The Mediating Effect of Job Satisfaction on the Relationship between Organizational Justice, Person-Organization Fit and Organizational Citizenship Behavior

*Dr Noormala Amir Ishak
Email: noormala317@salam.uitm.edu.my

Norashikin Hussein
Email: eaniki.yahoo.com

Noorlaila Yunus
Email: nlaila814@salam.uitm.edu.my

Faculty of Business Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Malaysia
The Mediating Effect of Job Satisfaction on the Relationship between Organizational Justice, Person-Organization Fit and Organizational Citizenship Behavior

ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to examine the influence of organizational justice and person-organization fit as components that influence organizational citizenship behavior and to clarify the mediating effect of job satisfaction. One hundred and ninety operating-level employees from various service sectors participated in this study. The results show that although both organizational justice and person-organization fit significantly influence organizational citizenship behavior, when examining the inclusion of job satisfaction as a mediator, only the relationship between person-organization fit and organizational citizenship behavior shows partial mediation effect. There is no significant relationship between organizational justice and OCB. Further research and practical implications are discussed.

Keywords: Organizational Citizenship Behavior, Organizational Justice, Person-Organization Fit, Job Satisfaction

ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOR

Many practicing managers believe that investment in subordinate morale will pay off in better employee work performance. Social exchange theory (Adams, 1965; Blau, 1964) predicts that people seek to reciprocate those who benefit them (Bateman & Organ, 1983). One behavior that exhibits this behavior is ‘organizational citizenship behavior’ (OCB). OCB is defined as ‘those behaviors that are discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and that in the aggregate promotes the effective functioning of the organization’ (Organ, 1988). Organ and his colleagues (Bateman & Organ, 1983; Smith, Organ & Near, 1983) initially sought to explain why early research found weaker than expected relationships between employees’ attitudes and work performance. Empirical studies found that employees’ attitudes are more likely to be expressed in actions where the employees have greater discretion, such as through OCB (Bateman & Organ, 1983; Smith et al., 1983). One employee’s attitude that is well accepted in organizational behavior literature is the relationship between organizational justice, person-organization fit (P-O Fit) and OCB. Put to one side technical questions about the relationships between organizational justice and person-organization fit, question remains as to why a discrepancy exists between what the practicing managers believe and the researchers’ actual findings..
One simple answer suggested by Organ (1988) is that the managers and the researchers are simply focusing on different types of job performance. When practicing managers endorse the proposition that organizational justice or person-organization fit influences performance, they are thinking that satisfied people are more willing to do little “extras” either spontaneously or when requested, and in general are easier to work with in a day-to-day relationship (Murphy, Athanasou, & King, 2002). On the other hand, when researchers measure performance, the focus typically is on traditional measures of work such as level of production, material output or achievement on a challenging task (Organ, 1988). The unique contribution of Organ (1988) was thus to identify a class of employee behaviors (OCB), whose relationship with organizational justice, person-organization fit and job satisfaction might be usefully examined in the search for a practically significant workplace-based behavioral correlate of employee job attitudes. For this reason, it is important to understand whether the relationships hold uniformly across organizations.

The central tenet of this study is that there appears to be a robust relationship between organizational justice, P-O Fit and OCB, and that job satisfaction mediates these relationships. The objectives of study are thus:

a. To examine the direct relationship between organizational justice and OCB.

b. To examine the direct relationship between P-O Fit and OCB.

c. To investigate the mediating effect of job satisfaction on the relationship between organizational justice and OCB.

d. To investigate the mediating effect of job satisfaction on the relationship between P-O Fit and OCB.

**Organizational Justice and OCB**

Justice perceptions may influence OCB by prompting employees to define his or her relationship with the organization as one of social exchange. In a social exchange process, employees perceiving fair treatment and trust in managers go beyond formal job requirements and voluntarily perform acts which benefit the
organization (Deluga, 1994). People’s perceptions about justice can be seen as a basic requirement for the effective functioning of organizations and the personal satisfaction of the individuals they employ (Greenberg, 1990).

