

The Effect of Person-Organization Fit on the Display of Organizational-Citizenship Behaviors Directed towards the Organization (OCB-Os)

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ABSTRACT

Prior research suggests a relationship between the degree to which employees feel integrated within their organization and how often employees perform voluntary, helpful behaviors that aid the organization. This positive relationship is believed to be moderated by task performance, agreeableness, and self-esteem. Data collected from a sample of college students concluded that P-O fit and OCB-Os are positively related, task performance is positively related to OCB-Os, and agreeableness is positively related to OCB-Os. However, task performance and self-esteem were not confirmed to moderate the relationship. An additional supplemental analysis confirmed that P-O fit, task performance, and agreeableness are all predictors of OCB-Os. This study may lead to research to find a more substantial relationship involving variables other than task performance, agreeableness, and self-esteem. This may result in a research-based guide for business practitioners to abide by when dealing with new employees.

INTRODUCTION

The relationship between the degree to which employees fit into their organization and perform supplemental, helpful behaviors has been studied extensively (Vilela, Gonzalez, & Ferrin, 2008). Person-Organization fit is defined as the "compatibility between people and the organization in which they work" (Kristof, 1996, pg. 1). Workers who fit well in their organization are more likely to experience positive work-related outcomes, such as greater job involvement (Blau, 1993), better work attitudes (Caldwell & O'Reilly, 1990), and Organizational Citizenship Behaviors (OCBs). (OCBs are discretionary behaviors that employees engage in to benefit the organization (Organ, 1988; 1997).) In this study, organizational citizenship behaviors specifically directed towards the organization (OCB-Os) will be examined. Examples include defending the organization and attending optional work-related functions.

The relationship between P-O fit and OCB-Os is not necessarily direct; rather, several variables are likely to intervene and moderate the relationship. A meta-analysis suggests that the variables, task performance, self-esteem, and agreeableness, among others, are tied to person-organization fit (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). These variables address personal characteristics and performance ability that could be related to the occurrence of OCB-Os. Furthermore, these prospective moderating variables, task performance, self-esteem, and agreeableness, refer to the degree of adequacy with which workers complete their job-related tasks, how positively or negatively they think of themselves, and the extent to which employees are pleasant and accommodating. These moderators are important because they determine the conditions and the degree of the primary relationship. In effect, the main relationship under examination, between P-O fit and OCB-Os, is contingent upon these specific moderators.

In this study, we focus on what constructs moderate the relationship between person-organization fit (P-O fit) and organizational citizenship behaviors directed towards the organization (OCB-Os). Very little research has examined moderators of this relationship. Vilela et al. (2008) proposed that high P-O fit is an antecedent of OCBs; however, there is no mention of what moderators affect the relationship. Bateman and Organ (1983) suggested that job satisfaction, which is a product of high P-O fit, can lead to OCBs. While their study proposes a mediation between P-O fit and OCBs, our study concentrates primarily on the moderators within the relationship. With our consideration of self-esteem,

agreeableness, and task performance as moderators, we address how the gap between P-O fit and OCB-Os depends on other constructs.

The present study explores the different aspects of individuals that moderate this relationship – specifically, if factors such as how well employees perform their job-related tasks, how favorably they perceive themselves, and how agreeable they are, moderate the relationship between employees' accordance with their organization and how often they engage in OCB-Os.

HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

High P-O fit has been confirmed as antecedent to trust, commitment, and satisfaction within an organization, all of which lead to increased OCB-Os. Conversely, those who feel disconnected from their organization (i. e. who have low P-O fit) are likely to respond with animosity towards it (Dailey and Kirk, 1992; Skarlicki and Folger, 1997). The importance of P-O fit has been emphasized in past research; those whose values align with the culture of the organization are more likely to experience more positive work-related outcomes, such as higher job involvement (Blau, 1993), greater organizational commitment (Meglino, Ravlin, & Adkins, 1989), and better work attitudes (Caldwell & O'Reilly, 1990). Such employees are more likely to remain in that environment (Vilela et al., 2008). Indeed, we expect to replicate the finding that the more someone fits with their organization, the more likely they are to engage in OCB-Os.

Hypothesis 1: Person-organization fit is positively related to organizational citizenship behaviors directed towards the organization.

