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Between Loyalty and Integrity: The Paradox of Organizational Support and Employee Behavior in Healthcare

Antara Loyalitas dan Integritas: Paradoks Dukungan Organisasi dan Perilaku Karyawan di Sektor Kesehatan

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates the interplay between Perceived Organizational Support (POS), Organizational Identification (OI), Unethical Pro-Organizational Behavior (UPB), and Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) among healthcare professionals at RSU Dr. Iskak, Tulungagung. Employing a quantitative methodology with Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) using SmartPLS 4.0, data from 150 employees were analyzed to determine the direct and indirect effects of POS on workplace behaviors. The results indicate that POS significantly affects both UPB and OCB, with OI serving as a key mediating factor. Employees with a strong perception of organizational support tend to develop a heightened sense of identification with their organization, which in turn promotes discretionary behaviors, both constructive and ethically questionable. The study highlights that OI positively influences UPB, suggesting that employees with deep organizational attachment may justify unethical actions in pursuit of organizational objectives. Simultaneously, the positive indirect impact of OI on OCB affirms that a strong identification with the organization encourages voluntary prosocial behaviors. These findings emphasize the dual effects of organizational identification, reinforcing the necessity for organizations to cultivate employee commitment while instilling ethical leadership and well-defined behavioral standards.

Keywords: Perceived Organizational Support, Organizational Identification, Unethical Pro-Organizational Behavior, Organizational Citizenship Behavior.

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini menyelidiki interaksi antara Perceived Organizational Support (POS), Organizational Identification (OI), Unethical Pro-Organizational Behavior (UPB), dan Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) di antara para tenaga kesehatan di RSU Dr. Dengan menggunakan metodologi kuantitatif dengan Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) menggunakan SmartPLS 4.0, data dari 150 karyawan dianalisis untuk menentukan pengaruh langsung dan tidak langsung dari POS terhadap perilaku di tempat kerja. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa POS secara signifikan mempengaruhi UPB dan OCB, dengan OI sebagai faktor mediasi utama. Karyawan dengan persepsi yang kuat tentang dukungan organisasi cenderung mengembangkan rasa identifikasi yang tinggi dengan organisasi mereka, yang pada gilirannya mendorong perilaku diskresioner, baik yang konstruktif maupun yang secara etis dipertanyakan. Studi ini menyoroti bahwa OI secara positif mempengaruhi UPB, menunjukkan bahwa karyawan dengan keterikatan organisasional yang mendalam dapat membenarkan tindakan tidak etis dalam mengejar tujuan organisasi. Secara bersamaan, dampak tidak langsung yang positif dari OI terhadap OCB menegaskan bahwa identifikasi yang kuat dengan organisasi mendorong perilaku prososial yang bersifat sukarela. Temuan ini menekankan efek ganda dari identifikasi organisasi, memperkuat perlunya organisasi untuk menumbuhkan komitmen karyawan sambil menanamkan kepemimpinan yang beretika dan standar perilaku yang jelas.

Kata Kunci: Dukungan Organisasi Yang Dipersepsikan, Identifikasi Organisasi, Perilaku Pro-Organisasi Yang Tidak Etis, Perilaku Kewargaan Organisasi.

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1. Introduction

Employee behavior significantly influences organizational outcomes, as it shapes productivity, ethical standards, and workplace culture. Within organizational behavior research, two key constructs have garnered considerable attention: Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) and Unethical Pro-Organizational Behavior (UPB). OCB refers to voluntary actions that enhance organizational effectiveness without direct rewards (Sun, 2023), whereas UPB involves unethical conduct intended to benefit the organization, often at the expense of ethical or legal norms (Xiu et al., 2019). These contrasting behaviors illustrate the complexity of employee decision-making within organizational settings, particularly concerning Perceived Organizational Support (POS), which plays a vital role in shaping workplace attitudes and behavioral tendencies (Khan et al., 2019).

POS represents employees' perceptions of how much their organization values their contributions and prioritizes their well-being (Khan et al., 2019). It is widely recognized as a fundamental factor influencing both positive and negative workplace behaviors. Employees who perceive strong organizational support tend to demonstrate greater commitment and engage in discretionary behaviors that align with OCB (Eisenberger et al., 2020; Khan et al., 2019). However, in certain conditions, heightened POS may also encourage UPB, as employees might feel obligated to protect the organization's interests, even through unethical means (Zeng et al., 2024). While POS predominantly fosters beneficial workplace behaviors, its potential role in promoting unethical actions necessitates further exploration of the mechanisms linking POS to employee decision-making and behavioral outcomes.

