



The impact of work alienation on organizational citizenship behavior in the Canary Islands

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this research is to examine work alienation (WA) as a mediator in the relationship between employees' perceptions of person-organization (PO) fit – operationalized as value congruence – and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) directed at their organization (OCBO), co-workers (OCBIC), and students or clients (OCBIS).

Design/methodology/approach – Data were collected from 99 of the 156 (63.5 percent) teachers at a district high school in Spain. Structural equation modeling (SEM) was used to test the predicted relationships.

Findings – Results support that PO fit is an antecedent of OCBO, OCBIC, and OCBIS and also, in general, that the three dimensions of WA (powerlessness, meaninglessness, and self-estrangement) mediate this link. Separately, all WA dimensions are totally or partially supported as “full mediators,” except for powerlessness and meaninglessness that appear to act on OCBIS as “partial mediators.” The model tested suggests PO fit predicts OCB and that this relationship can be explained by the mediating role of WA.

Research limitations/implications – Subjects in this study reflect job conditions peculiar to the public sector. This may limit the ability to extrapolate the findings to the private sector. Also, results may not generalize to other cultural or national contexts. The findings contribute to an improved understanding of the influence of PO value fit/misfit on OCB.

Practical implications – Understanding how PO fit is able to affect citizenship behavior suggests that actions designed to promote PO fit may be useful for more efficiently managing employee WA, and, therefore, more powerfully eliciting OCB in the workplace.

Originality/value – Employee work alienation is demonstrated to be a mediator in the relationship between PO fit and OCB. This is the first empirical test of this relationship.

Keywords Organizations, Citizenship, Employee behaviour, Spain

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) is beneficial to organizations. Organ (1988, 1997) defined OCB as voluntary and discretionary individual behavior that is expected to promote overall organizational efficacy. Two salient dimensions of OCB include defending the organization (OCB-O) when other employees criticize it and, when directed at individuals (OCB-I), assisting co-workers with their duties. Borman and Motowidlo (1993) redefined OCB as “contextual performance” that included supervisor ratings of a broad range of behavior, which are not specifically included in a job description, but still contribute to organizational life.

Considerable research on OCB has centered on identifying the causes of such extra-role behavior (e.g., Brief and Motowidlo, 1986; George and Bettenhausen, 1990; Organ, 1988; Smith *et al.*, 1983). The organizational behavior (OB) literature offers a



wide range of potential antecedents. Characteristics of the environment, organization, and work group seem to be elements of the social context that have a crucial impact on the attitudes and behavioral intentions of organizational members (Dunlop and Lee, 2004). More specifically, individual positive attitudes such as job satisfaction, job involvement and organizational commitment precede several OCB facets (Bateman and Organ, 1983; O'Reilly and Chatman, 1986; Organ, 1990; Puffer, 1987; Smith *et al.*, 1983; Van Dyne *et al.*, 1995). Somech and Drach-Zahavy (2000) confirmed positive a relationship between job satisfaction and teachers' extra-role behavior, not only directed at the school as an organization (OCBO) and at colleagues (OCBIC), but even at their own students or clients (OCBIS). Different antecedents at different levels seem to form part of a general prediction of OCB, but how can those predictions be properly integrated? What is the process that links OCB to these antecedents?

In order to predict work behavior, researchers usually propose a social exchange explanation (Blau, 1964) whereby employees may exhibit positive or negative behavior as a response to the treatment received from their organizations (Greenberg and Scott, 1996; Konovsky and Pugh, 1994). On the other hand, the extent of an employees' fit with one's organization (PO fit) has also been studied as a potential inductor of one's job choice decisions, work attitudes (Cable and Judge, 1996), and turnover (O'Reilly *et al.*, 1991). Taking both approaches into consideration would imply that, to the extent a PO fit occurs, the employee should be more willing to engage in OCB. However, it has been suggested that the effect of the *person-organization* (PO) fit on OCB is likely to be indirect, and, hence, it may depend on the PO fit's previous impact on job satisfaction (Van Dyne *et al.*, 1994) or other mediators (Netemeyer *et al.*, 1997; Podsakoff *et al.*, 1990). Accordingly, another important macro-motive that researchers have emphasized as a potential mediator in this relationship is organizational commitment (Menguc, 2000).

In contrast to past research, our study explores the mediating role of work *alienation* (from the Latin, *alienati*, *alienare*: "take away," "remove," "or cause a separation to occur"). Alienation originates in the writings of German philosopher Karl Marx, and results from a contradiction between the nature of the work role and human nature. Alienation occurs in situations where the individual has lost control over the product and process of one's labor, and, therefore, the capacity to express oneself at work.

Interest in the value of PO fit seems related to topics closely linked to work alienation and, consequently, we believe there is evidence that work alienation (WA) may be mediating the relationship between PO fit – operationalized as value congruence – and OCB. If this is the case, we should gain a better understanding of why PO fit may predict OCB. Furthermore, this could contribute to the OCB literature, particularly in light of the fact that WA is an under-researched concept. Certainly, Dunlop and Lee (2004), Henle (2005), and Henle *et al.* (2005) investigated topics similar to WA, such as low morale, damaged self-esteem, increased fear and insecurity at work. However, the use of the specificity of Seeman's (1971) alienation facets in explaining how PO fit may be linked with OCB has not been empirically studied (see Figure 1).

