

# Person-Group Fit and Organizational Citizenship Behaviour in Public Service Employees: How Work Involvement Moderates the Relationship

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## ABSTRACT

Organizational citizenship behavior is crucial in public service, where effective collaboration and discretionary efforts significantly influence organizational success. Despite extensive research on organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), limited attention has been paid to how person-group fit (PGF) influences OCB, particularly in the context of public service employees. Moreover, the role of work involvement as a potential moderator in this relationship remains underexplored. This study addresses these gaps by investigating the interplay between PGF, OCB, and work involvement among public service employees, shedding light on mechanisms that foster a cohesive and productive workforce. 376 questionnaires were issued and 371 were returned, resulting in a response rate of 98.67%. The analysis utilized SPSS to examine the person-group fit. The findings of this study indicate that work involvement has no moderating effect on the relationships between person group fit and OCB. The paper discusses the ramifications of the study.

**Keywords:** Person-Group Fit, OCB, Work Involvement

## INTRODUCTION

In a distinctly aggressive world, the biggest challenge facing leaders might be coping with and motivating people in an organisation. Powerful management of human resources is important for an organization to maintain its competitive gain. There are growing pressures for organizations to be lean, dynamic, proactive, fast responding, team-based, efficient, empowering and innovative (Azhari et al., 2023). For the general public provider enterprise, in particular, its ability to respond efficaciously to the changing desires of the environment is a key element in making sure a nation's sustainable development, growth and worldwide competitiveness (Thani et al., 2022). This case calls for the needs for organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) to be exhibited by using all personnel within the corporations. OCB including employees' discretionary actions not explicitly identified by means of formal reward system that promotes effective functioning of the company (Organ, 1988). OCB is in particular vital in improving governmental effectiveness, considering that it can supplement formal bureaucratic operations that may be really constrained by means of confined administrative and economic sources or protocols (Sulaiman et al., 2024). Consequently, governmental operations can be controlled with greater efficiency and services delivered with higher quality each time employees engage with stakeholders in approaches that exhibit the positive actions related to OCB (Meilani, 2022). Their performance and effectiveness of making use of constrained resource that is being funded via finances allocation will substantially have an effect on the economic increase of a particular district.

The public service is undergoing extraordinary pressure to carry through effective management because of the growth in urbanization, education levels of the population and the industrialization of the country (Aziz et al., 2022). Due to the importance of government services to the community, their overall performance had been subjected to numerous criticisms and being barraged with questions and complaints directly via electronic and written media, suggesting the inefficiency and effectiveness of the government control. The governments have frequently been criticized for their poor offerings, bureaucratic, inefficient, wasteful, unresponsive and not

citizen-friendly (Mohamad Hajari, 2020). The allegations of bribery and misuse of power are regularly raised towards local authorities (Hashim, 2020). Bila (2020) stated that corruptions are most occurring at lower levels of administration particularly where the receiver of a permit or license is seen to benefit financially. Public service work leaves its executives and staff uncovered to so many temptations in their every day jobs (Alias et al., 2022). A study executed by Manaf et al. (2023) revealed that the performance of public service has thus far failed to broaden a robust package deal of extensive satisfaction to fulfill the wishes of the communities. They recognized the lack of cooperation from external (the community) in addition to internal (personnel and management) as the ultimate cause of government failure in delivering excellent service quality.

Maximum performance can only be achieved if the working environments as well as the job context particularly allow the employees to establish the efforts in maximizing their level of job performance. In addition, employees and their work environment must be compatible which might influence the public servants' job performance. When the characteristics of individuals (employees) match their work environments, this is actually called person-environment fit (P-E fit). As the person-environment fit research in public service is not in a broad scope as stated by Wightman and Christensen(2024), this study would like to contribute some information on the consequences of person environment (P-E) fit especially in the Ministry of Home Affairs. One of the previous studies conducted by Shahidan et al. (2024) shows that there are a limited studies conducted in person- group fit and person-supervisor fit (Sumantri et al., 2019). It is also important to remark that the person-supervisor fit and person-group fit which may have significant impact on the public servants' job performance. Thus, this study is designed specifically to examine whether one of dimension of person-environment fit namely Person-Group Fit may affect the job performance of the employees in Ministry of Home Affairs

