

Core self-evaluation: an empirical study in the in the Colombian context

La autoevaluación central: un estudio empírico en el contexto colombiano

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Abstract: core self-evaluation (CSE) refers to the essential judgments individuals make regarding their self-performance. This study aims to empirically examine the correlation between employee's CSE and key organizational variables, encompassing happiness, motivation, job satisfaction, work commitment, and person-job fit. Through a cross-sectional self-administered instrument, the research delves into the perspectives of 241 employees within four retail industry companies in northeastern Colombia. Employing a partial least squares-structural equation model, the analysis explores the relationships among these variables. The results identify a lack of full reciprocity in the examined associations. When treating CSE as the dependent variable, the study validates only the hypotheses proposing job satisfaction and motivation as independent variables. Nevertheless, a significant association emerges between CSE, and all examined organizational variables when applying a supplemental analysis with inverted hypotheses. These findings emphasize the importance of adopting a multifaceted approach to enhance organizational outcomes for employees in a business setting. Furthermore, they suggest that, beyond conventional knowledge, CSR could function as a significant catalyst for various organizational behaviors, thereby advocating for its exploration and application in similar studies.

Keywords: organizational behavior, core self-evaluation, work performance, correlational study, non-reciprocal associations.

Resumen: la autoevaluación central (AEC) se refiere a los juicios esenciales que los individuos hacen sobre su propio desempeño. Este estudio tiene como objetivo examinar empíricamente la correlación entre la AEC de los empleados y algunas variables organizacionales clave que incluyen felicidad, motivación, satisfacción laboral, compromiso, y ajuste persona-trabajo. A través de un instrumento autoadministrado de corte transversal, el estudio ahonda en las perspectivas de 241 empleados en cuatro empresas del sector minorista en el noreste de Colombia. Utilizando un modelamiento de ecuaciones estructurales mediante mínimos cuadrados parciales, el análisis explora las relaciones entre estas variables. Los resultados apuntan a una reciprocidad parcial en las asociaciones evaluadas. Al considerar la AEC como variable dependiente, se validan solo las hipótesis que proponen la satisfacción laboral y la motivación como variables independientes. Sin embargo, surge una asociación significativa entre la AEC y todas las variables organizacionales examinadas al aplicar un análisis complementario con hipótesis invertidas. Estos hallazgos subrayan la importancia de adoptar un enfoque multifacético en aras de mejorar los resultados organizacionales orientados a los empleados per cuencientes a un contexto empresarial. Además, proponen que, además del conocimiento convencional, la AEC podría funcionar como un catalizador importante para diversos comportamientos organizacionales relevantes, abogando así por su exploración y aplicación en estudios similares.

Palabras clave: comportamiento organizacional, autoevaluación central, desempeño laboral, estudio correlacional, asociaciones no-recíprocas.

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Introduction

316

Beyond a categorical interpretation aimed at defining an individual's outcomes, work performance can also be viewed as a set of behaviors. actions undertaken by the employee. The results are not solely indicative of an individual's performance but are also influenced by various external factors (Campbell and Wiernik, 2015). Therefore, the performance of employees is shaped by a combination of their behaviors and actions, as well as the external conditions that influence these outcomes. In organizational literature, individual performance is evaluated in two primary ways: objectively, through indisputable evidence such as sales and quantity of production, and subjectively, through judgments made by others and the employee's performance self-assessment (Schachter, 2010). This latter approach, referred to in this work as core self-evaluation (CSE), emphasizes the employee's internal assessment of their performance.

The present study adopts the CSE approach and aims to establish whether there is a relationship between this construct and other notions of organizational behavior. However, the study chooses to evaluate the behavior of these correlations in two ways: first, considering CSE as a consequent variable (i.e., original model), and subsequently, as an antecedent variable (inverse model). In this study, the notions or behaviors examined are limited to six constructs: Happiness (HP), Motivation (MT), Job Satisfaction (JS), Work Commitment (CM), and Person-Job Fit (JF). The fieldwork is conducted in four companies in the Colombian retail industry, where a self-administered cross-sectional instrument is applied to a sample of employees. After hypothesis formulation, these data are analyzed using two partial least squares-structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) models: one for the original hypotheses and another for the inverted hypotheses.

The results obtained are dissimilar. With the original model, the study accepts the hypotheses where the relationships between MT and JS with the CSE are proposed, suggesting that these two former variables are possible activators in achieving better perceptions of one's work performance. However, when analyzing the inverse model, it is evident that CSE has a significant relationship with all the organizational variables studied, and, in that sense, it is shown that this variable also acts as a possible activator on other behaviors.

