

Person–Supervisor Fit and Organizational Citizenship Behavior: A Pilot Study with Work Involvement as a Moderating Variable among Government Staff

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ABSTRACT

This pilot study examines the relationship between Person–Supervisor Fit as the independent variable and Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) as the dependent variable, with Work Involvement functioning as a moderating variable among government staff at Wisma Persekutuan Kota Bharu, Kelantan. A quantitative research design was adopted using a structured questionnaire adapted from Abdullah Thani (2019). The pilot study involved 30 respondents, selected through convenience sampling, with the primary objective of testing the reliability and suitability of the research instruments prior to conducting a full-scale study. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and reliability analysis through Cronbach's alpha. The results indicate that all constructs achieved acceptable to excellent internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha values exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70. These findings suggest that the questionnaire items are reliable and appropriate for use in the main study. This pilot study provides preliminary methodological support for examining the influence of person–supervisor fit on organizational citizenship behavior, as well as the moderating role of work involvement, within the Malaysian public sector context.

Keywords: Person–Supervisor Fit, Work Involvement, Organizational Citizenship Behavior

INTRODUCTION

Public sector organizations play a crucial role in delivering services that directly affect societal well-being and national development. In Malaysia, government agencies are expected to operate efficiently, transparently, and responsively to meet increasing public expectations. Beyond formal job performance, employees are often required to demonstrate positive discretionary behaviors that enhance organizational functioning. These behaviors, commonly referred to as Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB), are not explicitly stated in job descriptions but significantly contribute to organizational effectiveness (AlHammadi & Abu Elanain, 2024).

OCB includes behaviors such as helping colleagues, volunteering for additional tasks, adhering to organizational rules, and promoting a positive work environment. In government organizations, where rigid structures and bureaucratic procedures are prevalent, the presence of OCB among employees can improve service quality, teamwork, and overall organizational performance (Azhari et al., 2023).

One of the key factors influencing employees' willingness to engage in OCB is the quality of the relationship between employees and their immediate supervisors. This relationship is conceptualized as Person–Supervisor Fit, which refers to the degree of compatibility between employees and supervisors in terms of values, work style, personality, and goals. Supervisors act as key representatives of the organization, and their interactions with subordinates significantly shape employees' attitudes and behaviors (Thani et al., 2022).

However, the effect of person-supervisor fit on OCB may not be uniform across all employees. Work Involvement, defined as the extent to which individuals psychologically identify with their work, may influence how employees respond to supervisory relationships. Employees with high work involvement are more likely to internalize positive workplace experiences and translate them into discretionary behaviors (Amran et al., 2024).

Given the limited empirical research examining these relationships within the Malaysian public sector, particularly at the organizational level of federal government offices, this pilot study was conducted among government staff at Wisma Persekutuan Kota Bharu. The primary purpose of this pilot study is to assess the reliability and clarity of the research instruments before proceeding to a full-scale study.

Problem Statement

Despite continuous efforts by the Malaysian government to enhance public sector performance, issues related to employee motivation, engagement, and discretionary behavior persist. Government organizations often rely heavily on formal rules and procedures, which may limit employees' willingness to engage in behaviors beyond their prescribed duties.

One critical factor contributing to this issue is the quality of supervisory relationships. Mismatches between supervisors and subordinates in terms of values, leadership style, and expectations can result in reduced job satisfaction, lower commitment, and minimal organizational citizenship behavior. In hierarchical public sector settings, poor person-supervisor fit may discourage employees from voluntarily contributing extra effort (Judy & Janet, 2021).

While previous studies have established that person-supervisor fit is associated with positive work outcomes, empirical evidence focusing on its impact on OCB in Malaysian government organizations remains scarce (Thani et al., 2022). Furthermore, not all employees respond to supervisory relationships in the same manner. Employees' level of work involvement may influence whether a good fit with supervisors leads to higher OCB.