It is important to realize that the public servants' job performance may be closely related to other factors including their job and also the departments and agencies revolving around them. Therefore, it is seen that there is an urge to investigate the relationship between P-E fit and also the job performance of the employees within the Malaysian context. As the public servants who are responsible under the Ministry of Home Affairs, they need to showcase good voluntary behavior or OCB in helping the society. OCB is a useful term used in describing the voluntary public servants' behaviours that go the 'extra mile' to society to succeed and those behaviors are not the performance expectation of their official roles. Apart from that, it is also known as an alternative which can be applied in comparing the performance level between two or more employees who fulfilled the requirement of task performance. Therefore, it is believed that OCB might become the benchmark for the evaluation of employees who successfully produce the level that is similar as the task performance output.

In this study, work involvement is expected to affect the function of P-G Fit. The moderating role of work involvement helps to conceptualize the P-G fits and job performance relationships. Jex and Britt (2014) suggested that job performance can be meaningful if a moderator is included in elucidating and understanding its relationship with the predictors.

## Research Objectives

In order to achieve the aim of the study, the following objectives are formulated:

1. To investigate the influence of person-group (P-G) fit on job performance among public servants.
2. To investigate the moderating role of work involvement in influencing the link between dimensions of person- group fit (P-G) fit and job performance among public servants

## LITERATURE REVIEW

OCB was originally being introduced by Bateman and Organ in the early 1980s which highlighted on the extra role behavior. In particular, OCB includes the positive behavioral aspects which are not even stated in the job description and besides, it is also not enforced in the contract of employment. Apart from the contextual performance, based on Huang (2016), OCB has also been regarded as the extra role behaviors or the discretionary behaviors. It was characterized into another aspect which is the general compliance basically when it was first introduced by Bateman and Organ (1983), where it deals which the actions that should be taken by the employees and also the compassion they possessed which includes their willingness to help others (Organ, 1988b). Organ (1988a) then expanded OCB into five (5) different dimensions as explained below;

## **Altruism**

Altruism refers to helping the workers on the task assigned or problems faced in a way that it provides the relevant information for the employees besides assisting and helping them to solve the problems they faced and also giving a helping hand in handling the equipment as well as the machineries (Organ, 1988a).

## **Civic Virtue**

Civic virtue refers to participation in the events conducted in the organization and it also has to do with the decision making. In other words, it specifically has contributions in terms of the organizational governance (Organ, 1988a). It occurs when the employees take part in the events in the organization which reflect the unity and also the relationship among members and creating a good intention as well as positive image to be viewed by the public (Abdullah Thani, 2019).

## **Conscientiousness**

As employees started to perform their responsibilities and job which are above the minimum level of requirement, this is called conscientiousness (Organ, 1988a). Among the behaviors are arriving early and leaving the office or workplace late, giving sincere beneficial suggestion and not doing things that are considered as a waste of time such as chit chatting, gossiping, or having breaks very frequently (Abdullah Thani, 2019).

## **Courtesy**

Courtesy refers to the act of the employees in informing and also notifying others from threats that may impact them or their career (Organ, 1988a). This is a good behavior as it will help in preventing or at least notifying others from the harm that might give an impact to them (Huang, 2016). For example, the company may notify the employees that they have been frequently arriving late to work before appropriating any actions on them (Abdullah Thani, 2019).

## **Sportsmanship**

Sportsmanship concerns withholding from complaining on small issues encountered at the workplace (Organ, 1988a). Tolerating in situations that are unpleasant or inconvenience at the workplace instead of keep complaining about it (Abdullah Thani, 2019).

