

## The Effect of Job Satisfaction as a Mediator in the Relationship between Person-Environment Fit and Job Performance: Evidence from the Food Industries in Libya

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### Abstract

### Original Research Article

This study investigates the effects of job satisfaction as mediator in the relationship between P-E fit and job performance. Random sampling is adopted, 300 questionnaires among employees in the food industries in Libya were distributed, and 230 out of them were returned and valid for analysis. The findings revealed that P-E fit had direct and positive effect on job performance. Moreover, job satisfaction partially mediated the relationship between P-E fit and job satisfaction. Future recommendations are recommended in this study.

**Keywords:** Person- Environment fit, job satisfaction, job performance.

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## INTRODUCTION

The topic of job satisfaction and performance has attracted the attention of many researchers in the organizational literature in recent decades. High Job satisfaction leads to great outcomes that are very important for organization. Job satisfaction increases task performance in a positive way, contributing to a reduction in counterproductive work behaviours [1], and reduces employee turnover intention [2]. In this regard [3], indicated that a stronger relationship between satisfaction with work and task performance compared to contextual performance. In contrast, a stronger relationship between satisfaction with supervision and contextual performance compared to task performance.

According to this importance, the factors affecting job satisfaction must be taken care of and well understood so that its levels can be predicted. In the literature on organizational behavior, there are many factors that affect the job satisfaction of employees. Maslow's theory indicated that employee satisfaction is related to the extent to which his/her needs are satisfied. In contrast, the two-factor theory indicated that the presence of health factors raises the level of job satisfaction among individuals, and other protective factors that prevent dissatisfaction in the event of their presence and do not increase the levels of satisfaction.

On the other hand, theory of Person-Environment fit (P-E fit) by (Edwards, 1990, 2008) reported that job satisfaction and turnover intention are outcomes of P-E fit [4]. Several studies have examined the relationship between P-E fit and job satisfaction. The results of these studies reinforce Edwards's assumptions [5, 6].

Recently, empirical studies focused on the role of attitudinal variables as a mediator in the relationship between the independent variables and the standard variable. For example [7, 8], studied the job satisfaction and trust in leader as mediators in the relationship between leadership style and extra- role behaviour. By searching for previous studies, it became clear that there are few studies that examined the indirect relationship between an individual's compatibility– his/her work environment and his/her job performance. Also, the studies that tested the role of job satisfaction as a mediator in relationships, showed only the type of mediation (full or partial mediation), but did not reveal the size of the effect of mediation, which is one of the most important elements to be disclosed during the analysis [9].

## PROBLEM OF THE STUDY

According of discussion above, the problem of this study is the low performance of employees in the food industries sector in Libya. This problem will be

addressed by studying the role that the employee's fit with the work environment will play in improving the performance of employees through the job satisfaction.

### QUESTIONS OF THE STUDY

1. What is the role of the individual- environment compatibility in improving the performance of workers in the food industry sector in Libya?
2. Does job satisfaction mediate the relationship between individual-environment compatibility and employee performance?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### PERSON- ENVIRONMENT FIT (P-EFIT)

Recently, the theory of individual compatibility with the environment has attracted the attention of scholars, as it considers the behavior of the individual the key to interactions between the individual and the environment, and also considers that a good match between the individual and his organizational environment can produce positive attitudes and behaviors for the employee [10]. P-E fit means the degree to which individual characteristics (such as values, goals, needs, capabilities, and personality) and environmental characteristics (e.g., organizational values, rewards, and job or role requirements) are identical [11].

The P-E fit has four dimensions: the compatibility of the individual with the organization, the fit of the person with the job (P-J), the fit of the person with the group (P-G), and the fit of the person with the person (P-P). For (P-O) fit, Organizational culture plays a central role in assessing an individual's fit with the organization as a whole, and it occurs when at least one entity provides what others need, or share similar basic characteristics (Kristof, 1996). This fit is essentially centered on values and goals [12]. Bonn and Hartog (2011) note that alignment between individuals and the organization means a strong culture and shared values among co-workers, and this high alignment may lower labor turnover, increase citizenship behaviors, and organizational commitment (Andrews *et al.*, 2010; Gregory *et al.*, 2010).

