



Marliana Junaedi , SE., M.Si. &lt;marliana@ukwms.ac.id&gt;

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**Fwd: International Journal of Workplace Health Management - Decision on Manuscript ID IJWHM-06-2020-0103**

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**Fenika Wulani** <fenika@ukwms.ac.id>

Sun, Dec 6, 2020 at 6:38 PM

To: "Marliana Junaedi , SE., M.Si." &lt;marliana@ukwms.ac.id&gt;

Sore bu Marli,

Berikut hasil reviewernya

salam,  
Fenika Wulani  
Department of Management  
Faculty of Business  
Widya Mandala Catholic University  
Surabaya, Indonesia

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **International Journal of Workplace Health Management** <[onbehalf@manuscriptcentral.com](mailto:onbehalf@manuscriptcentral.com)>

Date: Tue, Dec 1, 2020 at 12:17 PM

Subject: International Journal of Workplace Health Management - Decision on Manuscript ID IJWHM-06-2020-0103

To: <[fenika@ukwms.ac.id](mailto:fenika@ukwms.ac.id)>, <[fewulani@gmail.com](mailto:fewulani@gmail.com)>

01-Dec-2020

Dear Dr. Wulani,

Manuscript ID IJWHM-06-2020-0103 entitled "The moderating effect of person-organizational fit on the relationship between job stress and deviant behaviors of frontline employees" which you submitted to the International Journal of Workplace Health Management, has been reviewed. The comments of the reviewer(s) are included at the bottom of this letter.

Although it is of interest, we are unable to consider it for publication in its current form. The reviewers have raised a number of points which we believe would improve the manuscript and may allow a revised version to be published. Therefore, I invite you to respond to the reviewer(s)' comments and revise the manuscript.

To revise the manuscript, log into <https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/ijwhm> and enter your Author Centre, where you will find the manuscript title listed under "Manuscripts with Decisions." Under "Actions," click on "Create a Revision." The manuscript number has been appended to denote a revision.

Revisions cannot be made on the originally submitted version of the manuscript. Instead, the manuscript must be revised using a word processing program and saving it on your computer. Please also highlight any changes to your manuscript within the document by using the track changes mode in MS Word OR by using bold OR by using coloured text. Once the revised manuscript is prepared, you can upload it and submit it through your Author Centre.

When submitting the revised manuscript, you will have the opportunity to respond to the comments made by the reviewer(s) in the space provided. This space can be used to document any changes that are made to the original manuscript. In order to expedite the processing of the revised manuscript, please be as specific as possible in your response to the reviewer(s).

**IMPORTANT:** Your original files are available to you when you upload your revised manuscript. Please delete any redundant files before completing the submission.

As we are trying to facilitate timely publication of manuscripts submitted to the International Journal of Workplace Health Management, the revised manuscript should be uploaded as soon as possible. If it is not possible for you to submit your revision in a reasonable amount of time, we may have to consider your paper as a new submission.

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Please note that there is no obligation to use Editage and using this service does not guarantee publication.

Once again, thank you for submitting your manuscript to the International Journal of Workplace Health Management and I look forward to receiving your revision.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Christine Ipsen

Editor, International Journal of Workplace Health Management

[chip@dtu.dk](mailto:chip@dtu.dk)

Reviewer(s)' and Associate Editor Comments to Author:

Reviewer: 1

Recommendation: Major Revision

Comments:

it is not clear how organizational deviance is different from frontline deviance.

Additional Questions:

1. Originality: Does the paper contain new and significant information adequate to justify publication?: Authors should improve the value and originality

2. Relationship to Literature: Does the paper demonstrate an adequate understanding of the relevant literature in the field and cite an appropriate range of literature sources? Is any significant work ignored?: justification for Frontline deviance is needed. how it differs from organizational deviance.

3. Methodology: Is the paper's argument built on an appropriate base of theory, concepts, or other ideas? Has the research or equivalent intellectual work on which the paper is based been well designed? Are the methods employed appropriate?: I am unable to comment I have not used PLS-SEM programme for data analysis.

4. Results: Are results presented clearly and analysed appropriately? Do the conclusions adequately tie together the other elements of the paper?: No comment.

5. Implications for research, practice and/or society: Does the paper identify clearly any implications for research, practice and/or society? Does the paper bridge the gap between theory and practice? How can the research be used in practice (economic and commercial impact), in teaching, to influence public policy, in research (contributing to the body of knowledge)? What is the impact upon society (influencing public attitudes, affecting quality of life)? Are these implications consistent with the findings and conclusions of the paper?: this highly depend on originality of the paper.

6. Quality of Communication: Does the paper clearly express its case, measured against the technical language of the field and the expected knowledge of the journal's readership? Has attention been paid to the clarity of expression and readability, such as sentence structure, jargon use, acronyms, etc.: OK. can understand.

Reviewer: 2

Recommendation: Major Revision

Comments:

Thank you for your work. I really enjoyed reading it.

Here are my suggestions:

- In the Practical Implications I would rather say that the companies should also try to reduce the job stress and not only seek a better P-O fit. AS P-O fit, as you said does not moderate the relationship between job stress and organizational deviance. I am curious to see P-O fit would moderate the perception of stress and deviant behavior. And what is the relationship between stress at work and P-O fit? Are they completely independent? Maybe if I experience a lot of stress at work, maybe I do not feel like I belong to the company. P-O could also change over time. One thing is when people are interviewed and another when they work there and experience stress every day. Stressed employees might engage in deviant behavior, but one can not generalize.
- Do you mean customers and not consumers on Page 2?
- It is also important to note that many things influence deviant behavior, from work-related, such as pay, perceived injustice, work motivation, to personal factors and that job stress is only one factor.
- On page 3, you say that there are few research projects that investigate job stress and frontline deviance, but you do not list any of them. Please provide references.
- Why did you choose P-O? Please clarify.
- The research aim maybe better than object on page 3
- Please add more information on the scales you used. What exactly they measure, and how, example items, questions, reliability and validity. Did you translate these questionnaires into the local language or did you use it in the original version?
- There are some English errors.
- Good conclusion.
- I am also curious to know what is the relationship between P-O and deviance. Is there a positive correlation/negative...
- It is also important to mention the importance of work support, supervisor support, job-employee fit. Maybe some people are not meant to work in customer service... maybe is job-person fit part of the P-O fit, but then I would need to see the questions you asked to determine that.
- Also did you mention look into job demands or just job stress.

Additional Questions:

1. Originality: Does the paper contain new and significant information adequate to justify publication?: Yes

2. Relationship to Literature: Does the paper demonstrate an adequate understanding of the relevant literature in the field and cite an appropriate range of literature sources? Is any significant work ignored?: Yes
3. Methodology: Is the paper's argument built on an appropriate base of theory, concepts, or other ideas? Has the research or equivalent intellectual work on which the paper is based been well designed? Are the methods employed appropriate?: Yes
4. Results: Are results presented clearly and analysed appropriately? Do the conclusions adequately tie together the other elements of the paper?: Yes
5. Implications for research, practice and/or society: Does the paper identify clearly any implications for research, practice and/or society? Does the paper bridge the gap between theory and practice? How can the research be used in practice (economic and commercial impact), in teaching, to influence public policy, in research (contributing to the body of knowledge)? What is the impact upon society (influencing public attitudes, affecting quality of life)? Are these implications consistent with the findings and conclusions of the paper?: Yes
6. Quality of Communication: Does the paper clearly express its case, measured against the technical language of the field and the expected knowledge of the journal's readership? Has attention been paid to the clarity of expression and readability, such as sentence structure, jargon use, acronyms, etc.: Very easy to follow.

Associate Editor

Comments to the Author:

Both reviewers have decided that major revisions are needed to the article before it can be accepted for publication. We invite you to consider their comments and resubmit a revised manuscript to address the feedback provided.

Please see their comments below:

REVIEWER 1

1. Originality: Does the paper contain new and significant information adequate to justify publication?

Authors should improve the value and originality

2. Relationship to Literature: Does the paper demonstrate an adequate understanding of the relevant literature in the field and cite an appropriate range of literature sources? Is any significant work ignored?

justification for Frontline deviance is needed. how it differs from organizational deviance.

3. Methodology: Is the paper's argument built on an appropriate base of theory, concepts, or other ideas? Has the research or equivalent intellectual work on which the paper is based been well designed? Are the methods employed appropriate?

I am unable to comment I have not used PLS-SEM programme for data analysis.

4. Results: Are results presented clearly and analysed appropriately? Do the conclusions adequately tie together the other elements of the paper?

No comment.

5. Implications for research, practice and/or society: Does the paper identify clearly any implications for research, practice and/or society? Does the paper bridge the gap between theory and practice? How can the research be used in practice (economic and commercial impact), in teaching, to influence public policy, in research (contributing to the body of knowledge)? What is the impact upon society (influencing public attitudes, affecting quality of life)? Are these implications consistent with the findings and

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OK. can understand.

General comment:

Comments to the Author

it is not clear how organizational deviance is different from frontline deviance.

REVIEWER 2:

1. Originality: Does the paper contain new and significant information adequate to justify publication?

Yes

2. Relationship to Literature: Does the paper demonstrate an adequate understanding of the relevant literature in the field and cite an appropriate range of literature sources? Is any significant work ignored?

Yes

3. Methodology: Is the paper's argument built on an appropriate base of theory, concepts, or other ideas? Has the research or equivalent intellectual work on which the paper is based been well designed? Are the methods employed appropriate?

Yes

4. Results: Are results presented clearly and analysed appropriately? Do the conclusions adequately tie together the other elements of the paper?

Yes

5. Implications for research, practice and/or society: Does the paper identify clearly any implications for research, practice and/or society? Does the paper bridge the gap between theory and practice? How can the research be used in practice (economic and commercial impact), in teaching, to influence public policy, in research (contributing to the body of knowledge)? What is the impact upon society (influencing public attitudes, affecting quality of life)? Are these implications consistent with the findings and conclusions of the paper?

Yes

6. Quality of Communication: Does the paper clearly express its case, measured against the technical language of the field and the expected knowledge of the journal's readership? Has attention been paid to the clarity of expression and readability, such as sentence structure, jargon use, acronyms, etc.

Very easy to follow.

General comments:

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Here are my suggestions:

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- Also did you mention look into job demands or just job stress.

Associate Editor

Comments to the Author:

Both reviewers have decided that major revisions are needed to the article before it can be accepted for publication. We invite you to consider their comments and resubmit a revised manuscript to address the feedback provided.

	<b>Reviewer 1</b>  <b>Decision: major revision</b>	<b>Reviewer 2</b>  <b>Decision: major revision</b>
1. Originality: Does the paper contain new and significant information adequate to justify publication?	<b>Reviewer:</b> Authors should improve the value and originality  <b>Response:</b>  We have added some of the previous studies' results showing research gaps and differences from our studies	<b>Reviewer:</b> Yes
2. Relationship to Literature: Does the paper demonstrate an adequate understanding of the relevant literature in the field and cite an appropriate range of literature sources? Is any significant work ignored?	<b>Reviewer:</b> justification for Frontline deviance is needed. how it differs from organizational deviance  <b>Response:</b>  We have added information regarding the differences between them.	<b>Reviewer:</b> Yes
3. Methodology: Is the paper's argument built on an appropriate base of theory, concepts, or other ideas? Has the research or equivalent intellectual work on which the paper is based been well	<b>Reviewer:</b> I am unable to comment I have not used PLS-SEM programme for data analysis.	<b>Reviewer:</b> Yes

designed? Are the methods employed appropriate?		
4.Results: Are results presented clearly and analysed appropriately? Do the conclusions adequately tie together the other elements of the paper?	No comment.	<b>Reviewer: Yes</b>
5. Implications for research, practice and/or society: Does the paper identify clearly any implications for research, practice and/or society? Does the paper bridge the gap between theory and practice? How can the research be used in practice (economic and commercial impact), in teaching, to influence public policy, in research (contributing to the body of knowledge)? What is the impact upon society (influencing public attitudes, affecting quality of life)? Are these implications consistent with the findings and	<b>Reviewer:</b> this highly depend on originality of the paper.	<b>Reviewer: Yes</b>



conclusions of the paper?		
<p>6. Quality of Communication:</p> <p>Does the paper clearly express its case, measured against the technical language of the field and the expected knowledge of the journal's readership?</p> <p>Has attention been paid to the clarity of expression and readability, such as sentence structure, jargon use, acronyms, etc.</p>	<p><b>Reviewer:</b> OK. can understand.</p>	<p><b>Reviewer:</b> Very easy to follow.</p>
General comment:	<p><b>Reviewer:</b> it is not clear how organizational deviance is different from frontline deviance.</p> <p><b>Response:</b></p> <p>We have added information regarding the differences between them.</p>	<p>Here are my suggestions:</p> <p>2a.<b>Reviewer:</b> In the Practical Implications I would rather say that the companies should also try to reduce the job stress and not only seek a better P-O fit</p> <p><b>Response:</b></p> <p>Thank you for your suggestion. We have added an explanation of what companies can do to reduce work stress</p> <p>2b. <b>Reviewer:</b> AS P-O fit, as you said does not moderate the relationship between job stress and organizational deviance. I am curious to see P-O fit would moderate the perception of stress and deviant behavior.</p> <p><b>Response:</b></p> <p>Thank you for your suggestion. We</p>

		<p>have added them in this section.</p> <p><b>2c. Reviewer:</b> And what is the relationship between stress at work and P-O fit? Are they completely independent?</p> <p><b>Response:</b></p> <p>Job stress and P-O fit are different constructs, as has been explained in the definition. Instead of examining the relationship between the two, this study focuses on P-O fit's role, which might weaken/strengthen the impact of job stress on deviant behavior.</p> <p><b>2d. Reviewer:</b> Maybe if I experience a lot of stress at work, maybe I do not feel like I belong to the company. P-O could also change over time.</p> <p><b>Response:</b></p> <p>Thank you for your suggestion. We have added them in the conclusion section as one of the future research suggestions.</p> <p><b>2e. Reviewer:</b> One thing is when people are interviewed and another when they work there and experience stress every day. Stressed employees might engage in deviant behaviour, but one can not generalize.</p> <p><b>Response:</b></p> <p>In the original paper, we have explained that not all employees who experience stress will be involved in deviance (in the discussion section).</p>
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		<p><b>Reviewer:</b> Do you mean customers and not consumers on Page 2?</p> <p><b>Response:</b></p> <p>Thank you for your suggestion. We have revised and instead of consumer, we use customer.</p>
		<p><b>Reviewer:</b> It is also important to note that many things influence deviant behavior, from work-related, such as pay, perceived injustice, work motivation, to personal factors and that job stress is only one factor.</p> <p><b>Response:</b></p> <p>In this study, we focused on frontline workers' work stress and selected workplace deviance as the impact variable.</p> <p>We have provided an explanation of the reasons for choosing work stress and workplace deviance in the introduction section.</p>

		<p><b>Reviewer:</b> On page 3, you say that there are few research projects that investigate job stress and frontline deviance, but you do not list any of them. Please provide references.</p> <p><b>Response:</b></p> <p>Thank you for your suggestion. We have added information about the research example.</p>
		<p><b>Reviewer:</b> Why did you choose P-O? Please clarify.</p> <p><b>Response:</b></p> <p>Thank you for your suggestion. In the introduction section, we have added information regarding the reasons for choosing P-O fit as the moderating variable</p>
		<p><b>Reviewer:</b> The research aim maybe better than object on page 3</p> <p><b>Response:</b></p> <p>Thank you for the suggestion.</p> <p>We have revised it.</p>
		<p><b>Reviewer:</b> Please add more information on the scales you used. What exactly they measure, and how, example items, questions, reliability and validity. Did you translate these questionnaires into the local language or did you use it in the original version?</p> <p><b>Response:</b></p> <p>Thank you for the suggestions. We have added information regarding the</p>

		<p>example of item and language we used.</p> <p>We already mentioned “What exactly they measure and how” in the original paper.</p> <p>Such as: Person-organization (P-O) fit is an individual’s perception of the congruence between the organizational values and his/her values</p> <p>We already explained the validity and reliability in the result section in the original paper.</p>
		<p><b>Reviewer:</b> There are some English errors.</p> <p><b>Response:</b></p> <p>We have using the proofread service to fix the error.</p>
		<p><b>Reviewer:</b> Good conclusion.</p> <p><b>Response:</b></p> <p>Thank you.</p>
		<p><b>Reviewer:</b> I am also curious to know what is the relationship between P-O and deviance. Is there a positive correlation/negative.</p> <p><b>Response:</b></p> <p>Thank you for the suggestions. We have added information about it.</p>
		<p><b>Reviewer:</b> It is also important to mention the importance of work support, supervisor support, job-employee fit. Maybe some people are not meant to work in customer service... maybe is job-person fit part</p>

		<p>of the P-O fit, but then I would need to see the questions you asked to determine that.</p> <p><b>Response:</b></p> <p>Thank you for your suggestion. We have added them in the conclusion section as one of the future research suggestions.</p>
		<p><b>Reviewer:</b> Also did you mention look into job demands or just job stress.</p> <p><b>Response:</b></p> <p>This study focuses on job stress, which refers to the conditions experienced by individuals, not on job demand, which is usually used in the job stressor construct.</p>

**Abstract:**

**Purpose** – This study examines the relationship between job stress and deviant behaviors, which include organizational and frontline deviance, and the moderating effect of person-organizational (P-O) fit on these relationships.

**Design/methodology/approach** – The sample consists of 259 frontline employees working in Surabaya, Indonesia. Respondents were asked to complete a questionnaire distributed by survey assistants. This present study conducts PLS-SEM to examine hypotheses.

**Findings** – The results indicate that job stress has positive correlations with organizational and frontline deviance. P-O fit has a moderating effect on the relationship between job stress and frontline deviance; the lower the P-O fit, the stronger the relationship between job stress and frontline deviance. P-O fit does not moderate the relationship between job stress and organizational deviance.

**Practical implications** – Companies must be more careful in the recruitment and selection process and continuously perform activities to communicate their values and norms to employees.

**Originality/value** – This study introduces the moderating effect of person-organization (P-O) fit on the relationship between job stress and frontline employees' deviant behaviors which have not been revealed in previous studies. It provides an understanding of the importance of considering the compatibility between individual and organizational values as one of the company's efforts to reduce stressed employees' response by engaging in workplace deviance.