One might assume that employees who display job competence and knowledgeable ability, and therefore perform their job-related tasks well, will be more likely to contribute OCB-Os. Organ (1988) argues that both task performance and OCBs are necessary components to healthy organizational functioning. While OCBs are related to how the effectiveness of groups within an organization (Karambayya, 1990), task performance is a greater factor in employee evaluations (Broman, Hamilton, Hoffman, & Mavaddat, 1995). Those who are more skilled at their professions are likely to be more confident in their work, and to produce higher quality outputs. In turn, such individuals are likely to receive higher appraisals and to feel more pride in their work. These translate into a higher investment in OCBs (Vilela et al., 2008). Indeed, a higher degree of task performance is expected to strengthen the relationship between P-O fit and OCB-Os. Those individuals who have substantial mastery over their work-related tasks will feel more integrated and contribute more effectively to their organizations. Because organizational literature has suggested that an indirect relationship exists between these two factors, we concluded that those who are more competent at their jobs are more likely to engage in OCB-Os.

Hypothesis 2: Task performance is positively related to organizational citizenship behaviors directed towards the organization.

Carmeli and Josman (2006) found relationships between task performance and emotional intelligence as well as emotional intelligence and OCBs. If employees show signs of both high task performance and high P-O fit, they probably will perform more OCB-Os. This will determine how large of an impact task performance has on employees' behavior in a workplace in which they think they fit.

Hypothesis 3: Task performance moderates the relationship between person-organization fit and organizational citizenship behaviors directed towards the organization. We expect that employees with both high task performance and high person-organization fit will yield the highest levels of organizational citizenship behaviors directed towards the organization.

Previous research has shown that individuals high in agreeableness are likely to be cooperative and helpful. Van Vianen & De Dreu (2001) demonstrated that agreeableness in individuals relates to

group cohesion, task cohesion, and compliance with team goals. We believe we can expand these findings, because the cooperative and trusting nature of those individuals who are high in agreeableness will result in a greater likelihood to engage in OCB-Os.

Hypothesis 4: Agreeableness is positively related to organizational citizenship behaviors directed towards the organization.

After validating a positive relationship between agreeableness and OCB-Os, we predict that agreeableness will be one of the moderators of the relationship between P-O fit and OCB-Os. As we have noted, individuals high in agreeableness are likely to cooperate and comply with team goals. Their level of commitment and dedication to team goals is likely to integrate them into their organizations better. Such attitudes are likely to produce OCB-Os. Therefore, if employees show signs of both high agreeableness and high P-O fit, we expect that they will perform more OCB-Os.

Hypothesis 5: Agreeableness moderates the relationship between person- organization fit and organizational citizenship behaviors directed towards the organization. We expect that employees with high levels of both agreeableness and person-organization fit will yield the highest levels of organizational citizenship behaviors directed towards the organization.

We believe there is a positive relationship between OCBs and self-esteem (that is, a person's self-perception). Though self-esteem is individual, we hypothesize that employees' self esteem could have dramatic effects on the organization in which they work. Previous research shows that employees with high self-esteem have the emotional stamina to perform OCBs under difficult and challenging circumstances (Tang & Ibrahim, 1998). Thus, such individuals, who are more likely to perform OCBs in uncertain circumstances, are expected to engage in OCBs in a variety of situations. We propose that the higher the self-esteem of employees, the more likely they will engage in OCBs.

Hypothesis 6: Self-esteem is positively related to organizational citizenship behaviors directed towards the organization.

After validating a positive relationship between self-esteem and OCB-Os, we have reason to believe that self-esteem is one of the moderators between P-O fit and the previously mentioned OCB-Os. The present study proposes that if employees show signs of high self esteem and high P-O fit, they will perform more OCB-Os. The research of Skarlicki (1997) and Dailey (1992) on P-O fit and OCB relationships, along with Tang and Ibrahim's (1998) examination of the correlation between self-esteem and OCBs, offers plenty of support for our proposal. Overall, we hope to discover the impact individual employee characteristics have on employees' behavior in a workplace in which they feel they fit.

Hypothesis 7: Self esteem moderates the relationship between person-organization fit and organizational citizenship behaviors directed towards the organization. We expect that employees with both high self esteem and high person-organization fit will yield the highest levels of organizational citizenship behaviors directed towards the organization.