(P-J) refers to the fit between a person's characteristics and the characteristics of a particular job [13]. The relationship between the individual and the job is achieved in two ways: when the skills of the employees match the specific job requirements (fit capacity requirements), and when their needs match the job opportunities (fit the needs and supplies) [14]. The (P-J) fit enhances the correlation between individual knowledge, skills and abilities with the requirements of the job [15]. Employees who have personal values that better match the job description will display high levels of performance not stated in the job description, such as organizational citizenship behavior [13].

(P-G) Person-group congruence refers to the psychological agreement of co-workers on individual outcomes in group situations. In this regard, a study conducted by Bohn and Hartog (2011) revealed that person-group attachment is closely related to group-oriented outcomes such as co-worker satisfaction.

Finally, Person-to-person compatibility (P-P) is the fit between one's culture preferences and those of others. It corresponds to the similarity-attraction hypothesis, which states that people are drawn to other people's ideas that are similar to their own based on their values, attitudes, and opinions (Van Vianen, 2000).

There are many theories that have worked to explain the P-E fit, and it is difficult to list them all. In general, the P-E fit theories are concerned with the environmental compatibility factors represented by the worker and work and the interactions that occur in the work environment, some of them focus on the characteristics of the worker and their compatibility with the work environment and the job, and some it focuses on the extent to which the worker's needs are satisfied as a result of his work, and some of them combine what the worker expects with the reality of the work, and so on.

### JOB SATISFACTION

Researchers and scholars have investigated the meaning of job satisfaction through systematic investigations and meta-analysis. There is great agreement among management scholars in defining job satisfaction. In practice, job satisfaction is classified as a general attitude toward a goal. Jorfi and his colleague (2014) indicated that job satisfaction is an employee's emotional reaction to his job in terms of how much it satisfies the desired outcome [16].

From the previous concepts, it can be concluded that there are psychological and material variables that contribute to achieving job satisfaction for the worker as a result of his reactions to those variables. Also, the source of job satisfaction is the work groups and the worker's job. In addition, there is a tendency to agree that job satisfaction is a psychological feeling that may carry positive or negative ramifications.

The worker's feeling of job satisfaction is positively reflected on his performance and the performance of the organization as a whole. Job satisfaction is of great importance for the organization, because it determines organisational performance [17].

Moral and material impact and negative or positive reflection on the way he performs the work and the efficiency and effectiveness of performance results, as job satisfaction increases the worker's ability to

adapt to the work environment, motivates him to innovate and raises his desire for achievement [17].

On the other hand, working environment represented by working hours, job safety and security, relationship with co-workers, esteem needs, and top management determines job satisfaction represented by employee loyalty, sense of ownership, level of commitment, and efficiency and effectiveness productivity [18].

### JOB PERFORMANCE

Those interested in the field of job performance, such as [19] pointed out that performance is one of the most important constructs in industrial-organizational psychology research and practice. Job performance was defined by [20] as the set of behaviors an individual performs toward achieving the goals of an organization. On the other hand, Job performance indicates to “aggregated value to the organization of the discreet behavioural episodes that an individual performs over a standard interval of time” (Motowidlo, Borman, & Schmit, 1997, p71).

In the literature on organizational behavior, there is complete consensus that job performance is a multidimensional variable, since task performance and contextual performance are considered are two distinct dimensions of behaviour at work that can independently contribute to effectiveness for organisations [21]. Task performance is refers about employee’s involvement and it should be linked to formal organization reward system [22]. In this regard, there are five models are relevant to task performance that contains specific job tasks proficiency, non-job task specific proficiency, oral and written proficiency, supervision of leadership position and management support [23].