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## Introduction

Organizations certainly have goals to be achieved. Reaching those goals requires high performance and positive work behavior of their employees. However, some types of work demand enormous tasks, culminating stress for employees. This will be prone to stress if their responsibilities lie in between the company and customers, such as frontline employees (Singh, 2000). Since they serve customers as company representatives to interact and communicate with customers (Cambra-fierro *et al.*, 2014; Reynolds and Harris, 2006), they are likely to experience high expectations from their supervisors and verbal aggression from customers (Mulki *et al.*, 2006). Moreover, they are required to provide high-quality service and product knowledge, which brings job stress (Geldart *et al.*, 2018; Sliter *et al.*, 2010). These high demands boost the likelihood of frontline employees experiencing work pressure, which might affect the quality of their services to customers (Kashif *et al.*, 2017; Chaudhary and Lodhwal, 2017).

Job stress is an individual's physical and psychological response when one perceives a threat to something valuable and exhausts his/her resources (Harms *et al.*, 2017). Individuals who experience stress may vent their frustration by taking actions that are detrimental to their organization, such as deviant behavior (De Clercq *et al.*, 2019), that targets organizations (Chiu *et al.*, 2015; Bennett and Robinson, 2000) and threaten the well-being of their members (Everton *et al.*, 2007). However, since customers can be a source of employee stress, the employee is more likely to retaliate by engaging in deviant behaviors against them (Mullen and Kelloway, 2013). Empirically, there are only a few studies that investigate the effects of job stress on organizational and frontline deviance (e.g., Darrat *et al.*, 2016; Swimberghe *et al.*, 2014). However, these studies provide different results regarding the relationship between job stress and deviant behavior. Darrat *et al.* (2016) found that job stress (i.e., in specific form: emotional exhaustion) was positively related to organizational and frontline deviance.



On the contrary, Swimberghe *et al.* (2014) discovered that job stress was not significantly related to organizational and frontline deviance.

Little attention has been paid in existing studies to variables that may mitigate or exacerbate the impact of job stress. De Clercq *et al.* (2019) found that personality factors moderate the relationship between job stress and counterproductive work behaviour (CWB). However, they combine targets of CWB, i.e., organization and other individuals. Thus, there is still uncertainty concerning the effect job stress on certain targets. This current study proposes that P-O (Person-Organization) fit may moderate the relationship between job stress and workplace deviance. Since the latter is employee behavior that violates organizational norms and rules (Robinson and Bennett, 1995), it is possible that P-O fit may reduce the impact of the former. The organization's values play an important role in regulating its employees' behavior (Kim *et al.*, 2013), so individuals with low fit between their values and organization values may have difficulty following the regulations. Thus, it is plausible that individuals with low P-O fit who experience job stress will have a high likelihood of responding with deviant behaviors. Related to the context of frontline employees, since they are expected to communicate the brand image and present themselves as members of the company (Schepers and Nijssen, 2018), the suitability of values between them and the company becomes important. However, the mechanisms of P-O fit's role tend to receive less empirical attention, including in the context of frontline employees. This study aimed to identify the relationship between job stress and workplace deviance (i.e., organizational and frontline deviance) and the role of P-O fit as a moderating variable in these relationships. We incorporate social exchange theory and conservation of resources theory (COR) as the model's basis. This study contributes to address the research gap and provide the mechanism model of how job stress impacts deviant behavior.

## Theoretical Background and Hypothesis

### *Job Stress, organizational and frontline deviance*

Job stress is individuals' responses, both physically and psychologically, that occurs when one's resources are perceived to be insufficient in meeting the expectations for task completion (Harms *et al.*, 2017). In the context of stress, these resources can be an object (e.g., socioeconomic status), personal characteristics (e.g., expertise), conditions (e.g., tenure and seniority), and energy (e.g., time and money) that are valuable for individuals (Hobfoll, 1989). Different individuals may have various valuable resources depending on the experience and situation they face (Halbesleben *et al.*, 2014). Job stress can be generated by several triggers, such as work overload and deficient interaction between individuals at work, working conditions, time pressure, family conflicts, interactions with customers, **workplace**

**incivility & employee cynicism, organizational politics and workplace victimization,**

**Emotional exhaustion** (DeTienne *et al.*, 2012; Geldart *et al.*, 2018; Harms *et al.*, 2017;

**Abubakar, Megeirhi, & Shneikat, 2018; Abubakar *et al.*, 2017; Jiang *et al.*, 2020).**

Responses to work stress are called strains, physiological, like headaches and fatigue, and psychological like anxiety and helplessness (DeTienne *et al.*, 2012; Halbesleben *et al.*, 2014; Hobfoll, 1989; Hobfoll *et al.*, 2018). **Work stress can also lead to intention to**

**sabotage**(Abubakar & Arasli, 2016); **job search behavior** (Abubakar, Megeirhi, & Shneikat,

**2018) and workplace withdrawal behavior** (Abubakar *et al.*, 2017)

Conservation of Resources (COR) theory can explain the relationship between job stress and deviant behaviors (Halbesleben *et al.*, 2014; Hobfoll, 1989). The basic principle of COR's is that individuals are motivated to protect existing resources and to obtain new resources (Halbesleben *et al.*, 2014). Furthermore, individuals will engage in certain behaviors to avoid losing their resources (Halbesleben *et al.*, 2014). For example, for the

sake of remaining health resources, individuals who have a heavy workload will reduce their effort, which could be considered as deviant behaviors. Furthermore, according to COR theory, individuals focus more on stressors when doing work to protect their resources (Chiu *et al.*, 2015). As a result, they may have deviant behaviors against work norms, such as daydreaming and taking longer breaks. Stressed individuals are prone to frustration and likely to engage harmful behaviors on targets perceived as the sources of frustration, including customers (Chiu *et al.*, 2015; Martinko *et al.*, 2002; and Swimberghe *et al.*, 2014). In various studies, negative individual behaviors that deviate from the norms and rules are investigated in the construct of workplace deviance.

Workplace deviance is an individual's tendency to engage in behavior that violates the workplace's organizational norms (Bennett and Robinson, 2000) and erode the organization values (Mulki *et al.*, 2006). These norms consist of regulations, procedures, and policies both formal and informal (Robinson and Bennett, 1995). Deviant behavior can be targeted toward organizations. In this case, individuals engage in actions that violate work norms and rules that result in losses for the company (Ferris, *et al.*, 2009; Jelinek and Ahearne, 2010). For example, employees take company resources without permission and do not carry out their job responsibilities during working hours (Jelinek and Ahearne, 2010). Referring to the indicators provided by Bennett and Robinson (2000), organizational deviance includes such behaviour: spent too much time fantasizing or daydreaming instead of working, intentionally working more slowly than you could have worked, and put little effort into your work. Additionally, Jelinek and Ahearne (2006) introduced another target, the customers, using the term of frontline deviance. Frontline deviance is a violation of organizational norms that is specifically directed at people outside the organization, such as customers (Jelinek and Ahearne, 2010). Individuals involved in frontline deviant toward customers by conducting

unethical and deceptive actions and showing frustration in front of customers (Darrat *et al.*, 2016).

Deviant behaviors are individual's reactions to their experiences in the workplace (Ferris, *et al.*, 2009), to the incompatibility between the work situations and individual's expectations (Bordia *et al.*, 2008), as well as stress at work (Colbert *et al.*, 2004). Individuals who perceive unfavorable events may experience frustration and try to fix the problem or express their feelings toward the organization and its customers (Colbert *et al.*, 2004; Lee and Allen, 2002). This situation is parallel to social exchange theory where individuals tend to unleash unpleasant behaviors due to the bad things they have experienced (Harris *et al.*, 2007). Stressed individuals could view the company as a responsible party. As a result, they will engage in behaviors harmful to their company, deviant behaviors against organizations and customers. .

However, before individuals perpetrate deviant behaviors, they scrutinize the viability of their actions (Bennett and Robinson, 2000). For frontline employees, it is plausible that these behaviors are directed at the customers they often encounter. Since these frontline employees who experience mental pressure focus more on their problems (Swimberghe *et al.*, 2014), their energy are increasingly drained. Therefore, it is difficult for them to provide satisfactory behaviors or to understand others, which results in harmful and inappropriate interactions with customers (Swimberghe *et al.*, 2014). Empirically, Darrat *et al.* (2016) found that job stress (i.e., in specific form: emotional exhaustion) was related to salespersons' deviance. Consequently, it can be argued that the higher job stress, the higher individuals' deviant behaviors, and the following hypotheses are proposed:

*H1a.* Job stress has a positive relationship with organizational deviance.

*H1b.* Job stress has a positive relationship with frontline deviance.

*P-O fit as a moderating effect on the relationship between job stress and deviant behaviors*

Person-organization (P-O) fit is developed based on the interactionist view that individuals' behavior is determined by individuals' characteristics and existing situations (Chatman, 1989). Chatman (1989:339) introduced P-O fit as the congruence between the organization's norms and values and the employee's values. An individual's values refer to one's beliefs about how one should behave or the end-state to be achieved. On the other hand, the values and the norms of the organization are made to regulate its members' behavior, showing which are appropriate (Chatman, 1989). It provides two perspectives: the needs-supplies, referring to companies' ability to meet their employees' needs, and the demands-abilities that relates to individuals' ability to meet companies' requirements (Kristof, 1996). Moreover, Kristof (1996) suggested that P-O fit occurs if at least one of the parties, either companies or employees, are capable of meeting the other party's expectations. The existence of P-O fit will affect work attitudes and behavior (Cable and Edwards, 2004). Individuals who have value incompatibility with their company will be more uncomfortable and dissatisfied (Schwepker, 2019). As a result, their social interaction skills will diminish, including when dealing with customers (Matanda and Ndubisi, 2013; Schwepker, 2019). Empirically, Schwepker (2019) found that salespeople who have low P-O fit have reduced quality of services to customers.

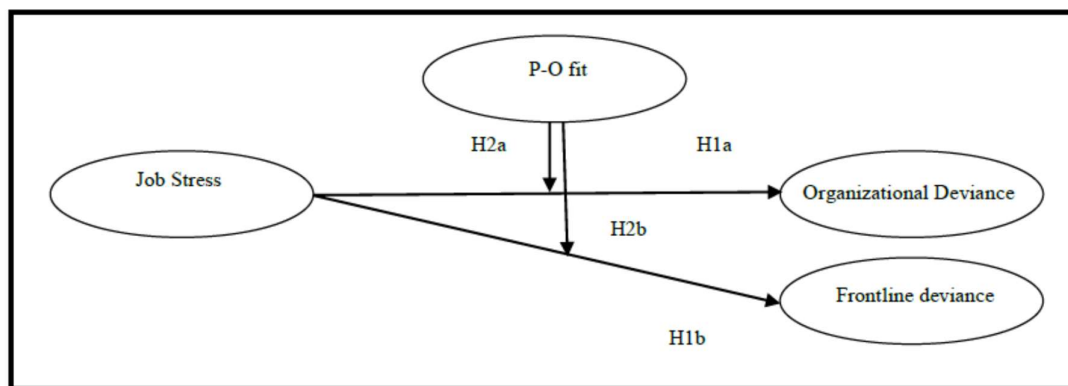
Individuals with high P-O fit will have a high sense of belonging to the organizations (Memon *et al.*, 2017). O'Reilly *et al.* (1991) found that P-O fit has a positive relationship with organizational commitment. Furthermore, organization values are intended to regulate employee behavior (Kim *et al.*, 2013). Therefore, if individuals assume that their values are not in line with the company's values, they may have difficulty in exercising organizational values and lack organizational commitment. It can be argued that when individuals with low

P-O fit experience stress, they will be unable to follow the organizational rules and norms due to fatigue and too much focus on stress. In addition, the inconvenience of their interpersonal interaction with customers means stressed employees increasingly fail to meet applicable service norms, so they are involved in frontline deviance. Their low organizational commitment and sense of belonging also make it easier for them to disobey organizational rules and provide inadequate performance, especially when they experience intense tension.

Hence, this current study proposes that:

*H2a.* The relationship between job stress and organizational deviance is moderated by P-O fit, such that the relationship is stronger when P-O fit is low than high.

*H2b.* The relationship between job stress and frontline deviance is moderated by P-O fit, such that the relationship is stronger when P-O fit is low than high.



**Figure 1.**  
Research Model

## Method

### *Sample and data collection*

This study uses a self-report questionnaire distributed to the respondents by survey assistants.

The respondents are frontline employees who work as salespeople, customer service, and

bank tellers from various industries in Surabaya, Indonesia. Surabaya is the capital of East Java and a business center in Indonesia (Gilbert, 2017). We asked the respondents to fill out the questionnaire anonymously and return it within a sealed envelope that was already provided. There are 259 surveys collected, which could be analyzed for hypothesis testing. The respondents' profiles demonstrate that the majority of the respondents are women (58.3%) with the age range of 18-35 years old (90.8%), have tenure <5 years (81.4%), and are single (68.7%).

### *Instrument*

Person-organization (P-O) fit is an individual's perception of the congruence between the organizational values and his/her values. In this study, P-O fit was measured using five indicators that we adopted from Netemeyer *et al.* (1996) (e.g., This organization has the same values as I do with regard to concern for others) and Saks and Ashforth (1997) (e.g., I feel like I really match into my organization). Respondents were asked to respond on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree - 5 = strongly agree). Job stress is a condition of physical and psychological disorders experienced by individuals due to work pressure accumulated from preceding years. Work stress was measured using seven indicators (e.g., I feel emotionally drained from my work) from Anderson *et al.* (2002). Respondents were asked to respond on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = never - 5 = every day). Organizational deviance is an individual's deviant behavior toward the company, while frontline deviance is an individual's deviant behavior toward the customers in the prior year. This study used twelve organizational deviance indicators (e.g., Spent too much time fantasizing or daydreaming instead of working) from Bennett and Robinson (2000), and three frontline deviance indicators (e.g., Acted out work-related frustrations in front of a customer) from (Darrat *et al.*, 2016). Respondents were asked to respond to both deviant behaviors on a 5-point Likert

scale (1 = never - 5 = daily). The research questionnaire was modified and translated into Indonesian to facilitate respondents' understanding.

## Result

### *Measurement Model and Hypotheses Testing*

This study conducts data analysis in three stages, namely, identifying the common method variance, testing the measurement model, and finally, testing the research hypothesis. Based on Harman's Single Factor Test (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003), the largest variance explained by the first factor is 25.22%, indicating the absence of a single factor. Therefore, common method bias is not a potential threat for this study.

This study examines the validity, reliability, and hypotheses using PLS-SEM, which is illustrated in figure 1. Table I exhibits composite reliability (CR) values and convergent validity (i.e., outer loading values and average variance extracted/AVE). For the achievement of sufficient convergent validity, several indicators are dropped and are not used in further analysis. All outer loading of each indicator results in values above the minimum cutoff of 0.5 (Hair *et al.*, 2017). Similarly, the test of convergent validity at the construct level can be seen from each variable's average variance extracted (AVE) value, which also has the minimum cutoff of 0.5 (Hair *et al.*, 2017). As a condition to fulfil the reliability of internal consistency, all variables have shown satisfactory CR values, being more than 0.836 (Hair *et al.*, 2017). Furthermore, the Fornell-Larcker criterion is used for discriminant validity testing. Table II shows that all the square root of the AVE of any constructs is higher than the correlation value between constructs.

**Table I.**  
Reliability and Convergent Validity

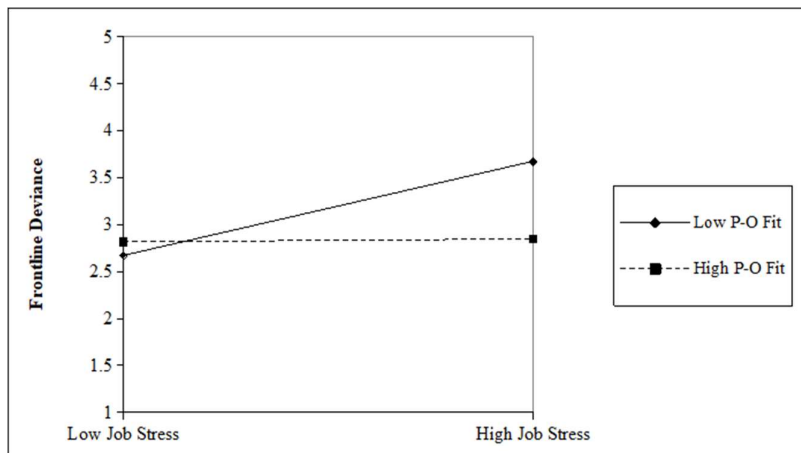
**Table II.**  
Discriminant Validity



### Structural Model

Table III shows that job stress is positively correlated to organizational deviance ( $\beta = 0.359$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and to frontline deviance ( $\beta = 0.257$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). These results support hypotheses 1a and 1b. Although not hypothesized, but as part of the moderation testing process, this study found that P-O fit has a negative effect on organizational and frontline deviance (respectively:  $\beta = -0.209$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ;  $\beta = -0.169$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Moreover, testing the role of moderation indicates that P-O fit moderates the relationship between job stress and frontline deviance ( $\beta = -0.242$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), but does not moderate the relationship between job stress and organizational deviance ( $\beta = -0.089$ , ns.). These results support hypothesis 2b but do not support hypothesis 2a. Figure 2 displays the correlation between job stress and frontline deviance is stronger as the P-O fit decreased, and that job stress is not significantly correlated to frontline deviance when P-O fit is high.

**Table III.**  
Hypotheses Testing



**Figure 2.**  
Moderation effect of P-O fit

### Discussion

As predicted, the results show that job stress is positively correlated to organizational and frontline deviance. These findings support the study of Darrat *et al.* (2016) about the relationship between job stress and workplace deviance. These results are in line with the COR theory. Stressed individuals are engulfed in their resources and tend to focus on the causes of stress and their poor condition. Consequently, they may reduce their efforts to protect their remaining resources. Another explanation is that they may show undue performance in front of customers because of their fatigue. Our result can also be explained based on the social exchange theory that individuals deviate from the norm to retaliate organizations and customers who are considered to be the cause of their unpleasant conditions. Referring to our sample, frontline employees may experience work stress due to high work demands and the provision to interact with customers. This type of work requires them to have high product knowledge and a certain level of service quality in order to satisfy customers, boosting company sales. The stressed frontline employee exhibits heightened deviant behaviors toward the organization and customers. The impacts of these behaviors could be detrimental to the company, decreasing organizational performance, and escalating customers' dissatisfaction.

