



The Mediating Role of Organization-Based Self-Esteem in the Effect of Perceived Overqualification on Work Engagement¹

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Algılanan Aşırı Nitelikliliğin İşe Angaje Olma Üzerindeki Etkisinde Örgüt Temelli Benlik Saygısının Aracı Rolü	The Mediating Role of Organization-Based Self-Esteem in the Effect of Perceived Overqualification on Work Engagement
Öz Bu araştırmanın amacı kişi-iş uyumu ve sosyal mübadele teorileri ekseninde algılanan aşırı nitelikliliğin işe angaje olma üzerindeki etkisinde örgüt temelli benlik saygısının aracı rolü olup olmadığını ortaya koymaktır. Amaçlı örnekleme yöntemi ile 412 zincir market çalışanından elde edilen veriler, SPSS 22.0 ve AMOS 24.0 paket programları aracılığıyla analiz edilmiştir. Yapılan analizler sonucunda algılanan aşırı nitelikliliğin işe angaje olma üzerinde olumsuz bir etkiye sahip olduğu tespit edilirken, örgüt temelli benlik saygısının işe angaje olma üzerinde olumlu bir etkisi olduğu saptanmıştır. Öte yandan algılanan aşırı nitelikliliğin işe angaje olma üzerindeki etkisinde örgüt temelli benlik saygısının kısmi aracı rol üstlendiği belirlenmiştir.	Abstract The aim of this study is to examine whether organization-based self-esteem (OBSE) acts as a mediator in the effect of perceived overqualification (POQ) on work engagement (WE) within the axis of person-job fit (PJ) and social exchange theory (SET). Data obtained from 412 chain store employees using purposive sampling were analyzed through SPSS 22.0 and AMOS 24.0. The analyses revealed that perceived overqualification has a negative impact on work engagement, while organization-based self-esteem positively influences work engagement. Moreover, it was found that organization-based self-esteem partially mediates the effect of perceived overqualification on work engagement.
Anahtar Kelimeler: Algılanan Aşırı Niteliklilik, İşe Angaje Olma, Örgüt Temelli Benlik Saygısı, Kişi-İş Uyumu Teorisi, Sosyal Mübadele Teorisi	Keywords: Perceived Overqualification, Work Engagement, Organization-Based Self-Esteem, Person-Job Fit Theory, Social Exchange Theory
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Yazarların Makaleye Olan Katkıları	Yazar 1'in makaleye katkısı %50, Yazar 2'nin makaleye katkısı %50'dir.
Çıkar Beyanı	Yazarlar açısından ya da üçüncü taraflar açısından çalışmadan kaynaklı çıkar çatışması bulunmamaktadır.

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1. Introduction

Organizations aim to maintain their positions in the global market, compete with rivals, and enhance the attractiveness to buyers for the values they create. To achieve these objectives, they seek to build a suitable structure. Human resources are considered a key element for organizations to achieve success and survival (Muscalu, 2015, p. 351). The inimitable nature of human resources makes competitiveness sustainable (Sıgır & Dinçer, 2013, p. 195), and their uniqueness contributes to competitive strength (Tabancalı & Korumaz, 2014, p. 142). Thus, adopting internal resources for competitive advantage (Becker & Huselid, 2006, p. 900) positions human resources as one of the most crucial components in building this structure.

Despite the significance and strength of human resources for organizations, the reality of limited employment opportunities for qualified labor and high unemployment rates in Türkiye also emerges as a critical issue. According to 2024 data, the unemployment rate stands at 9.1% (TÜİK, 2024a), while the youth unemployment rate is recorded at 17.6% (TÜİK, 2024b). The high youth unemployment rate in many countries has led to the underutilization of young individuals' qualifications (Taş et al., 2018, p. 281). It is also stated that the Turkish workforce is overeducated, with 36% of employees working in jobs unrelated to their educational background, which leads to a sense of overqualification (OECD, 2019, cited by Khan, 2023, p. 461).

Consequently, the young and educated population, driven by concerns about the future, tends to concede jobs that do not align with their qualifications and are employed in such positions. This situation can give rise to the concept of perceived overqualification (POQ) (Johnson et al., 2002, p. 425), which refers to employees' perception that they possess qualifications exceeding the requirements of their job and that their current organization offers no opportunities for further development. Organizational policies that treat human resources as a strategic asset and focus on recruiting talented employees, coupled with individuals' need to sustain their livelihood, initiate their careers, and gain experience, are seen as precursors to the problem of POQ, shaped by employees' subjective judgments.

In this context, POQ serves as a precursor to numerous negative outcomes. These include reduced job satisfaction (Fine & Nevo, 2008; Maynard et al., 2006; Lobene et al., 2015), counterproductive work behaviors (Luksyte et al., 2011; Liu et al., 2015; Fine & Edward, 2017), turnover intentions (Maynard & Parfyonova, 2013; Harari et al., 2017), and job search behaviors (Frei & Sousa-Poza, 2012). Another adverse outcome is the decline in work engagement (WE), which is regarded as a positive emotional state reflecting employees' attachment to their jobs and known to yield beneficial outcomes for organizations (Schaufeli et al., 2006, p. 702). It is evident that WE offers substantial benefits both for the individual and the organization (Öztürk, 2020, p. 616). When employees are engaged in their work, harmony is established between their priorities and the organization's goals (Tomic & Tomic, 2011, p. 471). Engaged employees feel a vested interest in the success of their organization, demonstrating a willingness and motivation to exceed the criteria outlined in their job descriptions (Jeve et al., 2015, p. 86). They can enhance organizational performance, foster productivity, and contribute to profitability (Ariani, 2013, p. 46).

This study, framed within person-job (PJ) fit theory, examines the impact of POQ on work engagement attitude by exploring the mediating role of organization-based self-esteem (OBSE) (Pierce et al., 1989, p. 625). The role of OBSE, which represents the value attributed by organizations to their employees, has emerged as a focal point of interest in this study. The

discussion is centered on how employees' perceived value within the organization on their levels of OBSE and their subjective perceptions of overqualification influence their work behaviors.

The study seeks to explore the direction in which OBSE might evolve in light of these potential effects and to what extent it impacts work engagement attitude, which constitutes the core research question. The study discusses how employees' perceptions of their value within the organization, as determined by their levels of OBSE, influence the impact of subjective perceptions of overqualification on negative work behaviors. Among the research questions are the direction in which OBSE might evolve in such scenarios and the extent to which it affects work engagement attitudes. The primary objective of this research is to examine the mediating role of OBSE in the effect of POQ on WE. In addition to its primary aim, the study addresses several interconnected factors, including education policies considered the origin of the POQ concept imbalances in PJ fit that are seen as reflections of organizational recruitment practices, career mobility theory (CMT) encompassing the behaviors of young workers entering the labor market, and social exchange theory (SET), which explores the mutual expectations between organizations and employees. The increase in the young and educated population, economic benefits, the issue of unemployment, the limited number of studies on the concepts, the lack of research involving all three variables, and the rising importance of human resources as a competitive priority for organizations suggest that this study will contribute to the business world, individuals, and the literature.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Perceived Overqualification

The concept of overqualification is often associated with underemployment in the literature. Although underemployment has been subjected to various interdisciplinary definitions, it is generally considered as a type of inadequate employment. Economists describe it as the mismatch between individuals' education levels and their jobs, often emphasizing the wages earned by employees in the economy literature (Feldman, 1996, p. 387). When considering overqualification as a condition specific to underemployment, the prevalent phenomenon among these conditions is that employees' knowledge, experience, and skills exceed the requirements of their job, leading to the underutilization of these essential attributes during job execution (Şen & Çalışkan, 2022, p. 88).