In a study conducted by Colquitt, Conlon, Wesson, Porter and Ng (2001), a meta-analysis of past justice literature linkage with organizational outcomes were investigated. Organizational justice refers to the overall fairness of the organization reward system and the perceived fairness of the actions of individuals responsible for implementing the rewards allocation system (Leventhal, 1976). Research suggests a direct effect of fairness on OCB. Thus it is hypothesized that:

\[ H1. \text{Organizational justice significantly influences OCB}. \]

**Person-Organization Fit and OCB**

P-O fit addresses the compatibility between people and the entire organization. Perceived P-O fit allows the greatest level of cognitive manipulation because the assessment is all done in the head of the respondents, allowing them to apply their own weighting scheme to various aspects of the environment. It is clear that the study of P-O fit has become a key factor for increasing our understanding of employee attitudes and behavior in organizations. For instance, in their recent meta-analysis Verquer, Beehr, and Wagner (2003) found that P-O fit was related to job attitudes such as turnover intentions, and organizational commitment. Similarly, other meta-analytic evidence shows that P-O fit was related to behavioral outcomes such as job performance, organizational citizenship behavior, and actual turnover. Thus, we hypothesized:

\[ H2. \text{Person-organization Fit significantly influences OCB}. \]

**Job Satisfaction and OCB**

The lack of relationship between job satisfaction and OCB are reported in the research literature is even more interesting given the strong support felt for the relationship by many managers. To most managers, it appears only logical that a more satisfied employees will perform better and many managers swear by
the notion that if they manage the satisfaction of their employees, increased OCB will soon follow. Organ (1988) studied on the relationship between job satisfaction and OCB. Organ (1988) suggested that satisfaction may not be related to performance not because no such relationships exist, but because most research has been measuring the wrong kind of performance. He proposed theoretical and empirical work to look at conceptions of OCB beyond the preconceived requirements of including job satisfaction as a mediator (refer to Figure 1). Thus:

**H3.** The relationship between organizational justice and OCB is mediated by job satisfaction in such a way where the direct effect of organizational justice on OCB will decrease (partial mediation) or become non-significant (full mediation) after job satisfaction is considered.

**H4.** The relationship between P-O Fit and OCB is mediated by job satisfaction in such a way where the direct effect of P-O Fit on OCB will decrease (partial mediation) or become non-significant (full mediation) after job satisfaction is considered.

**METHODS**

The present study utilized a field study design. Survey methodology has been used for the empirical analysis. We tested hypotheses using non-supervisory employees and their supervisors. The sample consisted of 250 employees. A total of 190 questionnaires were returned in sealed envelopes, yielding a response rate of 76 percent.

Questionnaires were used to collect data from subordinates and their supervisors. Questionnaires completed by the respondents were placed in envelopes that were marked ‘confidential’. The respondents were requested to seal the envelopes once they completed the questionnaires. Complete confidentiality of completed questionnaires was guaranteed to all respondents. The supervisors provided data on subordinates’ OCB. The subordinates provided data on organizational justice, P-O Fit and job
satisfaction. The data collection procedure was designed to avoid common method variance by obtaining data on the independent and dependent variables from different sources.

**Measures**

The hypotheses called for three independent variables and one dependent variable (OCB). We used five of the 24-item OCB scale developed by Podsakoff, Mackenzie, Moorman, and Fetter (1990) which was utilized to assess OCB as proposed by Organ (1988). On a 7-point scale ranging from 1, “strongly disagree” to 7, “strongly agree”, a supervisor rated how their subordinates behaved. By requesting this information from them, we sought to avoid confounding our hypotheses by common source bias. The single scale used has a reliability of 0.76.

Organizational justice was measured with eleven items used by Colquitt (2001). The items adapted from Colquitt (2001) were similar with the measures used by other researchers (e.g., McFarlin & Sweeney, 1992; Moorman, 1991). The responses ranged from 1 = “Strongly Disagree” to 7 = “Strongly Agree”. Higher scores represented respondents’ perceptions of greater organizational justice. The coefficient alpha of the scale was 0.85. There were also a total of 11 survey items related to P-O Fit perceptions. The responses ranged from 1 = “Strongly Disagree” to 7 = “Strongly Agree”. The coefficient alpha of the scale was 0.81. The job satisfaction measures areas of pay, promotion, supervision, type of work, and the people on the job. All items were measured on a 7-point scale that also ranged from 1 = “Strongly Disagree” to 7 = “Strongly Agree”. The coefficient alpha of the scale was 0.83.