Hypotheses

Researchers use value congruence as the operationalization of person-organization (PO) fit for two reasons. First, values are fundamental and enduring characteristics of both individuals and organizations (Chatman, 1991); second, values predict a large

variety of individual outcomes including satisfaction and behavioral intentions (Meglino *et al.*, 1992). Nonetheless, researchers still have difficulty supporting direct links between PO fit and employee behavior. The reason could be due to the fact that PO fit – as an organizational design variable – is too remote an antecedent to influence OCB and, therefore, possibly requires closer ones. However, it is relatively easy to find convincing arguments to predict such an association. Given that PO fit is able to satisfy several employee needs, desires and preferences (Chatman, 1989; Kristof, 1996), PO fit may elicit positive sentiments (e.g., trust, commitment and satisfaction) that, in turn, could motivate a person to perform positive actions in the organization. Conversely, PO misfit would lead to disconnected personal values with the organization, eliciting sentiments of low self-esteem and lack of trust (Kristof, 1996; Kuczmariski and Kuczmariski, 1995; Saks and Ashforth, 1997; Van Vianen, 2000). As a result, such negative feelings could provoke employee retaliation against the organization (Dailey and Kirk, 1992; Skarlicki and Folger, 1997), which could decrease OCB. Based on these arguments, it is reasonable to propose a significant PO fit/OCB association through the following initial hypotheses:

- H1(p)*. Employees' perceptions of person-organization (PO) fit will be positively associated with their OCB directed at the organization (OCBO).
- H1(m)*. Employees' perceptions of person-organization (PO) fit will be negatively associated with their OCB directed at their co-workers (OCBIC).
- H1(s)*. Employees' perceptions of person-organization (PO) fit will be negatively associated with their OCB directed at their students or clients (OCBIS).

The effects of person-organization fit on work alienation

Seeman (1967, 1972, 1975, 1983, 1991) provides a more contemporary interpretation of WA. In Seeman's (1959) initial article, he attempted to clarify the meaning of the concept by identifying five dimensions of WA:

- (1) *Powerlessness* (i.e. lack of job autonomy by reason of which employees have limited freedom to exert control over work activities).

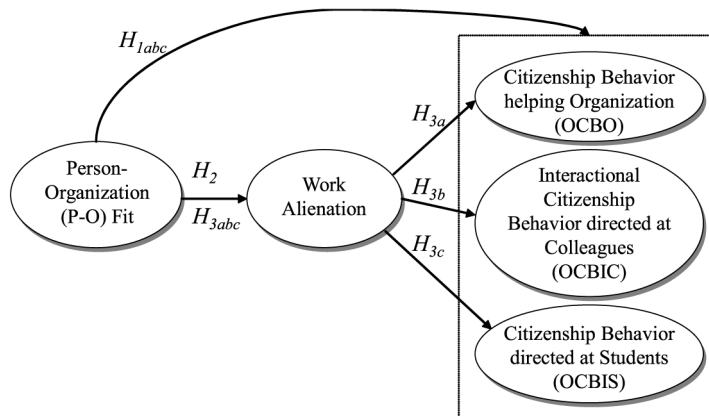


Figure 1. Hypothesized model of work alienation as a mediator of the relationship between PO fit and the citizenship behaviors directed at organization (OCBO) and individuals (OCBI)

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- (2) *Meaninglessness* (i.e. the inability to comprehend the relationship of one's contributions to a larger purpose).
 - (3) *Normlessness*.
 - (4) *Isolation* (i.e. when norms or codes of conduct do not effectively guide behavior toward personal goals).
 - (5) *Self-estrangement* (i.e. when work becomes a path for satisfying merely extrinsic needs rather than a means for expressing one's potential).

Shepard (1973) defined alienation as awareness of the discrepancy between one's own inclinations and the demands of reality (see, Lee, 2005; Muntaner *et al.*, 2006). Seeman (1975) agrees by pointing out that the majority of alienation studies contain some notion of "discrepancy." Applied to the workplace, this discrepancy usually takes the form of a gap between perceptions of an objective work situation and certain concerns of individuals, such as needs, values, ideals, desires, or expectations (see, Mottaz, 1981). The present study stressed work alienation as a discrepancy between the employees' perceptions of objective task conditions along specific dimensions (control, purpose, and self-expression), and their expectations regarding these dimensions. The expected outcome should be a feeling of powerlessness, meaninglessness, and a sense of self-estrangement (Ferguson and Lavalette, 2004; Ludz, 1976; Plasek, 1974; Seeman, 1975; Mottaz, 1981; Sarros *et al.*, 2002).

Linking the above discussion with value discrepancy theory (PO value misfit), it is reasonable to assume that the employees' perceptions of the task conditions are, to a significant extent, conditioned by their appraisals of the organization's values. Similarly, their individual values should inspire their final desires and expectations regarding their task conditions. In effect, if employee alienation depends on what they want, believe in and intend, alienation may be in conflict with reality. Employee value discrepancy with the organization should increase feelings of WA – in particular, their powerlessness, meaninglessness and self-estrangement. Therefore, we suggest that employees' sense of discord between their personal values and those at work should create a working context in which feelings of alienation (WA) arise. In this respect, our hypotheses are as follows:

- H2(p)*. Employees' perceptions of person-organization (PO) fit will be negatively associated with their sense of powerlessness.
- H2(m)*. Employees' perceptions of person-organization (PO) fit will be negatively associated with their sense of meaninglessness.
- H2(s)*. Employees' perceptions of person-organization (PO) fit will be negatively associated with their sense of self-estrangement.

Mediating role of work alienation

Meglino *et al.* (1989) contend that individuals who hold values and beliefs similar to those of the organization interact more efficiently with their organization, reducing both uncertainty and conflict (see Pandey and Welch, 2005; Kristof, 1996; Saks and Ashforth, 1997; Van Vianen, 2000). In addition, Kuczmarski and Kuczmarski (1995, p. 53) note that when there is a disparity between values held by management and employees, confusion results which can cause employees to become disoriented,

anxious and isolated. PO misfit – acting as a constraining factor of working conditions – could give rise to work alienation. However, our key prediction suggests that it is this context of alienation – created by PO misfit – in which employees' OCB really occurs.

Direct outcomes of PO fit offer an explanation of why applicants make decisions on their job choices (Cable and Judge, 1996), or on their withdrawal behavior from the organization (O'Reilly *et al.*, 1991), and there is evidence that they may also elicit OCB. In order to support the mediating role of WA in the link between PO fit and OCB, it could be even more important to explore the feelings that a PO value misfit can elicit in individuals and for which they make such critical decisions.