Overqualification was first put forward by Freeman (1976) in his book "The Overeducated American," where he discussed the surplus of supply of highly educated individuals. He predicted the persistence and permanency of this surplus in the following years, expressing concerns about the wages that university graduates could earn and highlighting the potential devaluation of a university diploma over time (Smith & Welch, 1978, p. 52).

Overqualification, in general, refers to employees have more than the required elements for their job and their personal perceptions that gaining new skills that are related to their job in the current organizations they involved is impossible (Johnson et al., 2002, p. 425; Zhang et al., 2023, p. 701). It also encompasses having more knowledge, skills, and education than the job requires, indicating that employees hold higher qualifications than necessary for their current positions (Maynard & Parfyonova, 2013, p. 436). POQ describes the mismatch between employees' qualifications and their occupations, based on subjective judgments and self-assessments (Lu et al., 2023, p. 2). Employees may feel overqualified when they change jobs or

gain new job experiences that align with the job requirements (Johnson & Johnson, 1996, p. 436). This condition is detrimental to economic resources and should be avoided by both organizations and employees (Tınaztepe & İrge, 2021, p. 306).

Since the concept was introduced, researchers have approached overqualification from different perspectives. Objective overqualification, considered as the first approach, is measured through comparisons made by employees. In contrast, subjective overqualification is based on employees' perceptions that they are not creating enough value (Zhang et al., 2016, p. 63). Objective overqualification is defined by the employer's comparison of the employee's qualifications with job requirements from their perspective, while subjective overqualification arises from the employee's own perceptions (Erdogan et al., 2011, p. 217).

2.2. Work Engagement

Positive organizational behavior, developed within the context of positive psychology, has valuable practical applications in guiding workplace behaviors (Çalışkan, 2014, p. 365). It involves examining and applying the strengths and psychological boundaries of human resources, which can be measured, developed, and effectively directed to improve performance in today's work environment (Luthans, 2002, p. 59). WE is recognized as one of the positive organizational behaviors that play a crucial role in creating job opportunities and utilizing employees in organizations, contributing significantly to organizational success (Kanten & Yeşiltaş, 2013, p. 87).

When examining the work engagement in the literature, it is often evaluated within the framework of burnout, as its origin is linked to a proposition against burnout (Maslach et al., 2001, p. 416). However, Schaufeli et al. (2002a) argue that assessing work engagement within the burnout framework is incorrect. They emphasize that, instead of focusing on the negative concepts prevalent in recent research, researchers should shift their attention to positive concepts, such as employee well-being, and that WE should be evaluated independently. Kahn (1990, p. 694), who provided the first definition of WE in the literature, states that individuals reveal or withhold their personal selves while performing their work roles. He explains personal engagement as employees adapting themselves to their work roles. During engagement, individuals express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally while performing their roles.

Despite the numerous studies conducted on WE, researchers have not established a consistent structure for defining the concept (Christian et al., 2011, p. 90) and have not reached a consensus on a single, widely accepted definition of WE (Markos & Sridevi, 2010, p. 90). WE involves individuals feeling energetic and emotionally attached to their roles, perceiving that they can meet job expectations (Chirkowska-Smolak, 2012, p. 76), and mentally engaging themselves in their tasks (Bakker & Leiter, 2017, p. 67). Positive criteria in engagement are characterized by energy and enthusiasm (Macey & Schneider, 2008, p. 24), internalizing one's job, improving communication quality with colleagues (Düzgün, 2022, p. 170), supporting learning motivation and foresight skills, and enhancing performance (Denton et al., 2008, p. 2). It is a positive, satisfying mental state related to work, characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli et al., 2002a). Engaging in work involves a positive emotional attitude that encompasses significant personal energy and psychological attachment (Biggs et al., 2014, p. 301), extending over a broad period rather than focusing on a specific event, condition, or individual (Schaufeli et al., 2002b, p. 465).

Although there is a perspective in the literature that distinguishes between "job engagement" and "organizational engagement" when discussing employee engagement (Saks, 2006, p. 608), WE is often explained based on the classification provided by Schaufeli et al. (2002a), which includes dimensions such as "vigor, dedication, and absorption." Vigor represents employees' tendency to work with high energy and mental resilience, showing determination despite difficulties (Schaufeli et al., 2002a, p. 74), and their willingness to exert effort and their ability to avoid fatigue (Turgut, 2011, p. 156). It signifies high energy levels and cognitive robustness (Akın, 2019, p. 4). Dedication involves employees' strong identification with their work, leading to significant participation in their tasks, experiencing a sense of value, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge (Schaufeli et al., 2006, p. 702). The term "absorption" describes the condition in which people are completely focused and absorbed in their task, losing track of time and finding it difficult to step away from it (Schaufeli et al., 2002a, p. 74-75).

2.3. Organization-Based Self-Esteem

OBSE refers to the level of belief employees have in their ability to participate in tasks within the organization and meet their needs as a result of their work. Consequently, OBSE reflects the perceptions of individuals about the value attributed to them within the organizational context (Pierce et al., 1989, p. 625).

The belief that an individual is competent and valuable as a member of the organization, the opinions formed based on their attributes, and the mindset of "I count around here" are explained by the concept of OBSE (Pierce & Gardner, 2004, p. 593). In addition to the mindset of "I count around here" employees also hold the belief "I am an important part of this place" (Hui & Lee, 2000, p. 218). The concept encompasses the fulfillment of desires and the belief in personal competence within the organization (Çakıroğlu & Altınöz, 2018, p. 628). Employees believe they can satisfy their needs by taking on roles within the organization's tasks (Güney et al., 2007, p. 194). Employees with OBSE often consider themselves unique, valuable, and significant to their workplaces (Pan et al., 2014, p. 131).

Since OBSE reflects employees' personal competence and value as members of the organization, individuals begin to feel valuable and meaningful when they develop their OBSE (Gardner et al., 2004, p. 310). OBSE, which expresses perceived value, reflects an individual's self-assessment within the organizational context (Brutus et al., 2000, p. 369). Those with high OBSE exhibit behaviors related to positive job attitudes, enhancing the positive attitudes they have developed towards their personalities as part of the organizational machinery. Conversely, low OBSE results in negative work behaviors, opposing positive actions as a consequence of low self-esteem in the organizational context (Çakmak Otluoğlu, 2015, p. 228).

3. Development of Hypothesis and Research Model

3.1. The Relationship Between POQ and Work Engagement

The common denominator of the concepts of POQ and WE is the PJ fit theory. The PJ fit theory posits that individuals either possess the ability to meet the demands of their job or that the job meets their expectations (Edwards, 1991). It also describes the extent to which an employee's objectives, mission, and company values align (Lauver & Kristof-Brown, 2001, p. 455).

Since employees' perceptions of their needs and desires being met influence their work engagement attitudes (Enwereuzor, 2018, p. 351), the alignment between employee

expectations and the opportunities provided by the job (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005, pp. 284-285) is conceptually significant within the context of specific variables. While PJ fit plays an effective role in employee preference during the recruitment process (Sekiguchi, 2004, p. 179), it is essential to follow the mentality of hiring the right person for the right job in the personnel selection process (Demirkol & Ertuğral, 2007, p. 24), although this principle does not always hold.

