

**PERSON-ORGANIZATION FIT, OCB AND PERFORMANCE: AN EMPIRICAL  
INVESTIGATION IN THE SPANISH SALES CONTEXT**

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# **PERSON-ORGANIZATION FIT, OCB AND PERFORMANCE: AN EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION IN THE SPANISH SALES CONTEXT**

## **ABSTRACT**

Despite the considerable research about the influence of Organizational Citizenship Behaviours (OCB) on important managerial decisions, in the selling context little is known about the process of this influence. Researchers have also noticed the need to investigate in deep the causal relations among different antecedents of extra-role behaviours. In this study we propose and test a model that considers several affective factors that might influence the development of OCB by the salespeople; as well as the influence of this extra-role behaviour on the supervisor's rating of the salesperson's performance. Data collected from 122 sales agents and their managers from 35 firms confirmed that person-organization fit has a positive effect on OCB through the impact on the salesperson's job satisfaction. In addition, organizational commitment and job satisfaction are confirmed as two important affective antecedents of OCB. The results also supported the positive effect of this type of extra-role behaviour on the supervisor's rating of the sales agent's performance, both directly and indirectly through the impact on supervisor's affect towards the seller. Some implications of this study and directions for future research are also addressed.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Theories of person-environment interaction have been prevalent in the management literature for almost 100 years (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). In words of Schneider (2001, p. 141): "Of all the issues in psychology that have fascinated scholars and practitioners alike, none has been more pervasive than the ones concerning the fit of person and environment".

Person-organization (PO) fit, as the compatibility between people and entire organizations, is a type of person-environment interaction which is especially important for salespeople. There is evidence that perceptions of PO fit are important predictors of job-satisfaction, stress and intentions to leave the organization (Lovelace and Rosen, 1996). It has been suggested that the selling job puts the salesperson in a boundary role position that is

filled sometimes with uncertainty and interpersonal conflict; in addition to this, the salespeople's performance is very visible what adds to their role stress (Dubinsky et al., 1986).

Considering the evidence that PO fit results in increased levels of well-being and decreased levels of stress (French et al., 1982), the congruence between individual and organizational values might be critical in the selling context. Another aspect that makes PO fit especially important for salespeople is the evidence that individuals who obtain less direct feed-back, overtime, perceive that they fit less well with their organization (Lovelace and Rosen, 2001). Considering the specific nature of the sales role, obtaining feed-back is not always easy for the salespeople. Still, research about PO fit in the sales context is scarce (Netemeyer et al., 1997). Besides, most of these studies (e.g. Netemeyer et al., 1997) considered only one firm; what is a matter of concern taking into consideration the evidence that the nature of the sales situation can affect the strength of the relationship between predictor and performance (Churchill et al., 1985; Dubinsky et al., 1986).

Extra-role performance, which includes organizational citizenship behaviours (OCB), refers to discretionary behaviours (i.e. sportsmanship, civic virtue, and helping behaviour) on the part of the salesperson that are not objectively related to his/her sales productivity (Podsakoff et al., 1998). Even though OCB are not part of individual's assigned duties, they are still beneficial to the organization, its members and the employees themselves (Diefendorff et al., 2002). In the sales context, it has been demonstrated that OCB have a strong, positive, and consistent effect on the evaluation of the salesperson's performance, in several contexts (MacKenzie et al., 1999; Podsakoff and MacKenzie, 1994). For example, MacKenzie et al., (1993) found that various combinations of OCB were more important than sales productivity in determining sales managers' ratings of salespeople. Furthermore, it has been noted that sales force management would be a more difficult task without salespeople engaging in OCB (Netemeyer et al., 1997). One of the arguments used to explain the influence of organizational citizenship behaviour on performance evaluation lies in the mediating effect of affective variables (Podsakoff and MacKenzie, 1994). According to this idea, employees that engage in these behaviours will be rewarded with the positive liking of their supervisors (Lefkowitz, 2000). Despite these arguments, there is still the need to empirically confirm them in the sales context.

Concerning the relationship between PO fit and OCB, it has been suggested that the effect that person-organization fit has on OCB is likely indirect through PO fit's impact on job

satisfaction (Van Dyne et al., 1994). It has been noted also that direct effects of other variables on OCB are sales situation specific and that other mediators besides job satisfaction might exist (Netemeyer et al., 1997; Podsakoff et al., 1990). One macromotive that researchers have underlined as a potential mediator of this relationship is organizational commitment (Menguc, 2000). This affective variable is especially important in the sales context. As Michaels et al., (1988) have confirmed salespeople show higher levels of organizational commitment than those reported for professional and non-professional employee groups by Mowday et al., (1979). In the same sense, Pierce and Dunham (1987) observed that organizational commitment is an important behavioural variable for employees in jobs that are more complex, involve a task-initiating structure, and are high in effort-to – performance expectancy. As Sager and Johnston (1989) suggested, sales jobs correspond closely with Pierce and Dunham’s (1987) profile.

The present paper seeks to fill some of the gaps noted above. *Firstly*, this study seeks to enhance understanding of the perceptual determinants of salespeople’s OCB by evaluating the indirect influence of person-organization fit on OCB through the effects on job satisfaction and organizational commitment. In addition to this, the literature about PO fit has confirmed that there are some demographic characteristics that might act as antecedents of this construct. For instance, it has been suggested that women may perceived that they fit less with the organization than men (Lovelace and Rosen, 2001). This result might be even more accused in the sales profession, as the industrial sales positions are traditionally occupied by men. By analyzing these differences among the salespeople in our study we will try as well to address the recommendation made by the literature about the need to compare different occupational groups in order to make the conclusions more generalized (Lovelace and Rosen, 2001). *Secondly*, we will try to analyse the effects of OCB on performance, directly and indirectly through supervisor’s affect towards the salesperson. *Finally*, this study will intend to shed some light on the traditional debate about the relationship between job satisfaction and performance, by proposing the mediating effect of OCB in the relationship between these two variables.