A general prediction of socio-psychological literature is that individuals tend to evaluate themselves in social situations that confirm their worth, and will devalue social situations that do not reward them in this way (Faunce, 1968; Shepard, 1971). In effect, classical social psychologists, such as Zetterberg (1957) and Murphy (1947), believe that activities which permit individuals to see themselves positively are more likely to be used as referents for judging the kind of people they think they are. This association between employees' evaluations of their work, and their personal worth, may permit us to state that "shared values" create work contexts in which workers feel really appreciated. Conversely, if the individuals' sense of identity is not fulfilled by membership in the organization, they may view their work as merely a small part of who they are. They are "unable to actively participate in the community life" (Kohn and Schooler, 1983, p. 90). Their necessary feelings of worth can be difficult to find in work domains, and instead are found in other domains. In so doing, employees may be leading themselves to social detachment, and the feeling of being undervalued by their organization. Indeed, those feelings seem to echo Shore and Shore and Shore's (1995, p. 159) "global schema of history support".

The literature on justice emphasizes the mediating role of contexts in which a worker believes an organization values its staff. Lind and Tyler (1988) proposed a group value model to explain non-instrumental effects of justice perceptions. Similarly, Lind *et al.* (1990) suggested that these non-instrumental effects, which result in employees feeling valued by their organization, are the most important for creating environments in which OCB occurs (see Moorman *et al.*, 1998). Shore and Shore (1995, p. 159) supported the mediating role of perceived organizational support (POS) when they discussed how perceptions of justice create a "global schema of history support". Based on this argument, Moorman *et al.* (1998) found that justice perceptions elicit OCB by creating a context of support in which OCB occurs. In particular, they found that fair procedures promote OCB by eliciting feelings of respect and pride among employees.

The above rationale for supporting a POS mediating role also seems applicable to supporting WA sentiment as a mediator in the link between PO fit and OCB. In effect, as one of the most important environments in which OCB occurs, if justice is able to create a "global schema of history support," a context of alienation – serving as a "history of alienation" created by PO fit – also plays an important role in cultivating OCB. Alienated employees, an outcome of PO misfit, should only limit their work behavior to fulfilling enforceable tasks. In so doing, they may avoid disciplinary measures, but also will hinder their OCB towards their organization.

Regarding OCB target, to the extent that employees perceive their WA as being caused by PO misfit – thus, holding the organization responsible for this misfit – that

alienated context should prompt them to retaliate with decreased OCB-O, more than OCB-I. Hence, our next hypotheses are:

- H3a(p)*. Powerlessness will mediate the relationship between employees' perceptions of person-organization (PO) fit and their citizenship behavior directed at their organization.
- H3a(m)*. Meaninglessness will mediate the relationship between employees' perceptions of person-organization (PO) fit and their citizenship behavior directed at their organization.
- H3a(s)*. Self-estrangement will mediate the relationship between employees' perceptions of person-organization (PO) fit and their citizenship behavior directed at their organization.

In educational settings, Bandura (1993) found that team members believe that their collective instructional work process contributes significantly to their organization's level of achievement. This suggests that teamwork may be perceived by employees as an essential part of their work, and, hence, of their school as an organization. In light of this, employees may also perceive the source of their WA in co-workers because they participate in teamwork activities. In this case, PO fit may also lead them, under the guiding influence of WA sentiments, to reciprocate with OCB-I. Therefore, the following hypotheses are:

- H3b(p)*. Powerlessness will mediate the relationship between teachers' perceptions of person-organization (PO) fit and their citizenship behavior directed at their colleagues.
- H3b(m)*. Meaninglessness will mediate the relationship between teachers' perceptions of person-organization (PO) fit and their citizenship behavior directed at their colleagues.
- H3b(s)*. Self-estrangement will mediate the relationship between teachers' perceptions of person-organization (PO) fit and their citizenship behavior directed at their colleagues.

With regard to the student target dimension (OCBIS), *social exchange theory* (Blau, 1964) provides a rationale for the relationship between perceived PO fit and OCB, suggesting that individuals reciprocate to the source of positive perceptions. In spite of the above assertion regarding social exchange, research on workplace deviance suggests that the targets of harm and the entities harmed may diverge, probably by displacement of other individuals. In addition, it also may be the case that when teachers (as in our sample) attempt to harm their school or colleagues, students are harmed as well (Ambrose *et al.*, 2002; O'Leary-Kelly *et al.*, 1996). Thus, our final hypotheses are:

- H3c(p)*. Powerlessness will mediate the relationship between teachers' perceptions of person-organization (PO) fit and their citizenship behavior directed at their clients or students.
- H3c(m)*. Meaninglessness will mediate the relationship between teachers' perceptions of person-organization (PO) fit and their citizenship behavior directed at their clients or students.

H3c(s). Self-estrangement will mediate the relationship between teachers' perceptions of person-organization (PO) fit and their citizenship behavior directed at their clients or students.

Method

Procedure and sample characteristics

Questionnaires were distributed personally to all teachers in a district high school in the Canary Islands (Spain) in early 2006. The response rate was 63.5 percent (99 out of 156). Completed questionnaires were received until February 20, 2006. The sample comprised 53 percent males and 47 percent females and, while 3 percent were 30 years old or younger, 55 percent were older than 40. With regard to tenure, 36 percent of those responding had less than ten years experience, 50 percent had ten to 20 years experience, and 14 percent had over 20 years experience working at the high school. The sample descriptive structures are quite similar to the population data. The population included 53 percent of teachers having ten to 20 years of experience; 14 percent had over 20 years. According to age, 3 percent were 30 years or younger and 66 percent were older than 40. According to gender, 50 percent were male and 50 percent female.

Measures

All items in this study were scored on a 7-point scale ranging from (1) Strongly Disagree to (7) Strongly Agree; for OCB, from (1) Never to (7) Constantly. Several items were negatively worded and, thus, were reverse coded. Reliability was established by means of Cronbach's alpha. The values are shown on the main diagonal of the correlations table (Table I). All scale items are shown in Table II.

