Organisational Pride as a Key to Success: Associations of Job Characteristics with Employee Engagement and Job Satisfaction

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Abstract

Organisational pride is associated with job satisfaction and employee engagement because it may strengthen employees' sense of purpose and meaningfulness at work. This study examines the mediating role of organisational pride in the relationships between job characteristics, job satisfaction, and employee engagement. Data were collected from 308 employees in 15 Croatian organisations at three time points. Job satisfaction and employee engagement were measured in April 2024, job characteristics in July 2024, and organisational pride in October 2024. Two simple mediation models were estimated using the PROCESS macro for SPSS. Job characteristics were positively associated with organisational pride, which was positively associated with job satisfaction and employee engagement. The direct associations between job characteristics and both outcomes remained statistically significant, and the indirect associations through organisational pride were also significant. The findings support statistical mediation; however, the temporal ordering of the measurements does not permit causal inference or establish a temporally ordered mediation process. The results therefore identify organisational pride as an important psychological mechanism associated with job characteristics, job satisfaction, and employee engagement.

Keywords: organisational pride; job characteristics; job satisfaction; employee engagement

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Introduction

Employees who feel proud of their organisation tend to develop stronger relationships with colleagues and a stronger sense of organisational belonging. Organisational pride is also associated with a positive work environment, job satisfaction, and employee engagement. According to the Job Characteristics Model (Hackman & Oldham, 1976), jobs that include intrinsically motivating characteristics, such as skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback, are associated with higher job satisfaction.

Although numerous studies have reported a positive association between organisational pride and job satisfaction (Anh et al., 2022; Fiernaningsih et al., 2019; Mas-Machuca et al., 2016; Widyanti et al., 2020), the literature indicates a research gap concerning the association between job characteristics and organisational pride and the association between organisational pride and employee or work engagement. This study therefore empirically examines the direct and indirect associations between job characteristics and job satisfaction and employee engagement, with organisational pride as a mediator. The study's originality lies in examining organisational pride as a potential statistical mechanism linking job characteristics to two important work outcomes.

The paper begins with the theoretical framework and a review of previous research, followed by the development of the hypotheses. The methodology section describes the data collection procedure and the measures of job characteristics, organisational pride, job satisfaction, and employee engagement. The results section presents the main findings. The paper concludes with theoretical and practical implications, limitations, and recommendations for future research.

Literature review

Theoretical framework

Pride is a positive emotion people experience when they perform above expected standards (Verbeke et al., 2004). It is closely related to personal achievement, enhanced self-esteem, and a sense of importance (Tracy & Robins, 2007). At the organisational level, employees show pride when they recognise their contribution to a challenging, high-performing work environment and identify with their organisation (Kraemer & Gouthier, 2014). Organisational pride commonly arises when employees perceive their work as important to both the organisation and society (Gouthier & Rhein, 2011). It also contributes to employees' self-concept by drawing attention to their contributions and achievements (Kamani, 2017).

Wollack et al. (1971) describe organisational pride as the satisfaction and happiness employees derive from performing their work well. Organisations that create a supportive work environment and help employees develop pride in their roles foster

respect for and appreciation of their work (Kamani, 2017). Organisational pride is closely related to self-esteem and may serve as an important psychological resource that provides intrinsic motivation (Mas-Machuca et al., 2016). Kraemer and Gouthier (2014) also note that organisational pride may help predict employees' intention to remain in the organisation.

Job characteristics are stable and measurable aspects of the work environment that employees perceive and to which they respond. They therefore play an important role in theoretical and practical approaches to work design (Hernaus & Marić, 2023). Specific job characteristics are associated with employee attitudes and behaviours, including job satisfaction (De Jonge et al., 1999; Spector & Jex, 1991), motivation (Hackman & Lawler, 1971), exhaustion (Spector & Jex, 1991), and health outcomes (De Jonge et al., 1999; Spector & Jex, 1991). According to the Job Characteristics Model, five core dimensions are related to three psychological states and, through them, to employee motivation and satisfaction (Parker & Wall, 1998). Skill variety, task identity, and task significance contribute to experienced meaningfulness; autonomy is associated with responsibility for work outcomes; and feedback enables employees to understand the results of their activities (Latham, 2012). The model therefore predicts positive associations between these dimensions and favourable work attitudes and behaviours, and negative associations with adverse outcomes (Humphrey et al., 2007).

