INFLUENCE OF PERSON-ORGANISATION-FIT ON WORK ENGAGEMENT THROUGH ENHANCED JOB SATISFACTION: TEST OF SOCIAL IDENTITY THEORY

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ABSTRACT

This study extends Social Identity Theory by examining the link between Person-Organisation fit (POF) and Work Engagement (WE) through enhanced Job Satisfaction (JS) and testing it in a non-US environment. The study was conducted on a large sample (527) of Turkish blue and white-collar employees from business units of 15 independent companies; 10 different industry types. Data was analysed with Structural Equation Modelling. It was found that POF was positively related to WE, and secondly Job Satisfaction (JS) was (positively) related to WE. Results also showed that job satisfaction acted as a mediator between POF and WE and it mediated as high as 70% of the effect of POFs. This study supports the research stream that JS was a predictor of work engagement. The results confirmed the applicability of Social Identity Theory in a Turkish context and advocates that employees who fit to organisation more are more likely to have job satisfaction and repay this to the organisation through higher levels of engagement.

Keywords: Work Engagement, Job Satisfaction, Person-Organisation Fit, Social Identity Theory, Turkey

JEL Codes: M10, J28, J24

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1. INTRODUCTION

The increased recognition of employees as a critical resource in the competitive global marketplace has sustained the interest of organisational scholars to understand the motivational implications of person–organisation fit (POF) for employee work attitude and behaviour (Verquer et al., 2003; Kristof-Brown et al., 2005; Arthur et al., 2006; Hoffman & Woehr, 2006).

In today’s highly competitive work environment, a very important way of gaining a competitive advantage is ensuring engagement of human resources in the form of work engagement (WE).

Empirical research shows that there is a positive relationship between WE and job satisfaction (JS) in different professions and POF acts as a significant factor in this relationship. POF is defined as ‘the degree to which a person feels his personality and values fit with his current job’ (Resick et al., 2007). In this manner, when organisational ends fit the employee’s own values, it is easy for people to engage personally in fulfilling work processes, as research on organisational commitment has suggested.

Our study contributes to the ongoing debate about the relationship of JS with WE in organisations through examination of person-organisation fit (POF) effect on the relationship in a Turkish context. We make three specific contributions. Firstly, we propose and test the hypothesis that JS mediates the relationship between POF and WE and thus extends Social Identity Theory (SIT). Secondly, as a methodological contribution, we tested our model using McDonald’s Omega instead of Cronbach’s alpha to evaluate internal validity. We deliberately preferred to use McDonald’s Omega coefficient besides Cronbach’s alpha because it is specifically developed for evaluating internal consistency in exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis, and in Structural Equation Models where latent variables exist. Since we used exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis in the variable selection stage, and since for data analysis we used Structural Equation Modelling where latent variables exist for mediator and moderator analysis, McDonald’s Omega is highly recommended in recent literature. Lastly, with a few notable exceptions (Erdogan et al., 2004), research on POF and its demonstrated outcomes has primarily been conducted in the advanced economies of the West, specifically the USA (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). Therefore, we aim to cross-validate the linkage between POF and work engagement through enhanced job satisfaction in a non-US country, namely Turkey. This is the first study examining the effect of POF on work engagement through enhanced job satisfaction in a Turkish context, to the best knowledge of researchers. Research in a new cultural setting is important because it contributes to the assessment of the generalizability of the POF theory which was originally developed in Western settings (Parkes et al., 2001; Kristof-Brown & Guay, 2011).
Grounded in Social Identity Theory, we first posit that individuals should find organisations similar to themselves to be satisfying as an underlying mechanism through which POF influences employee work attitudes and behaviours.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Work Engagement

Engagement at work was conceptualized by Kahn (1990), as the ‘harnessing of organisational members’ selves to their work roles. Although there are different definitions, all conceptualizations meet on the fact that engagement is characterized by discretionary effort exhibited by employees to their work roles’ (Frank et al., 2004), through emotional or intellectual commitment to the organisation (Baumruk, 2004; Richman, 2006; Shaw, 2005). ‘A highly engaged employee will consistently deliver beyond expectations.’ (Wright & Cropanzano, 2000).

The importance of work engagement is supported by academic literature. Research shows very low levels of engagement among workers as evident in works which are tested in multinational companies with samples of thousands of workers. Evidence from the USA indicates seven in 10 Americans in the workforce are “not fully engaged” or are “actively disengaged” in their work, meaning they are emotionally disconnected from their workplaces and less likely to be productive (Gallup, 2017).