Person-Organization (PO) fit. The study assessed perceived fit. In perceived or direct PO fit, teachers rated their values as similar to those of their school. Perceived fit was measured with the three-item 7-point scale developed by Cable and Judge (1996). The items were worded so that they could be scored on Likert-type scales.

Work alienation. We used Mottaz's (1981) original 21-item scale to assess felt alienation, which includes dimensions of Powerlessness, Meaninglessness, and Self-Estrangement (7-items for each).

Organizational citizenship behavior. We used 15 items (eight for OCBO and seven for OCBIC) of the 16-item scale proposed by Lee and Allen (2002), which they derived from many scales in the literature (e.g., Konovsky and Organ, 1996) to assess OCB. Moreover, we added four items to assess OCBIS, adapted from the Lee and Allen (2002) OCB scale.

We performed a factor analysis (CFA) for all variables to ensure that they were separate constructs by using structural equation modeling (SEM). The fit of the model was assessed using multiple fit indices. Results of CFA, shown in Table II, suggest that the variables are distinct constructs. After the final data were factor analyzed (CFA), several items were dropped since they had insufficient factor loadings (see Table II). Remaining items were averaged to work out correlations.

Results

Table I shows the scale means, standard deviations, reliabilities and correlations (r) between all the research variables. Results of the correlation analysis suggest that most

Variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Perceived PO fit	4.69	1.04	(0.883) [*]						
2. Powerlessness	3.13	1.14	-0.233 ^{**}	(0.820)					
3. Meaninglessness	3.04	0.99	-0.347 ^{***}	0.557 ^{***}	(0.810)				
4. Self-estrangement	3.19	1.20	-0.210 [*]	0.500 ^{***}	0.532 ^{***}	(0.784)			
5. OCB0	5.54	0.87	0.254 [*]	-0.358 ^{***}	-0.594 ^{***}	-0.421 ^{***}	(0.795)		
6. OCB1C	5.18	0.90	0.141	-0.276 ^{**}	-0.489 ^{***}	-0.430 ^{***}	0.546 ^{***}	(0.871)	
7. OCBIS	5.64	0.95	0.264 ^{**}	-0.265 ^{**}	-0.424 ^{***}	-0.356 ^{***}	0.577 ^{***}	0.568 ^{***}	(0.775)

Notes: The numbers in parentheses on the diagonal are coefficient alphas; $N = 99$; * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

Table I.
Means, standard deviations, correlations and reliabilities

Measure		
<i>Perceived person-organization (PO) fit</i>		
X1	My values match those of current in school	0.91
X2	The values and "personality" of this school reflect my own values and personality	0.82
X3	I feel my values "match" or fit this school and the current colleagues in this school	0.80
<i>Powerlessness</i>		
Y1	I have a good deal of freedom in the performance of my daily task	0.88
Y2	I have the opportunity to exercise my own judgment on the job	0.93
Y-	I have little control over how I carry out my daily tasks*	-
Y-	I make most work decisions without first consulting my supervisor*	-
Y-	I am not able to make changes regarding my job activities*	-
Y-	My daily activities are largely determined by others*	-
Y3	I make my own decisions in the performance of my work role	0.60
<i>Meaninglessness</i>		
Y4	My work is a significant contribution to the successful operation of the school	0.63
Y-	Sometimes I am not sure I completely understand the purpose of what I'm doing*	-
Y5	My work is really important and worthwhile	0.60
Y	I often wonder what the importance of my job really is*	-
Y	I often feel that my work counts for very little around here*	-
Y6	I understand how my work role fits into the overall operation of this school	0.87
Y7	I understand how my work fits in with the work of others here	0.79
<i>Self-estrangement</i>		
Y-	I do not feel a sense of accomplishment in the type of work I do*	-
Y-	My salary is the most rewarding aspect of my job*	-
Y8	My work provides me with a sense of personal fulfillment	0.79
Y-	I have little opportunity to use my real abilities and skills in the type of work I do*	-
Y9	My work is a very self-rewarding experience	0.77
Y-	My work is often routine and dull, providing little opportunity for creativity*	-
Y10	My work is interesting and challenging	0.64
<i>OCBO</i>		
Y11	Keep up with developments in the school	0.69
Y-	Defend the school when other colleagues criticize it*	-
Y-	Show pride when representing the school in public*	-
Y12	Offer ideas to improve the functioning of the school	0.60
Y-	Express loyalty toward the school*	-
Y13	Take action to protect the school from potential problems	0.72
Y-	Demonstrate concern about the image of the school*	-
Y14	Attend functions that are not required but that help the school image	0.79
<i>OCBIC</i>		
Y15	Help others who have been absent	0.76
Y16	Willingly give your time to help others who have work-related problems	0.64
Y17	Go out of the way to make newer colleagues feel welcome in the work group	0.76
Y-	Adjust your schedule to accommodate other colleagues' requests for time off*	-
Y18	Give up time to help others who have work or non-work problems	0.82
Y19	Assist others with their duties	0.83
Y-	Share personal property with others to help their work*	-
<i>OCBIS</i>		
Y20	Do my best not to make students wait	0.80
Y21	Be polite and show sincere interest in students even when they are complaining about something	0.85
Y22	Help students with their problems	0.61
Y-	Help students who have justifiably been absent*	-

Table II.
Confirmatory factor
analysis of the variables
of the study

Notes: Cmin = 424.233; df = 254; $p < 0.0001$; Cmin/df = 1.670; CFI = 0.87; NFI = 0.74; GFI = 0.76; RMSEA = 0.083; TLI = 0.85; PGFI = 0.59; PNFI = 0.63; AGFI = 0.69; * Before proceeding to calculate fit indices those items were removed because its loading factor was fewer than 0.60

variables in our study are significantly correlated in the expected directions, and, thus, the proposed WA mediating role receives initial support. Assuming the results in Table I hold after SEM is conducted, we find that:

- PO fit is significantly positively correlated with OCBO ($r = 0.254; p < 0.05$) and OCBIS ($r = 0.264; p < 0.01$), but not with OCBIC ($r = 0.141; p$ n.s.); and
- all three WA dimensions are negatively correlated with OCBO/IC/IS.

