



The Impact of Employee Work Experience on Job Performance in Internet Enterprises: The Chain Mediating Role of Positive Emotions and Work Engagement

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Abstract. With the continuous development of the experience economy, the relationship between employee work experience and work performance is increasingly valued by enterprises. Based on the theory of emotional events, the research framework of “employee work experience-positive emotions-work engagement-work performance” was constructed, which verified the mechanism of employee work experience on work performance, and provided theoretical guidance for employees of Internet enterprises to improve their work performance.

Keywords: employee work experience · positive emotions · work engagement · job performance

1 Introduction

The new multigenerational workplace requires a new way of thinking about human resource management [1]. Employees are the ultimate factor that enterprises can reflect in market competition, and are important for the sustainable development of enterprises. With the continuous advancement of economic globalization, the growing competition between companies and the impact of the COVID-19 epidemic, companies are more dependent on their employees than ever before, the need to improve productivity and the need to restructure new employee relationships. At the same time, a good work experience can create highly engaged people and communities and has the potential to deliver amazing business results [2]. Employees who are satisfied with their work experience will be motivated to contribute to the organization’s mission and put their full skills and self into their work. Shifting the focus from HRM systems and systems to employees and employee experience, and then to achieve high performance, is a very real challenge for organizations and HRM. This is a very real challenge for organizations and HRM.

Job performance research has always been one of the important contents in the field of HRM, it is directly related to various workplace factors, is the expected organizational value of behavior, in addition to the knowledge and skills that can identify

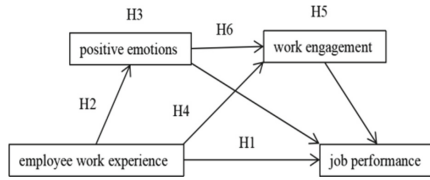


Fig. 1. Research model

production behavior, but also provide insight into employees’ deviation from normal work behavior, can help organizations establish effective interventions to ensure the positive development of the organization [3]. In order to improve the core competitiveness of enterprises, it is need to improve work performance. Currently, research suggests a link between employee experience and retention, autonomy, and job performance [4], However, there are few studies in the domestic and foreign literature on job performance as a driver and outcome of employee work experience. Therefore, this study builds on previous generations and enriches knowledge in this field by linking the two structures, namely employee work experience and job performance.

Affective event theory can explain and identify the factors that lead to emotional responses at work, helping to understand how these emotional responses affect employee attitudes and behaviors. In recent years, the Internet information service industry has achieved great development, coupled with the rise of the digital economy, Internet enterprises have successfully become the preferred industry for the young generation to work. At the same time, such enterprises generally have problems such as low employee sentiment, poor work experience, and high turnover rate, which may not only bring higher recruitment costs to the organization, but also damage the overall performance of the organization [5].

Based on previous research, this study will focus on the positive outcomes brought about by employee work experience, and construct a research framework of “employee work experience - positive emotion - work engagement - job performance” based on emotional event theory and the expansion-construction theory of positive emotion. The research model is shown in Fig. 1.

2 Theoretical Review and Research Hypothesis

2.1 Employee Work Experience and Job Performance

In 2000, the American Compensation Association (Wordat Work) first introduced “work experience”. Zhu Yongguo [6] (2008) defines employee work experience in a Chinese context as how employees feel about their work and the organization they work for. Zhang Yang [7] (2013) suggested that a good working experience motivates employees to continuously invest in their work to achieve the organization’s target performance. Whitter [8] (2022) propose to design a comprehensive employee experience for employees that will help employees deliver high performance to the organization. In the literature review, it is found that there are few studies on employee work experience and job performance by domestic and foreign scholars, but most of the studies believe that employee work

experience affects job performance, and based on this, the following hypotheses are put forward:

H1: Employee work experience positively influences job performance.