In summary, the present study attempts to establish that there is a significant, positive relationship between P-O fit and OCBs. We expect to show the importance of self-esteem, agreeableness, and task performance as key moderators in this relationship. Employers will benefit from this information by being able to determine the levels of their employees' citizenship behaviors. We hope to add to the work of Vilela (2008), Kristof (1996), and Blau (1993) by extending their research into the realm of what actually moderates this key workplace relationship.

METHOD

Participants

The participants were 57 undergraduate students from a small, liberal-arts college in New Jersey who had been employed within six months of participating in the study. They were recruited through PIPER, a computer-based participant pool at the college. The mean age of the participants was 19.74 years, 35.1% of them being first-year college students; 77.2% of the participants were female; 71.9%, Caucasian /White, 10.5%, Black /African American (non-Hispanic); 1.8%, Asian Indian; 5.3%, Latino /Hispanic, and 5.3%, multiracial. The majority of participants (65.1%) were psychology majors, of which 21.62% had a second major. Thirty-four participants (59.65%) indicated a minor, including four (7%) in psychology.

Procedure

Participants, after signing in, were asked to take any available seat and handed an informed consent form, which explained the purpose of the study. If they agreed to the terms, they signed the sheet, which was collected from them and placed in a manila envelope. They followed the same procedure with a demographic sheet. After this, participants were given surveys and pencils and asked to respond to the questions. When finished, they returned the surveys, which were placed in a separate manila envelope. Participants then received a debriefing form, which they were asked to read, sign, and hand in. Finally, participants were offered a debriefing form to keep and thanked for their time.

Measures

Self-Esteem. Self-esteem was measured with the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES; Rosenberg, M., 1989), a 10-item self-report measure of global, or state if modified, self-esteem. Coefficient alpha values for the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale ranged from .77 to .88. A sample item reads, "I feel I am a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others." We found that the coefficient alpha was .88 for the scale in this study.

Person-Organization Fit. Person-organization fit was measured with the Person-Organization Fit Scale (POFS; Bretz, & Judge, 1994), consisting of two 15-item questionnaires asking about participants' current work environment and preferences for an organization in which to work. Instead of testing reliability with coefficient alpha values, the authors assessed the internal reliability of the measures of employee preferences, organizational characteristics, and differences between these two measures using confirmatory factor analysis; internal consistency reliability was found. A sample item reads, "This organization pays on the basis of individual performance." We found that the coefficient alpha was .69 for the scale in this study.

Job Performance. Job performance was measured using the Role-Based Performance Scale (RBPS; Welbourne, Johnson, & Erez, 1998), a 20-statement questionnaire analyzing an individual's fulfillment of on-the-job responsibilities based on the self-reported distinction of the participant as, "needs much improvement," "needs some improvement," "satisfactory," or "excellent." Coefficient alpha values for the Role-Based Performance Scale ranged from .86 to .96. A representative category to be evaluated was "Quality of work output." We found that the coefficient alpha was .88 for the scale in this study.

Personality Traits. Personality traits were measured using The Big Five Inventory (BFI; John, Donahue, & Kentle, 1991), consisting of 44 statements assessing an individual's basic personality traits, including the extent to which they are extroverted, agreeable, conscientious, emotionally stable, and cultured. The coefficient alpha value for The Big Five Inventory is .83. A sample item reads, "I see myself as someone who can be somewhat careless." We found that the coefficient alpha was .65 for the scale in this study.

Organizational Citizenship Behaviors-Organization (OCB-O). OCB-O was measured with the OCB-O scale (Williams & Anderson, 1991), a 7-item measure used to determine an individual's behaviors directed at an organization. Coefficient alpha values for the OCB-O ranged from .70 to .75. A sample item reads, "Adheres to informal rules devised to maintain order." We found that the coefficient alpha was .71 for

the scale in this study.

RESULTS

Fifty-seven participants completed our survey. We had two cases of missing data; both were treated using mean imputation. One participant entered an invalid score of 0.5 for question number 14 of the Big Five Inventory. After performing a mean imputation, we entered the participant's score as 1.5. Another mean imputation was computed because a participant left question number 4 of the second P-O Fit Scale blank. A score of 3.3 was entered. Because these two were the only participants who misinterpreted items, we attribute their mistakes to random error.

