



The role of abusive supervision on the relationship between person-job fit and engagement

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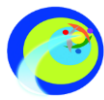
Abstract

According to the person job-fit (PJ-Fit) theory, high PJ-Fit leads to positive work outcomes. However, empirical evidence is not always aligned with this theory, and scholars endlessly called for further research to find the reasons for this. Therefore, this study investigates the influence of employees' person job-fit (PJ-Fit) on their work engagement and the moderating role of abusive supervision on the relationship between PJ-Fit and work engagement. This study was conducted with 114 employees working in public-sector organizations in the northern part of Sri Lanka. Hierarchical multiple regression was employed to analyze the data. Personal and demographical variables (age, gender, marital status, and experience) have been controlled in this study. This study's outcomes indicated that PJ-Fit has a significant (positive) impact on work engagement and the relationship between PJ-Fit and engagement is moderated by abusive supervision. The employees with high PJ-Fit are profoundly engage in their work. However, abusive supervision negatively influences work engagement and weakens the positive impact of PJ-Fit on work engagement. This study extends the literature by investigating the influence of PJ-Fit on work engagement and being the first to introduce the abusive supervision as a moderator on this relationship. This study suggests that recruiting employees who fit well to the job is necessary, but it is not sufficient to make them engage in their work. The Organization needs to take necessary steps to avoid abusive supervision to create an engaged workforce that is a crucial indicator of organizational success

Keywords: abusive supervision, attitudes, engagement, leadership and PJ-Fit

Introduction

In today's fast-changing and competitive environment, organizations make many attempts to maintain engaged employees because engaged employees have high motivation to act, contribute to organizational success and succeed in their carrier. Previous studies highlighted the organizational level factors such as leadership and culture are the antecedents of work engagement and underestimates the role of individuals in controlling their work and work situation. According to fit theory individual has an inner motive to exercise control, and they search job and Organization that fit well to them (Yu, 2013). Therefore, organizational level factors can only partially explain employees' engagement, as they cannot reflect individuals' intrinsic needs (Rayton et al.,



2019). Therefore, this study aims to investigate the role of person-job fit (PJ-Fit) on their engagement.

Methodology

Population and sample

For this study, the researcher collected data from employees in the banking sector. Hundred and fifty participants were randomly selected, and questionnaires were distributed to them through the researcher's personal and professional networks. A convenience sampling method was adopted to recruit respondents. To maintain confidentiality, data that help identify the particular respondent were not collected, and each questionnaire was accompanied by a stamped envelope and a cover letter assuring confidentiality. Out of 150 responses, only 121 responses were received, and seven were removed because of a high number of missing variables. Ultimately this study was conducted with 114 responses. Male participants accounted for (60%) of the respondents. Fifty-six respondents, accounting for 50 percent, were married. Concerning age and working experience of respondents, their average age and working experience were 38.2 years and 9.9 years, respectively, with a standard deviation of 5.8 years and 4.9 years.

Hypotheses of the study

According to the person job-fit (PJ-Fit) theory, high PJ-Fit leads to positive work outcomes. However, empirical pieces of evidence are not always aligned with this theory, and scholars called for further research to find the reasons for this. Supervisors' negative treatment may show that employees have a low value in the Organization that leads employees to feel that they are excluded and impractical (Zhang & Frenkel, 2018). Also, an Individual's self-concept becomes vulnerable to the negative experience in the workplace (Baumeister et al., 2001). Abusive supervision, "as a typical negative situation in an organization, refers to hostile verbal and non-verbal behaviors (not including physical contact) that employees repeatedly perceive in their supervisors" (Shen et al., 2019). Abusive supervision comprises public criticism, impolite handling and ridicule of subordinates. Consequently, abusive supervision makes employees doubt their own importance, value and competence in the workplace, thus resulting in the feeling of lack of (individual) resources, which decrease employees' engagement in their work. Therefore, this study further investigates the role of abusive supervision on the relationship between PJ-Fit and work engagement. The researcher developed the following two hypotheses:

H₁: Person-job fit (PJ-Fit) positively influence engagement.

H₂: The relationship between PJ-Fit and engagement is moderated by abusive supervision



Results and Discussions

Before conducting the analysis, the data's accuracy was checked; no values outside the specified range were found, which means standard deviations and correlations appeared to be reasonable. Further, questionnaire non-responsive rate, item non-response rate, distribution of data and outliers were taken into account and appropriately treated.

