

Fostering Organizational Citizenship Behaviors: The Impact of Employee Engagement and Organizational Learning with Teamwork as a Mediator

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Abstract

This study focuses on exploring the intermediary function of teamwork (TW) within the context of higher education institutions and its effect on administrative organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB). Employing a survey methodology, quantitative data were gathered from individuals working in the higher education sector. Data analysis was conducted using partial least squares structural equation modeling. The results affirmed the anticipated intermediary effect of TW in enhancing OCB through the interaction of employee engagement (EE) and organizational learning (OL). Contrary to expectations, direct links between organizational learning and OCB were not substantiated; however, an indirect relationship was identified through TW's mediating role. Additionally, the model accounted for 57.8% of the variance observed in OCB. This research contributes to the body of knowledge on OCB by proposing a new and theoretically grounded mediator, offering insights into how EE and OL at higher education institutions influence OCB via TW.

Keywords: Organizational Citizenship Behavior, Teamwork, Employee Engagement, Organizational Learning, Smart-PLS.

Introduction

In today's competitive and dynamic business environments, organizations need to function successfully and efficiently. Several empirical studies have shown that organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB) contribute to increased customer satisfaction, work productivity and quality, and organizational revenue and profitability (Huynh & Nguyen, 2022). The relationship between the university students and the employee, who is the service provider, embodies employee performance. It is essential to the accomplishment of the organization's success. Additionally, it is the cause of its failure because employee conduct actualizes organizational goals (Sitopu et al., 2021). More significantly, the literature study showed that OCB and in-role performance are the main dimensions of employee performance (Purwanto et al., 2021). The term OCB describes actions taken voluntarily by staff members because they feel they directly advance the efficiency of the organization's operations without adversely influencing their productivity (Salahat & Abdul Majid, 2016). It encompasses a variety of actions, including lending a hand when needed, volunteering for extra labor, and abiding by workplace norms, laws, and regulations. This highlights the benefits of OCB (Widarko & Anwarodin, 2022).

Similarly, corporate citizenship behaviors are critical to the company's success; they help achieve its goals and allow employees to perform better (Yusnita et al., 2021) despite the significance of both employee performance and OCB. OCB at Palestine's educational institutions are currently in a distinct condition.

Many unfavorable signs were noted in a survey designed to gauge worker productivity in educational institutions: Sixty-seven percent of the employees surveyed said that they do not receive constructive feedback from their managers; thirty-three percent said that their managers do not treat them fairly and equally; thirty-three percent said that they do not set annual objectives with their managers at the beginning of the year; sixty-percent said that they would not recommend their workplace to others; five-seven percent said that they are generally dissatisfied at work; and, finally, sixty-six percent said that they are not making progress in their professional development. The main driving force behind this study's conduct was the preceding indicators of the state of OCB (Salahat & Katalu, 2023).

Research Problem and Questions

Numerous internal and external organizational factors influence OCB; this study concentrates on internal factors because leadership within the organization controls these elements. They understand how internal organizational factors affect OCB benefits educational institutions by enhancing their overall performance. Two primary criteria were used in this study to create a gap. First, the resource-based view theory identifies the theoretical connections between the dependent variable (DV), independent variables (IVs), and mediators. Second, the study's factors are crucial in assisting institutions in embracing and executing non-conventional organizational citizenship activities. As a result, the single mediator in this study is Teamwork (TW), which stands for the primary research gap. According to the literature review, it has yet to be employed in this capacity as a mediator between worker productivity and organizational learning (OL) and worker engagement and learning on the other. This leads to the formulation of the following research questions:

1. How does Employee Engagement and Organizational Learning affect Organizational Citizenship Behavior?
2. Does Teamwork mediate the relationship between Employee Engagement and Organizational Learning and Organizational Citizenship Behavior?

