

# The Effects of LMX and Perceived Fit on Employees' Negative Word-of-Mouth: The Role of Corporate Citizenship and Organization-Based Self-Esteem

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## Abstract

**Purpose** – This study examines the relationships between leader-member exchange (LMX), perceived fit, organization-based self-esteem (OBSE), corporate citizenship, work engagement, and employees' negative word-of-mouth (NWOM). In particular, it analyzes the effect of the interaction between LMX and corporate citizenship on OBSE, and the effect of the interaction between perceived fit and corporate citizenship on OBSE. Finally, this study analyzes moderated mediation by legal/ethical citizenship and philanthropic citizenship, and work engagement in the LMX-NWOM relationship and the perceived fit-NWOM relationship, respectively.

**Design/methodology** – The research data were collected through a questionnaire from 293 employees working at 117 restaurant companies in Korea.

**Findings** – The results were as follows. First, both LMX and perceived fit were negatively related to employees' NWOM. Second, both LMX and perceived fit were positively related to OBSE. Third, OBSE was negatively related to employees' NWOM. Fourth, legal/ethical citizenship and philanthropic citizenship were found to attenuate the positive (+) relationship between perceived fit and OBSE, respectively. Fifth, it was found that work engagement weakened the negative (-) relationship between OBSE and NWOM. Finally, OBSE was found to have a partial mediating effect moderated by corporate citizenship (legal/ethical citizenship and philanthropic citizenship) and work engagement in the relationship between perceived fit and NWOM.

**Originality/value** – This study makes a theoretical contribution by expanding the mechanisms associated with LMX and NWOM by revealing the mediating effect of OBSE in their relationship. Additionally, this study makes a theoretical contribution in that it demonstrates the importance of enhancing legal and ethical citizenship and philanthropic citizenship by revealing the moderating effect of corporate citizenship in the relationship between perceived fit and OBSE. Finally, it makes a theoretical contribution by suggesting that the interaction between work engagement and OBSE is important in reducing employees' NWOM by revealing the moderating effect of work engagement.

**Keywords:** Corporate Citizenship, Leader-Member Exchange, Negative Word-of-Mouth, Organization-Based Self-Esteem, Perceived Fit, Work Engagement

**JEL Classifications:** C12, D23, L26

## 1. Introduction

A company's brand is regarded as a valuable intangible asset that acts as a differentiator in the competitive marketplace (Iyer et al., 2018). In the digital world, next-generation informa-

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tion technology and social networking are increasing the influence of word of mouth by creating and popularizing online social networks (Liu, Hu, Wang, & Zhang, 2021). In particular, because the spread of negative word-of-mouth (NWOM) about brands is much faster than that of positive word-of-mouth (Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2006), companies must make great efforts to suppress and manage NWOM so that negative images are not formed about them. This is because NWOM is important information that not only degrades the brand's reputation but also adversely affects the organization's profits. Negative brand information lowers positive attitudes and purchase intentions toward brands and negatively affects sales and profits (Yu, Liu, & Lee, 2019).

Most scholars have approached the topic of brand management from a customer-centered perspective, but an additional organizational perspective that incorporates the role of employees is emerging (Santos-Vijande et al., 2013). This perspective assumes that the brand image is created jointly by an internal stakeholder (i.e., an employee) with an external stakeholder (i.e., a customer). Employees' discretionary brand-oriented behavior can be negative. Beyond showing unproductive workplace behavior toward an organization, colleagues, or bosses, employees can transfer negative brand-oriented behavior that may undermine the perception of the organization's brand reliability to those outside the organization (Darrat, Atinc, & Babin, 2016; Garas, Mahran, & Mohamed, 2018).

Service employees' attitudes and behaviors at the point of contact with customers play a crucial role in their organization's brand image and satisfaction with customers' products and services (Hartline & Ferrell, 1996). As deviations by front-line employees become easily concealable as anonymity increases due to the development of social media, it is very important to examine the preceding factors for employees' NWOM. Because front-line employees serve as a point of contact between organizations and customers, their role has been increasingly emphasized in brand management (Wallace, de Chernatony, & Bill, 2013). In particular, in addition to the obligatory role of front-line employees in brand management, their discretionary or voluntary brand support behavior is increasingly emphasized. Frontline employees project the organization's brand to outsiders, such as customers and potential job seekers, and exchange positive brand-related messages with outsiders. Additionally, when they make brand-oriented deviations from organizations they degrade organizational brand value by spreading NWOM to outsiders (Harris & Ogbonna, 2012). Employees in the service sector have an important influence on the formation of relationships between companies and customers (Pfeffer, 1994).

There are various potential variables which can affect employees' NWOM. This study focuses on leader-member exchange (LMX), perceived fit, corporate citizenship, organization-based self-esteem (OBSE), and work engagement as key variables that affect employees' organizational behavior. First, LMX has long served as a framework to understand how one-on-one relationships between leaders and members develop and lead to important perceptual, attitudinal, and behavioral consequences (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). According to social identity theory, leaders show a more favorable attitude toward speech behaviors such as ideas and problem-raising by members of their group who recognize them as close to them (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Accordingly, members of in-groups actively express constructive speech behavior that develops their organizations.

In contrast, out-group members are reluctant to speak because of a perception that an organization will reject or react negatively to their opinions or ideas. Therefore, they do not develop a feeling of trust in the leader. In this context, LMX will have a positive effect on

increasing employees' OBSE and play a role in reducing employees' NWOM.

Fit is a familiar concept to most people in an organization (Cable & Derue, 2002). Employees' subjective perception of fit affects their decision-making while at work. Thus, employees' perceived fit with various environments, including individuals and organizations, affects job and organizational attitudes and behaviors. These include job satisfaction, turnover intention, organizational commitment, and organizational citizenship behavior (Cable & Judge, 1996). People develop and perceive fit subjectively in their work lives. For example, job seekers choose organizations based on their perceived fit for jobs and organizations, and employers make employment decisions based on their perception of the fit of applicants (Kristof-Brown, 2000). Employees make decisions about job satisfaction, self-esteem at work, and their organizational commitment, and also evaluate the organization based on their perceived fit in their organizations and jobs. Therefore, employees' subjective perceived fit is an important variable that affects their workplace-based self-esteem and their word of mouth associated with their organization's brands, products, and services.

OBSE is a positive antecedent factor that lowers employees' NWOM. OBSE refers to the degree to which an individual believes that they are a competent, important, and valuable member of an organization (Pierce et al., 1989). Employees with high OBSE believe they are suitable for their work and provide considerable value to the organization. They have faith in the organization and believe they are competent, important, and helpful in the workplace. Employees with high OBSE do not act in violation of organizational norms and do not deviate from behaviors that support the well-being of their organizations or colleagues compared with employees with lower OBSE (Kim & Beehr, 2018). This is because employees' deviant behavior that occurs within an organization appears when they do not internalize the culture, values, or beliefs of the organization. In this context, employees with high OBSE are less likely to disseminate NWOM about their organization.

Society is shifting from passive to more demanding and active participants in corporate relationships (Bodhanwala & Bodhanwala, 2018). Many companies strive to actively respond to the changing social needs of various stakeholders. Corporate social responsibility can be conceptualized as a commitment to maximizing customer well-being from an economic, social, and environmental perspective through business practices (Du, Bhattacharya, & Sen, 2007). Companies have responded to these demands by adopting corporate citizenship practices as a subset of corporate social responsibility activities. Corporate citizenship refers to corporate social obligations, so includes how well a company fulfills its economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic obligations. All companies have basic ethical and legal responsibilities, but successful companies build strong foundations for corporate citizenship and show strong commitments to ethical behavior by balancing between shareholder needs and community and environmental needs associated with them (Hayes, 2022). These practices help attract consumers and establish and maintain brand and corporate loyalty. In short, the implementation of corporate citizenship practices affects employees' perceptions and evaluations of their organizations as well as consumer behavior, including purchase intentions (Fernandez-Ferrón, Castro-González, & Bande, 2020; Tsai et al., 2014).

