

MEDIATING EFFECT OF SOCIAL VALUE ORIENTATION ON PERCEPTION OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN A MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The growth of globalisation, the emergence of flexible production and the increased need for a small number of workers mean that conflicts between workers appear to be improvements in the workplace, structure and relationships are more complex, dense, fragmented and intense. The purpose of this study is to describe the role defined by Social Value Orientation (SVO) for the relationship between individual views and conflict management. This structure gives an idea of the role social value orientation in determining the meaningful perception of the employee and the perception of conflict in the manufacturing sector as an intermediary in the relationship between conflict management, personal awareness and concepts of orientation to social values. This survey will also become a tool for directors of organisations to maintain peace and stability for their employees and the entire organisation.

Keywords: Conflict management, social value orientation, Individual perceptions.

Introduction:

Conflict play an important role in organisational life and contributes to the efficiency and productivity of employees and organisations. On the other hand, it can hinder the achievement of goals. Henry (2000) argues that, conflict is one of the most common phenomena in human and organisational life. Employees of the organisation have different ideas about how to see what is happening among themselves. In fact, their approach to each other seems to be a sign of conflict. Strength, work, position, resources, awareness, security and

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classes are essential elements of organisational life when people compete (Bagshaw, 1998). Awareness is one of the most important in understanding, integrating and managing organisational conflicts. Similarly, differences in people's perceptions of issues causes conflict. This is, no conflict in the organisation will occur only if the parties involved do not perceived it.

According to Mullins (2005), perception is primarily a mental function that combines stimuli such as shape, skin colour, sound, pressures and feeling with meaning. Since employee perception plays an important role in shaping attitudes toward the organisation's policies, programs or responsibilities, the employee's response to a particular situation or organisation's problem is largely determined by perception. This is not only how people in the organisation understand and respond to policies and programs, but their perceptions most affect the interpretation, evaluation and evaluation of such policies. People's perceptions of the effects of conflict can be beneficial or harmful, depending on many factors for employees and the organisation. Social value orientation is one of the main phenomena in conflict management in an organisation.

According to Kazimoto (2013), conflict is understood as a dispute arises when the goals, interests, or values of different people or groups are incompatible and interfere with each other's efforts to achieve each other's goals. In particular, the origin of culture, family orientation, the level of educational and experience of a particular person plays an important role in determining the level of perception. According to Chen and Starosta (1997), increasing cultural diversity in different environment s requires the ability to adopt to unknown environments, work productively and live with people from different cultures.

To understand more about multi-dimensional conflicts in today's highly competitive business environment, we need to look at a study by Ubeku (2002), organisational conflict was the results of an ongoing struggle for control over aspects of work and inequality over the power struggle between workers and employers. Distribution of labour income, lack of work and lack of control by management. Similarly, Fajana (2002) separates industrial conflicts from other forms of conflict, emphasising the inability of employers and workers to share a common understanding of all issues of employer-employee interaction. Labour conflict always arises when there is a conflict of interests and goals in the relationship between work and management. As a result, conflict with employees often arise due to differences in the personalities and values of workers. To maintain a healthy work environment, timely resolution of conflicts with workers is important (Ogunbameru & Oribabor, 2000).

Previous studies have been conducted on subjects such as: Einarsen, Skogstad, Rorvik, Lande and Nielsen., (2016) Climate conflict management, workplace harassment and work engagement; analysis of interventions. As a result, harassment and engagement are linked, the climate for conflict management has less interruption reports, the climate for conflict management is associated with intervention at work, and the climate for conflict management indirectly indicates that it is associated with participation in oppression. Sushma

(2016), conducted a study on the role of mediation in workplace stress between work-family conflict, work-leisure conflict, and employee's perception of service quality in the French hospitality industry. The results showed that the conflict between work-family conflict and work-leisure conflict has a positive effect on job stress.

Similarly to the work of Dielhl, Richter and Sarnecki, (2016) the influence of sensitivity of socio-economic conditions on the difference in employee productivity in organisational justice consists in strengthening the relationship between organisational justice, on the one hand, and the fulfilments of organisational tasks and behaviour, on the other hand, when socio-economic conditions are poor. On the other hand, there is no connection between organisational justice and unproductive behaviour.