Further analysis reveals that P-O fit moderates the relationship between job stress and frontline deviance. There is a strong positive correlation between job stress and frontline deviance when P-O fit is low. Contrarily, when P-O fit is high, the relationship between job stress and frontline deviance is not significant. Incongruent values between the organization and employees will encourage the emergence of counterproductive attitudes and behaviors (Schwepker, 2019). Individuals who have a value match with their organization will trust their company and be comfortable in interpersonal interactions in the workplace (Cable and Edwards, 2004; Zhang and Bloemer, 2008). Thus, frontline employees with low P-O fit may become less comfortable communicating and becoming agents of the company's brand. The

work stress they experience makes them run out of important resources to serve customers. Especially with the lower P-O fit, they will be increasingly uncomfortable and unable to become a qualified service provider who must communicate the company's value through the products and brands they offer to customers. As a result, stressed frontline employees will increasingly exhibit frontline deviance. In addition, Matanda and Ndubisi (2013) suggest that individuals who have similar values as their organizations are more likely to provide the same service value to customers. Furthermore, individuals who have value incongruence with their company will experience job dissatisfaction (Kim *et al.*, 2013), which makes them unable to satisfy their customers (Matanda and Ndubisi, 2013). Therefore, the absence of compatibility – can strengthen the adverse impact work stress on frontline deviance.

However, this present study shows that P-O fit does not mitigate/exacerbate the impact of job stress on organizational deviance. There are several possible explanations regarding this result. Individuals who engage in workplace deviance may consider the risks of that behavior (Diefendorff, 2007). Some employees might consider organizational deviance to be too risky to carry out, while others do not. In this case, the compatibility between the individuals' values and the organizations' may not be relevant in limiting their involvement in organizational deviance. For some individuals, organizational deviance is still carried out despite their value fit, because they feel that the organization fails to establish a pleasant working environment and is less concerned about employees' psychological and physiological health. As a result, individuals who experience job stress may perceive the organization as responsible for their stresses. These employees respond to their frustration by defying organization norms. On the contrary, other employees, regardless of having high or low P-O fit, tend to focus on exercising frontline deviance as opposed to organizational deviance, since they consider customers as the cause of their stress.

## Implication

Because of their job demands, frontline employees are vulnerable to stress. As a result, they can respond to their stress through workplace deviance. Undeniably, these employees are more likely to be involved in deviant behavior if they have low P-O fit. Therefore, companies and managers need to consider the following approach to manage their employees successfully. First, the interactionist approach suggests that companies need to prevent this issue by exercising the process of selection and continuous socialization to control employees' behavior (Chatman, 1989). During the recruitment and selection process, companies should be more careful in assessing applicants' personalities, such as reflecting whether individuals have values parallel to the company and their job, the tendency to experience stress, and the likelihood of rules violation. Background checks and references are essential in recruiting individuals with minimized likelihood of engaging in workplace deviance. Second, companies need to continuously support, establish friendly relationships, and develop participatory decision-making processes with employees to reduce their work stress and deviant behaviors. Moreover, since individual differences (e.g., disposition) can play a role in how individuals deal with pressures at work (Barsky *et al.*, 2004), organizations need to provide information about company demands for employee work behavior and work conditions. Organizations also need to consider situational factors that may increase employees' stressful experiences, such as supervisors and coworkers' behaviour (Cohen and Wills, 1985). In this regard, they need to create a comfortable social environment and hold role-playing training so colleagues and supervisors can understand the impact of their negative behavior. Third, employees can learn the company's values and norms from the daily activities they experience, including how managers treat them (Lu *et al.*, 2015; Zheng *et al.*, 2017). Therefore, companies need to evaluate regularly to ensure that managers have become positive role models and treat their employees according to company values and

norms. Fourth, companies need to communicate their values, norms, and regulations regularly to all organization members while also providing a clear reward and punishment policy to reduce deviant behavior.

## **Conclusion**

This study found that frontline employees who experience work stress may engage in deviant behavior. This can be directed toward the organization, such as frequent daydreaming, and customers, in the form of unethical conduct. These behaviors certainly reduce the overall effectiveness of the organization and intensify customers' dissatisfaction level which leads to the deterioration of the organization's performance. Furthermore, this study demonstrates that the impact of job stress on frontline deviance can be exacerbated if employees have low person-organization (P-O) fit. Therefore, companies need to emphasize not only the suitability between individual competencies and job requirements but also that between an individual's values and those of the organization.

Despite these contributions, this study contains limitations that need to be addressed in future studies. First, this study uses cross-sectional data. Future researchers should consider using longitudinal studies, specifically related to the possibility of a change in P-O fit due to work stress. By using longitudinal study researchers may compare the changes in research subjects after a certain period. The stages can be done as follows: P-O fit is analyzed in time-1 and time-3, job stress is analyzed in time-2. This research was conducted on the same subjects, and each period was given a time lag. Thus, it will appear that there is a change in the employees' PO Fit due to their job stress. Second, this study obtained data through self-report for all variables. Since these variables – job stress and P-O fit – are subjective to personal perceptions and personal experience, self-report could be an alternative way to obtain data. Furthermore, Berry *et al.* (2007) indicated no significant difference in the

use of self-reports or other-reports to measure individuals' deviant behaviors. However, the use of other data sources is suggested for future researches. Third, since individuals may work in fields that are not in accordance with their wishes, including their skills and abilities (person-job fit), further studies need to consider the role of this P-J fit variable as a moderation in the relationship between job stress and deviant behavior. Furthermore, draw from the results that P-O Fit does not moderate the relationship between job stress and organizational deviance, future research may test moderating variables such as organizational characteristics, employee characteristics, and workgroups (Appelbaum *et al.*, 2007), which may play a role in this relationship. Social support from co-workers and supervisors can mitigate individuals who experience unpleasant treatment to engage in behaviors detrimental to the organization (Holm *et al.*, 2019). Future studies may identify the role social support has as a moderating effect on the relationship between job stress and workplace deviance. Fourth, the sample of this study is the frontline employees. Further studies should consider utilizing other occupations with a code of ethics that requires high professional work, such as doctors and teachers. Therefore, future research regarding this context could generate more generalized outcomes.

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09-Jan-2021

Dear Dr. Wulani,

Your revised manuscript entitled "The moderating effect of person-organizational fit on the relationship between job stress and deviant behaviors of frontline employees" has been successfully submitted online and is presently being given full consideration for publication in the International Journal of Workplace Health Management.

Your manuscript ID is IJWHM-06-2020-0103.R1.

Please mention the above manuscript ID in all future correspondence or when calling the office regarding any questions. If there are any changes in your street address or e-mail address, please log in to Manuscript Central at <https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/ijwhm> and edit your user information as appropriate.

You can view the status of your manuscript at any time by checking your Author Centre after logging in to <https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/ijwhm>

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Thank you for submitting your manuscript to the International Journal of Workplace Health Management.

Yours sincerely,  
Maria Karanika-Murray  
International Journal of Workplace Health Management



Marliana Junaedi , SE., M.Si. &lt;marliana@ukwms.ac.id&gt;

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**Fwd: International Journal of Workplace Health Management - Decision on Manuscript ID IJWHM-06-2020-0103.R1**

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Fenika Wulani &lt;fenika@ukwms.ac.id&gt;

Tue, May 16, 2023 at 5:31 PM

To: "Marliana Junaedi , SE., M.Si." &lt;marliana@ukwms.ac.id&gt;

bu Marli ini kukirim email dari ijwhm

salam

Fenika Wulani

Department of Management

Faculty of Business

Widya Mandala Catholic University

Surabaya, Indonesia

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **International Journal of Workplace Health Management** <onbehalf@manuscriptcentral.com>

Date: Tue, Mar 30, 2021 at 1:18 PM

Subject: International Journal of Workplace Health Management - Decision on Manuscript ID IJWHM-06-2020-0103.R1

To: &lt;fenika@ukwms.ac.id&gt;, &lt;fewulani@gmail.com&gt;

30-Mar-2021

Dear Dr. Wulani,

Manuscript ID IJWHM-06-2020-0103.R1 entitled "The moderating effect of person-organizational fit on the relationship between job stress and deviant behaviors of frontline employees" which you submitted to the International Journal of Workplace Health Management, has been reviewed. The comments of the reviewer(s) are included at the bottom of this letter.

The reviewer(s) have recommended publication, but also suggest some minor revisions to the manuscript. Therefore, I invite you to respond to the reviewer(s)' comments and revise the manuscript.

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Revisions cannot be made on the originally submitted version of the manuscript. Instead, the manuscript must be revised using a word processing program and saving it on your computer. Please also highlight any changes to your manuscript within the document by using the track changes mode in MS Word OR by using bold OR coloured text.



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To help support you on your publishing journey we have partnered with Editage, a leading global science communication platform, to offer expert editorial support including language editing and translation.

If your article has been rejected or revisions have been requested, you may benefit from Editage's services. For a full list of services, visit: [authorservices.emeraldpublishing.com/](https://www.editage.com/authorservices)

Please note that there is no obligation to use Editage and using this service does not guarantee publication.

Once again, thank you for submitting your manuscript to the International Journal of Workplace Health Management and I look forward to receiving your revision.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Christine Ipsen

Co-Editor-in-chief, International Journal of Workplace Health Management

[chip@dtu.dk](mailto:chip@dtu.dk)

Reviewer(s)' and Associate Editor Comments to Author:

Reviewer: 1

Recommendation: Minor Revision

Comments:

Greatly improved!

I would just like to see a bit more how this research can be used practically in the area of HR. Just add a bit on this section.

Additional Questions:

1. Originality: Does the paper contain new and significant information adequate to justify publication?: Yes.

2. Relationship to Literature: Does the paper demonstrate an adequate understanding of the relevant literature in the field and cite an appropriate range of literature sources? Is any significant work ignored?: Yes.

3. Methodology: Is the paper's argument built on an appropriate base of theory, concepts, or other ideas? Has the research or equivalent intellectual work on which the paper is based been well designed? Are the methods employed appropriate?: Yes.
4. Results: Are results presented clearly and analysed appropriately? Do the conclusions adequately tie together the other elements of the paper?: Yes.
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6. Quality of Communication: Does the paper clearly express its case, measured against the technical language of the field and the expected knowledge of the journal's readership? Has attention been paid to the clarity of expression and readability, such as sentence structure, jargon use, acronyms, etc.: Yes.

Reviewer: 2

Recommendation: Minor Revision

Comments:

Dear author(s),

The paper addresses an important topic and as such I feel that a minor revision can get the paper ready. The issues are subsequently detailed.

- 1) Please develop the rationale behind your work, there is a need for further clarification and justifications.
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- 7) Relevant papers published in the journal should be cited.

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#### Associate Editor

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Reviewer: 2

Recommendation: Minor Revision

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#### Associate Editor

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##### Comments to the Author

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We have reviewed the comments of the reviewer and have now completed all of the requested. Thank you for the useful comments and suggestions for our manuscript entitled "The moderating effect of person-organizational fit on the relationship between job stress and deviant behaviors of frontline employees" (ID IJWHM-06-2020-0103.R2).

In our revised paper, we use yellow and blue color to mark our answers to reviewer comments and suggestions. **We use a yellow color to respond to reviewer one and a blue color for reviewer two.**

### Responses to reviewers 1

<b>Reviewer 1</b>	
<b>Minor Revision</b>	
General Comment	<b>Reviewer 1:</b>
1. Originality: Does the paper contain new and significant information adequate to justify publication?	<b>Reviewer 1:</b> Yes  <b>Response:</b> Thank you for the comment.
2. Relationship to Literature: Does the paper demonstrate an adequate understanding of the relevant literature in the field and cite an appropriate range of literature sources? Is any significant work ignored?	<b>Reviewer 1:</b> Yes  <b>Response:</b> Thank you for the comment.
3. Methodology: Is the paper's argument built on an appropriate base of theory, concepts, or other ideas? Has the research or equivalent intellectual work on which the paper is based been well designed? Are the methods employed appropriate?	<b>Reviewer 1:</b> Yes  <b>Response:</b> Thank you for the comment.
4.Results: Are results presented clearly and analysed appropriately? Do the conclusions adequately tie together the other elements of the paper?	<b>Reviewer 1:</b> Yes  <b>Response:</b> Thank you for the comment.
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<p>implications for research, practice and/or society? Does the paper bridge the gap between theory and practice? How can the research be used in practice (economic and commercial impact), in teaching, to influence public policy, in research (contributing to the body of knowledge)? What is the impact upon society (influencing public attitudes, affecting quality of life)? Are these implications consistent with the findings and conclusions of the paper?</p>	<p>I would just like to see a bit more how this research can be used practically in the area of HR. Just add a bit on this section.</p> <p>Helpful for researchers on this topic and for HR professionals to understand that belonging and PO fit really important are</p> <p><b>Response:</b> Thank you for the suggestion. We have added an explanation of the importance of P-O fit.</p> <p><i>The text reads as follows on:</i> <b>(Implication, first paragraph)</b></p> <p>“P-O fit is important to pay attention to because individuals who have a value mismatch with their company will be more uncomfortable and dissatisfied (Schwepker, 2019). As a result, their social interaction skills will decrease, including when dealing with customers (Matanda and Ndubisi, 2013; Schwepker, 2019). Schwepker (2019) found that salespeople who have a low P-O fit have lowered the quality of service to customers. Our study also shows that employees who have a low P-O fit will increasingly respond to their job stress by engaging in workplace deviance. Since individual characteristics and situational factors can influence the extent to which individuals experience and react to their stress by engaging in deviant behavior (Malik and Lenka, 2019; Singh, 2019), organizations need to improve effective employee management practices to reduce the risk of improper employee placement and unpleasant situations. Therefore, companies and managers need to consider the following approach to manage their employees successfully based on human resource practices. “</p>
<b>Response to Reviewer 2</b>	
	Minor Revision
<p>1. Originality: Does the paper contain new and significant information adequate to justify publication?</p>	<p>Please develop the rationale behind your work, there is a need for further clarification and justifications.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> Thank you for the suggestions. We have added information regarding the rationale behind your</p>

	<p>work</p> <p><b><i>The text reads as follows on:</i></b>  <b>(Introduction, last paragraph)</b></p> <p>“This study aimed to identify the relationship between job stress and workplace deviance (i.e., organizational and frontline deviance) and the role of P-O fit as a moderating variable in these relationships. We incorporate social exchange theory and conservation of resources theory (COR) as the model's basis. The current study contributes in two ways. First, this study provides an understanding of the relationship between job stress and workplace deviance that has not been widely investigated by previous research. We focus on workplace deviance carried out by frontline employees, i.e., in the form of violations of organizational norms and rules (organizational deviance) and deviant behavior directed at consumers (frontline deviance). This investigation is important considering that frontline employees are the vanguard of the company, so that their deviant behavior may have an impact on the loss of opportunities for the company to gain higher profits. Second, to address the research gap regarding the relationship between job stress and workplace deviance, and the limited number of studies of factors that can strengthen/weaken the relationship between the two, this study offers P-O fit as a moderating variable. We demonstrate that the response of stressed employees by engaging in deviant behavior can be influenced by the extent of their P-O fit. Our study not only enriches the literature in regard to the relationship between job stress and workplace deviance, especially in the context of frontline employees but also provides insights for business practitioners. This study gives guidance to managers to better manage job stress by strengthening employee P-O fit to reduce workplace deviance through various human resource management activities.”</p>
<p>2. Relationship to Literature: Does the paper demonstrate an adequate understanding of the relevant literature in the field and cite an appropriate range of literature sources? Is any</p>	<p><b>Reviewer 2:</b> Literature seems adequate but can be enhanced using <b>recently published materials</b></p> <p>Response: Thank you for the suggestion. We have added some</p>

<p>significant work ignored?</p>	<p>of recent articles.</p> <p><b><i>The text reads as follows on:</i></b>  <b>(Theoretical Background and Hypothesis)</b></p> <p>“workplace incivility &amp; employee cynicism, organizational politics and workplace victimization, Emotional exhaustion (Abubakar <i>et al.</i>, 2017, 2018; DeTienne <i>et al.</i>, 2012; Geldart <i>et al.</i>, 2018; Harms <i>et al.</i>, 2017; Jiang <i>et al.</i>, 2020).”</p> <p>“In this case, ...; Malik and Lenka, 2019). For example, ... working slowly (Malik and Lenka, 2019).”</p> <p>“Deviant behaviors are individual’s reactions ... as well as organizational stress (Singh, 2019).”</p> <p>“The existence of P-O fit will affect work attitudes and behavior (Boon and Biron, 2016; Schwepker, 2019). “</p> <p>“P-O fit has a positive relationship with organizational commitment (Chung, 2017; O’Reilly <i>et al.</i>, 1991). Furthermore, organization values are intended to regulate employee behavior (Chung, 2017; Kim <i>et al.</i>, 2013).”</p>
<p>3. Methodology: Is the paper's argument built on an appropriate base of theory, concepts, or other ideas? Has the research or equivalent intellectual work on which the paper is based been well designed? Are the methods employed appropriate?</p>	<p><b>Reviewer 2:</b>  In Method section, sampling method is NOT acknowledged. Did the author(s) conduct the study in English, are there any back-translation? Were there any selection criteria for the participants? I commend the author(s) test of common variance.</p> <p>Response:  Thank you for the comment.</p> <p>a. We did not use a back-translation process for our research instrument, except for a measure of organizational deviance. We have used the organizational deviance instrument in other studies that have not been published</p> <p>b. We have added information about the criteria for respondents.</p> <p><b>The text reads as follows on:</b>  <b>(Method, Sample and data collection, first</b></p>