The use of a sample composed by 35 different enterprises pertaining to 9 sectors of activity will be useful for the generalization of the results obtained here and in previous research. In addition to this and taking into consideration that most of the literature on OCB, job satisfaction, organizational commitment and PO fit is US-centred, the fact that data was

gathered in Spain might provide an insight as to generalization of these behaviours and job attitudes to other countries and cultures.

## **2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND DEVELOPMENT OF HYPOTHESIS**

### **2.1 Person-organization (PO) fit**

The term “person-organization (PO) fit” has been used to describe the congruence between individual and organizational goals; individual preferences or needs and organizational systems or structures; and individual personality and organizational climate (Kristof, 1996).

Beginning with Tom’s (1971) suggestion that individuals will be most successful in organizations that share their personalities, research has emphasized individual-organizational similarity as the crux of PO fit (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). Some research has followed Tom’s (1971) operationalization of PO fit as personality-climate congruence (e.g. Christiansen et al., 1997; Ryan and Schmitt, 1996); however, the bulk of PO fit research has been concerned with the similarity between individual and organizational values, or person-culture fit (Cable and Judge, 1996, 1997; Chatman, 1991; Meglino and Ravlin, 1998; O’Reilly et al., 1991). In particular, the work of Chatman and her colleagues stands out from most other work on value congruence in measuring actual or objective fit, rather than perceived fit (Parkes et al., 2001). Chatman demonstrated that value congruence between individuals and organizations can predict outcomes such as adjustment, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, intent to stay, tenure, and turnover after two years (Chatman, 1991; O’Reilly et al., 1991).

Concerning the influence of demographic variables in the perception of PO fit, it has been suggested that many women might perceive that they fit less well in a predominantly white male environment than do their male colleagues, because they have different outside interests, different definitions of appropriate work-family balance (Schwartz, 1989), different communication styles (Tannen, 1990) and different definitions of career success (Miguel, 1993). It has been suggested as well that women might perceive also a poor organizational fit based on slower organizational advancement (Lovelace and Rosen, 1996). In this sense, research on the career experiences of female has documented that they encounter greater difficulty advancing than do males (Jones, 1986; Morrison and Von Glinow, 1990). Taking into consideration this evidence and the fact that sales positions have been traditionally

occupied by men, we expect that saleswomen will perceived less PO fit than their male colleagues. Thus, hypothesis one is formulated as follows:

*H<sub>1</sub>: Saleswomen will perceive less PO fit than salesmen.*

### ***PO fit and job satisfaction***

Job satisfaction is conceptualized as both affect-and cognition-based, with definitions ranging from a “positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one’s job or job experiences” (Locke, 1976, p. 1300), to “all characteristics of the job itself and the work environment which salespeople find rewarding, fulfilling, and satisfying, or frustrating and unsatisfying “(Churchill et al., 1974, p. 255).

PO fit theory suggests that shared values between individual persons and organizations lead to job satisfaction for the person and favourable outcomes toward achieving organizational goals (Chatman, 1991). Support is found in the organizational behaviour literature for the effect of PO fit on job satisfaction (e.g. Kristof-Brown et al., 2005; Kristof, 1996). The sales literature also confirms that “value congruence” is antecedent to job satisfaction (Brown y Peterson, 1993; Churchill et al., 1985; O’Reilly et al., 1991). Sales force socialization theory suggests that internalisation of organizational values has positive effects on job satisfaction, which in turn affects the performance of non selling behaviours that benefit the organization (Dubinsky et al., 1986). Thus, we formulate hypothesis two as follows:

*H<sub>2</sub>: The salesperson’s perception of person-organization fit will have a positive influence on the salesperson’s job satisfaction*

### ***PO fit and organizational commitment***

Organizational commitment is characterized by an individual’s identifying with the organization’s goals and values, a willingness to put forth effort for the organization, and a desire to remain in the employ of the organization (Sager and Johnsnton, 1989). It has been

suggested that organizational commitment is a promising construct for sales force research because it encompasses positive traits, among them loyalty and involvement.

Concerning the relationship between PO fit and organizational commitment, it has been demonstrated that individuals who perceive a congruence between their personal values and the values of their organization experience higher levels of organizational commitment (Valentine et al., 2002). The recent meta-analysis conducted by Kristof-Brown et al., (2005) confirmed this approach by concluding that PO fit had strong correlations with organizational commitment. Thus, we formulate hypothesis three on these terms:

*H<sub>3</sub>: The salesperson's perception of PO fit will have a positive influence on the salesperson's organizational commitment.*

### ***Organizational commitment and job satisfaction***

O'Reilly and Caldwell (1981) and Pierce and Dunham (1987) posit that affective commitment first surfaces as an employee makes a job choice. This is a pre-employment disposition. The literature argues that when this predisposition reflects relatively lower affective commitment to an organization, job satisfaction will be lower. Correspondingly, if the pre-employment disposition exhibits a relatively strong commitment to the job, high job satisfaction will ensue (Bhuiyan and Menguc, 2002). This hypothesis is empirically supported by a number of studies (Bateman and Strasser, 1984; Hunt et al., 1985; Kacmar et al., 1999). An aspect of special concern about these studies is the presence of longitudinal analyses (i.e. Bateman and Strasser, 1984) and that some of them use samples composed by salespeople from different countries (i.e. Bhuiyan and Menguc, 2002; with salespeople from Saudi Arabia or Coelho et al., 2005; with customer contact employees from Portugal)<sup>1</sup>.

