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Investigating Workplace Inclusion and Extra-Role Employee Behaviors: Evidence from IT Professionals through Engagement and Commitment

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ABSTRACT

Inclusion at work is one of the critical factors in explaining the attitude and behaviour of employees. In the present study, the influence of Perceived Inclusion on the Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) of IT professionals working in Tricity region, viz., Chandigarh, Mohali, and Panchkula is examined. Moreover, the mediating role of Affective Commitment and Employee Engagement and the moderating role of Gender on the association between perceived inclusion and OCB has been explored. Quantitative research design was used in which 400 IT professionals were surveyed using a structured questionnaire. The collected data was analyzed using reliability analysis, descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, regression analysis, mediation analysis, and moderation analysis. Results suggest that perceived inclusion has a positive effect on OCB, affective commitment, and employee engagement. Moreover, it was found that affective commitment and employee engagement play the role of mediator in the relation between perceived inclusion and OCB while gender acts as a non-significant moderator in this regard.

Keywords: Perceived Inclusion, Organizational Citizenship Behavior, Affective Commitment, Employee Engagement, Gender, IT Professionals, Workplace Inclusion.

1. Introduction

In today's organizational world, diversity in the workforce has emerged as an important element in the management of organizations and in the experiences of workers. However, diversity results in good outcomes for organizations only if employees perceive themselves as included in the workplace. Fairness perceptions, recognition and participation have direct effects on employee attitudes and behaviors, and this makes workplace inclusion a priority now. Inclusion is seen as "the creation of an organizational environment in which all members of the organization can be included and feel part of the organization" (Mor Barak, 2016). Also, Shore et al. (2011) argued that there are two crucial elements of inclusion, feeling of belongingness and feeling of uniqueness. Perceived inclusion refers to employees' feeling of being valued, respected, and accepted, based on belongingness and uniqueness. Shore et al. (2011) stated that the inclusion is the way by which an organization gives opportunity for the employees to participate in the organization and to recognize their individuality.

Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB) is a key construct in organizational behavior which accounts for employees' positive behaviours that do not involve an explicit job requirement. Nandal and Nandal (2023) defined OCB as behaviours that go above and beyond the stated requirements of the job and help the organization to run efficiently (Goswami & Goswami, 2018). The five dimensions of Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB) that were identified by (Nandal & Nandal, 2023) included altruism, courtesy, conscientiousness, sportsmanship, and civic virtue. Affective Commitment is the level of emotional involvement of the employees in their organization. According to Moreira et al. (2024), affective commitment refers to the emotional commitment that exists with the organization and leads to commitment and positive performance.

Employee engagement represents employees' psychological involvement, motivation, and connection with their work. Engagement is defined as the amount of physical, cognitive and emotional effort that people invest in their jobs (Yerdaw & Berhanu, 2026). Employees who are engaged are more likely to put in extra effort and positively contribute to the organization's objectives. The IT context is relevant for this study as IT workers operate in a context of high collaboration and knowledge intensity, which creates an environment where inclusion issues are important. The Rajiv Gandhi Chandigarh Technology Park has played a major role in shaping the IT industry in the area (Deloitte, 2023). This study emphasizes the IT professionals of the Tricity region and investigates the relationship between the perceived inclusion and the Organizational Citizenship Behaviour. The moderating effect of gender and the mediating effect of affective commitment and employee engagement are also explored in the study.

The study aims are:

- To investigate the relationship between Perceived inclusion and Organizational Citizenship Behaviour among IT professionals.
- To examine how perceived inclusion is related to affective commitment among information technology professionals.
- To examine the mediating role of affective commitment between perceived inclusion and Organizational Citizenship Behaviour among IT professionals.
- To investigate the mediating effect of employee engagement between perceived inclusion and OCB in IT professionals.
- To examine the moderating effect of gender between perceived inclusion and Organizational Citizenship Behaviour of information technology workers.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Perceived Inclusion and Organizational Citizenship Behaviour

Inclusion in the workplace has been observed in previous studies as an influencer on employee positive behavior. Employees who feel included at work have been found to experience respect and value for their work. The above relation can be explained using the theory of social exchange (Suparyanto et al., 2025). Employees respond to inclusion, fairness, and support from organizations with increased co-operation and citizenship behaviours. Moreover, Nazir et al. (2018) have highlighted the impact of the implementation of inclusive work practices on the conduct of employees that may be beneficial to their units.

