



THE ROLE OF GOAL ORIENTATION AMONG THE EXECUTIVES

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ABSTRACT

Goal orientation refers to the goals individuals implicitly pursue while attempting to attain certain performance outcomes (Dweck & Leggett, 1988). In general, goal orientation has been conceptualized as the mental framework in which people interpret and respond to situations, circumstances and events of both achievement and failure. The data for this study was collected through survey method. Executives with more than 45 years of age have higher performance-approach and performance-avoidance. Further details were discussed in this paper.

Key Words:

Goal orientation and Executives

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INTRODUCTION

Goal orientation refers to the goals individuals implicitly pursue while attempting to attain certain performance outcomes (Dweck & Leggett, 1988). In general, goal orientation has been conceptualized as the mental framework in which people interpret and respond to situations, circumstances and events of both achievement and failure. Learning and performance goal orientation are associated with different personal attributes such as intellect and interpersonal skills (Dweck, 1999). Some authors have assumed that goal orientation would be composed of three independent and not mutually exclusive components (Elliot & Harackiewicz, 1996; VandeWalle, 1997, 2001): learning goal orientation - - the preference to develop one's competence by acquiring new skills and mastering new situations', proving performance goal orientation - - the preference to demonstrate and validate one's competence by seeking favourable judgments; and avoidance performance goal orientation - - the preference to avoid negative judgments about one's ability from others. Individuals who are high in performance avoidance orientation are avoiding demonstrations of incompetence and negative judgments, relative to others. Consequently, a performance-avoid goal is considered to be an avoidance form of motivation as it orients one towards the negative outcomes of avoiding negative judgments and demonstrating lack of ability. Individuals with a performance-approach goal orientation focus on gaining favourable judgments of their ability and competence relative to others. A performance-avoid goal orientation orients individuals towards the avoidance of demonstrating incompetence and negative judgments relative to others (Elliot and Harackiewicz, 1996; Rawsthorne & Elliot, 1999; VandeWalle, 1997).

Learning goal orientation is to develop competence by acquiring new skills and mastering new situations. The goal orientation measure administered to the executives would explore the different dimensions such as performance approach, performance avoidance, and learning orientation based on which we identify the approach of executives in approaching targets.

Review of Literature

Collin (2009) investigated how workers' work-related identity is related to various forms of workplace learning. The findings revealed that learning and work-related identity are related to one another in many ways. Further, work-related identity is constructed strategically as one of many identities constituted in other areas of life. Kooij, Lange, Jansen, and Dikkers (2008) explored age-related factors that influence work motivation. The results from 24 empirical and nine conceptual studies indicated that most age-related factors can have a negative impact on the motivation to continue to work of older people. Manolopoulos (2008) studied the relationship between work motivation and organizational performance in the public sector organization. Findings indicated that both the individuals' ability and demographic characteristics are core determinants of employees' motivational preferences. Maurer and Lippstreu (2008) examined whether learning and performance goal orientations of employees act as moderators among 651 employees. The findings revealed that support for development is positively related to commitment for some workers; however, individual learning and performance orientations act as moderators. For some individuals, support for development by an organization will not be associated with greater commitment and might even be negatively associated with commitment. Rebecca, Jayasuriya, Caputi, and Hammer (2008) developed a model to test conceptions from goal theory within an existing framework of training motivation and tested with employees participating in training in a non-profit organization. Results revealed that goal orientation predicted a significant proportion of variance in the

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proximal antecedents (valence (33 per cent), expectancy (39 per cent), and self-efficacy (31 per cent)), whereas the proximal antecedents explained 43 per cent of the variance in goal intentions. Bertram, Hae-Ching, and Chen-Kuo (2007) examined empirically the relationships among industry environment, diversification motivations, and corporate performance. The results suggest that industry environment has positive and significant impact on diversification motivations, and has positive but not significant impact on corporate performance. Diversification motivations have positive and significant impact on corporate performance.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study aims at exploring the role of goal orientation of the executives. The study also considers the differences in the selected variable on the basis of age, length of service, number of dependents, and educational qualification of the executives.

The objectives are:

- To compare the goal orientation of executives with respect to their age, educational qualification, length of service, and number of dependents.
- To study the role of goal orientation among the executives.

Research Design: Survey method is used in this study, which is descriptive and associational in nature. Executives of a public sector organization were selected and from 256 sample questionnaire were administered. This study is made using Goal Orientation Measure of Zweing and Webster (2004). The data for this study was collected through survey method. The description, administration, and the psychometric properties of the tools are presented here.