2.2 The Mediating Role of Positive Emotions

The Impact of Employee Work Experience on Job Performance in Internet Enterprises: The Chain Mediating Role of Positive Emotions and Work Engagement. George & Jones [9] (1996) suggest that the experience of work affects employees' willingness to quit or stay. Cole [10] (2006) suggests that supervisor support (or lack thereof) is directly related to employees' emotional responses. Li Fangjun [11] (2020) suggests that feelings of jealousy can trigger positive emotions in employees and that this effect varies across age groups. Based on this, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H2: Employee work experience positively influences positive emotions.

In the workplace, positive emotions can also significantly influence employees' attitudes, behaviour, and outcomes, etc. Wright [12] (2007) argues that employees perform best when they score high on both positive emotions and job satisfaction. Ouweneel [13] (2012) explored the mediating effect of positive emotions on the experience of hope and work engagement. Chen Hui [14] (2022) found that visionary leadership behaviour positively influenced subordinate positive emotion and performance. The results found that visionary leadership behaviour positively influences subordinates' positive emotions and performance. In summary, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H3: Positive emotions mediate the relationship between employee work experience and job performance.

2.3 The Mediating Role of Work Input

Kahn [15] first articulated 'work engagement' in 1990 as a state of work in which members of an organization are physically, cognitively and emotionally involved in their own work tasks. At the individual level, a sense of professional mission [16] and work pressure [17]. At the organizational level, factors such as organizational commitment [18] and leadership style [19] may influence work engagement. Based on this, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H4: Employee work experience positively influences work engagement.

In general, employees' work engagement affects work behaviour and outcomes, such as organizational innovation and job performance. Li Yongzhou et al. [20] (2015) believes that increasing the work commitment of R&D personnel can improve innovation performance. Neuber et al. [21] (2022) analyzed the effect of work engagement on employee performance and absenteeism. In summary, the following hypotheses were formulated:

H5: Work engagement mediates the relationship between employee work experience and job performance.

2.4 The Chain Mediating Role of Positive Emotions and Work Engagement

Some studies have shown that positive emotions are effective in promoting work engagement, for example, Staw et al. [22] (1994) suggest that positive emotions lead to good work outcomes, with desirable effects independent of the person's relationships with others, including more positive task activities, perseverance and enhanced cognitive functioning; Tsai [23] (2001) suggest that positive emotions can increase employee engagement. Weiss & Cropanzano [24] (1996) proposed affective events theory (AET), which refers to the logical chain of emotional reactions that occur in the workplace as a result of work events and the resultant changes in individual attitudes. On this basis, this study adopts the two chains of "work event - emotional response - emotion-driven behavior" and "work event - emotional response - work attitude - attitude-driven behavior", and introduces the chain mediation of positive emotions and work engagement to elaborate the mechanism of employee work experience on job performance. In summary, the following assumptions are made:

H6: Positive emotions and work engagement play a chain mediating role in the relationship between employee work experience and job performance.

3 Research Methodology

3.1 Data Collection

In this study, 250 questionnaires were distributed to employees of different genders, ages, educational backgrounds, job levels and working years in Internet companies, mainly in first-tier cities, and a total of 213 valid questionnaires were retained after screening and sorting out the collected questionnaires, with an effective rate of 85.2%.

3.2 Measuring Tools

The Employee Work Experience Scale: A total of 25 questions were selected from the "Employee Work Experience Questionnaire", which was developed by China Employer Branding after years of data collection and scale optimization in a Chinese context [6]. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for this scale in this study was 0.961.

Job performance scale: A 10-item scale, based on Borman & Motowidlo [25] (1993) two-dimensional performance model of "relational performance-task performance". The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for this scale in this study was 0.864.

Positive Affect Scale: 5 items, using the Positive Affect Scale (PANAS) developed by Watson et al. [26] (1988). The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for this scale in this study was 0.813.

Work Engagement Scale: The 9-item scale was selected from Schaufeli et al. [27] (2006), which includes three dimensions: vitality, dedication and concentration. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for this scale in this study was 0.880.