## **Person-Group (P-G) Fit**

Generally, P-G fit is explained as the compatibility between co-workers. Up until today, studies in this area are actually limited as usually psychological or attitudinal compatibility of team members in work groups have been given the major attention (Charlton & Eschleman, 2019). An early experimental study found that perceived group attractiveness and cohesiveness were higher when group members possessed high degrees of attitude similarity (Chang et al., 2019). It has also been said that P-G fit contributed to a moderate and positive correlation towards job satisfaction as well as organizational commitment but negative correlation has been drawn between it and the intention to quit (Kristof-Brown et al., 2019). Moreover, prior research on P-G fit suggested that the degree of similarity between individuals and work team members may be crucial in terms of assimilation and retention for new organization members.

## **The relationship between Person-Group (P-G) Fit and Job Performance**

Employees who share the same values may perform at higher levels as they tend to be able to predict the behaviors of their co-workers, agree about which workplace behaviors are deemed important, develop beneficial working relationships as well as communicate with one another more effectively (Das, 2023). A study conducted by Deschênes (2021) hypothesized that person-group fit is related to the performance of the employees. Parallel to this, research had also demonstrated that P-G fit has a positive correlation with job satisfaction and job performance (Li et al., 2019). Pudjiarti, et al. (2020) mentioned that the paradigm of similarity attraction was said to be helpful in clarifying the occurrence of P-G fit. In this paradigm, it was predicted that an individual is

particularly interested to another criterion that he or she finds similar to his or her social scope (Seong & Choi, 2023). There have already been a lot of studies which emphasize on how attraction actually facilitates a person in terms of his or her attitudes, personality, values, and goals.

Basically, the main factor contributing to similarity-based attraction is the fact that similarity usually happens to be useful in the prediction of how other people act or behave. Research has also discovered that the communications among the workers and also the social integration were actually affected by the personality similarity (Sung et al., 2020). Research has been done in a very small number on the effect of P-G fit towards the individual outcomes and the findings gained from the study has concluded that there is a positive relationship between the P-G fit and the individual outcomes (Yang et al., 2021). Apparently, most of the studies addressing P-G fit usually narrowed down on the characteristics which were intended to be examined where it focused on specific issues and some of them are the person-group personality fit (Li, 2019), values fit (Safavi & Bouzari, 2020), goals fit (Zhang et al., 2022), or work style fit (Wurster, et al., 2021). Apart from that, earlier studies have also found that the behavioral as well as the attitudinal results for groups as well as individuals can be distinguished in light of the piece of group members particularly on the qualities (Luu, 2019), goals (Brooks, 2020), personality (Gonzalez & Simpson, 2021), working style (Wang, 2021), and lifestyle (Rief & Clinkinbeard., 2020).

Thus, this study proposes values, goals, and group member attributes (e.g. personality, workstyle, and lifestyle) to be incorporated as the dimensions of P-G fit. This particular study apparently highlighted the following essential hypothesis;

Hypothesis 1 : Person- group fit significantly influences OCB.

### **Work involvement**

Work involvement is in like manner a regulating recognition about the estimation of work in an officeholder's life and this attitudinal state is a conceivable result of his or her past social and socialization exercises (Kanungo, 1982). In view of El-Sayed (2023), the work inclusion idea might be used in evaluating the organization's level of contribution all through the task carried while work involvement is limited to a specific employment.

### **The Relationship between Work Involvement and Job Performance**

There are limited studies on work involvement. Based on a study conducted by Fadhillah et al. (2023) on 98 respondents from PT Amara Tujuh Perjuangan, Indonesia, the empirical linkage between work involvement and job performance has been substantiated. It has also been found that there is a significant relationship when it comes to work involvement specifically between job characteristics, organizational structure and work involvement. Based on this particular study, it has been found that work involvement played a significant mediating role in terms of explaining the relationship between the independent and dependent variables.

### **Work Involvement as the Moderator**

This particular study also includes the work involvement as a moderator in explaining person-group fit as well as job performance link. Based on the literature, it has been suggested that work involvement may moderate the relationship between person-group fit and OCB. In supporting the proposed moderator, this research finds the needs in supporting the relationship that lies between the work involvement and the predictor variables stated earlier in this research and also the relationship that lies between the work involvement and the criterion variables i.e. OCB.