From the organization's perspective, interest in employees' work engagement has grown due to the formation of a perception that efforts to strengthen positive aspects are more effective than suppressing members' negative behavior (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2014). Management activities place importance on acquiring human resources, a key resource that determines a company's competitiveness, and in work engagement so that employees are

motivated to maximize their capabilities.

This study aims to analyze the relationship between LMX, perceived fit, OBSE, corporate citizenship, work engagement, and NWOM. In particular, it analyzes the effect of the interaction between LMX and corporate citizenship and the interaction between perceived fit and corporate citizenship on OBSE. Additionally, this study analyzes the effect of the interaction between OBSE and work engagement on NWOM. Finally, this study analyzes how the mechanisms between LMX and NWOM and the mechanisms between perceived fit and NWOM are affected by employees' OBSE.

## 2. Theory and Hypotheses

### 2.1. Leader-Member Exchange and Negative Word-of-Mouth

Consumers show negative behaviors such as NWOM propagation (Kim, Wang, & Mattila, 2010), purchase suspension (Crié, 2003), service provider change intention, reduction of willingness to repurchase, and complaining (Schoefer et al., 2019). Customers who are dissatisfied with a product or service can create NWOM and switch to users of other products and services (Gültekin, & Güvercin, 2022). NWOM generate various risks such as undermining a company's customer preferences and causing them and others to have negative feelings and opinions about the company (Sweeney et al., 2008).

The key assumption maintained by LMX literature is that the relationship a leader has with each member is qualitatively different (Anand et al., 2018). Leaders tend to trust and support employees, consider them members of their group, and interact frequently with them when in a high LMX context (Liden & Maslyn, 1998). Because leaders have limited resources to support their creative efforts and implement their creative ideas (Baer, 2012), they tend to listen to and adopt ideas proposed by members engaged in higher-quality LMX (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). When a leader provides more resources and information to members of an inner group, the resources and information provided to members of an outer group are relatively limited.

LMX has been found to have a positive effect on the attitudes, behaviors, and performance of members. Scotta & Zweig (2021) found that LMX has a positive effect on organizational citizenship behavior within roles, outside of roles, and task performance. When a leader is engaged in low LMX with a member, the frequency of communication with the member, role expectations, and reliability will all be low. Leaders treat individuals engaged in low LMX as external group members (Liden, Sparrowe, & Wayne, 1997). Employees engaged in low-level LMX with a leader are not recognized by the leader because the leader's evaluation of their work performance or opinions is less positive than compared with members of their preferred (i.e., high LMX) group. Employees engaged in high LMX are less likely to produce NWOM because they have a positive attitude toward the organization. In contrast, employees in the low LMX category are not recognized by the leader as members of an external group. This increases the likelihood of NWOM about the organization along with distrust and complaints about the organization and the leader. Generally, organization members engaged in high LMX make constructive and supportive remarks to the organization's leadership. Botero & Van Dyne (2009) argued that LMX has a positive effect on the speech behavior of organization members. Mesdaghinia, Shapiro, & Eisenberger (2022) revealed that LMX has a positive (+) effect on prohibited voices and that there is an interaction effect between LMX

and moral identity internalization of prohibited voices.

Notably, organization members with low LMX do not express their thoughts because they do not communicate well with the leader and have not developed trust. Rather, they react negatively to the organization's brand management by secretly expressing negative thoughts and attitudes toward the organization.

These arguments lead to the following hypothesis:

*Hypothesis 1: Leader-member exchange will be negatively related to negative word-of-mouth.*

## 2.2. Perceived Fit and Negative Word-of-Mouth

Personal needs and fit perceptions may vary among people because they include social information obtained and processed by individuals about their needs and what entrepreneurship provides (Kiani, Ali, Wang, & Islam, 2022). However, this theoretical perspective does not explain the role of the external environment in which long and uncertain entrepreneurship processes occur (Lin, Pan, Wu, & Wang, 2019). The theory of person-environment fit shows that intentions are shaped by individual evaluation of external environments and internal factors (Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005).

The theory of person-environment fit recommends mutual consideration of whether people have the positive attitudes, emotions, and abilities needed for an activity and whether the execution of the activity meets their needs (Markman & Baron, 2003). The concept of person-environment fit has emerged as a prominent topic in the field of industrial and organizational psychology, and research on this topic has been actively conducted since Schneider's (1987) introduction of the attractiveness, selection, and reduction framework.

Attraction-selection-reduction theory is often used in organizations to better understand the concept of fit. This theory suggests that job seekers are lured and selected by organizations that employ similar types of individuals and that significantly different individuals leave their organizations to work elsewhere. When individuals perceive that an organization's values or beliefs are different from their values, they will have negative attitudes and behaviors toward the organization. Therefore, employees who are perceived to have a weak person-organization fit try to leave the organization or have a strong intention to change jobs, complain about the organization, and express their discomfort toward the organization through NWOM.

Employees with a low perception of needs-supplies fit recognize the unfairness of their compensation because it fails to meet their compensation needs based on their job performance and consequently reduce their loyalty to and immersion within the organization. This perception of compensation unfairness can lead to dissatisfaction with the job, low organizational commitment, absenteeism, and high turnover intention. In particular, employees with a low perception of needs-supplies fit are more likely to spread NWOM and negatively evaluate the products or services provided by the organization. When person-organization fit decreases due to discrepancies between individual values and organizational values, organization members form negative emotions and attitudes toward the organization, resulting in NWOM (Lauver & Kristof-Brown, 2001).

Drawing on these arguments, we propose:

*Hypothesis 2: Perceived fit will be negatively related to negative word-of-mouth.*

### 2.3. Leader-Member Exchange and Organization-Based Self-Esteem

According to self-determination theory, individuals tend to maintain self-consistency and perform appropriate role behaviors according to their self-concept (Shamir, House, & Arthur, 1993). OBSE reflects the evaluation of an individual's self-image, and organization members are motivated to verify and strengthen their self-concept. When individuals equate the values, beliefs, and goals an organization aspires to with their own values, they will have more faith and hope in the organization and will feel proud to be a member of it. Additionally, they will hope to remain with the organization and will be committed to its development and the achievement of its goals.

When members of an organization maintain good relationships with their superiors and are recognized by them concerning their work, they have a growing belief that they are valuable and capable people who can achieve certain results. In short, employees engaged in high LMX receive considerable attention from the organization's leaders and form a high level of OBSE because their actions or performances are recognized by the leaders.

When members of an organization do not have a good relationship with the boss and are not recognized by leadership for their work, they are more likely to value themselves less and not perform as well. In other words, employees with low-level LMX will have negative attitudes toward the organization, which will lower their OBSE. According to previous studies, ethical leadership (Wen, Wu, & Long, 2011) and empowering leadership (Kim & Behr, 2018) each have positive (+) effects on OBSE.

Summarizing these arguments, we propose:

*Hypothesis 3: Leader-member exchange will be positively related to organization-based self-esteem.*

### 2.4. Perceived Fit and Organization-Based Self-Esteem

The process theory of motivation explains how various human and situational factors in the organizational framework affect motivation (Kinicki, 2021). In particular, equity theory determines the fairness of compensation by comparing the efforts and results of an individual with those of others (Mathis et al., 2017). Here, efforts include time, loyalty, sincerity, passion, knowledge, skills, etc., and the results include extrinsic rewards such as wages or benefits, and intrinsic rewards such as praise or recognition. According to equity theory, employees with a high perception of needs-supplies fit recognize the fairness of compensation when their needs are met through compensation based on job performance; thus, maintaining or increasing loyalty and commitment to the organization. In this context, employees with a high perception of needs-supplies fit have a strong sense of respect for themselves related to their organization along with a positive evaluation of their organization.