Furthermore, a Global Workforce Survey conducted by consultancy firm Towers in 2005 involving about 85,000 personnel working full-time for large and mid-sized firms in USA found that only as low as 14 per cent of all employees worldwide were highly engaged in their job (Seijts & Crim, 2006).

Importance of the debate on work engagement comes from business practice as well. In today’s business environment, getting employees engaged remains the top human resource challenge that HR specialists face (Flander, 2010). Companies spend over $720 million each year on employee engagement, and that figure is projected to rise to over $1.5 billion in the future (La Motte, 2015).

Although typically ‘employee engagement’ and ‘work engagement’ are used interchangeably, following Schaufeli et al. (2006) we prefer the first because it is more general and has connections with the organisation itself. Work Engagement refers to the relationship of the employee with his or her work, whereas Employee Engagement may also include the relationship with the organisation. In this context, we will be studying the effect of POF on the relationship of JS and WE.

Saks (2006) proved that engagement (both job and organisation engagement) mediates the relationship between the antecedents (organisational support, job characteristics and procedural justice) and consequences (job satisfaction, organisational commitment, intentions to quit, and organisational citizenship behaviour) of engagement. However, Saks (2006) recommended further
research and acknowledged that longitudinal studies are required ‘to provide more definitive conclusions about the causal effects of WE.’

2.2. Person-Organisation Fit (Job Fit)

Person-Organisation fit is the concept that has been presented in organisational studies literature since the 1960s and is a sub-dimension of a broader concept that is named ‘person-environment fit’.

In organisational behaviour literature, it is documented that to have the right employees for the right jobs (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005) is crucial, since it determines whether or not the employee is well-suited for the job (Zheng et al., 2010), and whether the employee will be committed and productive to the organisation (Rousseau & McLean Parks, 1993).

POF is defined as ‘the degree to which a person feels his personality and values fit with his current job’ (Resick et al., 2007). Person-Organisation fit has been conceptualised into four dimensions (Kristof, 1996; Sekiguchi, 2004), namely: value congruence, goal congruence, needs of employee fulfilment, and culture personality congruence.

In this respect, when organisational ends do not fit the employee’s own values, it is difficult for people to engage personally in fulfilling work processes, as research on organisational commitment has suggested (Kahn; 1990; Mowday, Porter & Steers, 1982) and is shown to significantly affect the development of the individual, job and organisational related attitudes such as engagement, job satisfaction, organisational commitment, job performance, intention to stay and citizenship behaviour (Resick et al., 2007; Hoffman & Woehr, 2006; Chatman, 1991; Chuang et al., 2015; Kim et al., 2013; Kristof-Brown et al., 2005).

2.3. Social Identity Theory (SIT)

SIT proposes that individuals seek to join and sustain membership in groups that reinforce their self-concepts (Tajfel & Turner, 2004), thus allowing them to answer the question, “Who am I?” (Stryker & Serpe, 1982), and define or locate themselves within society (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Since an organisation’s values are reflected onto those who work there (Dutton & Dukerich, 1991), individuals potentially use the organisation as a source of social identity (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Accordingly, individuals should find organisations similar to themselves to be satisfying (Cable & Judge, 1996; Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). In this respect, Social Identity Theory is relevant to POF in the attraction context, since Person-organisation fit (POF) refers to the compatibility between a person and the organisation, emphasising the extent to which a person and the organisation share similar characteristics and/or meet each other’s needs (Kristof, 1996). POF is generally conceptualised in terms of value congruence in SIT (O’Reilly et al., 1991; Kristof, 1996).
In line with Schneider’s (1987) attraction-selection-attrition model, employees whose values are congruent with those of their organisation will choose to remain in the organisation. Membership in such value-congruent organisations will lead to the fulfilment of needs, thereby enhancing the development of a favourable attitude toward the organisation (Tae-Yeol et al., 2013; Arthur et al., 2006).

2.4. Mediation Effect of Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is one of the most researched concepts in academic literature, since it has practical positive work-related outcomes for businesses besides its strong theoretical base. The three most common definitions describe JS as: ‘the pleasurable emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one’s job as achieving or facilitating the achievement of one’s job values’ (Locke, 1976) and ‘the extent to which people like (satisfaction) or dislike (dissatisfaction) their jobs (Spector, 2006) and all the feelings that an individual has about his/her job’ (Spector, 1997). Job satisfaction could be inclined by various factors such as organisational policies, administration, organisational culture, salary and fringe benefits, and overall quality of life. It is ‘a positive (or negative) evaluative judgment one makes about one’s job or job situation’ (Weiss, 2002). In other words, job satisfaction has emotional, cognitive, and behavioural components (Bernstein & Nash, 2008; Rich et al., 2010). It is a combination of both what an employee feels (affective, emotional reaction) about his/her job (Cranny, Smith & Stone, 1992), such as boredom, anxiety, acknowledgement and excitement, on the one hand; what he/she thinks or believes (cognition) about the various aspects of his/her job, such as whether it is respectable, mentally demanding/challenging and rewarding, on the other hand. Finally, the behavioural component includes people's actions in relation to their work, such as tardiness, working late, or faking illness in order to avoid work (Bernstein & Nash, 2008).