Before examining these relationships in a large-scale empirical study, it is essential to ensure that the measurement instruments used are reliable and suitable for the target population. Without reliable instruments, research findings may be inaccurate or misleading. Therefore, this pilot study seeks to address this methodological gap by testing the reliability of a questionnaire adapted from Abdullah Thani (2019) among government staff at Wisma Persekutuan Kota Bharu.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB)

Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) refers to discretionary employee behaviors that are not formally rewarded or explicitly required by job descriptions but contribute to organizational effectiveness. The concept of OCB was first introduced by Organ (1988), who defined it as individual behavior that is voluntary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and that collectively promotes the effective functioning of an organization.

OCB encompasses a range of positive behaviors such as helping colleagues, voluntarily taking on extra tasks, complying with organizational rules, and demonstrating sportsmanship in challenging situations. Organ (1988) categorized OCB into five primary dimensions: altruism, conscientiousness, sportsmanship, courtesy, and civic virtue. These dimensions highlight the various ways employees can contribute beyond their formal job roles.

In public sector organizations, OCB plays a particularly critical role due to the nature of bureaucratic structures and formalized procedures. Studies have shown that OCB enhances service quality, teamwork, organizational efficiency, and public satisfaction (Amrutha & Geetha, 2024). Government organizations often rely on employees' willingness to go beyond minimum requirements to meet citizens' needs, making OCB a vital component of public sector performance.

Empirical research consistently demonstrates that employees who exhibit high levels of OCB contribute to improved organizational outcomes such as reduced absenteeism, enhanced cooperation, and higher overall effectiveness. In the Malaysian public sector context, OCB has been linked to improved service delivery and organizational commitment, highlighting its importance in achieving national development goals.

Person–Supervisor Fit

Person–Supervisor Fit is a specific form of person–environment fit theory, which posits that positive work outcomes occur when there is compatibility between individuals and their work environment. Person–Supervisor Fit refers to the degree of alignment between employees and their immediate supervisors in terms of values, work style, personality, and goals (Schuh, 2025).

Supervisors serve as key agents of the organization, influencing employees' daily work experiences, performance expectations, and access to resources. When employees perceive a high level of fit with their supervisors, they are more likely to experience positive work attitudes such as job satisfaction, trust, and organizational commitment (Chuang et al., 2025). Conversely, poor person–supervisor fit may result in role conflict, stress, dissatisfaction, and reduced motivation.

Previous studies have found that person–supervisor fit is positively associated with job satisfaction, leader–member exchange quality, and employee engagement. Employees who feel aligned with their supervisors are more likely to accept feedback, communicate openly, and demonstrate cooperative behaviors (Wightman & Christensen, 2025). This alignment fosters a supportive work environment that encourages employees to exceed formal job requirements.

In the context of OCB, person–supervisor fit has been identified as an important antecedent. Employees who perceive their supervisors as supportive and aligned with their values are more inclined to reciprocate through positive discretionary behaviors (Abdullah et al., 2025). Social exchange theory suggests that employees respond to favorable treatment from supervisors by engaging in behaviors that benefit the organization, including OCB.

Within public sector organizations, where supervisory relationships are often hierarchical and formal, the role of person–supervisor fit becomes even more significant. High-quality supervisory relationships can mitigate the negative effects of bureaucracy and encourage employees to engage in citizenship behaviors despite structural constraints.

Work Involvement

Work involvement refers to the degree to which individuals psychologically identify with their work and view it as an important aspect of their self-concept. Employees with high work involvement are emotionally and cognitively engaged in their work, perceiving it as meaningful and fulfilling (Abdullah Thani, 2019).

Highly involved employees tend to demonstrate higher levels of motivation, commitment, and job satisfaction. They are more likely to invest personal effort and energy into their work roles and are willing to go beyond formal job requirements (Ju et al., 2021). Work involvement has been found to positively influence job performance, organizational commitment, and employee well-being.

In the public sector context, work involvement is particularly important due to the nature of government work, which often emphasizes service to society and public interest. Employees who are highly involved in their work are more likely to perceive their roles as meaningful and contribute positively to organizational goals (Kamdrone & Randmann, 2022).