In contrast, contextual performance refers to “those activities of employees that are required to interact and coordinate with others and to perform them in certain ways that go beyond their job- description in order to fulfill job specific tasks” [24, p. 82]. Relevant

elements of contextual performance that able to bring effectiveness are organizational citizenship behaviour [25] and extra-role performance [26]. In this line, Borman and Motowidlo (1993) enumerated five categories of contextual performance: a) helping and cooperating with others, b) volunteering for additional task activities, c) persisting with extra effort, d) following rules and procedures, e) and endorsing organizational objectives.

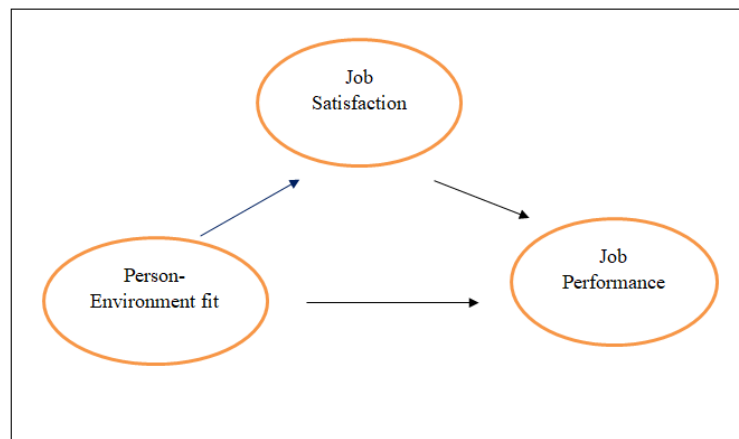
### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

(P-E) fit theory posits that when there is a fit between employee performance and the actual situation in the organization, workers are likely to positively develop attitudes and behaviors such as strong organizational commitment, high job satisfaction, and prosocial behavior. Thus, (P-E) fit is important for organizations to design jobs, desired values, and standards in a way that contributes to a person's greater compatibility with the environment [27].

Research on Person-Environmental Compatibility (PE) has shown that congruence between a person’s traits and characteristics of their environment is positively correlated with many desirable outcomes for employees and organizations, such as increased job satisfaction, stronger commitment, higher participation in role and extra role behaviors, and lower turnover [28]. Hang et al. stated that the individual's job fit enhances the creative behavior of individuals within the organization. The more compatible the individual with his job in terms of knowledge and skill, the greater the innovative behavior of the individual [10].

According to the above, the current study assumes the following hypotheses:

1. (P-E) fit affects job performance in Libyan food industrials.
2. (P-E) fit affects job satisfaction in Libyan food industrials.
3. Job satisfaction mediates the relationship between (P-E) fit and job performance.



**Figure 1: Theoretical Framework**

## METHODOLOGY

In this study, quantitative approach was followed, random sampling is adopted, where, simple random sample is determined in Libyan food industries

The same data using in Alshrksi' (2021) study is used in current work, since 300 questionnaires among employees are distributed, and 230 questionnaires are returned and filtered. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), and deductive analysis are used. Descriptive statistics aim to test the extent of (P-E) fit and job satisfactions are presented among members in Libyan food industries. According to the Likert scale, the 3 value indicate that the average practice is middle, while the value greater than 3 is considered high and vice versa when the average is less than 3. Descriptive statistics and correlation analysis were applied in current study.

## MEASUERS

The Perceived Person-Environment Fit Scale (PPEFS) was used, developed by [29], including (25) items distributed over four main dimensions. The first dimension explains the (P-O) fit, including (7) items that reflect the fit of general values (honesty, achievement, fairness, helping others), and the compatibility of the objectives of the organization, reward, goal, and goal of competition). The second dimension, which measures the (P-J) fit (4 items). As for the third dimension, it focuses on the (P-S) fit, in terms of values, personality, work style and leadership style through (4) items. Finally, the (P-G) fit was measured through (10) items attached to the dimensions of values and goals.