In the context of theories that significantly contribute to explaining POQ, it is possible to view a series of barriers to achieving this alignment. These theories include CMT (Sicherman & Galor, 1990), which explains individuals leaving their jobs to chart the best career path and maximize their earnings; the theory of relative deprivation (Crosby, 1984), which describes the frustration and anger arising from unfulfilled expectations when individuals seek jobs that can adequately utilize their qualifications; and other relevant theories such as equity theory (Adams, 1963) and theories that emphasize gaining experience for better job opportunities (Baltacı & Özaydın, 2020).

Researchers have suggested that individuals with POQ possess lower job passion and exhibit negatively motivated work engagement attitudes (Lou & Ye, 2019; Duan et al., 2022; Luksyte et al., 2022, p. 334; Tomas et al., 2023).

H₁: POQ has a negative effect on work engagement.

H_{1a}: Underestimate work has a negative effect on vigor.

H_{1b}: Underestimate work has a negative effect on dedication.

H_{1c}: Underestimate work has a negative effect on absorption.

H_{1d}: Self-righteousness has a negative effect on vigor.

H_{1e}: Self-righteousness has a negative effect on dedication.

H_{1f}: Self-righteousness has a negative effect on absorption.

3.2. The Relationship Between OBSE and Work Engagement

The relationship between OBSE and work engagement can be explained by Social Exchange Theory. The theory posits that there are reciprocal relationships among individuals that occur with certain expectations (Blau, 1964, p. 91). The Social Exchange Theory is based on the social relationships and personal commitments of the parties shaping the benefits (Blau, 1968, p. 455). The theory undertakes the task of explaining many concepts within the field of organizational behavior (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005, p. 875). According to SET, which is demonstrated as a reflection of the level of justice in organizations, a high perception of justice ensures that employees engage in their jobs with the expectation of rewards (Yin, 2018, p. 874). It is noted in the literature that reward perception and justice are antecedents of WE (Freeney & Tiernan, 2009, p. 1557). Thus, it is possible to state that work engagement and SET are integrated structures.

The notion of higher wages, which underpins OBSE and creates the thought of "I am important here" (Gardner et al., 2004, p. 311), is a component of SET and WE. Therefore, it is believed that work engagement and OBSE can be combined under SET. OBSE, which reflects the perceived value and meeting of employees' desires (Brutus et al., 2000, p. 369; Çakıroğlu and Altınöz, 2018, p. 628), is anticipated to be related to WE and SET based on reciprocal expectations.

Studies in the literature have revealed that OBSE is related to engagement (Pierce et al., 1989, p. 630). Employees with high OBSE contribute value to both the organization and their colleagues, thus engaging in their jobs (Hur et al., 2022, p. 62). Conversely, employees with low OBSE exhibit less WE (Güner Kibaroglu et al., 2022, p. 131). Based on this information, the following hypothesis was developed:

H₂: OBSE has a positive effect on work engagement.

H_{2a}: OBSE has a positive effect on vigor.

H_{2b}: OBSE has a positive effect on dedication.

H_{2c}: OBSE has a positive effect on absorption.

3.3. The Relationship Between POQ, Work Engagement, and OBSE

When examining the relationship between POQ and work engagement, along with other positive variables, concepts that could mediate this connection or significantly strengthen or alter its course were explored. The mediating effects of OBSE were examined. Considering that overqualification can have negative consequences, it is known that in the presence of low OBSE, this perception can be intensified, and OBSE can influence employees' actions (Acaray, 2019, p. 452). OBSE is seen as a precursor to both overqualification (Liu et al., 2015) and work engagement (Xanthopoulou et al., 2007, p. 124; Costantini et al., 2019), thus affecting both concepts.

There are no studies looking at the mediating function of OBSE in the relationship between POQ and work engagement, according to a review of the literature. However, a study exists that examines the mediating role of empowering leadership in the relationship between POQ and work engagement (Ma et al., 2020). Additionally, it has been observed that when OBSE mediates the relationship between POQ and positive work behaviors and attitudes, resulting in negative effects. In this context, POQ, through the mediating role of OBSE, is found to affect concepts such as innovative behavior (He & Li, 2024), organizational citizenship (Yan et al., 2024), and job satisfaction (Acaray, 2019). Moreover, it has been found that OBSE predicts work engagement (Rotich, 2016). Another study in which work engagement is considered as a dependent variable (Yuan et al., 2024) shows that OBSE, acting as a mediator, positively influences work engagement. Based on all this information, the following main hypotheses of the research are listed below.

H₃: POQ has a negative effect on OBSE.

H_{3a}: Underestimate work has a negative effect on OBSE.

H_{3b}: Self-righteousness has a negative effect on OBSE.

H_{4a}: OBSE mediates the effect of underestimate work on vigor.

H_{4b}: OBSE mediates the effect of underestimate work on dedication.

H_{4c}: OBSE mediates the effect of underestimate work on absorption.

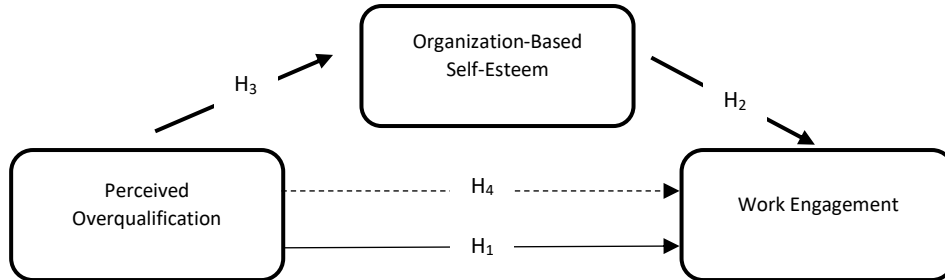
H_{4d}: OBSE mediates the effect of self-righteousness on vigor.

H_{4e}: OBSE mediates the effect of self-righteousness on dedication.

H_{4f}: OBSE mediates the effect of self-righteousness on absorption.

Based on all the literature, the research model has been developed as follows, along with the main hypotheses

Figure 1: The Research Model



4. Method

4.1. The Purpose and Significance of the Research

The aim of the research is to examine the mediating role of OBSE on the effect of employees' POQ on their work engagement attitudes. This study, based on the fundamental research question, "Do employees' perceptions of overqualification affect their WE attitudes?" attempts to elucidate the mediating role of OBSE in this potential effect.

In the discipline of social psychology, the concept of self-esteem is frequently utilized, though it has not sufficiently gained attention in management. Nonetheless, the concept plays a significant role in determining the behaviors employees and the reasons behind these behaviors. It is known that OBSE is derived from general self-esteem. When employees work in positions below their qualifications, declines in organizational commitment and job performance are observed. This situation is believed to extend to their lack of positive feelings toward their organizations. Consequently, the human factor, considered one of the most critical elements for organizations, becomes more significant along with the transformation of employee psychology.

4.2. Population and Sample of the Research

The population of the study consists of employees working in chain supermarkets, while the sample comprises employees from five different chain supermarkets located in Istanbul and Konya, selected due to time and budget constraints. The decision to focus on chain supermarket employees stems from the retail sector's role in providing opportunities for individuals entering the workforce (Akduman et al., 2013, p. 204), aligning with the theoretical foundations of the study and the dynamics of career mobility. Furthermore, the sector is characterized by jobs frequently chosen by recent graduates in the initial stages of their career paths. These jobs often require minimal qualifications, skills, or experience, typically involving routine and straightforward tasks that do not necessitate an associate's or bachelor's degree. These factors were pivotal in the selection of the sample. Additionally, the high employee turnover rate in the sector is assumed to align with the insights and assumptions underlying the research design.