High JS is associated with higher levels of job performance, organisational citizenship behaviour, lower levels of turnover (Hulin & Judge, 2003), loyalty, good mental health and counterproductive behaviour (Gottfredson & Holland, 1990).

In this research, researchers will use the concept of JS developed by Spector (1997).

Person-organisation fit has a significant effect on JS. According to (Smith et al., 1969), various researches put forward that, in general, Job Satisfaction is powerfully inclined by employees’ assessment of the job and assignments they execute, which are the vital components of person-job fit.

2.5. Association of Job Satisfaction and Work Engagement

The relationship between JS and WE has been widely researched. However, the direction of the relationship between JS and WE remains unclear in the literature (Mauno, Kinnunen & Ruokolainen, 2007; Bakker & Schaufeli, 2008; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010). Some studies argue that JS is an outcome of work engagement (Demerouti et al., 2001, Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Saks 2006;
Karatepe & Aga, 2012; Hakanen, Bakker & Schaufeli, 2006; Vecina et al., 2013). Saks (2006), while positing that overall JS is a positive outcome of engagement, also states the study limitation of using cross-sectional and self-reported data which limits the conclusions one can make about causality and raises concerns about common method bias. Thus, he acknowledged that longitudinal studies are required ‘to provide more definitive conclusions about the causal effects of engagement.’

Other studies argue that JS is a predictor of work engagement (Avery et al., 2007; Simpson, 2009; Salanova et al., 2011; Yalabik et al., 2013; Harter et al., 2002). As such, Abraham (2012) links employee engagement with JS and defines it as ‘the degree to which workers feel job satisfaction and an emotional connection to the success of their business, resulting in improved productivity, innovation and retention,’ which is the basic proposition of our study. Maylett and Riboldi (2008) stated that JS is ‘a component in making an employee feel engaged.’ Similarly, Tiwari (2011) in a study has cited JS as ‘an antecedent to engagement’. Penna (2005) both use a model of engagement which incorporates JS as one of the key influences on staff engagement and overall satisfaction at work. Similarly, the results of the 2012 Employee Job Satisfaction and Engagement published by SHRM reveals that the conditions of employee engagement are related to the factors influencing JS in an organisation (Abraham, 2012).

In light of previous research, we expect that the employees who are satisfied with their jobs become engaged and produce positive outcomes for the work and organisation.

2.6. Previous Research

In academic literature, engagement is an important topic since the vast majority of the researchers found evidence that an employee’s level of engagement predicts positive outcomes for the organisation (Salanova et al., 2005; Schaufeli et al., 2002), and engaged employees are more likely to exhibit discretionary efforts and improve individual performance (Corporate Leadership Council, 2004). Similar results are obtained by Bamford et al. (2013), Fiabane et al. (2013), Jenaro et al. (2011), Othman and Nasurdin (2013), Rickard et al. (2012), Van Bogaert et al. (2013), Lawrence (2011), Lu et al. (2011), Palmer (2011), Simpson (2009), Tomic and Tomic (2011), Walker and Campbell (2013) and Cureton (2014).

There are many factors that contribute to Work Engagement, one of which is the person-organisation fit (Kristof, 1996).

Previous research also documents supporting evidence that perceptions of POF are important predictors of job satisfaction, stress and intentions to leave the organisation (Lovelace & Rosen, 1996). When the values of individuals and organisations are alike and thus the person fits to the organisation, it will increase job satisfaction and performance, and will reduce employee stress (Silverthorne, 2004).
In a Turkish setting, to the best knowledge of the researchers, four researches were conducted on POF. However, none of them are related to POF’s effect on WE through enhanced job satisfaction. Kılıç (2010) worked on a limited sample of 78 people working in the same food-producing firm and found that POF effected organisational commitment positively, and had a little effect on work performance.