	<p><b>paragraph)</b></p> <p>“Selection of respondents based on purposive sampling technique (i.e., non-managerial and educational level).”</p> <p>c. Thank you for your commend.</p> <p>However, we also added an explanation to complete the information about our efforts to reduce the potential of CMB.</p> <p><b>The text reads as follows on: (Method, instrument, last sentence)</b></p> <p>“To minimize the potential of CMB, we asked respondents to complete the questionnaire anonymously and return it in a sealed envelope (Abubakar et al., 2017; Podsakoff et al., 2003).”</p>
<p>4.Results: Are results presented clearly and analysed appropriately? Do the conclusions adequately tie together the other elements of the paper?</p>	<p><b>Reviewer 2:</b></p> <p>In Result section, the author(s) did not <b>report the HTMT for discriminant validity</b>.</p> <p>Response:</p> <p>Thank you for the comment.</p> <p>In our initial paper, we have already written that discriminant validity testing is carried out using the Fornell-Larcker criterion approach. Following your suggestion, we replaced it with the HTMT approach.</p> <p><b><i>The text reads as follows on: (Result, second paragraph)</i></b></p> <p>“Furthermore, the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlations approach is used for discriminant validity testing. Table II shows that all the constructs have a value less than HTMT.85, which indicates that they are unique constructs.”</p>
<p>5. Implications for research, practice and/or society: Does the paper identify clearly any implications for research, practice and/or society? Does the paper bridge the gap between theory and practice? How can the research be used in practice (economic and commercial</p>	<p><b>Reviewer:</b></p> <p>Finally, your discussion on the <b>effect of stress on deviance</b> should be supported and enriched with recent findings. Work or job stressors either organizational-related, supervisors-related, co-worker-related have been shown to manifest various kinds of deviance in different cultural settings such as <b>intention to sabotage</b>(Abubakar &amp; Arasli, 2016);</p>

<p>impact), in teaching, to influence public policy, in research (contributing to the body of knowledge)? What is the impact upon society (influencing public attitudes, affecting quality of life)? Are these implications consistent with the findings and conclusions of the paper?</p>	<p><b>Job search behavior</b> (Abubakar, Megeirhi, &amp; Shneikat, 2018) and <b>workplace withdrawal behavior</b> (Abubakar et al., 2017). <b>Also use the theories to explain how the associations emerge...</b></p> <p><b>Response:</b> Thank you for the suggestion. we have added an explanation of the importance of P-O fit to the implications</p> <p><b><i>The text reads as follows on:</i></b> <b>(Discussion, second paragraph)</b></p> <p>“Our findings support Darrat <i>et al.</i> (2016) about the relationship between job stress and workplace deviance. However, in contrast to this current study which focuses on the physical and psychological conditions of employees who experience stress, Darrat <i>et al.</i> (2016) focused on the impact of emotional exhaustion. Thus the results of this study enrich the literature regarding the relationship between job stress and deviant behaviors, i.e., organizational and frontline deviance, especially in the context of frontline employees, which has not been widely studied. These findings support several studies that employees experiencing unpleasant and stressful conditions will respond by engaging in behavior that deviates from workplace norms and rules, such as intention to sabotage (Abubakar and Arasli, 2016), job search behavior (Abubakar <i>et al.</i>, 2018), workplace withdrawal behavior (Abubakar <i>et al.</i>, 2017), organizational deviance (Chung, 2017; Khattak <i>et al.</i>, 2019; Khattak <i>et al.</i>, 2020). These studies were conducted in different countries which have different cultural contexts. These findings indicate that, in general, individuals who experience unpleasant events will respond by engaging in deviant behavior. This thinking is in line with Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005) that social exchange theory can be applied universally even though the cultural context can still influence the extent to which individuals apply this reciprocal principle.”</p>
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**Abstract:**

**Purpose** – This study examines the relationship between job stress and deviant behaviors, which include organizational and frontline deviance, and the moderating effect of person-organizational (P-O) fit on these relationships.

**Design/methodology/approach** – The sample consists of 259 frontline employees working in Surabaya, Indonesia. Respondents were asked to complete a questionnaire distributed by survey assistants. This present study conducts PLS-SEM to examine hypotheses.

**Findings** – The results indicate that job stress has positive correlations with organizational and frontline deviance. P-O fit has a moderating effect on the relationship between job stress and frontline deviance; the lower the P-O fit, the stronger the relationship between job stress and frontline deviance. P-O fit does not moderate the relationship between job stress and organizational deviance.

**Practical implications** – Companies must be more careful in the recruitment and selection process and continuously perform activities to communicate their values and norms to employees.

**Originality/value** – This study introduces the moderating effect of person-organization (P-O) fit on the relationship between job stress and frontline employees' deviant behaviors which have not been revealed in previous studies. It provides an understanding of the importance of considering the compatibility between individual and organizational values as one of the company's efforts to reduce stressed employees' response by engaging in workplace deviance.

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## Introduction

Organizations certainly have goals to be achieved. Reaching those goals requires high performance and positive work behavior of their employees. However, some types of work demand enormous tasks, culminating stress for employees. This will be prone to stress if their responsibilities lie in between the company and customers, such as frontline employees (Singh, 2000). Since they serve customers as company representatives to interact and communicate with customers (Cambra-fierro *et al.*, 2014; Reynolds and Harris, 2006), they are likely to experience high expectations from their supervisors and verbal aggression from customers (Mulki *et al.*, 2006). Moreover, they are required to provide high-quality service and product knowledge, which brings job stress (Geldart *et al.*, 2018; Sliter *et al.*, 2010). These high demands boost the likelihood of frontline employees experiencing work pressure, which might affect the quality of their services to customers (Kashif *et al.*, 2017; Chaudhary and Lodhwal, 2017).

Job stress is an individual's physical and psychological response when one perceives a threat to something valuable and exhausts his/her resources (Harms *et al.*, 2017). Individuals who experience stress may vent their frustration by taking actions that are detrimental to their organization (De Clercq *et al.*, 2019), such as workplace deviance, that targets organizations (Chiu *et al.*, 2015; Bennett and Robinson, 2000) and threaten the well-being of their members (Everton *et al.*, 2007). However, since customers can be a source of employee stress, the employee is more likely to retaliate by engaging in deviant behaviors against them (Mullen and Kelloway, 2013). Empirically, there are only a few studies that investigate the effects of job stress on organizational and frontline deviance (e.g., Darrat *et al.*, 2016; Swimberghe *et al.*, 2014). However, these studies provide different results regarding the relationship between job stress and deviant behavior. Darrat *et al.* (2016) found that job stress (i.e., in specific form: emotional exhaustion) was positively related to organizational and frontline deviance.

On the contrary, Swimberghe *et al.* (2014) discovered that job stress was significantly related to frontline deviance but not organizational deviance. However, they only found a low effect of job stress on frontline deviance.

Little attention has been paid in existing studies to variables that may mitigate or exacerbate the impact of job stress on detrimental work behavior. De Clercq *et al.* (2019) found that personality factors moderate the relationship between job stress and counterproductive work behaviour (CWB). However, they combine targets of CWB, i.e., organization and other individuals. Thus, there is still uncertainty concerning the effect job stress on certain targets. This current study proposes that P-O (Person-Organization) fit may moderate the relationship between job stress and workplace deviance. Since the latter is employee behavior that violates organizational norms and rules (Robinson and Bennett, 1995), it is possible that P-O fit may reduce the impact of the former. The organization's values play an important role in regulating its employees' behavior (Kim *et al.*, 2013), so individuals with low fit between their values and organization values may have difficulty following the regulations. Thus, it is plausible that individuals with low P-O fit who experience job stress will have a high likelihood of responding with deviant behaviors. Related to the context of frontline employees, since they are expected to communicate the brand image and present themselves as members of the company (Schepers and Nijssen, 2018), the suitability of values between them and the company becomes important. However, the mechanisms of P-O fit's role tend to receive less empirical attention, including in the context of frontline employees.

This study aimed to identify the relationship between job stress and workplace deviance (i.e., organizational and frontline deviance) and the role of P-O fit as a moderating variable in these relationships. We incorporate social exchange theory and conservation of resources theory (COR) as the model's basis. The current study contributes in two ways. First, this

study provides an understanding of the relationship between job stress and workplace deviance that has not been widely investigated by previous research. We focus on workplace deviance carried out by frontline employees, i.e., in the form of violations of organizational norms and rules (organizational deviance) and deviant behavior directed at consumers (frontline deviance). This investigation is important considering that frontline employees are the vanguard of the company, so that their deviant behavior may have an impact on the loss of opportunities for the company to gain higher profits. Second, to address the research gap regarding the relationship between job stress and workplace deviance, and the limited number of studies of factors that can strengthen/weaken the relationship between the two, this study offers P-O fit as a moderating variable. We demonstrate that the response of stressed employees by engaging in deviant behavior can be influenced by the extent of their P-O fit. Our study not only enriches the literature in regard to the relationship between job stress and workplace deviance, especially in the context of frontline employees but also provides insights for business practitioners. This study gives guidance to managers to better manage job stress by strengthening employee P-O fit to reduce workplace deviance through various human resource management activities.

## **Theoretical Background and Hypothesis**

### *Job Stress, organizational and frontline deviance*

Job stress is individuals' responses, both physically and psychologically, that occurs when one's resources are perceived to be insufficient in meeting the expectations for task completion (Harms *et al.*, 2017). In the context of stress, these resources can be an object (e.g., socioeconomic status), personal characteristics (e.g., expertise), conditions (e.g., tenure and seniority), and energy (e.g., time and money) that are valuable for individuals (Hobfoll, 1989). Different individuals may have various valuable resources depending on the

experience and situation they face (Halbesleben *et al.*, 2014). Job stress can be generated by several triggers, such as work overload and deficient interaction between individuals at work, working conditions, time pressure, family conflicts, and interactions with customers, workplace incivility & employee cynicism, organizational politics and workplace victimization, Emotional exhaustion (Abubakar *et al.*, 2017, 2018; DeTienne *et al.*, 2012; Geldart *et al.*, 2018; Harms *et al.*, 2017; Jiang *et al.*, 2020). Responses to work stress are called strains, physiological, like headaches and fatigue, and psychological like anxiety and helplessness (DeTienne *et al.*, 2012; Halbesleben *et al.*, 2014; Hobfoll, 1989; Hobfoll *et al.*, 2018).

Conservation of Resources (COR) theory can explain the relationship between job stress and deviant behaviors (Halbesleben *et al.*, 2014; Hobfoll, 1989). The basic principle of COR's is that individuals are motivated to protect existing resources and to obtain new resources (Halbesleben *et al.*, 2014). Furthermore, individuals will engage in certain behaviors to avoid losing their resources (Halbesleben *et al.*, 2014). For example, for the sake of remaining health resources, individuals who have a heavy workload will reduce their effort, which could be considered as deviant behaviors. Furthermore, according to COR theory, individuals focus more on stressors when doing work to protect their resources (Chiu *et al.*, 2015). As a result, they may have deviant behaviors against work norms, such as daydreaming and taking longer breaks. Stressed individuals are prone to frustration and likely to engage harmful behaviors on targets perceived as the sources of frustration, including customers (Chiu *et al.*, 2015; Martinko *et al.*, 2002; and Swimberghe *et al.*, 2014). In various studies, negative individual behaviors that deviate from the norms and rules are investigated in the construct of workplace deviance.

Workplace deviance is an individual's tendency to engage in behavior that violates the workplace's organizational norms (Bennett and Robinson, 2000) and erode the organization

values (Mulki *et al.*, 2006). These norms consist of regulations, procedures, and policies both formal and informal (Robinson and Bennett, 1995). Deviant behavior can be targeted toward organizations. In this case, individuals engage in actions that violate work norms and rules that result in losses for the company (Ferris, *et al.*, 2009; Jelinek and Ahearne, 2010; Malik and Lenka, 2019). For example, employees take company resources without permission and do not carry out their job responsibilities during working hours (Jelinek and Ahearne, 2010), working slowly (Malik and Lenka, 2019). Referring to the indicators provided by Bennett and Robinson (2000), organizational deviance includes such behaviour: spent too much time fantasizing or daydreaming instead of working, intentionally working more slowly than you could have worked, and put little effort into your work. Additionally, Jelinek and Ahearne (2006) introduced another target, the customers, using the term of frontline deviance. Frontline deviance is a violation of organizational norms that is specifically directed at people outside the organization, such as customers (Jelinek and Ahearne, 2010). Individuals involved in frontline deviant toward customers by conducting unethical and deceptive actions and showing frustration in front of customers (Darrat *et al.*, 2016).

Deviant behaviors are individual's reactions to their experiences in the workplace (Ferris, *et al.*, 2009), to the incompatibility between the work situations and individual's expectations (Bordia *et al.*, 2008), as well as organizational stress (Singh, 2019). Individuals who perceive unfavorable events may experience frustration and try to fix the problem or express their feelings toward the organization and its customers (Colbert *et al.*, 2004; Lee and Allen, 2002). This situation is parallel to social exchange theory where individuals tend to unleash unpleasant behaviors due to the bad things they have experienced (Harris *et al.*, 2007). Stressed individuals could view the company as a responsible party. As a result, they will engage in behaviors harmful to their company, deviant behaviors against organizations and customers.

However, before individuals perpetrate deviant behaviors, they scrutinize the viability of their actions (Bennett and Robinson, 2000). For frontline employees, it is plausible that these behaviors are directed at the customers they often encounter. Since these frontline employees who experience mental pressure focus more on their problems (Swimberghe *et al.*, 2014), their energy are increasingly drained. Therefore, it is difficult for them to provide satisfactory behaviors or to understand others, which results in harmful and inappropriate interactions with customers (Swimberghe *et al.*, 2014). Empirically, Darrat *et al.* (2016) found that job stress (i.e., in specific form: emotional exhaustion) was related to salespersons' deviance. Consequently, it can be argued that the higher job stress, the higher individuals' deviant behaviors, and the following hypotheses are proposed:

*H1a.* Job stress has a positive relationship with organizational deviance.

*H1b.* Job stress has a positive relationship with frontline deviance.

*P-O fit as a moderating effect on the relationship between job stress and deviant behaviors*

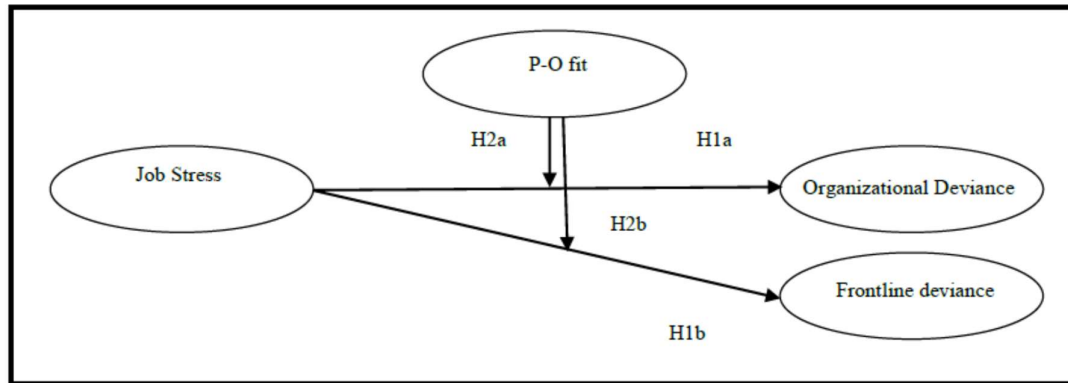
Person-organization (P-O) fit is developed based on the interactionist view that individuals' behavior is determined by individuals' characteristics and existing situations (Chatman, 1989). Chatman (1989:339) introduced P-O fit as the congruence between the organization's norms and values and the employee's values. An individual's values refer to one's beliefs about how one should behave or the end-state to be achieved. On the other hand, the values and the norms of the organization are made to regulate its members' behavior, showing which are appropriate (Chatman, 1989). It provides two perspectives: the needs-supplies, referring to companies' ability to meet their employees' needs, and the demands-abilities that relates to individuals' ability to meet companies' requirements (Kristof, 1996). Moreover, Kristof (1996) suggested that P-O fit occurs if at least one of the parties, either companies or

employees, are capable of meeting the other party's expectations. The existence of P-O fit will affect work attitudes and behavior (Boon and Biron, 2016; Schwepker, 2019). Individuals who have value incompatibility with their company will be more uncomfortable and dissatisfied (Schwepker, 2019). As a result, their social interaction skills will diminish, including when dealing with customers (Matanda and Ndubisi, 2013; Schwepker, 2019). Empirically, Schwepker (2019) found that salespeople who have low P-O fit have reduced quality of services to customers.

Individuals with high P-O fit will have a high sense of belonging to the organizations (Memon *et al.*, 2017). P-O fit has a positive relationship with organizational commitment (Chung, 2017; O'Reilly *et al.*, 1991). Furthermore, organization values are intended to regulate employee behavior (Chung, 2017; Kim *et al.*, 2013). Therefore, if individuals assume that their values are not in line with the company's values, they may have difficulty in exercising organizational values and lack organizational commitment. It can be argued that when individuals with low P-O fit experience stress, they will be unable to follow the organizational rules and norms due to fatigue and too much focus on stress. In addition, the inconvenience of their interpersonal interaction with customers means stressed employees increasingly fail to meet applicable service norms, so they are involved in frontline deviance. Their low organizational commitment and sense of belonging also make it easier for them to disobey organizational rules and provide inadequate performance, especially when they experience intense tension. Hence, this current study proposes that:

*H2a.* The relationship between job stress and organizational deviance is moderated by P-O fit, such that the relationship is stronger when P-O fit is low than high.

*H2b.* The relationship between job stress and frontline deviance is moderated by P-O fit, such that the relationship is stronger when P-O fit is low than high.



**Figure 1.**  
Research Model

## Method

### *Sample and data collection*

This study uses a self-report questionnaire distributed to the respondents by survey assistants. The respondents are frontline employees who work as salespeople, customer service, and bank tellers from various industries in Surabaya, Indonesia. Surabaya is the capital of East Java and a business center in Indonesia (Gilbert, 2017). **Selection of respondents based on purposive sampling technique (i.e., non-managerial and educational level).** We asked the respondents to fill out the questionnaire anonymously and return it within a sealed envelope that was already provided. There are 259 surveys collected, which could be analyzed for hypothesis testing. The respondents' profiles demonstrate that the majority of the respondents are women (58.3%) with the age range of 18-35 years old (90.8%), have tenure <5 years (81.4%), and are single (68.7%).