Goal Orientation Measure

Description: The Goal Orientation Measure of Zweing and Webster (2004) is a self-report measure, which explored the different types of goal orientation. This measure consists of 21 statements from which I have utilized only 12 items for this study, which explore the different dimensions of goal orientation viz. performance approach, performance avoidance, and learning orientation. There are five response categories viz. "strongly disagree," "disagree," "neutral," "agree," and "strongly disagree."

The number of items in each dimension of the Goal Orientation Measure is given below:

Dimension of Goal Orientation	No. of items	Item numbers
Performance approach	4	1,2,3,4
Performance avoidance	4	5,6,7,8
Learning orientation	4	9,10,11,12

The Goal Orientation Measure is presented in Section – D.

Administration: The executives were instructed as follows: "This measure consists of a number of statements which follow five response categories. Read each statement carefully and indicate your agreement or disagreement in the given five-point scale and by marking the corresponding number. There is no right or wrong answer and there is no time limit. Work rapidly and give your immediate response to each item."

Scoring: The following scoring pattern was used to score the items:

Response	Score
Strongly disagree	1
Disagree	2
Neutral	3
Agree	4
Strongly agree	5

Reliability: Zweing and Webster (2004a) have established internal consistency reliability for the three scales. For the learning orientation, it is 0.85, for performance approach orientation it is 0.82, and for performance avoidance orientation it is 0.69. The test-retest reliability coefficients for the goal orientation scale are: learning orientation is 0.73, performance approach orientation is 0.84, and

performance avoidance orientation is 0.78. These correlation coefficient values suggest that goal orientation is stable over time.

Validity: Zweing and Webster (2004a) ensured both content and construct validity. The convergent validity of the 3 scales is: learning orientation it is 0.87, for performance approach orientation it is 0.79, and for performance avoidance orientation it is 0.81. These convergent validity values reveal that the tool is highly valid.

Data Analysis

Hypothesis: 1

"Executives differ in their goal orientation on the basis of age.": From Table –1, it is found that the 't' values are significant for performance-approach and performance-avoidance whereas it is not significant for learning orientation. Hence, the hypothesis is accepted. It is concluded that the executives significantly differ in their goal orientation on the basis of age. From the above table it is found that the executives with more than 45 years of age have higher performance-approach and performance-avoidance.

Table 1. Goal orientation of executives on the basis of their age

Dimensions of Goal orientation	Age Group				t-value
	Up to 45 Years		Above 45 Years		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Performance - approach	15.01	2.09	15.80	2.53	2.66*
Performance - avoidance	10.50	2.47	11.55	3.98	2.41*
Learning	16.53	2.28	16.41	1.94	0.44 ^{NS}

N₁= 108 * - Significant at 0.05 level; N₂= 148 ^{NS} - Not Significant

With a performance-approach goal, one seeks to demonstrate or prove competence in the presence of others. In contrast, people with a performance-avoidance goal orientation act to avoid negative evaluations. Individuals with strong performance-approach orientation try to utilize all the opportunities, develop knowledge and skills, and regulate themselves. Higher in performance-approach incorporates attributes like commitment, involvement, and responsibility etc., which will be growing with experience. Organizational Development is possible only through uniform motivation practices, and individual career grooming at all levels within the organization. The good motivational practices and goal orientation should be considered by the organization, and the management should show interest in establishing such systems in the organization with employees over a period of time. It is evident that the executives with higher age have better performance orientation. It is concluded that executives differ in the better performance approach and avoidance orientation on the basis of their age.

Hypothesis: 2

"Executives differ in their goal orientation with respect to the number of dependents in the family.": From Table - 2, it is observed that the 't' values are significant for two goal orientation constructs and not significant for learning orientation. Hence, the hypothesis is accepted. It is concluded that the executives with more number of dependents have significantly higher performance-avoidance orientation whereas executives with less dependents have higher performance approach orientation.

Table 2. Goal orientation of executives on the basis of their number of dependents

Dimensions of Goal orientation	Number of Dependents				t-value
	Up to 2		More than 2		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Performance - approach	16.06	2.42	15.06	2.28	3.36*
Performance - avoidance	9.53	3.49	12.20	2.99	6.54*
Learning	16.50	2.22	16.44	2.00	0.22 ^{NS}

N₁= 105 * - Significant at 0.05 level; N₂= 151 ^{NS} - Not Significant

Hypothesis: 3

"Executives differ significantly in their goal orientation on the basis of their educational qualification.": From Table - 3, it is noticed that

the 'F' values are not significant for the performance-approach and learning where as significant for performance-avoidance goal orientations. Hence, the hypothesis is not accepted. It is concluded that executives do not differ in their goal orientation on the basis of their goal efficient. However, the executives differ significantly in their performance-avoidance based on their educational qualification.