Organizational Identification (OI) serves as a crucial mediator in the relationship between POS and employee behavior. Based on Social Identity Theory (Graham et al., 2020), OI reflects the extent to which employees perceive their identity as closely tied to the organization and align with its values and objectives (Chen et al., 2022). Studies indicate that employees with strong OI are more inclined to engage in OCB due to their deep psychological connection with the organization (Demissie et al., 2024). However, elevated OI levels may also foster UPB, as employees may justify unethical actions as being in the organization's best interest (Chen et al., 2022). This dual influence of OI highlights its pivotal role in shaping employee responses to POS and underscores the need for further examination of its mediating effects.

Empirical research has established a strong link between POS and OCB, with OI acting as a mediator. Employees who feel valued by their organization are more likely to exhibit prosocial behaviors, such as assisting colleagues and demonstrating organizational loyalty (Demissie et al., 2024). These behaviors contribute to increased job satisfaction, reduced turnover intentions, and improved organizational performance (Mahembe & Engelbrecht, 2014). Furthermore, POS reinforces OI by fostering a sense of belonging and emotional commitment, which in turn enhances OCB (Chen et al., 2022; Guan & Frenkel, 2020).

Conversely, POS has also been linked to UPB, particularly in high-pressure and performance-driven work environments. Employees who perceive substantial organizational support may feel compelled to reciprocate, sometimes through unethical actions (Zeng et al., 2024). This tendency is especially prevalent in industries where competitive pressures and performance-based rewards create incentives for unethical behaviors that benefit the organization (Chen & Kao, 2012; Suan & Nasurdin, 2014). OI further intensifies this effect, as employees with strong identification may prioritize organizational success over ethical considerations (Demissie et al., 2024; Vuong, 2022).

The dual role of POS in encouraging both OCB and UPB emphasizes the importance of analyzing how OI mediates this relationship. Prior research indicates that strong organizational

identification increases employees' willingness to engage in actions that benefit the organization, whether ethical or unethical (Graham et al., 2020; Chen et al., 2022). Employees with high identification levels are more likely to adopt the organization's values and prioritize its interests, sometimes at the expense of ethical standards (Sun, 2023; Eisenberger et al., 2020). While previous studies have examined the direct effects of POS on OCB and UPB, limited research has specifically addressed OI's mediating role in these relationships. Exploring this gap is essential for understanding the underlying mechanisms that shape employee decision-making.

Additionally, the influence of organizational politics and leadership styles on these dynamics remains an area requiring further investigation. Servant leadership, which emphasizes employee well-being and ethical decision-making, has been shown to mitigate perceptions of organizational politics and enhance OCB (Demissie et al., 2024; Van Dierendonck, 2011). Conversely, a perception of organizational politics—where employees recognize internal power struggles and favoritism—can heighten tendencies toward UPB, as employees may rationalize unethical actions as necessary for organizational survival (Vigoda-Gadot & Cohen, 2002; Khattak et al., 2022). Understanding these contextual factors is crucial to determining their moderating effects on the POS-OI-employee behavior relationship.

As ethical leadership and organizational integrity gain increasing attention, understanding the mechanisms behind OCB and UPB is critical for shaping policies that promote ethical workplace cultures. This study aims to investigate Ol's mediating role in the relationship between POS and both OCB and UPB, providing insights into how organizational support influences ethical and unethical employee behaviors. By integrating perspectives from Social Identity Theory and Social Exchange Theory, this study contributes to the broader discourse on organizational behavior by highlighting both the positive and potentially negative consequences of strong employee identification with their organization.

2. Literature Review

Perceived Organizational Support (POS)

Perceived Organizational Support (POS) refers to employees' beliefs about how much their organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being (Khan et al., 2019). High POS has been linked to increased job satisfaction, commitment, and motivation, leading to positive workplace behaviors such as *Organizational Citizenship Behavior* (OCB) (Eisenberger et al., 2020; Khan et al., 2019). Employees who perceive strong organizational support tend to reciprocate with higher engagement and discretionary efforts, benefiting both the organization and their colleagues (Sun, 2023).

However, POS can also have unintended consequences. Employees who feel a strong sense of obligation to their organization may engage in *Unethical Pro-Organizational Behavior* (UPB) to protect or advance its interests (Zeng et al., 2024). This dual effect highlights the complexity of organizational support in shaping employee behavior. In healthcare, where ethical standards are paramount, organizations must ensure that POS fosters ethical engagement rather than pressure employees into morally compromising situations (Chen & Kao, 2012).