Variables and measures

PJ-Fit.

The degree of fit between the person and their job was measured using 6 items scale developed by Rayton et al., (2019) from the original scale developed by Cable and DeRue in 2002. The estimated internal consistency reliability of the previous studies and the current study was greater than the threshold value ($CrA > .7$)

Abusive supervision

Abusive supervision was measured with a 10-item short version scale (Aryee et al., 2007; Shen et al., 2019). Respondents were asked to rate their agreement with statements about their direct supervisor's behavior, using a five-point Likert scale from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. Cronbach's α for the abusive supervision scale in the previous studies (Aryee et al.'s 2007; Shen et al., 2019) and the current study was satisfactory ($CrA > .7$)

Work engagement

Work engagement was measured with the nine-item Utrecht WE Scale (Schaufeli et al., 2006). The previous study (Rayton, et al. 2019) and the current study reported very high-reliability score ($CrA > .8$). Participants responded to items on a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree).

The factor loading of each indicator, Cronbach's alpha, and composite reliability of each construct were more substantial than the threshold value of 0.70. AVEs of all reflective latent variables were greater than 0.5. The square root of AVE is higher than inter-construct correlations. Moreover, each indicator's loadings to the specified constructs is significantly higher than the loading to any other construct. Therefore, it can be concluded that the measurement model has adequate indicator reliability, construct reliability, discriminant validity and convergent validity (Hair et al., 2011).



To test the two hypotheses, the researcher employed hierarchical multiple regressions. Four personal and demographical variables were considered as the control variable of the study. In the first step, the four control variables (age, marital status, gender, management level and work experiences) were entered as a predictor of engagement. In the second step, the four person-job fit has been entered, and the results are summarized in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Outcomes of hierarchical regression analysis

Variables	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
	t	Sig.	t	Sig.	t	Sig.	t	Sig.
Age	1.00	.28	1.01	.30	1.00	.31	.86	.38
Experience	-.42	.66	-.67	.49	-.56	.57	-.65	.51
Marital status	.17	.86	-.03	.97	-.14	.88	-.09	.91
Sex	.78	.43	.76	.46	.80	.47	.92	.34
<i>PJ-Fit</i>			6.85	.00	7.1	.00	-.29	.76
<i>Abusive sup.</i>					2.10	.04	-1.3	.18
<i>PJ_Fit*Abus.Sup.</i>							2.2	.00

The path coefficient and its significant values indicated that PJ-Fit has a positive ($\beta = .54, p = .00$) impact on engagement. Also, perceived abusive supervision has a negative (significant) influence on the engagement. To examine the moderation effect of abusive supervision on the relationship between fit perception and engagement, the interaction term (PJ-Fit * Abusive supervision) was created. The results indicate that abusive supervision negatively moderates the relationship between fit perception and engagement (R^2 change was significant when introducing the moderator). Therefore, H_1 and H_2 are supported.

Conclusions

This study's findings indicated that PJ-Fit has a significant (positive) impact on work engagement and the relationship between PJ-Fit and engagement is moderated by abusive supervision. The employees with high PJ-Fit are highly engaged in their work. However, abusive supervision negatively influences work engagement and weakens the positive impact of PJ-Fit on work engagement. That is, when employees perceive high-level abusive supervision, PJ-Fit becomes less important in explaining work engagement. When perceived abusive supervision is lower, fit perception becomes more important in explaining engagement. This study extends the literature by investigating the influence of PJ-Fit on work engagement and being the first to introduce the abusive supervision as a moderator on the relationship between PJ-Fit and Work engagement. This study also contributes to the literature by deepening the understanding of the relationship between PJ-Fit and engagement under abusive supervision. This study's findings suggest that recruiting employees who fit well to the job is not sufficient to make them



engage in their work. The organization needs to take the necessary steps to avoid abusive supervision in the workplace. Organizations spent a considerable amount of resources identifying a suitable candidate for a particular job to harvest positive work outcomes from them. To maximize employees' engagement, which is a crucial indicator of organizational success organization should be careful in the way employees are managed in the workplace.

This stud used cross-sectional and self-reported data, which is vulnerable to common method bias (CMB). However, the researcher takes some necessary steps in the survey design state and the data analysis stage to minimize CMB. Further studies are encouraged to introduce a new moderator (e.g., organizational politics) to deepen the understanding of PJ-Fit and employees' outcomes relationship and help management build an engaged workforce.

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