### *Instrument*

Person-organization (P-O) fit is an individual's perception of the congruence between the organizational values and his/her values. In this study, P-O fit was measured using five



indicators that we adopted from Netemeyer *et al.* (1996) (e.g., This organization has the same values as I do with regard to concern for others) and Saks and Ashforth (1997) (e.g., I feel like I really match into my organization). Respondents were asked to respond on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree - 5 = strongly agree). Job stress is a condition of physical and psychological disorders experienced by individuals due to work pressure accumulated from preceding years. Work stress was measured using seven indicators (e.g., I feel emotionally drained from my work) from Anderson *et al.* (2002). Respondents were asked to respond on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = never - 5 = every day). Organizational deviance is an individual's deviant behavior toward the company, while frontline deviance is an individual's deviant behavior toward the customers in the prior year. This study used twelve organizational deviance indicators (e.g., Spent too much time fantasizing or daydreaming instead of working) from Bennett and Robinson (2000), and three frontline deviance indicators (e.g., Acted out work-related frustrations in front of a customer) from (Darrat *et al.*, 2016). Respondents were asked to respond to both deviant behaviors on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = never - 5 = daily). The research questionnaire was modified and translated into Indonesian to facilitate respondents' understanding. To minimize the potential of CMB, we asked respondents to complete the questionnaire anonymously and return it in a sealed envelope (Abubakar *et al.*, 2017; Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003).

## **Result**

### *Measurement Model and Hypotheses Testing*

This study conducts data analysis in three stages, namely, identifying the common method variance, testing the measurement model, and finally, testing the research hypothesis. Based on Harman's Single Factor Test (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003), the largest variance explained by

the first factor is 25.22%, indicating the absence of a single factor. Therefore, common method bias is not a potential threat for this study.

This study examines the validity, reliability, and hypotheses using PLS-SEM, which is illustrated in figure 1. Table I exhibits composite reliability (CR) values and convergent validity (i.e., outer loading values and average variance extracted/AVE). For the achievement of sufficient convergent validity, several indicators are dropped and are not used in further analysis. All outer loading of each indicator results in values above the minimum cutoff of 0.5 (Hair *et al.*, 2017). Similarly, the test of convergent validity at the construct level can be seen from each variable's average variance extracted (AVE) value, which also has the minimum cutoff of 0.5 (Hair *et al.*, 2017). As a condition to fulfil the reliability of internal consistency, all variables have shown satisfactory CR values, being more than 0.836 (Hair *et al.*, 2017). Furthermore, the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlations approach is used for discriminant validity testing. Table II shows that all the constructs have a value less than HTMT.85, which indicates that they are unique constructs.

**Table I.**  
Reliability and Convergent Validity

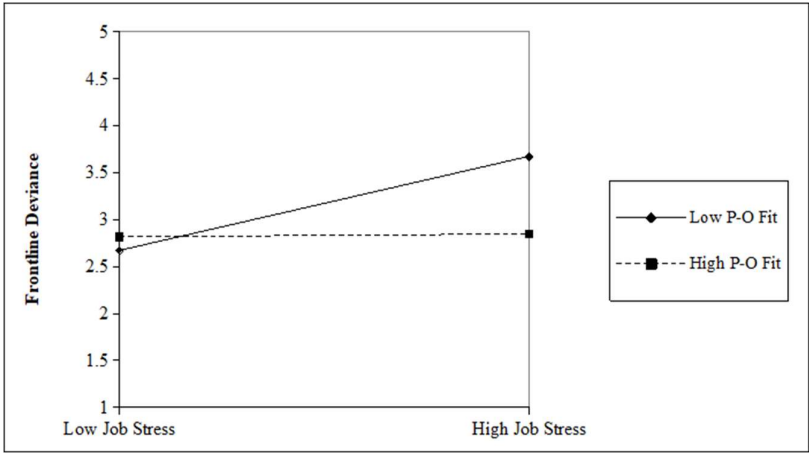
**Table II.**  
Discriminant Validity

*Structural Model*

Table III shows that job stress is positively correlated to organizational deviance ( $\beta = 0.359$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and to frontline deviance ( $\beta = 0.257$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). These results support hypotheses 1a and 1b. Although not hypothesized, but as part of the moderation testing process, this study found that P-O fit has a negative effect on organizational and frontline deviance (respectively:  $\beta = -0.209$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ;  $\beta = -0.169$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Moreover, testing the role of moderation indicates that P-O fit moderates the relationship between job stress and frontline

deviance ( $\beta = -0.242, p < 0.05$ ), but does not moderate the relationship between job stress and organizational deviance ( $\beta = -0.089, ns.$ ). These results support hypothesis 2b but do not support hypothesis 2a. Figure 2 displays the correlation between job stress and frontline deviance is stronger as the P-O fit decreased, and that job stress is not significantly correlated to frontline deviance when P-O fit is high.

**Table III.**  
Hypotheses Testing



**Figure 2.**  
Moderation effect of P-O fit

## Discussion

As predicted, the results show that job stress is positively correlated to organizational and frontline deviance. These results are in line with the COR theory. Stressed individuals are engulfed in their resources and tend to focus on the causes of stress and their poor condition. Consequently, they may reduce their efforts to protect their remaining resources. Another explanation is that they may show undue performance in front of customers because of their fatigue. Our result can also be explained based on the social exchange theory that individuals deviate from the norm to retaliate organizations and customers who are considered to be the cause of their unpleasant conditions. Referring to our sample, frontline employees may

experience work stress due to high work demands and the provision to interact with customers. This type of work requires them to have high product knowledge and a certain level of service quality in order to satisfy customers, boosting company sales. The stressed frontline employee exhibits heightened deviant behaviors toward the organization and customers. The impacts of these behaviors could be detrimental to the company, decreasing organizational performance, and escalating customers' dissatisfaction.

Our findings support Darrat *et al.* (2016) about the relationship between job stress and workplace deviance. However, in contrast to this current study which focuses on the physical and psychological conditions of employees who experience stress, Darrat *et al.* (2016) focused on the impact of emotional exhaustion. Thus the results of this study enrich the literature regarding the relationship between job stress and deviant behaviors, i.e., organizational and frontline deviance, especially in the context of frontline employees, which has not been widely studied. These findings support several studies that employees experiencing unpleasant and stressful conditions will respond by engaging in behavior that deviates from workplace norms and rules, such as intention to sabotage (Abubakar and Arasli, 2016), job search behavior (Abubakar *et al.*, 2018), workplace withdrawal behavior (Abubakar *et al.*, 2017), organizational deviance (Chung, 2017; Khattak *et al.*, 2019; Khattak *et al.*, 2020). These studies were conducted in different countries which have different cultural contexts. These findings indicate that, in general, individuals who experience unpleasant events will respond by engaging in deviant behavior. This thinking is in line with Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005) that social exchange theory can be applied universally even though the cultural context can still influence the extent to which individuals apply this reciprocal principle.

Further analysis reveals that P-O fit moderates the relationship between job stress and frontline deviance. There is a strong positive correlation between job stress and frontline

deviance when P-O fit is low. Contrarily, when P-O fit is high, the relationship between job stress and frontline deviance is not significant. Incongruent values between the organization and employees will encourage the emergence of counterproductive attitudes and behaviors (Schwepker, 2019). Individuals who have a value match with their organization will trust their company and be comfortable in interpersonal interactions in the workplace (Cable and Edwards, 2004; Zhang and Bloemer, 2008). Thus, frontline employees with low P-O fit may become less comfortable communicating and becoming agents of the company's brand. The work stress they experience makes them run out of important resources to serve customers. Especially with the lower P-O fit, they will be increasingly uncomfortable and unable to become a qualified service provider who must communicate the company's value through the products and brands they offer to customers. As a result, stressed frontline employees will increasingly exhibit frontline deviance. In addition, Matanda and Ndubisi (2013) suggest that individuals who have similar values as their organizations are more likely to provide the same service value to customers. Furthermore, individuals who have value incongruence with their company will experience job dissatisfaction (Kim *et al.*, 2013), which makes them unable to satisfy their customers (Matanda and Ndubisi, 2013). Therefore, the absence of compatibility – can strengthen the adverse impact work stress on frontline deviance.

However, this present study shows that P-O fit does not mitigate/exacerbate the impact of job stress on organizational deviance. There are several possible explanations regarding this result. Individuals who engage in workplace deviance may consider the risks of that behavior (Diefendorff, 2007). Some employees might consider organizational deviance to be too risky to carry out, while others do not. In this case, the compatibility between the individuals' values and the organizations' may not be relevant in limiting their involvement in organizational deviance. For some individuals, organizational deviance is still carried out despite their value fit, because they feel that the organization fails to establish a pleasant

working environment and is less concerned about employees' psychological and physiological health. As a result, individuals who experience job stress may perceive the organization as responsible for their stresses. These employees respond to their frustration by defying organization norms. On the contrary, other employees, regardless of having high or low P-O fit, tend to focus on exercising frontline deviance as opposed to organizational deviance, since they consider customers as the cause of their stress.

## **Implication**

Because of their job demands, frontline employees are vulnerable to stress. As a result, they can respond to their stress through workplace deviance. Undeniably, these employees are more likely to be involved in deviant behavior if they have low P-O fit. P-O fit is important to pay attention to because individuals who have a value mismatch with their company will be more uncomfortable and dissatisfied (Schwepker, 2019). As a result, their social interaction skills will decrease, including when dealing with customers (Matanda and Ndubisi, 2013; Schwepker, 2019). Schwepker (2019) found that salespeople who have a low P-O fit have lowered the quality of service to customers. Our study also shows that employees who have a low P-O fit will increasingly respond to their job stress by engaging in workplace deviance. Since individual characteristics and situational factors can influence the extent to which individuals experience and react to their stress by engaging in deviant behavior (Malik and Lenka, 2019; Singh, 2019), organizations need to improve effective employee management practices to reduce the risk of improper employee placement and unpleasant situations. Therefore, companies and managers need to consider the following approach to manage their employees successfully based on human resource practices.

First, the interactionist approach suggests that companies need to prevent this issue by exercising the process of selection and continuous socialization to control employees'

behavior (Chatman, 1989). During the recruitment and selection process, companies should be more careful in assessing applicants' personalities, such as reflecting whether individuals have values parallel to the company and their job, the tendency to experience stress, and the likelihood of rules violation. Background checks and references are essential in recruiting individuals with minimized likelihood of engaging in workplace deviance. Second, companies need to continuously support, establish friendly relationships, and develop participatory decision-making processes with employees to reduce their work stress and deviant behaviors. Moreover, since individual differences (e.g., disposition) can play a role in how individuals deal with pressures at work (Barsky *et al.*, 2004), organizations need to provide information about company demands for employee work behavior and work conditions. Organizations also need to consider situational factors that may increase employees' stressful experiences, such as supervisors and coworkers' behaviour (Cohen and Wills, 1985). In this regard, they need to create a comfortable social environment and hold role-playing training so colleagues and supervisors can understand the impact of their negative behavior. Third, employees can learn the company's values and norms from the daily activities they experience, including how managers treat them (Lu *et al.*, 2015; Zheng *et al.*, 2017). Therefore, companies need to evaluate regularly to ensure that managers have become positive role models and treat their employees according to company values and norms. Fourth, companies need to communicate their values, norms, and regulations regularly to all organization members while also providing a clear reward and punishment policy to reduce deviant behavior.

## **Conclusion**

This study found that frontline employees who experience work stress may engage in deviant behavior. This can be directed toward the organization, such as frequent daydreaming, and

customers, in the form of unethical conduct. These behaviors certainly reduce the overall effectiveness of the organization and intensify customers' dissatisfaction level which leads to the deterioration of the organization's performance. Furthermore, this study demonstrates that the impact of job stress on frontline deviance can be exacerbated if employees have low person-organization (P-O) fit. Therefore, companies need to emphasize not only the suitability between individual competencies and job requirements but also that between an individual's values and those of the organization.

Despite these contributions, this study contains limitations that need to be addressed in future studies. First, this study uses cross-sectional data. Future researchers should consider using longitudinal studies, specifically related to the possibility of a change in P-O fit due to work stress. By using longitudinal study researchers may compare the changes in research subjects after a certain period. The stages can be done as follows: P-O fit is analyzed in time-1 and time-3; job stress is analyzed in time-2. This research was conducted on the same subjects, and each period was given a time lag. Thus, it will appear that there is a change in the employees' PO Fit due to their job stress. Second, this study obtained data through self-report for all variables. Since these variables – job stress and P-O fit – are subjective to personal perceptions and personal experience, self-report could be an alternative way to obtain data. Furthermore, Berry *et al.* (2007) indicated no significant difference in the use of self-reports or other-reports to measure individuals' deviant behaviors. However, the use of other data sources is suggested for future researches. Third, since individuals may work in fields that are not in accordance with their wishes, including their skills and abilities (person-job fit), further studies need to consider the role of this P-J fit variable as a moderation in the relationship between job stress and deviant behavior. Furthermore, draw from the results that P-O Fit does not moderate the relationship between job stress and organizational deviance, future research may test moderating variables such as organizational



characteristics, employee characteristics, and workgroups (Appelbaum *et al.*, 2007), which may play a role in this relationship. Social support from co-workers and supervisors can mitigate individuals who experience unpleasant treatment to engage in behaviors detrimental to the organization (Holm *et al.*, 2019). Future studies may identify the role social support has as a moderating effect on the relationship between job stress and workplace deviance. Fourth, the sample of this study is the frontline employees. Further studies should consider utilizing other occupations with a code of ethics that requires high professional work, such as doctors and teachers. Therefore, future research regarding this context could generate more generalized outcomes.

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**Table I.**  
Reliability and Convergent Validity

Variables	Item	Loading	CR	AVE
Job Stress (JS)	JS1	0.671	0.882	0.521
	JS2	0.76		
	JS3	0.791		
	JS4	0.843		
	JS5	0.562		
	JS6	0.754		
	JS7	0.635		
Frontline Deviance (FD)	FD1	0.82	0.836	0.629
	FD2	0.748		
	FD3	0.81		
Organizational Deviance (OD)	OD2	0.755	0.892	0.509
	OD4	0.774		
	OD5	0.744		
	OD6	0.696		
	OD7	0.678		
	OD8	0.798		
	OD11	0.664		
	OD12	0.574		
Person-Organization (P-O) Fit	PO1	0.679	0.892	0.626
	PO2	0.782		
	PO3	0.864		
	PO4	0.889		
	PO5	0.721		

**Table II.**  
Discriminant Validity

Variables	JS	FD	OD	P-O Fit
1. JS	<b>0.83</b>			
2. FD	0.393	<b>0.45</b>		
3. OD	0.83	0.45	<b>0.252</b>	
4. P-O Fit	0.243	0.181	0.252	<b>0.252</b>

*Note: n=259. The square root of the AVE in bold along the diagonal*

**Table III.**  
Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis	Relationship	<i>Path coefficient</i>	<i>t</i>	Hypothesis support
H1a	JS → OD	0.359	6.689**	Supported
H1b	JS → FD	0.257	4.738**	Supported
H2a	POF x JS → OD	-0.089	0.631	Unsupported
H2b	POF x JS → FD	-0.242	2.165*	Supported

*\*\*p < 0.01; \*p < 0.05.*



Marliana Junaedi , SE., M.Si. &lt;marliana@ukwms.ac.id&gt;

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**Fenika Wulani** <fenika@ukwms.ac.id>

Tue, May 16, 2023 at 5:31 PM

To: "Marliana Junaedi , SE., M.Si." &lt;marliana@ukwms.ac.id&gt;

bu Marli ini kukirim email dari ijwhm

salam

Fenika Wulani

Department of Management

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Subject: International Journal of Workplace Health Management - IJWHM-06-2020-0103.R2

To: &lt;fenika@ukwms.ac.id&gt;, &lt;fewulani@gmail.com&gt;

22-Apr-2021

Dear Dr. Wulani,

Your revised manuscript entitled "The moderating effect of person-organization fit on the relationship between job stress and deviant behaviors of frontline employees" has been successfully submitted online and is presently being given full consideration for publication in the International Journal of Workplace Health Management.

Your manuscript ID is IJWHM-06-2020-0103.R2.

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Thank you for submitting your manuscript to the International Journal of Workplace Health Management.

Yours sincerely,  
Maria Karanika-Murray  
International Journal of Workplace Health Management

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Marliana Junaedi , SE., M.Si. &lt;marliana@ukwms.ac.id&gt;

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Sun, Jun 27, 2021 at 12:49 PM

Reply-To: chip@dtu.dk

To: marliana@ukwms.ac.id, fenika@ukwms.ac.id, fewulani@gmail.com

27-Jun-2021

Dear Junaedi, Marliana; Wulani, Fenika

It is a pleasure to accept your manuscript IJWHM-06-2020-0103.R2, entitled "The moderating effect of person-organization fit on the relationship between job stress and deviant behaviors of frontline employees" in its current form for publication in International Journal of Workplace Health Management. Please note, no further changes can be made to your manuscript.

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Thank you for your contribution. On behalf of the Editors of International Journal of Workplace Health Management, we look forward to your continued contributions to the Journal.

Yours sincerely,  
Dr. Christine Ipsen

Co-Editor-in-chief, International Journal of Workplace Health Management

[chip@dtu.dk](mailto:chip@dtu.dk)



Marliana Junaedi , SE., M.Si. &lt;marliana@ukwms.ac.id&gt;

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## International Journal of Workplace Health Management - Author update

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**International Journal of Workplace Health Management** <onbehalfof@manuscriptcentral.com>

Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 11:32 AM

Reply-To: maria.karanika-murray@ntu.ac.uk

To: marliana@ukwms.ac.id, fenika@ukwms.ac.id, fewulani@gmail.com

06-Jul-2020

Dear Author(s)

It is a pleasure to inform you that your manuscript titled The moderating effect of person-organizational fit on the relationship between job stress and deviant behaviors of frontline employees (IJWHM-06-2020-0103) has passed initial screening and is now awaiting reviewer selection. The manuscript was submitted by Dr. Fenika Wulani with you listed as a co-author. As you are listed as a co-author please log in to <https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/ijwhm> and check that your account details are complete and correct, these details will be used should the paper be accepted for publication.

Yours sincerely,

Maria Karanika-Murray

Editorial Assistant, International Journal of Workplace Health Management

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# The moderating effect of person-organization fit on the relationship between job stress and deviant behaviors of frontline employees

Moderating  
effect of  
person-  
organization fit

AQ: 4

AQ: 1

AQ: 2

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## Abstract

**Purpose** – This study examines the relationship between job stress and deviant behaviors, which include organizational and frontline deviance, and the moderating effect of person-organization (P-O) fit on these relationships.

**Design/methodology/approach** – The sample consists of 259 frontline employees working in Surabaya, Indonesia. Respondents were asked to complete a questionnaire distributed by survey assistants. This present study conducts PLS-SEM to examine hypotheses.

