

# The Moderating Role of Work Involvement in Influencing the Relationship between Person-Environment Fit and Organizational Citizenship Behaviour among Public Service Employees

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## Abstract

Studies have put considerable effort to examine the influence of person-environment fit on organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB). However, the findings indicate that the direct relationship is not always satisfactory. Therefore, this study decided to introduce work involvement as a moderator to clearly explained the influence of person-environment fit and OCB. A total of 376 questionnaires were distributed and 371 questionnaires were returned, giving a response rate of 98.67%. The SPSS was used for the analysis. Person-environment fit consists of person-job fit, person-organization fit, person-group fit and person-supervisor fit. The results of this study show that work involvement moderates the relationships between person-job fit and OCB, person-organization fit and OCB and person-supervisor fit and OCB. The implications of the study are discussed in the paper.

**Keywords:** *Person-Environment Fit, Job Performance, Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) and Work Involvement*

## Introduction

The issues pertaining to job performance of Malaysia public services have been discussed critically in the previous studies (e.g., Johari, Yahya & Omar., 2012; Nayan, 2012). Poor performance of public servants is due to lack of communication skills, lack of leadership commitment to manage the human resource at the agency level, high resistance to change, problems to handle and deal with individuals with poor performance because of the lack of an exit policy, decision making process which is over centralized, lack of a systematic succession planning that leads to uncertainty in career path and last but not least, the lack of focus particularly on the management of human resources by the top management of the agencies.

It has been observed that although there are great efforts that have been put on the reformation of public servants' performance, public service is still far behind from achieving the intended results especially when it involves the quality of the service as well as its delivery (Johari, CheMit & Omar, 2010). This issue is obviously seen when the Ministry of Home Affairs recorded the highest number of formal complaints by the public from 2011 to 2016 as compared to the other 25 ministries in Malaysia. According to Public Complaints Bureau (2011), Ministry of Home Affairs received a

total of 1,386 complaints. Meanwhile, in 2012, the Ministry of Home Affairs received a total of 1,246 complaints (Public Complaints Bureau, 2012). The number of complaints decreased to 1,186 complaints in the year 2013 (Public Complaints Bureau, 2013). In 2014, the number of complaints slightly dropped to 1,176 (Public Complaints Bureau, 2014). In the following year, the Ministry recorded 1,192 complaints (Public Complaints Bureau, 2015). Up to 31st August 2016, the number of complaints was 536 (Public Complaints Bureau, 2016). From eight departments and agencies under the Ministry of Home Affairs, Royal Malaysian Police, Department of Immigration and Registration Department were the major contributors to the highest number of complaints received.

Among the issues highlighted in the complaints are delays in service provision, unsatisfactory service quality, unfair action by public servants and also failure of enforcement (Public Complaints Bureau, 2014). Basically, the unfair action occurred when the public servants took inappropriate actions and were not referring to the procedures, which had already been stipulated, thus, contributing to the dissatisfaction of the public. This failure of enforcement refers to the act of the public servants who are not following the guidelines and stated procedures to satisfy the needs of the public. These issues signal that there is more room for improvement in the departments and also the agencies under the ministry especially on service delivery to the public. It is seen that the public servants in the department and agencies need to change the way they execute their task to enhance their levels of OCB, which eventually contributes toward better quality of service and delivery.

## **Problem Statement**

Malaysian public servant performance was evaluated based on certain aspects of organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) (Johari et al., 2012). Thus, OCB should be practiced by all Malaysian public servants. Johari (2010), Rayner, Lawton and Williams (2012) and Saraih (2014) suggested that research that focuses on job performance of public officials is critical for these reasons; (i) the research findings within this context are still unsatisfying, and (ii) job performance happens to have great impact on the overall performance of the public sector and its predictors. Therefore, these authors urged researchers to examine the levels of job performance among public officials. This study was conducted by basically focusing on the public sector specifically the three departments of Ministry of Home Affairs.