Organizational Identification (OI)

Organizational Identification (OI) is the degree to which employees define themselves in terms of their membership in an organization (Chen et al., 2022). According to *Social Identity Theory* (Graham et al., 2020), individuals seek to enhance their self-concept by associating with

groups that reflect their values and aspirations. Employees with high OI are more likely to internalize organizational goals, demonstrating loyalty and commitment (Chen et al., 2022).

While strong OI generally leads to positive behaviors, such as increased motivation and *OCB*, it can also create ethical dilemmas. Employees who over-identify with their organization may prioritize its interests over ethical considerations, engaging in UPB to protect its reputation (DeCelles & Aquino, 2020). In healthcare, excessive identification can lead to ethical blind spots, where employees justify unethical actions—such as concealing medical errors or manipulating patient records—as necessary for organizational success (Mishra et al., 2022).

Unethical Pro-Organizational Behavior (UPB)

Unethical Pro-Organizational Behavior (UPB) refers to unethical actions performed by employees with the intention of benefiting the organization. Unlike traditional unethical behavior, which is often self-serving, UPB arises from a misdirected sense of loyalty and obligation. Employees may justify dishonest actions—such as misleading stakeholders, covering up mistakes, or violating regulations—as necessary for organizational survival or success (Mishra et al., 2022).

Research shows that UPB is strongly influenced by factors such as POS, OI, and leadership style (Graham et al., 2020; Kuenzi et al., 2020). High POS can create a sense of indebtedness, compelling employees to engage in unethical acts to reciprocate organizational support (Zeng et al., 2024). Similarly, strong OI can lead employees to rationalize unethical behaviors if they believe these actions align with the organization's interests (Chen & Kao, 2012). In healthcare, where ethical integrity is critical, organizations must actively counter UPB through ethical leadership, transparent policies, and accountability measures (Xiu et al., 2019; Kuenzi et al., 2020).

Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB)

Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) refers to discretionary, non-mandatory actions that employees perform to support their organization and colleagues (Sun, 2023). OCB includes behaviors such as helping coworkers, taking on extra tasks, and promoting a positive work environment. High POS and strong OI are significant predictors of OCB, as employees who feel valued and identify with their organization are more likely to go beyond formal job requirements (Eisenberger et al., 2020).

While OCB is generally seen as beneficial, some researchers argue that excessive OCB can lead to negative consequences, such as burnout and work-life imbalance (Xiu et al., 2019). Additionally, OCB can sometimes blur the line between ethical and unethical behavior—employees who feel compelled to "go the extra mile" may engage in UPB if they believe it aligns with organizational goals (Mishra et al., 2022). In healthcare, where patient safety and ethical considerations are paramount, organizations must ensure that OCB is encouraged within ethical boundaries (Lemoine et al., 2019).

Conceptual Framework and Hypothesis

The conceptual framework for this study is developed based on prior literature, integrating *Perceived Organizational Support (POS), Organizational Identification (OI), Unethical Pro-Organizational Behavior (UPB),* and *Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB).* This framework explores the relationships among these constructs, emphasizing how organizational support and identification influence both ethical and unethical employee behaviors in a healthcare setting.

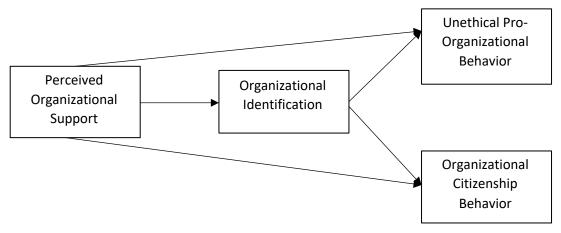


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

- H1: Perceived Organizational Support (POS) is positively related to Organizational Identification (OI).
- H2: Organizational Identification (OI) is positively related to Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB).
- H3: Perceived Organizational Support (POS) is positively related to Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB).
- H4: Organizational Identification (OI) is positively related to Unethical Pro-Organizational Behavior (UPB).
- H5: Perceived Organizational Support (POS) is positively related to Unethical Pro-Organizational Behavior (UPB).
- H6: Organizational Identification (OI) mediates the relationship between Perceived Organizational Support (POS) and Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB).
- H7: Organizational Identification (OI) mediates the relationship between Perceived Organizational Support (POS) and Unethical Pro-Organizational Behavior (UPB).