SEM was used to test our predictions since it is a powerful tool to analyze causal relationships in non-experimental studies. Figures 2, 3 and 4 are path diagrams that show relationships between the observed variables (survey answers, in rectangles) and the unobserved latent variables (in circles). The items that loaded sufficiently, as provided in the Table II, define the variables of the hypothesized model shown in Figure 3. The various indices used (see Figure 3) show a sufficient fit of this model ($\chi^2 [263, 99] = 523.376$). Support for *H2a*, *H2b* and *H2c* is found (see Figure 3) by the significant link between PO fit and, respectively, powerlessness ($B = -0.418; p < 0.001$), meaninglessness ($B = -0.483; p < 0.001$) and self-estrangement ($B = -0.341; p < 0.01$). To test direct effects of PO fit on OCB we built the model shown in Figure 2. Support for *H1a*, *H1b* and *H1c* is found (see Figure 2) by the significant path between PO fit and OCBO ($B = 0.444; p < 0.001$), OCBIC ($B = 0.268; p < 0.05$) and OCBIS ($B = 0.408; p < 0.001$), respectively.

To test *H3a*, *H3b* and *H3c*, we examined whether the association between PO fit and OCBO/IC/IS is better explained as a fully mediated model than a partially mediated one. With this aim, we conducted a nested models comparison using the sequential chi-square difference test (SCDT). In line with Anderson and Gerbing's (1988) recommendations, the hypothesized model (more constrained), shown in Figure 3, is compared with the saturated alternative (less constrained) in which direct links from

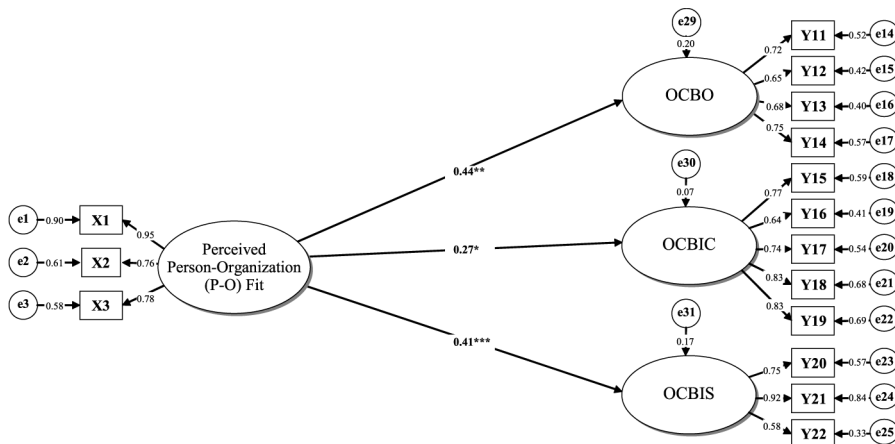


Figure 2. Direct effects model of perceived PO fit on organizational citizenship behavior

Note: * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$. $N = 99$; $Cmin = 243.567$; $df = 87$; $p < 0.0001$; $Cmin/df = 2.800$; $GF1 = 0.75$; $CFI = 0.80$; $IFI = 0.80$; $TLI = 0.75$; $NFI = 0.72$; $RMSEA = 0.136$; $PGFI = 0.547$; $PNFI = 0.545$; $PCFI = 0.659$; $AGFI = 0.657$

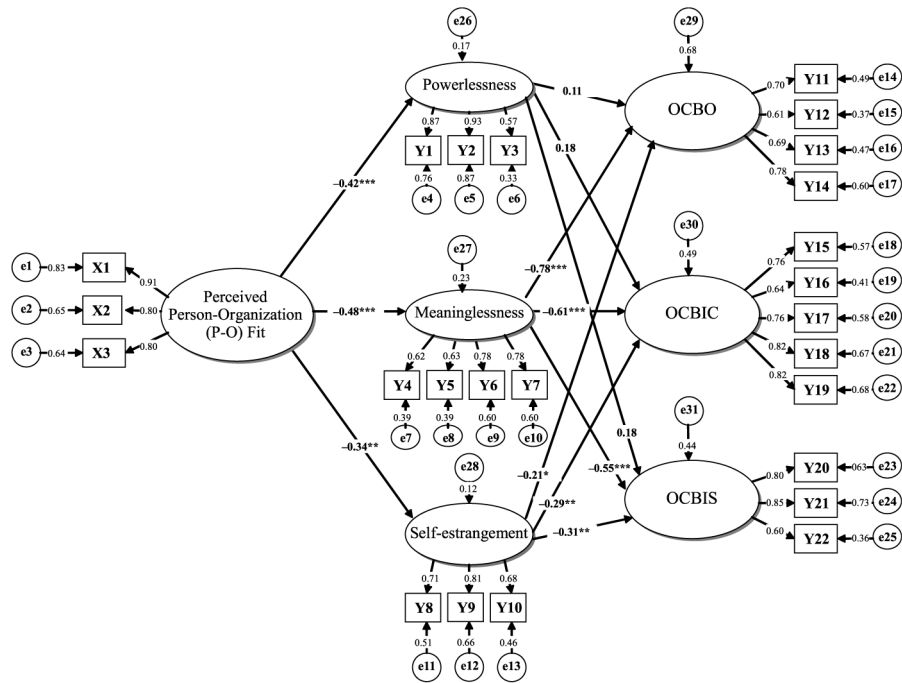


Figure 3.
More constrained model of perceived PO fit, work alienation and organizational citizenship behavior without direct paths from PO fit to OCB

Note: N = 99. * p < 0.05; ** p < 0.01; *** p < 0.001. Cmin = 523.376; df = 263; p < 0.0001; Cmin/df = 1.990; GFI = 0.72; CFI = 0.81; IFI = 0.81; TLI = 0.78; NFI = 0.68; RMSEA = 0.101; PGFI = 0.579; PNFI = 0.597; PCFI = 0.706; AGFI = 0.648