The sample for the study was determined as chain supermarket employees with at least an associate degree (considered the minimum indicator of higher education), selected using the purposive sampling method. In addition to the aforementioned reasons, the career preferences of higher education graduates were also considered. Purposive or judgmental sampling is a non-probabilistic technique in which researchers deliberately and selectively choose participants whose knowledge and opinions align with the purpose of the study (Siğrı, 2021).

This method focuses on identifying participants most likely to provide accurate and relevant information for achieving the research objectives (Kumar, 2015) and serves to target those who best fit the study's aim (Altunışık et al., 2023). Within this framework, chain supermarket employees with at least an associate degree were selected as participants, representing the population most aligned with the research objectives.

When the population size cannot be precisely determined, the required sample size should be at least 384 participants (Özdamar, 2003). Accordingly, data were collected from 421 chain supermarket employees with associate, bachelor's, or postgraduate degrees through face-to-face and online surveys between January and April 2024.

4.3. Data Collection Tool

Research is empirically designed and employs a quantitative research framework, specifically the survey model. The data collection method utilized is the questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of four sections. A 5-point Likert scale was used to measure the variables (1 = Totally Disagree, 5 = Totally Agree).

- **Perceived Overqualification Scale:** The Maynard et al. (2006) POQ Scale is included in the first section. Although the original scale, validated by Yıldız et al. (2017), consists of a single dimension with nine items, the study conducted in Turkish culture resulted in a consistent two-dimensional structure (Yıldız et al., 2017). In this context, items 1, 2, 4, 5, and 8 form the underestimate work dimension, while items 3, 6, 7, and 9 constitute the self-righteousness dimension. The scale includes statements such as: "*I have more abilities than I need in order to do my job.*"

- **Work Engagement Scale:** The second section of the questionnaire features the WE Scale developed by Schaufeli and Bakker (2003). The Turkish translation and validation of the scale were performed by Özkalp and Meydan (2015). The scale includes statements such as: "*I feel happy when I am working intensely.*"

- **Organization-Based Self-Esteem Scale:** The third section contains the OBSE Scale, developed by Pierce et al. (1989), consisting of ten items and one dimension. The Turkish adaptation of the scale was developed by Akalın (2006). The scale includes statements such as: "*I am taken seriously around here.*"

- **Demographic Information:** The fourth and final section of the survey includes questions aimed at identifying participants' demographic characteristics, such as gender, age, education level, marital status, and work experience.

4.4. Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using SPSS 22 and AMOS 24. Prior to analysis, nine questionnaires containing errors or incomplete information were excluded, leaving 412 valid questionnaires for further analysis. Frequency analysis was conducted to identify the demographic characteristics of the participants. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) were performed to assess the validity of the scales, and Composite Reliability (CR) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values were calculated. To evaluate the reliability of the scales, Cronbach's Alpha coefficients were computed. Normality tests were conducted to examine univariate and multivariate normal distribution, along with multicollinearity issues, which are prerequisites for structural equation modeling (SEM). Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) and tolerance coefficients were also calculated. Finally, SEM was used to determine the impact of

POQ on work engagement, the mediating role of OBSE in this relationship, the effect of POQ on OBSE, and the effect of OBSE on work engagement.

5. Findings

5.1. Frequency Analysis

The demographic characteristics of the employees who participated in the study are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Participants

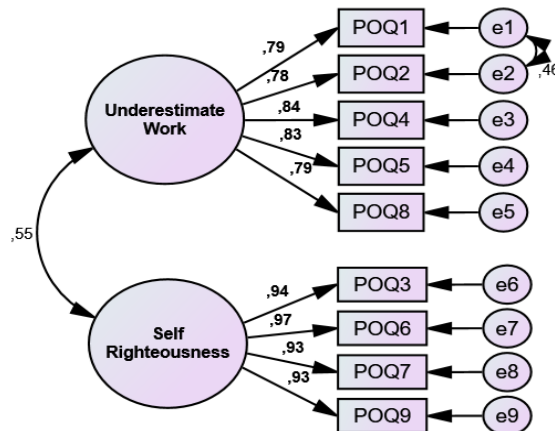
Demographic Characteristics	Total	%	Demographic Characteristics	Total	%
Gender	412	100	Age	412	100
- Female	133	32.3	- 20-23	63	15.3
- Male	279	67.7	- 24-27 age	163	39.6
Marital Status	412	100	- 28-31 age	129	31.3
- Married	161	39.1	- 32 years and above	57	13.8
- Single	232	56.3	Professional Seniority	412	100
- Divorced	19	4.6	- Less than 1 year	69	16.7
Educational Background	412	100	- 1-5 year	173	42.0
- Associate Degree	88	21.4	- 6-10 year	114	27.7
- Bachelor's Degree	299	72.5	- 11-19 year	42	10.2
- Postgraduate	25	6.1	- 20 years and above	14	3.4

Of the employees participating in the research, 32.3% were female, and 67.7% were male. Additionally, 15.3% were aged 20-23, 39.6% were aged 24-27, 31.3% were aged 28-31, and 13.8% were aged 32 and above. Regarding education levels, 21.4% had an associate degree, 72.5% had a bachelor's degree, and 6.1% had a postgraduate degree. Marital status was distributed as 39.1% married, 56.3% single, and 4.6% divorced. In terms of tenure, 16.7% had less than 1 year, 42% had 1-5 years, 27.7% had 6-10 years, 10.2% had 11-19 years, and 3.4% had 20 years or more of professional experience.

5.2. Validity and Reliability Analyses

The validity and reliability analyses of the scales used for the variables of POQ, WE, and OBSE have been conducted.

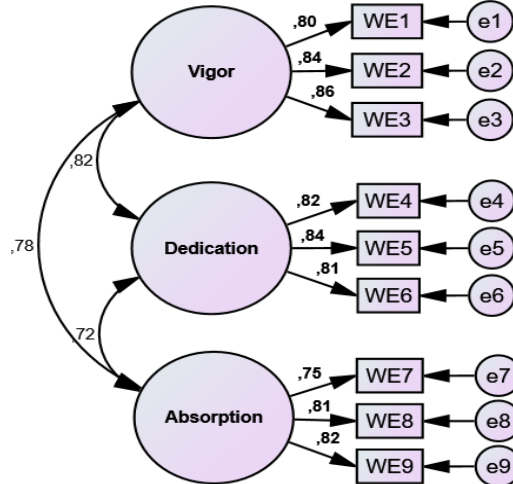
Figure 2: Measured First-Order Factor Structure Model for the POQ Scale



The POQ scale items have factor loadings ranging from 0.78 to 0.97. It is acknowledged that all the POQ scale's factor loadings are at an "excellent" level (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2018, p. 509).

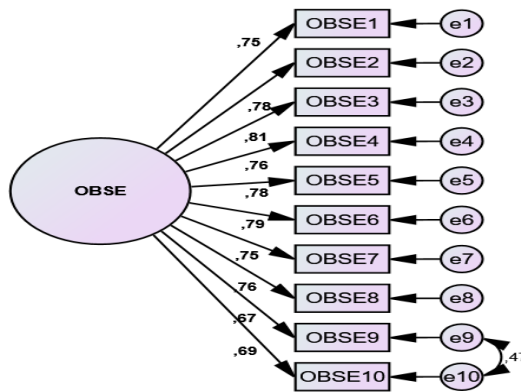
To determine the structural validity of the WE scale, a confirmatory factor analysis was conducted. The items on the WE scale have factor loadings ranging from 0.75 to 0.86. It is acknowledged that all the work engagement scale's factor loadings are statistically at an "excellent" level (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2018, p. 509).