2. Research methods

This study employs a quantitative research approach to examine the relationships among POS, OI, UPB, and OCB among healthcare professionals at RSU Dr. Iskak, Tulungagung. Using a structured survey method, data is collected from 150 randomly sampled employees across medical, administrative, and support roles. Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) is utilized to analyze both direct and indirect effects, particularly assessing OI's mediating role between POS and behavioral outcomes. Grounded in Social Exchange Theory and Social Identity Theory, the study adopts validated measurement scales and records responses on a five-point Likert scale. A pilot study with 30 employees ensures instrument reliability and validity before full data collection. The analysis follows a two-step procedure, first validating the measurement model, then testing hypotheses via bootstrapping in SmartPLS 4.0. Ethical considerations, including confidentiality, informed consent, and voluntary participation, are strictly upheld. The findings aim to provide empirical insights into how organizational support and identification shape ethical and unethical behaviors, offering valuable implications for leadership strategies and ethical workplace development in the healthcare sector.

3. Results and Discussion

Before conducting hypothesis testing, the measurement model's validity and reliability were evaluated to ensure the constructs' robustness. Convergent validity was confirmed by factor loadings exceeding 0.7, AVE values above 0.5, and CR greater than 0.7, demonstrating that the constructs effectively captured their intended dimensions (Hair et al., 2010). Discriminant validity was verified through the Fornell-Larcker criterion, ensuring construct distinctiveness (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Reliability analysis indicated strong internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha values exceeding 0.7. These findings confirm the measurement model's robustness, facilitating hypothesis testing via structural equation modeling (SEM) using SmartPLS 4.0 to analyze the relationships between POS, OI, Unethical UPB, and OCB in RSU Dr. Iskak, Tulungagung's healthcare sector. The path analysis results, presented in Table 1, illustrate the direct effects of POS and OI on UPB and OCB, with statistical significance assessed through bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples, considering paths significant if the p-value was below 0.05 (Hair et al., 2010).

Table 1. Path Analysis (Direct Effects)

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Path	Original Sample	P - Value	Decision	
$POS \rightarrow UPB$	0.312	0.004	Supported	
POS → OCB	0.451	0.000	Supported	
POS → OI	0.527	0.000	Supported	
$OI \rightarrow UPB$	0.284	0.012	Supported	
OI → OCB	0.398	0.001	Supported	

Source: Data processed (2024)

The path analysis results reveal that perceived organizational support (POS) significantly impacts both unethical pro-organizational behavior (UPB) and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). A strong positive relationship was found between POS and OCB (β = 0.451, p = 0.000), reinforcing the notion that employees who perceive high organizational support are more likely to engage in pro-social behaviors, such as assisting colleagues, demonstrating loyalty, and exceeding job expectations (Khan et al., 2019). This finding aligns with Social Exchange Theory, which suggests that employees feel an obligation to reciprocate organizational support through positive work behaviors (Guan & Frenkel, 2020).

However, the positive association between POS and UPB (β = 0.312, p = 0.004) indicates that employees may also justify unethical behaviors if they believe such actions ultimately benefit the organization. This tendency is particularly evident in high-pressure work environments, where unethical conduct may be perceived as necessary to achieve organizational success (Mishra et al., 2022; Graham et al., 2020). Additionally, the strong effect of POS on organizational identification (OI) (β = 0.527, p = 0.000) supports the idea that employees who perceive organizational support develop a stronger sense of belonging and commitment. This is consistent with Social Identity Theory, which posits that employees define themselves based on their affiliation with organizations that value their contributions (Chen et al., 2022).

Employees with high organizational identification tend to align their behaviors with organizational goals, making them more likely to engage in both ethical and unethical discretionary behaviors if they perceive such actions serve the organization's interests. The dual effect of OI on UPB (β = 0.284, p = 0.012) and OCB (β = 0.398, p = 0.001) further highlights how strong identification fosters both positive organizational citizenship behaviors and ethically ambiguous actions, depending on employees' perceptions of what benefits the organization.

The next step involves conducting an indirect effect test, which is presented in the following table:

Table 2. Path Analysis (Indirect Effects)

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Path	Original Sample	P - Value	Decision	
$POS \rightarrow OI \rightarrow UPB$	0.150	0.021	Supported	
$POS \rightarrow OI \rightarrow OCB$	0.210	0.003	Supported	

Source: Data processed (2024)

The results indicate that OI significantly mediates the relationship between POS and both UPB (β = 0.150, p = 0.021) and OCB (β = 0.210, p = 0.003). The positive indirect effect suggests that employees who perceive higher organizational support are more likely to develop a strong sense of identification with their organization, which in turn influences both ethical and unethical discretionary behaviors. This finding aligns with Social Identity Theory, which posits that individuals who strongly identify with an organization internalize its values and goals, shaping their behavioral choices accordingly (Graham et al., 2020).