Overall, this research suggests the importance of considering multiple factors in evaluating and improving work performance. At the same time, the study highlights the relevance of understanding this behavior not only as a variable resulting from traditional organizational behaviors but also as appreciating its true value and understanding it as an antecedent variable. The theoretical but mainly practical implications will be put into perspective at the end of the document.

In selecting the factors to evaluate the correlation with CSE, a multidimensional approach supported by current academic literature on organizational behavior has been considered. In this sense, happiness at work has been included due to its intrinsic connection with productivity and general satisfaction in the workplace (Oswald et al., 2015). Likewise, MT, an essential element in self-determination theory, is a key predictor of work performance (Deci et al., 2017). Finally, JS, CM, and JF have been selected in line with the theory of person-job fit, supported by the research of Kristof-Brown (2015), which suggests that the congruence between individual characteristics and job demands is positively related to the productivity obtained. This selection of factors is based on a deep understanding of how these interrelated elements influence individual perceptions of work performance. In this spirit, the theoretical approach provides a comprehensive framework supported by the most recent academic research in organizational behavior.

Core-self evaluation

Employees' work performance denotes a sort of efficiency and productivity indicator helpful for an entire organization. However, work performance can also be defined as a construct comprising behaviors under employees' control that contribute to organizational objectives; it can be understood as a set of behaviors, not the external variables that define these behaviors or their results (Campbell and Wiernik, 2015). Along these lines, core self-evaluation reflects an individual's overall self-concept and refers to people's subjective evaluation of their performance. In a more specific sense, CSE represents the fundamental perceptions individuals have about their worth and capabilities in relation to their in-role and extra-role job performance. It integrates key psychological constructs such as self-esteem, generalized self-efficacy, locus of control, and emotional stability (Kammeyer-Mueller *et al.*, 2009).

A variety of factors can influence this self-assessment. For instance, a study developed by Downes *et al.* (2021) found that work self-efficacy, the belief in one's ability to carry out work tasks successfully, is positively related to core self-evaluation. This suggests that people who perceive themselves as more competent and effective at their jobs also tend to evaluate their work performance positively. Similarly, other studies provide evidence that perceptions related with CSE can be influenced by organizational constructs such as organizational support (Ding *et al.*, 2020), socialization tactics (Song *et al.*, 2015), and work-family balance (Katou, 2021), among others.

Literature also insinuates that individual's feedback may influence CSE. According to Su et al. (2022), the quality and type of feedback employees receive from their superiors can affect their work performance evaluation. The authors found that constructive and specific feedback was associated with greater perceptions of better-perceived work performance. However, it is important to remember that core self-evaluation may not always coincide with objective evaluations made by others. For instance, Dunning et al. (2003) highlight a pervasive human inclination to overestimate one's performance and abilities, a phenomenon extensively substantiated over time. This phenomenon suggests that people may have a more favorable view of their performance than external evaluations.

But beyond what has been previously mentioned, it is necessary to comment that authors such as Chang *et al.* (2012), Gabini (2018) and Yazdanshenas (2021) address the relationship between different forms of CSE and other variables in their studies. However, it is important to highlight that it mainly considers work performance as an antecedent rather than a result variable. This perspective offers a valuable new understanding of the factors that may influence core self-evaluation, a perspective that, as previously mentioned, is adopted in the present study.

317

In conclusion, CSE constitutes the subjective evaluations of a person's performance at work. Such perceptions of work performance may differ from objective appraisals or evaluations made by others. CSE can be influenced by, but also can influence several organizational constructs.

Happiness

The concept of happiness depends on each author's approach to their work, which is why many researchers refer to it as "subjective well-being". In fact, countless studies conclude that happiness arises from a subjective assessment made by each individual regarding the achievements in their own life (Oswald *et al.*, 2015).

Happiness at work is important because most people do their job out of necessity or desire. Therefore, happiness can be a source of income and a way to practice personal skills, face challenges, and work toward personal achievement. Happiness at work can be analyzed globally and at the organizational or business level, with most studies focusing on the employee as an individual or as part of the workgroup or environment in which they operate (Bellet *et al.*, 2023). In this sense, certain emotions, motivations, personalities, and tasks combine to predict performance. However, through the various tasks typically required of employees, happiness is likely to benefit overall productivity (Zelenski *et al.*, 2008).

In this regard, authors such as Lin *et al.* (2022) emphasize that CSE not only encompasses people's evaluations of their own abilities and self-esteem but also significantly affects their happiness and overall well-being at work. This underscores the importance of understanding the bidirectional relationship between CSE and happiness, and thus, the study suggests the following hypotheses:

H1: H is positively associated with CSE. *H1i:* CSE is positively associated with H.