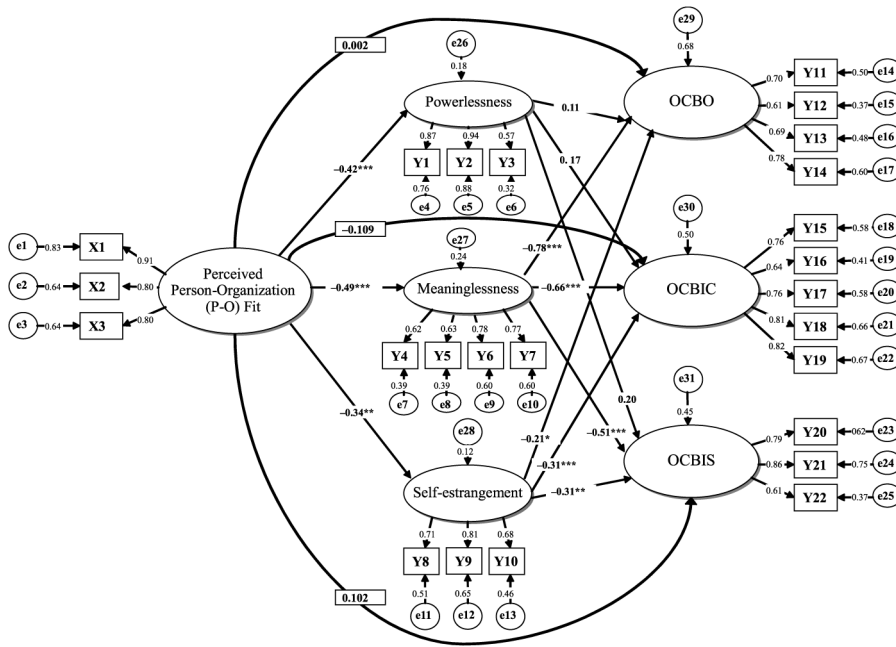
PO fit to each one of the OCB dimensions (see Figure 4) were added. This latter model (see Figure 4) represents the partially mediated model of the effects of PO fit on OCB.

As a complement to SCDT, we also inspected the three Baron and Kenny (1986) conditions for mediation:

- (1) independent variable (PO fit) has to predict the dependent one (OCB);
- (2) the proposed mediator (WA) has to be predicted by the independent variable (PO fit), which predicts the dependent one (OCB); and finally
- (3) the direct path between PO fit and OCB has to decrease (preferably to non-significant: full mediation) when the mediator (WA) is added.

Conditions 1 and 2 are satisfied by the support found for *H1* and *H2*.

In order to lead the comparison between the hypothesized and saturated models, the outputs of both were calculated and they are shown in Figure 3 and 4, respectively. As we can see, the fully mediated model of the PO fit on OCBO/IC/IS – since no direct paths linking PO fit and OCBO/IC/IS are available – showed a better fit than the partially mediated one, especially according to the parsimony fit indices. In effect, according to the fit indices provided, the fully mediated model shows a better fit in referring to PGFI (parsimony goodness-of-fit index), PCFI (parsimony comparative fit index), PNFI (parsimony normed fit index), and AGFI (adjusted goodness of fit index),



Note: N = 99. * p < 0.05; ** p < 0.01; *** p < 0.001. Cmin = 521.449; df = 260; p < 0.0001; Cmin/df = 2.006; GFI = 0.72; CFI = 0.81; IFI = 0.81; TLI = 0.78; NFI = 0.68; RMSEA = 0.101; PGFI = 0.572; PNFI = 0.591; PCFI = 0.697; AGFI = 0.643

Figure 4. Less constrained model of perceived PO fit, work alienation and organizational citizenship behavior in which direct paths from PO Fit to OCB dimensions were added

given that the fully mediated model's parsimony is stronger. The RMSEA (root-mean-square error of approximation) index is equal. This situation occurs even though the partially mediated model is less constrained, given that it includes three direct paths through which PO fit could show direct influences on OCBO/IC/IS. In effect, SEM did not find significant effects in those direct paths, not from PO fit to OCBO ($B = 0.002$; $p = 0.989$) or from PO fit to OCBIC ($B = -0.109$; $p = 0.396$), or from PO fit to OCBIS either ($B = 0.102$; $p = 0.446$) (see Figure 4). When WA dimensions are added, they carry the weight of the link given that the direct paths linking PO fit with OCBO/IC/IS (see Figure 2) are no longer significant (see Figure 4). Thus, this pattern fulfills Baron and Kenny's (1986) third condition.

The change in chi-square of the hypothesized model as compared with the saturated one is 1.927 for 3 degrees of freedom ($\chi^2_{df=3} = 1.927$; $df_d = 3$). Given the rule of thumb that a change in chi-square divided by the change in degrees of freedom should be at least 2, the change in chi-square test does not provide a significant change, but it is still worth considering. Thus, these patterns in general are partially supportive of our hypothesized model (full mediation) as the best-fitting model and allow us also to accept *H3* as a whole.

