

Person-Organization Fit and Employee Outcomes: A Study among Academicians in Malaysia

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Abstract

Purpose:

This study aims to investigate the effects of person-organization fit (P-O fit) on the employee outcomes (in-role performance and organizational citizenship behaviour) in Malaysian higher education institutions.

Design/methodology/approach:

This study employed a convenience sample. Personally administered questionnaires received through multi-source ratings from 295 academicians and their supervisors, which represents 53% response rate. Exploratory factor analysis was conducted, followed by confirmatory factor analysis. Structural equation model was the implemented to test the relationships among all variables.

Findings:

The results showed no relationship between P-O fit and in-role performance and no relationship between P-O fit and OCB.

Research limitations/implications:

This study employed the cross-sectional design instead of longitudinal design. The cross-sectional data limits the extent to which causality can be inferred from the results, which further restricts the acquisition of on the accurate directions of the relationships between the variables of the study.

Practical implications:

The findings of the present study adds a new argument which states that there is no relationship between P-O Fit and in-role performance and OCB. However, with the unexpected result of these relationships has made this study suggested that future research endeavors should be replicated in different context and samples.

Originality/value:

The study addresses there is no relationships between P-O fit and employee outcomes (in-role performance and OCB).

Keywords: P-O fit, in-role performance, OCB, employee outcomes, academicians

Introduction

People are the centre of all organizations. Education is an industry where there is a strong emphasis on the needs of people. Education level is a determining factor in an individual's perspective on life, particularly their expectations regarding business and their future plans. For this reason, it is observed that as employees' educational attainment rises, so do their viewpoints on corporate life, as well as the significance and expectations attached to their employment. Academics, who are the primary beneficiaries of education, contribute to their institutions by applying their expertise, abilities, and attitudes. Ermiş et.al. (2024) emphasized that universities may enhance their effectiveness by having academics that exhibit a high degree of Person-Organization Fit.

Universities rely on their academics as their main resource. By their nature, they are always open to development and communication, and they have an unstable structure. The nature of work is changing, and with it the relationships between employers and employees. In this respect, the presence of academics with a high level of person-job and Person-Organization Fit not only increases the efficiency of universities, but also strengthens the educational basis of the country they live in. Ermiş et al., (2021) highlight that the performance criteria of university academics, such as the quantity and calibre of their academic publications, have a direct impact on the global educational standing of their respective universities.

P-O Fit is popular in organizational behaviour and personnel management because it significantly affects employees' turnover intention, organizational citizen behaviour, working attitude, ethical behavior and job performance which increased attention in the academic and practical management field. P-O Fit is defined as the "compatibility between people and organizations that occurs when at least one entity provides what the other needs or they share similar fundamental characteristics or both" (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005).

Studying of P-O Fit is crucial as it impacts various aspects of both employee and organizational outcomes, leading to a more effective and harmonious workplace. The objective of this paper is to address the effects of employee's perceptions of P-O Fit on employee outcomes such as in-role performance and OCB of academicians in higher learning institutions in Malaysia. Person-Organization Fit refers to the compatibility of academics' personalities, values, ambitions, and attitudes with the culture, understanding, and conventions of the organization they serve (Andrews, Baker, & Hunt, 2011).

Literature Review

Person-Organization Fit and Employee Outcomes (In-role Performance and OCB)

According to self-identity theory, emotional responses may occur when individuals believe that their work environment, job demands, and organizational culture are consistent with their own beliefs, abilities, and future career aspirations. According to the theory, when employees perceive a high level of congruence with their job and organization, they are more willing to provide extra assistance to their colleagues and customers, as well as exhibit a high level of

adjustment and extra role behaviours towards their organization, because they believe that anything beneficial to the organization will also be beneficial to them (Caprar & Walker, 2024).

