our findings could be generalized to the wider population. It is recommended that future research directs its efforts to gathering information in multiple departments and organizations in different types of industries.

Secondly, there are some potential improvements for the data gathering procedure. Employees were asked to appoint a colleague themselves who would rate them on their performance. This means that it should be taken into account that there is a possibility that employees chose a colleague of whom they expected that he or she would assign high scores on performance to the participating employee, instead of a colleague that has better view on the employee's performance but would be more critical. We would advise to involve HR managers or line managers in creating dyads of employees who would rate each other based on the frequency and extent to which they work together. Furthermore, employees were asked to report the result of their last performance appraisal. We based the organization's perspective of employee performance on this data provided by the employee. There is a possibility that not every employee has been completely honest in providing this information, which means that the reliability of this information could be questioned. Therefore, an attempt should be made in future research to not only gather information about performance appraisal results from the employees themselves, but also through hard data provided by HR managers or line managers.

Thirdly, as mentioned earlier, Amos is intolerable towards missing data. Although we had a sufficient number of cases (133 respondents), we did not want to lose too much data by removing cases from the dataset that contained missing values. For this reason SPSS was used to replace missing values by the mean score of the scale, so we could retain all cases and the amount of data would not be reduced. However, we should take into account that this method influences the variances. In other words, the variances will be lower due to replacing missing values by the mean score of the scale. As suggested earlier, it is recommended to gather data in multiple departments and organizations in order to expand the amount of data. This ensures that in case of missing data it would be less problematic if cases with missing values are removed from the dataset in a listwise manner.

Fourthly, by asking employees to indicate to what extent they felt positive feelings and emotions "in general", positive affect was measured as a trait. Trait affect represents stable individual predispositions to certain states and people who score high on positive trait affect typically have a positive outlook and orientation (Polk, Cohen, Doyle, Skoner, & Kirschbaum, 2005; George & Brief, 1992). Using positive affect as a trait in research on individual job performance is sensible, because it is in most work settings difficult to precisely link affect and performance, due to the notion that performance in most work settings is not easily delimited in time. Except for sales and production

work, it is not always clear what the individual's exact work output and the exact moment of execution is. Usually, performance appraisals are based on the reflection on previous months or even a year, making it difficult to precisely link affect to performance. Therefore it could be expected that positive trait affect, that covers a longer lasting period of time, would provide a close fit with individual job performance (Wright & Staw, 1999). Nevertheless, it would be interesting to investigate the relationship between POSSU, POSDI and job performance mediated by positive affect measured as a state. State affect represents transient fluctuations in mood over time (Polk et al., 2005; George & Brief, 1992). Measuring positive state affect provides opportunities to analyze the influence of contextual factors on positive affect at different points in time (George & Brief, 1992). It would be interesting to set up an intervention aimed at improving deficits or supporting the use of strengths, and investigate the role of positive state affect in the relationship between this form of organizational support and job performance at that specific point in time.

To conclude, we should be cautious with making causal inferences. First of all, it may be possible that self-efficacy and positive affect do not only positively affect job performance as hypothesized in this study, but also the other way around. In other words, it may be that for example a good performance appraisal boosts employees' energy, makes them feel upbeat and gives them a feeling of capableness. Secondly, it is also possible that POSSU and POSDI do not only cause positive affect, but also that positive affect influences POSSU and POSDI. It may be that people who are more positive in general tend to have more positive perceptions and see the world through rose-colored-glasses. These positive minded people show more approach behaviors towards activities that lead them to take on challenges and take advantage of opportunities that are provided to them. For example, an individual that scores high on positive affect may have a tendency to evaluate a technical course provided by the organization as being supportive, whereas others might consider such course as an obligation instead of true organizational support. Nevertheless, the hypotheses in this study were based on extensive literature and the results are partially consistent with previous research that has examined the relationships between POSSU, POSDI, self-efficacy, positive affect and job performance. To further substantiate, we used different sources (self-rating, peer-rating and organization-rating) to provide us with data on the examined relationships, of which both the self-rating and organization-rating confirmed our hypotheses. To further examine causality in this matter, we would recommend to use a longitudinal design in future research on the topic, and ideally an experimental design could be constructed to help establishing causal relationships.

7. Practical Implications

Although organizations tend to focus mainly on supporting the improvement of employees' weaknesses, we did not find significant statistical support that it genuinely enhances job performance. The results of this study provide empirical support for the beneficial effects of organizational support for strengths use on job performance, self-efficacy and positive affect. As such, this study supports the conclusion drawn by Van Woerkom et al. (2013) that organizations would take great advantage out of investing in HR practices that are aimed at helping employees to learn about their strengths and give them the opportunity to use these in the workplace. For example, training and development should be aimed at finding personal strengths, and at learning how to use these. Strengths should also play an important factor in appraisal and reward systems, for example by evaluating whether the employee has capitalized on his or her strengths, and then reward accordingly. Lastly, in the process of job design and task allocation, teams should be complementary which means that one employee's strength is another employee's weakness.