Work involvement takes precedence over other attitudinal antecedents in the prediction of various workplace behavioral outcomes because this construct aims at assessing the employees' overall attitude towards their job, which might as well have an influence on their behavior at work (Meilani, 2022). Mustafa and MahaAbdeenAbdeenkeder (2021) and Sujono et al. (2020), noted that studies on antecedents and outcomes of work involvement are still open to questions due to scant attention in this area and contradictory results reported. Previous studies conducted by Fadhillah et al. (2023) and Hasibuan (2021) propose work involvement as a significant moderator for future studies. Thani et al. (2022) had also pointed out that research on work

involvement should be progressing by including other situational variables where the dimension of fits as predictors and the construct should also be examined in an organizational context that is wider in order to have better understanding on the function of work involvement specifically to predict various organizational outcomes.

Therefore, this study found that work involvement is essential to be tested as a moderator. Specifically, the aim of this study is simply to examine the roles of work involvement as a moderator in the relationship between both independent and dependent variables.

Therefore, this research study actually proposed the following hypothesis:

H2 : Work involvement moderates the relationship person-group fit and OCB

### Research Design

Basically, this particular study is a quantitative research and it was conducted as a correlational study in explaining the association between the dependent variable, moderator variable and the independent variables

### Population

This study focuses on the public servants from Royal Malaysian Police, Department of Immigration and Registration Department under Ministry of Home Affairs which are located in Selangor as the population of the study because all three departments have received complaints from public that are high compared to other departments or agencies. The population size of this study is equal to 20, 119 public servants. All of them came from the total numbers of 51 branches of three department under Ministry Home of Affairs in Selangor.

### Sampling Technique

The quota sampling technique was utilized in this study and it is specifically chosen because the quota fixed for each subgroup is based on the total numbers of each group in the population (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). In this study, samples are selected based on the quota categories.

### Sample Size

Sample size is known as the actual number of subjects chosen as samples in representing the characteristics of the population. The continuous need for a representation of statistical sample in empirical studies has actually grown the demands of a method that is effective to determine the sample size. In accordance to the generalized guideline for sample size suggested by Krejcie and Morgan (1970) the sample size that is apparently appropriate for this particular study is 376 public servants (for the population of 20,119).

### Data Analysis

SPSS Statistics Version 28.0 used to key in the data obtained and the descriptive analysis used to analyze them. The analysis of the data includes percentage, median, mode and also the frequencies. The Multiple Linear Regression will then be utilized in order to analyze the relationship between the variables of P-E fit and job performance of the employees.

## RESULTS

Table 1 Profile of Respondents

Demographic Factors	Category	Number of respondents	Percentage
Gender	Male	161	43.4
	Female	210	56.6



	Total	371	100.0
Age	Below 25 years old	49	13.2
	25-30 years old	34	9.2
	31-35 years old	55	14.8
	36-40 years old	88	23.7
	41-45 years old	16	4.3
	46-50 years old	61	16.4
	51-55 years old	34	9.2
	More than 55 years old	34	9.2
			371
Race	Malay	316	85.1
	Chinese	21	5.7
	Indian	34	9.2
	Total	371	100.0
Marital Status	Single	32	8.6
	Married	339	91.4
	Total	371	100.0
Working Experience	1-5 years	85	22.9
	6-10 years	154	41.5
	11-15 years	96	25.9
	More than 15 years	36	9.7
	Total	371	100.0
Educational level	Master Degree or Higher	43	11.6
	Bachelor	145	39.1
	Diploma	132	35.6
	Others (SPM, Certificate, STPM)	51	13.7
	Total	371	100.0

## Profile of the Respondents

A total of 376 questionnaires were personally distributed via the officer in charge. The criteria of respondent were they must be the public servants under Ministry of Home Affairs which is located in Selangor, which consists of Royal Malaysian Police, Department of Immigration and Registration Department. The other criteria for respondent were they must be a customer oriented front line employees in their organization. Customer-oriented front line employees (FLEs) are widely regarded as valuable resources who promote competitive differentiation and enhanced performance outcomes. It was because, complaints received by Public Complaint Bureau from public they were not satisfied with the customer service of these three department. All complaint were basically in relation to the government servant' performances, which involve the delays in provision of service, service quality which is apparently at not satisfactory level, unfair action and also failure of enforcement.