Figure 3: Measured First-Order Factor Structure Model for the WE Scale



The structural validity of the OBSE scale, the third and last variable of the study, was tested. The factor loadings of the OBSE scale items range from 0.67 to 0.81, showing that the factor loadings for the OBSE scale items are largely at a "good fit" level statistically (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2018, p. 509).

Figure 4: Measured First-Order Factor Structure Model for the OBSE Scale



The goodness-of-fit values of the scales were evaluated during the finalization of the models containing the first-order factor structure for each scale.

Table 2: Goodness of Fit Values for the Scales

	X ² Fit Test	CMIN/df (X ² /sd)	RMSEA	RMR	GFI	CFI	NFI	TLI
POQ	0,000	3.131	0.072	0.029	0.959	0.986	0.979	0.979
WE	0,000	1.519	0.036	0.020	0.980	0.994	0.984	0.992
OBSE	0,000	3.368	0.076	0.039	0.946	0.969	0.956	0.959
Acceptable Fit	p<0,01	≤5	≤0.08	≤0.08	≥0.80	≥0.85	≥0.80	≥0.80
Good Fit	p<0,05	≤3	≤0.05	≤0.05	≥0.90	≥0.95	≥0.95	≥0.95

Source: Schumacker & Lomax, 2010; Simon et al., 2010

When examining Table 2, it is observed that the goodness-of-fit values for the scales used in the study fall within the reference range indicated in the literature. Additionally, the composite and discriminant validity as well as the reliability values of the variables used in the study, were examined.

Table 3: Reliability and Validity Values

Variables	C. Alpha's	CR	AVE	MSV	ASV
POQ	.920	0.97	0.76	-	-
-Underestimate Work	.910	0.90	0.65	0.30	-
-Self Righteousness	.969	0.97	0.89	0.30	-
WE	.918	0.95	0.67	-	-
-Vigor	.873	0.87	0.70	0.67	0.60
-Dedication	.863	0.86	0.68	0.67	0.60
-Absorption	.833	0.83	0.63	0.67	0.60
OBSE	.930	0.93	0.57	0.35	-

As seen in Table 3, the Cronbach's Alpha values are above 0.80 proving the reliability of the scales (Sipahi et al., 2008, p. 89). For composite validity, Fornell and Larcker (1981) suggested that the CR value should be above 0.60 and the AVE value above 0.50, while for discriminant validity, the AVE value should be greater than the MSV value and the MSV value should be greater than the ASV value. Additionally, the CR value should be greater than the AVE value (Hair et al., 2019). Table 3 shows that the obtained values generally fell within the aforementioned reference ranges and met the expected conditions.

5.3. Descriptive Statistics

In this part, the descriptive statistics and skewness-kurtosis values for the research variables are presented. Additionally, Mardia coefficient was measured to test multivariate normality.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics and Skewness-Kurtosis Values for Variables

Variables	Avr.	Median	Mode	S.D.	Skewness		Kurtosis	
					Statistics	S.E.	Statistics	S.E.
POQ	3.84	4.11	3.33	0.77	-.993	.120	.203	.240
-Underestimate Work	3.68	4.00	3.80	0.84	-.629	.120	-.290	.240
-Self-Righteousness	4.04	4.00	4.25	0.94	-.996	.120	.419	.240
WE	3.26	3.33	3.33	0.78	-.172	.120	-.913	.240
-Vigor	3.26	3.33	3.67	0.92	-.060	.120	-.799	.240
-Dedication	3.27	3.33	4.00	0.90	-.161	.120	-.519	.240
-Absorption	3.26	3.33	4.00	0.83	-.308	.120	-.235	.240
OBSE	2.97	2.90	3.50	0.85	.161	.120	-.986	.240

When examining the descriptive statistics for the variables, the variable with the highest arithmetic mean is found to be the self-righteousness dimension ($X=4.04\pm 0.94$), the lowest arithmetic mean is OBSE ($X=2.97\pm 0.85$). It is seen that each variable is distributed between -1

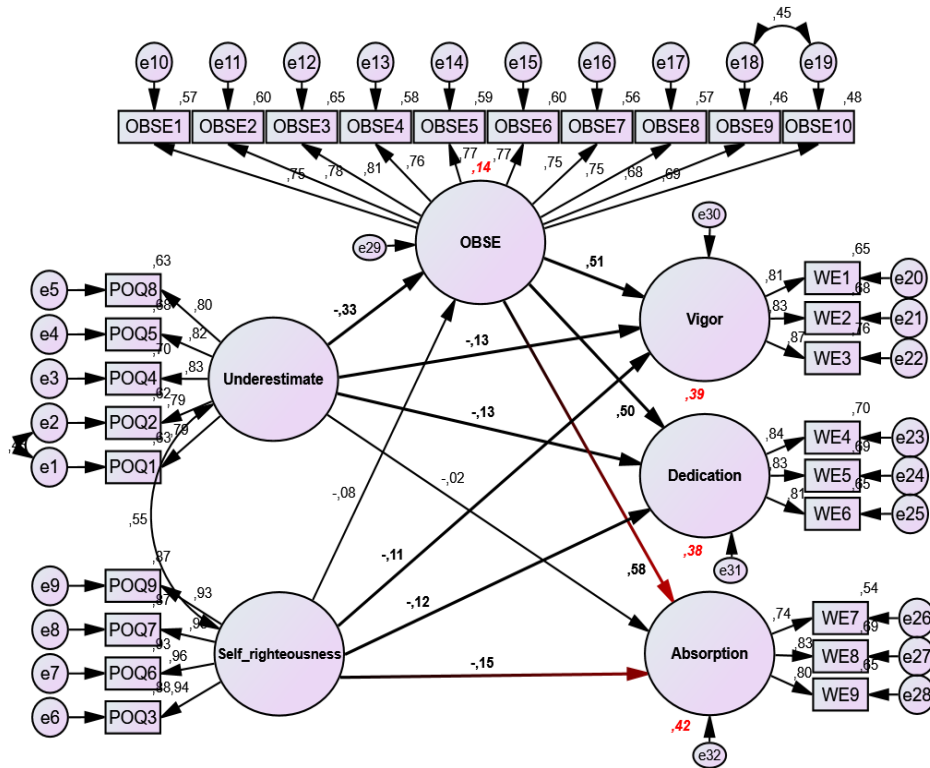
and +1, and the arithmetic mean, mode and median values are close to each other. Based on this data, it is concluded that the variables exhibit univariate normal distribution (Huck, 2012). The AMOS was used to measure the Mardia coefficient (Mardia=63.17) in order to test multivariate normality. The number 840 (28*30) that was derived using the formula "p*(p+2)" (p=number of observable variables) was compared to this coefficient. Since the Mardia coefficient is smaller than the obtained value, the data is "multivariate normal distribution" (Teo et al., 2023).