Motivation

Motivation can be defined as an individual's need to show performance and willingness to achieve in their environment (Ghaffari *et al.*, 2017). This behavior necessarily requires that there be some need of any degree; This can be absolute, relative, pleasure, or luxury. Whenever a person is motivated to do something, that "something" is considered necessary or convenient (Rheinberg and Vollmeyer, 2018). Motivated people are always aware of the goal to be achieved and direct their efforts to achieve that goal. Accordingly, it seems important to understand motivation as a predictor of work performance (Inam *et al.*, 2023).

Rheinberg and Vollmeyer (2018) point out that motivation is a key factor in the workplace, which depends on internal factors, such as affiliation with the organization, personal achievement, and power, as well as external factors, such as constant supervision of organizational leaders, salary improvements, incentives for improving professional skills, promotion, and organizational advancement, among others; that is, motivation depends on both individual and organizational factors. The importance of work motivation lies in how this factor influences an organization's human capital, who, by feeling motivated, can adapt more easily to the business world (Deci et al., 2017). More emphatically, Johnson et al. (2016) highlight that CSE significantly impact motivational outcomes, suggesting that individuals with high CSE are more likely to be motivated and perform better in their tasks. Therefore, we propose the following hypotheses:

H2: MT is positively associated to CSE. *H2i:* CSE is positively associated to MT.

Job satisfaction

Job satisfaction is an attitude variable that indicates employees' positive or negative perception of their work, both in general and in the different specific factors surrounding it (Guayacán *et al.*, 2022). Job satisfaction varies according to the degree of agreement between what an employee wants and looks for in their job and what they receive from it; therefore, the perception of a greater negative difference between what is expected and what is found leads to less satisfaction (Wright and Davis, 2003). Its deep understanding and the discovery of its antecedents are necessary, given that sufficient empirical evidence confirms a positive relationship between this attitude and achieving important positive results at the individual and organizational levels (Pujol-Cols and Dabos, 2018; Chiang-Vega *et al.*, 2021).

The perception of satisfaction or dissatisfaction would seem to be influenced by each person's needs, values, and expectations. In this sense, it should be noted that job satisfaction causes differ from employee to employee. For example, some important factors that predict a variation in this attitude may be the challenge and interest aroused by the work, the working conditions, the rewards received from the employer, and the relationship with colleagues and supervisors, among others (Lepold et al., 2018). For this same reason, job satisfaction is a consequence of employees' work experience and, therefore, a variable that can be analyzed based on a direct inquiry about themselves in specific contexts (Guayacán et al., 2022). Furthermore, research by Johnson et al. (2016) suggests that CSE plays a crucial role in shaping job satisfaction, indicating that individuals with high CSE are more likely to experience greater job satisfaction. Hence, the study posits the following hypotheses:

H3: JS is positively associated to CSE. *H3i:* CSE is positively associated to JS.

Work Commitment

According to authors such as Mercurio (2015), each collaborator's commitment to their organization is more than the simple fact of working for a salary; It is a factor that makes him perform and feel part of it. Therefore, this commitment is necessary to give employees a clear sense of belonging to the organization and feel the mission, vision, objectives, values, and organizational goals as their own.

Employee's work commitment is made up of three components: affective commitment, which

refers to an employee's emotional association with the organization; Followership commitment refers to the awareness of the costs associated with leaving the organization, such that the employee remains with the organization because they believe they need the job; and normative commitment that is associated with the feeling of obligation, where employees feel that they must remain in the organization (Prieto et al., 2021). Schaufeli et al. (2002) describes work commitment (or engagement) as a positive, satisfying, work-related state of mind characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption. Vigor refers to high levels of energy and mental resilience at work, the willingness to invest effort and persistence in the face of difficulties; dedication refers to being strongly involved in work and experiencing feelings of importance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge; and absorption refers to being fully concentrated and happily absorbed in one's work. In this spirit, the study suggests the following hypotheses:

H4: CM is positively associated to CSE. *H4i:* CSE is positively associated to CM.