Similarly, a study by Yang Woon Chung (2018) on exclusion in the Workplace and behaviour in the workplace shows that the mediated model, through perceived stress and enhanced psychological capabilities, mediates the relationship between exclusion in workplace and supportive behaviour, lead, speak and complete tasks. A moderate analysis usually shows that stress, and the connection between exclusion in the workplace and behavioural outcomes is mediated only when people feel a low level of mental ability.

Hasani, Sadeghi, Saman Boroujerdi, Sheikhesmaeili and Aeini, (2014) a study of the identity of organisational of the organisational structure of the conflict: an assessment of factor modelling based on Iranian demography. The results of the survey show that, there are no significant differences between the causes of organisational conflict on basis of sex, but there are differences between the causes of organisational conflict by age, education and work experience. Frank, Emelia and Theresa (2018), writes about the impact of employee perceptions on the successful institutionalisation and implementation of performance management systems in developing countries.

Ghanian civil service perspective “ The analyses shows that employees have positive attitudes towards performance management, taking in to account how the system is implemented and what role the different regulators play in the company and Serkan (2017), seeks to determine employee confidence in the organisation shows that perception of employee confidence organisation depends on personality characteristics and organisations .

Long-Zeng, Thomas, Flora and Haina (2016), wrote about the perceptions of negative workplace Gossip: the foundations of the theory of self-consistency. The results showed that, workplace gossip affects self-esteem based on the organisation of employees and, therefore, their behaviour towards the organisation and its members. Finally, Michal, Maya, and Menachem (2016) stated that “with regard to the perceived meaning of life, the characteristics of social workers indicate that age, subjective well-being, satisfaction with attached, and fear of personal violence exist in the context of the meaning of life.

However, the above studies largely ignore how these variables (individual perceptions, conflict management etc.) can be mediated through social value

orientation (Individual Orientation, Competitive Orientation, Cooperative Orientation and Altruistic Orientation) as a driving force. They will immediately focus on explaining how individual employees feel when managing conflict in an organisation. To address these gaps, the study focuses on assessing the direct influence of social value orientation on the perception and management of conflict among employees in the manufacturing industry.

The aim of this work is to review the various literature on the role of social value orientation in mediating the relationship between individuals' perception and conflict management in manufacturing industry. The research methodology is based on existing literature on individual perception and conflict management. A review of variables, theoretical and conceptual framework conditions is discussed and conclusion are drawn.

Conceptual Review

Conflict

Generally, the concept of conflict has no comprehensive or universal definition, where various definitions have been offered by many scholars from a variety of backgrounds, such as sociology, psychology, behavioural science, anthropology and communication (Ajike, Akinlabi, Magaji & Sonubi, 2015). According to Mc Shane, Von Glinow and Sharm (2008) describe the concept of conflict as “a process in which one party perceives that its interests are being opposed or negatively affected by another”. Conflict occur as a result of incompatibility of needs, ideas, beliefs, values or goals among people working as a team (Suliman & Abdulla, 2005); further said, “the end result of conflict is not predetermined and it could be either be good or bad”. According to Deutsch and Coleman (2000) said, conflict is not a battle between the rational and irrational; however, the manner in which conflict is controlled establishes whether it is constructive or destructive.

The concept of conflict is also synonymous with antagonism, opposition, disagreement, discord, combat and encounter. More so, the concept can be referring as competition between or among group individual in an organisation. Rahim (2001:365) looked at conflict as “an interactive process manifested in incompatibility, disagreement or dissonance within or between social entities. Monkoe (2007) defined conflict as the pursuit of incompatible or at least seemingly incompatible goals such that gain to one side come out at the expenses of the other. Likewise, Ursing (2003) state that, conflict is the differences in perspectives, beliefs, actions or interest, which are sometimes verbalised, and sometimes they are not.