There are numerous predictors of job performance such as personality, job characteristics, organizational commitment and job attitudes (Ariffin, 2014; Johari, 2010). Although previous studies confirmed the significant role of job performance predictors such as job characteristics (Johari, 2010; Nayan, 2012), personality (Chiaburu, Oh, Berry, Li & Gardner, 2011; Johari, 2012), organizational commitment (Ariffin, 2014; Nayan, 2012), June and Mahmood (2011) and Soltis (2012) highlighted that work environment must be considered as one of the major predictors of job performance. Optimum performance can be achieved if the working environment and job context allow employees to exert maximum efforts in performing their tasks. In addition, employees and their work environment must be compatible so that they can work happily to achieve the performance goal. When the characteristics of individuals (employees) match their work environment, this is actually called person-environment fit (P-E fit).

Person-environment (P-E) fit research in Malaysian public service is still limited (Ahmad, Veerapandian & Ghee, 2011) as compared to private sector (e.g. June & Mahmood, 2011; Johari, 2012) because of low urgency to solve the performance related issues in government agencies. In the private sector, performance relates to profitability but in the public sector, it is less quantifiable in the monetary term. Nevertheless, the scope of person-environment fit research in public service is limited as stated by Ahmad et al. (2011), this study would like to make some contributions by concentrating on the consequences of person-environment (P-E) fit study especially in the Ministry of Home Affairs.

Thus, this study is designed specifically to examine whether all four dimensions of person-environment fit affect job performance of the employees in the Ministry of Home Affairs. Most of the previous studies examined fit dimensions separately (e.g. Ahmad et al., 2011; June & Mahmood, 2011; Soltis, 2012) but for this particular study, all the four dimensions of fit act as the independent variables to influence the dependent variable. To further support the need for this study, Chuang, Shen and Judge (2014) contended that there should be more investigations on the linkage between these four dimensions of person-environment (P-E) and their outcome variable due to inconsistent results reported in the literature.

This study incorporates work involvement as a moderator in examining the influence of all four dimensions of fit on OCB among public servants. A moderator is a variable through which the predictor is able to influence the criterion variable (Sekaran & Bougie 2013). A moderator explains how and why a certain effect occurs. Saraih (2014) strongly suggested that in identifying antecedents of job performance, particularly OCB, a moderating variable is required to better explain the influence of the predictor on the criterion variable.

Some previous studies (Chinomona et al., 2013; Johari, 2012; June & Mahmood, 2011) ignored the role of a moderating factor when investigating the relationship between P-E Fit and OCB. As a result, these studies found inconsistent findings pertaining to the relationship between person-environment fit and OCB. As suggested by Chinomona et al. (2013), a moderator variable is needed for future research that can show the clear relationship between person-environment fit and OCB. Aslam (2016) claimed that there are limited studies conducted having work involvement as a moderator. In this study, the role of work involvement was examined to clearly explain the relationship between P-E fit and OCB of public servants.

## **Literature Reviews**

### **Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB)**

It is important for organizations to maximize the employees' efforts besides only performing core tasks in order to sustain the competitive advantage, keep up with changes as well as engage in innovation (Podsakoff, Podsakoff & Mackenzie, 2014). This particular situation eventually requires all employees within the organization to showcase the organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). OCB was regarded by Organ (1997) and Podsakoff et al. (2014) as contextual performance or extra role performance, which is also the outstanding factor that leads to organizational

effectiveness. OCB was originally introduced by Bateman and Organ in the early 1980s that emphasizes on the extra role behavior (Huang, 2016).

In particular, OCB includes the positive behavioral aspects which are not even stated in the job description. Besides, it is also not enforced in the contract of employment. Apart from the contextual performance, Huang (2016) claimed that OCB has also been regarded as the extra role behavior or the discretionary behavior.

### **Person-Environment Fit**

In understanding person-environment fit, it is important to define what “person” and “environment” stand for (Yang, Levine, Smith, Ispas, & Rossi, 2008). Basically, a person is defined by one’s knowledge, skills, abilities, and other traits such as personality, values, and interests. On the other hand, “environment” concerns those external characteristics of an individual, which are job characteristics (e.g. challenge and autonomy) and organization characteristics (e.g. values or pay structure). There are still lack of studies which actually put these four dimensions of person-environment fit into their perspectives. Primarily, this particular study aims to examine the person-environment fit, which includes the combination of all four stated perspectives i.e. person-organization fit, person-job fit, person-group fit and person-supervisor fit and this is parallel to what has been stated by Edwards and Billsberry (2010) that person-environment fit is known as a multidimensional construct and thus, it should also be treated that way. The focus of the present study involves an integrative empirical study of four dimensions of person-environment fit: person-job fit, person-organization fit, person-group fit and person-supervisor fit.