**Findings** – The results indicate that job stress has positive correlations with organizational and frontline deviance. P-O fit has a moderating effect on the relationship between job stress and frontline deviance; the lower the P-O fit, the stronger the relationship between job stress and frontline deviance. P-O fit does not moderate the relationship between job stress and organizational deviance.

**Practical implications** – Companies must be more careful in the recruitment and selection process and continuously perform activities to communicate their values and norms to employees.

**Originality/value** – This study introduces the moderating effect of P-O fit on the relationship between job stress and frontline employees' deviant behaviors which have not been revealed in previous studies. It provides an understanding of the importance of considering the compatibility between individual and organizational values as one of the company's efforts to reduce stressed employees' response by engaging in workplace deviance.

**Keywords** Person-organization fit, Job stress, Organizational deviance, Frontline deviance

**Paper type** Research paper

## Introduction

AQ: 5 Organizations certainly have goals to be achieved. Obtaining those goals requires high performance and positive work behavior of their employees. However, some types of work demand for enormous tasks, culminating stress to employees. Employees will be prone to experiencing stress if their responsibilities lie in between the company and consumers, such as frontline employees (Singh, 2000). Frontline employees are individuals that serve consumers, as company representatives, to interact and to communicate with consumers (Cambra-fierro *et al.*, 2014; Reynolds and Harris, 2006). Furthermore, most companies expect frontline employees to communicate the company's brand values appropriately and to show consumers that they are credible (Schepers and Nijssen, 2018). These high demands boost the likelihood of frontline employees in experiencing work pressure, which might affect the quality of their services to consumers (Kashif *et al.*, 2017; Chaudhary and Lodhwal, 2017).

AQ: 6 Job stress is an individual's physical and psychological response when one perceives a threat to something valuable and exhausts his/her resources (Harms *et al.*, 2017). These responses, such as physical fatigue and anxiety, have been studied in various studies in terms of strains (Halbesleben *et al.*, 2014). Stressed individuals will be frustrated and engage in workplace deviance behavior (WDB) that targets organizations and other individuals (Chiu *et al.*, 2015). These deviant behaviors harm the performance of individuals and organizations



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(Bennett and Robinson, 2000) and threaten the well-being of the organization and its members (Everton *et al.*, 2007). WDB consists of behaviors that target organizations – e.g. using the company's resources for personal gain – and consumers – e.g. in the form of unethical behaviors (Bennett and Robinson, 2000; Jelinek and Ahearne, 2006; Darrat *et al.*, 2016). Moreover, since consumers can be a source of employee stress, the employee is more likely to retaliate by engaging in deviant behaviors against them (Mullen and Kelloway, 2013). However, even though several studies have examined the relationship between job stress and workplace deviance (e.g. Ahmad *et al.*, 2017; Bishopp *et al.*, 2016; Chiu *et al.*, 2015), there are only a few researches that investigate the effects of job stress on frontline deviance.

Previous studies have investigated variables that may mitigate or exacerbate the impact of job stress on workplace deviance. However, those studies tend to focus on the role of personality factors (e.g. Ahmad *et al.*, 2017; Farhadi *et al.*, 2015), leadership (e.g. Darrat *et al.*, 2016) and social support (e.g. Chiu *et al.*, 2015). This current study hypothesizes that person-organization (P-O) fit has a moderating effect on the relationship between job stress and deviant behaviors. P-O fit is developed based on the interactionist view that individuals' behavior is determined by individuals' characteristics and existing situations (Chatman, 1989). Since the organization's values play an important role in regulating the behavior of its employees (Kim *et al.*, 2013), individuals with low P-O fit may have difficulty following the regulations. Thus, it is plausible that individuals with low P-O fit who experience job stress will have a high likelihood of responding with deviant behaviors. Until now, the mechanisms of the role of P-O fit tend to receive less empirical attention, including in the context of frontline employees.

The research object of this study is frontline employees who work as a salesperson, customer service, or bank tellers. These employees, who have a high frequency of interaction with consumers, experience high expectations from their supervisors and verbal aggression from consumers (Mulki *et al.*, 2006). As a result, they often experience emotional exhaustion (Mulki *et al.*, 2006). Moreover, salesperson, customer service and bank tellers are occupations that require employees to provide high-quality service and product knowledge, which allows them to experience job stress (Geldart *et al.*, 2018; Sliter *et al.*, 2010). Additionally, nowadays, frontline employees are expected not only to communicate the brand image but also to present themselves as a member of the company (Schepers and Nijssen, 2018). Therefore, the suitability of values between them and the company becomes important and inevitable.

This study contributes to two critical aspects. First, it identifies the relationship between job stress and deviant behaviors, including organizational and frontline deviance. Second, it investigates the moderating role of P-O fit on the relationship between job stress and deviant behaviors, which has little attention from the precedent studies.

## Theoretical background and hypothesis

### *Job stress, organizational and frontline deviance*

Job stress is individuals' responses, both physically and psychologically, that occurs when one's resources are perceived to be insufficient in meeting the expectations for task completion (Harms *et al.*, 2017). In the context of stress, these resources can be an object (e.g. socioeconomic status), personal characteristics (e.g. expertise), conditions (e.g. tenure and seniority) and energy (e.g. time and money) that are valuable for individuals (Hobfoll, 1989). Different individuals may have various valuable resources depending on the experience and situation they face (Halbesleben *et al.*, 2014). Work stress can be generated by several triggers, such as work overload and deficient interaction between individuals at work, working conditions, time pressure, family conflicts and interactions with consumers (DeTienne *et al.*, 2012; Geldart *et al.*, 2018; Harms *et al.*, 2017). Responses to work stress are called strains, in the forms of physiological like headaches and fatigue, and psychological like anxiety and helplessness (DeTienne *et al.*, 2012; Halbesleben *et al.*, 2014; Hobfoll, 1989; Hobfoll *et al.*, 2018).

Conservation of Resources (COR) theory can explain the relationship between job stress and deviant behaviors (Halbesleben *et al.*, 2014; Hobfoll, 1989). The basic principle of COR is that individuals are motivated to protect existing resources and to obtain new resources (Halbesleben *et al.*, 2014). Furthermore, individuals will engage in certain behaviors to avoid losing their resources (Halbesleben *et al.*, 2014). For example, for the sake of remaining health resources, individuals who have a heavy workload will reduce their effort, which could be considered as deviant behaviors. Furthermore, according to COR theory, individuals focus more on stressors when doing work to protect their resources (Chiu *et al.*, 2015). As a result, individuals may be seen to conduct deviant behaviors against work norms, such as daydreaming and taking longer breaks. Stressed individuals are prone to frustration and are likely to engage harmful behaviors on targets that are considered the sources of frustration, including consumers (Chiu *et al.*, 2015; Martinko *et al.*, 2002; Swimberghe *et al.*, 2014). In various studies, negative individual behaviors that deviate from the norms and rules at work are investigated in the construct of workplace deviance.

Workplace deviance is an individual's tendency to engage in behavior that violates the workplace's organizational norms (Bennett and Robinson, 2000). These organizational norms consist of regulations, procedures, and policies in both formal and informal (Robinson and Bennett, 1995). Bennett and Robinson (2000) introduced two main targets of deviance behavior: to organizations (e.g. diminishing effort and leaving work early without permission) – and to individuals (e.g. being embarrassed and disclosing rude behaviors towards others). Additionally, Jelinek and Ahearne (2006) introduced another target, the consumers, using the term of frontline deviance. Frontline deviance is deviant behavior directed toward consumers, such as conducting unethical and deceptive actions and showing frustration in front of consumers (Darrat *et al.*, 2016).

Deviant behaviors are individual's reactions to their experiences in the workplace (Ferris *et al.*, 2009), and to the incompatibility between the work situations and individual's expectations (Bordia *et al.*, 2008), as well as stress at work (Colbert *et al.*, 2004). Individuals who perceive unfavorable events may experience frustration and then try to fix the problem or to express their feelings toward the organization and its customers (Colbert *et al.*, 2004; Lee and Allen, 2002). This situation is parallel to social exchange theory where individuals tend to unleash unpleasant behaviors due to the bad things they have experienced (Harris *et al.*, 2007). Stressed individuals could discern the company as a responsible party. As a result, individuals will commit harmful behaviors to their company, engaging deviant behaviors against organizations and consumers.

However, before individuals perpetrate deviant behaviors, they scrutinize the viability of their actions (Bennett and Robinson, 2000). For frontline employees, it is plausible that they direct their deviant behaviors toward consumers that they often encounter. Since these frontline employees who experience mental pressure focus more on their problems (Swimberghe *et al.*, 2014), their energy are increasingly drained. Therefore, it is difficult for these employees to provide satisfactory behaviors or to understand others, resulting in harmful and inappropriate interactions with consumers (Swimberghe *et al.*, 2014). In their empirical studies, Swimberghe *et al.* (2014) found that work stress was related to salespersons' deviance, whereas Ahmad *et al.* (2017) found that work stress was positively associated with organizational deviance. Consequently, it can be argued that the higher job stress, the higher individuals' deviant behaviors, and the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1a. Job stress has a positive relationship with organizational deviance.

H1b. Job stress has a positive relationship with frontline deviance.

*P-O fit as a moderating effect on the relationship between job stress and deviant behaviors* Chatman (1989, p. 339) introduced P-O fit as the congruence between the organization's norms and values and the employee's values. An individual's values refer to one's beliefs about how one should behave or the end-state to be achieved. On the other hand, the values and the norms of the organization are made to regulate the behavior of its members, showing which behaviors are appropriate (Chatman, 1989). P-O fit provides two perspectives: the needs-supplies, referring to companies' ability to meet the needs of their employees, and the demands-abilities that relates to individuals' ability to meet companies' requirements (Kristof, 1996). Moreover, Kristof (1996) suggested that P-O fit occurs if at least one of the parties, either companies or employees, are capable of meeting the other party's expectations. The existence of P-O fit will affect work attitudes and behavior (Cable and Edwards, 2004). Individuals who have value incompatibility with their company will be more uncomfortable and dissatisfied (Schwepker, 2019). As a result, their social interaction skills will reduce, including when dealing with consumers (Matanda and Ndubisi, 2013; Schwepker, 2019). Empirically, Schwepker (2019) found that salespeople who have low P-O fit reduce the quality of their services to consumers.

Individuals with high P-O fit will have a high sense of belonging to the organizations (Memon *et al.*, 2017). O'Reilly *et al.* (1991) found that P-O fit has a positive relationship with organizational commitment. Furthermore, organization values are intended to regulate employee behavior (Kim *et al.*, 2013). Therefore, if individuals assume that their values are not in line with the company's values, they may have difficulty in exercising organizational values and lack of organizational commitment. It can be argued that when individuals with low P-O fit experience stress, they will be unable to follow the organizational rules and norms due to fatigue and too much focus on stress. In addition, the inconvenience of their interpersonal interaction with consumers makes stressed employees increasingly failed to meet applicable service norms, so they are involved in frontline deviance. Their low organizational commitment and a low sense of belonging also make it easier for them to disobey organizational rules and to provide inadequate performance, especially when they experienced intense tension. Hence, this current study proposes that:

*H2a.* The relationship between job stress and organizational deviance is moderated by P-O fit, such that the relationship is stronger when P-O fit is low than high.

*H2b.* The relationship between job stress and frontline deviance is moderated by P-O fit, such that the relationship is stronger when P-O fit is low than high.

## Method

### *Sample and data collection*

This study uses a self-report questionnaire distributed by survey assistants to the respondents. The respondents are frontline employees who work as salespeople, customer service, and bank tellers from various industries in Surabaya, Indonesia. Surabaya is the capital of East Java and a business center in Indonesia (Gilbert, 2017). We asked the respondents to fill out the questionnaire anonymously and return it within a sealed envelope that was already provided. There are 259 surveys collected, which could be analyzed for hypothesis testing. The respondents' profiles demonstrate that the majority of the respondents are women (58.3%) with the age range of 18–35 years old (90.8%), have tenure <5 years (81.4%), and are single (68.7%).

### *Instrument*

Person-organization (P-O) fit is an individual's perception of the congruence between the organizational values and his/her values. In this study, P-O fit was measured using five

AQ: 7 indicators from Netemeyer *et al.* (1997). Respondents were asked to respond on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree). Job stress is a condition of physical and psychological disorders experienced by individuals due to work pressure accumulated from preceding years. Work stress was measured using seven indicators from Anderson *et al.* (2002). Respondents were asked to respond on a five-point Likert scale (1 = never; 5 = every day). Organizational deviance is an individual's deviant behavior toward the company, while frontline deviance is an individual's deviant behavior toward the consumers in the prior year. This study used twelve organizational deviance indicators from Bennett and Robinson (2000), and three frontline deviance indicators from Jelinek dan Ahearne (2006). Respondents were asked to respond to both deviant behaviors on a five-point Likert scale (1 = never; 5 = daily).

## Result

### Measurement model and hypotheses testing

This study conducts data analysis in three stages, namely, identifying the common method variance, testing the measurement model, and finally, testing the research hypothesis. Based on Harman's single-factor test (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003), the largest variance explained by the first factor is 25.22%, indicating the absence of a single factor. Therefore, common method bias is not a potential threat for this study.

T1 F1 This study examines the validity, reliability and hypotheses using PLS-SEM, which is illustrated in Figure 1. Table 1 exhibits composite reliability (CR) values, indicator reliability (i.e. outer loading values) and convergent validity (i.e. average variance extracted/AVE). For the achievement of sufficient convergent validity, several indicators are dropped and are not used in further analysis. All outer loading of each indicator results in values above the minimum cutoff of 0.5 (Hair *et al.*, 2017). Similarly, the test of convergent validity at the construct level can be seen from each variable's average variance extracted (AVE) value, which also has the minimum cutoff of 0.5 (Hair *et al.*, 2017). As a condition to fulfil the reliability of internal consistency, all variables have shown satisfactory CR values, being more than 0.836 (Hair *et al.*, 2017). Furthermore, the Fornell-Larcker criterion is used for discriminant validity testing. Table 2 shows that all the square root of the AVE of any constructs is higher than the correlation value between constructs.

### Structural model

T3 Table 3 shows that job stress is positively correlated to organizational deviance ( $\beta = 0.359$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and to frontline deviance ( $\beta = 0.257$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). These results support hypotheses 1a and 1b. Moreover, testing the role of moderation indicates that P-O fit moderates the relationship between job stress and frontline deviance ( $\beta = -0.242$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), but does not moderate the relationship between job stress and organizational deviance ( $\beta = -0.089$ , ns).

F2 These results support hypothesis 2b but do not support hypothesis 2a. Figure 2 displays the correlation between job stress and frontline deviance is stronger as the P-O fit decreased, and that job stress is not significantly correlated to frontline deviance when P-O fit is high.

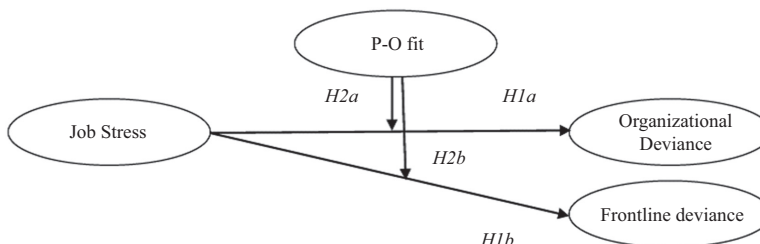


Figure 1.  
Research model

Variables	Item	Loading	CR	AVE
Job stress (JS)	JS1	0.671	0.882	0.521
	JS2	0.76		
	JS3	0.791		
	JS4	0.843		
	JS5	0.562		
	JS6	0.754		
	JS7	0.635		
Frontline deviance (FD)	FD1	0.82	0.836	0.629
	FD2	0.748		
	FD3	0.81		
Organizational deviance (OD)	OD2	0.755	0.892	0.509
	OD4	0.774		
	OD5	0.744		
	OD6	0.696		
	OD7	0.678		
	OD8	0.798		
	OD11	0.664		
Person-organization (P-O) fit	OD12	0.574	0.892	0.626
	PO1	0.679		
	PO2	0.782		
	PO3	0.864		
	PO4	0.889		
	PO5	0.721		

**Table 1.**  
Reliability and  
convergent validity

Variables	1	2	3	4
1. Job stress	<i>0.722</i>			
2. Frontline deviance	0.312	<i>0.793</i>		
3. Organizational deviance	0.401	0.625	<i>0.714</i>	
4. P-O fit	−0.137	−0.22	−0.266	<i>0.791</i>

**Table 2.**  
Discriminant validity  
**Note(s):**  $n = 259$ . The square root of the AVE in italic along the diagonal

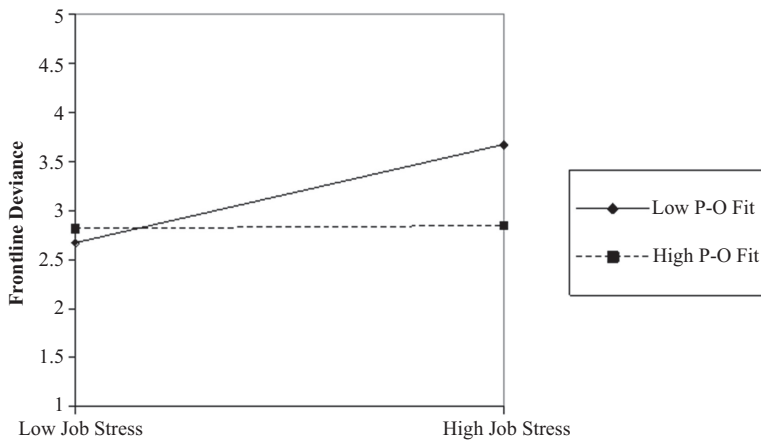
Hypothesis	Relationship	Path coefficient	$t$	Hypothesis support
H1a	JS OD	0.359	6.689**	Supported
H1b	JS FD	0.257	4.738**	Supported
H2a	POF $\times$ JS OD	−0.089	0.631	Unsupported
H2b	POF $\times$ JS FD	−0.242	2.165*	Supported

**Table 3.**  
Hypotheses testing  
**Note(s):** \*\* $p < 0.01$ ; \* $p < 0.05$

## Discussion

As predicted, the results show that job stress is positively correlated to organizational and frontline deviance. These findings support the study by [Ahmad \*et al.\* \(2017\)](#) about the relationship between job stress and organizational deviance, and the study by [Swimberghe \*et al.\* \(2014\)](#) concerning the relationship between job stress and frontline deviance. These results are in line with the COR theory. Stressed individuals are absorbed by their resources and tend to focus on the causes of stress and their poor condition. Consequently, they may reduce their efforts to protect their remaining resources. Another explanation is that they





Moderating  
effect of  
person-  
organization fit

**Figure 2.**  
Moderation effect  
of P-O fit

may show undue performance in front of consumers because of their fatigue. Our result can also be explained based on the social exchange theory that individuals deviate from the norm to retaliate organizations and consumers who are considered to be the cause of their unpleasant conditions. Referring to our sample, frontline employees may experience work stress due to high work demands and the provision to interact with consumers. This type of work requires them to have the high product knowledge and a certain level of service quality to satisfy consumers, boosting company sales. The stressed frontline employee exhibits heightened deviant behaviors toward the organization and customers. The impacts of these behaviors could be detrimental to the company, decreasing organizational performance, and escalating consumer dissatisfaction.