On the other hand, to detect a potential autocorrelation problem among the dimensions, the "Durbin Watson coefficient" was calculated (Durbin Watson=1.76). A value between 1.5 and 2.5 is accepted as an indicator of no autocorrelation problem (Kalaycı, 2005). Furthermore, to detect multicollinearity, the "VIF and Tolerance values" were calculated (VIF values=1.34; Tolerance values=0.75). Tolerance values greater than 0.2 (Menard, 2002) and VIF values less than 10 (Kim, 2019) indicate no multicollinearity problem among the variables. Finally, to detect a potential common method variance problem, "Harman's Single Factor Test" was conducted. The total variance value obtained from this test was calculated as 38.51%. Since this value is below 50% (Aguirre-Urreta & Hu, 2019) and the VIF values are less than 3.4 (Kock, 2015), it is an important indication that there is no common method variance problem.

5.4. Structural Equation Model and Hypothesis Testing

The SEM for the effect between the variables and the mediating role of OBSE is presented in Figure 5.

Figure 5: Model for the Mediating Role of OBSE in the Effect of POQ on WE



In the initial phase, the measurement model was tested and the fit indices of the model were examined. It was found that the factor loadings in the model significantly ranged from 0.68 to 0.97 and these values were considered statistically adequate. The model fit indices (χ^2 Goodness-of-Fit Test=0.000; $\chi^2/df=1.600$; RMSEA=0.038; RMR=0.040; GFI=0.913; CFI=0.977; NFI=0.942; TLI=0.974) were determined to be at an acceptable level (Schumacker & Lomax, 2010; Simon et al., 2010), thereby validating the measurement model.

The effect pathways, coefficients, and significance values related to the model are presented in Table 5 for each main hypothesis and sub-hypothesis.

Table 5: Parameter Estimates for the Effect Between Variables

Hypotheses	Independent Variables	Dependent Variables	β	S.E.	C.R.	p
H _{1a}	Underest. Work	Vigor	-.135	.057	-2.254	.024**
H _{1b}	Underest. Work	Dedication	-.129	.061	-2.123	.034**
H _{1c}	Underest. Work	Absorption	-.024	.050	-.404	.686
H _{1d}	S.Righteousness	Vigor	-.110	.046	-2.020	.043**
H _{1e}	S.Righteousness	Dedication	-.119	.049	-2.154	.031**
H _{1f}	S.Righteousness	Absorption	-.149	.041	-2.666	.008**
H _{2a}	OBSE	Vigor	.508	.060	8.935	***
H _{2b}	OBSE	Dedication	.503	.062	8.889	***
H _{2c}	OBSE	Absorption	.578	.056	9.334	***
H _{3a}	Underest. Work	OBSE	.327	.060	-5.012	***
H _{3b}	S.Righteousness	OBSE	.084	.049	-1.403	.161

Note: *** indicates a significant effect at the 0.001 level ($p < 0.001$); ** indicates a significant effect at the 0.05 level ($p < 0.05$).

The POQ in terms of underestimate work has a negative significant effect on vigor (-0.135; $p < 0.05$) and dedication (-0.129; $p < 0.05$). However, it was determined that underestimate work does not have a significant effect on absorption (-0.024; $p > 0.05$). The self-righteousness dimension of POQ has a negative effect on vigor (-0.110; $p < 0.05$), dedication (-0.119; $p < 0.05$), and absorption (-0.149; $p < 0.05$). Based on these findings, hypotheses H_{1a}, H_{1b}, H_{1d}, H_{1e}, and H_{1f} are supported, while H_{1c} is not supported. Consequently, the H₁ is partially supported.

OBSE has a positive effect on the dimensions of WE; vigor (0.508; $p < 0.001$), dedication (0.503; $p < 0.001$), and absorption (0.578; $p < 0.001$). In light of these findings, hypotheses H₂, H_{2a}, H_{2b}, H_{2c} are supported. It was found that underestimate work, a dimension of POQ, has a negative effect on OBSE (-0.327; $p < 0.001$), while self-righteousness does not effect on OBSE (-0.084; $p > 0.05$). Accordingly, hypothesis H_{3a} is supported, while hypothesis H_{3b} is not supported, and hypothesis H₃ is partially supported.

The mediation analysis was conducted with 5000 resamples and a 95% confidence level. In studies based on the bootstrap method, the values within the 95% confidence interval should not include zero during hypothesis testing (Gürbüz, 2019, p. 120).

Table 6: Structural Equation Model Findings for the Mediating Role

Hypotheses	Independent Variables	Mediating Variable	Dependent Variables	β			Confid. Inter.		p
				β_t	β_d	β_i	Low.	Upper	
H _{4a}	Under. Work	OBSE	Vigor	-.301	-.135	-.166	-.282	.018	.085
H _{4b}	Under. Work	OBSE	Dedication	-.293	-.129	-.164	-.277	.026	.102
H _{4c}	Under. Work	OBSE	Absorption	-.213	-.024	-.189	-.163	.129	.749
H _{4d}	S.righteous.	OBSE	Vigor	-.153	-.110	-.043	-.232	.007	.075
H _{4e}	S.righteous.	OBSE	Dedication	-.162	-.119	-.043	-.240	.002	.053
H _{4f}	S.righteous.	OBSE	Absorption	-.197	-.149	-.049	-.277	-.031	.016**

It has been determined that OBSE does not have a mediating role in the effect of underestimate work, one of the dimensions of POQ, on vigor, dedication and absorption, and in the effect of self-righteousness on vigor and dedication. However, a statistically significant mediating role of OBSE has been identified in the effect of self-righteousness on absorption ($\beta_i = -0.049$; Conf. Int. = -0.277 and -0.031 ; $p < 0.05$). The effect of self-righteousness on absorption increased with the inclusion of OBSE in the model ($\beta_d = -0.149$; $\beta_t = -0.197$).

According to Zhao et al. (2010, p. 201), when an indirect effect is present, if the c path “(the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable) is significant and the product of paths a (the effect of the independent variable on the mediator), b (the effect of the mediator on the dependent variable), and c is positive, it indicates complementary partial mediation; if negative, it indicates competitive partial mediation.” Based on, the observed mediation effect satisfies the conditions for complementary partial mediation. Therefore, it has been determined that OBSE plays a complementary partial mediating role in the effect of self-righteousness, a dimension of POQ, on absorption, a dimension of WE. Based on these findings, hypotheses H_{4a}, H_{4b}, H_{4c}, H_{4d}, and H_{4e} have not been supported, while hypothesis H_{4f} has been supported. Therefore, the H₄ has been partially supported.

6. Conclusion and Discussion

The increase in the educated population along with high population growth, the presence of factors such as unemployment and lack of experience in the workforce which limit the path for newly graduated individuals, prompt individuals to take on jobs beneath their qualifications. These individuals are recruited and positioned within organizations parallel to the importance given to human resources. However, the goals, strategies, operations, and culture of the organization may conflict with and be incompatible with the expectations and mindset of these newly employed individuals. At this point, individuals perceive themselves as overqualified, leading them to believe that their needs will not be met by the organization under any circumstances and that they will not be able to develop personally.

When evaluated through the lens of PJ fit theory, which underpins this study, the incompatibilities between the employee and the organization produce negative outcomes for both organizations striving to gain a competitive advantage and individuals seeking personal development. Employees who perceive themselves as overqualified tend to distance themselves from exhibiting work engagement attitudes, which yield positive outcomes for the organization, potentially leading to negative results. The role of OBSE in this relationship has become a subject of interest, and the study was designed based on the problem of whether OBSE plays a role in the effect of POQ on work engagement.