A great opportunity and responsibility for stimulating employees to work with their strengths lies in the hands of managers. The execution of HR practices relies for a great deal on them. It is the manager's task to know his or her subordinates and to communicate with them. As Buckingham (2005) already suggested, it is the manager's responsibility to find out what the uniqueness is of every employee in the team, to pull the triggers to further develop this uniqueness as a strength, and to coach employees on the development of their strengths in their preferred learning style. To a manager this may seem an intense job, but as was found in the results of this study, providing this support for strengths use will make employees feel more capable, energized and thus motivated to work hard and reach their performance goals. Moreover, designing the team in such a way that strengths and weaknesses are balanced out, as well as pairing up employees who possess the same strengths and can learn from each other, will already free up the manager's time.

Ultimately, it is very important for organizations to realize that this study provided some evidence for the assumption that perceived organizational support for strengths use can function as a job resource that increases feelings of capableness and positivity that may reduce stress and may possibly prevent depression. Investing in the use of strengths may therefore be a good way to overcome the great challenge of job withdrawal, such as absenteeism, turnover, and job burnout.

8. Conclusion

This study was aimed at narrowing the gap in the literature about perceived organizational support for strengths use and deficits improvement in order to enhance job performance. Additionally, we were interested in the extent to which self-efficacy and positive affect would play a role in this relationship. Firstly, this study provided evidence that perceived organizational support for strengths use was beneficial to job performance through self-efficacy and positive affect, reported by both the employee and the organization. Although we assumed that peers would perceive this the same way, results were non-significant thus this could not be confirmed. Secondly, we did not find any support for the relation between perceived organizational support for deficits improvement and job performance, through self-efficacy and positive affect.

We made some steps in learning more about perceived organizational support for strengths use and deficits improvement, but there is still much work to be done to unravel all there is to know about these approaches.

9. References

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Appendix 1 - Questionnaire Participating Employee

1. What is your gender? ☐ 1 Male ☐ 2 Female
2. In what year were you born? _____
3. What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed? ☐ 1 'Elementary' – you have no or almost no education
☐ 2 'Basic' – you have completed education at level (similar to) VMBO, MBO1, or MBO2.
☐ 3 'Secondary' – you have completed education at level (similar to) HAVO, VWO, MBO3, or MBO4.
☐ 4 'Higher' – you have completed education at level (similar to) HBO.
☐ 5 'Academic' – you have earned a University degree.
4. How long have you been working for this organization? _____ year(s) _____ month(s)
5. How long have you been working for this department? _____ year(s) _____ month(s)
6. What type of employment contract do you have? ☐ 1 Fixed contract
☐ 2 Temporary contract, but facing fixed contract
☐ 3 Temporary
☐ 4 Secondment
☐ 5 Other, namely: _____
7. How many hours a week do you work based on your contract? _____ hours
8. What was your score on behavior during the last performance appraisal round? ☐ 1 Improvement required
☐ 2 Valued player
☐ 3 Role model
9. What was your score on results during the last performance appraisal round? ☐ 1 Partially meets
☐ 2 Solid results
☐ 3 Exceptional results
10. What is the name of your organization? _____
11. What is the name of your department? _____

Please indicate for each statement how often this is applicable to you personally, by ticking the box with the corresponding number (1 to 7).

- 1 = Almost never
2 = Rarely
3 = Occasionally
4 = Sometimes
5 = Frequently
6 = Usually
7 = Almost always

		Almost never						Almost always
12.1	This organization uses my strengths.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7
12.2	In this organization, I can do my job in a manner that best suits my strong points.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7
12.3	This organization provides me with the opportunity to do what I am good at.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7
12.4	In this organization, I can use my talents.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7
12.5	In this organization, my job tasks are aligned with my strengths.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7
12.6	This organization makes the most of my talents.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7
12.7	This organization ensures that I can apply my strong points in my job.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7
12.8	This organization focuses on what I am good at.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7
13.1	This organization emphasized the development of my weak points.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7
13.2	In this organization, I receive training to improve my weak points.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7
13.3	This organization focuses on my areas of development.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7
13.4	In this organization, I am required to work on my shortcomings.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7
13.5	In this organization, my development is aimed to better my weaknesses.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7
13.6	In this organization, I am expected to improve the things I am not good at.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7
13.7	In this organization, performance appraisals address my areas of development.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7
13.8	In this organization, I receive feedback regarding my limitations.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7

14. Overall, how would you rate your performance at this time?
(on a scale from 1 to 10 in which 1 is the lowest score and 10 the highest score).