Research indicates that work involvement is positively related to OCB. Employees who identify strongly with their work are more inclined to help colleagues, participate in organizational activities, and demonstrate proactive behaviors. Work involvement provides the psychological motivation necessary for employees to engage in discretionary behaviors that support organizational functioning.

Relationship between Person–Supervisor Fit and Organizational Citizenship Behavior

The relationship between person–supervisor fit and OCB has been supported by numerous empirical studies. Previous study conducted by Seman et al. (2025) asserted that employees perceive compatibility with their supervisors, they are more likely to develop positive attitudes toward their work and organization. This positive perception encourages employees to engage in OCB as a form of reciprocity.

Social exchange theory explains this relationship by suggesting that employees respond to favorable treatment from supervisors with positive discretionary behaviors. High person–supervisor fit enhances trust, communication, and mutual respect, creating a supportive work environment that fosters OCB.

Li and Chen (2024) found that person–supervisor fit significantly predicts OCB across various organizational contexts. Employees who experience alignment with their supervisors demonstrate higher levels of altruism, conscientiousness, and civic virtue. These findings suggest that supervisory relationships play a crucial role in shaping employees' willingness to go beyond formal job requirements.

Work Involvement as a Moderating Variable

Work involvement is proposed as a moderating variable in the relationship between person–supervisor fit and OCB. A moderating variable influences the strength or direction of the relationship between an independent variable and a dependent variable.

Employees with high work involvement are more likely to internalize positive workplace experiences, including good supervisory relationships. As a result, the positive effect of person–supervisor fit on OCB is expected to be stronger among highly involved employees (Thani et al., 2022). Conversely, Elahi et al. (2021) found that employees with low work involvement may not fully translate positive supervisory relationships into discretionary behaviors.

Singh et al. (2023) highlighted the importance of considering individual differences such as work involvement when examining the effects of supervisory relationships on employee outcomes. By incorporating work involvement as a moderator, this study provides a more nuanced understanding of how and when person–supervisor fit influences OCB.

METHODOLOGY

The questionnaire for this pilot study was distributed using Google Form, an online survey platform that enables efficient and cost-effective data collection. The use of Google Form was considered appropriate due to its accessibility, ease of use, and suitability for collecting quantitative data from respondents within a short period of time.

A structured questionnaire adapted from Abdullah Thani (2019) was converted into an online format using Google Form. The link to the questionnaire was then distributed to government staff at Wisma Persekutuan Kota Bharu through electronic communication channels such as email and WhatsApp. Respondents were provided with a brief introduction explaining the purpose of the study, assurance of confidentiality, and instructions on how to complete the questionnaire (Menon et al., 2021).

The online distribution method allowed respondents to complete the questionnaire at their convenience using smartphones, tablets, or computers, without disrupting their work schedules. This approach was particularly suitable for government staff, as it reduced the need for physical contact and minimized administrative burden (Nawi et al., 2025).

In addition, Google Form automatically records responses and stores them in a secure database, reducing the risk of data entry errors and improving data accuracy. The platform also ensures anonymity by not requiring respondents to provide identifying information, which may encourage honest and unbiased responses (Yasin et al., 2025).

Overall, the use of Google Form as the distribution method enhanced the efficiency of data collection, improved response management, and supported the timely completion of the pilot study involving 30 respondents. This method is therefore recommended for the subsequent full-scale study due to its practicality, reliability, and ease of administration.

Importance of Pilot Study

Conducting a pilot study is a crucial preliminary step in the research process, particularly in quantitative research that relies heavily on standardized measurement instruments. A pilot study is generally defined as a small-scale version of the main study that is conducted prior to the actual data collection. Its primary purpose is to test the feasibility, clarity, and reliability of research instruments and procedures before committing resources to a fullscale investigation (Amran et al., 2025).

In this study, the pilot test serves several important methodological and practical purposes. Given that the questionnaire was adapted from Abdullah Thani (2019) and administered to a different population and organizational context, it was necessary to ensure that the instrument remained appropriate, reliable, and comprehensible for government staff at Wisma Persekutuan Kota Bharu.