To seek support for the sub-hypotheses contained in general *H3*, we tested nine partial SEM sub-models where the PO fit-OCBO/IC/IS links are analyzed for each of the three WA dimensions separately (see Table III). The various indices used to test the fit of the fully mediated sub-models (in which direct paths were added), corresponding to

Table III.
Chi-square and fit index comparison of the fully and partially mediated sub-models of the effects of PO fit on employees' OCB

SUB-MODEL	A direct path is added linking POfit and OCB?	χ^2	df	CFI	GFI	RMSEA	PGFI	PNFI	AGFI
PO fit/Powerlessness/OCBO(p)	Yes (B = 0.229; $p = 0.063$)* No**#	71.388 (s.)	32	0.92	0.87	0.112	0.508	0.613	0.781
PO Fit/Powerlessness/OCBIC(p)	Yes (B = 0.093; $p = 0.435$)* No**#	74.569 (s.) 77.561 (s.)	33 41	0.91 0.94	0.87 0.87	0.113 0.095	0.523 0.540	0.627 0.654	0.786 0.790
PO Fit/Powerlessness/OCBIS(p)	Yes (B = 0.272; $p = 0.026$)* No**#	78.147 ($p = 0.001$) 55.396 (s.)	42 24	0.94 0.93	0.87 0.89	0.094 0.116	0.553 0.473	0.669 0.590	0.795 0.789
PO Fit/Meaninglessness/OCBO(m)	Yes (B = 0.080; $p = 0.468$)* No**#	60.166 (s.) 71.716 ($p = 0.002$)	25 41	0.92 0.94	0.89 0.88	0.120 0.087	0.492 0.549	0.607 0.646	0.793 0.813
PO Fit/Meaninglessness/OCBIC(m)	Yes (B = -0.034; $p = 0.764$)* No**#	72.189 ($p = 0.003$) 103.594 (s.)	42 51	0.94 0.91	0.89 0.86	0.086 0.103	0.563 0.564	0.661 0.654	0.820 0.789
PO Fit/Meaninglessness/OCBIS(m)	Yes (B = 0.198; $p = 0.104$)* No**#	103.683 (s.) 58.263 ($p = 0.002$)	52 32	0.92 0.94	0.86 0.90	0.101 0.092	0.575 0.522	0.667 0.626	0.793 0.822
PO Fit/Self-estrangement/OCBO(s)	Yes (B = 0.223; $p = 0.054$)* No**#	60.657 ($p = 0.002$) 67.402 (s.)	33 32	0.94 0.91	0.90 0.88	0.092 0.106	0.538 0.514	0.642 0.606	0.827 0.801
PO Fit/Self-estrangement/OCBIC(s)	Yes (B = 0.050; $p = 0.646$)* No**#	70.810 (s.) 81.366 (s.)	33 41	0.91 0.92	0.88 0.87	0.108 0.100	0.529 0.542	0.619 0.642	0.802 0.795
PO Fit/Self-estrangement/OCBIS(s)	Yes (B = 0.222; $p = 0.048$)* No**#	81.538 (s.) 38.091 ($p = 0.034$) 41.906 ($p = 0.018$)	42 24 25	0.93 0.96 0.96	0.87 0.92 0.92	0.098 0.077 0.083	0.555 0.493 0.509	0.657 0.604 0.623	0.799 0.857 0.850

Notes: (s.) Chi-square is significant at $p < 0.001$ level; * The betas and significance levels of the direct paths between PO fit and OCB are shown in parentheses. Although SEM "offers" this saturated sub-model the possibility that PO fit hacks paths directly to OCB, they are not significant; ** According to fit indices provided, this fully mediated sub-model (less constrained) shows a better fit than its saturated alternative, in referring to PGFI (parsimony goodness-of-fit index), PNFI (parsimony normed fit index), and AGFI (adjusted goodness of fit index) parsimony fit indices, which are in general stronger. If the difference in chi-square divided by the change in degrees of freedom is at least 2, the change in chi-square test provides a significant difference

OCBO(p) and OCBIC(p), show better fit than the saturated ones (see fit indices in Table III). Moreover, these direct paths from PO fit to OCBO(p) ($B = 0.229$; p n.s) and to OCBIC(p) ($B = 0.093$; p n.s), when powerlessness mediates, are no longer significant (see Table III). The change in the chi-square test provides a significant change in the case of OCBO(p) ($\chi^2_d = 3.181$; $df_d = 1$) but not in the case of OCBIC(p) ($\chi^2_d = 0.586$; $df_d = 1$). Hence, $H3a(p)$ is supported but $H3b(p)$ is only partially supported. Moreover, the worse fit and non-significant direct paths in models when meaninglessness partially mediates [$B = 0.080$; p n.s, in OCBO(m); $B = -0.034$; p n.s, in OCBIC(m); and $B = 0.198$; p n.s., in OCBIS(m)] support $H3a(m)$, $H3b(m)$ and $H3c(m)$. This support is salient in the case of OCBIS(m) – $H3c(m)$ – while the change in chi-square is significant ($\chi^2_d = 2.394$; $df_d = 1$). Support for $H3a(s)$ and $H3b(s)$, when self-estrangement mediates, is found by the non-significance of the direct paths added – namely, $B = 0.223$; p n.s, in OCBO(s); $B = 0.050$; p n.s, in OCBIC(s) – but not by the change in chi-square (see Table III).

In contrast to the above hypotheses in which “full mediation” is totally or partially supported – given that the direct paths were never significant – $H3c(p)$ and $H3c(s)$ perform as a “partial mediation.” In effect, given that in the case of OCBIS(p) and OCBIS(s) the direct paths decrease but not as far as to non-significant ($B = 0.272$; $p = 0.26$; $B = 0.222$; $p = 0.48$), they offer total support [$\chi^2_d = 4.770$, $df_d = 1$, in OCBIS(p); and $\chi^2_d = 3.815$, $df_d = 1$, in OCBIS(s)] but only as partial mediations.

Discussion

The aim of this study was to test the usefulness of a three-dimensional construct of WA to further explain how employee's PO fit elicits OCB. We analyzed whether PO fit affects OCBO/IC/IS by influencing the employee's level of WA, and whether that sense of alienation prompts reciprocation with OCB. This mediating role of work alienation in organizations is generally supported by the results.