Spector (1997) defines job satisfaction as the extent to which individuals feel satisfied or dissatisfied with their jobs. Locke (1976) describes it as a positive or pleasant emotional state resulting from an individual's appraisal of the job or work experience. Betts (2000) similarly defines job satisfaction as an individual's perception of the job, shaped by psychological and physiological factors. Aziri (2011) emphasises a managerial approach that recognises employees as individuals with distinct needs, aspirations, and personal goals. Job satisfaction thus reflects employees' perceptions of specific aspects of their work and the correspondence between their expectations or needs and their work experiences (Locke, 1969).

Kahn (1990) introduced employee engagement as employees' capacity to devote themselves fully to their work while maintaining a sense of authenticity. Engaged employees are physically and emotionally involved in their work tasks. Wefald et al. (2012) describe engagement as a work attitude reflecting psychological involvement and focus. Schaufeli and Bakker (2004, p. 295) define engagement as a positive and fulfilling work-related state of mind comprising vigour, dedication, and absorption. Kahn (1990) and Schaufeli et al. (2002) associate engagement with work performance and employee well-being.

Hypothesis development

Numerous studies have reported a positive association between organisational pride and job satisfaction (Anh et al., 2022; Fiernaningsih et al., 2019; Mas-Machuca et al., 2016; Widyanti et al., 2020). However, fewer studies have examined job characteristics, organisational pride, and employee engagement simultaneously. Widyanti et al. (2020)

analysed the relationships between organisational justice and organisational pride and job satisfaction and job performance among 200 employees of private universities in Indonesia and reported positive, statistically significant associations.

Arnett et al. (2002) examined how internal marketing approaches in hotels were associated with employees' job satisfaction and organisational pride. Employees who were more satisfied with their jobs also reported greater pride in their organisations. Studies of work-life balance have likewise reported positive associations between organisational pride and job satisfaction (Anh et al., 2022; Fiernaningsih et al., 2019; Mas-Machuca et al., 2016). Accordingly, the following hypothesis was formulated:

H1: Organisational pride statistically mediates the association between job characteristics and job satisfaction.

S. A. M. Ali et al. (2014) examined the application of the Job Characteristics Model to job satisfaction among fast-food restaurant managers. The five dimensions of the model were positively associated with job satisfaction. Similarly, Andrew et al. (2016) reported an association between job characteristics and employee job satisfaction. Accordingly, the following hypothesis was formulated:

H2: Job characteristics are positively associated with job satisfaction.

Seddik et al. (2022) examined associations between skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback and organisational pride among 400 employees in the banking sector. They reported a positive and statistically significant association between job characteristics and organisational pride. F. Ali et al. (2024) examined the mediating role of organisational pride in the relationship between internal corporate social responsibility and employee engagement and found a statistically significant indirect association. Accordingly, the following hypothesis was formulated:

H3: Organisational pride statistically mediates the association between job characteristics and employee engagement.