Literature Review: Conceptual Framework

Employee Engagement

The degree to which an employee's behavior and emotional condition are directed toward achieving company goals is called employee engagement (EE) (Chin et al., 2019). It is also described as a person's emotional and personal attachment to the company and its strategic objectives (Kassa & Tsigu, 2022). Employees engaged in labor for their companies' success in addition to their pay and benefits (Al Zeer et al., 2023). They strongly desire to increase their positive engagement by making the most of their abilities in a focused, integrated manner. The rationale is that when workers have a purpose in their work, company culture, and rules, they perform at a higher level (Riyanto et al., 2021). This aligns with the employee stewardship and social exchange theories (Uddin et al., 2019). Theoretically, positive emotions like interest, excitement, and joy are experienced by fully engaged employees, and these feelings expand their thought-action knowledge pool and help them develop their skills by encouraging creativity in their thoughts and actions. This is the basis for the relationship between EE and TW. This makes individuals more receptive to new ideas, encourages unconventional thinking, and makes them more creative in their job and output (Ismail et al., 2019). Additionally, the research analysis showed that OCB and EE are significantly positively correlated (Sugianingrat et al., 2019). Based on the previous discussion, the present study hypothesizes the following:

H₁: There is a significant positive relationship between employee engagement and organizational citizenship behavior.

H₂: There is a significant positive relationship between employee engagement and teamwork.

Organizational Learning

The idea of OL was first introduced over fifty years ago. Organizations are expected to have a better competitive position in today's global climate. It needs to pick things up more quickly than its competitors (Hariharan & Vivekanand, 2018). The best way to accomplish this is to encourage staff members to pursue education and impart their knowledge to others, making what they have learned beneficial to everyone involved (including themselves, others, and their company) (Sturm et al., 2021). It refers to ongoing procedures that help groups and people learn, and when this happens, there is shared knowledge among all organization members (Namada, 2018). It is described as the cornerstone and primary means of achieving sustained organizational performance advantage (Kiziloglu, 2015). OL is the hub for utilizing previous knowledge, implementing environmental changes, and giving access to future possibilities (Hariharan & Vivekanand, 2018). Additionally, suppose an organization has a dynamic, adaptable, and responsive structure that allows it to learn faster than its competitors. In that case, it will be better ready to react and respond to new environmental issues. Organizations with a solid commitment to OL find it easier to achieve their goals (Kiziloglu, 2015). According to the literature review, OL has a significant and positive relationship with TW (Lyman et al., 2023). Similarly, OL affects OCB significantly and positively (Sutardi et al., 2022; Udin, 2021). Based on the above discussion, the present study hypothesizes the following:

H₃: There is a significant positive relationship between organizational learning and organizational citizenship behavior.

H₄: There is a significant positive relationship between organizational learning and teamwork.

Teamwork

A team is defined as a group of two or more people who carry out tasks connected to their jobs, engage in dynamic interactions with one another, and have a shared past, foreseeable future, and destiny. They are all considered to be members of a team. The fact that a team needs to communicate with one another in order to complete a task is one of its distinguishing traits. Thus, behaviors that promote effective team member collaboration are used to define TW (Beaubien & Baker, 2017). Organizations have moved from individual duties to team tasks after realizing that teams might be more productive than the total work done by individuals. Because team members can combine their unique, complimentary abilities to provide backup behavior, check one another to reduce errors, and shift the burden as needed, teams can take on more intricate work than individuals (Goodwin et al., 2018). This shift from an individual to a team focus has occurred in various settings, including different fields (Ervin et al., 2018). Academics are changing their practices, norms, and values to align with a more collaborative approach that involves a broader range of stakeholders, disciplinary specialists, and approaches. Teams are becoming increasingly interprofessional; businesses are shifting from individual to TW and interdisciplinary (Tebes & Thai, 2018) and cross-cultural (Feitosa et al., 2018). Without teams or larger collectives, much work in the modern world cannot be completed. Additionally, since TW has not been used in this context before, according to the literature review, it fills a significant gap in the current study by examining its mediating role between EE and OL on the one hand and OCB on the other. The impact of EE on TW (Macauley, 2015) and OL (Lyman et al., 2023). At the same time, innovative TW affects OCB significantly and positively (Hamid et al., 2022). Based on the above discussion, innovative work behavior can mediate between the variables mentioned above. So, the present study hypothesizes the following: following:

H₅: There is a significant positive relationship between teamwork and organizational citizenship behavior.

H₆: Does teamwork mediate the relationship between employee engagement and organizational citizenship behavior.

H₇: Does teamwork mediate the relationship between organizational learning and organizational citizenship behavior.

The Methodological Process

Research Design and Population

This research employed a quantitative methodology with primary data to explore the determinants of OCB within Palestinian higher education institutions. The selection of employees from these institutions as the data source was driven by a gap in existing research specifically addressing this demographic. OCB is critical for enhancing the educational process, which has repercussions for both present and future generations.