Person-job fit revolves around the compatibility between people and organization where they worked for (Kristof-Brown, 1996). Kristof-Brown also defined person-job fit as the compatibility of the individual towards a specific job. Another influential person-environment fit dimension is person-organization fit, which is defined as the compatibility between individuals and the organization in which they work (Chuang et al., 2014). Person-group fit, on the other hand, is known as the interpersonal comparability between individuals and their peers and work groups (Kristof-Brown & Guay, 2010). Another emerging dimension of person-environment fit is person-supervisor fit where it revolves around the employees and the supervisors’ characteristics (Chuang et al., 2014).

### **Hypotheses:**

#### **Work Involvement**

This particular study also includes work involvement as a moderator in explaining the link of person-job fit, person-organization fit, person-group fit and person-supervisor fit with OCB. Basically, work involvement is known as the extent to which the interest of the employees in working is identified and observed to be relatively interconnected to other aspects in their respective lives (Kanungo, 1982). It has been found by Aslam (2016) that when the work involvement increases, the person-environment fit also increases. Work involvement is also considered to be a determinant of organizational effectiveness (Stoner & Gallagher, 2010) and individual motivation (Johari, 2010).

## Methodology

### Research Design

This present study is a quantitative research and it was conducted as a correlational study in explaining the association of the dependent variable, moderator variable and the independent variables. The approaches involve the descriptive analysis, the correlation analysis and also the regression analysis in the efforts to examine the relationship among the variables.

### Population

This study focuses on the public servants from Royal Malaysian Police, Department of Immigration and Registration Department under the Ministry of Home Affairs, which are located in Selangor as the population of the study because all three departments have received higher complaints as compared to other departments or agencies.

### Sampling Technique

The quota sampling technique was utilized in this study and it was specifically chosen because the quota fixed for each subgroup is based on the total number of each group in the population (Sekaran&Bougie, 2013). In this study, samples were selected based on departments or agencies. The quota is based on the proportion of subclasses in the population (Chua, 2012).The sampling process involves the distribution of the respondents into exclusive groups or strata such as departments or agencies.

Table 1: Sample Determination

No	Strata by Department	Number of Population	Number of Respondents
1	Royal Malaysian Police	15,111	283
2	Department of Immigration	2,906	54
3	Registration Department	2,102	39
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>20,119</b>	<b>376</b>

### Data Analysis

SPSS Statistics Version 24.0 was used to key in the data obtained and to perform the descriptive analysis. The descriptive analysis includes percentage, median, mode and also the frequencies. The correlation analysis and multiple linear regression analysis were then performed to analyze the relationship between the variables of P-E fit and OCB of the employees.

### Instrument

The questionnaire survey was used in order to collect the data that are required for this study. Based on the objectives and also the hypotheses of the study, the questionnaire is considered as a suitable tool in the effort to gather the responses from the respondents.

### Findings

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 between 31 and 35 years old. The amount of respondents who aged between 36 and 40 years old was 88 or 23.7%. 16 or 4.3% of respondents aged between 41 and 45 years old. For those who aged between 46 and 50 years old, the amount of respondents was 61 or 16.4%. 34 respondents aged between 51 and 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 the ministry were dominated by Malays, 85.1% of the respondents came from this category. Only 5.7% and 9.2% were Chinese and Indians, respectively. Furthermore, the majority of the respondents, which constitute 91.4%, were married while 8.6% were single.

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 respondents had been working in the organization for six to 10 years, while 96 of respondents had been working for 11 to 15 years. 85 of respondents had been working in the organization for one to 5 years. The rest of respondents had been working in the organization for more than 15 years. Finally, 65.5% of the respondents were support staff and 34.5% were professional and managerial staff.

### Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation coefficient describes the relationship between two continuous variables. Correlation and regression analyses are related in the sense that both deal with relationships among variables.

Table 2: Correlation Analysis of Person-Environment Fit, Work Involvement and OCB

No	Variables	1	2	3	4	5
1	PJ-Fit	1				
2	PO-Fit	-.025	1			
3	PG-Fit	-.019	-.047	1		
4	PS-Fit	.081	-.142**	-.037	1	
5	Work Involvement	.088	-.128*	-.043	.940**	1
6	OCB	.039	-.086	-.043	.855**	.844**

Notes: \*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed); \*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed).