H1: Perceived inclusion has a significant positive relationship with Organizational Citizenship Behaviour among IT professionals.

2.2 Perceived Inclusion and Affective Commitment

Perceived inclusion is considered to be one of the primary elements influencing the emotional attachment of employees to their organizations (Arif et al., 2023). Affective commitment is the condition where the employees are emotionally attached and involved in their organization. Research shows that the culture of organizations which creates a sense of inclusion creates a culture of trust, respect and belonging in the organization. When an individual feels that his/her contribution is appreciated and recognized by the organization, then he/she would be committed to the organizational goals. Social Exchange Theory can also be used to explain the relationship of inclusion and affective commitment (C. Chen & Tang, 2018)

H2: Perceived inclusion has a significant positive relationship with affective commitment among IT professionals.

2.3 Perceived Inclusion and Employee Engagement

Employee engagement is the psychological commitment and attachment that employees feel towards their job. The existing literature indicates that workforce inclusion can positively impact employee engagement by building a psychologically safe and respectful workplace that inspires employees. If staff feel their ideas are appreciated and their work is rewarded, they are more likely to put effort into the cognitive, emotional and behavioural aspects of their work. Plezia and Moczyłowska (2025) said that meaningfulness, safety, and availability are factors that increase employee engagement in their work.

H3: Perceived inclusion has a significant positive relationship with employee engagement among IT professionals.

2.4 Affective Commitment and Organizational Citizenship Behaviour

Affective commitment is considered one of the main factors that predict OCB because it suggests that employees would be more willing to exhibit OCB when they are emotionally attached to the organization. The stronger the identification of an employee with the organization, the more he or she would be supportive of the objectives of the organization and willing to act voluntarily. Briggs et al. (2022) proposed that affective commitment is a psychological state of employees' emotional attachment to their organization.

2.5 Employee Engagement and Organizational Citizenship Behaviour

The relationship between employee engagement and the positive results in the workplace like Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB) has been widely recognized. Employees who show high levels of engagement are more likely to exhibit citizenship behaviors due to their personal relationship with the organization and its activities (Ariani, 2013). They can willingly provide help to colleagues, disseminate knowledge and engage in events that benefit the organization's success.

2.6 Mediating Role of Affective Commitment

It has been found in literature that the feeling of inclusion can be related to the concept of affective commitment, which could be used for explaining its impact on Organizational Citizenship Behavior. The high level of affective commitment arises due to the acceptance, respect, and

appreciation of the employees. The emotional connection makes them feel the need to come back in work-related behaviors like OCB. Accordingly, affective commitment offers a psychological account of the effect of inclusive practices on employees' behavior (Zhao et al., 2022).

H4: Affective commitment mediates the relationship between perceived inclusion and Organizational Citizenship Behaviour.

2.7 Mediation Role of Employee Engagement

Other mechanisms that may explain the relationship between perceived inclusion and OCB include employee engagement. In an inclusive setting, workers develop psychological attachment to the job itself and as such become motivated to perform beyond their duties. As suggested in the synopsis, the research framework adopted is based on the premise that employee engagement is a mediating factor between perceived inclusion and OCB (Adewale et al., 2019).

H5: Employee engagement mediates the relationship between perceived inclusion and Organizational Citizenship Behaviour.

2.8 Moderating Role of Gender

Gender can affect the way employees feel included in the workplace and how they react to workplace practices. Employees from various gender groups may experience organizational support and recognition and feeling included in different ways (Nishii & Rich, 2014). Some studies have indicated that there may be a relationship between demographic characteristics and employee experience and outcomes in the workplace. The current research investigates the gender as a moderator between perceived inclusion and OCB among IT professionals.

H6: Gender moderates the relationship between perceived inclusion and Organizational Citizenship Behaviour.

3. Theoretical Framework

The current study employs two theories, namely the Optimal Distinctiveness Theory (Brewer, 1991) and Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964).