Concerning the marketing literature, there is ample evidence supporting the main effect of organizational commitment on job satisfaction (Bateman and Strasser, 1984; Hunt et al., 1985; Steers, 1977; Still, 1983; Wiener, 1982; Wiener and Vardi, 1980).

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<sup>1</sup> Although literature has evidence for the direct effect of job satisfaction on organizational commitment (Bhuiyan and Menguc, 2002), job satisfaction is often considered a cause of organizational commitment, assuming that an employee's orientation towards a certain job precedes the orientation towards an entire organization (Currivan, 1999). However, the studies that have supported these assumptions have essentially a cross sectional nature, which curtails inferences over causation; in addition to this, they have been conducted within the US context.

*H<sub>4</sub>: The salesperson's organizational commitment will have a positive influence on the salesperson's job satisfaction.*

## **2.2 Organizational citizenship behaviours (OCB)**

In recent years, researchers have recognized the importance of distinguishing between in-role (e.g. sales volume, commissions, percent of quota) and extra-role (e.g. organizational citizenship behaviours, prosocial behaviours) aspects of performance. The forms of extra-role performance that have received the most attention in the marketing (MacKenzie et al., 1993; MacKenzie et al., 1998; Netemeyer et al., 1997; Podsakoff and MacKenzie, 1994) and management (Bateman and Organ, 1983; Moorman, 1991; Organ and Ryan, 1995 ) literature are OCB.

Organizational citizenship behaviours (OCB), concerns discretionary behaviours (i.e. sportsmanship, civic virtue, and helping behaviour) on the part of the salesperson that are not objectively related to his/her sales productivity (Podakoff et al., 1998). OCB are defined as behaviours that a) are above and beyond those formally outlined in the job description; b) are non-compulsory; c) are not compensated by the organization's reward system; and d) are important to the organization successful performance (Organ, 1988).

Sportsmanship is a willingness on the part of a salesperson to tolerate less-than ideal circumstances without "complaining...railing against real or imagined slights, and making federal cases out of small potatoes" (Organ, 1988, p. 11). Civic virtue is behaviour that indicates the salesperson responsibly participates in, and is concerned about, the life of the company (e.g. attending meetings or functions that are not required but htat help the company, keeping up with changes in the organization, taking the initiative to recommend how company operations or procedures can be improved) (MacKenzie et al., 1998). Finally, helping behaviour is a composite of several types of citizenship behaviour-altruism, courtesy, peacekeeping, and cheerleading- identified by Organ (1988, 1990) that share the theme of helping coworkers solve or avoid work-related problems.

### ***Job satisfaction and OCB***

The significant relationship between *OCB and job satisfaction* has been highly consistent over the organizational literature (Organ, 1988; Organ and Konovsky 1989; Organ



and Ryan, 1995; Podsakoff et al., 1993; Podsakoff et al., 1990; Smith et al., 1983; Van Dyne et al., 1994). In the selling context it has been suggested its importance as an antecedent of OCB (MacKenzie et al., 1993; Podsakoff et al., 1990) and empirically tested (Netemeyer et al., 1997).

Several theoretical explanations are offered for the relationship between job satisfaction and OCB, including social exchange theory (Konovsky and Pugh, 1994) and psychological contract theory (Robinson and Morrison, 1995). A central aspect to most of these theories is the “norm of reciprocity” (Netemeyer et al., 1997). An employee satisfied with his or her job will engage in OCB as reciprocation for those who have benefited him or her (Bateman and Organ, 1983; Schnake, 1991). The theoretical and empirical evidence confirms that job satisfaction predicts OCB (Niehoff and Moorman, 1993; Organ, 1988; Organ and Ryan, 1995; Schnake, 1991; Smith et al., 1983).

In a sales setting, MacKenzie et al., (1993) and Podsakoff et al., (1990) have suggested to examine job satisfaction as a potential antecedent of OCB. The studies conducted by Netemeyer et al., (1997) and MacKenzie et al., (1998) demonstrated support for the role of job satisfaction as a predictor of OCB in the sales context. Taking into consideration this evidence, we state hypothesis five as follows:

*H<sub>5</sub>: The salesperson’s job satisfaction will have a positive influence on OCB.*

### ***Organizational commitment and OCB***

Organizational commitment is a variable of an affective nature which maintains with the extra-role behaviours a similar relationship as job satisfaction. Mowday et al., (1982, p. 27) noted that those who were committed to the organization were “willing to give something of themselves in order to contribute to the organization’s wellbeing”. In addition, Brief and Motowidlo (1986) in their review of the literature on extrarole behaviour, argue that the components of commitment are predictive of prosocial or citizenship behaviour.