In general, correlation coefficients among the variables in person-environment fit (independent variables), a moderator variable and OCB (dependent variable) are ranging from -.019 to .940. It can be concluded that overall correlations between independent variables and dependent variables are ranging from very low to very high. Similarly, the moderator has low to high correlations with the independent variables and the dependent variable.

### Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis testing is to examine the moderating effects of work involvement on the relationship between person-environment fit and employees' job performance that involves OCB.

- H1: Work involvement moderates the relationship person-job fit and OCB.
- H2: Work involvement moderates the relationship person-organization fit and OCB
- H3: Work involvement moderates the relationship person-group fit and OCB
- H4: Work involvement moderates the relationship person-supervisor fit and OCB

Work involvement is hypothesized to moderate the relationship between each person-environment fit and OCB. Table 3 below summarizes the results of the moderating effects of work involvement on the relationships between person-environment fit dimensions and OCB.

Table 3: The results of the moderating effects of work involvement on the relationships between person-environment fit dimensions and OCB

<b>MODEL 1</b>		<b>MODEL 2</b>	<b>MODEL 3</b>
Variables	Dependent Variable	Dependent Variable	Dependent Variable
	OCB	OCB	OCB
<b>Independent Variables</b>			
Person-job fit	-.028	-.033	.715**
Person-organization fit	.038	.036	-.447*
Person-group fit	-.011	-.008	.215
Person-supervisor fit	.860**	.504**	3.224**
<b>Moderator</b>			
Work involvement		.379**	4.391**
<b>Interaction terms</b>			
PJF x WI			-.863**
POF x WI			.497*
PGF x WI			-.223
PSF x WI			-6.369**
R <sup>2</sup>	.726	.746	.766
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	.729	.742	.761
R <sup>2</sup> Change	.729	.017	.021
F Change	246.435	23.815	7.977
Significance F Change	.000	.000	.000

Notes: \*\*\* significance at the .01 level; \*\* significance at the .05 level;

From table above, work involvement has moderation effect on the relationship between person-job fit, person-organization fit and person-supervisor fit and OCB. It can be concluded that, work involvement is a moderator for the link of person-job fit, person-organization fit, person-supervisor fit with OCB as the dependent variable and the hypothesis are supported. Meanwhile, another dimension of person-environment fit (i.e 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.

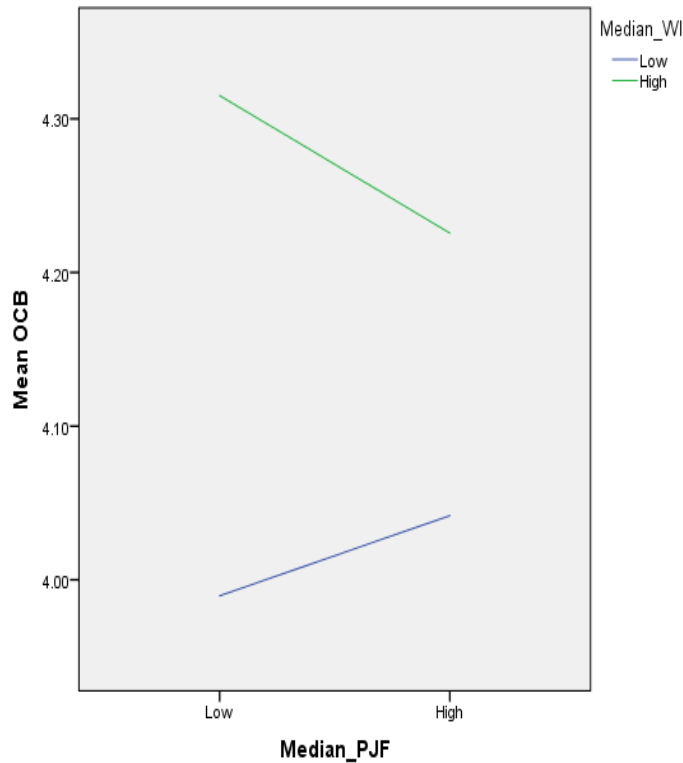


Figure 1: Moderating effect of work involvement on the relationship between person-job fit and OCB

The outcome of this study established that work involvement moderates the relationship between person-job fit and OCB. The result shows that low person-job fit but high work involvement is required for employees to have high OCB. This shows that when work involvement among personnel is high, it can counter the effect of low person-job fit and consequently contributes to high OCB. Therefore, government servants should be highly involved in their work and continuously exert efforts to improve their OCB. The findings support those found by Johari, Yean and Yahya (2015) that when the work involvement level of the incumbents is high, they are more likely to become high performers.