Discussion

These findings contribute to the growing body of literature highlighting the paradoxical role of organizational identification (OI) in workplace behavior. On one hand, employees with strong OI exhibit higher organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) due to their emotional attachment to the organization and motivation to contribute positively (Xiu et al., 2019). On the other hand, high OI can also lead employees to engage in unethical pro-organizational behavior (UPB), as they may prioritize organizational success over ethical considerations. This underscores the need for organizations not only to foster employee identification but also to establish strong ethical leadership and clear behavioral expectations to mitigate the potential negative consequences of high OI (Kuenzi et al., 2020). In industries such as healthcare, where ethical conduct is critical, organizations must be cautious about reinforcing excessively strong identification that could lead employees to rationalize unethical practices as beneficial to patient care or institutional goals (DeCelles & Aquino, 2020).

A key implication of these findings is that organizations must carefully manage the balance between providing support and encouraging ethical decision-making. While perceived organizational support (POS) can enhance both OCB and OI, it should be accompanied by ethical leadership, clear policies, and accountability mechanisms to prevent UPB (Mayer et al., 2012). Ethical leadership has been shown to mitigate the risk of UPB by reinforcing integrity norms and discouraging employees from engaging in unethical behaviors, even when they believe such actions serve organizational goals (Xiu et al., 2019). Moreover, fostering an ethical climate in which employees feel valued but also held accountable for their decisions can ensure that the positive effects of POS and OI are directed toward ethical behaviors rather than opportunistic or unethical actions (Vuong, 2022).

Overall, the study highlights the complex interplay between organizational support, employee identification, and workplace behavior. While strong POS and OI promote engagement and discretionary effort, they also pose ethical risks that organizations must actively manage. The dual impact of OI, in particular, calls for a nuanced approach to employee engagement strategies, ensuring that high identification does not create ethical blind spots (Epitropaki et al., 2017). Future research should examine contextual factors such as industry norms, regulatory pressures, and leadership styles that may moderate the relationships among POS, OI, UPB, and OCB. By

understanding these dynamics, organizations can design support systems that maximize employee commitment while upholding ethical integrity in professional settings (Lemoine et al., 2019).

The significant mediating effect of OI in the POS \rightarrow UPB relationship reinforces concerns that strong organizational identification may lead employees to justify unethical behaviors as a means of protecting or benefiting the organization (Xiu et al., 2019). Employees who feel deeply connected to their organization may develop moral rationalizations, believing that unethical actions are acceptable if they contribute to organizational success (DeCelles & Aquino, 2020). Conversely, the POS \rightarrow OI \rightarrow OCB pathway demonstrates that strong identification also enhances positive discretionary behaviors, such as helping colleagues, demonstrating organizational loyalty, and engaging in voluntary tasks beyond formal job requirements (Chen et al., 2022). These findings underscore the dual nature of OI—while it fosters commitment and engagement, it may also create ethical blind spots that increase the likelihood of UPB.

Overall, the mediation analysis confirms that OI serves as a psychological mechanism amplifying both positive and negative employee behaviors, depending on the organizational context. This highlights the importance of ethical leadership and well-defined behavioral norms to ensure that strong identification translates into constructive organizational engagement rather than unethical actions (Kuenzi et al., 2020). In high-stakes industries such as healthcare, where ethical considerations are paramount, organizations must carefully balance fostering employee commitment with reinforcing ethical standards to prevent unintended ethical compromises (Graham et al., 2020).

4. Conclusion

This study highlights the complex interplay between Perceived POS, OI, UPB, and OCB in the healthcare sector. The findings confirm that POS significantly influences both ethical OCB and unethical UPB discretionary behaviors, with OI playing a crucial mediating role in these relationships. Employees who perceive high organizational support are more likely to develop a strong identification with their organization, which in turn enhances their engagement in both prosocial and ethically questionable behaviors. While strong identification fosters OCB by reinforcing commitment and voluntary contributions, it also increases the risk of UPB, as employees may justify unethical actions as benefiting the organization. These results underscore the dual nature of organizational identification, highlighting the need for organizations to balance fostering commitment with ethical leadership and clear behavioral norms to prevent unintended ethical lapses. In high-stakes environments such as healthcare, organizations must carefully manage employee identification and support systems to encourage ethical engagement while mitigating risks associated with excessive loyalty-driven unethical behavior. Future research should explore contextual and leadership factors that may moderate these relationships, ensuring that strong organizational support translates into ethical and sustainable workplace behaviors.

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