The empirical evidence confirms this statement, both in the management (Organ and Ryan, 1995; Podsakoff et al., 2000) and in the sales (MacKenzie et al., 1998) literature. Thus, we expect OCB to be a consequence of organizational commitment and we formulate hypothesis six as follows:

*H<sub>6</sub>: The salesperson's organizational commitment will have a positive influence on OCB.*

### ***OCB, liking and performance***

A literature review reveals that supervisors' positive affective regard for subordinates is associated frequently with higher performance appraisal ratings, and with other findings such as greater halo, reduced accuracy, a better interpersonal relationship, and a disinclination to punish poor performance (Lefkowitz, 2000). De Nisi and Williams (1988) stated that affect influences the processing of performance information, and Isen and Baron (1991) shed light on this suggestion in their conceptualization of positive affect and its role in organizational settings. They argued that positive affect facilitates the recall of information stored in memory that possesses a positive affective tone. Thus, positive affect toward a subordinate should result in a supervisor's recalling more positive performance-related behaviours and evaluative impressions, which should lead to the supervisor's rating the subordinate's performance highly. Moreover, it is not an isolated effect. French and Raven (1959) described it as a form of reference power; while Tedeschi and Melburg (1984) pointed out that "on a long term basis there are many potential gains for the liked person, including better communication, trust and ability to influence". These statements suggest that liked can lead to biased performance ratings. Empirical support has been found for Liden and Mitchel proposition that affect plays a critical role in the type of exchange that develops between supervisor and subordinate (Ferris et al. 1994; Judge and Ferris 1993; Wayne and Ferris 1990; Wayne and Liden 1995).

In the selling context, the studies conducted by DeCarlo and Leigh (1996) and Strauss et al., (2001) stand out. In both cases, the relationship between supervisor's liking of the sales agent and performance rating was positive and significant.

Concerning the conceptualization of the variable, De Carlo and Leigh (1996) studied in deep its nature and distinguished two different dimensions of the supervisor's liking of a subordinate: (1) task attraction; concerning how desirable the salesperson was as a colleague, implying the existence of mutual confidence, efficiency concerning work relationship and quality in the communication; and (2) social attraction; concerning how desirable the salesperson was as a friend and social colleague. This second dimension which is similar to the concept of affect used in similar investigations in the organizational context (Wayne and Liden, 1995) is the one we use in this study.

*H<sub>7</sub>: A supervisor's affect towards the salesperson will positively influence the supervisor's rating of the salesperson's performance.*

Concerning the relationship between OCB and performance, studies on performance evaluation conclude that many managers take as reference the objective productivity – for example the sales volume achieved – as the main indicator of the overall performance of subordinates such as salespeople. However, this is not usually the only factor considered. There is evidence that supervisors also implicitly consider organisational citizenship behaviour when evaluating the overall performance of their employees. This behaviour consequently affects their decisions *vis-à-vis* promotion, training and compensation (Organ, 1995; Park and Sims, 1989; Podsakoff *et al.* 2000).

Among the research carried out involving sales forces, the work of MacKenzie *et al.* (1991, 1993), MacKenzie *et al.* (1999) and Podsakoff and MacKenzie (1994) stand out. These authors demonstrate that organisational citizenship behaviour has a strong, positive and consistent effect on the evaluation of salesperson performance in very varied contexts (insurance, petrochemical products and pharmaceuticals). Thus, we propose:

*H<sub>8</sub>: OCB will be positively related to supervisor ratings of the salesperson's performance.*

Podsakoff *et al.* (1993) have argued that supervisors like employees who engage in OCB because such behaviors tend to make a manager's job easier. Not surprisingly, then, previous investigations have demonstrated that those who engage in OCB are typically seen as more likeable by their supervisors (Allen and Rush, 1998). Thus, we formulate hypothesis nine as follows:

*H<sub>9</sub>: OCB will be positively related to supervisor's liking of the sales agent.*

[Take in Figure 1]

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

#### **Sample**

Data were collected from sales supervisors and industrial salespeople working for 35 different companies located in Spain. The companies represented a variety of industries, including pharmaceuticals (30%), insurance (14%), banking (14%), and wholesaling (12.3%). A total of 240 pairs of questionnaires were distributed. After the elimination of surveys with severe missing data, 122 pairs of questionnaires were obtained, yielding a response rate of 50.8 percent.

The structure of the organizations did not permit a single supervisor for each employee. In our study, then, the number of subordinates for any given supervisor ranged from one to three. Specifically, there were 68 supervisors and 122 employees, for a total of 122 supervisor-subordinate dyads. Of the subordinates, 69 percent were men and 31 percent were women. The mean age of the subordinates was 37.9 years; and the mean organizational tenure was 8.6 years. Of the supervisors, 81 percent were men and 19 percent were women. The mean age of the supervisors was 43 years; their mean organizational tenure was 14 years, and their mean tenure working as supervisors was 11.3 years.

#### **Measures**

The survey instrument employed in this study was developed in English and then underwent a back-translation process. The items were first translated into Spanish and then back translated into English. This translation procedure is consistent with the framework established by Brislin (1980) in regards to the equivalence of language translations. Once the translation process was completed, pilot tests were conducted to ensure the accuracy of the survey translation. Pre-test of all the measurement items was conducted in two different steps: firstly, several experts were asked to examine the questionnaire in order to identify those items that might be confused or difficult to answer; as well as any other problem concerning the survey; secondly, we conducted a test of content validity using supervisors and sales agents pertaining to three enterprises from different sectors (machinery, pharmaceuticals and insurance).

Organizational citizenship behaviour. Supervisor ratings of employee OCB were obtained using a measure developed by Podsakoff and MacKenzie (1994). Their 14-item

scale measures different types of organizational citizenship, including helping, civic virtue, and sportsmanship. Supervisors were asked to rate the OCB of their subordinates using a seven-point scale ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (7) strongly agree. Sample items are: “Willingly gives of his or her time to help other agents who have work-related problems,” “Attends functions that are not required but help the agency/company image,” and “Consumes a lot of time complaining about trivial matters” (reverse-scored). Based on the recommendations of LePine et al., (2002), these items were aggregated to create an overall measure of OCB. Cronbach’s alpha for this scale was .87.