Person job-fit

Person-job fit refers to the match between an individual's competences (i.e., knowledge, skills, attitudes, and abilities) with the description of his or her job and the incentives eventually delivered to perform it (Kristof-Brown, 2015; Vogel and Feldman, 2009). Two different types of position-person compatibility have been identified in the literature. The first one, compatibility, is skills-demand, which is understood as the correspondence between the competences of individuals and the specific demands of the job. Once the employees achieve the needed competences to meet job demands, they are more likely to perform at a higher level, meet supervisors' expectancies, and stay on the job. The second type of person-job fit is needs-supplies, which is accomplished once the needs of individuals are satisfied by the external incentives related to their work. When the organization meets employees' affiliation, autonomy, and economic security

needs through like-minded colleagues, schedule autonomy, and generous compensation, they experience greater job satisfaction and commitment to the organization (Vogel and Feldman, 2009). On the other hand, person-job fit is understood as the match between the person and the features of the position. In other words, person-job compatibility occurs when a person's knowledge, skills, and abilities are compatible with the demands and resources of the job (e.g., salary, working conditions, and fringe benefits), therefore satisfying both physiological and psychological needs and preferences of employees (Saufi *et al.*, 2020). The present research suggests these two final hypotheses:

H5: JF is positively associated to CSE. *H5i:* CSE is positively associated to JF.

Materials and methods

The research design is correlational in nature. To achieve the research objective, after data collection, the variables were measured and analyzed through a PLS-SEM, which allows the analysis of complex relationships between variables and put into practice (i.e., testing the proposed hypotheses).

Data collection, sample sizes and measurement instruments

The study utilized an anonymous, structured cross-sectional questionnaire, including sociodemographic variables, to investigate employees' perceptions of their work performance. The measurement instruments, validated in the relevant literature, comprised a total of 87 items. Each scale, designed to assess distinct constructs, incorporated validated measures such as Core Self-Evaluation (18 items; Ramos et al., 2019), Happiness (11 items; Ramírez et al., 2019), Motivation (19 items; Gagné et al., 2015), Job Satisfaction (11 items; Lepold et al., 2018), Employee's Work Commitment (10 items; Prieto et al., 2021), and Person-Job Fit (six items; Vogel and Feldman, 2009). Respondents evaluated each variable using a five-point Likert scale (1: "Totally disagree" to 5: "Totally agree"). The inclusion of these validated

319

scales in the survey ensured the reliability and validity of the obtained results. Additionally, the study controlled for company, gender, age, and seniority within each company.

320

The research focused on a sample of employees from four Colombian companies in the retail industry. Data collection involved direct in-person contact, with 296 self-administered questionnaires physically distributed. Ultimately, 241 questionnaires were deemed usable for data analysis (70 from Company A, 98 from Company B, 49 from Company C, and 24 from Company C).

The retail industry stands as a one of the cornerstones of any economy, playing a crucial role in driving economic growth and consumer satisfaction. Comprised of diverse companies offering goods and services directly to consumers, the retail sector contributes significantly to employment and commerce. Within this dynamic landscape, employees who directly engage with customers form the frontline ambassadors of these companies. Their role is critical, as they not only represent the face of the brand but also wield influence over customer experiences (Moss, 2021). The symbiotic relationship between employee engagement and customer satisfaction is evident, where content and motivated employees contribute positively to the overall shopping experience (Park et al., 2021). Therefore, understanding the intricate dynamics of these employees' perceptions and work performance becomes paramount. This study aims to delve into the nuanced relationships within this context, recognizing the significance of the retail industry and the pivotal role played by employees in shaping the customer-facing facet of these businesses.

Data analysis

The model was analyzed and evaluated through PLS-SEM. This technique allows researchers to evaluate causal relationships between indicators and causal relationships of latent constructs (Hair *et al.*, 2017). The study used the suggested procedures by the relevant literature to evaluate the measurements and the structural model. The data were analyzed in the SmartPLS 4.0 software since it resolves relevant issues that arise when proposing structural equations, such as inadmissible solutions, indeterminacy of factors, and the no need for a normal distribution of data (Ringle *et al.*, 2015). To carry out the corresponding analysis, the methodology was divided into two phases: evaluation of the measurement model and evaluation of the structural model. First, the Smart PLS software was run to evaluate the reliability and validity of the measurement model.

This procedure was done by calculating Cronbach's Alpha (α), the composite reliability (CR), and the average variance extracted (AVE). Likewise, the factor loadings (λ) were obtained; they represent the individual reliability of each item towards its variable and the discriminant validity of the constructs was evaluated using the Fornell and Larcker criterion. Finally, to obtain discriminant validity, the square root of the AVE of a construct must be greater than its correlation with any other construct (Hair *et al.*, 2017).

As a second phase in evaluating the structural model, the "bootstrapping" function was run to verify the proposed hypotheses. First, the significance of the relationship between the variables was estimated. To do this, the t-student statistic, the p-value, and the path coefficient (β) were obtained for each hypothesis. With the interpretation of these results, the respective conclusions are obtained.

Measurement model evaluation

The first step considers a description of the model (Hair *et al.*, 2017). For this purpose, both the original model (with hypotheses presented as Hn) and the inverse model (with hypotheses presented as Hni) are described graphically in Figure 1.