Employees in higher education possess in-depth knowledge relevant to the research area and can provide valuable insights into innovative work behaviors. Such behaviors have been the focus of numerous studies within higher education, as evidenced by works like those of Dixit & Upadhyay, (2021) and Jia et al. (2022). According to The Ministry of Higher Education & Scientific Research (2021), the workforce in higher education comprises 13,337 individuals, including 7,103 academic teaching staff, 635 academic administrators, 19 academic researchers, 1,149 administrative personnel, 2,562 office staff, and 1,869 teaching assistants.

Research Instrument and Data Collection

To ensure content validity, the construction of measurement items was guided by a comprehensive literature review. The research instrument encompasses items designed to evaluate OCB, as outlined by Podsakoff et al. (2009), TW concepts from (Ifechi et al., 2022), EE criteria from Majid et al., (2020), and OL frameworks from Hanaysha, (2016). A five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), was utilized to gauge responses.

The study focused on employees within higher education institutions in the West Bank, Palestine, as its primary subjects. To calculate the sample size, the study employed the G*Power analysis, highly advocated by Cohen (1992). According to the analytical model featuring five predictors targeting a single outcome, a minimum sample size of 70 is recommended to attain 80% statistical power. This is sufficient for detecting R² values of at least 0.25, with a 5% error probability, as Hair et al. (2016) suggested.

Data was collected through self-administered and electronic questionnaires, employing a convenience random sampling method. This approach facilitated the distribution of online questionnaires, yielding 105 valid responses.

For data analysis, the Partial Least Squares (PLS) method was utilized via Smart-PLS 4 software, as described by Ringle et al. (2022). Consistent with established best practices for PLS analysis, the study assessed the measurement model for internal consistency reliability and convergent and discriminant validity, as advised by Hair et al., (2016). Hypotheses testing was conducted through PLS path modeling and multiple regression analysis, employing a bootstrapping technique with 10,000 samples, following the methodology recommended by Ringle et al., (2022).

Results and Discussion

Assessment and Refinement of the Measurement Model

The initial phase of the study involved a rigorous assessment of the measurement model to ascertain its psychometric attributes, with a particular focus on reliability and validity. This evaluation demonstrated high internal consistency and substantial outer loadings, which ranged between 0.668 and 0.912, indicating the model's efficacy in capturing the constructs it intends to measure. Hulland (1999) posits that observed variables should possess outer loadings exceeding a minimum threshold of 0.50 to warrant acceptability. In the present study, the outer loadings demonstrate a spectrum of values ranging from 0.668 to 0.912, surpassing the stipulated criterion.

Table 1 offers empirical substantiation that the present study fulfills the criteria for establishing convergent validity. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct varies between 0.540 and 0.796, thereby exceeding the a priori threshold of 0.50, as corroborated by extant literature (Abuamria & Ajouz, 2020; Hair et al., 2016; Salahat & Halim, 2016). Concerning the composite reliability, denoted as Rho-a, and Rho-c, of the latent variables, observed metrics span from 0.802 to 0.951. Analogously, Cronbach's Alpha (α) values are situated within a range of 0.791 to 0.936, surpassing acceptable levels delineated in earlier research (Ajouz et al., 2023; Hair et al., 2019). These empirical findings collectively bolster the psychometric robustness of the measurement model, specifically with respect to its validity and reliability.

Table 1. Assessment of the Measurement Model

Code	Constructs	Cronbach's alpha	Composite Reliability		AVE
			Rho-a	Rho-c	
OCB	Organizational Citizenship Behavior	0.848	0.852	0.897	0.685
TW	Teamwork	0.882	0.898	0.911	0.634
EE	Employee Engagement	0.791	0.802	0.854	0.540
OL	Organizational Learning	0.936	0.941	0.951	0.796

Source: Author's Own Creation based on Smart-PLS Results

To assess discriminant validity, the current investigation employed the methodological framework proposed by Fornell and Larcker (1981). More precisely, Table 2 illustrates that the square roots of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each primary construct manifest statistical significance in exceeding the correlational values associated with other constructs. This observed differentiation between constructs constitutes compelling empirical evidence for their discriminant validity. Such outcomes are congruent with the Fornell-Larcker criteria, thereby corroborating the methodological rigor of the technique employed and validating antecedent scholarly contributions (Ajouz et al., 2023; Hair et al., 2019; Salahat, 2021).