Supervisor liking. Supervisor liking of the subordinate was measured with a three-item measure developed by Wayne and Liden (1995). Sample items are: “I like him/her very much as a person” and “I think he/she would make a good friend.” Responses for these items were made on a seven-point scale ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (7) strongly agree. Cronbach’s alpha for the scale was .91.

Performance ratings. Employee performance was measured with five items based on the measure developed by Wayne and Liden (1995). Supervisors were asked to rate each employee’s overall work performance using a seven-point scale. Sample items are: “The overall level of performance that I observe for this subordinate is:” (where 1=unacceptable and 7=outstanding) and “My personal view of this subordinate in terms of his or her overall effectiveness is:” (where 1=very ineffective and 7=very effective). We combined ratings across the five items to create the measure. Cronbach’s alpha for the scale was .95.

PO fit. Perceived person-organization fit by the salespeople was measured with four items developed by Netemeyer et al., (1997). Sample items are “I feel that my personal values are a good fit with this organization” and “This organization has the same values as I do with regard to concern for others”. Responses for these items were made on a seven-point scale ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (7) strongly agree. Cronbach’s alpha for the scale was .89.

Organizational commitment. Salesperson’s organizational commitment was obtained using a measure developed by Mathew and Shepherd (2002), based on the scale previously proposed by Cook and Wall (1984). This scale has been recognized as the main measure of the construct “organizational commitment” in the European context (Peccei and Guest, 1993). The information regarding the six items of this scale was provided by the salesperson. Sample items are “ I feel proud telling other people that I work for this organization” or “ Even if this

enterprise had financial problems, I would be reluctant to move to another one”. Responses for these items were made on a seven-point scale ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (7) strongly agree. Cronbach’s alpha for the scale was .88.

Job satisfaction. Salesperson’s job satisfaction was measured with a four-items scale developed for the sales context by Brown and Peterson (1994). Sample items are “I think my work is very exciting” and “I would recommend a friend to work in this organization as a sales agent”. Responses for these items were given by the sales agents based on a seven-point scale ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (7) strongly agree. Cronbach’s alpha for the scale was .90.

## Results

We used CFA<sup>2</sup>, with maximum likelihood estimation and randomly created item parcels (as described by Floyd and Widaman (1995)) to verify that the three supervisor-rated variables (OCB, liking and performance ratings) were distinct. This analysis supported the three-factor structure ( $\chi^2 = 35.62$ ,  $df=17$ ;  $GFI=.93$ ,  $CFI=.97$ ,  $TLI=.96$ ). The fit of this three-factor model was also compared with the fit of a two-factor model in which OCB and performance ratings loaded onto the same factor ( $\chi^2 = 223.10$ ,  $df=19$ ;  $GFI=.70$ ,  $CFI=.73$ ,  $TLI=.60$ ), a two-factor model in which OCB and liking loaded onto the same factor ( $\chi^2 = 147.99$ ,  $df=19$ ;  $GFI=.76$ ,  $CFI=.82$ ,  $TLI=.73$ ), a two-factor model in which liking and performance ratings loaded onto the same factor ( $\chi^2 = 116.03$ ,  $df=19$ ;  $GFI=.82$ ,  $CFI=.86$ ,  $TLI=.80$ ), and a one-factor model ( $\chi^2 = 294.52$ ,  $df=20$ ;  $GFI=.61$ ,  $CFI=.61$ ,  $TLI=.46$ ). In every instance, the fit of the 3-factor model was significantly better than the fit of any alternative model, which provides some evidence of the distinctiveness of the three outcome variables.

We follow the same procedure for the three sales agent-rated variables (PO fit, satisfaction and organizational commitment). We used CFA with maximum likelihood estimation and randomly created parcels to verify that these three salesperson-rated variables were distinct. The analysis supported the three-factor structure ( $\chi^2 = 8.27$ ;  $df=6$ ;  $GFI=.98$ ,  $CFI=.99$ ,  $TLI=.98$ ). The fit of this three-factor model was also compared with the fit of a two-factor model in which PO fit and commitment loaded onto the same factor ( $\chi^2 = 60.08$ ,  $df=8$ ;  $GFI=.85$ ,  $CFI=.88$ ,  $TLI=.78$ ), a two-factor model in which PO fit and satisfaction loaded onto the same factor ( $\chi^2 = 4.88$ ,  $df=8$ ;  $GFI=.91$ ,  $CFI=.93$ ,  $TLI=.87$ ), a two-factor model

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<sup>2</sup> In order to avoid problems due to possible non-fulfilment of the conditions of multivariate normality, the bootstrapping technique was used

in which satisfaction and commitment loaded onto the same factor ( $\chi^2 = 26.33$ ,  $df=8$ ; GFI=.92, CFI=.95, TLI=.92), and a one-factor model ( $\chi^2 = 60.41$ ,  $df=9$ ; GFI=.85, CFI=.88, TLI=.80). In every instance, the fit of the 3-factor model was significantly better than the fit of any alternative model, which provides some evidence of the distinctiveness of the three salesperson-rated variables.

Finally, an unparcelled CFA model indicated that the factor loading of each item onto its specified factor was statistically significant.

The means, standard deviations, alphas, and correlations for all of the variables in the study are provided in Table 1.