Conflict is a form of social interaction and social situation, where interest or activities of individuals or groups within an organisation usually confront each other and prevent attainment of one party's objectives (Spaho, 2013). Conflict can also be expressed in terms of disagreements among the stakeholders about levels of risk, future conditions, core problems, alternative ways dealing with problems and criteria for assessing these alternatives (Nutt, 1988). According to Choudric

(2005), when people from diverse backgrounds & experience work together, conflict are bound to arise. Also, conflict can be seen as a condition that arises when two or more individual or groups perceive their own interests as being challenged by the other's and where strong feelings can be aroused, (Kurfi, 2016). Moreover, conflict occurs when two or more people or groups perceive that they have incompatibility of goals or interdependence of activities. In other words, conflict in an organisational context can also be seen as a disagreement amongst individuals and groups within the organisation stemming from the need to share scarce work activities. (Kurfi, 2016). On the traditionalist view of conflict as a dysfunctional outcome which is a product of managers' unresponsiveness to the needs and concerns of their personnel, lack of effective communication and trust between the parties. Kurfi (2016:148) further said that "there may be conflict if management or employer is not satisfied with the performance of personnel within the organisation

Types, Causes, and factors of Conflict

There are five major types of conflicts in an organisation, namely: intra-personal conflicts, interpersonal conflict, individual conflict, inter group conflict and between organisations in the environment (Kurfi, 2016).

Lots of reasons have been advanced for the causes of conflict. For example, Benjamin and Hideaki (2004) stated the reason and the motives of organisational conflict and can be classified into two categories, namely: economic and non-economic causes. The economic cause involves subjects relating to amends such as payment, award, allowances and conditions for work, working hours, leave and holidays without pay, and unfair Layoffs and retrenchments. In addition, in the other hand non-economic factors are victimisation of workers, poor treatment by staff members, compassionate strikes, political element, indiscipline etc. Likewise, the work of Ubeku (2002) who also observed that conflict in an organisation is a consequence of enduring power struggle between workers and their employer over the control of various aspect of work, inequality in the distribution of proceeds of industry, job security of the worker and poor management control. Tiwari (2016) classified causes of workplace conflict to include Differences in Personalities, Competition, Poor communication, and Different values.

Furthermore, if the tasks of individual working as a group are not clearly defined by the management, they will lead more conflict; and most conflict would arise from or between individuals and groups if the goals were not specified for individual within the group (Duke, 1999). Conflict may also arise within an individual when a person is uncertain about what task is expected to do, if not clearly defined by the supervision or the person in charge (Henry, 2009). When managers perceived conflict in the workplace, they may assume it is due to incompatible personalities "why can't everyone just get along with each other?" they plead. Nevertheless, managers need to understand that, the sources of conflict are often deeper than individual personality. They will better able to select the appropriate strategy in managing it by underlying the causes or sources of

conflict situations often are built into the organisation's hierarchy and ways of doing business.

A situational thinker, Bercovitch (1990:6) also defined conflict as "situation which generates incompatible goals or values among different parties". Coser (1957:197) who is an American sociologist also defined conflict as the "clash of values and interests, the tension between what is and what some groups feel ought to be".

Ichaver (2006) organisational conflicts are influenced by a number of factors such as Conflict of interests, differences in perceptions, excessive use of official power, conflict in value judgment, and unrestrained. Kurfi (2016) adds that flow of emotional sentiments in official matters could cause organisational conflicts.

Conflict Management

Conflict is a fact in any giving organisation as long as people compete for a jobs, resources, recognition, power and security. Therefore, dealing with a conflict in an organisation is a great challenge to the management of an organisation (Adomi & Anie, 2008). Managing conflict in an organisation, contributes significantly to the successful leadership, teamwork, product improvement, as well as service quality to the customers not only that, it will also build customer loyalty, reduces costs and efficient use of financial resources (Tjosvold, Hui & Law, 2001). According to Rahim (2002:206), "Conflict management is a process of limiting the negative aspects of conflict and increasing the positive aspects of it". To him also, the main objective of conflict management is to enhance learning and group outcomes, including effectiveness in performance of organisational setting. Likewise, Hellriegel (2010) cited by Ndulue and Ekechukwu (2016) defined conflict management as the interventions designed to reduce conflict, or in some instances, to increase insufficient conflict.