Table 2. Discriminant Validity for First-Order Model

	OCB	TW	EE	OL
OCB	0.828	0.833	0.669	0.479
TW	0.737	0.796	0.662	0.559
EE	0.582	0.589	0.735	0.398
OL	0.428	0.517	0.354	0.892

Source: Author's Own Creation based on Smart-PLS Results

Notes: Diagonal and italicized are the square roots of the AVE. Below the diagonal elements are the correlations between the construct's values. Above the diagonal elements are the Heterotrait–Monotrait ratio of correlations values.

Additionally, the study incorporated the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) test, formulated by Henseler et al. (2015). The derived HTMT values oscillate between 0.398 and 0.833, falling beneath the predetermined threshold of 0.85, as posited by Kline, (2011). These empirical data furnish unequivocal evidence that substantiates the discriminant differentiation of the constructs under investigation, thereby fortifying the discriminant validity of the current analytical framework (Alomary et al., 2023; Salahat & Katalu, 2023).

Structural Model

The evaluation of the research hypotheses was executed using the Partial Least Squares (PLS) bootstrapping method, an analytical approach renowned for its robust statistical inference capabilities and suitability for model assessment (Hair et al., 2017). Figure 4 elucidates the model's predictive efficacy, indicating that it accounts for approximately 57.8% of the total variance in OCB.

The analysis yields compelling empirical support for the hypothesized relationships, each of which achieved statistical significance within a 95% confidence interval. For ease of reference, pertinent data have been methodically organized in Tables 3 and 4.

Among the study's key discoveries is the validation of the pre-existing theoretical framework. Specifically, the findings corroborate the assertion that EE and OL exert a significant influence on OCB. Concurrently, the analysis identifies TW as a critical mediating variable that enhances OCB, underscoring its importance in the theoretical model.

Starting with H₁ and H₂, the analysis found a coefficient of 0.222 for the relationship between EE and OCB, with a T-value of 2.920 and a P-value of 0.004. This indicates a statistically significant positive relationship, suggesting that increases in EE correspond to increases in behaviors beneficial to the organization that go beyond formal job requirements. Furthermore, the relationship between EE and TW was found to be even more pronounced, with a coefficient of 0.464, a T-value of 5.581, indicating extreme statistical significance. This stronger positive relationship highlights the substantial impact of EE on enhancing TW within the organization.

Table 3. PLS-SEM Results: Direct Path Coefficients of the Adjusted Model

H _x	Relationship	Std Beta	T-Value	P-Value	Decision
H ₁	EE -> OCB	0.222	2.920	0.004	Supported
H ₂	EE -> TW	0.464	5.581	0.000	Supported
H ₃	OL -> OCB	0.049	0.906	0.365	Not Supported
H ₄	OL -> TW	0.353	3.981	0.000	Supported
H ₅	TW -> OCB	0.580	7.842	0.000	Supported

Source: Author's Own Creation based on Smart-PLS Results

These results carry significant implications for organizational strategies, emphasizing the need for initiatives aimed at boosting EE. By investing in engagement-enhancing activities such as recognizing employee achievements, fostering professional growth opportunities, and creating a supportive work environment, organizations can expect to see not only an increase in OCB but also significant improvements in TW. Such outcomes can contribute to a more productive, cohesive, and positive organizational culture, ultimately enhancing overall performance.