Fit to organization refers to the degree to which an employee's unique characteristics align with those of the employing organization as a whole (Gregory et al., 2010). Previous studies have extensively explored the simultaneous impact of P-O Fit on both, in-role performance and OCB. These studies, conducted by Ashfaq and Hamid (2021), Jufrizen et al. (2023), Park and Hai (2024), and Wang and Chen (2024), consistently found positive relationship between P-O Fit and performance. Therefore, this study presents the following hypotheses derived from the meta-analysis and empirical studies on the relationship between P-O Fit and employee outcomes (in-role performance and OCB).

H1: P-O Fit is positively related to In-role Performance

H2: P-O Fit is positively related to OCB

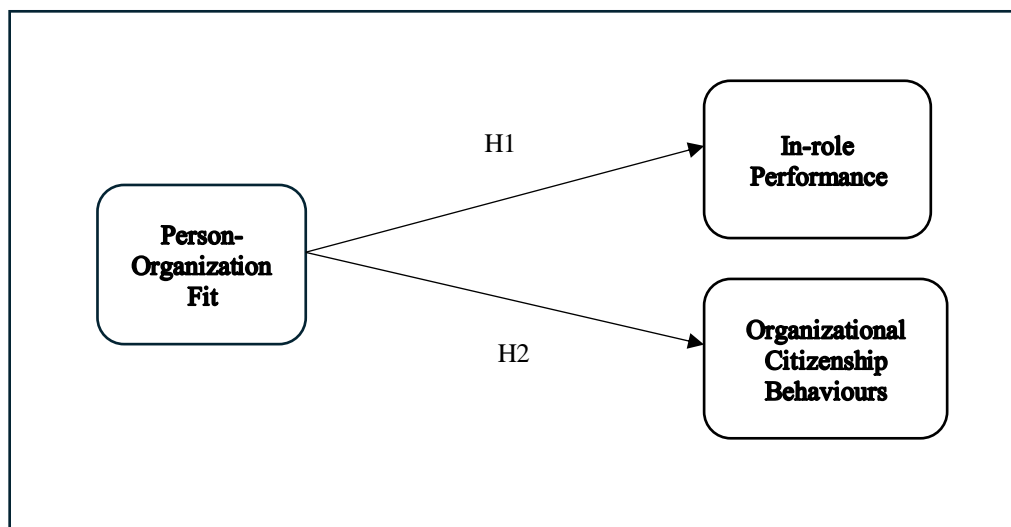


Figure 1: The Research Model

Method

This study employed a convenience sample. The data was collected by personally administered questionnaires, received through multi-source ratings from 295 academicians and their supervisors, which represents 53% response rate. Meanwhile, a total of 295 completed questionnaires were paired after each questionnaire was matched up with their immediate supervisor's. The respondents include academics from two types of institution within Kuala Lumpur and Selangor: public universities (N = 229) and private universities (N = 66).

The paper employed carefully selected measurement tools, sourced from reputable academic sources, to guarantee the dependability and applicability within the study's specific framework.

The present study adapted the measures from Edwards and Cable (2009) known as the Work Values Survey (WVS) in order to assess the subjective values congruence. The WVS was developed using Schwartz's model of basic human values (Schwartz, 1992; Cable & Edwards, 2004; Edwards & Cable, 2009). Cable and Edwards (2004) of the eight core values was adapted to measure items within the working environment (Cable & Edwards, 2004; Edwards & Cable, 2009). The eight core work values are listed as follows: (a) altruism, (b) relationships, (c) pay, (d) job security, (e) authority, (f) prestige, (g) variety, and (h) autonomy. The scales measuring values congruence were divided into two sections, namely employee values and perceived organizational values.