### Gender, age, and race

The sample consisted of 161 or 43.4 percent male and 210 or 56.6 percent female. There were 49 or 13.2% of respondent below 25 years old. 9.2% or 34 respondents aged from 25 to 35 years old. 55 respondents aged 31 to 35 years old. The number of respondents for 36-40 years old was 88 or 23.7%. 16 or 4.3% of respondents aged 41 to 45 years old. For 46 to 50 years old, the amount of respondents was 61 or 16.4%. 34 respondents aged 51 to 55 years old. The rest of public servants in Ministry aged more than 55 years old. Given the fact that the departments and agencies under the respective Ministry were predominantly Malay-populated, 85.1% of the respondents were Malays. Only 5.7% and 9.2% were Chinese and Indian, respectively. Furthermore, the majority of the respondents, 91.4% were married while 8.6% were single.

### Education level, organizational and job tenure, and position

The majority of respondents or 39.1% were Bachelor Degree holders, 35.6% were Diploma holders, and 13.7% were SPM holders. The rest of the respondents or 11.6% were Masters Degree holders. A total of 154 of the respondents had worked within a company for six to 10 years, while 96 of respondents had worked for 11 to 15 years. 85 of respondents had served for the organization for the range of 1 to 5 years. The rest of respondents had served for the organization for particularly more than 15 years.

### Reliability Analyses

The unwavering quality examination was directed by figuring the Cronbach's alpha for each of the measure involved. The dependability of a measure demonstrates the solidness and consistency of the instrument in estimating an idea and evaluates the decency of a measure (Sekaran, 2000).

Table 2 Reliability Analyses

Variables	Number of items	Cronbach's alphas
Person-Group Fit	10	0.98
Work Involvement	5	0.99
OCB	5	0.86

As stated in Table 1, the Cronbach's alphas for independent variable are .98. The figures have demonstrated that the measure possessed high internal consistency as well as stability. In line with that, the reliability analyses have also happened to confirm that the moderating variable used in the study had high internal consistency and reliability. The Cronbach's alpha for work involvement was .99. The investigations likewise delivered high unwavering quality coefficients for both ward factors with Cronbach's alphas surpassing .70. The most minimal alpha was .86 (OCB). Subsequently, in light of the dependability investigations, the measures utilized as a part of the examination were exceedingly solid, hence, proposed its preparation for additional analysis.

MODEL 1		MODEL 2		MODEL 3	
Variables	Dependent Variable	Variables	Dependent Variable	Variables	Dependent Variable
	OCB		OCB		OCB
Independent Variables		Independent Variables		Independent Variables	
Person-group fit	-.011	Person-group fit	-.008	Person-group fit	.215
Moderator					
Work involvement			.379**		4.391**
Interaction terms					
PGF x WI					-.223
R <sup>2</sup>	.726	R <sup>2</sup>	.746	R <sup>2</sup>	.766
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	.729	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	.742	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	.761
R <sup>2</sup> Change	.729	R <sup>2</sup> Change	.017	R <sup>2</sup> Change	.021
F Change	246.435	F Change	23.815	F Change	7.977
Significance F Change	.000	Significance F Change	.000	Significance F Change	.000

### Summary of Regression Analyses

From the above table, person-group fit shows no moderation effect on the relationship with OCB. It can be concluded that, work involvement is not a moderator for the link between person-group fit and OCB as a dependent variable and the hypothesis is not supported.

### DISCUSSION

The outcomes of this research suggest that work involvement does not serve as a moderating factor in the relationship between person-group fit and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). Interestingly, person-group fit appears negatively associated with both work involvement and OCB, a finding that contrasts with earlier studies (e.g., Kristof-Brown et al., 2005; Cable & DeRue, 2002), which generally reported positive associations between person-group fit and work attitudes or group outcomes. This divergence may be explained by the unique influence of demographic dissimilarity identified in this study.