Table 1. Results of the validation factor analysis

Models	Factors included	χ^2	df	χ^2/df	CFI	TLI	IFI	RMSEA
Basic model	Four factors (X, M1, M2, Y)	1494.44	1121	1.33	0.93	0.93	0.93	0.04
Model I	Three factors (X + M1, M2, Y)	1783.38	1124	1.59	0.87	0.87	0.87	0.05
Model 2	Two-factor (X + M1 + M2, Y)	2421.96	1126	2.15	0.75	0.74	0.75	0.07
Model 3	One factor (X + M1 + M2 + Y)	2847.17	1127	2.53	0.66	0.65	0.67	0.09

Note: X = employee work experience, M1 = positive emotion, M2 = work engagement, Y = job performance

4 Results

4.1 Discriminant Validity Test

The Harman one-way test was used to test the common method bias, and the variance interpretation rate of the first factor when it was not rotated was 31.72%, which did not account for 40% of the total variation explanation, indicating that there was no serious common method bias.

Validation factor analysis was performed on four core variables using Amos 26.0 to verify their differential validity, and the results are shown in Table 1. The four-factor model fits well with the data ($\chi^2 = 1494.44$, $df = 1121$, $\chi^2/df = 1.33$, $CFI = 0.93$, $TLI = 0.93$, $IFI = 0.93$, $RMSEA = 0.04$), and is better than the three-factor model (combining employee work experience and positive emotions), the two-factor model (combining employee work experience, positive emotions and work engagement) and the one-factor model (combining all core variables). The results showed that the four variables had good discrimination validity, and the four-factor model fit the data well.

4.2 Descriptive Statistical Analysis

The results of the mean, standard deviation and correlation coefficient of each variable are shown in Table 2. According to the results, it can be seen that employees' work experience is positively related to positive emotion ($\beta = 0.320$, $p < 0.001$), work engagement ($\beta = 0.150$, $p < 0.05$), and job performance ($\beta = 0.431$, $p < 0.001$); positive emotion is positively related to work engagement ($\beta = 0.314$, $p < 0.001$), job performance ($\beta = 0.449$, $p < 0.001$) and work engagement was positively related to job performance ($\beta = 0.512$, $p < 0.001$). This is consistent with the proposed hypothesis and provides a preliminary basis for further testing of the hypothesis subsequently.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of variables

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Gender	1								
2. Age	-0.011	1							
3. Academic qualifications	0.042	0.077	1						
4. Position level	-0.072	0.479***	-0.131	1					
5. Years of service	-0.009	0.848***	0.056	0.420***	1				
6. Staff work experience	-0.010	0.036	-0.062	0.035	0.057	1			
7. Positive emotions	0.102	-0.142	0.026	-0.207**	-0.154*	0.320***	1		
8. Work input	0.055	-0.110	0.117	-0.153*	-0.003	0.150*	0.314***	1	
9. Job performance	0.012	-0.078	0.150*	-0.159 *	-0.027	0.431***	0.449***	0.512***	1
Average value	1.465	1.878	2.371	1.319	4.474	3.853	3.780	3.934	3.942
Variance	0.500	0.809	0.732	0.600	3.276	0.770	0.802	0.760	0.698

Note: * denotes $p < 0.05$, denotes ** $p < 0.01$, *** denotes $p < 0.001$

4.3 Hypothesis Testing

From Model 2, it can be seen that employees’ work experience positively predicts job performance ($\beta = 0.446, p < 0.001$), and H1 is supported. From Model 6, it can be seen that employees’ work experience positively predicts positive emotions ($\beta = 0.352, p < 0.001$), and H2 is supported; It can be seen from Model 3 that positive emotions positively predict job performance ($\beta = 0.335, p < 0.001$), while the positive impact of employees’ work experience on work performance is still significant, but the degree of influence is reduced compared with Model 2 ($\beta = 0.328, p < 0.001$), indicating that positive emotions play a partial mediating role between employees’ work experience and work performance, and H3 is supported. According to Model 8, employee work experience positively affects work engagement ($\beta = 0.283, p < 0.001$), and H4 is supported. It can be seen from Model 4 that work engagement positively predicts job performance ($\beta = 0.394, p < 0.001$), while the positive impact of employee work experience on job performance is still significant, but the degree of influence is slightly lower than that of Model 8 ($\beta = 0.326, p < 0.001$), indicating that work engagement plays a partial mediating role between employee work experience and work performance, and H5 is supported, the specific results are shown in Table 3.