[Take in Table 1]

Structural equation modelling (SEM) was used to test the hypothesized relationships depicted in Figure 1. SEM is useful here because it allows for several hypothesized relationships to be tested simultaneously, provides an indication of the fit between the hypothesized model and the actual data and allows for the evaluation of alternative models. Given the number of variables in our model and the relatively small sample size here ( $N=122$ ), however, we were unable to meet the minimum recommended sample size necessary to conduct our tests at the latent-variable level. Therefore, the analyses reported here were conducted at the manifest-variable level (i.e., using observed variables). The maximum likelihood structural estimates of the hypothesized model are presented in Figure 2. The model fits the data well ( $\chi^2 = 21.49$ ;  $d.f. = 13$ ;  $p = .064$ ;  $\chi^2/df = 1.65$ ; RMSEA=.07; GFI=.95; AGFI=.89; TLI = .96; CFI = .97). The  $R^2$  for the ratings of the subordinate's performance was .46; for liking was .38; for OCB was .11; for job satisfaction was .68; for organizational commitment was .35 and for PO fit was .03.

As depicted here, seven of the nine predicted links were statistically significant (figure 2). Specifically, findings supported Hypothesis 2: the parameter estimate for the relationship between PO fit and job satisfaction was positive and significant. The significant parameter estimate for the relationship between PO fit and organizational commitment and between organizational commitment and job satisfaction indicated support for Hypothesis 3 and 4. Contrary to our expectations, the relationship between organizational commitment and OCB was not significant, so Hypothesis 6 was not supported. For the relationship between job

satisfaction and OCB, the parameter estimate was positive and significant, providing support for Hypothesis 5. Concerning the consequences of OCB all of the predicted relationships were significant and on the expected sense. In particular, the significant parameter estimates for the relationship between OCB and liking was positive and significant, giving support for Hypothesis 9. OCB were positively related to performance, supporting Hypothesis 8 and, finally, the parameter estimate for the relationship between liking and performance was positive and significant, in support of Hypothesis 7. Concerning Hypothesis 1, the parameter estimate was not significant, what indicates that, in our sample, men do not manifest higher PO fit than women.

[Take in Figure 2]

#### **4. DISCUSSION**

Overall, the results of this study provide strong support for the hypothesized model.

In particular, the results supported the mediating role of job satisfaction and organizational commitment in the relationship between PO fit and OCB. When a salesperson feels that there is a congruence between his values and the values of the organization, he will be more satisfied at work and will experiment a higher level of organizational commitment to the organization, what, in turn, will have a positive influence on conducting OCB. The strength of these relationships are consistent with those found in previous research in organizational (Brown and Peterson, 1993; Kristof-Brown et al., 2005; O'Reilly et al., 1991; Valentine et al., 2002) and selling (Netemeyer et al., 1997) contexts and confirm the importance of careful employee selection and socialization processes. Organizations should provide potential sales agents with a realistic appraisal of their value systems and work place environments. At the same time it would be important to let the sales managers know the importance of the hiring process. To the extent that top management can identify the specific reasons underlying perceptions of poor organizational fit, steps can be taken to reduce stress and prevent turnover among salespeople.

Our results confirm as well that job satisfaction is an important predictor of OCB, what can be more important in modern sales organizations than is currently recognized. As Netemeyer et al. (1997) have pointed out as an example; an outside sales person often needs assistance or guidance in dealing with a customer. Though, his manager might not be available to provide advice or assistance on handling a specific customer-related problem. In this type of situation, co-workers can be of help.



Contrary to our expectations, organizational commitment was not directly related to OCB. One possible explanation has to do with the measure used in this study. Though it has been suggested that researchers frequently consider organizational commitment as a global construct (Rylander et al., 1997), some studies have pointed out the need to consider a multi-factor structure of the construct (Bansal et al., 2004; Dunham et al., 1994; Frutos et al., 1998). For example, research has recognized the existence of three different dimensions of commitment: affective, normative and continuance (San Martin, 2005). Hence, these multidimensional models of commitment should be studied using structural equations modelling approach.

The positive link from organizational commitment to job satisfaction confirms the idea that commitment can develop quite early (O'Reilly and Caldwell, 1981), namely as a function of socialization efforts, which aim to embed newly hired salespeople in the values of the organization, and provide them with the ability to work in and to interact with others in the organization (Louis, 1980). Managers should note that pursuing strategies to increase salespeople's organizational commitment should be useful in increasing their job satisfaction.

This result, though consistent with previous studies in the sales literature (e.g. Bhuiyan and Menguc, 2002) is a deviation from the view of most studies in US-context where job satisfaction is seen as an antecedent to organizational commitment (Brown and Peterson, 1993; MacKenzie et al., 1998; Johnston et al., 1990). So, empirical studies of these issues in other non-US contexts are needed.

Concerning the influence of demographic characteristics in PO fit, in our sample women did not perceived less PO fit than men, as we were expecting. However, these results must be taken with caution, as the relationship is statistically significant only at  $p < .1$  level. The characteristics of the sample, where only 31% of the salespeople were women must have had an influence as well in this result. Though future research should assess this issue with a larger sample, this result means a first step in the consideration of differences between saleswomen and salesmen in their perception of person-organization fit.

Consistent as well with prior research in organizational settings is the positive influence of supervisor's affect towards the salesperson on the supervisor's ratings of salesperson's performance. This finding gives empirical support to the proposition that affect plays a critical role in the type of exchange that develops between supervisor and subordinate (Liden, Wayne, and Stilwell 1993; Wayne and Ferris 1990).