Implications for research and management practice

This study offers organizational, psycho-sociological, and management implications that could enhance both research and management practice in organizations. First, prior studies of alienation and its implications for human behavior at a sociological level have given solid results (Menard, 1995). However, the study of alienation in organizations has been relatively scarce. In addition, workplace studies have typically paid little, if any, attention to the outcomes of alienation and have, instead, focused primarily on its causes. Specifically, research on alienation has focused on its nature and sources (Mottaz, 1981), such as organizational leadership (Sarros *et al.*, 2002), work centralization, work formalization, and work technology (Aiken and Hage, 1966; Kakabadse, 1986; Leiter, 1985; Zeffane and Macdonald, 1993). In their recent study, Pugh and Zhao (2003) insisted on focusing on WA antecedents when they examined both a lack of egalitarian employee culture and conflict. In the same way, Weiss (1999) analyzed employees' perceptions of workplace conditions.

Unlike prior research, we have studied alienation to investigate its impact on employee organizational citizenship behavior. OCB is not just one more example of employee behavior without management repercussions, but it promotes important benefits for organizational performance. Therefore, our findings place work alienation firmly in the organizational analysis literature because they add support to the idea

that work alienation – beyond a discussion of its organizational causes – is capable of influencing employee behavior inside organizations. Without finding this WA impact on work behavior, our respondents' alienation might otherwise have been caused by their organizations, but these sentiments are directed at their behavior outside work. In this case, Seeman's alienation facets would be assessing one more organizational cause of a sociological phenomenon. In this view, we think our results contribute to furthering organizational scholarship by the acceptance of WA as a useful construct in the existing organizational analysis and management literature.

One of the practical implications of our study is the awareness that the workplace is where we find the keys to managing PO misfit and OCB occurrence. OCB is elicited because PO fit generates a situation wherein the employee, according to Karl Marx, "has lost control over the product and process of his labor," and hence the capacity for self-expression at work. In turn, this context of alienation prompts employees to reciprocate with less OCB. According to our results, this situation is primarily caused by a general value maladjustment in the organization, but it is finally the result of a sentiment closely linked to employee tasks and context in the workplace. But where does this discussion lead us concerning practical implications?

Since organizational values and norms are set by supervisors (Greenberg, 1990; Tyler and Bies, 1990; Bies and Moag, 1986), their leadership can play an important role in influencing employees' perceptions about the organization (see also Aquino *et al.*, 1999). If leaders of organizations are positively evaluated by the employees, it will be easier for them to "give things of value to followers [employees], such as sense of direction, values, and recognition, and receive other things in return such as esteem and responsiveness" (Hollander, 1987, p. 16). On the contrary, position power may erode PO value congruence (Huey, 1994), and thus leadership may contribute to a lack of control on the WA and its diluting consequences on OCB in the organization.

In this way, WA naturally points to the criterion that should be followed: *Supervisors should provide employee work conditions consistent with human needs, thereby diluting alienation and cultivating a context in which employee citizenship behavior, and associated performance, is encouraged.* Specifically, what arrangements can be made to ensure employee work conditions are in harmony with human needs? How can loss of employee control over product and labor process be avoided, and, hence, the employee's capacity for self-expression at work? Our findings concerning the WA mediation role should provide supervisors and managers with useful practices towards this objective. Understanding how PO fit influences OCB suggests that:

- Actions designed to achieve PO fit may be useful to manage employee work alienation (WA) by providing norms that fit the underlying principles of the workplace. On this basis, we stress that a preventive anti-WA strategy should strengthen healthy employee reciprocal behavior in favor of the organization, and, hence, OCB in the workplace. This objective should include the encouragement of real – and tested – positive work arrangements, such as implementing healthy procedures and processes, no matter how small. The proper amount of influence would be stated.
- Since WA may be a consequence of the employee's belief in values embedded in formal regulations, it could promote positive employer-worker agreements concerning work procedures and processes. This policy of agreement may favor subjective perceptions of PO fit and satisfaction with jobs which, in turn, may

inspire efficient citizenship behavior patterns. In effect, employees would be expected to be more willing to forgive workplace deficiencies when employees have a say in decision making.

In many organizations, *human resource management* (HRM) is mainly responsible for employee satisfaction and motivation. To achieve these aims, HRM must not only employ a traditional approach but also regulate the organization's norms and values in order to exercise control over WA. In this respect, we should affirm our personal support for organizational learning as another tool to integrate that "knowledge" and achieve those behavioral improvements in members of the organization. In effect, knowledge is something more than mere data or information flow charged with data (Davenport and Prusak, 1998); it is a framework of the individual's experiences, values, information and "know-how" that permits both the accumulation of new knowledge and an effective personal action against WA.

This study suggests questions that remain open to future research. The literature contains numerous proposals that the perception of unfairness leads an employee to desire the restoration of justice, which in turn makes one engage in retributive actions against the perceived perpetrator. Hence, could organizational justice mediate links between teachers' PO fit and their OCB and/or their counterproductive workplace behavior (CWB) as an alternative extra-role or non-task behavior? Could WA affect teacher's CWB and mediate the relationship between PO misfit and CWB? Could a WA teacher constitute a "culture medium" to retributive attitudes against OCB in the face of an unfair organization?

Finally, we believe that this study has several inherent weaknesses. First, the study could suffer from mono-method/source bias. Second, the state school researched has certain job conditions that are often inherent to the peculiarities of workers in the public sector. For instance, bureaucracy in the public sector is generally higher than in the private sector in the Canary Islands, which could present a different picture of normative values. The performance of the constructs used in the present research, as well as their implications, therefore, could vary. Finally, the data set provided a limited population, raising concerns about the generalizability of the findings. A study of teachers in one high school in Spain may have limited relevance to other geographical contexts and organizational settings.

In conclusion, the results of this research suggest that work alienation (WA) is a mediator in the relationship between PO value fit and OCB. As a mediator, WA is mainly responsible for the PO fit predictions on OCB and opens a new area of organizational analysis and management practices in the workplace. The mechanism appears to be that perceptions of PO fit affect the degree to which employees feel alienated, and, thus, they are more likely to retaliate by decreasing their OCB. This WA explanation of the PO value fit effects on OCB suggests that managers should pay greater attention to the values that are expressed in the workplace when dealing with employee detachment. In so doing, managers can reduce work alienation and encourage what Organ (1988) calls "good soldiers" in the workplace.

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