The results are shown in Table 4, H3 indicates that positive affect mediates the relationship between employee work experience and job performance, and model 3 shows a significant mediating effect of 0.285, with a 95% confidence interval of (0, 0.178), excluding 0. H5 states that work engagement mediates the relationship between employees’ work experience and job performance, and model 4 is tested.

H6 proposed that positive emotion and work engagement play a chain mediating role in the relationship between employee work experience and job performance, which was tested using PROCESS and the results are shown in Table 4. The chain mediating effect

Table 3. Results of the hierarchical regression analysis

Variables	Job performance				Positive emotions		Work input	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8
Gender	-0.003	-0.043	-0.030	-0.049	-0.006	-0.038	0.041	0.016
Age	-0.153	-0.168	-0.150	-0.027	-0.041	-0.053	-0.346**	-0.353**
Academic qualifications	0.136	-0.055	0.156**	0.092	-0.062	0.067	0.110	-0.060
Job Level	-0.131	0.199	-0.077	-0.033	0.007	0.132	-0.108	0.355**
Years of work	0.150	0.135*	0.155	0.056	0.093	-0.064	0.33**	0.112
Staff work experience		0.446***	0.328***	0.326***		0.352***		0.283***
Positive emotions			0.335***					
Work input				0.394***				
F	2.134	10.633	14.721	21.059	0.333	4.908	3.054	5.538
R2	0.049	0.236	0.335	0.452	0.008	0.125	0.069	0.159

Note: * denotes $p < 0.05$, denotes ** $p < 0.01$, *** denotes $p < 0.001$

Table 4. Intermediary role test

Path of action	Direct effects			Indirect effects		
	Effect value	95% confidence interval		Effect value	95% confidence interval	
		Lower limit	Upper limit		Lower limit	Upper limit
X → M1 → Y	0.285	0.000	0.178	0.103	0.052	0.161
X → M2 → Y	0.284	0.000	0.181	0.104	0.045	0.184
X → M1 → M2 → Y	0.193	0.000	0.092	0.195	0.1215	0.278

coefficient for employee work experience to predict job performance through positive emotion and work engagement in turn was 0.193 with a 95% confidence interval of (0, 0.092], excluding 0, supporting H6.

5 Conclusion

5.1 Research Findings

Based on positive event theory, this study explored the mechanism of the role of employee work experience on job performance through positive emotion and work engagement. The data analysis results support hypotheses 1–6.

5.2 Management Insights

First of all, to help enterprises and employees achieve a new situation of “win-win”, by exploring the impact of employee work experience on work performance, enterprise managers pay attention to employees’ work experience and employees’ emotions, and maximize employees to give full play to their potential, committed to the vision and mission of the organization; Secondly, to promote enterprises to use new ideas to improve employee work performance, this study provides Internet enterprises with ideas to improve work performance through positive work experience, positive emotions and high work commitment; Finally, help establish a complete set of nurturing system for employee work experience, design a work experience, enable enterprises to have a deeper understanding of the needs, expectations and emotions of each employee, attract and retain employees through meaning and value, so that human resource management can be transformed into a more strategic process, and an emerging source of sustainable competitive advantage can be obtained, providing new ideas and breakthrough points for the recruitment and allocation of human resources and labor relations management and other modules in the later stage.

5.3 Shortcomings and Outlook

There are still some shortcomings in this study: first, this study is carried out in the context of China, and the research objects are mostly concentrated in first-tier cities and regions, so the research conclusions have regional and cultural limitations, and future research can be carried out in multiple regions to test the research conclusions; Second, this study mainly focuses on the positive results brought by the work experience of employees in networked enterprises, explores the impact of employee work experience on work performance, and can pay attention to the overall impact of employee emotions (positive and negative emotions) in the future to enrich the research level.

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