When person-organization fit increases as organization members recognize that their values match those of the organization, they form a strong sense of unity, and their organization-centered self-esteem increases (Cable & DeRue, 2002). Few studies have examined the effect of needs-supplies fit among the sub-dimensions of person-environment fit, but according to the perspective of social exchange theory, when members of organizations with high needs are satisfied with the rewards received from the organization, they achieve high performance and are motivated to voluntarily contribute to the organization (Gagné & Deci, 2005).

Accordingly, the hypothesis was established as follows:

*Hypothesis 4: Perceived fit will be positively related to organization-based self-esteem.*

## 2.5. Organization-Based Self-Esteem and Negative Word-of-Mouth

Self-concept theory suggests that individuals tend to maintain self-consistency and perform appropriate role behaviors to match their self-concept (Shamir, House, & Arthur, 1993). OBSE reflects the evaluation of an individual's self-image and employees are motivated to validate and strengthen their self-concept. Compared to people with low levels of OBSE, those with high levels of OBSE tend to perceive themselves as more capable and believe that they can make valuable contributions to their organizations (Pierce et al., 1989). Therefore, people with higher OBSE are less likely to spread NWOM about their organizations.

The Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986) suggests that individuals with different personalities may differ in their interests and responses to the environment. According to social cognitive theory, organization members with high OBSE recognize themselves as valuable if they have an important meaning in the role of their organization. Therefore, they are not easily influenced by external signals (Brockner, 1988). Organization members with high OBSE are more committed to their organization and demonstrate vitality and energy that has grown into OBSE. This can take the form of increased communication behavior, which is an action beyond that of their role. In other words, they have positive communication behavior toward their organization, so are less likely to speak negatively.

OBSE reduces the likelihood of employees engaging in harmful or deviant behavior toward the organization. This is because employees' negative behavior does not match their feelings of value and importance within the organization. Previous studies have shown that OBSE has a negative (-) effect on workplace deviation (Ferris, Brown, & Heller, 2009; Whelpley & McDaniel, 2016). In short, individuals with low OBSE tend to personally engage in more harmful and less beneficial behaviors. Accordingly, we posit:

*Hypothesis 5. Organizational-based self-esteem will be negatively related to negative word-of-mouth.*

## 2.6. The Moderating Role of Corporate Citizenship

Corporate citizenship includes the degree to which a company's social, economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic responsibilities established by shareholders are met (Carroll, 1998). The importance of corporate citizenship is increasing as both individual and institutional investors begin to find companies with socially responsible directions (An & Kang, 2020; Ko & Park, 2021). These include environmental, social, and governance (ESG) practices. The level of an organization's corporate citizenship has been found to positively affect its reputation, trust in the organization, and employees' enthusiasm for work. For example, Hong Sung-Su and Lee Sang-Ho (2020) found that corporate citizenship activities that measured economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic responsibilities together had a positive (+) effect on corporate reputation. In contrast, Lin (2010) divided corporate citizenship into economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic citizenship, and analysis revealed that economic and legal citizenship had a positive (+) effect on employees' work commitment, and economic and ethical citizenship had a positive (+) effect on organizational trust.

In the present study, among the four types of corporate citizenship distinguished by Carroll

(1988) and Lin (2010), legal, ethical, and philanthropic citizenship are used as research variables. This is because economic responsibility is an important responsibility of a company, but since it is a result variable such as corporate performance, this study did not include it in corporate citizenship. Although high-quality LMX and perceived fit tend to increase employees' OBSE, the degree will vary depending on the level of corporate citizenship of the organization. This is because corporate citizenship affects employees' evaluation of their image at work. When employees recognize that their organization is a good corporate citizen who is responsible to society, they develop a strong sense of unity with identification of the organization's identity, further increasing OBSE (Cable & DeRue, 2002).

Employees who perceive high corporate citizenship in their employers evaluate the organization's reputation and trust more positively, therefore the provision of high-quality LMXs will further increase their OBSE. Likewise, employees who perceive high corporate citizenship behavior in their employers will further increase their OBSE if a highly perceived fit is provided.

In contrast, employees who perceive low corporate citizenship in their employers tend to have less OBSE than employees who perceive high corporate citizenship, even if they provide high-quality LMXs. Likewise, employees who perceive low corporate citizenship will have lower OBSE if they also perceive low fit levels.

According to the similarity-attraction theory, the more similar the values, beliefs, and goals of organizational members, the more positive they are displayed, such as liking each other and having a sense of belonging and pride in the organization. (Elfenbein & O'Reilly, 2007). When employees who recognize that they and their organization are highly suitable perceive high corporate citizenship behaviors, they will have a strong sense of respect for themselves relative to their organization, along with high identification toward their organization (Yang & Han, 2020). Yet, when employees who perceive that they and their organization are less suitable perceive low corporate citizenship, their respect for themselves will be further lowered in association with their organization along with low identification of their organization.

Identifying a study examining the moderating effect of corporate citizenship in the relationship between LMX and OBSE and perceived fit and OBSE has been difficult. However, based on the discussion so far, the positive (+) effect of LMX on OBSE can be considered strengthened by corporate citizenship. Additionally, the positive effect of perceived fit on OBSE can be strengthened by corporate citizenship. Thus, we hypothesize:

*Hypothesis 6a: Legal and ethical corporate citizenship will strengthen the positive (+) relationship between leader-member exchange and organization-based self-esteem.*

*Hypothesis 6b: Legal and ethical corporate citizenship will strengthen the positive (+) relationship between perceived fit and organization-based self-esteem.*

*Hypothesis 7a: Philanthropic corporate citizenship will strengthen the positive (+) relationship between leader-member exchange and organization-based self-esteem.*

*Hypothesis 7b: Philanthropic corporate citizenship will strengthen the positive (+) relationship between perceived fit and organization-based self-esteem.*

## 2.7. The Moderating Role of Work Engagement

Employees who are highly engaged in their work can perform their roles to the highest level



and are active in tasks assigned by their organizations (Anitha, 2014). They believe they fit in with their work and are motivated by the work itself. They tend to work harder and are more productive than others and are more likely to produce the results that organizations and customers expect and desire. Engaged employees find their work challenging, and inspiring, and provide a personal sense of accomplishment. They also believe that their skills and abilities are being used well to perform their work.

Both OBSE and engagement for work are major predictors of employees' NWOM. However, it is not well known how OBSE interacts with work engagement in impacting employees' OBSE. Therefore, this study aims to predict and analyze how work engagement moderates the relationship between OBSE and employees' NWOM. Employees who are engaged in their work convert their energy into creativity and organizational commitment. Engaged employees tend to be immersed in the organization and vice versa. They are proud to work for their organizations, identify themselves with them, and think they are doing well to become leaders in their industries.

When employees are highly engaged in their work they tend to vocally promote their organization. In contrast, when the level of employee engagement is low, they feel distant from the organization and don't value the development and promotion of the organization. Thus, positive speech behavior decreases, and negative defensive behavior can occur in the organization (Simsek & Gurler, 2019).