Further analysis reveals that P-O fit moderates the relationship between job stress and frontline deviance. There is a strong positive correlation between job stress and frontline deviance when P-O fit is low. Contrarily, when P-O fit is high, the relationship between job stress and frontline deviance is not significant. Incongruence values between the organization and employees will encourage the emergence of counterproductive attitudes and behaviors (Schwepker, 2019). Individuals who have a value match with their organization will trust their company and be comfortable in interpersonal interactions in the workplace (Cable and Edwards, 2004; Zhang and Bloemer, 2008). Thus, frontline employees with low P-O fit may become less comfortable for communicating and becoming agents of the company's brand. The work stress experienced by frontline employees makes them run out of important resources to serve consumers. Especially with the lower P-O fit, they will be increasingly uncomfortable and unable to become a qualified service provider who must communicate the company's value through the products and brands they offer to consumers. As a result, stressed frontline employees will increasingly exhibit frontline deviance. In addition, Matanda and Ndubisi (2013) suggest that individuals who have similar values as their organizations are more likely to provide the same service value to consumers. Furthermore, individuals who have value incongruence with their company will experience job dissatisfaction (Kim *et al.*, 2013), which makes them unable to satisfy their customers (Matanda and Ndubisi, 2013). Therefore, the absence of compatibility can strengthen the adverse impact of work stress on frontline deviance.

However, this present study shows that P-O fit does not mitigate/exacerbate the impact of job stress on organizational deviance. There are several possible explanations regarding this result. Individuals who engage in workplace deviance may consider the risks of that behavior



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(Diefendorff, 2007). Some employees might consider organizational deviance to be too risky to execute, while others do not. In this case, the compatibility between individuals' values and the organizations' values may not be relevant in limiting their involvement in organizational deviance. For some individuals, organizational deviance is still carried out despite their value fit, because they feel that the organization fails to establish a pleasant working environment and is less concerned about employees' psychological and physiological health. As a result, individuals who experience job stress may perceive the organization as responsible for their stresses. These employees respond to their frustration by defying from organization norms. On the contrary, other employees, regardless of having high or low P-O fit, tend to focus on exercising frontline deviance as opposed to organizational deviance, since they consider customers as the cause of their stress.

### Implication

Because of their job demands, frontline employees are vulnerable to stress. As a result, they can respond to their stress by doing workplace deviance. Undeniably, these employees are more likely to be involved in deviant behavior if they have low P-O fit. Therefore, companies and managers need to consider the following approach to manage their employees successfully. First, the interactionist approach suggests that companies need to prevent this issue by exercising the process of selection and continuous socialization to control employees' behavior (Chatman, 1989). During the recruitment and selection process, companies should be more careful in assessing applicants' personalities, such as reflecting whether individuals have values parallel to the company and their job, the tendency to experience stress, and the likelihood of rules violation. Background checks and references are essential in recruiting individuals with the minimized likelihood in engaging workplace deviance. Second, companies need to continuously support, establish friendly relationships, and develop participatory decision-making processes with employees to reduce their work stress and deviant behaviors. Third, employees can learn the company's values and norms from the daily activities they experience, including how managers treat them (Lu *et al.*, 2015; Zheng *et al.*, 2017). Therefore, companies need to evaluate regularly to ensure that managers have become positive role models and treat their employees according to company values and norms. Fourth, companies need to communicate their values, norms and regulations regularly for all organization members while also providing a clear reward and punishment policy to reduce deviant behavior.

### Conclusion

This study found that frontline employees who experience work stress may engage in deviant behaviors. This deviant behavior can be directed toward the organization, such as frequent daydreaming, and the consumers, in the form of unethical conduct. These behaviors certainly reduce the overall effectiveness of the organization; intensifying consumers' dissatisfaction level that leads to the deterioration of the organization's performance. Furthermore, this study demonstrates that the impact of job stress on frontline deviance can be exacerbated if employees have low P-O fit. Therefore, companies need to emphasize not only the suitability between individual competencies and job requirements but also the compatibility between an individual's values and those of the organization.

Despite these contributions, this study contains limitations that need to be addressed in future studies. First, this study uses cross-sectional data. Future researchers should consider using longitudinal studies. Second, this study obtained data through self-report for all variables. Since these variables – job stress and P-O fit – are subjective to personal perceptions and personal experience, self-report could be an alternative way to obtain data.

Furthermore, [Berry et al. \(2007\)](#) indicated no significant difference in the use of self-reports or other-reports to measure individuals' deviant behaviors. However, the use of other data sources is suggested for future researches. Third, the sample of this study is the frontline employees. Further studies should consider utilizing other occupations with a code of ethics that requires high professional work, such as doctors and teachers. Therefore, future research regarding this context could generate more generalized outcomes.

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## AQ: 9 Further reading

Yalabik, Z.Y., van Rossenberg, Y., Kinnie, N. and Swart, J. (2015), "Engaged and committed? The relationship between work engagement and commitment in professional service firms", *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, Vol. 26 No. 12, pp. 1602-1621.

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**The moderating effect of person-organization fit on the relationship between job stress and deviant behaviors of frontline employees**

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Manuscript ID	IJWHM-06-2020-0103.R2
Manuscript Type:	Research Paper
Keywords:	Frontline Deviance, Organizational Deviance, Job Stress, Person-Organization Fit

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**Abstract:**

**Purpose** – This study examines the relationship between job stress and deviant behaviors, which include organizational and frontline deviance, and the moderating effect of person-organization (P-O) fit on these relationships.

**Design/methodology/approach** – The sample consists of 259 frontline employees working in Surabaya, Indonesia. Respondents were asked to complete a questionnaire distributed by survey assistants. This present study conducts PLS-SEM to examine hypotheses.

**Findings** – The results indicate that job stress has positive correlations with organizational and frontline deviance. P-O fit has a moderating effect on the relationship between job stress and frontline deviance; the lower the P-O fit, the stronger the relationship between job stress and frontline deviance. P-O fit does not moderate the relationship between job stress and organizational deviance.

**Practical implications** – Companies must be more careful in the recruitment and selection process and continuously perform activities to communicate their values and norms to employees.

**Originality/value** – This study introduces the moderating effect of person-organization (P-O) fit on the relationship between job stress and frontline employees’ deviant behaviors which have not been revealed in previous studies. It provides an understanding of the importance of considering the compatibility between individual and organizational values as one of the company’s efforts to reduce stressed employees’ response by engaging in workplace deviance.

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## Introduction

Organizations certainly have goals to be achieved. Reaching those goals requires high performance and positive work behavior of their employees. However, some types of work demand enormous tasks, culminating stress for employees. This will be prone to stress if their responsibilities lie in between the company and customers, such as frontline employees (Singh, 2000). Since they serve customers as company representatives to interact and communicate with customers (Cambra-fierro *et al.*, 2014; Reynolds and Harris, 2006), they are likely to experience high expectations from their supervisors and verbal aggression from customers (Mulki *et al.*, 2006). Moreover, they are required to provide high-quality service and product knowledge, which brings job stress (Geldart *et al.*, 2018; Sliter *et al.*, 2010). These high demands boost the likelihood of frontline employees experiencing work pressure, which might affect the quality of their services to customers (Kashif *et al.*, 2017; Chaudhary and Lodhwal, 2017).

Job stress is an individual's physical and psychological response when one perceives a threat to something valuable and exhausts his/her resources (Harms *et al.*, 2017). Individuals who experience stress may vent their frustration by taking actions that are detrimental to their organization (De Clercq *et al.*, 2019), such as workplace deviance, that targets organizations (Chiu *et al.*, 2015; Bennett and Robinson, 2000) and threaten the well-being of their members (Everton *et al.*, 2007). However, since customers can be a source of employee stress, the employee is more likely to retaliate by engaging in deviant behaviors against them (Mullen and Kelloway, 2013). Empirically, there are only a few studies that investigate the effects of job stress on organizational and frontline deviance (e.g., Darrat *et al.*, 2016; Swimberghe *et al.*, 2014). However, these studies provide different results regarding the relationship between job stress and deviant behavior. Darrat *et al.* (2016) found that job stress (i.e., in specific form: emotional exhaustion) was positively related to organizational and frontline deviance.



On the contrary, Swimberghe *et al.* (2014) discovered that job stress was significantly related to frontline deviance but not organizational deviance. However, they only found a low effect of job stress on frontline deviance.

Little attention has been paid in existing studies to variables that may mitigate or exacerbate the impact of job stress on detrimental work behavior. De Clercq *et al.* (2019) found that personality factors moderate the relationship between job stress and counterproductive work behaviour (CWB). However, they combine targets of CWB, i.e., organization and other individuals. Thus, there is still uncertainty concerning the effect job stress on certain targets. This current study proposes that P-O (Person-Organization) fit may moderate the relationship between job stress and workplace deviance. Since the latter is employee behavior that violates organizational norms and rules (Robinson and Bennett, 1995), it is possible that P-O fit may reduce the impact of the former. The organization's values play an important role in regulating its employees' behavior (Kim *et al.*, 2013), so individuals with low fit between their values and organization values may have difficulty following the regulations. Thus, it is plausible that individuals with low P-O fit who experience job stress will have a high likelihood of responding with deviant behaviors. Related to the context of frontline employees, since they are expected to communicate the brand image and present themselves as members of the company (Schepers and Nijssen, 2018), the suitability of values between them and the company becomes important. However, the mechanisms of P-O fit's role tend to receive less empirical attention, including in the context of frontline employees.

This study aimed to identify the relationship between job stress and workplace deviance (i.e., organizational and frontline deviance) and the role of P-O fit as a moderating variable in these relationships. We incorporate social exchange theory and conservation of resources theory (COR) as the model's basis. The current study contributes in two ways. First, it



provides an understanding of the relationship between job stress and workplace deviance that has not been widely investigated by previous research. We focus on workplace deviance carried out by frontline employees, i.e., in the form of organizational and frontline deviance. This investigation is important considering that frontline employees are the vanguard of the company, so that their deviant behavior may have an impact on the loss of opportunities for the company to gain higher profits. Second, it addresses the research gap regarding the relationship between job stress and workplace deviance and the limited studies investigating factors that can strengthen/weaken the relationship between them. This study offers P-O fit as a moderating variable. We demonstrate that the response of stressed employees by engaging in deviant behavior can be influenced by their P-O fit. Our study not only enriches the literature in regard to the relationship between job stress and workplace deviance, especially in the context of frontline employees but also provides insights for business practitioners. This study gives guidance to managers to better manage job stress by strengthening employee P-O fit to reduce workplace deviance through various human resource management activities.

## Theoretical Background and Hypothesis

### *Job Stress, organizational and frontline deviance*

Job stress is individuals' responses, both physically and psychologically, that occurs when one's resources are perceived to be insufficient in meeting the expectations for task completion (Harms *et al.*, 2017). In the context of stress, these resources can be an object (e.g., socioeconomic status), personal characteristics (e.g., expertise), conditions (e.g., tenure and seniority), and energy (e.g., time and money) that are valuable for individuals (Hobfoll, 1989). Different individuals may have various valuable resources depending on the experience and situation they face (Halbesleben *et al.*, 2014). Job stress can be generated by several triggers, such as work overload and deficient interaction between individuals at work,

working conditions, time pressure, family conflicts, and interactions with customers, workplace incivility & employee cynicism, organizational politics and workplace victimization, Emotional exhaustion (Abubakar *et al.*, 2017, 2018; DeTienne *et al.*, 2012; Geldart *et al.*, 2018; Harms *et al.*, 2017; Jiang *et al.*, 2020). Responses to work stress are called strains, physiological, like headaches and fatigue, and psychological like anxiety and helplessness (DeTienne *et al.*, 2012; Halbesleben *et al.*, 2014; Hobfoll, 1989; Hobfoll *et al.*, 2018).

Conservation of Resources (COR) theory can explain the relationship between job stress and deviant behaviors (Halbesleben *et al.*, 2014; Hobfoll, 1989). The basic principle of COR's is that individuals are motivated to protect existing resources and to obtain new resources (Halbesleben *et al.*, 2014). Furthermore, individuals will engage in certain behaviors to avoid losing their resources (Halbesleben *et al.*, 2014). For example, for the sake of remaining health resources, individuals who have a heavy workload will reduce their effort, which could be considered as deviant behaviors. Furthermore, according to COR theory, individuals focus more on stressors when doing work to protect their resources (Chiu *et al.*, 2015). As a result, they may have deviant behaviors against work norms, such as daydreaming and taking longer breaks. Stressed individuals are prone to frustration and likely to engage harmful behaviors on targets perceived as the sources of frustration, including customers (Chiu *et al.*, 2015; Martinko *et al.*, 2002; and Swimberghe *et al.*, 2014). In various studies, negative individual behaviors that deviate from the norms and rules are investigated in the construct of workplace deviance.

Workplace deviance is an individual's tendency to engage in behavior that violates the workplace's organizational norms (Bennett and Robinson, 2000) and erode the organization values (Mulki *et al.*, 2006). These norms consist of regulations, procedures, and policies both formal and informal (Robinson and Bennett, 1995). Deviant behavior can be targeted toward

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3 organizations. In this case, individuals engage in actions that violate work norms and rules  
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5 that result in losses for the company (Ferris, *et al.*, 2009; Jelinek and Ahearne, 2010; Malik  
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7 and Lenka, 2019). For example, employees take company resources without permission and  
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9 do not carry out their job responsibilities during working hours (Jelinek and Ahearne, 2010),  
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11 working slowly (Malik and Lenka, 2019). Referring to the indicators provided by Bennett  
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13 and Robinson (2000), organizational deviance includes such behaviour: spent too much time  
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15 fantasizing or daydreaming instead of working, intentionally working more slowly than you  
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17 could have worked, and put little effort into your work. Additionally, Jelinek and Ahearne  
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19 (2006) introduced another target, the customers, using the term of frontline deviance.  
20  
21 Frontline deviance is a violation of organizational norms that is specifically directed at people  
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23 outside the organization, such as customers (Jelinek and Ahearne, 2010). Individuals  
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25 involved in frontline deviant toward customers by conducting unethical and deceptive actions  
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27 and showing frustration in front of customers (Darrat *et al.*, 2016).  
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34 Deviant behaviors are individual's reactions to their experiences in the workplace  
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36 (Ferris, *et al.*, 2009), to the incompatibility between the work situations and individual's  
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38 expectations (Bordia *et al.*, 2008), as well as organizational stress (Singh, 2019). Individuals  
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40 who perceive unfavorable events may experience frustration and try to fix the problem or  
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42 express their feelings toward the organization and its customers (Colbert *et al.*, 2004; Lee and  
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44 Allen, 2002). This situation is parallel to social exchange theory where individuals tend to  
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46 unleash unpleasant behaviors due to the bad things they have experienced (Harris *et al.*,  
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48 2007). Stressed individuals could view the company as a responsible party. As a result, they  
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50 will engage in behaviors harmful to their company, deviant behaviors against organizations  
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52 and customers.  
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57 However, before individuals perpetrate deviant behaviors, they scrutinize the viability  
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59 of their actions (Bennett and Robinson, 2000). For frontline employees, it is plausible that  
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these behaviors are directed at the customers they often encounter. Since these frontline employees who experience mental pressure focus more on their problems (Swimberghe *et al.*, 2014), their energy are increasingly drained. Therefore, it is difficult for them to provide satisfactory behaviors or to understand others, which results in harmful and inappropriate interactions with customers (Swimberghe *et al.*, 2014). Empirically, Darrat *et al.* (2016) found that job stress (i.e., in specific form: emotional exhaustion) was related to salespersons' deviance. Consequently, it can be argued that the higher job stress, the higher individuals' deviant behaviors, and the following hypotheses are proposed:

*H1a.* Job stress has a positive relationship with organizational deviance.

*H1b.* Job stress has a positive relationship with frontline deviance.

#### *P-O fit as a moderating effect on the relationship between job stress and deviant behaviors*

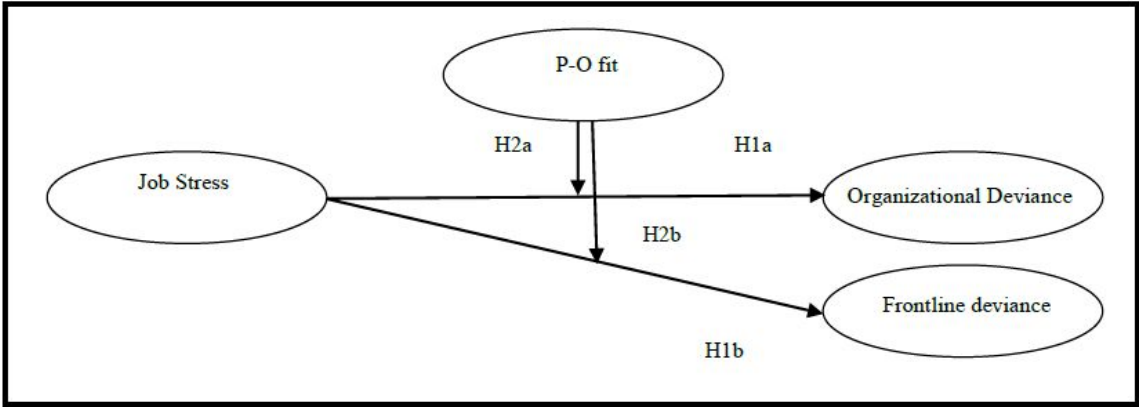
Person-organization (P-O) fit is developed based on the interactionist view that individuals' behavior is determined by individuals' characteristics and existing situations (Chatman, 1989). Chatman (1989:339) introduced P-O fit as the congruence between the organization's norms and values and the employee's values. An individual's values refer to one's beliefs about how one should behave or the end-state to be achieved. On the other hand, the values and the norms of the organization are made to regulate its members' behavior, showing which are appropriate (Chatman, 1989). It provides two perspectives: the needs-supplies, referring to companies' ability to meet their employees' needs, and the demands-abilities that relates to individuals' ability to meet companies' requirements (Kristof, 1996). Moreover, Kristof (1996) suggested that P-O fit occurs if at least one of the parties, either companies or employees, are capable of meeting the other party's expectations. The existence of P-O fit will affect work attitudes and behavior (Boon and Biron, 2016; Schwepker, 2019).