321

Figure 1

Structural Model - with "original" (Hn) and "inverse" (Hni) hypotheses



The individual reliability of the variables is evaluated through the λ of the elements of the model, which must have a value greater than the minimum acceptable value of 0.50. The criterion is taken to accept those items whose value is greater than or equal to 0.50; Items with λ <0.5 that do not meet the minimum acceptable will be considered for elimination only if the elimination results in an increase in the composite reliability and AVE above the recommended value (Hair *et al.*, 2017).

As stated by Hair *et al.* (2017), it is found that, out of the 18 original CSE items, six items are outside the indicated levels, which is why CSE11, CSE13, CSE14, CSE15, CSE16, CSE17, and CSE18 were discarded. Within the HP construct, HP06, HP07, and HP08 were eliminated. Also, MT01, MT02, and MT03 were discarded from the MT construct. Regarding JS, items JS01, JS02, JS04 and JS06 were eliminated. Continuing with CM, two out of its 10 items were discarded, specifically AC09 and AC10. Lastly, regarding the JF construct, all its items met the values proposed in the theory.

The Fornell and Larcker (1981) criterion was used to judge discriminant validity. According

to this, the square root of the AVE, which corresponds to the main diagonal of the table, must be greater than the correlations with the other constructs. The model's constructs share more variance with their indicators than other constructs. Following the proposed logic, about the JS construct, item JS03 was eliminated; in the CM construct, item AC08 was eliminated; in the MT construct, items MT09, MT10, MT11, MT15, and MT19 were eliminated. These elements were discarded from the data set because they generated conflicts in their analysis and distorted the results. It is important to mention that the analyses above were carried out individually for the two proposed structural models; However, the same result was obtained in both cases.

An analysis was carried out to determine the model's reliability using α and CR as measures of internal consistency. For both indices, a value of 0.7 is accepted for modest reliability in the early stages of the research and 0.8 for basic investigation. For convergent validity, AVE is considered (Chin, 1998). According to Fornell and Larcker (1981), 0.5 is suggested as the lower limit of an acceptable AVE, which means that more than 50%

of the construct's variance is due to its indicators; in this way, the adjustment of the indicators will be significant. They will be highly correlated; then, the Fornell and Larcker (1981) criterion and the HTMT ratio criterion were used to determine the discriminant validity.

The model was evaluated through the statistical significance of the loadings and estimating the R^2 values. The R^2 value measures a model's ability to explain a construct's variability. Chin (1998) considers that an R^2 should have a value of 0.67, 0.33, and 0.10 (substantial, moderate, and weak, respectively).

Structural model evaluation

As mentioned above, the coefficients' statistical significance is obtained using the "bootstrapping" function. β values represent standardized regression weights. Standardized regression coefficients, also known as path coefficients, are essential for analyzing the research model since they allow the relationships between the hypotheses to be identified. Values of β >0.2 are considered significant, although ideally, β >0.3 is expected (Chin, 1998).

The *p*-value is used to evaluate the statistical significance of the coefficients in a structural equation model. It is calculated using the bootstrapping method and compared to a significance threshold to determine the relevance of the relationships represented in the model, usually 0.05. Suppose the *p*-value is less than the significance threshold. In that case, the coefficient is considered statistically significant, and evidence supports the relationship represented by that coefficient in the model (Hair *et al.*, 2017). The same technique is used for the purpose of evaluating the eventual effect of the control variables.

Results

In the first instance, to thoroughly understand the study's sample, we present the results in terms of descriptive statistics focusing on control variables—age, seniority and gender within each of the four companies analyzed and in total. See Table 1. These demographic factors provide crucial insights into the participant composition.

Table 1

	Company A	Company B	Company C	Company D	Total
Age (years); $\bar{\mathbf{x}}(\sigma)$	32,45 (6,32)	27,83 (4,21)	30,12 (7,75)	29,3(5,21)	29,77 (5,32)
Seniority (years); x̄(σ)	6,27 (3,41)	4,21(2,28)	4,99 (1,63)	3,54 (1,19)	4,87 (2,57)
Gender (%)					
Male %	45,71	42,86	40,82	20,83	41,08
Female %	54,29	54,08	55,10	75,00	56,43
Other %	0,00	2,04	0,00	0,00	0,83
N/A %	0,00	1,02	4,08	4,17	1,66

Description of the sample

Moreover, the study presents arithmetic means (\bar{x}) and standard deviations (σ) for an overview of the overall data behavior, as outlined in Table 2. Concurrently, an assessment of the model's reliability and trustworthiness is provided, encompassing an evaluation of internal consistency and convergent validity. Subsequently, we proceed to validate the hypotheses posited in the structural

model. This process aims to determine the effectiveness of the selected constructs in explaining the variability of core self-evaluation (and *vice versa*) and verify if the anticipated relationships between them hold true. The results derived from this analysis enable us to gauge the model's quality and the validity of the formulated hypotheses.