Since both OBSE and enthusiasm for work have positive effects on OBSE, the interaction effect of these variables will appear more positively on OBSE. When employees' engagement in their work is greater, the negative (-) effect of OBSE on OBSE will be further weakened. In contrast, when employees' enthusiasm for work is, the negative (-) effect of OBSE on NWOM will be further strengthened. Accordingly, we posit:

*Hypothesis 8. Work engagement will weaken the negative (-) relationship between organization-based self-esteem and negative word-of-mouth.*

## 2.8. The Moderated Mediating Effect of Organization-Based Self-Esteem

OBSE is a useful process variable to explain the effect of LMX and the effect of perceived fit on employees' OBSE. Since OBSE is a result variable of LMX and perceived fit, it can be inferred that LMX and perceived fit will have an indirect effect on OBSE through OBSE. However, few previous studies have analyzed the interaction effect between these variables. According to our discussion, both LMX and perceived fit have positive (+) effects on an employee's OBSE, and an employee's OBSE has a negative (-) effect on NWOM. This means that both LMX and perceived fit directly affect OBSE, while indirectly affecting NWOM through employees' OBSE.

Until now, it is difficult to verify the mediating effect of OBSE in the LMX-NWOM relationship and the perceived fit-NWOM relationship. In a similar prior study, Wang et al. (2022b) found that OBSE mediates the relationship between paradoxical leadership and innovative behavior. In contrast, Kim & Beehr (2018) found that OBSE completely mediates the relationship between empowering leadership and organizational citizenship behavior. Additionally, Liao et al. (2021) presented a study that showed that OBSE mediates the relationship between on-the-job embeddedness and altruism. Furthermore, Prasetyo, Kistyanto, & Surjanti (2022) revealed that OBSE mediates the relationship between perceived organizational support and employee performance.

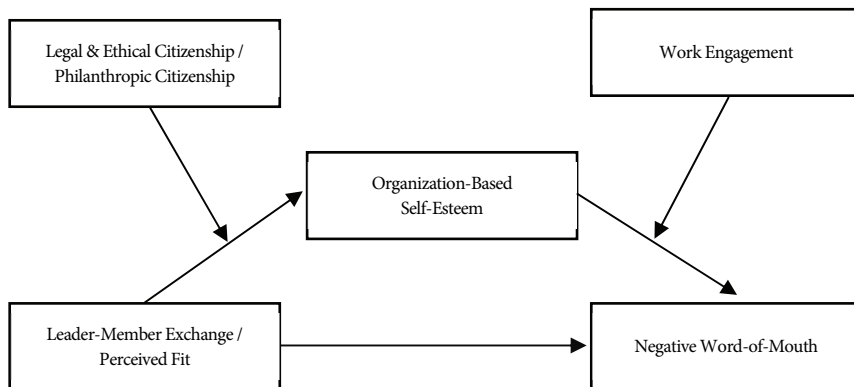
Since perceived corporate citizenship behavior moderates the LMX-OBSE relationship and work engagement moderates the OBSE-NWOM relationship, this study established a hypothesis to analyze the moderated mediating effect of OBSE in the LMX-NWOM relationship. Additionally, since corporate citizenship moderates the perceived fit-OBSE relationship and work engagement moderates the OBSE-NWOM relationship, this study established a hypothesis to analyze the moderated mediating effect of OBSE in the perceived fit-NWOM relationship. Accordingly, we posit:

*Hypothesis 9a. Organization-based self-esteem will mediate the relationship between leader-member exchange and negative word-of-mouth.*

*Hypothesis 9b. Organization-based self-esteem will mediate the relationship between perceived fit and negative word-of-mouth.*

The conceptual model is shown in Fig. 1.

**Fig. 1.** Conceptual Model



### 3. Methods

#### 3.1. Sample

To collect research data, this study distributed a questionnaire along with completion instructions through e-mail, face-to-face, and online methods to employees working at domestic restaurant companies and collected 323 copies under anonymous names. In this study, 293 questionnaires belonging to 117 companies, excluding 30 problematic copies, were used for hypothesis verification while analyzing the survey responses using SPSS 28.0 Statistical Software for Windows (IBM Corp., Armonk, NY, USA). Examining the demographic characteristics of the respondents used in the analysis, 78.2% (229) of the respondents were women, 21.8% (64) were men, 81.6% (239) were married, and 18.4% (54) were unmarried, with far more married than single. By age group, 44.7% (131 people) were aged 41–50 years, followed by 30.4% (89 people) aged 31–40 years, 16.7% (49 people) aged 51–40 years, and 8.2% (24 people) up to 30 years of age.

### 3.2. Measures

LMX was measured using a 7-point Likert scale (1 = not at all, 7 = not at all), with seven items developed by Janssen & Van Yperen (2004). Sample items ( $\alpha = .89$ ) included "My manager and I fit in well," and "I trust him even if I defend and justify his decision because he doesn't do anything right."

Perceived fit was measured using a 7-point Likert scale, with a total of six items ( $\alpha = .92$ ) that combined three items for person-organization fit and three items for needs-supplies fit among nine items developed by Cable & Derue (2002). A sample item of person-organization fit included "what I value in life and what my organization values are very similar," and a sample item of needs-supplies fit included "the essence I pursue through work is well realized through my current work."

OBSE was measured using a 7-point Likert scale with six items ( $\alpha = .92$ ) developed by Pierce et al. (1989). Sample items include "I'm a valuable person at work," and "I'm a helpful person at work."

Lin (2010) divided corporate citizenship into economic citizenship, legal citizenship, ethical citizenship, and philanthropic citizenship. In this study, corporate citizenship was divided into perceived legal and ethical citizenship and philanthropic citizenship, which are highly related to the citizenship of restaurant companies, and the contents of the questions were modified for use with restaurant companies. Legal and ethical citizenship was measured using a 7-point Likert scale with five items ( $\alpha = .90$ ). Sample items include "My manager always complies with the obligations under the contract," and "My organization is recognized as a merchant with excellent business ethics."

In contrast, philanthropic citizenship was measured using a 7-point Likert scale with four items ( $\alpha = .89$ ). Sample items include "My organization makes appropriate contributions to community donations," and "My organization helps promote the public welfare of society."

Work engagement was measured using a 7-point Likert scale, with six items ( $\alpha = .83$ ) developed by Lin (2010). Sample items include "I feel happy when I work intensively," and "I am passionate about my work."

NWOM was measured using a 7-point Likert scale, with three items ( $\alpha = .81$ ) developed by Grégoire & Fisher (2006). Sample item includes "I spread NWOM about my organization."

This study utilized employees' gender, marital status, years of service, age, and academic background as variables that affect OBSE and NWOM and controlled these variables when verifying hypotheses. In terms of gender, men were coded as 1 and women as 0, and marriage was coded as 1 and unmarried as 0. The number of years of service was measured by the total number of months worked. Age was measured as full age, and the academic background was coded as 1 for those under high school graduates, 2 for high school graduates, and 3 for university graduates.