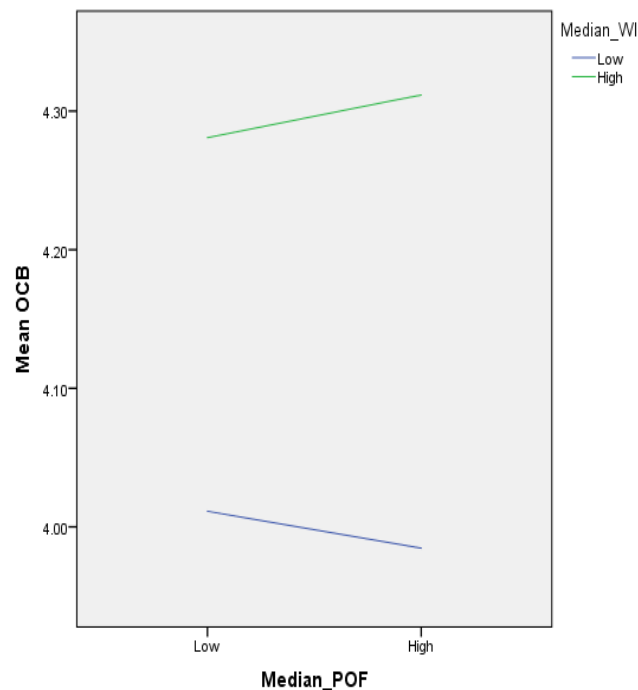


Figure 2: Moderating effect of work involvement on the relationship between person-organization fit and OCB

The outcome of this study further established that work involvement moderates the relationship between person-organization fit and OCB. High person-organization fit and high work involvement are required for employees to engage in high OCB. This indicates that when work involvement of personnel is high, coupled with high person-organization fit, they tend to engage in high OCB. This significantly means that employees usually develop stronger passion towards their works over time, and they then become more involved in their works. Furthermore, employees also strive to find the organizations that would fit their values and personalities and once they have found it, their level of OCB becomes high because they are willing to contribute to the well-being of the organization. It can be argued that since OCB is an extra-role behavior and more associated with personal willingness, value similarity between the employee and organization could foster attitudes towards helping others and volunteering for extra-role behaviors (Khaola&Sebotsa, 2015).

The outcome of this research also indicates that there is no significant role of work involvement in moderating the relationship between person-group fit and OCB. This occurrence might be due to demographic dissimilarity. Demographic dissimilarity refers to the extent to which an individual and some second entity fluctuate in terms of numerous characteristics (Cicek&Bicer, 2013). It could reflect the degree to which individuals in the group have common attributes and the degree to which an individual's attributes are shared by other group members (Thatcher & Patel, 2012). When there are high group member differences, OCB is difficult to be achieved and work involvement does not affect the relationship.