In the case of employee values, respondents indicated each of the eight WVS condition in the sense of 'How important is this to you?'. The respondents are required to assess the degree of their own work values for their employing organization. The participants were also asked the extent to which each value exists in themselves, using a 7 point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly unimportant) to 7 (strongly important). Meanwhile, in the context of perceived organizational values, the respondents are required to rate each item of WVS in terms of 'How important is this in your organization?'. For this particular question, the respondents are expected to perceive their own thoughts and assess their organization values. The total Cronbach's alpha for this measure was .91

In-role Performance refers to 'behaviours that are recognized by the formal reward systems and are part of the requirements as described in job descriptions'. The measures revised by Williams and Anderson (1991) are adopted in the current study. Their study on full time employees in various organizations in the United States showed that the scales were useful and applicable to various related occupations as well. The Cronbach's alpha was .91 for the study.

The present study adapted the 7-items of in-role performance scales of Williams and Anderson (1991). The supervisors were asked to provide their evaluation on their subordinates' in-role performance. The subject of each questions from 'I' were changed to 'He or She' to represent the employees who have been rated in the survey. This measure is intended to reflect how well a person performs the activities required based on his or her job description. The reliability coefficient on this measures was .82.

Employees in various industries and organizations have been sampled using the measures of OCB-I and OCB-O. The study reported Cronbach's alphas of .87 and .81 for self-rated and .79 and .68 for supervisor's rating (Brummel & Parker, 2015).

Organizational Citizenship Behavior refers to 'an employee behaviour that is voluntarily based, not directly rewarded or not rewarded by the formal reward system'. The 14 items of the OCB-O (directed towards the whole organisation) and OCB-I (directed at other individuals) scale developed by Williams and Anderson (1991) were used. The researcher used supervisory ratings to test the scales. The Cronbach's alphas were .73 and .68 for OCB-I and OCB-O respectively. As examined by Ng and Feldman (2011) in their meta-analysis study, 88% of the studies used supervisory ratings of OCB, 11% used peer ratings and 1% represented the objective measures. The average scale reliability was .87 across all the studies mentioned.

The 14 items adapted from Williams and Anderson (1991) were measured on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

Table 1: Measuring Instruments

No.	Variable	No. of Items	Adapted
1	Person-Organization Fit	7	Edwards and Cable (2009)
2	In-role Performance	7	Williams and Anderson (1991)
3	Organizational Citizenship Behaviours	14	Williams and Anderson (1991)

Findings

Profile of Demographics

The research analysis concerns the demographic characteristics of the respondents, which include gender, age, race, marital status, educational level, type of organization, current position, job status, monthly income and length of service in higher learning institutions in Malaysia. A total of 295 valid responses were considered in the analysis. The results of the demographics revealed the majority of study responses were female (70.8%), but male represented about 30%. The results of the sample age groups showed the majority of them aged between 31 and 40 years old represented about 58%, followed by those aged between 20 and 30 years old (27.5%). Meanwhile, the results of the educational level of the participants revealed that the majority of them were Masters holders, 47.8% (141). On the other hand, the results of years of service in these universities showed that most of the participants had service years below 10 years (258 responses) (87.4%), which indicated diversity in the demographic characteristics of the sample involved in this study and would reflect on their perceptions about the study variables (see table 2).

Table 2: Overall Demographic

Demographic Variable	Category	Sample: (n = 295)		Total
		Frequency	Percentage (%)	
Gender	Male	86	29.2%	86
	Female	209	70.8%	295
Age	20 -30	81	27.5%	81
	31 - 40	171	58%	252
	41 -50	37	12.5%	289
	51 - 60	4	1.4%	293
	More than 60	2	0.7%	295
Race	Malay	258	87.5%	258
	Indian	12	4.1%	270
	Chinese	14	4.7%	284
	Other	11	3.7%	295