## 4. Results

Table 1 shows means, standard deviations, and correlations. This study measured and compared the total explanatory power of factors used in a single potential factor research model and utilized Harman's single-factor test to address the issue of common method variance (Podsakoff et al., 2003). As a result of the analysis, the variance of the seven factors

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Matrix <sup>a</sup>

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Gender <sup>b</sup>	.22	.41											
2. Married <sup>c</sup>	.82	.39	-.11 +										
3. Tenure (month)	28.34	23.59	.06	-.06									
4. Age	43.11	8.39	-.18 **	.52 ***	.15 **								
5. Educational Background	1.94	.58	.21 ***	-.23 ***	-.09	-.38 ***							
6. LMX	4.94	.90	-.07	.05	.04	.01	-.00						
7. Perceived Fit	5.62	1.17	.00	-.04	.13 *	.04	.12 *	.72 ***					
8. Legal/Ethical Citizenship	5.10	1.04	-.07	-.00	.06	.11 +	.08	.67 ***	.69 ***				
9. Philanthropic Citizenship	4.61	1.12	-.07	-.06	.18 **	.01	.06	.59 ***	.67 ***	.66 ***			
10. OBSE	5.29	.84	.02	-.12 *	.02	-.06	.11 +	.51 ***	.45 ***	.38 ***	.35 ***		
11. Work Engagement	5.23	.98	.03	-.04	.06	-.03	.10 +	.62 ***	.60 ***	.57 ***	.47 ***	.58 ***	
12. NWOM	2.48	1.00	-.10 +	.09	-.06	-.01	-.13 *	-.51 ***	-.48 ***	-.45 ***	-.36 ***	-.55 ***	-.52 ***

<sup>a</sup> N = 293, <sup>b</sup> 1 = Male, 0 = Female, <sup>c</sup> 1 = Married, 0 = Unmarried.  
 A two-sided test is done. +  $p < .10$ , \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$

used in this study was 70.5%, but the variance when extracted with a single factor that did not rotate was significantly lowered to 42.1%. If the explanation of the total variance does not exceed 50%, it is judged that common method bias did not occur. Therefore, common method variance is not an issue in this study.

Table 2 reports the results of the regression conducted to test Hypotheses 1 through 5. Model 2 in Table 2 shows that, after the control variables had been included, LMX had a negative (-) effect on NWOM ( $\beta = -.40, p < .001$ ), thus confirming Hypothesis 1. Furthermore, Model 2 in Table 2 shows that subjectively perceived fit had a negative effect on NWOM ( $\beta = -.17, p < .05$ ), thus supporting Hypothesis 2. Additionally, Model 3 in Table 2 shows that OBSE had a negative effect on NWOM ( $\beta = -.34, p < .001$ ), thus confirming Hypothesis 5.

Model 5 in Table 2 shows that LMX had a positive effect on OBSE ( $\beta = .42, p < .001$ ), thus confirming Hypothesis 3. Furthermore, Model 5 in Table 2 shows that perceived fit had a positive effect on OBSE ( $\beta = -.14, p < .05$ ), thus supporting Hypothesis 4.

Table 3 shows the results of the regression conducted to test Hypothesis 6, the moderation hypothesis. Model 3 in Table 3 shows that legal and ethical citizenship did not moderate the relationship between LMX and OBSE ( $\beta = -.08, n.s.$ ), thus not supporting Hypothesis 6a. In contrast, Model 5 in Table 3 shows that legal and ethical citizenship weakened the positive (+) relationship between perceived fit and OBSE ( $\beta = -.18, p < .01$ ). Thus, failing to confirm Hypothesis 6b.

Figure 2 shows that legal and ethical citizenship weakened the positive (+) relationship between perceived fit and OBSE. Specifically, there was no significant difference in OBSE when the perceived fit is high, but when the perceived fit is low, OBSE is much lower than when legal and ethical citizenship is high.

**Table 2.** Results of Regression Models Predicting NWOM and OBSE <sup>a</sup>

Variable	Negative Word-of-Mouth			Organization-Based Self-Esteem	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Control					
Gender <sup>b</sup>	-.08	-.12*	-.11*	-.01	.03
Married <sup>c</sup>	.11	.13*	.08	-.13+	-.15*
Work Tenure	-.04	.002	-.01	.02	-.02
Age	-.13+	-.13*	-.11+	.04	.04
Educated Level	-.14*	-.11+	-.08	.10	.07
Independent					
LMX		-.40***	-.26***		.42***
Perceived Fit		-.17*	-.13+		.14+
Mediate					
OBSE			-.34***		
$R^2$	.04	.33	.41	.03	.30
$\Delta R^2$		.29***	.08***		.28***
$F$	2.40*	19.91***	24.66***	1.47	17.43***
$df$	5, 287	7, 285	8, 284	5, 287	7, 285

<sup>a</sup> n = 293, <sup>b</sup> 1 = Male, 0 = Female, <sup>c</sup> 1 = Married, 0 = Unmarried  
+  $p < .10$ , \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$

**Table 3.** The Moderating Effect of Legal/Ethical Citizenship on OBSE <sup>a</sup>

Variable	Negative Word-of-Mouth			Organization-Based Self-Esteem	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Control					
Gender <sup>b</sup>	-.01	.04	.04	.02	.02
Married <sup>c</sup>	-.13+	-.16**	-.16**	-.10	-.10
Work Tenure	.02	-.01	-.01	-.03	-.03
Age	.04	.06	.06	-.02	-.04
Educated Level	.10	.08	.08	.02	.01
Independent					
LMX		.50***	.51***		
Perceived Fit				.35***	.41***
Legal & Ethical Citizenship		.04	.04	.14+	.15*
Interaction					
LMX × Legal/Ethical Citizenship			-.08		
Perceived Fit × Legal/Ethical Citizenship					-.18**
$R^2$	.03	.29	.30	.38	.40
$\Delta R^2$		.27***	.01	.34***	.02**
$F$	1.47	16.79***	15.08***	12.01***	12.20***
$df$	5, 287	7, 285	8, 284	7, 285	8, 284

<sup>a</sup> n = 293, <sup>b</sup> 1 = Male, 0 = Female, <sup>c</sup> 1 = Married, 0 = Unmarried

+  $p < .10$ , \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$

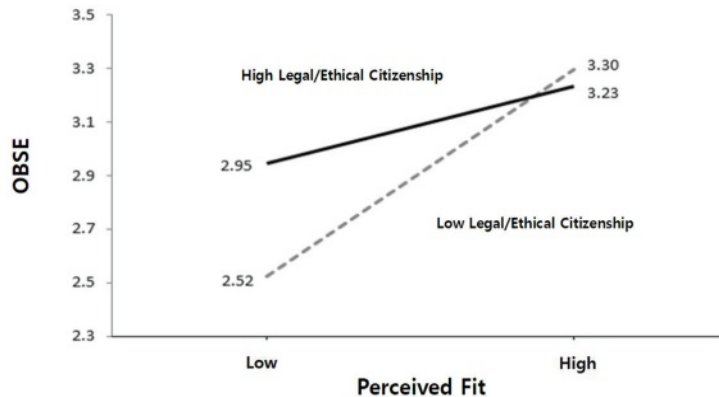
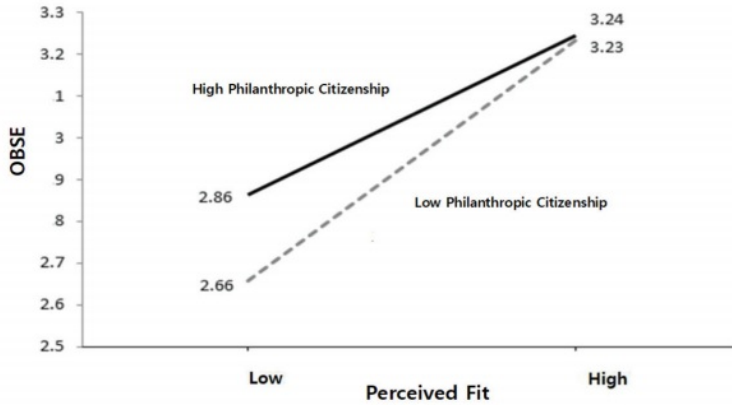
**Fig. 2.** The Interaction Effect of Legal/Ethical Citizenship with Perceived Fit for Organizational-Based Self-Esteem

Table 4 shows the results of the regression conducted to test Hypothesis 7, the moderation hypothesis. Model 3 in Table 4 shows that philanthropic citizenship did not moderate the relationship between LMX and OBSE ( $\beta = -.03$ , n.s.), thus not supporting Hypothesis 7a. In contrast, Model 5 in Table 4 shows that philanthropic citizenship weakened the positive (+) relationship between perceived fit and OBSE ( $\beta = -.10$ ,  $p < .01$ ), thus failing to confirm

Hypothesis 7b.