Generally, conflict has a negative connotation; however, it is a positive occurrence if really properly manage by management of the organisation. Therefore, managers, in an organisation are expected to analyse their goals, create dialogue among their employees and lastly foster creative solutions. In fact, some previous studies also said, conflict that is properly managed may foster creativity and suggest that, moderate conflict yields higher quality decisions than little or no conflict. Without conflict therefore, employees and organisations would stagnate, (Hoffman, Hamburg & Meier, 1962). In an organisation, task conflict helps to overcome individual psychological distortions and biases by forcing people out of their traditional modes of thinking, in as such, conflict promotes the unstructured thinking that some see as required for developing good and novel alternatives to difficult problem (Putnam & Wilson, 1988). According to Choudric (2005), conflicts are not productive for organisation and therefore, conflict resolution is sought to ensure peace and understanding. He also states that, there are two forms of conflict that exist within work psychology literature and these are affective and substantive conflict.

Conflict management or resolution therefore, is the best instrument to be used to minimise and mitigate conflictual situations into peace building process, not only that, it is also the best mechanism towards social justice, peace, harmony, cooperation and above all world brotherhood. Other studies suggested that, it is the best slogan of peacekeeping, peace making and building among conflicted parties and war zones. Conflict resolution or management as a discipline has thrust upon that conflicts should be resolved only through peaceful means not through violent means of destruction (Pooja, 2007). According to Peter (2002), conflict management or resolution is when a conflicting party enter into an agreement that solves their central incompatibilities, accept each other's continued existence as parties and cease all violent action. Conflict resolution on the other hands, refers to a range of process to alleviating or eliminating sources of conflict. It is an umbrella term for a whole range of methods and approaches for dealing with conflict: from negotiation to diplomacy, from mediation to arbitration, from facilitation to adjudication, from conciliation to conflict prevention, from conflict management to conflict transformation, from restorative justice to peacekeeping.

Conflict and Perception

Perceived conflict is present when parties recognise the conditions or when the parties involve misunderstanding one another's true position. More so, failure to identify potentially conflictive situation may prevent conflicts from developing immediately, but in an organisational setting, there is illogical or inaccurate perception of the situation, which cause unnecessary conflicts. The concept of perception can be defined according to Berelson and Steiner (1964) as complex process by which people select, organise, and interpret sensory stimulation into a meaningful and coherent picture of the world. Likewise, Barber and Legge (1976) defined it as about receiving, selecting, acquiring, transforming and organising the information supplied by our senses. Perception is therefore, not necessarily based on reality but is merely a perspective, an individual's view (Kim and Han, 2017; Pettinger, 2010; Pickens, 2005). Pickens (2005) defined the concept of perception as a process by which organisms interpreted and organised sensation to produce a meaningful experience of the world. Whereas Munhall (2008) see it as a mode of apprehending reality and experience through the sense, thus enabling discernment of figure, form language, behaviour and action. Robbins, Judge, Odendael and Roodt (2013), said perception is a process by which individual organise and interpret their sensory impressions in order to give meaning to their environment. In an organisational setting, thus perception therefore, becomes part of individual or employee's realities and remains as such without concerted effort to get beyond them (Mc Connel, 1994).

Employee or individual perception then it will refer to as a process through which employees detect and interpret environmental workplace stimuli as to create a meaningful picture of that world. A research conducted by Katsaros, Tsirikas and Bani (2014:36) described individual perception as "the process by which an employee organises and interprets his/her impressions in order to give

meaning to his/her environment and thus, it influences significantly to his/her workplace behaviour". Individual perception can also be viewed as important in an organisation, simply because people behaviour is based on their perception of what reality is, not on reality itself; the world as it is perceived is the world that is behaviourally important (Robbins, et al., 2013). As a result, management of an organisation has a duty to develop and implement an effective strategy that will influence, as well as change perceptions of the organisation both within and outside it. (Elsbach, 2003; Neck, Houghton & Murray, 2017). However, failure to do so, such can be disastrous consequences to both employees and the organisation as a whole.

Factors Influencing Individual Perception in an Organisation

Previous researches conducted by various scholars have identified some factors that influence individual perception in an organisation. According to Robbins *et al.* (2013), they can break down into three (3) categories, the situation, the perceiver, and the target.

The situation

This is simply the context in which perception take place. For example, employees in an organisation that is in crisis situation may see or perceive things differently than those in an organisation that is stable. With this regard, elements include: time, work setting, and social setting. Helms and Stern (2001), conducted a study on organisational culture, and found that organisational unit, age, gender, and ethnicity do influence people perception. However, Mc Connell (1994:75) said that "an individual employee's perception is shaped by organisational roles, communication, styles, supervisory styles and congruence of practice and policy."