3.1 Optimal Distinctiveness Theory (Brewer, 1991)

According to the Optimal Distinctiveness Theory (Brewer, 1991), there are two fundamental psychological needs of people: belongingness and uniqueness. This theory is applied for the explanation of the importance of the achievement of the balance between the needs of belongingness and uniqueness in the organizational context. Perceived inclusion also has strong linkages with Optimal Distinctiveness Theory as inclusion is one that relates to employees' experience of being accepted and valued. Inclusion is described by Shore et al. (2011) as a blend of belongingness and uniqueness, employees feel like they belong to the organization, but they are still unique individuals. Where employees feel that they belong to the organization and are valued, they develop a feeling of responsibility towards the organization and will gladly go beyond their expectations.

3.2 Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964)

Blau (1964) suggested that social interaction between a person and an organisation is carried out through a process of exchange. In organizational settings, workers assess their treatment by their organizations. Positive perceptions towards the workplace are formed when employees feel supported, respected, fair and included in the organization. Social Exchange Theory is an important explanation for the link between perceived inclusion and Organizational Citizenship Behaviour. Employees are likely to respond when they feel that their organization values them and that they are included, by engaging in voluntary behaviours that benefit the organization. Inclusive experiences can increase the emotional attachment and psychological involvement of employees with their organizations, thereby increasing the likelihood of OCB. Social Exchange Theory is the psychological response to positive organizational treatment in terms of attitudes and behaviours, while Optimal Distinctiveness Theory is the psychological significance of belongingness and uniqueness.

4. Conceptual Model

The model incorporates the mediating variables of Affective Commitment and Employee Engagement to provide an explanation of the mechanism that links perceived inclusion and Employee's OCB.

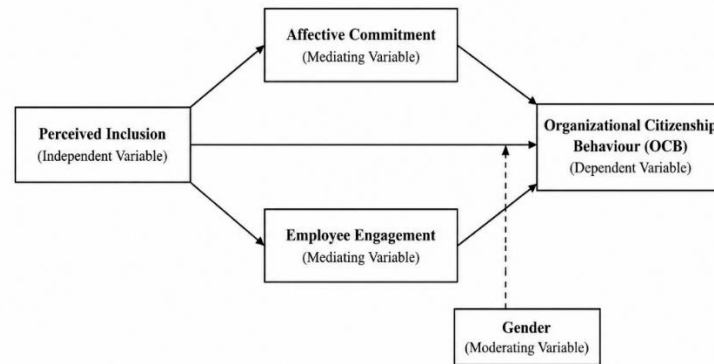


Figure 1: Conceptual Model

5. Research Methodology

The present study is aimed at investigating the relationship between Perceived Inclusion and OCB amongst Information Technology (IT) professionals and the impact of Affective Commitment and Employee Engagement as mediating variables with Gender as a moderator variable. For this, a quantitative research approach is used to achieve these objectives.

5.1 Research Design

The present study used quantitative research design. The study employs the structured questionnaire as an instrument for the collection of information from IT professionals and statistical methods are employed to test the proposed hypotheses (Sajad Ullah et al., 2018).

5.2 Research Area

Study carried out in the Tricity Region of India comprising of the cities of Chandigarh, Mohali and Panchkula. Tricity region is a suitable environment for studying the impact of employees' perception of inclusion on their attitudes and behaviours in the workplace (Amiri, 2019).

5.3 Target Population

The target population for the research is the IT professionals employed by the firms based in Tricity Region (Chandigarh, Mohali and Panchkula). The reason for selecting IT professionals as the subject of the study is that their work involves dealing with individuals from different backgrounds and solving problems together with others.

5.4 Sampling Technique

The nature of the research and the source of respondents makes the use of non-probability sampling approach appropriate. The sampling method adopted in the study is the judgemental sampling method which is a method in selecting the respondents based on specific criteria which are relevant to the purpose of the study. Participants were those with IT-related work experience who were able to offer meaningful information about experiences related to inclusion in the workplace, including behaviours of employees.

5.5 Sample Size

The present study uses a sample of 400 information technology (IT) professionals from the Tricity Region. The number of 400 respondents would be adequate to carry out statistical analysis such as reliability test, correlation test, regression test, mediation test, and moderation test.