Figure 3 shows that philanthropic citizenship weakened the positive (+) relationship between perceived fit and OBSE. Specifically, if the perceived fit was high, there was no significant difference in OBSE depending on high or low levels of philanthropic citizenship, but if the perceived fit was low, OBSE was much lower.

**Fig. 3.** The Interaction Effect of Philanthropic Citizenship with Perceived Fit for OBSE



**Table 4.** The Moderating Effect of Philanthropic Citizenship on OBSE <sup>a</sup>

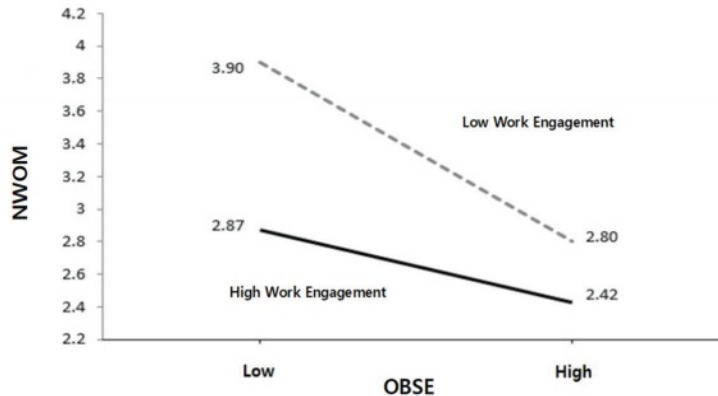
Variable	Negative Word-of-Mouth			Organization-Based Self-Esteem	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Control					
Gender <sup>b</sup>	-.01	.04	.04	.02	.02
Married <sup>c</sup>	-.13+	-.16**	-.16**	-.10	-.10
Work Tenure	.02	-.02	-.02	-.05	-.04
Age	.04	.06	.06	-.01	-.01
Educated Level	.10	.08	.08	.03	.02
Independent					
LMX		.49***	.49***		
Perceived Fit				.39***	.39***
Philanthropic Citizenship		.05	.07	.10+	.12*
Interaction					
LMX × Philanthropic Citizenship			-.03		
Perceived Fit × Philanthropic Citizenship					-.10+
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	.03	.29	.29	.22	.23
$\Delta R^2$		.27***	.00	.34***	.01**
<i>F</i>	1.47	16.88***	14.78***	11.67***	10.65***
<i>df</i>	5, 287	7, 285	8, 284	7, 285	8, 284

<sup>a</sup> *n* = 293, <sup>b</sup> 1 = Male, 0 = Female, <sup>c</sup> 1 = Married, 0 = Unmarried  
+  $\rho < .10$ , \*  $\rho < .05$ , \*\*  $\rho < .01$ , \*\*\*  $\rho < .001$

Table 5 reports the results of the regression conducted to test Hypothesis 8, the moderation hypothesis. Model 3 in Table 5 shows that work engagement weakened the negative (-) relationship between OBSE and NWOM ( $\beta = .13, p < .01$ ), thus confirming Hypothesis 8.

Figure 4 shows that work engagement weakened the negative (-) relationship between OBSE and NWOM. Specifically, it was found that when OBSE was high and work engagement was high, the level of NWOM was the lowest, and when OBSE was low and work engagement was low, the NWOM is the greatest.

**Fig. 4.** The Interaction Effect of Work Engagement with OBSE



**Table 5.** The Moderating Effect of Work Engagement on Negative Mouth-of-Mouth <sup>a</sup>

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
<b>Control</b>			
Gender <sup>b</sup>	-.08	-.08+	-.08
Married <sup>c</sup>	.11	.05	.06
Work Tenure	-.04	-.02	-.02
Age	-.13+	-.10+	-.11+
Educated Level	-.14*	-.07	-.08
<b>Independent</b>			
OBSE		-.34***	-.32***
Work Engagement		-.32*	-.33***
<b>Interaction</b>			
OBSE × Work Engagement			.13**
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	.04	.38	.40
$\Delta R^2$		.34***	.02**
<i>F</i>	2.40*	25.05***	23.39***
<i>df</i>	5, 287	7, 285	8, 284

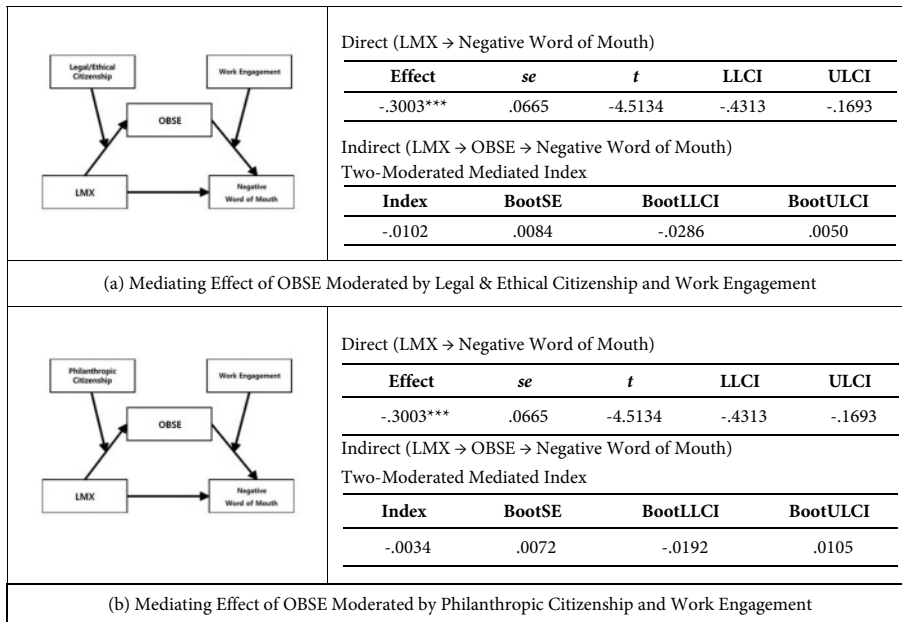
a  $n = 293$ , b 1 = Male, 0 = Female, c 1 = Married, 0 = Unmarried

+  $p < .10$ , \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$



This study verified the moderated mediating effect of OBSE twice using the PROCESS Macro program. A 99% confidence interval was estimated through 5,000 bootstrapping samples. Figure 5 shows the PROCESS Macro program results conducted to test Hypothesis 9a, the moderated mediation hypothesis. Figure 5a shows that the direct effect of LMX on NWOM was significant ( $\beta = -.30, p < .001$ ). However, since there was 0 between BootLLCI and BootULCI in the mediating indices that were moderated two times, the indirect effect was not significant. In contrast, Figure 5b shows that the direct effect of LMX on NWOM was significant ( $\beta = -.30, p < .001$ ). However, since there were zeroes in BootLLCI and BootULCI in the mediating indices that were moderated two times, the indirect effect was not significant. Thus, Hypothesis 9a was not supported.