Perceiver:

Perceiver here means that, the person trying to interpret some observation that he or she has just made, or the input from his or her senses (George & Jones, 2005). The perceiver factors may include; attitudes, motives, interests, experiences, and expectations. Paanwe and Richrdson (2001: 1085-1091) found out that "attitude and behaviour are significantly in employee perception as a key construct explaining the link between organisational performance and employee attitudes and behaviour". With regard to expectation and experience, Schinnenburg, Dutton, Grant, Spreitzer and Sutchiffe (2013) conducted a study on younger employees in non-profit sector in Germany and found out that experiences and expectations lead to either job satisfaction or negative perception of the sector.

The target:

The target refers to whatever it is the perceiver is trying to make sense (Robbins et al, 2013). In an organisation, this includes a new policy or any change process and the variables include Novelty, motion, sound, size, background, proximity and similarity (Robbins, et al., 2013).

Social Value Orientation

The general concept underlying social value orientation has become widely studied in a variety of different scientific disciplines, such as sociology,

economics, psychology and Biology under a multitude of different name. (E.g. social preferences, other regarding preferences welfare trade-off ratios, social motives, etc.) (Murphy, Ackermann & Handgraaf, 2011). For instance, in social psychology, social value orientation is a person's preference about how to allocate resources between the self and another person. As such, social value orientation corresponds to how much weight a person attaches to the welfare of others in relation to his own. In an organisational setting, peoples are assumed to vary in the weight they attach to other people's outcomes in relation to their own. With this regard, we can say that, social value orientation generally is an individual difference variable. Likewise, it is possible to assume that, person's preference over own other resources allocation referred as social value orientation (there is interdependence, but if there is no other person making a decision that affects the joint outcome, here there is no interdependence and therefore a potential effect or belief on behaviour is ruled out), (Murphy, et al., 2011).

De Dreu and Boles (1998:253), said "social value orientation (SVO) has been found to affect cognitions and account for behaviours across a range of interpersonal decision-making context, especially in the domain of negotiation settings". Likewise, the work of Zeelenberg, Nelissen, Brengelmanns and Pieters (2008:18) postulated that "social value orientation has been identified as a covariate interacting with different emotional states and influencing the propensity to cooperate". Social value orientation can be described as dispositional weights individual attach to their own and to another person's outcome (Jan, Daniel, Jeff, Michael, Sven & Paul, 2018). Social value orientation can serve as a mediating factor between the individual perception and that of conflict management as people vary in their motivations or goals when evaluating different source allocations between themselves and another person. Studies on the motivations that underline interdependent decision behaviour have long history and these motivations have been referred to by a variety of names: social preferences, social motives, other regarding preferences, welfare trade off ratios and social value orientation (Henrich et al., 2005)

Conflict between employees in an organisation is a common phenomenon, which mostly resulted from differences in individual personalities and values. In fact, conflict among the workers in an organisation is almost inevitable, as long as people work together in an organisation, conflict become part of doing the business. The emergence of globalisation, industrialisation and liberalisation, bring about flexible production, and higher demands with fewer workers manifest, as such, employee's conflict is perceived as being on the increase in the workplace, particularly in manufacturing industry as the workplace structures and relationships become more complicated, dense, fractured and intense (Brown et al, 2012).

Pro-self and Pro-social within Social Value Orientation

When peoples seek to maximise their gains or benefits in an organisation, they are said to be pro-self, but in the other hand, when people are also having more concerned with other's gains and losses, they are said to be prosocial. Based

on the definition of two concepts above, there are four (4) categories of people within social value orientation: Individualistic and Competitive social value orientations are pro-self while Comparative and Altruistic social value orientation are pro-social (Forsyth, 2006).

Individualistic orientation

People within this category are concerned only with their own outcomes and they can only make a decision based on what they think they will personally achieve without concern for others outcomes. That is, they are not involved with other group members, rather than focused only on their own outcome and they neither assist nor interfere in other business. However, their action may indirectly affect other members of the group but such effect is not their goal.