On the other hand [30], has developed a job satisfaction measure consisting of (36) paragraphs,

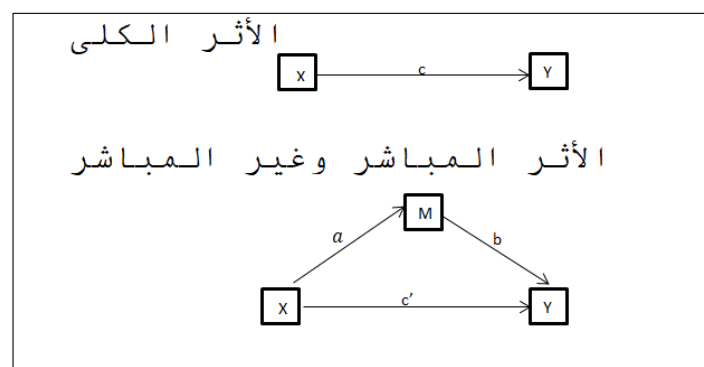
distributed into (9) sub-levels, which are, satisfaction with: salary, job promotion, supervision, benefits, benefits, rewards, operating procedures, colleagues work, nature of work, communications within the organization.

Finally, the Individual Work Performance Questionnaire (IWPQ) was used to measure the job performance variable. The original scale contains (18) items distributed over three dimensions: task performance (5 items), contextual performance (8 items), and reflexive behaviors (5 items). The current study was satisfied with the two positive dimensions (ie, task performance and contextual performance). The negative dimension was not addressed [31].

## DATA ANALYSIS

This study is based on mediation analysis, which is adding the variable job satisfaction as a third variable to the relationship between the individual's compatibility with the work environment as an independent variable and job performance as a standard variable, as it provides a more detailed explanation for understanding the relationships between the variables [32].

According to the mediation model presented by Baron & Kenny (1986) and described by [33] and MacKinnon *et al.*, 2007, there are three partial models which are  $a$ ,  $b$ , and  $c'$ . In the mediation test, Barron and Kenny indicated the necessity of having a significant individual relationship between each pair of variables separately, and then testing the relationship between the independent and dependent variables in the presence of the mediator variable.



Source: [34].

In this regard, mediation occurs when the indirect effect is greater than the direct effect, and mediation is complete when the direct effect no longer has a significant effect after the introduction of the mediating variable. In the event that there is still a significant effect of the exogenous construct on the endogenous construct, the mediation is partial [35]. Structural equation modeling by SPSS-AMOS will be

used to test mediation effect in the relationship between E-P fit and job performance.

The important indices used are Estimates of regression, standard error of regression, and critical ratio for regression weights. Moreover, several indices that assess the fitness indices of model were used,

which are  $\chi^2/df$  (should be  $< 5$ ), GFI, IFI, CFI, TLI (should be  $> .90$ ), RMSEA (should be  $< .08$ ) [35].

## RESULTS

Table 1 detected that the means values of the P-E fit, JS, and JP are relatively high ( $M > 3$ ). Therefore,

it is possible to say that there are high fit between members and environment ( $M = 3.5$ ,  $S.D. = .697$ ), high level of job satisfaction, and high level in Libyan commercial banks, since TLBS were the most practiced ( $M = 3.31$ ,  $S.D. = .643$ ).

**Table 1**

	M	S.D.	$\alpha$	E-P fit	JS	JP
E-P fit	3.50	.697	.92	1		
JS	3.65	.630	.94	.451**	1	
JP	3.58	.890	.91	.543**	.579**	1

## EXPLORATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was used for each variable of the study variables separately several times, and then the analysis was carried out for all the variables combined. The following table shows the results of the EFA. The factors were extracted by principal components method, and the varimax for rotation was used in the EFA. The results of the analysis indicated that 31 items were excluded and ninety-five items were kept.

The results also provided strong evidence of data quality and suitability for factor analysis, as (KMO') value exceeded (.90), Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was 6671,  $df = (741)$ , and p-value less than (.05).