Polatçı and Cindiloğlu (2013) studied POF in a Turkish hospitals context and found that it has a positive relationship with affective commitment and organisational citizenship behaviour. Demir (2015) reported POF has a positive correlation with job performance and intention to remain in hospitality business. Bayramlık et al. (2015) found that POF has a positive and significant effect on JS. However, no research was conducted on the mediating effect of JS in the relationship of POF and WE in a Turkish setting, which shows a literature gap.

Tepeci (2001) in a recent study and Karakurum (2005) reported that POF (both direct and indirect fit) were significant predictors of job satisfaction and organisational commitment in a public organisation.

3. MATERIALS AND METHOD

3.1. Aim of the Study

In this study, drawing from SIT, we develop and test a model whereby POF is linked to WE through enhanced JS and thus test the mediation effect of JS over WE. Empirical support for this model is offered, and its potential implications for research and practice are discussed.

3.2. Model and Hypothesis

In light of a literature review, our paper proposes that POF is related to WE through enhanced job satisfaction, and the below hypotheses were tested.

POF is defined as ‘the degree to which a person feels his personality and values fit with his current job’ (Resick et al., 2007) and is shown to significantly affect the development of job-related...
attitudes such as engagement, commitment, performance, and intention to turnover (Resick et al., 2007; Hoffman & Woehr, 2006).

Therefore, our first hypothesis is:

**Hypothesis 1**: Person-organisation fit (POF) is (positively) related to WE.

In light of previous research, we expect that employees who are satisfied with their jobs become engaged and produce positive outcomes for the work and organisation (Avery et al., 2007; Simpson, 2009; Salanova et al., 2011; Yalabik et al., 2013; Harter et al., 2002; Abraham, 2012; Maylett & Riboldi, 2008; Tiwari, 2011; Penna, 2005).

Therefore, our second hypothesis is:

**Hypothesis 2**: Job Satisfaction (JS) is (positively) related to WE.

POF determines whether or not the employee is well-suited for the job (Zheng et al., 2010) and whether the employee will be committed and productive to the organisation (Rousseau & McLean Parks, 1993). It is evident in academic literature that POF significantly affects the development of individual, job and organisational related attitudes such as engagement, job satisfaction, organisational commitment, job performance, intention to stay, and citizenship behaviour (Resick et al., 2007; Hoffman & Woehr, 2006; Chatman, 1991; Chuang et al., 2015; Kim et al., 2013; Kristof-Brown et al., 2005).

There is empirical evidence that PO fit is related to job satisfaction and also job satisfaction is related to work engagement. Job satisfaction acts as a mediator in this relationship.

Thus, our third hypothesis is:

**Hypothesis 3**: JS mediates the positive relationship between Person-organisation fit (POF) and WE, such that POF is positively related to JS which is, in turn, positively related to WE.

### 3.3. Sample and Data Collection

As a sample from a Turkish setting, we tested the model on a large sample of Turkish blue and white-collar employees from business units of 15 independent companies; 10 different industry types on employees with different demographics. For this research, 571 self-administered questionnaires were sent to employees in businesses. Participation in our survey was voluntary and no remuneration was offered, and participants were informed that their responses would remain anonymous and confidential.

The final study sample (N=527) consisted of 318 men and 209 women; and the mean age of the sample was 31. This is due to the fact that female employees are still rare in the industry. The mean tenure of the sample was 6.98 years. In terms of educational background, 29% had a high school degree, 47% of the sample had an undergraduate degree; 20% had an associate degree, and 3% had a graduate degree.
3.4. Measures and Method

WE was measured with The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-9), which is a developed and shortened form of UWES-17 with acceptable psychometric properties, developed by Dr. Wilmar B. Schaufeli (Schaufeli, Bakker and Salanova, 2006).

The subscale vigour was measured with three items (e.g., ‘at my work, I feel bursting with energy’). The subscale dedication was measured with three items (e.g., ‘I am enthusiastic about my job’). The subscale absorption was measured with three items (e.g., ‘I am immersed in my work’). Participants responded using a 5-point Likert scale with anchors (0) ‘never’ to (6) ‘always’. The reliability and the factorial validity of the UWES have been supported by Schaufeli et al. (2002) and Langelaan et al. (2006).

POF was measured using the 3-Item scale developed by Cable and Judge (1996). The Turkish version of the measure is used in Kılıç’s (2010) work, whose Cronbach alpha was found to be 0.83.

Job satisfaction was measured using the Michigan Organizational Assessment Questionnaire, a three-item measure of global job satisfaction (Cammann et al., 1983), which has been meta-analysed and found to have acceptable reliability across the multitude of studies that have used the measure since it was first published (Rayton & Yalabik, 2014; Bowling & Hammond, 2008). The Cronbach’s alpha for the job satisfaction scale is 0.89.