To ensure individual reliability, the variables underwent evaluation based on λ loadings. The reliability of each construct was further examined

through α and CR analyses. Additionally, the AVE for each construct exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.5, as detailed in Table 2.

Table 2

Reliability and Convergent Validity Criteria

Latet variable	Element	x	σ	λ	α	CR	AVE
	AEC01			0,825			0,545
	AEC02	_	0,882	0,867	-		
	AEC03			0,762			
	AEC04	-		0,842			
	AEC05			0,822			
Core Self-Evaluation (CSE)	AEC06	4,347		0,731	0,908	0,928	
	AEC07	_		0,523	_		
	AEC08	_		0,679	_		
	AEC09	_		0,812	_		
	AEC10	_		0,590	_		
	CSE12			0,567			
	F01			0,545	_		
	F02			0,767 0,774 0,803 0,617 0,680	- - 0,861 (- -	0,892	0,513
	F03						
Happiness (HP)	F04	4 133	1 478				
	F05	4,135	1,170				
	F09						
	F10		0,821 0,674	0,821			
	F11			0,674			
	M04	-		0,707	_		
	M05			0,629 0,692	_		
	M06	-					
	M07	_	0,624 0,666	_			
	M08	-		0,666	_		0,534
Motivation (MT)	M12	4,006	1,950	0,749	0,906	0,926	
	M13	-		0,723	_		
	M14	_		0,774	_		
	M16	_		0,819	-		
	M17	-		0,879	_		
	M18			0,736			
	SL05	_		0,477	_		
	SL07	_		0,784	- 0.866		
Job Satisfaction (IS)	SL08	4.032	1 278	0,844		0.881	0.558
,	SL09		,	0,819	-	.,	,
	SL10			0,753			
	SL11			0,745			

Latet variable	Element	x	σ	λ	α	CR	AVE
	CL01		0, <mark>0</mark> , 0,	0,788			0,560
	CL02			0,830			
	CL03			0,765			
Work Commitment (CM)	CL04	3,890	2,011	0,736	0,892	0,899	
	CL05			0,687	0,892		
	CL06			0,758			
	CL07			0,660			
	PT01	- - 3,741 -	0,566	0,566		0,879	0,558
	PT02			0,876	_		
Demons I-le Ett (IE)	PT03		0.709	0,851	- 0,854		
Person-Job Fit (JF)	PT04		0,798	0,507			
	PT05			0,863			
	PT06			0,732			

To evaluate discriminant validity, the square root of the AVE of a construct must be greater than its correlation with any other construct (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). As seen in Table 3, this criterium is accomplished, thus discriminant validity is achieved.

Table 3

Discriminant validity

	CSE	HP	MT	JS	СМ	JF
CSE	0,752					
HP	0,408	0,727				
MT	0,593	0,644	0,732			
JS	0,586	0,607	0,673	0,754		
СМ	0,539	0,540	0,722	0,725	0,748	
JF	0,391	0,552	0,658	0,700	0,724	0,739

Furthermore, the model was evaluated through the statistical significance of the loadings and estimating the R² values. In the initially proposed model, an R²= 0.471 (moderate value) was obtained. It was determined, then, that the latent variables analyzed presented moderate variability in relation to CSE, representing approximately 47.10% of the variance. These results suggest validity of the model.

In the analysis of the inverse model (presented in Table 4), a value of 0.168 (weak value) was obtained for the relationship with HP, 0.312 (weak value) for the relationship with MT, 0.401 (moderate value) for the relationship with JS, 0.306 (weak value) for the relationship with CM, and 0.217 (weak value) for the relationship with JF. Analogously, these values represent the percentage of variability of the constructs concerning CSE. That is, CSE explains 16.8% of the variability of HP, 31.2% of the variability of MT, 40.1% of the variability of JS, 30.6% of the variability of CM, and 21.7% of the variability of JF.

Table 4

Variability (R²) - Inverse model

	HP	MT	JS	СМ	JF
R ²	0,168	0,312	0,401	0,306	0,217

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After establishing the measurement model, the study assessed control variables. Notebly, the variables company, gender, age, and seniority within each company were found to have no effect (p>0.1) on CSE; thus, confirming their role as control variables.

Subsequently, the hypotheses, both original and inverse, underwent testing using the bootstrapping method with 5000 subsamples, as proposed by Hair *et al.* (2017). The results of the original hypothesis diverge from the inverse hypotheses.