5.6 Data Collection Method

Primary data was collected through a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was constructed to assess the main aspects of the study such as perceived inclusion, employee engagement, affective commitment and Organizational Citizenship Behaviour. The structured questionnaire method enables the systematic response collection from the participants and uniformity in measuring various constructs. The aggregated answers are then subjected to a statistical analysis to check the suggested hypotheses.

5.7 Measurement Scales

The study measured four constructs: Perceived Inclusion, Employee Engagement, Affective Commitment, and Organizational Citizenship Behavior.

5.8 Data Analysis Techniques

Data were analyzed using reliability analysis, descriptive statistics, correlation, regression, mediation, and moderation analyses.

6. Results and Data Analysis

6.1 Demographic Analysis

Demographic profiling was carried out in order to identify the background profile of the respondents. There were 400 IT professionals in the sample for the current research who hailed from the Tricity region. The respondents varied across ages, genders, educational profiles, professional experience and job profiles. The full demographic profile of respondents is provided in Appendix Table A1.

6.2 Reliability Analysis

The reliability test was done using Cronbach's Alpha for measuring internal reliability of the measurement scales. The results revealed that all the constructs had very high reliability levels. The Cronbach's Alpha of Perceived Inclusion was 0.934, Employee Engagement was 0.898, Affective Commitment was 0.899 and Organizational Citizenship Behaviour was 0.920. As all the values were above the minimum acceptable level of 0.70, the measurement scales were deemed to be reliable for use. The reliability results are provided in Appendix A2.

6.3 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were employed to analyze the responses from the participants on the variables in the study. The results indicated positive perceptions from the respondents. Perceived Inclusion attained the highest mean ($M = 3.9621$, $SD = 0.42727$), while Employee Engagement was second ($M = 3.8025$, $SD = 0.39071$), Affective Commitment third ($M = 3.7900$, $SD = 0.39779$) and Organizational Citizenship Behavior fourth ($M = 3.6767$, $SD = 0.40666$). The detailed descriptive results are provided in Appendix Table A3.

6.4 Correlation Analysis

The Pearson correlation was used to establish the nature of association among the study variables. The findings showed significant positive associations among all variables. Perceived Inclusion exhibited a high positive association with Organizational Citizenship Behavior ($r = .717$, $p < .01$). Additionally, Perceived Inclusion had a positive association with Employee Engagement ($r = .688$, $p < .01$) and Affective Commitment ($r = .701$, $p < .01$). There was also a significant positive association between OCB and Employee Engagement, and Affective Commitment. The detailed correlation results are provided in Appendix Table A4.

6.5 Hypothesis Testing

Regression analysis was carried out to test the direct effects hypothesized in the research model.

6.5.1 Regression Analysis

To analyse the effect of Perceived Inclusion on Organizational Citizenship Behaviour, regression analysis was done. The results indicated that Perceived Inclusion was a significant predictor of OCB ($\beta = .717$, $p < .001$). The model explained 51.4% variance in Organizational Citizenship Behaviour ($R^2 = .514$). Hence, it was supported that H1 is true. The detailed regression results are provided in Appendix Table A5.

6.5.2 Mediation Analysis of Affective Commitment

The Affective Commitment was used as a mediating variable in the present study through mediation analysis. The indirect effect is significant (Effect = 0.1238, BootLLCI = 0.0679, BootULCI = 0.1844) with the bootstrap confidence interval not overlapping zero. Thus, Affective Commitment plays a mediating role between Perceived Inclusion and OCB, which is consistent with the hypothesis H4. The detailed mediation results are given in Appendix Table A6.

6.5.3 Moderation Analysis of Gender

To see if there was an interaction between Perceived Inclusion and Organizational Citizenship Behaviour, the data was analysed using moderation analysis. There was no significant interaction between Perceived Inclusion and Gender ($\beta = 0.0531$, $p = 0.1902$). Hence, the interaction between Perceived Inclusion and OCB was not found to be significant and H6 is not supported. The detailed moderation results are detailed in Appendix Table A7.