POOR ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 EXCELLENT

Please indicate for each statement to what extent this is applicable to you personally on the job, by ticking the box with the corresponding number (1 to 5).

- 1 = Strongly disagree
2 = Disagree
3 = Neutral
4 = Agree
5 = Strongly agree

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
15.1	I adequately complete assigned duties.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
15.2	I fulfill responsibilities specified in my job description.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
15.3	I perform tasks that are expected of me.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
15.4	I meet formal performance requirements of the job.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
15.5	I engage in activities that will directly affect my performance evaluation.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
15.6	I neglect aspects of the job that I am obliged to perform.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
15.7	I fail to perform essential duties.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
16.1	I help others who have been absent.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
16.2	I help others who have heavy workloads.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
16.3	I assist the supervisor with his/her work (when not asked).	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

16.4	I take time to listen to co-workers' problems and worries.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
16.5	I go out of my way to help new employees.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
16.6	I take a personal interest in other employees.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
16.7	I pass along information to co-workers.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

Please indicate for each statement to what extent this is applicable to you personally, by ticking the box with the corresponding number (1 to 5).

- 1 = Strongly disagree
2 = Disagree
3 = Neutral
4 = Agree
5 = Strongly agree

Strongly disagree
Disagree
Neutral
Agree
Strongly agree

18.1	I will be able to achieve most of the goals that I have set for myself.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
18.2	When facing difficult tasks, I am certain that I will accomplish them.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
18.3	In general, I think that I can obtain outcomes that are important to me.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
18.4	I believe I can succeed at most any endeavor to which I set my mind.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
18.5	I will be able to successfully overcome many challenges.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
18.6	I am confident that I can perform effectively on many different tasks.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
18.7	Compared to other people, I can do most tasks very well.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
18.8	Even when things are tough, I can perform quite well.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

Please indicate to what extent you generally feel this way on the job, that is, how you feel on average. Ticking the box with the corresponding number (1 to 5).

- 1 = Very slightly or not at all
2 = A little
3 = Moderately
4 = Quite a bit
5 = Extremely

Very slightly/not at all
A little
Moderately
Quite a bit
Extremely

19.1	Interested	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
19.2	Excited	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
19.3	Strong	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
19.4	Enthusiastic	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
19.5	Proud	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
19.6	Alert	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
19.7	Inspired	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
19.8	Determined	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
19.9	Attentive	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
19.10	Active	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

Appendix 2 – Questionnaire Peer

1. What is your gender? ☐ 1 Male ☐ 2 Female
2. In what year were you born? _____
3. What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed?
- ☐ 1 'Elementary' – you have no or almost no education
- ☐ 2 'Basic' – you have completed education at level (similar to) VMBO, MBO1, or MBO2.
- ☐ 3 'Secondary' – you have completed education at level (similar to) HAVO, VWO, MBO3, or MBO4.
- ☐ 4 'Higher' – you have completed education at level (similar to) HBO.
- ☐ 5 'Academic' - you have earned a University degree.
4. How long have you been working for this organization? _____year(s)_____month(s)
5. How long have you been working for this department? _____year(s)_____month(s)
6. What type of employment contract do you have?
- ☐ 1 Fixed contract
- ☐ 2 Temporary contract, but facing fixed contract
- ☐ 3 Temporary
- ☐ 4 Secondment
- ☐ 5 Other, namely: _____
7. How many hours a week do you work based on your contract? _____ hours
8. What is the name of your department? _____

9. Overall, how would you rate your colleague's performance at this time?
(on a scale from 1 to 10 in which 1 is the lowest score and 10 the highest score).

POOR

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

EXCELLENT

Please indicate for each statement to what extent this is applicable to your colleague, by ticking the box with the corresponding number (1 to 5).

- 1 = Strongly disagree
2 = Disagree
3 = Neutral
4 = Agree
5 = Strongly agree

My colleague...

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
10.1	Adequately completes assigned duties.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
10.2	Fulfills responsibilities specified in job description.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
10.3	Performs tasks that are expected of him/her.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
10.4	Meets formal performance requirements of the job.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
10.5	Engages in activities that will directly affect his/her performance evaluation.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
10.6	Neglects aspects of the job that he/she is obligated to perform.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
10.7	Fails to perform essential duties.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

My colleague...

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
11.1	Helps others who have been absent.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
11.2	Helps others who have heavy workloads.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
11.3	Assists the supervisor with his/her work (when not asked).	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
11.4	Takes time to listen to co-workers' problems and worries.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
11.5	Goes out of his/her way to help new employees.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
11.6	Takes a personal interest in other employees.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
11.7	Passes along information to co-workers.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5