Demographic dissimilarity, defined as differences between individuals in visible (e.g., race, gender) and informational traits (e.g., education, tenure) (Chang et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2021), emerged as a key factor impacting person-group fit. While Kristof-Brown et al. (2005) suggested that congruence between individuals and group values or norms enhances group cohesion, our findings align with Das (2023) and Fu and Huang (2022), who noted that demographic differences could reduce contributions to group tasks and hinder open communication. Similarly, Heng et al. (2022) found that demographic diversity can lead to reduced participation in decision-making processes, which aligns with the reduced work involvement observed in this study.

The negative impact of demographic dissimilarity on group cohesion and interaction has also been noted in



earlier studies. For instance, Hillman (2014) and Li (2019) emphasized that minority group members often perceive less effective teamwork and group alignment, which undermines both person-group fit and broader organizational outcomes. These observations resonate with the findings of this research, as participants with distinct demographic profiles reported challenges in social integration, echoing Kristof-Brown et al.'s (2018) assertion that dissimilarity fosters exclusion from group dynamics.

Moreover, our findings support Ren et al. (2024), who argued that visible demographic traits often become a basis for categorization, stereotyping, and even hostility within groups. Such categorization processes, driven by visible demographic differences, likely contribute to the observed reduction in work involvement and OCB in this study. This adds to Wang and Liao's (2024) conclusion that demographic dissimilarity adversely affects group processes and performance, underscoring the necessity of inclusive organizational strategies.

In contrast to studies that highlight the benefits of diversity in fostering innovation and group creativity (e.g., van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007), this research aligns more closely with those emphasizing the potential downsides of unmanaged diversity. Specifically, our findings contribute to the growing body of evidence suggesting that demographic dissimilarity can undermine interpersonal dynamics and hinder positive work behaviors if not addressed effectively.

By linking these findings to both supportive and contradictory literature, this study underscores the complexity of person-group fit and the nuanced role of demographic characteristics in shaping work involvement and OCB. Future research should explore interventions that mitigate the adverse effects of demographic dissimilarity, such as targeted inclusion initiatives, diversity training, and organizational policies that promote equitable group dynamics.

## RECOMMENDATION

To address the challenges of demographic dissimilarity and improve person-group fit, work involvement, and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), organizations should take actionable steps to foster inclusivity. First, they should implement diversity and inclusion training to raise awareness about unconscious biases and reduce stereotyping. Creating employee resource groups (ERGs) and organizing cross-demographic team-building activities can enhance integration and mutual understanding among employees. Structured decision-making frameworks and meeting protocols that actively engage minority voices should be adopted to promote equitable participation in group processes. Additionally, organizations can hold regular feedback sessions to address exclusion or marginalization and ensure all employees feel valued.

Addressing barriers caused by visible and informational demographic differences is equally crucial. This can include transparent career development opportunities, tailored onboarding programs for underrepresented groups, and leveraging demographic data to identify and mitigate exclusion patterns. Strengthening organizational commitment to inclusion involves training leaders in inclusive practices, incorporating inclusivity metrics into performance evaluations, and encouraging open dialogues about demographic-related challenges. To monitor progress, organizations should regularly measure group fit, work involvement, and OCB through surveys or focus groups, using the data to iteratively improve their programs.

Finally, cultivating a culture of belonging is essential. Celebrating diversity through events, recognizing contributions from diverse employees, and enhancing social integration through informal gatherings can strengthen camaraderie and diminish demographic barriers. By implementing these strategies, organizations can create an inclusive environment that not only improves individual and group outcomes but also supports long-term organizational success.

## CONCLUSION

All in all, this study has successfully provided the satisfied empirical evidence that is associated with the relationships between P-E fit, work involvement and job performance. The research outcomes have also provided support for the key theoretical propositions for this study. What is more important is, this study has successfully answered all of the research questions despite some of the limitations. Although there have been many studies

which considered finding out the relationships of person-environment fit and job performance, this study has successfully addressed the huge gap by integrating work involvement as a significant moderating variable.

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