3.5. Findings

Data was analysed with Structural Equation Modelling. To analyze the data, R-Project program (R Core Team, 2018), Psych package (Revelle, 2018) and SmartPLS 3.0 (Ringle, Wende, & Will, 2015) was used.

Firstly, an iterative ‘item trimming’ procedure was performed for the original scale items in which the items did not consistently load together on a single factor and which obtained relatively low reliabilities. As a result of this procedure, WE8 and WE9 were eliminated from WE subscales.

Cronbach’s alpha was found to be 0.95 and total Omega was found to be 0.94. When deciding whether the dataset was suitable for PCA, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin’s (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy Index was calculated. KMO index was found to be 0.94, which proved marvellous for PCA, as Kaiser (1974) recommended.

As a first step, the direct effect of POF over WE was tested. For the model fit, SRMR value was calculated as 0.050 and NFI value as 0.897; both of which proved that the model was acceptable. The path coefficient of POF’s direct effect over WE was found to be significant (0.657), as shown in Figure 1. Thus, POF was found to be positively related to WE and our first hypothesis is adopted.
Mediation hypothesis test

To research the mediation effect of JS, when JS was added to the model as a mediator, the model was found to be acceptable with an SRMR value of 0.043 and an NFI value of 0.899. The path coefficient of JS’s direct effect over WE was found to be significant (0.641 with p value: 0.000). JS was found to be positively related to WE. Thus, our second hypothesis is adopted. The path coefficient of POF’s direct effect over JS was found to be significant (0.714 with p value: 0.000) as shown in Figure 2.

When JS was added to the model as a mediator, the path coefficient of POF’s direct relationship over WE decreased from 0.657 (p value: 0.000) to 0.198 (p value: 0.001). The rest of the effect has shifted to POF’s indirect effect over JS, which is found to be significant (0.458; p value: 0.000), which is found to be significant (0.458; p value: 0.000). As a result, it is evident that, when JS is added to the model, it mediates 70% of the effect of POF. Thus, our third hypothesis is adopted.
Moreover, effect sizes are searched. Bootstrapping results of effect size ($f^2$) can be seen in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Original Sample</th>
<th>Sample Mean</th>
<th>P Values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>POF -&gt; WE</td>
<td>0.053</td>
<td>0.058</td>
<td>0.124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JS -&gt; WE</td>
<td>0.549</td>
<td>0.566</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POF -&gt; JS</td>
<td>1.037</td>
<td>1.067</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although the effect size of POF over WE is found to be weak as 0.058 (p value: 0.124) according to Cohen (1988), it is statistically insignificant. Besides this, JS’s effect size over WE is found to be 0.566 (p value: 0.000), which is ‘large’.

As a result, the POF effect size over WE was found to be large and significant (0.773 with p value: 0.000). When JS was added to the model as a mediator, the effect size decreased to 0.058 (p value: 0.124), which made it weak and insignificant.

Consequently, we can say that JS acts as a mediator between POF and WE.

It is found that Person-organisation fit (POF) is (positively) related to WE and that Job Satisfaction (JS) is (positively) related to WE.

JS acts as a mediator between POF and WE, and it mediates 70% of the effect of POF. JS mediates the positive relationship between Person-organisation fit (POF) and WE, such that POF is positively related to JS which is, in turn, positively related to WE.

4. CONCLUSION

The paper makes a contribution to the literature by extending empirical research on SIT and its applications in a non-U.S. environment, and thus, highlighting the increased importance of context in organisational science research today.

Testing the relationship of POF with WE contributes to limited research in frontline service jobs pertaining to the effects of POF on WE.

Grounded in SIT, this study advocates that employees who fit to the organisation more are more likely to have job satisfaction and repay this to the organisation through higher levels of engagement. The results support previous studies on WE (Rich et al., 2010).

In reality, job satisfaction is the bare minimum. JS keeps employees around but it doesn't really inspire them to do more than fulfil the fundamental job requirements of their role.
The findings of the study reveal that when employees fit the organisation and its values, they attain higher JS levels. And, thus, the satisfied employee goes beyond enjoying the job and it does not work only to get the pay check for a living, but rather becomes more productive, and is likely to work more hours for the organisation and go beyond basic responsibilities for the organisation’s good. A satisfied but unengaged employee generally enjoys what he/she does for a living, but, for the most part, his/her job is a means to a pay check.


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