Marital Status	Single	57	19.3%	57
	Married	232	78.6%	289
	Divorced/ Separated	6	2.0%	295
	Widowed	0	0%	295
Highest Level of Education	Bachelor	49	16.6%	49
	Masters	141	47.8%	190
	PhD	89	30.2%	279
	Other	16	5.4%	295
Type of Organization	Public University	229	77.6%	229
	Private University	66	22.4%	295
Current Position	Tutor	26	8.8%	26
	Lecturer	168	56.9%	194
	Senior Lecturer	85	28.8%	279
	Associate	7	2.4%	286
	Professor	9	3.1%	295
	Other			
Extra Position	Yes	70	23.73%	70
	No	225	76.27%	295
Job Status	Permanent	249	84.4%	249
	Contract	22	7.5%	271
	Temporary	23	7.8%	294
	Other	1	0.3%	295
Monthly Income	Under RM3000	23	7.8%	23
	RM3001-RM5000	137	46.4%	160
	RM5001-RM8000	117	39.7%	277
	Above RM8001	18	6.1%	295
Length of service in current institution	Under 5 years	129	43.7%	129
	5 to 10 years	129	43.7%	258
	11 to 15 years	32	10.8%	290
	More than 15 years	5	1.7%	295

Measurement Model of Analysis

The observable indicators of a construct were expected to exhibit strong relationship during the analysis of convergent validity. In this analysis, the evaluation of loading factors and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) metric was performed. The AVE value of each variable exceeded the threshold of 0.5. This indicated that the implemented variables or constructs were considered valid and appropriate. Further, the analysis of indicator reliability was conducted using the values of composite reliability and strengthened with the values of Cronbach Alpha. The acceptable, favourable, and recommended results for the composite reliability should be at least 0.70, but Hair et al. (2010) indicated that values of composite reliability between 0.60 and 0.70 can be acceptable (see table 3).

Table 3: Measurement Model Results

First Order Constructs	Loadings	CR	AVE	Convergent Validity (AVE > 0.5)
P-O Fit (P-O Fit)	0.602	0.919	0.589	Yes
	0.810			
	0.806			
	0.780			
	0.731			
	0.790			
	0.744			
In-role Performance	0.853	0.959	0.887	Yes
	0.953			
	0.961			
	0.911			
OCB (OCB)	0.840	0.856	0.666	Yes
	0.849			
	0.755			

The study investigated the possibility of positive relationships between P-O Fit and in-role performance, as well as OCB. According to the results, the relationship is demonstrated to be positive, but with no significant paths from P-O Fit to in role performance ($\beta = 0.005$, $p < 0.928$). The relationship negatively insignificant to OCB ($\beta = -0.069$, $p < 0.270$). Hence, hypotheses 1a and 1b are not supported.

Table 4: Hypotheses Testing

No	Hypotheses	Path Coefficients	T Statistics	P Values	95% Confidence Intervals	Result
1	H1a P-O Fit -> In-role Performance	0.005	0.091	0.928	[-0.107, 0.121]	Not Significant
2	H1b P-O Fit -> OCB	-0.069	1.102	0.270	[-0.180, 0.064]	Not Significant

** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$

Discussion and Conclusion

The results of the current study failed to prove the hypotheses. The relationships between P-O Fit and in-role performance and OCB, were insignificant. The results contradict a number of previous studies (Chinomona et al., 2013; Demir et al., 2015; Kim et al., 2013). Hence, the findings of the present study adds a new argument which argues that there is no relationship between P-O Fit and in-role performance and Organizational Citizenship Behaviours (OCB).

The insignificant relationships between P-O Fit and in-role performance and OCB raises possibilities for explaining this result. The possibility of other variables mediates their

relationships to examine the mechanisms through which P-O Fit affects employee outcomes. Besides, to consider the context of the analysis and the specific research question being addressed. A lack of significant relationship between two variables in one study does not necessarily mean that there is no relationship in other contexts or populations.

However, with the unexpected result of these relationships has made this study suggested that future research endeavors should be replicated in different context and samples. Longitudinal research is both time consuming and expensive, but it may benefit well. Various types of fit such as person-job fit, person-group fit might be used to explain the relationship in the current study. Future studies also can examine other employee outcomes such as intention to quit for the purpose of considering the potential negative effects of P-O Fit. More research could be done and consider the moderating or mediating effects of other variables in the relationship.

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