Hypotheses 1, 2, and 3 were tested with a single instance of multiple regression. Specifically, we regressed OCB-Os on P-O fit, task performance, and the interaction of P-O fit and task performance. Hypothesis 1 stated that P-O fit is positively related to OCB-Os. Hypothesis 1 was supported by a significant, positive relationship, ($\beta=.27, p<.05$). This shows a positive relationship between P-O fit and OCB-Os. Hypothesis 2, which predicted that task performance is positively related to OCB-Os, was supported by a significant, positive relationship ($\beta=.44, p<.01$). This indicates that there is a positive relationship between task performance and OCB-Os. Hypothesis 3 assumed that task performance moderates the relationship between P-O fit and OCB-Os. We centered the scores for both P-O fit and task performance prior to creating the interaction term, which was found to be non-significant ($\beta=-.03, p>.05$). Thus, Hypothesis 3 was not supported, which means that task performance does not moderate the relationship between P-O fit and OCB-Os.

Hypotheses 4 and 5 were tested with tests of multiple regression. Specifically, we regressed OCB-Os on P-O fit, agreeableness, and the interaction of P-O fit and agreeableness. Hypothesis 4, that agreeableness relates positively related to OCB-Os, was supported by a significant, positive relationship ($\beta=.54, p<.01$). This demonstrates a positive relationship between agreeableness and OCB-Os. Hypothesis 5 predicted that agreeableness moderates the relationship between P-O fit and OCB-Os. We centered the scores for both P-O fit and agreeableness prior to creating the interaction term, which was found to be non-significant ($\beta= -.17, p>.05$). Thus, Hypothesis 5 was not supported, which means that agreeableness does not moderate the relationship between P-O fit and OCB-Os.

Hypotheses 6 and 7 received tests of multiple regression. Specifically, we regressed OCB-Os on P-O fit, self-esteem, and the interaction of P-O fit and self-esteem. Hypothesis 6, that self-esteem relates positively to OCB-Os, was not supported because of a non-significant, negative relationship ($\beta= -.22, p>.05$). This suggests no positive relationship between self esteem and OCB-Os. Hypothesis 7 stated that self esteem moderates the relationship between P-O fit and OCB-Os. We centered the scores for P-O fit and self esteem prior to creating the interaction term, which was non-significant ($\beta= -.11, p>.05$). Thus, Hypothesis 7 was not supported, which means that self-esteem does not moderate the relationship between P-O fit and OCB-Os. Refer to Table 1 for a summary of the correlations of all variables investigated in this study.

After completing the data analysis, we found that P-O fit, task performance, and agreeableness were all predictors of OCB-Os. We originally tested these predictors gradually in separate regression analyses. We decided to test them all simultaneously to see if all three remaining significant predictors were examined in combination. So, we completed a supplemental analysis to regress all three predictors on OCB-O simultaneously. We learned that significant, positive relationships exist between task performance and OCB-Os ($\beta=.28, p<.05$), P-O fit and OCB-Os ($\beta=.22, p<.05$), and agreeableness and OCB-Os ($\beta.42, p<.05$). The total effect size, which tells the percentage of variability in the outcome (OCB-Os) that can be predicted with this combination of antecedents (task performance, P-O fit, and agreeableness), for this specific combination was .39.

DISCUSSION

After completing data analysis, we found three of our seven hypotheses were supported. Consequently, we were able to confirm that a positive relationship exists between P-O fit and OCB-Os, task performance is positively related to OCB-Os, and agreeableness is positively related to OCB-Os. The first confirmed hypothesis, Hypothesis 1, indicates that individuals who feel integrated within their organization are

more likely to contribute voluntary citizenship behaviors to it, such as attending non-mandatory work-related events. Indeed, past research has indicated that those who are especially compatible with their organizations are more likely to experience higher job involvement (Blau, 1993), greater organizational commitment (Meglino et al., 1989), and better work attitudes (Caldwell & O'Reilly, 1990). Hypothesis 2 demonstrates that those who are more competent at their job-related tasks are more likely to support the organization with voluntary citizenship behaviors. Vilela et al. (2008) also concluded that the pride associated with performing one's tasks effectively and the recognition received for it can be translated into a higher investment into OCBs. The last substantiated hypothesis, Hypothesis 4, shows that agreeableness is positively related to OCB-Os. Employees with more pleasant demeanors are more likely to contribute voluntary citizenship behaviors to the organization. This supports the findings of van Vianen & De Dreu (2001), who showed how agreeableness in individuals relates to group cohesion, task cohesion, and compliance with team goals.