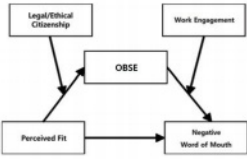
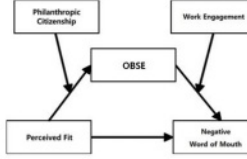
**Fig. 5.** The moderated mediating effect of OBSE in the LMX-NWOM relationship



\*  $n = 293$ . \*\*\*  $p < .001$ , LMX = Leader-Member Exchange Relationship, OBSE = Organizational-based self-esteem

Figure 6 shows the PROCESS Macro program results conducted to test Hypothesis 9b, the moderated mediation hypothesis. Figure 6a shows that perceived fit had a significant direct effect on NWOM ( $\beta = -.18, p < .001$ ), since there was no zero between BootLLCI and BootULCI, indirect effects were significant. Therefore, moderated OBSE had to be verified to partially mediate under this condition. Further, Figure 6b shows that perceived fit had a significant direct effect on NWOM ( $\beta = -.18, p < .001$ ), in the index of mediation moderated by philanthropic citizenship, there was 0 between BootLLCI and BootULCI in the +1SD group, and there was no 0 between BootLLCI and BootULCI in the -1SD group and Mean group. Therefore, it can be seen that the partial mediation effect was verified only in the case of the two groups so Hypothesis 9b was only partially supported.

**Fig. 6.** The moderated mediating effect of OBSE in the perceived fit-NWOM relationship

	<p>Direct (Perceived Fit → Negative Word of Mouth)</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Effect</th> <th>se</th> <th>t</th> <th>LLCI</th> <th>ULCI</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>-.1752***</td> <td>.0503</td> <td>-3.4863</td> <td>-.2742</td> <td>-.0763</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Indirect (Perceived Fit → OBSE → Negative Word of Mouth)</p> <p>Two-Moderated Mediated Index</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Index</th> <th>BootSE</th> <th>BootLLCI</th> <th>BootULCI</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>-.0171</td> <td>.0076</td> <td>-.0341</td> <td>-.0043</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Effect	se	t	LLCI	ULCI	-.1752***	.0503	-3.4863	-.2742	-.0763	Index	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI	-.0171	.0076	-.0341	-.0043		
Effect	se	t	LLCI	ULCI																	
-.1752***	.0503	-3.4863	-.2742	-.0763																	
Index	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI																		
-.0171	.0076	-.0341	-.0043																		
(a) Mediating Effect of OBSE Moderated by Legal/Ethical Citizenship and Work Engagement																					
	<p>Direct (LMX → Negative Word of Mouth)</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Effect</th> <th>se</th> <th>t</th> <th>LLCI</th> <th>ULCI</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>-.1752***</td> <td>.0503</td> <td>-3.4863</td> <td>-.2742</td> <td>-.0763</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Indirect (LMX → OBSE → Negative Word of Mouth)</p> <p>Two-Moderated Mediated Index</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Index</th> <th>BootSE</th> <th>BootLLCI</th> <th>BootULCI</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>-.0067</td> <td>.0064</td> <td>-.0248</td> <td>.0000</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Effect	se	t	LLCI	ULCI	-.1752***	.0503	-3.4863	-.2742	-.0763	Index	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI	-.0067	.0064	-.0248	.0000		
Effect	se	t	LLCI	ULCI																	
-.1752***	.0503	-3.4863	-.2742	-.0763																	
Index	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI																		
-.0067	.0064	-.0248	.0000																		
<p>Mediation Index Moderated by Philanthropic Citizenship</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Work Engagement</th> <th>Index</th> <th>BootSE</th> <th>BootLLCI</th> <th>BootULCI</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>4.2551(-1SD)</td> <td>.0233</td> <td>.0187</td> <td>.0003</td> <td>.0727</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5.2309(Mean)</td> <td>.0167</td> <td>.0134</td> <td>.0002</td> <td>.0527</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6.2067(+1SD)</td> <td>.0101</td> <td>.0093</td> <td>-.0001</td> <td>.0360</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Work Engagement	Index	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI	4.2551(-1SD)	.0233	.0187	.0003	.0727	5.2309(Mean)	.0167	.0134	.0002	.0527	6.2067(+1SD)	.0101	.0093	-.0001	.0360
Work Engagement	Index	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI																	
4.2551(-1SD)	.0233	.0187	.0003	.0727																	
5.2309(Mean)	.0167	.0134	.0002	.0527																	
6.2067(+1SD)	.0101	.0093	-.0001	.0360																	
(b) Mediating Effect of OBSE Moderated by Philanthropic Citizenship and Work Engagement																					

<sup>a</sup>  $n = 293$ . \*\*\*  $p < .001$ , LMX = Leader-Member Exchange Relationship, OBSE = Organizational-based self-esteem

## 5. Discussion

The results of this study are summarized as follows. First, LMX was found to have a negative (-) effect on employees' NWOM. These results are similar to previous studies (Botero & Van Dyne, 2009) that found that LMX has a positive effect on the speech behavior of organization members. This means that employees who experience high-quality LMX are less likely to spread NWOM. Additionally, the perceived fit was found to have a negative (-) effect on employees' NWOM. These results are similar to previous studies (Je Min-Ji & Kim Young-Gu, 2010; Elfenbein & O'Reilly, 2007) that found that person-organization fit showed positive attitudes and behaviors. This means that when employees perceive that person-organization fit and needs-supplies fit are high, they make fewer negative evaluations of the organization.

Additionally, OBSE was found to have a negative (-) effect on NWOM. These results are similar to previous studies (Pierce et al., 1989) which found that employees with high OBSE made valuable contributions to the organization. This indicates that OBSE is a characteristic of intrinsic motivation that can lead to desirable employee behavior which allows employees to act beneficially relative to the organization and prevent deviant behavior such as NWOM. Furthermore, OBSE leads to altruistic organizational citizenship behavior that helps organi-

zations and colleagues (Williams & Anderson, 1991) and lowers deviant behavior that violates organizational norms or threatens the welfare of organizations or colleagues (Bennett & Robinson, 2003).

Second, it was found that LMX had a positive (+) effect on OBSE. These results are similar to previous studies that found that ethical leadership (Wen et al., 2011) and empowering leadership (Kim & Beehr, 2018) have positive (+) effects on OBSE. This indicates that employees who recognize the quality of high-level LMXs value themselves more in the workplace because they are recognized and trusted by leaders in comparison to employees who do not recognize this quality.

The perceived fit was also found to have a positive (+) effect on OBSE. These results are similar to previous studies (Jem Min-ji & Kim Young-gu, 2010) that found that person-organization fit had a positive (+) effect on the experience of positive psychological states. This suggests that when employees recognize a high level of person-organization fit and needs-supplies fit, employees' OBSE is higher.

Third, contrary to expectations, both legal and ethical citizenship, and philanthropic citizenship was found to weaken the positive (+) relationship between perceived fit and OBSE. In particular, OBSE was found to be the lowest when the perceived fit was low and legal and ethical citizenship was high. Yet, OBSE was found to be lowest when the perceived fit was low and philanthropic citizenship was high. This means that the positive (+) relationship between the perceived fit and OBSE was weakened by legal and ethical citizenship and philanthropic citizenship, respectively, and that the interaction between legal and ethical and philanthropic citizenship and perceived fit is an important antecedent factor to increase employees' organizational self-esteem.

Fourth, it was found that employees' work engagement weakened the negative (-) relationship between OBSE and NWOM. The NWOM of employees was found to be lowest when OBSE was high and work engagement was lower than when OBSE was low and work engagement was high. This indicates that the relationship between OBSE and NWOM was weakened by work engagement, and the interaction between work engagement and OBSE was an important antecedent factor in reducing NWOM among employees.

Finally, OBSE was found to have a moderated mediating effect in the relationship between perceived fit and NWOM. These results were similar to previous studies (Liao et al., 2021) that found that OBSE mediates the relationship between job exclusion and altruism and job performance, and previous studies that found that OBSE mediated the relationship between perceived organizational support and employee performance. This indicates that perceived fit is not only a direct antecedent factor that lowers NWOM by employees but also indirectly lowers the NWOM by employees through OBSE.