Competitive orientation

People fall within this category are much similar to that of individualistic, who also strive to maximise their own outcomes, but in addition, they seek to minimise other outcomes, (i.e. Win-lose situation) and also competitors find the satisfaction in forcing their ideas upon others. People of such attitudes in an organisation always have the belief that each person should get the most they can in each situation and play to win every time. Therefore, those people with competitive social value orientation are more likely to find themselves in conflicts (Forsyth, 2006). In an organisation mostly, competitors cause co-operators to react with criticism to their abrasive styles, even though competitors are rarely modified or adjust their behaviour in response to these complaints because they are relatively unconcerned with maintaining interpersonal relations.

Cooperative orientation

Here, co-operators tend to maximise their own outcomes as well as other's outcomes. They prefer strategies that generate win-win situations. When dealing with other people, they believe that it is better if everyone comes out even in a situation.

Altruistic orientation

People who fall within this category are always motivated to help other who is in need; they are also low in self-interest by willing to sacrifice their own outcomes in the hopes of helping others to achieve their benefits in the organisations. According to Au and Kwong (2004:71), "Individualism is prevalent among very young children and that the frequency of expressions of prosocial and competitive social value orientations increases with age. Among adults, it has been shown repeatedly that prosocial social value orientations are most frequently observed (up to 50 percent) followed by individualistic social value orientations (about 30-40 percent) and competitive social value orientations (about 5-10 percent). Evidence also suggests that social value orientation is first. It is determined by socialisation, and genetic predisposition plays a minor role in social value orientation development.

Theoretical Framework

The present study sought to extent the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) which was propound by Ajzen (1985) and it is an extension of theory of reasoned action (TRA) to more comprehensively explain the behaviour of individual employees in terms of their perceptions on conflict management in an organisation. The central idea behind theory is to explain human behaviour not to predict the behaviour and it is also dealing with the antecedents of attitudes, subjective norms and the perceived behavioural control, antecedents that is the final analysis determine intentions and actions.

The theory postulated that behaviour is the function of salient information, or beliefs, relevant to the behaviour. People can hold a great many beliefs about any given behaviour, but they can attend to only a relatively small number at any given moment (Miller, 1956). These silent beliefs are considered to be the prevailing determinants of a person’s intentions and actions, where behavioural beliefs that influence attitudes toward the behaviour. Normative beliefs to be determinant of subjective norms which is also known as social and control beliefs provide the basis for perceptions of behavioural control (perceived ease or difficulty of performing the behaviour and its reflect past experience as well as anticipated impediments and obstacles). Furthermore, the more favourable the attitude, subjective norms with respect to a behaviour, couple with the greater perceived behavioural control, the stronger should be an individual’s intention to perform the behaviour under consideration. This is the underpinning theory to be adopted for the study.

Proposed Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this research drives from Ajzen (1985) theory of planned behaviour as bases for ascertaining the relationship between individual’s perception and conflict management through social value orientation as a mediator.

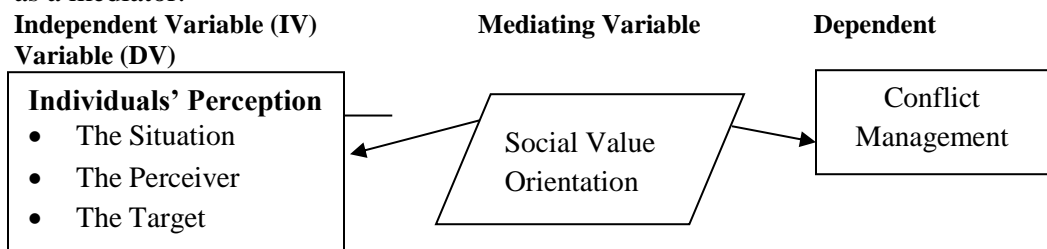


Figure 1: The Conceptual Framework.

Source: Ajzen (1985) adopted by Armitage, Conner, Loach and Willetts (2010).

Conclusion

The study provides an overview of the role of social values in identifying important relationships between employees’ perception and workplace conflict management. This survey will also become a tool for directors of the organisations to maintain peace and stability for their employees and the entire

organisation. In addition, if tested empirically, this study will demonstrate the significant impact of individual employee perceptions on conflict management by focusing on social value in the organisational environment.

Empirical research is required to verify the correctness of the structure and the statements presented, and further research should analyse the data using multiple regressions methods to determine the significant effect on the measurement of independent variable and measurement on the dependent variables through the mediating variable.

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