**OVERVIEW OF ANALYSES**

Descriptive statistics and inter-correlations of the study variables are shown in Table 1. The means range from a maximum value of 5.08 to a minimum value of 4.76. The standard deviations range from 0.76 to 1.32. The magnitude of the correlation for variables measures from $(r) = 0.34$ to $(r) = 0.58$. Every variable is significantly correlated with each other.
To test the hypotheses stated earlier, regression analyses were carried out (refer Table 2). The results indicated that when OCB was regressed on organizational justice, there was no significant relationship ($\beta=0.04$). Hypothesis 1 is thus not supported. Then, OCB was regressed on P-O Fit where it was found that there is a significant relationship between them ($\beta=0.62$). Hypothesis 2 is supported. Next, the role of job satisfaction as a mediator between organizational justice and job satisfaction need not be examined because the conditions set for testing of mediation is not fulfilled. In the procedure advocated by Baron and Kenny (1986), mediation effects are determined by analysis of separate regression equations. Three conditions for mediation were examined. The first condition is that the predictors must be significantly related to the mediating element (Equation 1). The second condition is that the predictors must relate to the criterion in the absence of the mediator (Equation 2). The final condition is that, when both the predictors and mediator element are included, the direct relationship between predictors and criterion should become significantly smaller (partial mediation) or non-significant (full mediation) (Equation 3).

The test for mediation was then carried out on the relationship between P-O Fit and OCB since this relationship met with the condition for mediation (Equation 1 and Equation 2). We found that the relationship between P-O Fit and OCB was significant in Equation 2 ($\beta=0.62$) and when job satisfaction was added into the equation as a mediator, the $\beta$ was 0.60 (Equation 3) and significant. There is thus partial mediation. Hypothesis 4 is supported.

**DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

This study aimed to investigate aspects of the construct validity of OCB, as it pertains to the work attitudes and work behavior of a sample of Malaysian non-supervisory employees. Specifically the study sought to ascertain the extent to which OCB is influenced by employees’ organizational justice and P-O Fit in the group of respondents. The results indicated partial mediation effect of job satisfaction on the relationship between P-O Fit and OCB and no mediation effect on the relationship between organizational
justice and OCB. In this respect, the findings provide initial empirical support on the importance of P-O Fit. Job satisfaction was found to be strongly influenced by P-O Fit which then influenced OCB. These results provide additional support for the capability of managers to understand that reactions for employees are affected by the various aspects of their work environment. The results present conclusive evidence to management that fit matters and that it influences employees’ attitudes, decisions and work domains.

Although we anticipated relationship between organizational justice and OCB, the results showed otherwise and this surprised us. The measure of organizational justice used in this study may have provided limited information because it did not demarcate the types of organizational justice which may be distributive justice, procedural justice, and interactional justice (Colquitt, 2001). Future research needs to examine specific types of organizational justice that affect OCB. Another potential explanation for the non-significant findings is that there may be too heavy reliance on OCB measures – and not differentiating the inclusion of in-role behavior. In-role behavior refers to those jobs done within the job scope as prescribed by the organization to the employees. Future studies should include measures of in-role behavior as control.

From a theoretical point of view, this study contributes to the OCB literature by providing additional insights into the influence of P-O Fit towards OCB with the mediating effect of job satisfaction. The results from the study indicate that employees who have realistic expectations about their company and supervisor characteristics are more likely to be satisfied with their employment. The research also suggests that satisfied employees are more likely to exhibit behaviors that will benefit themselves or the organization. Thus to maximize benefits and minimize costs, organizations should hire and retain employees with expectations that can be met by the organization (P-O Fit). While there has been inquiry on the role of P-O Fit in affecting OCB, this study provides empirical evidence on how job satisfaction of employees can promote OCB. Theoretically, Organ (1988) argued that, if researchers wished to identify practically significant behavioral correlates of job satisfaction, they needed to measure different work behaviors from those commonly assessed (i.e., normally the in-role behavior). He argued
that employee job satisfaction was correlated with behavior displayed at work but that it was behavior of a certain class: behavior of a discretionary nature, which is not part of employees’ formal role requirements but nevertheless is important for the effective functioning of an organization. Empirically, the size of the obtained correlations is consistent with those found in similar studies (Bateman & Organ, 1983).