Assessment of Instrument Reliability

One of the most important functions of a pilot study is to assess the reliability of the measurement instruments. Reliability refers to the consistency and stability of a set of measurement items in capturing the intended constructs. In quantitative research, unreliable instruments can lead to inaccurate findings and weaken the overall credibility of the study.

Through the pilot study, reliability analysis using Cronbach's alpha was conducted to determine the internal consistency of the constructs measuring Person–Supervisor Fit, Work Involvement, and Organizational Citizenship Behavior. By involving 30 respondents, this study was able to obtain preliminary reliability estimates that indicate whether the items within each construct measure the same underlying concept. Establishing acceptable reliability at this stage ensures that the questionnaire is suitable for use in the main study and reduces the risk of measurement error (Abdullah Thani et al., 2025).

Identification of Ambiguous or Unclear Questionnaire Items

Another important objective of conducting a pilot study is to identify questionnaire items that may be ambiguous, confusing, or difficult to interpret. Even well-established instruments may require modification when applied to a new organizational or cultural context (Amran et al., 2025). Differences in terminology, work practices, or administrative structures can affect how respondents interpret certain items (Abdullah Thani et al., 2025).

By administering the questionnaire to government staff at Wisma Persekutuan Kota Bharu, the pilot study allowed the researcher to observe respondents' reactions and identify any items that required clarification or rewording. Items that were misunderstood or misinterpreted could be refined to better reflect the language and experiences of public sector employees (Falbo et al., 2025). This process enhances the clarity of the questionnaire and ensures that respondents interpret the items consistently, which is essential for obtaining valid data.

Evaluation of Respondents' Understanding

The pilot study also provided an opportunity to evaluate whether respondents fully understood the content and intent of the questionnaire items. Understanding is particularly important when measuring abstract psychological constructs such as person–supervisor fit, work involvement, and organizational citizenship behavior. If respondents do not clearly understand the items, their responses may not accurately reflect their true perceptions or behaviors (Min et al., 2022).

Feedback obtained during the pilot study helps the researcher determine whether the items are appropriate for the educational and professional background of the respondents. In the context of government staff with diverse job roles and responsibilities, it is essential that the questionnaire is easy to comprehend and relevant to their

daily work experiences (Abdulah Thani et al., 2025). Ensuring respondents' understanding enhances the accuracy and validity of the data collected in the main study.

Reliability Analysis (Cronbach's Alpha Results)

The pilot study involved 30 respondents, and reliability analysis was conducted using Cronbach's alpha to assess internal consistency.

Variable	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Person–Supervisor Fit	8	0.87
Work Involvement	6	0.84
Organizational Citizenship Behavior	10	0.90

All variables recorded Cronbach's alpha values above 0.70, indicating good to excellent reliability (Nunnally, 1978). These results confirm that the questionnaire items adapted from Abdullah Thani (2019) are reliable and suitable for use in the main study.

DISCUSSION ON RELIABILITY ANALYSIS

Reliability analysis is a crucial component of quantitative research, particularly in studies that employ survey instruments to measure latent constructs such as person–supervisor fit, work involvement, and organizational citizenship behavior. In this pilot study, reliability analysis was conducted using Cronbach's alpha to assess the internal consistency of the measurement items adapted from Abdullah Thani (2019). The primary objective of this analysis was to determine whether the items within each construct consistently measured the same underlying concept and were suitable for use in the main study.

The results of the reliability analysis indicated that all constructs achieved Cronbach's alpha values exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70, as suggested by Nunnally (1978) for exploratory and pilot research. Specifically, the Person–Supervisor Fit scale demonstrated a high level of internal consistency, suggesting that the items measuring compatibility between employees and supervisors were coherent and well-aligned. This finding indicates that respondents interpreted the items consistently and that the scale reliably captured the concept of person–supervisor fit within the context of government staff at Wisma Persekutuan Kota Bharu.