### 5.1. Implications for Theory and Research

The theoretical implications of the results of this study are as follows. First, the most important contribution of this study is that it provides insight into how employees structure and use fit perceptions. Past empirical studies on fit perception focused on important differences between person-organization fit and person-job fit and examined person-job fit in terms of demands-abilities fit. However, the needs-supplies fit is one of the important factors in employees' perception of fit because employees maintain employment relationships

largely to be compensated for their work. This study is significant in that it measures fit perception through person-organization fit and needs-supplies fit, and empirically analyzes and presents the impact of these employees' perceived fit on their OBSE and NWOM.

Second, this study makes a theoretical contribution in that it expands the mechanism from perceived fit to employee NWOM by revealing the moderated mediating effect of OBSE in the relationship between perceived fit and NWOM. In particular, this study is of great significance in that it presents the mediating effect of OBSE moderated by corporate citizenship and work engagement through bootstrap analysis.

As shown in Model 3 of Table 2, simple mediating effect verification without considering moderating variables leads to research results that OBSE partially mediates the relationship between LMX and NWOM and perceived fit and NWOM. However, the results of verifying the moderated mediating effect through bootstrap analysis of the PRECESS Macro statistical program results differed from the results of these studies. In other words, OBSE did not mediate the relationship between LMX and NWOM.

In contrast, OBSE was found to partially mediate the relationship between perceived fit and NWOM considering the moderating effect of legal and ethical citizenship and work engagement. Additionally, OBSE has been partially mediated only in the -1SD Group and the Mean Group in the relationship between perceived fit and NWOM considering the moderating effect of philanthropic citizenship and work engagement. Through these analysis results, this study suggests that the three-step mediating effect verification used by Baron & Kenny (1986) has limitations as an analysis technique.

Preacher & Hayes (2004) and Heyes & Rockwood (2020) argued that Baron & Kenny's (1986) and Sobel's (1982) mediating effect analysis methods did not reflect measurement errors in the research model and had limitations in verifying sophisticated mediating models such as double or multi-mediated models. The method proposed by Baron & Kenny (1986) and Sobel (1982) is desirable when the condition of having a normal distribution (or  $t$  distribution) is correct. Therefore, in future studies, it is necessary to use either the bootstrap method or the structural equation model analysis by PROCESS Macro to verify the mediating effect.

Third, this study contributes theoretically to the recognition of the importance of enhancing legal and ethical citizenship and philanthropic citizenship that interact with perceived fit by revealing the moderating effect of corporate citizenship in the relationship between perceived fit and OBSE. Among the four types of corporate citizenship claimed by Carroll (1998), this study is meaningful in that it has empirically shown that the interaction between corporate citizenship in legal, ethical, and philanthropic aspects and the perceived fit is an important antecedent factor that forms a desirable attitude toward the organization, such as OBSE. Yet, since fit has a positive effect on similar groups, but a negative effect on heterogeneous groups (Elfenbein & O'Reilly, 2007), further research is needed on OBSE.

Finally, this study makes a theoretical contribution by revealing the moderating effect of work engagement in the relationship between OBSE and NWOM, and by suggesting that the interaction between work engagement and OBSE is important in preventing NWOM. This study is significant in that it revealed that the interaction between employees' OBSE and work engagement is an important antecedent factor affecting their NWOM.

## 5.2. Practical Implications

Companies should make various efforts to prevent employees' NWOM about their brands. This is because when employees share their negative experiences through NWOM it has a greater impact on consumers' brand attitudes and purchase intentions than consumers' NWOM. NWOM is a common response and is a pervasive and persuasive force for consumers (Philp1, Pyle & Ashworth, 2018). While NWOM is uncommon among employees, it can potentially have serious consequences for companies (Arora, Gupta, & Naylor, 2021).

While previous studies have focused on consumers' NWOM and its effects on purchase intentions and corporate brands, this study focused on employees' NWOM which greatly affects the formation of NWOM associated with their companies or their products. The results of this study suggest practical implications for companies to lower NWOM as follows. First, companies should establish measures to lower NWOM about the organization by promoting and encouraging employees' enthusiasm for their work. For example, when an organization accurately shares its management ideology and vision with its employees, the level of work engagement increases, allowing them to focus on their work voluntarily and actively. Additionally, CEOs can classify tasks on a systematic basis and assign them to employees, allowing them to focus on their work, achieve results, and increase their confidence and sense of meaning in their work. When an employee feels satisfied with the organization, they trust the organization's beliefs and values and positively evaluate and respond to the organization. In contrast, when an employee feels dissatisfied with an organization, they are likely to complain about it and spread NWOM.

Companies should be more enthusiastic about their work by rewarding their efforts through objective evaluation of employee performance. When employees work hard with a sense of unity with their organization and autonomous motivation for work, they will become the subject of positive word of mouth that boasts about and promotes the organization externally as well as developing organization-based pride through individuality and achievement.

Second, companies should evaluate and monitor employees' perceptions of fit. This is because employees' perceived fit, like LMX, increases employees' OBSE and lowers NWOM about the organization. For example, corporate CEOs must try to share their culture, vision, and strategy with their employees so that they can be proud to work in their organizations.

Efforts are needed to increase needs-supplies fit so that employees can satisfy their needs through job performance and associated rewards from their organization. Additionally, companies will be able to perform better by comparing differences between job applicants for different types of fit in interviews and will then select the best employees that also share the values of the organization.

Third, companies should make efforts to maintain a high quality of LMX between leaders and organization members. This is because LMX immerses employees in the organization by increasing their OBSE. It also contributes positively to the organization by lowering NWOM. High-quality LMX makes groups of employees value themselves in the workplace and has a positive effect of lowering negative publicity about the organization. Additionally, high-quality LMX is an important antecedent factor in employees' out-of-role behavior, including constructive remarks (Khan & Malik, 2017), and is an important contextual factor in creating an organizational climate that stimulates employees' positive remarks (Carnevale et al., 2017).

Therefore, companies must demonstrate leadership so that organization members can work as a team without feeling alienated from external groups.

Finally, companies should make efforts to help employees increase their OBSE. This is because OBSE is related to various work outcomes that benefit the organization. As presented in the results of this study, employees with high OBSE spread less NWOM about their organizations. Additionally, these employees tend to reduce deviant behavior that violates organizational norms or threatens organizational well-being, while increasing positive organizational citizenship behavior such as altruistic behavior beyond their job descriptions. This ultimately helps their organization and colleagues.

### 5.3. Limitations and Future Research Directions

This study has some limitations which should be acknowledged. The first limitation is that there is a possibility of common method bias because a single method was used in this study by collecting the research model predictors from the same source at a single time. The main cause of this bias is related to using the questionnaire method and the psychological characteristics of respondents. In this study, Harman's single-factor test was utilized to address the problem of common method bias, and it identified no problems. Nevertheless, to fundamentally solve the limitations of research data from the same source, future studies must collect survey data from managers in addition to employees and include them in research data or find ways to use objective research data such as corporate financial report data.

Also, this study has a limitation in the generalization of research results due to the use of somewhat limited national samples in a single national environment. Since the relationship between the variables analyzed in this study may vary depending on cultural differences, future studies should devise a plan to expand the subject of research data collection internationally. Additionally, this study used a cross-sectional data analysis method, and to increase the generalization of the analysis results in future studies, it is necessary to use a longitudinal data analysis method that collects and analyzes research data at various points.

Finally, this study has a limitation in that it does not reflect institutional variables such as workplace culture, working hours, organization size, organization structure, and profitability due to the scope of research focusing on corporate citizenship, perceived fit, and OBSE. In future studies, it is necessary to accurately analyze the relationship between independence, mediation, regulation, and dependent variables by controlling variables such as organization size and profitability.

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