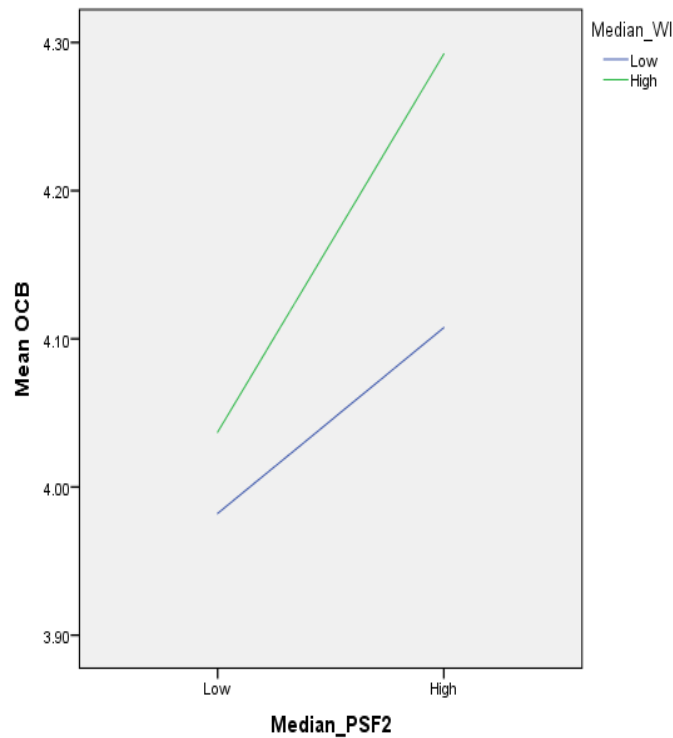


Figure 3: Moderating effect of work involvement on the relationship between person-supervisor fit and OCB

This study shows that high person-supervisor fit and high work involvement are required for employees to engage in OCB. Employees would feel respected if they feel that their supervisor encourages their involvement and supports them. As a result, employees’ OCB level will increase and they would demonstrate stronger commitment. Thus, some scholars perceive involvement as a way to enhance citizenship behaviors among the employee, particularly through their commitment toward the organization (Zhang, 2014).

Based on the social exchange theory, the result indicates that an employees’ intention to perform OCB could be affected by the supervisor, for instance, an employee would be likely to go beyond the minimum role requirements when he/she perceives that the supervisor is fair and takes care of his/her well-being. The effect is more intense when work involvement is high.

**Managerial Contribution**

The results of this study suggest the importance of work involvement in enhancing the relationships between person-job fit and OCB, person-organization fit and OCB and person-supervisor fit and OCB. To increase the levels of work involvement among employees, the management should empower employees to perform their job. By doing this, employees will feel that they own their job and responsibilities. Furthermore, employees must be continuously updated on the achievement of the organization in order to make them aware of what needs to be done to achieve greater targets. To do this, the organization must have an effective communication system or channel that can be used to disseminate current news to the organizational members. Moreover, high employee participation in the management of the organization will make them more involved. Management must consider employee input when making important decisions for the organization. When they feel their voice is heard and

valued, there is high probability that they will have high work involvement.

### **Methodological Contribution**

This study has established valuable evidence on the importance of work involvement in enhancing the role of person-environment fit in improving employees' OCB. Therefore, this construct must be considered when addressing the issue of job performance or OCB of employees in the organization. However, this construct should not be equated with work engagement. Work engagement refers to a strong desire to be part of the value an organization creates. Whereas, work involvement is an environment in which workers are encouraged to, and can directly impact, the decisions and activities in their work environment. The instrument measuring work involvement might not be suitable to measure work engagement.

### **Direction for future research**

Based on the research results and discussions, this study has successfully come out with several directions for research to be conducted in future. First of all, the study sample could be extended to a larger population, i.e. different ministries in all states in Malaysia. This may appear to be more meaningful to grasp the understanding and knowledge in terms of the empirical association of all variables of interest highlighted in this study. Besides, the set of population in any future studies is also suggested to be expanded to different groups of public servants, i.e. the management and professional groups. This could help in enhancing the level of understanding of how person-environment fit might have an impact on OCB of the managerial level public servants as compared to the support staff group in an organization.

Second, instead of only enlightening the single source of performance or OCB rating, future studies are suggested to use multiple sources of rating to minimize error and bias in evaluating employees' OCB. This study also suggests future works to apply the supervisory-rating specifically in measuring the level of OCB of the workers. This is due to the reason that self-rating is susceptible to self-bias which in return leads to significantly high or low correlation and subsequently, the inflation or deflation of the observed correlations (Danaeefard, Balutbaze&Kashi, 2010).

### **Conclusion**

This study has successfully provided the precious empirical evidence in terms of the moderating role of work involvement on the relationship between person-environment fit and OCB. The research outcomes have also provided support for the hypotheses of this study. What is more important is, this study has successfully answered all of the research questions despite some of the limitations. Although there are many studies which have concentrated on examining the relationship between person-environment fit and OCB, this study has successfully addressed the huge gap by integrating work involvement as a significant moderating variable.

Besides the theoretical and methodological contributions, the research outcomes have also provided some verified practical implications especially in terms of human resource management aspects and also for the overall public sector practices. Several directions for future research have been drawn clearly based on the limitations of the study that were noted during the completion of this study. Thus, it is believed that this research has added valuable theoretical, practical and methodological contributions in the respective area of study.

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