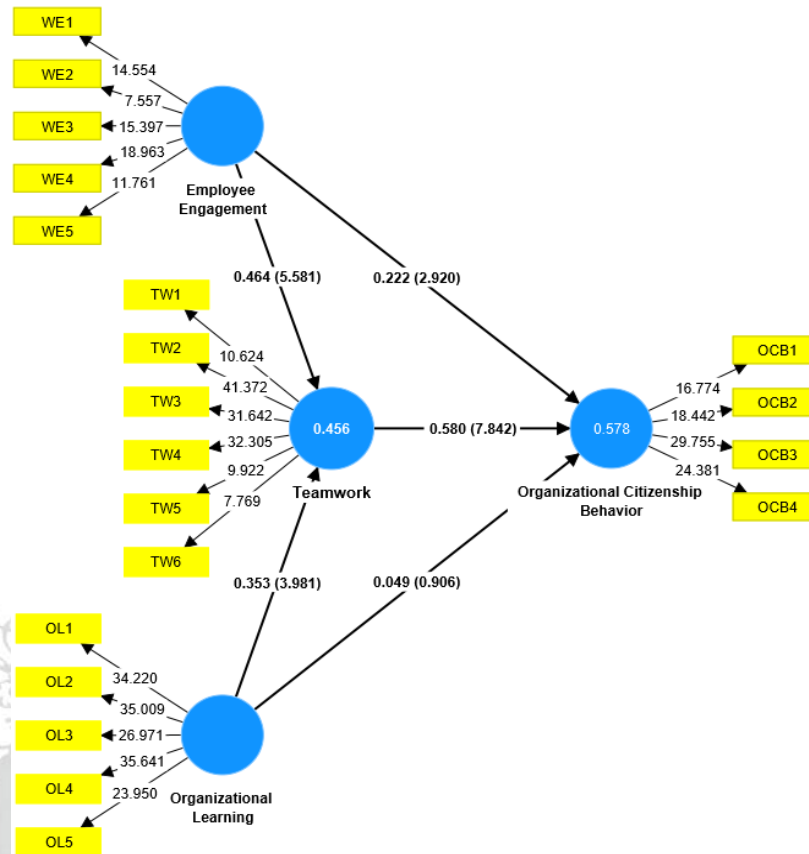


Fig. 1. Structural Model Results

Source: Author's Own Creation based on Smart-PLS Results

For the hypothesis (H₃) concerning the relationship between OL and OCB, the analysis yielded a coefficient of 0.049 with a T-value of 0.906 and a P-value of 0.365. This result indicates a very weak positive relationship between OL and OCB which is not statistically significant. This finding implies that, within the context of this study, OL does not have a meaningful impact on enhancing behaviors that contribute to the organization beyond formal job requirements. Conversely, the relationship between OL and TW (H₄) demonstrated a substantially different outcome. With a coefficient of 0.353, a T-value of 3.981, and a P-value of 0.000, the results indicate a strong and statistically significant positive relationship. This suggests that as OL increases, there is a significant improvement in TW. This robust evidence supports the hypothesis that OL plays a crucial role in fostering TW within organizations, likely by facilitating shared knowledge, enhancing communication, and aligning team members towards common goals. These contrasting results highlight the nuanced impact of OL on different aspects of organizational behavior. While OL appears not to significantly influence OCB directly, its positive impact on TW is clear and statistically significant. This suggests that the benefits of OL may be more pronounced in collaborative contexts, where shared knowledge and learning experiences directly contribute to team effectiveness and cohesion. The implication for organizations is that while fostering an environment of learning is crucial, its direct effects may be more tangible in some areas (like TW) than in others (such as discretionary individual behaviors outside formal job roles).

The statistical analysis examining the relationship between TW and OCB (H₅) revealed a significant and positive correlation, highlighted by a coefficient of 0.580, a T-value of 7.842, and a P-value of 0.000. These findings indicate that an increase in TW within an organization is strongly associated with a rise in OCB,

suggesting that improved TW leads to employees engaging more in behaviors that exceed their formal job requirements and contribute positively to the organization. This significant relationship underscores the importance of TW in fostering a culture where employees are willing to go above and beyond their formal duties for the benefit of the organization. The results suggest that organizations could greatly benefit from investing in team-building and collaborative initiatives. By focusing on enhancing TW, organizations can expect to see not only improved team dynamics but also an increase in voluntary, beneficial behaviors among employees that contribute to the organization's success and well-being.

Table 4. PLS-SEM of Serial Mediation Results

Relationship	Total effects β	H_x	Relationship	β	T-Value	P-Value	Decision
EE -> OCB	0.492	5.646	EE -> TW-> OCB	0.269	4.376	0.000	Supported
OL -> OCB	0.255	3.174	OL -> TW-> OCB	0.205	3.825	0.000	Supported

Source: Author's Own Creation based on Smart-PLS Results

The results presented in table 4 provide insightful implications for understanding the mediating role of TW in predicting OCB. The total effects analysis suggests a direct and significant relationship between EE and OCB is quantified by a coefficient of 0.492 and a T-value of 5.646. Additionally, the mediating effects analysis demonstrates that TW plays a crucial role in this process, serving as an important channel through which engaged employees contribute to the organizational culture through citizenship behaviors (H_6), the analysis reveals a coefficient of 0.269 with a T-value of 4.376. The implications of these findings are significant for organizational leaders and HR professionals. By fostering a work environment that promotes both high levels of EE and TW, organizations can enhance OCB among employees. This suggests that interventions aimed at increasing EE should not only focus on the direct outcomes of such engagement but also consider how creating a supportive and collaborative team environment can further amplify the positive effects on OCB.