Regarding the original model (Table 5), only two out of the five proposed hypotheses demonstrated a significant influence on the dependent variable (CSE). These findings indicate that, within this study's context, MT and JS are notable predictors of an important organizational outcome like CSE, whereas HP, CM, and JF do not seem to act as a significant influence.

Notebly, the relationship between JS and CSE is stronger than the relationship between MT and CSE, as indicated by the higher path coefficient ($\beta = 0.324$ for JS vs. $\beta = 0.275$ for MT). This suggests that JB may have a more direct or immediate impact on employees' self-assessment of their capabilities and worth within the organization. The higher intensity of this relationship could be due to the more intrinsic and immediate feedback that JS provides, compared to MT, which might be influenced by a broader range of external factors.

Table 5

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Hn	Asociación	β	valor t	valor <i>p</i>	Resultado
H1	$\mathrm{HP} \rightarrow \mathrm{CSE}$	0,024	0,445	0,590	H1 Rejected
H2	$MT \rightarrow CSE$	0,275	1,972	0,048	H2 Accepted
H3	$JS \rightarrow CSE$	0,324	2,111	0,044	H3 Accepted
H4	$CM \rightarrow CSE$	0,071	0,843	0,206	H4 Rejected
H5	$JF \rightarrow CSE$	0,121	1,506	0,091	H5 Rejected

Original model path coefficient

In contrast, the inverted hypotheses (Table 6) reveal a highly significant effect when CSE acts as their antecedent variable. The results show that this perception significantly influences the five organizational constructs on study, validating the five inverted hypotheses raised. This finding is of great relevance since it confirms the importance of the main variable in explaining the influence on the study's different constructs, allowing for the prediction of its behavior. The significant path coefficients and *p*-values across all hypotheses suggest that CSE is a foundational psychological construct that drives key aspects of employee well-being and performance within the organizational context.

Interestingly, the inverse model results highlight that CSE has a particularly strong impact on JF and JS, as evidenced by the highest path coefficients ($\beta = 0.609$ for JF and $\beta = 0.553$ for JS). This suggests that CSE has a significant influence on how well individuals perceive they fit with their job roles and how satisfied they feel with their jobs. The superior effect of CSE on these constructs may be due to the fundamental nature of self-evaluation in shaping one's perception of job compatibility and satisfaction. High CSE likely enhance an individual's confidence and positivity, leading to a better alignment with job requirements and greater job satisfaction as they feel more competent and valued in their roles.

Table 6

Inverse model path coefficient

Hni	Association	β	value t	value p	Result
H1i	$CSE \rightarrow HP$	0,401	3,305	0,000	H1i Aceptada
H2i	CSE→MT	0,362	2,939	0,000	H2i Aceptada

Hni	Association	β	value t	value p	Result
H3i	CSE→ JS	0,553	6,447	0,000	H3i Aceptada
H4i	$CSE \rightarrow CM$	0,410	3,508	0,000	H4i Aceptada
H5i	$CSE \rightarrow JF$	0,609	7,789	0,000	H5i Aceptada

In a nutshell, the findings from both the original and inverse model path coefficients provide a comprehensive understanding of the intricate relationships between CSE and various organizational constructs. The original model highlights that MT and JS are significant predictors of CSE, while HP, CM, and JF do not show a significant direct influence. Conversely, the inverse model robustly supports the notion that CSE acts as a crucial antecedent to a range of positive organizational outcomes, including HP, MT, JS, CM, and JF.

Discussion and conclusions

The current study delves into the intricate connections between core self-evaluation (Kammeyer-Mueller *et al.*, 2009) and various organizational behavior constructs within four retail industry companies in northeastern Colombia. Through the application of two distinct structural equation models –one 'original' and one 'inverse'– our primary objective was to validate the observed correlations. Surprisingly, the study revealed that most of the hypothesized associations are non-reciprocal. While the original model emphasizes the consequential role of core self-evaluation only in relation to motivation and job satisfaction, the inverse model substantiates the antecedent impact of core self-evaluation on all assessed constructs.

Our initial findings align with Deci *et al.* (2020), who highlighted the crucial relationship between motivation and job satisfaction in enhancing work performance. Similarly, Rheinberg and Vollmeyer (2018) and Pujol-Cols and Dabos (2018) corroborate this relationship, emphasizing that motivated and satisfied employees tend to accomplish more and better work-related objectives. While these studies predominantly address the global concept of 'work performance' (encompassing both objective and subjective dimensions), our research focuses on a purely subjective analysis from the employee's perspective, specifically through the lens of 'Core Self-Evaluation'. This specificity adds a more individual and intimate dimension to the analysis, highlighting the importance of self-confidence and its impact on organizational outcomes. This focus on subjective perceptions is crucial, as it can have significant implications for organizational results in the short, medium, and long term.