Results of (EFA) also outlined that P-E fit had three dimensions which are: person- organisation fit by six items (a5, a6, a7, a8, a24, a25), person- job fit by three items (a2, a3, a4), and fit of person with supervisor and group with six items (a14, a16, a18, a19, a21, a23). For job satisfaction, it was loaded on three dimensions, which are: satisfaction with job by five items (b1 to b5), satisfaction with colleagues with (b26, b27, b29, b30), satisfaction with supervisor by three items (b20, b24, b25), and satisfaction with monetary and non-monetary benefits by four items (b8, b10, b13, b16). Lastly, job performance had loaded with two dimensions, which are: task performance by six items (y1, y2, y4, y5, y6, y8) and contextual performance by four (y9, y11, y12, y12).

**Table 2: The Revised Factor Analysis of the Study Variables**

	Component							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
a2							.888	
a3							.892	
a4							.863	
a5	.768							
a6	.766							
a7	.756							
a8	.758							
a14		.835						
a16		.653						
a18		.812						
a19		.775						
a21		.686						
a23		.787						
a24	.742							
a25	.729							
b1			.732					
b2			.668					
b3			.674					
b4			.669					
b5			.685					
b8						.726		
b10						.724		
b13						.753		
b16						.669		
b20								.801
b24								.839



b25								.775
b26			.707					
b27			.678					
y1				.731				
y2				.530				
y4				.729				
y5				.690				
y6				.792				
y8				.756				
y9					.599			
y11					.858			
y12					.853			
y13					.792			
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy = .907								
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity Approx. Chi-Square 6671.144								
df 741								
Sig. .000								

**STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODELING**

Before testing hypotheses, the univariate relationship between the variables was done. The results

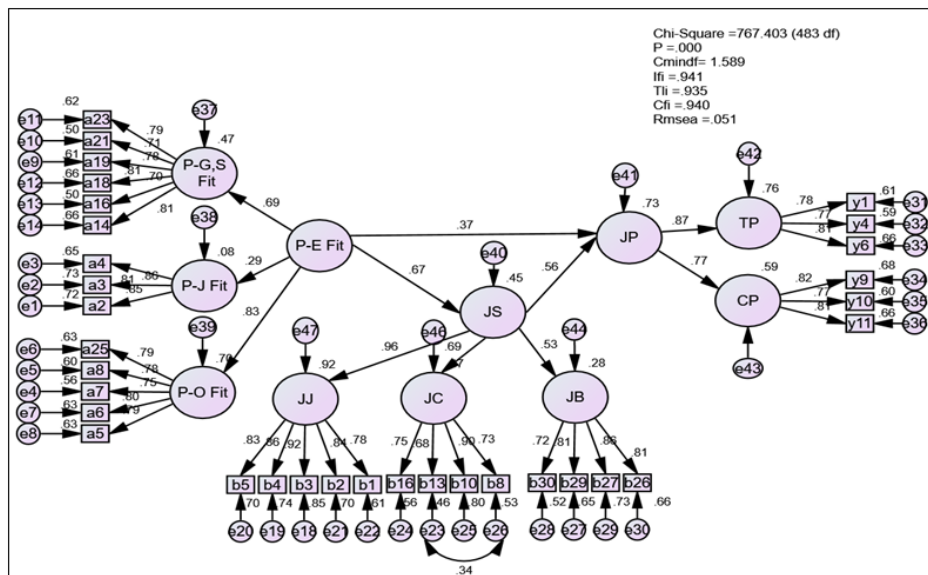
of simple liner regression as shown in Table 3. The results met Baron and Kenny (1986) recommendations.

**Table 3: Estimates of univariate relationship among latent constructs**

Exogenous construct	Path	Endogenous construct	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
P-E fit	-->	Job performance	.69	.273	6.125	.000
Job satisfaction	-->	Job performance	.80	.085	7.104	.000
P-E fit	-->	Job satisfaction	.60	.075	4.931	.000

In Figure 1, the supervisor's satisfaction variable has been omitted to meet the levels of fitness indices, convergence validity, and discriminant validity

for all latent constructs, since IFI, TLI, and CFI were more than .90, while Chisq/df less than 5 (1.59), and RMSEA reached .051 (less than .08). In this model.