DeNisi and Williams (1988) suggested that affect influences the processing of performance information, and Isen and Baron (1991) shed light on this suggestion arguing that positive affect facilitates the recall of information stored in the memory which possesses a positive affective tone. Thus, positive affect towards a salesperson should result in the supervisor recalling more positive performance-related behaviours and evaluative impressions, which should lead to the supervisor's rating of the salesperson's performance highly. This result has some important managerial implications as sales managers are exhorted to be objective in their performance appraisals (Gentry, Mowen & Tasaki, 1991).

Results of this study confirm that, yet, realistically, some subjective factors might influence these appraisals. Considering that traditional programs for improving appraisal processes focus on removing affect as a source of bias (Cardy and Dobbins, 1986), a possible solution would be to try with various methods of improving performance evaluations, including role-plays designed to help pinpoint evaluation errors (Latham and Wexley, 1977); training in the use of behaviourally anchored rating scales; use of field notes to provide concrete behavioural indicators (Bernardin and Walter, 1977); and development of historical territory and personal data files (De Carlo and Leigh, 1996).

Results of this study confirm the positive effect of OCB on the supervisor's evaluation of the salesperson's performance, both directly and indirectly through supervisor's affect towards the subordinate. As Podsakoff and MacKenzie (1994) have underlined subordinates that are considered as more efficient are not those ones who are productive in themselves, but contribute to make others also more productive. In the management literature different mechanisms of how OCB are related to job performance have been proposed (Podsakoff et al., 2000): reciprocity, performance implicit theories, illusory correlations... Fiske (1981, 1982) have argued that, when an object is identified by a person as an example of a previously define, affectively laden category, the affect associated with the category is quickly retrieved and applied to the stimulus object. Thus, if managers include citizenship behaviours, along with high levels of task performance, in their definition of "good employees", employees who exhibit OCB will trigger positive affect and subsequently will be evaluated more favourably than those that do not exhibit these behaviours. Results obtained in this study confirm this suggestion.

Regarding job performance, a strong argument can be made that a satisfied employee is also a productive employee (Organ, 1977; Petty et al., 1984). However, researchers have failed to find evidence of strong association between satisfaction and performance, despite the

many studies that have been conducted to uncover this relationship (Ramaswami and Singh, 2003). In a meta-analysis, Iaffaldano and Muchinsky (1985, p. 270) suggested that satisfaction and performance form only “an illusory correlation between two variables that we logically think should interrelate...but in fact do not”. Results of this study shed some light on this debate suggesting that the relationship between job satisfaction and performance ratings might be mediated by OCB. This idea has been already suggested by Ostroff (1992) in an organizational setting. She suggests that the relation between employee job satisfaction and organizational performance is important and could be mediated by OCB. She suggests that the internal adaptability of an organization could be a precursor to adapting to external environmental change.

Organizational citizenship behaviours represent a logical internal adaptation mechanism in that employees who engage in OCB go above and beyond the job requirements and thus help the organization to adapt to changing circumstances in the marketplace (Netemeyer et al.,1997).

Finally, this study represents an attempt to test the generalization of the proposed relationships and to stimulate researchers to begin to think about how antecedents and consequences may relate to OCB across national boundaries.

## **5. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS.**

Previous researchers (e.g. Konovsky and Pugh, 1994; Netemeyer et al., 1997; Niehoff and Moorman, 1993) have commonly urged that common method bias in such a study may stem from two reasons: (1) measuring the independent and dependent variables at the same time; (2) measuring all of the variables with perceptions of a single sample group that may inflate the reported relationships between the independent and dependent variables. Notwithstanding, researchers have recognized that common-method variance could be overstated in a sales setting (Churchill et al., 1985; Oliver and Anderson, 1994; Organ and Ryan, 1995). In this study, we used two groups of respondents (i.e. industrial salespeople and their immediate managers) to measure the constructs. Consequently, this study tried to eliminate the second likely reason that could cause a common method bias.

A second limitation of this study is that causality could not be determined due to the cross-sectional nature of the data. Longitudinal research is needed in order to examine the causal linkages proposed in the model.

Accordingly, while it is commonly recommended that supervisors should provide ratings of employee OCB (e.g., Organ & Ryan, 1995; Podsakoff et al., 2000), the findings here suggest that more work is needed to determine if such ratings reflect perceptions or reality. On this sense, it has been suggested that the use of several ratters of OCB, as independent experts or colleagues, notably contributes to improve the reliability of the measure (Allen et al., 2000). Likewise, more work is needed to better understand why those who engage in OCB are more likely to be seen as likeable and as having better overall job performance

Another direction for future research has to do with the suggestion that combining different job characteristics in examining their effects on job attitudes and behaviours might be a correct treatment. For instance, Bhuian and Menguc (2002) found that job characteristics, such as autonomy, task-identity and feed-back, interactively worked with organizational commitment to account for job satisfaction. This can be something to be considered in future investigations. There is also need for future research on personal and situational characteristics that moderate fit-outcome relationships. For instance, current results suggest that fit is most influential if the individual has high self-esteem (Dineen et al., 2002). There is also preliminary evidence that relationships with managers and co-workers (Erdogan et al., 2004; Strauss et al., 2001) and even job performance (Shaw and Gupta, 2004) may influence the nature of the fit's relationship with outcome variables.

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Table 1

Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations Among Variables

	Mean	S.D.	1	2	3	4	5	6
PO fit	4.67	1.23	(.89)					
Job satisfaction	5.06	1.24	.67***	(.90)				
Commitment	5.09	1.20	.56**	.75***	(.88)			
OCB	5.04	1.03	.12	.29**	.25**	(.87)		
Liking of Subordinate	4.89	1.11	.21*	.41***	.37**	.63***	(.91)	
Sales Performance	5.19	1.05	.11	.28**	.26**	.55***	.61***	(.95)

Notes: Alphas appear along the diagonal.