Contrary to our hypotheses, our data did not support the hypothesized connection between happiness and work performance (*H1*). Similarly, *H4* and *H5* were rejected, challenging the conventional wisdom and some relevant contributions (e.g., Mercurio, 2015; Vogel and Feldman, 2009), which vehemently suggest that employee's happiness and work commitment directly influence their self-evaluation of work performance. These findings are in line with some recent studies which suggest that the direct impact of happiness on work performance may be less significant than previously thought (Lin *et al.*, 2022).

The study effectively validates hypotheses linking motivation and job satisfaction with core self-evaluation. It emphasizes that a motivated and satisfied workforce is likely to perceive their performance positively. However, the lack of evidence for other hypotheses highlights the need for caution, recognizing the potential influence of unexplored variables. This aligns with the findings of Johnson *et al.* (2016), who suggested that while motivation and job satisfaction are crucial, other factors like organizational support, employee-company identification and leadership style might also play significant roles.

The validation of all formulated hypotheses in the inverse model aligns with Gabini (2018) and Yazdanshenas (2021)'s assertions, enriching our understanding of the reciprocal relationship between work performance and an individual's self-evaluation in terms of their organizational reality. This contribution significantly advances the field of organizational behavior, portraying work performance as a stronger antecedent and activating variable than merely a resultant variable. This perspective is further supported by Chang *et al.* (2012), who argue that the interplay between self-evaluation and work outcomes may be complex and bidirectional.

Similarly, other studies provide evidence that CSE can be influenced by organizational constructs such as organizational support, socialization tactics, and work-family balance, among others. For instance, Ding et al. (2020) found that perceived organizational support for strengths use mediates the relationship between CSE and job performance, suggesting that supportive environments enhance the positive effects of CSE on performance. Song et al. (2015) highlighted the role of organizational socialization tactics in moderating the effects of CSE on job satisfaction and engagement, emphasizing the importance of structured onboarding processes. Katou (2021) demonstrated that work-family balance mediates the relationship between CSE and organizational performance, underlining the significance of work-life integration. Kammeyer-Mueller (2009) and Yazdanshenas (2021) further corroborate these findings by showing that CSE is not only an outcome but also a predictor of various job-related attitudes and behaviors, depending on the organizational context and support systems in place.

The practical implications for human resource management are substantial, offering insights into factors influencing and influenced by core self-evaluation. The study provides guidance for management in resource allocation and strategic efforts to enhance employee performance, with a particular emphasis on the centrality of performance appraisal and feedback. Acknowledging the study's limitations, notably its focus on four companies within a single industry and its cross-sectional design, the results underscore the importance of considering these factors in organizational decision-making within a specific context.

Furthermore, within the dynamic context of the retail industry, where employees serve as the direct link between the organization and its customers, our findings hold particular relevance. The symbiotic relationship between employee's reality and customer satisfaction is a well-established phenomenon in retail (Moss, 2021; Park *et* al., 2021). Content and motivated employees, as identified through the positive correlations with core self-evaluation, are not only essential for internal organizational dynamics but also play a decisive role in shaping the external perception of the brand. Engaged and satisfied employees contribute to a positive customer experience, fostering loyalty and influencing purchasing behaviors. Our study sheds light on the intricate connections within this relationship, emphasizing that the perception of work performance is not only an internal metric but a key determinant of the overall customer-facing facet of these retail businesses. This reinforces the strategic importance of understanding and enhancing employee satisfaction, not only for internal organizational dynamics but as a critical factor influencing customer satisfaction in the competitive retail landscape.

327

The study's limitations should be taken into account when interpreting the results. Extending the sample to diverse organizations, industries, and geographic contexts, utilizing longitudinal or experimental designs, and employing multiple objective and subjective measures of work performance in future research can enhance the understanding of these intricate relationships.

The results obtained in this work underscore the pivotal role of core self-evaluation in both predicting and being influenced by key organizational variables, suggesting a complex, bidirectional relationship. This foundational understanding sets the stage for a deeper exploration and discussion of the implications, limitations, and potential future research directions in the subsequent sections. In conclusion, this study not only contributes valuable insights for management but also suggests that feedback based on performance evaluations can positively impact significant organizational perceptions and behaviors. Despite the study's contributions, future research should address the limitations mentioned before in order to broaden the applicability of the findings and further emphasize the critical role of feedback in shaping employees' perceptions and performance.

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