Individuals who have value incompatibility with their company will be more uncomfortable and dissatisfied (Schwepker, 2019). As a result, their social interaction skills will diminish, including when dealing with customers (Matanda and Ndubisi, 2013; Schwepker, 2019). Empirically, Schwepker (2019) found that salespeople who have low P-O fit have reduced quality of services to customers.

Individuals with high P-O fit will have a high sense of belonging to the organizations (Memon *et al.*, 2017). P-O fit has a positive relationship with organizational commitment (Chung, 2017; O'Reilly *et al.*, 1991). Furthermore, organization values are intended to regulate employee behavior (Chung, 2017; Kim *et al.*, 2013). Therefore, if individuals assume that their values are not in line with the company's values, they may have difficulty in exercising organizational values and lack organizational commitment. It can be argued that when individuals with low P-O fit experience stress, they will be unable to follow the organizational rules and norms due to fatigue and too much focus on stress. In addition, the inconvenience of their interpersonal interaction with customers means stressed employees increasingly fail to meet applicable service norms, so they are involved in frontline deviance. Their low organizational commitment and sense of belonging also make it easier for them to disobey organizational rules and provide inadequate performance, especially when they experience intense tension. Hence, this current study proposes that:

*H2a.* The relationship between job stress and organizational deviance is moderated by P-O fit, such that the relationship is stronger when P-O fit is low than high.

*H2b.* The relationship between job stress and frontline deviance is moderated by P-O fit, such that the relationship is stronger when P-O fit is low than high.



**Figure 1.**  
Research Model

**Method**

*Sample and data collection*

This study uses a self-report questionnaire distributed to the respondents by survey assistants. The respondents are frontline employees who work as salespeople, customer service, and bank tellers from various industries in Surabaya, Indonesia. Surabaya is the capital of East Java and a business center in Indonesia (Gilbert, 2017). Selection of respondents based on purposive sampling technique (i.e., non-managerial and educational level). We asked the respondents to fill out the questionnaire anonymously and return it within a sealed envelope that was already provided. There are 259 surveys collected, which could be analyzed for hypothesis testing. The respondents' profiles demonstrate that the majority of the respondents are women (58.3%) with the age range of 18-35 years old (90.8%), have tenure <5 years (81.4%), and are single (68.7%).

*Instrument*

Person-organization (P-O) fit is an individual's perception of the congruence between the organizational values and his/her values. In this study, P-O fit was measured using five

indicators that we adopted from Netemeyer *et al.* (1996) (e.g., This organization has the same values as I do with regard to concern for others) and Saks and Ashforth (1997) (e.g., I feel like I really match into my organization). Respondents were asked to respond on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree - 5 = strongly agree). Job stress is a condition of physical and psychological disorders experienced by individuals due to work pressure accumulated from preceding years. Work stress was measured using seven indicators (e.g., I feel emotionally drained from my work) from Anderson *et al.* (2002). Respondents were asked to respond on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = never - 5 = every day). Organizational deviance is an individual's deviant behavior toward the company, while frontline deviance is an individual's deviant behavior toward the customers in the prior year. This study used twelve organizational deviance indicators (e.g., Spent too much time fantasizing or daydreaming instead of working) from Bennett and Robinson (2000), and three frontline deviance indicators (e.g., Acted out work-related frustrations in front of a customer) from (Darrat *et al.*, 2016). Respondents were asked to respond to both deviant behaviors on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = never - 5 = daily). The research questionnaire was modified and translated into Indonesian to facilitate respondents' understanding. To minimize the potential of CMB, we asked respondents to complete the questionnaire anonymously and return it in a sealed envelope (Abubakar *et al.*, 2017; Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003).

## Result

### *Measurement Model and Hypotheses Testing*

This study conducts data analysis in three stages, namely, identifying the common method variance, testing the measurement model, and finally, testing the research hypothesis. Based on Harman's Single Factor Test (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003), the largest variance explained by



the first factor is 25.22%, indicating the absence of a single factor. Therefore, common method bias is not a potential threat for this study.

This study examines the validity, reliability, and hypotheses using PLS-SEM, which is illustrated in figure 1. Table I exhibits composite reliability (CR) values and convergent validity (i.e., outer loading values and average variance extracted/AVE). For the achievement of sufficient convergent validity, several indicators are dropped and are not used in further analysis. All outer loading of each indicator results in values above the minimum cutoff of 0.5 (Hair *et al.*, 2017). Similarly, the test of convergent validity at the construct level can be seen from each variable's average variance extracted (AVE) value, which also has the minimum cutoff of 0.5 (Hair *et al.*, 2017). As a condition to fulfil the reliability of internal consistency, all variables have shown satisfactory CR values, being more than 0.836 (Hair *et al.*, 2017). Furthermore, the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlations approach is used for discriminant validity testing. Table II shows that all the constructs have a value less than HTMT.85 (Hair *et al.*, 2017), which indicates that they are unique constructs.

**Table I.**  
Reliability and Convergent Validity

**Table II.**  
Discriminant Validity

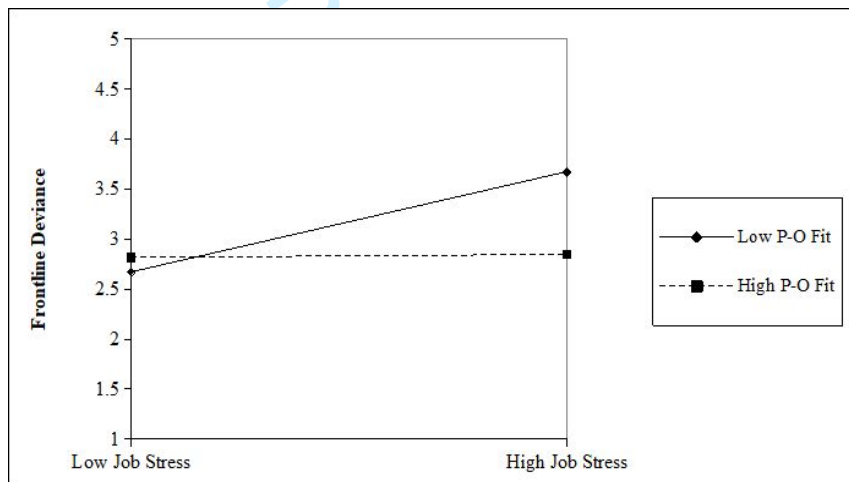
*Structural Model*

Table III shows that job stress is positively correlated to organizational deviance ( $\beta = 0.359$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and to frontline deviance ( $\beta = 0.257$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). These results support hypotheses 1a and 1b. Although not hypothesized, but as part of the moderation testing process, this study found that P-O fit has a negative effect on organizational and frontline deviance (respectively:  $\beta = -0.209$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ;  $\beta = -0.169$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Moreover, testing the role of moderation indicates that P-O fit moderates the relationship between job stress and frontline



deviance ( $\beta = -0.242, p < 0.05$ ), but does not moderate the relationship between job stress and organizational deviance ( $\beta = -0.089, ns.$ ). These results support hypothesis 2b but do not support hypothesis 2a. Figure 2 displays the correlation between job stress and frontline deviance is stronger as the P-O fit decreased, and that job stress is not significantly correlated to frontline deviance when P-O fit is high.

**Table III.**  
Hypotheses Testing



**Figure 2.**  
Moderation effect of P-O fit

## Discussion

As predicted, the results show that job stress is positively correlated to organizational and frontline deviance. These results are in line with the COR theory. Stressed individuals are engulfed in their resources and tend to focus on the causes of stress and their poor condition. Consequently, they may reduce their efforts to protect their remaining resources. Another explanation is that they may show undue performance in front of customers because of their fatigue. Our result can also be explained based on the social exchange theory that individuals deviate from the norm to retaliate organizations and customers who are considered to be the cause of their unpleasant conditions. Referring to our sample, frontline employees may

experience work stress due to high work demands and the provision to interact with customers. This type of work requires them to have high product knowledge and a certain level of service quality in order to satisfy customers, boosting company sales. The stressed frontline employee exhibits heightened deviant behaviors toward the organization and customers. The impacts of these behaviors could be detrimental to the company, decreasing organizational performance, and escalating customers' dissatisfaction.

Our findings support Darrat *et al.* (2016) about the relationship between job stress and workplace deviance. However, in contrast to this current study which focuses on the physical and psychological conditions of employees who experience stress, Darrat *et al.* (2016) focused on the impact of emotional exhaustion. Thus the results of this study enrich the literature regarding the relationship between job stress and deviant behaviors, i.e., organizational and frontline deviance, especially in the context of frontline employees, which has not been widely studied. These findings support several studies that employees experiencing unpleasant and stressful conditions will respond by engaging in behavior that deviates from workplace norms and rules, such as intention to sabotage (Abubakar and Arasli, 2016), job search behavior (Abubakar *et al.*, 2018), workplace withdrawal behavior (Abubakar *et al.*, 2017), organizational deviance (Chung, 2017; Khattak *et al.*, 2019; Khattak *et al.*, 2020). These studies were conducted in different countries which have different cultural contexts. These findings indicate that, in general, individuals who experience unpleasant events will respond by engaging in deviant behavior. This thinking is in line with Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005) that social exchange theory can be applied universally even though the cultural context can still influence the extent to which individuals apply this reciprocal principle.

Further analysis reveals that P-O fit moderates the relationship between job stress and frontline deviance. There is a strong positive correlation between job stress and frontline

deviance when P-O fit is low. Contrarily, when P-O fit is high, the relationship between job stress and frontline deviance is not significant. Incongruent values between the organization and employees will encourage the emergence of counterproductive attitudes and behaviors (Schwepker, 2019). Individuals who have a value match with their organization will trust their company and be comfortable in interpersonal interactions in the workplace (Cable and Edwards, 2004; Zhang and Bloemer, 2008). Thus, frontline employees with low P-O fit may become less comfortable communicating and becoming agents of the company's brand. The work stress they experience makes them run out of important resources to serve customers. Especially with the lower P-O fit, they will be increasingly uncomfortable and unable to become a qualified service provider who must communicate the company's value through the products and brands they offer to customers. As a result, stressed frontline employees will increasingly exhibit frontline deviance. In addition, Matanda and Ndubisi (2013) suggest that individuals who have similar values as their organizations are more likely to provide the same service value to customers. Furthermore, individuals who have value incongruence with their company will experience job dissatisfaction (Kim *et al.*, 2013), which makes them unable to satisfy their customers (Matanda and Ndubisi, 2013). Therefore, the absence of compatibility – can strengthen the adverse impact work stress on frontline deviance.

However, this present study shows that P-O fit does not mitigate/exacerbate the impact of job stress on organizational deviance. There are several possible explanations regarding this result. Individuals who engage in workplace deviance may consider the risks of that behavior (Diefendorff, 2007). Some employees might consider organizational deviance to be too risky to carry out, while others do not. In this case, the compatibility between the individuals' values and the organizations' may not be relevant in limiting their involvement in organizational deviance. For some individuals, organizational deviance is still carried out despite their value fit, because they feel that the organization fails to establish a pleasant

working environment and is less concerned about employees' psychological and physiological health. As a result, individuals who experience job stress may perceive the organization as responsible for their stresses. These employees respond to their frustration by defying organization norms. On the contrary, other employees, regardless of having high or low P-O fit, tend to focus on exercising frontline deviance as opposed to organizational deviance, since they consider customers as the cause of their stress.

### Implication

Because of their job demands, frontline employees are vulnerable to stress. As a result, they can respond to their stress through workplace deviance. Undeniably, these employees are more likely to be involved in deviant behavior if they have low P-O fit. P-O fit is important to pay attention to because individuals who have a value mismatch with those of their company will be more uncomfortable and dissatisfied (Schwepker, 2019). As a result, their social interaction skills will decrease, including when dealing with customers (Matanda and Ndubisi, 2013; Schwepker, 2019). Schwepker (2019) found that salespeople who have a low P-O fit have lowered the quality of service to customers. Our study also shows that employees who have a low P-O fit will increasingly respond to their job stress by engaging in workplace deviance. Since individual characteristics and situational factors can influence the extent to which individuals experience and react to their stress by engaging in deviant behavior (Malik and Lenka, 2019; Singh, 2019), organizations need to improve effective employee management practices to reduce the risk of improper employee placement and unpleasant situations. Therefore, companies and managers need to consider the following approach to manage their employees successfully based on human resource practices.

First, the interactionist approach suggests that companies need to prevent this issue by exercising the process of selection and continuous socialization to control employees'

behavior (Chatman, 1989). During the recruitment and selection process, companies should be more careful in assessing applicants' personalities, such as reflecting whether individuals have values parallel to the company and their job, the tendency to experience stress, and the likelihood of rules violation. Background checks and references are essential in recruiting individuals with minimized likelihood of engaging in workplace deviance. Second, companies need to continuously support, establish friendly relationships, and develop participatory decision-making processes with employees to reduce their work stress and deviant behaviors. Moreover, since individual differences (e.g., disposition) can play a role in how individuals deal with pressures at work (Barsky *et al.*, 2004), organizations need to provide information about company demands for employee work behavior and work conditions. Organizations also need to consider situational factors that may increase employees' stressful experiences, such as supervisors and coworkers' behaviour (Cohen and Wills, 1985). In this regard, they need to create a comfortable social environment and hold role-playing training so colleagues and supervisors can understand the impact of their negative behavior. Third, employees can learn the company's values and norms from the daily activities they experience, including how managers treat them (Lu *et al.*, 2015; Zheng *et al.*, 2017). Therefore, companies need to evaluate regularly to ensure that managers have become positive role models and treat their employees according to company values and norms. Fourth, companies need to communicate their values, norms, and regulations regularly to all organization members while also providing a clear reward and punishment policy to reduce deviant behavior.

## Conclusion

This study found that frontline employees who experience work stress may engage in deviant behavior. This can be directed toward the organization, such as frequent daydreaming, and

customers, in the form of unethical conduct. These behaviors certainly reduce the overall effectiveness of the organization and intensify customers' dissatisfaction level which leads to the deterioration of the organization's performance. Furthermore, this study demonstrates that the impact of job stress on frontline deviance can be exacerbated if employees have low person-organization (P-O) fit. Therefore, companies need to emphasize not only the suitability between individual competencies and job requirements but also that between an individual's values and those of the organization.

Despite these contributions, this study contains limitations that need to be addressed in future studies. First, this study uses cross-sectional data. Future researchers should consider using longitudinal studies, specifically related to the possibility of a change in P-O fit due to work stress. By using longitudinal study researchers may compare the changes in research subjects after a certain period. The stages can be done as follows: P-O fit is analyzed in time-1 and time-3; job stress is analyzed in time-2. This research was conducted on the same subjects, and each period was given a time lag. Thus, it will appear that there is a change in the employees' PO Fit due to their job stress. Second, this study obtained data through self-report for all variables. Since these variables – job stress and P-O fit – are subjective to personal perceptions and personal experience, self-report could be an alternative way to obtain data. Furthermore, Berry *et al.* (2007) indicated no significant difference in the use of self-reports or other-reports to measure individuals' deviant behaviors. However, the use of other data sources is suggested for future researches. Third, since individuals may work in fields that are not in accordance with their wishes, including their skills and abilities (person-job fit), further studies need to consider the role of this P-J fit variable as a moderation in the relationship between job stress and deviant behavior. Furthermore, draw from the results that P-O Fit does not moderate the relationship between job stress and organizational deviance, future research may test moderating variables such as organizational

characteristics, employee characteristics, and workgroups (Appelbaum *et al.*, 2007), which may play a role in this relationship. Social support from co-workers and supervisors can mitigate individuals who experience unpleasant treatment to engage in behaviors detrimental to the organization (Holm *et al.*, 2019). Future studies may identify the role social support has as a moderating effect on the relationship between job stress and workplace deviance. Fourth, the sample of this study is the frontline employees. Further studies should consider utilizing other occupations with a code of ethics that requires high professional work, such as doctors and teachers. Therefore, future research regarding this context could generate more generalized outcomes.

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**Table I.**  
**Reliability and Convergent Validity**

Variables	Item	Loading	CR	AVE
Job Stress (JS)	JS1	0.671	0.882	0.521
	JS2	0.76		
	JS3	0.791		
	JS4	0.843		
	JS5	0.562		
	JS6	0.754		
	JS7	0.635		
Frontline Deviance (FD)	FD1	0.82	0.836	0.629
	FD2	0.748		
	FD3	0.81		
Organizational Deviance (OD)	OD2	0.755	0.892	0.509
	OD4	0.774		
	OD5	0.744		
	OD6	0.696		
	OD7	0.678		
	OD8	0.798		
	OD11	0.664		
Person-Organization (P-O) Fit	PO1	0.679	0.892	0.626
	PO2	0.782		
	PO3	0.864		
	PO4	0.889		
	PO5	0.721		



**Table II.**  
**Discriminant Validity**

Variables	JS	FD	OD	P-O Fit
1. JS				
2. FD	0.393			
3. OD	0.83	0.45		
4. P-O Fit	0.243	0.181	0.252	

Note:  $n=259$ .

**Table III.**  
**Hypotheses Testing**

Hypothesis	Relationship	Path coefficient	$t$	Hypothesis support
H1a	JS $\rightarrow$ OD	0.359	6.689**	Supported
H1b	JS $\rightarrow$ FD	0.257	4.738**	Supported
H2a	POF $\times$ JS $\rightarrow$ OD	-0.089	0.631	Unsupported
H2b	POF $\times$ JS $\rightarrow$ FD	-0.242	2.165*	Supported

\*\* $p < 0.01$ ; \* $p < 0.05$ .