The results provided offer an intriguing insight into the relationship between OL, TW, and OCB. Specifically, they highlight a scenario where the direct relationship between OL and OCB is not statistically significant, yet the total effect of OL on OCB, as well as the mediating effect of TW, are both significant. The direct effect of OL on OCB, with a coefficient of 0.049, a T-value of 0.906, and a P-value of 0.365, indicates a weak and statistically non-significant relationship. This suggests that OL, when considered in isolation, does not have a direct, significant impact on OCB. In contrast, the total effect of OL on OCB, which likely encompasses both direct and indirect pathways, is significant, with a coefficient of 0.255 and a T-value of 3.174. This indicates a positive and statistically significant relationship when all pathways through which OL can influence OCB are considered. The significance of the total effect suggests that, beyond direct influence, there are other mechanisms through which OL affects OCB.

The significant mediating effect of TW on the relationship between OL and OCB is particularly noteworthy, with a coefficient of 0.205 and a T-value of 3.825. This result highlights TW as a crucial mediator that substantially contributes to the positive relationship between OL and OCB. It implies that OL enhances TW within the organization, and this improved TW, in turn, leads to higher levels of OCB. The significant T-value for this mediating effect underscores the statistical robustness of TW as a pathway through which the benefits of OL are realized in enhancing OCB. These findings collectively suggest that the pathway from OL to OCB is not straightforward but is significantly enhanced through the mechanism of TW. While OL may not directly lead to increased OCB, it fosters an environment or culture that improves TW.

Conclusion

In this research, meticulously dissected the intricate dynamics prevalent within higher education institutions, spotlighting the instrumental role of TW in bridging EE, OL, and OCB. Grounded in a methodologically sound approach, the investigation unearthed that direct associations between OL and OCB might not always be straightforward. However, it is the synergy through TW that markedly enhances these linkages. The findings not only validate the proposed mediating role of TW but also broaden the conceptual landscape, illustrating how EE and OL synergistically cultivate an environment conducive to exceptional OCB.

The empirical evidence robustly underscores the strategic imperative of fostering TW in academic milieus. Through the deliberate cultivation of TW, educational institutions stand to unlock the transformative potential of EE and OL as levers for propelling OCB. This revelation holds significant implications for higher education administrators and policymakers, advocating for targeted interventions to bolster TW, thereby reaping substantial dividends in organizational ethos and efficacy.

Moreover, the analytical prowess of the model, which elucidates 57.8% of the variance in OCB, lends credence to the solidity of the theoretical construct. By navigating the interplay between EE, OL, and TW within the scholarly realm of higher education, this study contributes a novel and theoretically substantiated perspective to the academic dialogue.

The insights derived beckon future scholars to venture further into understanding how TW serves as a vital conduit for nurturing OCB. An in-depth exploration into the specific facets of TW that most effectively mediate these relationships could unveil tailored strategies for organizational enhancement.

In alignment with the current discourse and pursuant to the evidence at hand, this investigation represents a pioneering endeavor to empirically affirm the mediating influence of TW in the confluence of EE, OL, and OCB within the educational sector of Palestine. Thus, this study enriches the global discourse on employee productivity, extending its relevance to the Palestinian context. It delineates the mediating prowess of TW in fortifying OCB, further elucidated by a model accounting for a substantial portion of the variance in OCB.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

Given the methodological choices, including a focus on the Palestinian educational sector through convenience random sampling, the extrapolation of these findings to broader contexts warrants cautious interpretation. Future inquiries, armed with a more expansive sample and varied geographical settings, could enhance the generalizability of these insights. Despite these caveats, the empirical contributions of this research significantly enrich the burgeoning corpus of knowledge surrounding OCB, TW, and their collective impact on the educational sector's vitality.

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