The study is structured around the questions: "Does POQ affect WE? If so, does OBSE play a mediating role in this effect?", "Does POQ affect OBSE?", and "Does OBSE affect WE?" The research was conducted on chain store employees under the assumption that the retail sector provides opportunities for new entrants to the workforce, and that employees hired within the scope of career mobility may not adapt to the sector and deviate from the PJ fit theory.

The self-righteousness was found to have a negative effect on vigor, dedication, and absorption, indicating that POQ has a negative impact on WE. These results support and the findings of studies conducted by Lou and Ye (2019), Tomas et al. (2022), Duan et al. (2022), and Luksyte et al. (2022). The lack of a significant effect of underestimate work on the absorption, which refers to the extent to which an individual is absorbed in their work, can be explained by factors such as the unemployment problem within the country, the structure preventing employees from disengaging during working hours, and the acquisition of experience during work hours as a reflection of the CMT.

The negative effect of POQ on WE is considered a reflection of PJ fit theory, which expresses the degree to which the knowledge and skills of individuals match the opportunities and criteria offered by the job (Edwards, 1991), and supports the foundation on which the study is built. The participants in the study were selected using a purposive sampling method, targeting employees with at least an associate degree. Data were collected from individuals who were anticipated, as per the study's design, to possess a high POQ within the framework of a 5-point Likert scale. These individuals, as expected, demonstrated disengagement with their jobs due to high POQ. This aligns with the theoretical foundations of the study, including PJ fit theory, SET and CMT. The PJ fit theory emphasizes the alignment between individuals' knowledge and skills and the requirements of the job, the SET highlights that mutual relationships are shaped based on expectations, and the CMT focuses on the premise that individuals enter the workforce primarily to gain experience.

When the findings are disaggregated by dimensions, it is observed that the superiority complex associated with narcissistic traits negatively impacts WE. This strengthens the assumption that OBSE, shaped around the concepts of self and self-esteem, might play a mediating role in this relationship. Considering the arrogant tendencies of narcissistic individuals, it is likely for them to perceive themselves as overqualified for their roles (Liu & Wang, 2012, p. 9). Narcissism is positively correlated with POQ (Maynard et al., 2015). The results of the research are consistent with the demographic characteristics of the employees. It has been observed that the level of WE remained low in this study. While 56.3% of the employees were found to be single, studies in the literature suggest that married employees tend to have higher levels of WE (Aboshaiqah et al., 2016; Zhang et al., 2021). Additionally, the proportion of participants aged 32 and above was found to be 13.8%. In terms of WE, older employees exhibit higher levels of WE compared to younger employees. The increase in work engagement attitudes with age is supported by studies in the literature (Douglas & Roberts, 2020). Similarly, as professional tenure increases, work engagement attitudes also increase (Köse, 2016). In this study, approximately 59% of the employees had less than five years of professional experience.

As a result of the structural equation model, it was determined that OBSE plays a mediating role, thereby contributing a new finding to the literature. The absence of factors perceived as opportunities for employees reduces OBSE (Norman et al., 2015, p. 255). This situation aligns with the perspectives of employees who develop personal judgments that they cannot gain

new achievements in their current organizations and thus perceive themselves as overqualified (Johnson et al., 2002, p. 425). This dynamic has facilitated OBSE's partial mediating role. On the other hand, when hypotheses unsupported in terms of mediation effects are evaluated, OBSE reflecting individuals' perceptions of the value ascribed to them within organizational contexts (Pierce et al., 1989, p. 625) is predominantly relevant in individualistic cultures. However, Turkish society represents a collectivist cultural structure (Hofstede, 2001, p. 249; Köksal, 2011, p. 102). Thus, it is considered that the concept does not resonate sufficiently within the Turkish cultural context. Chain supermarkets, where turnover rates are typically high, serve as both a sector where employees often take their first career steps and a setting where the workforce generally reflects the collectivist cultural characteristics of Turkish society. Consequently, employees in such contexts may neither interact with their organizations in terms of self-esteem nor develop expectations in this regard. The high turnover rates and the nature of the work performed have not fostered a perceptual environment regarding employees' sense of value ascribed to them through OBSE. Although overqualified employees can produce positive outcomes under appropriate conditions (Varma & Sandhya, 2019), their OBSE levels increase when they are motivated by managers (Gardner & Pierce, 2016, p. 405). However, in the Turkish work environment, characterized by high power distance and low individualism (Hofstede, 1980), employees fail to experience OBSE due to insufficient autonomy (Aycan, 2006). The mechanical organizational structure of chain supermarkets, the generally authoritarian approach of managers, and employees' tendency or necessity for temporary and short-term employment evidenced by demographic findings showing that approximately 59% of employees have less than five years of tenure are significant reasons for the lack of OBSE among employees. Finally, it was found that OBSE positively influences WE. This finding is consistent with expectations, as it aligns with prior studies in the literature (Rotich, 2016; Xanthopoulou et al., 2007; Costantini et al., 2019).

7. Implications and Recommendations

Given the findings on the adverse effects of POQ on WE and OBSE, barriers preventing recent graduates from securing jobs aligned with their education and qualifications at the outset of their careers can have detrimental impacts on both individual and organizational performance. Assigning roles, tasks, or salaries beneath the capabilities of recent graduates, requiring extensive experience in many sectors, or undervaluing their skills and education may lead to dissatisfaction and failure in their professional lives. Consequently, this situation can result in reduced focus on work and a diminished sense of belonging to the organization.

On the other hand, while every individual aspires to work in positions that align with their education, qualifications, and the effort they have invested over the years, labor market conditions and employer expectations may hinder this desire and limit their ability to make free career choices. At this juncture, recent graduates may perceive themselves as overqualified for certain positions or underestimate the value of these jobs, which can result in their inability to engage with their work or develop OBSE.

To mitigate or eliminate the negative outcomes of POQ at both the individual and organizational levels, it is imperative to provide recent graduates with opportunities that respect their education and qualifications, alongside fair compensation. In active employment, positive approaches such as delegating authority and responsibility, creating an organizational climate that enables employees to showcase their talents, and implementing job enrichment practices should be prioritized. Furthermore, policymakers in both public and private sectors

are expected to develop various employment policies to address these issues. In this regard, public authorities are advised to implement policies to enhance the value of higher education graduates, such as reducing the number of graduates from open and distance education programs, downsizing overly similar departments with high graduation rates, and focusing on improving the quality of education. Policies promoting university-industry collaboration are also recommended. Due to the digital transformation in the labor market and the differentiation of needs, expectations and demanded competencies, educational curricula could be revised, and overly broad departments with large student numbers at universities could be downsized. New specialization-based departments and programs tailored to the expectations of today's job market might be introduced. The current policy on vocational and technical high schools, which aims to provide specific labor force training with educational logic and curriculum, almost eliminating the need for higher education and addressing the perception of overqualification, should be reviewed and strengthened with supplementary measures. Persistent efforts are necessary to reevaluate and redesign relevant policies and sectoral employment opportunities related to these schools. These steps can eliminate the POQ by reducing the scope of education that individuals have received and creating a platform where they can directly match their qualifications.

In addition, policies can be developed to support entrepreneurs and encourage their investments, and by reducing the unemployment rate in new employment areas, graduates will be able to establish businesses that suit their qualifications and also have the opportunity to choose a job that suits their qualifications. Besides, policies should address the issue of new graduates being forced to pursue careers outside their preferences due to economic concerns, and in this context revisions to unemployment benefits should be considered. Depending on the concerns of individuals about gaining experience, the implementation of compulsory internship programs can be brought back to the agenda so that they can start their careers through jobs about their qualifications.