Since three main effects were confirmed, between P-O fit and OCB-Os, task performance and OCB-Os, and agreeableness and OCB-Os, we conducted a supplementary analysis further to investigate these relationships. We found that P-O fit, task performance, and agreeableness are all predictors of OCB-Os with an effect size of .39. This indicates that individuals who are integrated within their workplace, are competent at their job-related tasks, and have a relatively pleasant personality are more likely to perform voluntary citizenship behaviors for the organization.

Surprisingly, our study indicates that task performance does not moderate the relationship between P-O fit and OCB-Os, agreeableness does not moderate the relationship between P-O fit and OCB-Os, self-esteem is not positively related to OCB-Os, and lastly, that self-esteem does not moderate the relationship between P-O fit and OCB-Os. The findings from Hypothesis 5, which was unconfirmed, reveal that agreeableness does not moderate the relationship between P-O fit and OCB-Os. We ascertained that those who are both agreeable and high in P-O fit do not necessarily perform more OCB-Os. Moreover, the findings from Hypothesis 6, which was unsupported, suggest that those with higher self-esteem are not necessarily more likely to engage in OCB-Os. The findings from the last unconfirmed hypothesis, Hypothesis 7, show that self-esteem does not moderate the relationship between P-O fit and OCB-Os. This makes sense, since the previous hypothesis revealed that the main relationship does not exist.

Implications of Findings

The findings of the present study have several implications for psychological research and business world practices. Despite abundant research on P-O Fit and OCB-Os, there is little on the relationship between the two. This study may perhaps be a stepping-stone to future research that considers more variables than task performance, agreeableness, and self-esteem and may lead to the development of research-based guides for business practitioners to abide by when dealing with new employees.

From these results, business practitioners, and more specifically human-resource professionals (HR), can gauge whom (and whom not) to recruit for their organization. This study implies that employees whose ideals align with the company's will more likely help the organization by, for example, attending extra meetings or not taking unneeded breaks. According to our findings, when HR is looking for employees who will dedicate themselves to the organization and show that dedication through the aforementioned types of helping behaviors, it should assess whether applicants share the company's vision and values before deciding to hire them.

Limitations of Study and Future Research

Although our findings confirmed three main effect relationships, our study had several limitations. A few issues arose because of our sample, perhaps most notably its small size (57), which may have prevented us from detecting significance in our relationships (Maxwell, 2008). Moreover, because our sample consists of undergraduates from a single liberal arts college, our ability to generalize is very limited. The sample was also limited in other ways: it was over three-quarters female, 72percent Caucasian, and nearly two-thirds were psychology majors.

Similarly, because of our typical participants' college standing, we can assume that most are not yet employed by organizations with which they have long-term employment goals. We could have received some insight on this by asking participants if they were employed full- or part-time. Future research should encompass a larger, more demographically varied sample while targeting full-time employees with long-term career aspirations.

Finally, we must address our method of data collection. Self-assessment, especially with regard to performance-related questions, is not always reliable. While it was the most convenient and efficient for our purposes, meta-analysis of various self-assessment studies reports a wide range of correlations between self-assessed and external measures of performance of -0.05 to 0.82, with a mean of 0.39 (Falchikov & Boud, 1989). Future researchers might consider the possibility of receiving OCB-O and job performance data from employers of participants rather than relying solely on self-reports from participants themselves.

CONCLUSION

Our study has stressed the importance of feeling integrated in the workplace, and the positive outcomes related to that integration. It confirms that high P-O fit, task performance, and agreeableness pave the way for higher instances of OCB-Os, a positive work-related outcome. This suggests that human-resource professionals should recruit individuals whose goals are aligned with those of the organization, are competent at their tasks, and are agreeable. Our study sheds light on an area of I /O research that can benefit organizations (productively) and their employees (socially).

Table 1
Intercorrelations Between P-O Fit, OCB-Os, and their Moderators

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1. Self-esteem	1.68	.49	--				
2. P-O Fit	-13.83	9.17	.01	--			
3. Job Performance	3.87	.49	-.17	.02	--		
4. Agreeableness	4.14	.50	-.38**	-.02	.37**	--	
5. OCB-O	4.42	.48	-.21	.22*	.44**	.52**	--

*p <.05; **p <.01

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