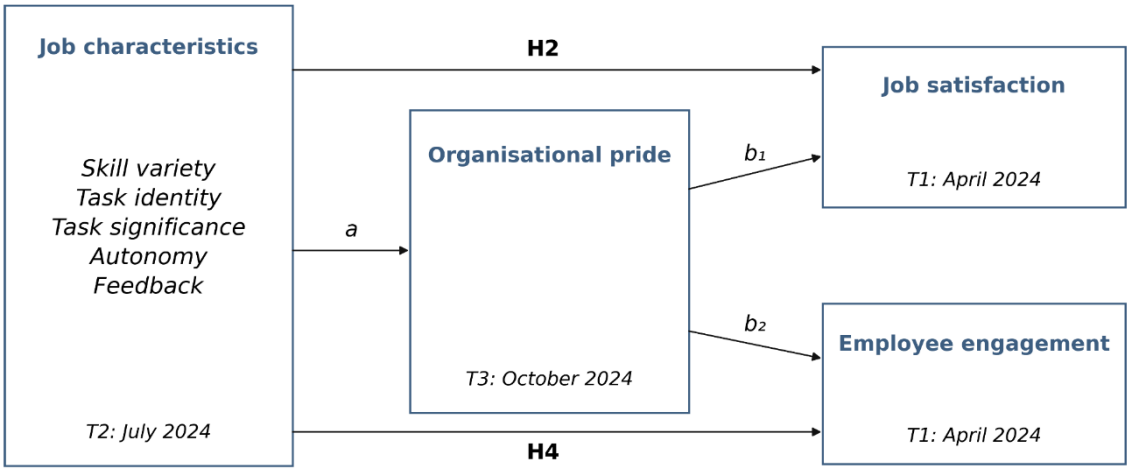
Xanthopoulou et al. (2009) and Bakker and Bal (2010) concluded that autonomy was positively associated with employee engagement. Christian et al. (2011) also reported positive associations of autonomy, skill variety, task significance, and feedback with engagement. The Job Demands-Resources Model provides a theoretical framework for research on the relationships of job resources, including feedback, task variety, and autonomy, with employee engagement (Salanova & Schaufeli, 2008; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Van den Broeck et al., 2008). Accordingly, the following hypothesis was formulated:

H4: Job characteristics are positively associated with employee engagement.

Based on the literature review, two simple mediation models were formulated. Model 1 examined the direct association between job characteristics and job satisfaction and the indirect association through organisational pride. Model 2 applied the same specification with employee engagement as the outcome. The variables were measured at three time points: job satisfaction and employee engagement in April 2024 (T1), job characteristics in July 2024 (T2), and organisational pride in October 2024

(T3), as shown in Figure 1. Because the outcomes were measured before the predictor and mediator, the models are interpreted as estimates of statistical mediation rather than evidence of a temporally ordered causal process.

Figure 1
Conceptual model and timing of measurement



H1: Indirect association with job satisfaction (a × b_1)
H3: Indirect association with employee engagement (a × b_2)

Source: Author's work

Research methodology

Research instrument

The questionnaire consisted of four sections—the first collected demographic information. The second comprised 18 items assessing job characteristics. The third contained six items measuring organisational pride, and the fourth contained five job satisfaction items and nine employee engagement items. All items were rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The instruments were originally developed in English and translated into Croatian for this study.

Job characteristics were measured using selected items from the Work Design Questionnaire, whose full version contains 77 statements covering different aspects of work design. This study used items assessing five motivational job characteristics: skill variety (four items), task identity (four items), task significance (four items), autonomy (three items), and feedback from the job (three items) (Morgeson & Humphrey, 2006).

Organisational pride was assessed with the six-item scale developed by Lee (2016), derived from the Emotional Labour Questionnaire (Guy et al., 2008). Job satisfaction was measured with the five-item Job Satisfaction Index (Brayfield & Rothe, 1951).

Employee engagement was measured with the nine-item Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES), covering vigour, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli et al., 2002).

Data

Data were collected from 308 employees in 15 organisations in Croatia. The same respondents participated in three survey waves separated by three-month intervals. Job satisfaction and employee engagement were measured in April 2024, job characteristics in July 2024, and organisational pride in October 2024. Although the time separation reduces simultaneous measurement of all constructs, the measurement order does not match the hypothesised predictor-mediator-outcome sequence. The analysis therefore does not establish temporal precedence or causality.

Statistical methods

The data were analysed in several steps. We assessed internal consistency using Cronbach's alpha, followed by descriptive analysis. The hypotheses were tested with two simple mediation models using the PROCESS macro for SPSS (Hayes, 2022), with no moderator included. Each model estimated path a (job characteristics to organisational pride), path b (organisational pride to the outcome while controlling for job characteristics), the direct association c', and the indirect association a x b. The statistical significance of the indirect associations was evaluated using 95% bootstrap confidence intervals. Given the timing of measurement, the coefficients are interpreted as associations within the specified mediation model rather than causal effects.

Reliability of the measurement instruments

The instruments were originally developed in English and translated into Croatian. Internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. Values of 0.70 or higher were considered to indicate satisfactory reliability (Nunnally, 1978). As shown in the final column of Table 1, all coefficients exceeded this threshold.