**Figure 2: Structural Equation Modelling**

In Table 4, the results of the structural modeling analysis demonstrated that there are positive and statistically significant relationships, but they are moderate among latent construct. For first hypothesis, the findings indicated that size effect of P-E fit on job

performance was (.39), and p-value = (.007). Therefore, the hypothesis was accepted. On the other hand, the second hypothesis was also accepted, since the effect size of P-E fit on job satisfaction reached (.64), and p-value less than (.05).

**Table 4: Structural model estimates of direct relationships**

Exogenous construct	Path	Endogenous construct	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
P-E fit	-->	Job performance	.37	.175	2.580	.010
Job satisfaction	-->	Job performance	.56	.274	4.219	.000
P-E fit	-->	Job satisfaction	.67	.077	5.201	.000

For third hypothesis, the result of indirect effect of P-E fit on job performance through job satisfaction is shown in Table 5. The table pointed out indirect effect (.38) was greater than direct effect (.37). This means that job satisfaction mediates the relationship between P-E fit and job performance.

On the other hand, and firstly, we found direct effect of P-E fit on job performance was (.69) and it had

a significant effect ( $p$ -value  $< .05$ ) as it is shown in Table 3. Secondly, the output in Table 4 shows the effect was reduced from (.69) to (.37) when job satisfaction entered the model, and the direct influence size of P-E fit on job performance was still significant ( $p$ -value .010). Here, the requirement for partial mediation was met.

**Table 5: The Size of the direct and indirect impact**

path	Direct effect	Indirect effect	Result
E-P fit --> job performance	.37	-	Mediation presence
Job satisfaction --> job performance	.56	-	
P-E fit --> job satisfaction	.67	.38	

## DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study assessed the direct and indirect effects of P-E fit on job performance. The findings from structural equation modeling indicated that there are direct positive influences of P-E fit on job performance, since the effect size was (.37). This means when P-E fit goes up (1) standard deviation, job performance goes up (.37). Therefore, first hypothesis was achieved. In the same line, P-E fit was affected job satisfaction positively by (.67). Thus, the second hypothesis was accepted.

The results of this study came accepted with empirical research findings. For instance [36], found that person- organisation fit had effect on both job satisfaction and job performance. Whiles [37, 38], confirmed that person- organisation fit had direct effect on contextual performance. Others, such as [39] confirmed that person- job fit and person- organisation fit related to employees' performance.

For the third hypothesis, the finding appeared that job satisfaction have partial mediation in the relationship between P-E fit and job performance. In fact, literature review did not examine the role of job satisfaction as mediation like the model in this study, but unlike models were presented in the organisational literature. For example [40], studied the effect of person-organisation fit on turnover intention mediated by job satisfaction. Andela and Doef focused on person-organisation, job, group, and supervisor fits, and its effects on turnover intention by burnout and job satisfaction mediation variables [41]. Moreover [42], assessed the effects both job satisfaction and organisational commitment in the relationship between person- job fit and turnover intention.

For third hypothesis, the findings explored that job satisfaction had partial mediated in the relationship between P-E fit and job performance, since indirect effect size (.38) was greater than direct influence (.37).

Interestingly, The work by [43] which used the same data of this study found that job satisfaction had full mediation in the in the relationship between P-E fit and job performance when turnover intention was mediated along with job satisfaction, but this study depended on one mediator. The output of structural equation modeling pointed out P-E fit and job satisfaction are highly explain about (73%) of job performance variance. In contrast, in Alshrksi's study, the findings indicated that job performance was explained by (.75) when entered turnover intention along with job satisfaction. Accordingly, multiple correlation square changes when several mediators used rather than one mediator.

Accordingly, for future research, researchers should examine the relationship between P-E fit by several variables, and since organisational literature confirmed that job satisfaction reduce turnover intention, thereby future research needs to focus on follow the effect path from P-E fit to job satisfaction to turnover intention to job performance.

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