Table 3. Goal orientation of executives with respect to their educational qualification

Dimensions of Goal orientation	Educational qualification			F-Value	Scheffe – Post hoc
	1	2	3		
	Mean (S.D)	Mean (S.D)	Mean (S.D)		
Performance - approach	14.94 (2.44)	15.46 (2.64)	15.80 (2.04)	2.560 ^{NS}	---
Performance – avoidance	11.44 (2.40)	11.69 (4.07)	10.37 (3.29)	3.995*	2 Vs 1 Vs 3
Learning	16.45 (1.59)	16.31 (2.25)	16.60 (2.21)	0.473 ^{NS}	---

N₁= 62 1. Technical diploma; N₂= 93 2. Non - Professional Degree; N₃ = 101 3. Professional Degree, * - Significant at 0.05 level ^{NS} - Not Significant

Hypothesis: 4

“Executives differ significantly in their goal orientation on the basis of length of service.”: From Table - 4, it is found that the 'F' values are significant for all the constructs of goal orientation. Hence, the hypothesis is accepted. It is concluded that the executives differ significantly in their goal orientation based on the length of service in the organization. Executives with above 20 years of service in the organization have higher score in performance-approach.

Table 4. Goal orientation of executives in accordance with their length of service

Dimensions of Goal orientation	Length of Service			F-Value	Scheffe – Post hoc
	1	2	3		
	Mean (S.D)	Mean (S.D)	Mean (S.D)		
Performance – approach	14.65 (2.08)	15.62 (2.36)	15.75 (2.57)	3.650*	3 Vs 2 Vs 1
Performance – avoidance	9.52 (2.25)	11.56 (3.50)	11.25 (3.82)	6.647*	2 Vs 3 Vs 1
Learning	17.21 (2.15)	16.22 (2.04)	16.47 (2.05)	4.195*	1 Vs 3 Vs 2

N₁= 48 1. Up to 10 years; N₂= 148 2. 11 to 20 years; N₃ = 60 3. Above 20 years; * - Significant at 0.05 level

It may be due to their experience in handling different managerial issues arising on day to day affairs, which has made them to get exposure of the right approaches to solve the various situations in the organization. Executives with 11 to 20 years of service in the organization have higher score in performance-avoidance. Executives, who are higher in the performance-avoidance, may be due to the monotony towards work which exhibits that individuals are avoiding demonstrations of incompetence and negative judgments, relative to others. Also, the executives with up to 10 years of service in the organization have higher score in learning orientation. It may be due to the age factor as they are starting their career with lot of hopes and expectations which makes them to learn things in the organization to prove themselves. It is concluded that executives differ in their goal orientation on the basis of their years of service in the organization.

FINDINGS

1. Executives with more than 45 years of age have higher performance-approach and performance-avoidance.
2. Executives with up to 2 dependents in the family have higher performance – approach orientation.
3. Executives with non-professional degrees have higher performance-avoidance orientation than the other educational groups.
4. Executives with above 20 years of service in the organization have higher score in performance-approach.
5. Executives with 11 to 20 years of service in the organization have higher score in performance-avoidance.

6. Executives with up to 10 years of service in the organization have higher score in learning orientation.

Conclusion

The literature on motivation reveals that the organization goals and goal setting are pivotal in the field of learning and instruction. The value executives assign to their goals, perception of the competence, casual attribution, and emotional reactions are found to be the promoters of organization success. The findings on goal orientation reveal that executives those who are above 45 years age, 11 to 20 years of experience and who have up to 2 numbers of dependents in the family where focused on performance-approach orientation. This is supported by Manolopoulos (2008), demographic characteristics are core determinants of employees' motivational preferences. Performance orientation is characterized by a desire to prove one's competency and to demonstrate it to others. Individual with this orientation may not have any desire to improve their own understanding and knowledge. The management should focus on their training methods to improve their learning orientation. The findings on goal orientation revealed that executives those who are aged above 45 years age, 11 to 20 years of experience, those who have more than 2 dependents in the family, and who possess non-professional degree holders have performance-avoidance attitude. The age related finding is supported by Kooij et al. (2008) most age-related factors can have a negative impact on the motivation towards older people. Performance-avoidance may be due to the result of ability, deceptive tactics, negative cognitions, and external factors. Further, the findings on goal orientation reveal that those up to 10 years of service in the organization have higher learning orientation. It is one of the interesting findings of this study. The younger ones are with an urge to learn. Moreover, they are keen to make use of the opportunities available in the organization. Organization should develop them for the welfare of organization.

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