Table 1
Measurement instruments and scale reliability

Study variable		Cronbach's alpha
Job characteristics		
AU1	The job allows me to decide how to schedule my work.	0.914
AU2	The job allows me to make many decisions on my own.	
AU3	The job gives me considerable opportunity for independence and freedom in how I do the work.	
SV1	The job requires me to use a variety of different skills to complete the work.	
SV2	The job requires me to use several different skills.	

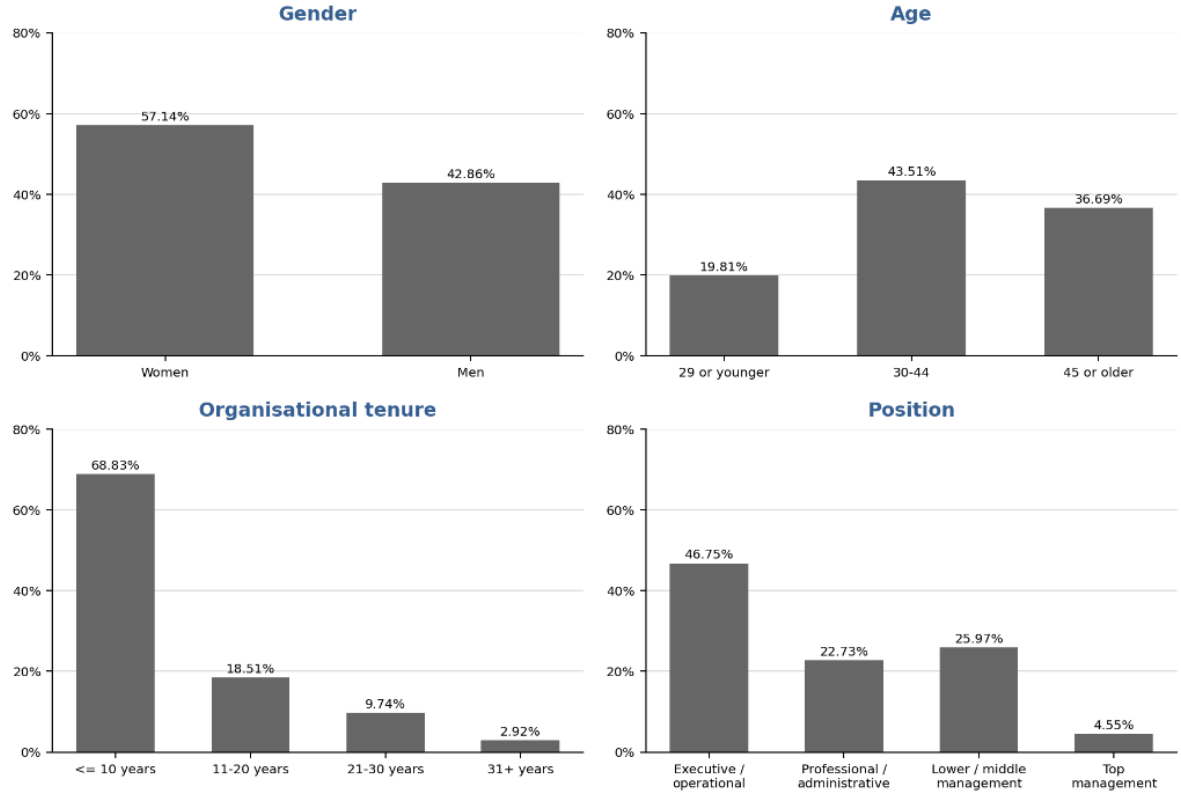
SV3	The job requires the use of complex or high-level skills.	
SV4	The job requires a variety of skills.	
TI1	The job involves completing tasks with a clear beginning and end.	
TI2	The job is arranged so that I can complete an entire piece of work from beginning to end.	
TI3	The job allows me to finish the tasks I begin.	
TI4	The job allows me to complete the work I start.	
TS1	The job has a major impact on people outside the organisation.	
TS2	The job is significant to the wider community.	
TS3	The work performed in this job has a significant impact on people outside the organisation.	
TS4	The results of my work are likely to have a significant effect on other people's lives.	
FB1	The job provides me with information about my work performance.	
FB2	The job itself provides feedback about my work performance.	
FB3	The work activities themselves provide direct and indirect information about the effectiveness of my performance.	
Job satisfaction		
JS1	I feel fairly satisfied with my present job.	
JS2	Most days I am enthusiastic about my job.	
JS3	Each day at work feels like it will never end.	0.787
JS4	I truly enjoy my work.	
JS5	I consider my job rather unpleasant.	
Employee engagement		
EE1	When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work.	0.928
EE2	My job inspires me.	
EE3	At work, I feel strong and vigorous.	
EE4	At work, I feel bursting with energy.	
EE5	I am enthusiastic about my job.	
EE6	I am proud of the work that I do.	
EE7	I feel happy when I am working intensely.	
EE8	I get carried away when I am working.	
EE9	I become completely absorbed in my work.	
Organisational pride		
OP1	My job is interesting.	0.930
OP2	I am proud of the work I do.	
OP3	I do something useful in my job.	
OP4	My job is challenging.	
OP5	I feel that my work makes a difference.	
OP6	My work gives me a sense of personal achievement.	