On the other hand, recent graduates themselves must enhance their self-respect and sense of acceptance in the workplace. To overcome the barrier of insufficient work experience, they are expected to engage in career planning during their higher education years, develop their skills, increase their human capital, take advantage of internship and job opportunities, adapt to the competencies required by the labor market, and focus on long-term plans rather than short-term goals.

Future studies investigating the effects of POQ on various work behaviors should explore variables such as industry, profession, alma mater, and academic department, as well as the mediating effects of organizational culture and leadership styles, to enrich the literature. While POQ is often regarded as a negative concept in the literature, organizational structures emphasizing support and democracy could mitigate its adverse effects, fostering innovative work behaviors and contextual performance. Such studies could be conducted in multinational and diverse organizations, where OBSE often overlooked in collectivist cultures like Turkey with high power distance could play a strengthened mediating role. Furthermore, empirical research is needed to uncover the antecedents and consequences of POQ and OBSE. Qualitative research methods, aimed at an in-depth analysis of the topic, would also contribute significantly to the field.

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Extended Summary

The Mediating Role of Organization-Based Self-Esteem in the Effect of Perceived Overqualification on Work Engagement

Considering the current conditions where population growth, economic circumstances, and high labor costs contribute to rising unemployment rates and limited job opportunities, it is a known social and economic reality that the young and educated population is often compelled to work in jobs below their qualifications. In this context, there is curiosity about how the perception of overqualification among individuals evolves, how this perception influences their work engagement (WE) attitudes, and the role of organization-based self-esteem (OBSE), which is considered a reflection of the value assigned by the organization. The effect of perceived overqualification (POQ) on WE has been examined within the framework of PJ Fit Theory, while the impact of OBSE on WE has been evaluated in the context of Social Exchange Theory. The aim of the study is to investigate the mediating role of OBSE in the effect of POQ on WE.

Overqualification, in general, refers to employees have more than the required elements for their jobs and their personal perceptions that gaining new skills that are related to their job in the current organizations they involved, is impossible (Johnson et al., 2002, p. 425). It also encompasses having more knowledge, skills, and education than the job requires, indicating that employees hold higher qualifications than necessary for their current positions (Maynard & Parfyonova, 2013, p. 436). Despite the numerous studies conducted on WE, researchers have not established a consistent structure for defining the concept (Christide et al., 2011, p. 90) and have not reached a consensus on a single, widely accepted definition of WE (Markos & Sridevi, 2010, p. 90).

WE involves individuals feeling energetic and emotionally attached to their roles, perceiving that they can meet job expectations (Chirkowska-Smolak, 2012, p. 76), and mentally engaging themselves in their tasks (Bakker & Leiter, 2017, p. 67). Positive criteria in engagement are characterized by energy and enthusiasm (Macey & Schneider, 2008, p. 24), internalizing one's job, improving communication quality with colleagues (Düzgün, 2022, p. 170), supporting learning motivation and foresight skills, and enhancing performance (Denton et al., 2008, p. 2). OBSE refers to the level of belief employees have in their ability to participate in tasks within the organization and meet their needs as a result of their work. Consequently, OBSE reflects the perceptions of individuals about the value attributed to them within the organizational context (Pierce et al., 1989, p. 625).

According to the career mobility theory (CMT) introduced to the literature by Sicherman and Galor (1990), newly graduated individuals often find themselves in job positions that are not suitable for them. Despite their inability to achieve person-job (PJ) fit, they occupy these positions in an effort to compensate for their lack of job-related experience. On the other hand, some researchers explain overqualification as a consequence of the failure to achieve the expected level of PJ fit. Consequently, although those who study PJ fit argue that as the alignment between employees and their work environment increases, the benefits in terms of job outcomes will also increase, this assumption can be challenged by theories that have the potential to create negative impressions among employees, such as relative deprivation theory, equity theory, the effort-reward imbalance model, and CMT.

The study is structured around the questions: "Does POQ affect WE? If so, does OBSE play a mediating role in this effect?", "Does POQ affect OBSE?", and "Does OBSE affect WE?" The research was conducted on chain store employees under the assumption that the retail sector provides opportunities for new entrants to the workforce, and that employees hired within the scope of career mobility may not adapt to the sector and deviate from the PJ fit theory.

Self-righteousness was found to have a negative effect on vigor, dedication, and absorption, indicating that the POQ has a negative impact on work engagement. These results support the findings of studies conducted by Lou and Ye (2019), Tomas et al. (2022), Duan et al. (2022), and Luksyte et al. (2022). The lack of a significant effect of underestimate work on the absorption, which refers to the extent to which an individual is absorbed in their work, can be explained by factors such as the unemployment problem within the country, the structure preventing employees from disengaging during working hours, and the acquisition of experience during work hours as a reflection of CMT.

The negative effect of POQ on work engagement is considered a reflection of Person-Job fit theory, which expresses the degree to which the knowledge and skills of individuals match the opportunities and criteria offered by the job (Edwards, 1991), and supports the foundation on which the study is built. The study participants were selected using a purposive sampling method, targeting employees with at least an associate degree. Data were collected from individuals who were anticipated, as per the study's design, to possess a high POQ within the framework of a 5-point Likert scale.

These individuals, as expected, demonstrated disengagement with their jobs due to high POQ. This aligns with the theoretical foundations of the study, including Person-Job Fit Theory, Social Exchange Theory and Career Mobility Theory. The Person-Job Fit Theory emphasizes the alignment between individuals' knowledge and skills and the requirements of the job, the Social Exchange Theory highlights that mutual relationships are shaped based on expectations, and the Career Mobility Theory focuses on the premise that individuals enter the workforce primarily to gain experience.

Although overqualified employees can produce positive outcomes under appropriate conditions (Varma & Sandhya, 2019), their Organization-Based Self-Esteem levels increase when they are motivated by managers (Gardner & Pierce, 2016, p. 405). However, in the Turkish work environment, which is characterized by high power distance and low individualism (Hofstede, 1980), employees fail to experience OBSE due to insufficient autonomy (Aycan, 2006).

The mechanical organizational structure of chain supermarkets, the generally authoritarian approach of managers, and employees' tendency or necessity for temporary and short-term employment evidenced by demographic findings show that approximately 59% of employees have less than five years of tenure which are significant reasons for the lack of organization-based self-esteem among employees. Finally, OBSE positively influenced work engagement. This finding is consistent with expectations, as it aligns with prior studies in the literature (Rotich, 2016; Xanthopoulou et al., 2007; Costantini et al., 2019).

The study is expected to guide organizational managers, decision-makers, individuals newly entering the workforce, and researchers conducting studies in this field. Furthermore, it is hoped to provide direction for state institutions in their employment and education policies and the methods they apply regarding job opportunities. Future studies investigating the effects of POQ on various work behaviors should explore variables such as industry, profession, alma mater, and academic department, as well as the mediating effects of organizational culture and leadership styles, to enrich the literature.

While POQ is often regarded as a negative concept in the literature, organizational structures emphasizing support and democracy could mitigate its adverse effects, fostering innovative work behaviors and contextual performance. Such studies could be conducted in multinational and diverse organizations, where organization-based self-esteem is often overlooked in collectivist cultures like Turkey with high power distance could play a stronger mediating role. Further, empirical research is needed to uncover the antecedents and consequences of POQ and organization-based self-esteem.