7. Discussion

Based on the findings, it can be deduced that perceived inclusion is positively associated with OCB in such a way that the more employees feel included (valued and respected), the more likely they are to exhibit organizational citizenship behaviors. In addition, the study has shown that there is a positive correlation between inclusion and affective commitment/employee engagement (Alshaabani et al., 2021). When employees feel recognised and a sense of belonging, they are more emotionally attached to their organisation and more psychologically engaged in their work. The findings also concur with the concept of the Optimal Distinctiveness Theory (Brewer, 1991) that people are looking for belongingness and uniqueness in their work environment.

8. Conclusion

This research found that perceived inclusion has a significant impact on employee attitudes and behaviours. The study also validates the positive link between perceived inclusion and affective commitment and employee engagement, further enhancing employees' willingness to go the extra mile. It offers evidence of the importance of psychological mechanisms like commitment and engagement in explaining how inclusive practices affect employees' behaviour.

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Appendix

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents (N = 400)

Age					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Below 25 years	105	26.3	26.3	26.3
	25–35 years	82	20.5	20.5	46.8
	36–45 years	124	31.0	31.0	77.8
	Above 45 years	89	22.3	22.3	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

Gender					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	139	34.8	34.8	34.8
	Female	139	34.8	34.8	69.5
	Other	122	30.5	30.5	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

Education					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Bachelor's Degree	123	30.8	30.8	30.8
	Master's Degree	144	36.0	36.0	66.8
	Other	133	33.3	33.3	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

Work Experience					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Less than 1 year	111	27.8	27.8	27.8
	1–5 years	102	25.5	25.5	53.3
	6–10 years	79	19.8	19.8	73.0
	More than 10 years	108	27.0	27.0	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

JobPosition					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Software Developer	101	25.3	25.3	25.3
	Project Manager	96	24.0	24.0	49.3
	Analyst	101	25.3	25.3	74.5
	Other	102	25.5	25.5	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

Table 2: Reliability Statistics of Study Variables

Variable	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Perceived Inclusion	12	0.934
Employee Engagement	7	0.898
Affective Commitment	7	0.899
Organizational Citizenship Behaviour	9	0.920

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Perceived Inclusion	400	2.67	5.00	3.9621	.42727
Employee Engagement	400	2.86	5.00	3.8025	.39071
Affective Commitment	400	2.71	5.00	3.7900	.39779
Organizational Citizenship Behaviour	400	2.78	4.89	3.6767	.40666
Valid N (listwise)	400				

Table 4: Correlation Matrix among Study Variables

Variables	PI	EE	AC	OCB
Perceived Inclusion (PI)	1	.688**	.701**	.717**
Employee Engagement (EE)	.688**	1	.695**	.682**
Affective Commitment (AC)	.701**	.695**	1	.704**
OCB	.717**	.682**	.704**	1

Table 5: Regression Analysis: Effect of Perceived Inclusion on Organizational Citizenship Behavior

Variables Entered/Removed ^a			
Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	Perceived Inclusion ^b	.	Enter

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.717 ^a	.514	.512	.28395

a. Predictors: (Constant), Perceived Inclusion

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	33.895	1	33.895	420.391	.000 ^b
	Residual	32.090	398	.081		
	Total	65.985	399			

a. Dependent Variable: Organizational Citizenship Behaviour

b. Predictors: (Constant), Perceived Inclusion

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.974	.133		7.346	.000
	Perceived Inclusion	.682	.033	.717	20.503	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Organizational Citizenship Behaviour

Table 6: Mediation Analysis of Affective Commitment between Perceived Inclusion and Organizational Citizenship Behaviour

Relationship	Effect	SE	t-value	p-value	BootLLCI	BootULCI
Perceived Inclusion → Affective Commitment	0.5946	0.0359	16.5607	<0.001	0.5241	0.6652
Perceived Inclusion → OCB (Direct Effect)	0.5583	0.0422	13.2343	<0.001	0.4754	0.6412
Indirect Effect (PI → AC → OCB)	0.1238	0.0294	—	Significant	0.0679	0.1844

Table 7: Moderation Analysis of Gender on the Relationship between Perceived Inclusion and Organizational Citizenship Behaviour

Predictor	Coefficient (β)	SE	t-value	p-value
Perceived Inclusion	0.5796	0.0874	6.6297	<0.001
Gender	-0.1898	0.1606	-1.1819	0.2380
PI $\times$ Gender Interaction	0.0531	0.0404	1.3124	0.1902