Results

Figure 2 presents the respondents' demographic characteristics. Women accounted for 57.14% of the sample. The largest age group was 30-44 years, most respondents had

up to 10 years of tenure in their organisation, and 46.75% held executive or operational positions.

Figure 2
Descriptive profile of respondents



Source: Author's work

Table 2 presents descriptive statistics for the individual items. The lowest mean was 3.13 (SD = 1.23) for a task significance item, while the highest was 4.21 (SD = 0.91) for a skill variety item.

Table 2
Descriptive statistics for the observed variables

	N	MIN	MAX	M	SD
AU1	308	1	5	3.62	1.13
AU2	308	1	5	3.44	1.167
AU3	308	1	5	3.63	1.18
SV1	308	1	5	4.21	0.913
SV2	308	1	5	4.2	0.93
SV3	308	1	5	3.94	1.016
SV4	308	1	5	4.12	0.912
TI1	308	1	5	4.14	0.974
TI2	308	1	5	3.84	1.102
TI3	308	1	5	4.05	0.977

TI4	308	1	5	3.99	0.963
TS1	308	1	5	3.36	1.236
TS2	308	1	5	3.33	1.198
TS3	308	1	5	3.24	1.222
TS4	308	1	5	3.13	1.232
FB1	308	1	5	3.54	1.087
FB2	308	1	5	3.53	1.105
FB3	308	1	5	3.54	1.002
JS1	308	1	5	3.7	1.059
JS2	308	1	5	3.18	1.06
JS3	308	1	5	3.4	1.17
JS4	308	1	5	3.56	1.033
JS5	308	1	5	3.98	1.154
EE1	308	1	5	3.32	1.123
EE2	308	1	5	3.33	1.112
EE3	308	1	5	3.35	1.056
EE4	308	1	5	3.15	1.03
EE5	308	1	5	3.45	1.046
EE6	308	1	5	3.79	1.045
EE7	308	1	5	3.78	1.041
EE8	308	1	5	3.79	0.993
EE9	308	1	5	4.08	0.934
OP1	308	1	5	4.08	1.03
OP2	308	1	5	4.03	1.047
OP3	308	1	5	4.19	0.935
OP4	308	1	5	4.19	1.002
OP5	308	1	5	3.86	0.989
OP6	308	1	5	3.91	1.068

Source: Author's work

The hypotheses were tested using two simple mediation models estimated with the PROCESS macro for SPSS (Hayes, 2022). In the first model, job characteristics were the predictor, organisational pride was the mediator, and job satisfaction was the outcome. In the second model, employee engagement was the outcome. Table 3 reports path a, path b, the direct association c', the total association c, and the indirect association a x b. Because the models contain no moderator, the procedure is consistently described as simple mediation analysis.