\*  $p < .05$

\*\*  $p < .01$

\*\*\*  $p < .001$

**Figure 1**  
**Hypothesized model**

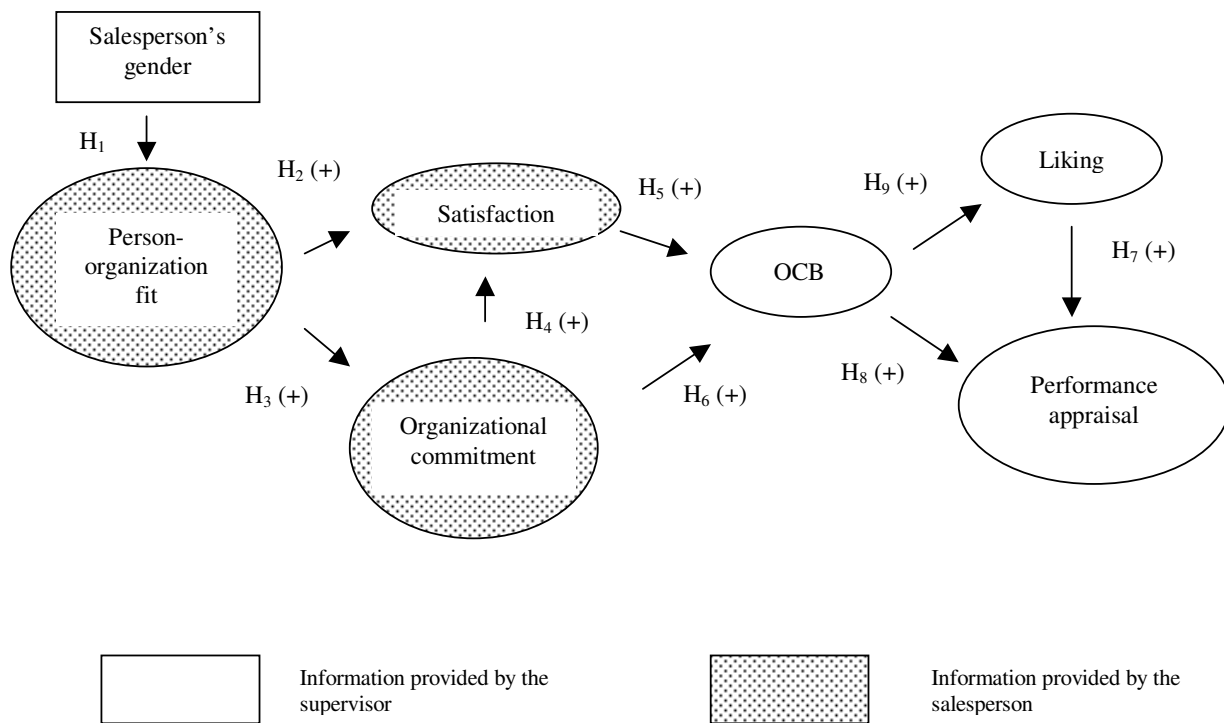
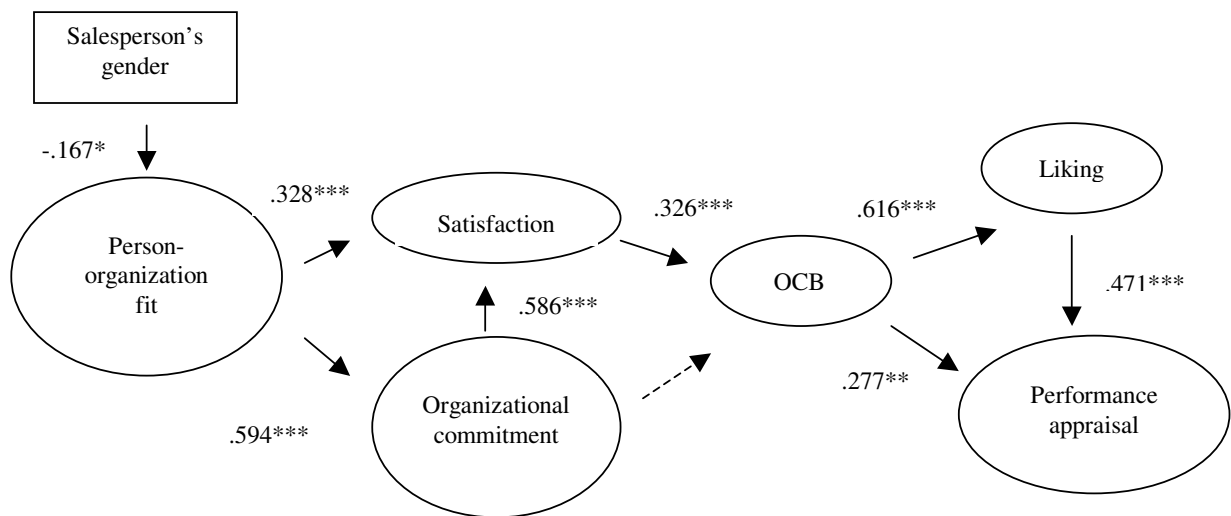


Figure 2

Structural estimates of causal model



\*  $p < .1$     \*\*  $p < .005$     \*\*\*  $p < .001$

----- n.s.