Important to note about this study that the employees involved as respondents were non-supervisory employees. This particular study is undertaken with the aim of adding to the theoretical body of knowledge as well as to the practitioners. The present study suggests some implications to human resource managers, top management and line managers on the importance of providing P-O Fit which leads to job satisfaction of employees and then leading them to perform OCB. Apart from traditional measures of employee productivity, it is important also for managers to monitor that set of work behaviors that ‘go beyond role description’ but also are important contributors to the effectiveness of the organization (Katz, 1964; George & Brief, 1992). These OCB are not only important in their own right but also are quite highly correlated with job satisfaction. Managers may want to utilize a range of human resource practices to ensure that the best-matched employees are identified. Screening for employee positions should be undertaken with an emphasis on P-O Fit. Job application/screening as well as many different forms of aptitude and psychological testing can be used to assess minimum qualification. A greater amount of time spent during the job interview should be devoted to assessing the match between candidate expectations and supervisor or organization characteristics, rather than focusing solely on basic qualifications or job skills. In order to improve the quality of P-O Fit assessments, human resource personnel need to spend time learning about the leadership styles of the supervisory staff as well as the general culture of the work environment. Psychological tests are available for assessment of management styles and comparisons to employee work habits, with the goal of creating matches between supervisors and new employees. This information can then be used to select candidates possessing compatible characteristics into departments where they will be most effective.
Organizations can also gain long-term benefit from internal analyses directed at identifying sources of misfit. If unmet expectations are detected early in employer-employee relationships, i.e., early warning signals, it may be possible to address or resolve problems before the employees feels forced to choose an escape behavior.

The findings of the study should be interpreted within the context of its limitations. First, the sample was from the service organizations and the extent to which they are representative of organizations in general, can be determined only by reference to the work of other researchers (Enscher, Grant-Vallone & Donaldson, 2001; Murphy, Athanasou & King, 2002)). Next, what is presumably a causal system has been examined here using cross-sectional data. Each variable is represented in the data only at a single point of time. This does not necessarily invalidate the conclusions that are drawn. Finally, the mediation model described is not the only model that could have been constructed to fit the observed data. Cross-sectional data cannot distinguish between these possibilities; longitudinal data is required.

In conclusion this study builds on previous research showing that organizational justice and P-O Fit are associated with OCB and job satisfaction has a role in promoting the relationship between these predictors and the criterion. Back to the question asked at the beginning: Does organizational justice influence OCB? The answer here is no. Does P-O Fit influence OCB? The answer is a qualified yes. Furthermore it was found that job satisfaction has an influence as a mediator in getting employees to perform OCB. More studies are needed to determine the robustness of this body of knowledge to greater depth.

REFERENCES


**FIGURE 1: Conceptual Framework on the Relationships between Organizational Justice, P-O Fit and OCB with the Mediating Effect of Job Satisfaction**

![Conceptual Framework](image)

*Fig.1: Conceptual framework on the relationships between organizational justice, P-O Fit and OCB with the mediating effect of job satisfaction.*

11
Table 1: Descriptive Statistics, Cronbach Alphas, and Zero-Order Correlations of All Study Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>OCB</th>
<th>Job Satisfaction</th>
<th>Organizational Justice</th>
<th>P-O Fit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OCB</td>
<td>4.76</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>.76</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Satisfaction</td>
<td>5.08</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>.34**</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Justice</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>1.32</td>
<td>.35**</td>
<td>.52**</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P-O Fit</td>
<td>4.81</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>.58**</td>
<td>.57**</td>
<td>.51**</td>
<td>.81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=190. ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). Diagonal entries indicate Cronbach Alpha values.

Table 2: Standardized Multiple Regression Beta Weights for OCB, Organizational Justice, P-O Fit with the Mediating Effect of Job Satisfaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion: OCB</th>
<th>Predictors:</th>
<th>Equation 1</th>
<th>Equation 2</th>
<th>Equation 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Organizational Justice</td>
<td>.33**</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>P-O Fit</td>
<td>.44**</td>
<td>.62**</td>
<td>.60**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mediator: Job Satisfaction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$R^2$</td>
<td>.41**</td>
<td>.34**</td>
<td>.34**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. N = 190. *p < .05; **p < .1