Table 3
Results of the simple mediation analysis

Statistic	Relationship	Path	JC -> OP -> JS	JC -> OP -> EE	95% bootstrap CI
Total association	X -> Y	c	0.4667*	0.6027*	
Direct association	X -> Y controlling M	c'	0.1389*	0.1873*	
Path a	X -> M	a	0.6611*	0.6611*	
Path b	M -> Y controlling for X	b	0.4959*	0.6284*	
Indirect association	X -> M -> Y	a x b	0.3278*	0.4154*	excludes 0

Note: * p < 0.05. For both indirect effects, the supplied results indicate that the 95% bootstrap confidence interval excluded zero. The numerical lower and upper bounds were not included in the original summary of results.

All estimated associations were positive and statistically significant. The path from job characteristics to organisational pride was a = 0.6611. Organisational pride was positively associated with job satisfaction (b = 0.4959) and employee engagement (b = 0.6284), controlling for job characteristics. The direct associations between job characteristics and job satisfaction (c' = 0.1389) and employee engagement (c' = 0.1873) remained significant. The indirect associations through organisational pride were 0.3278 for job satisfaction and 0.4154 for employee engagement; the supplied results indicate that the corresponding 95% bootstrap confidence intervals excluded zero. The total associations, calculated as c = c' + ab, were 0.4667 and 0.6027, respectively. The findings are consistent with H1-H4 and indicate partial statistical mediation, but they do not establish a causal or temporal sequence.

Discussion

This study provides insight into the direct and indirect associations between job characteristics, organisational pride, and job satisfaction and employee engagement. The findings are consistent with organisational pride statistically mediating these relationships. Job characteristics were positively associated with organisational pride, which in turn was positively associated with both outcomes. The direct associations between job characteristics and the outcomes also remained significant, indicating partial mediation. These findings support H1-H4 at the level of statistical associations. Because job satisfaction and engagement were measured before job characteristics and organisational pride, the results should not be interpreted as evidence that job characteristics temporally precede pride or that pride causes subsequent changes in the outcomes.

The results are consistent with previous studies linking organisational pride with job satisfaction (Anh et al., 2022; Fiernaningsih et al., 2019; Mas-Machuca et al., 2016; Widyanti et al., 2020) and employee engagement (F. Ali et al., 2024). Organisational pride may be viewed as a psychological resource associated with more favourable work attitudes. The findings are also consistent with the Job Characteristics Model, according to which motivating job characteristics are associated with higher job satisfaction (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). However, alternative explanations remain possible: more satisfied and engaged employees may later evaluate their job characteristics more positively and experience greater pride.

For organisational practice, the results suggest paying attention to job design and organisational pride, while avoiding treating the observed associations as established intervention effects. Managers may consider jobs that provide skill variety, significance, autonomy, and clear and constructive feedback. Investment in professional development and recognition of employee contributions may also be relevant to favourable work attitudes. The effectiveness of such measures should be evaluated using prospective or experimental designs.

Conclusion

The findings show that organisational pride statistically mediated the associations of job characteristics with job satisfaction and employee engagement. Both the direct and indirect associations were positive and statistically significant, consistent with partial mediation. The results identify organisational pride as an important construct for understanding the links between work design and employee attitudes. They do not, however, establish that changes in job characteristics cause subsequent changes in pride, satisfaction, or engagement.

The study has several limitations. Employees reported all variables, and the data came from a single source, creating the possibility of common-method bias. More importantly, the timing of measurement did not correspond to the hypothesised mediation sequence: the outcomes were measured before the predictor and mediator. Although the data were collected in three waves, this design does not establish the temporal precedence required for causal interpretation. The sample was drawn from 15 Croatian organisations, which also limits generalisability.

Future research should measure job characteristics before organisational pride and organisational pride before job satisfaction and employee engagement, while controlling for earlier levels of the mediator and outcomes. Studies should also include managerial ratings or objective indicators, such as job performance, and use longer longitudinal, experimental, or quasi-experimental designs. Potential moderators, including organisational culture (Korma et al., 2022; Pejić Bach et al., 2018) and leadership styles (Ismail et al., 2023; Mohamed et al., 2025), could also be examined. Qualitative evidence may deepen understanding of how employees develop organisational pride, while cross-sector and cross-industry comparisons may show where the observed associations are stronger or weaker.

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