Similarly, the Work Involvement construct recorded a strong Cronbach's alpha value, reflecting satisfactory internal consistency among the items measuring employees' psychological attachment and identification with their work. This result suggests that the respondents were able to clearly understand and relate to the items assessing work involvement, and that the construct was appropriately operationalized for the public sector setting (Zakiy, 2024). Given that work involvement is a key moderating variable in this study, establishing its reliability is particularly important to ensure the accuracy of subsequent moderation analysis in the full-scale study.

The Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) scale also demonstrated excellent reliability, indicating that the items measuring discretionary and extra-role behaviors were consistently interpreted by respondents. High reliability for the OCB construct suggests that the adapted instrument effectively captured various dimensions of citizenship behavior, such as helping behaviors, conscientiousness, and voluntary participation in organizational activities. This is especially significant in the public sector context, where OCB may manifest differently compared to private sector organizations (Udin, 2024).

Overall, the reliability analysis confirms that the questionnaire adapted from Abdullah Thani (2019) is suitable for use in the current research context. The satisfactory Cronbach's alpha values across all constructs indicate that the measurement instruments are stable and internally consistent, thereby reducing the likelihood of measurement error in the main study. Conducting this reliability analysis as part of the pilot study strengthens the methodological rigor of the research and enhances confidence in the validity of future findings.

Despite the positive reliability results, it is acknowledged that the pilot study involved a relatively small sample size of 30 respondents. While this sample size is considered adequate for preliminary reliability testing, future research with a larger sample may further validate the reliability and factor structure of the constructs. Nonetheless, the current findings provide strong preliminary evidence that the instruments are reliable and appropriate for examining the relationships among person-supervisor fit, work involvement, and organizational citizenship behavior among government staff.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this pilot study, several important recommendations are proposed to guide both the implementation of the main study and future research in this area. First, given that the reliability analysis demonstrated acceptable to excellent Cronbach's alpha values for all constructs, it is recommended that the questionnaire adapted from Abdullah Thani (2019) be retained for use in the full-scale study, with only minor refinements where necessary to further enhance clarity and contextual relevance. Second, the main study should involve a larger and more diverse sample of government staff across different departments and job grades at Wisma Persekutuan Kota Bharu or other government offices, in order to improve the generalizability of the findings. Third, future studies are encouraged to apply more advanced statistical techniques, such as hierarchical regression analysis or structural equation modeling, to examine the moderating effect of work involvement more rigorously. In addition, government organizations should consider the practical implications of this study by investing in supervisory training and leadership development programs aimed at improving person-supervisor fit. Enhancing supervisors' interpersonal skills, communication styles, and value alignment may encourage employees to engage more actively in organizational citizenship behaviors. Furthermore, initiatives that increase employees' work involvement, such as job enrichment, recognition programs, and opportunities for professional development, should be emphasized, as highly involved employees are more likely to translate positive supervisory relationships into discretionary behaviors that benefit the organization. Overall, these recommendations aim to strengthen both the academic contribution and practical application of future research in the public sector context.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this pilot study was conducted to assess the reliability and suitability of a questionnaire measuring person-supervisor fit, work involvement, and organizational citizenship behavior among government staff at Wisma Persekutuan Kota Bharu. The findings indicate that all measurement instruments demonstrated satisfactory internal consistency, confirming their appropriateness for use in a full-scale study. The pilot study highlights the importance of conducting preliminary testing to ensure methodological rigor, reduce measurement error, and enhance the validity and credibility of research findings. By adapting the instrument from Abdullah Thani (2019) and testing it within a public sector setting, this study provides a strong methodological foundation for examining the role of person-supervisor fit in promoting organizational citizenship behavior, as well as the moderating influence of work involvement. Although limited by a small sample size, the pilot study offers valuable insights and supports the feasibility of the proposed research framework. Ultimately, this study contributes to the growing body of literature on organizational behavior in the Malaysian public sector and underscores the importance of effective supervisory relationships and employee work involvement in fostering positive discretionary behaviors that enhance organizational effectiveness.

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