

# Organizational compassion, person-organization fit and discretionary behaviours in non-governmental organizations: a moderated model

Predicting  
discretionary  
behaviours

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## Abstract

**Purpose** – The authors proposed that Organizational Compassion and Person-Organization-Fit dimensions interactively predict Discretionary Behaviours among employees in the Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) sector in Uganda.

**Design/methodology/approach** – The authors employ structural equation modelling to test hypotheses. The research was carried out in two studies; the second one was done six months after the first study. Two samples of respondents were drawn from NGOs operating in West Nile and Kampala regions, respectively.

**Findings** – Discretionary behaviours were significantly related to the cross-sectionally assessed predictors including organizational compassion and supplementary fit. Complementary fit did not significantly predict discretionary behaviours. Both supplementary fit and complementary fit moderated the association between organizational compassion and employee discretionary behaviours among both rural and urban setting placed NGOs.

**Practical implications** – In order to boost employee exhibition of discretionary behaviours, leaders of NGOs should always endeavour to find viable organizational compassion-supplementary fit and organizational compassion-complementary fit blend that can add value to NGOs in Uganda.

**Originality/value** – This is one of the few studies that have focused on testing the interaction effects of organizational compassion and person organization fit dimensions on discretionary behaviours. These results highlight both supplementary fit and complementary fit as key individual resources that promote the effects of organization compassion on discretionary behaviours among NGO workers in Uganda.

**Keywords** Interaction effect, Organizational compassion, Person-organization fit, Discretionary behaviours, Non-governmental organizations (NGOs)

**Paper type** Research paper

## 1. Introduction

Employees are a foundation for competitive advantage for any institution (Clark, 1997), thus the necessity to exploit their extra-role performance in order to ensure institutional endurance. Today, institutions are ever more mindful of extra-role performance; referred to as



discretionary behaviours because they play a crucial function in increasing institutional performance (Saoula *et al.*, 2018). In order to attain their goals, institutions should not only hire workers who are just compassionate but equally able to exhibit discretionary behaviours (Francis *et al.*, 2018). Hiring compassionate employees is principally fundamental for organizations (Katherine and Kurt, 2020) such as the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) as they are now entangled in a predicament of serving vulnerable persons. Under such circumstances, organizational compassion becomes a foundation of organizational success (Lown *et al.*, 2020) such as in NGOs.

Compassion is the state induced by another person's suffering "a painful emotion" that one person experiences for another (Nussbaum, 1996). Organizational compassion refers to a dynamic process or a set of subprocesses that may be found both in individuals and collectivities. It exists when members of a system collectively notice, feel and respond to pain experienced by members of that system. These subprocesses become collective when they are legitimated within an organization context and propagated among organizational members (April *et al.*, 2013). This hence forces incisive managers in organizations (NGOs not excluded) to devote their efforts to organizational compassion acts among their employees (Ko and Choi, 2020). In fact, organizations such as NGOs are reaping success in their endeavours through their efforts to generate, promote and mobilize support for employee exhibition of discretionary behaviours. They do this through the building of compassionate acts like collective noticing, collective feeling and collective responding (Ko and Choi, 2020). Undoubtedly, the ability to succeed in the NGO sector is anchored on an appropriate human resource function; rendering it imperative for current researchers to identify the building blocks to discretionary behaviours (Kasekende, 2017). To the best of the researchers' knowledge, quite few studies have explored elements that impact discretionary behaviours in the current NGO sector, particularly in developing countries like Uganda (National Bureau of NGOs, 2019). This study capitalizes on organizational compassion and person-organization-fit as key precursors of discretionary behaviours in the NGO sector in Uganda.

First, Uganda has suffered from a number of natural and man-made catastrophes particularly civil wars (Abaho *et al.*, 2019). In the recent past, wars within the country have led to internal displacement of people. Furthermore, the wars from both internally in Uganda and externally from neighbouring countries such as South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) (Abaho *et al.*, 2019) and other catastrophes such as famine and disease have led people from those countries to seek safe haven in Uganda. This has created a toll on the economic development of the country in terms of space, provision of food, water, sanitation and medicine (Abaho *et al.*, 2019). These challenges necessitated the assistance from NGOs both locally and internationally to augment government efforts. The NGOs have done a lot of good work. There are many NGOs actively assisting displaced persons in West Nile region (Human Security Report Project, 2011). West Nile, a rural setting lies in the north-west of Uganda and borders South Sudan and Eastern DRC; countries that have suffered from many civil wars rendering people to leave their areas and seek refuge in the relatively peaceful West Nile (Branch, 2010). Over 1,700 NGO employees (National Bureau of NGOs, 2019) are also active in the Ugandan capital city Kampala; an urban setting where many refugees from nations such as Somalia, South Sudan and DRC have settled in search of peace and employment (Enzama, 2015). The work of caring for refugees is not only tedious but also creates moral pain on the part of the employee. These employees break down and require compassionate acts. Therefore, studying how compassionate tendencies affect them, adds value to their contribution to alleviating the problems of a suffering society. Second, the government expense on these people affected by the catastrophes is expected to reduce and the government will instead redirect such money into developmental projects such as road and energy infrastructure. Nonetheless, whereas the NGO sector features strongly in the alleviation of suffering of displaced persons, the sector has remained less exploited (National Bureau of NGOs, 2019; SDP, 2017). Unquestionably, the sector

has great prospective to accomplish better goals, but the foremost challenge appears to revolve around inability of employees to exhibit discretionary behaviours. This challenge may be attributed to person-organizational misfit (Wojtczuk-Turek and Turek, 2016) and uncompassionate acts among employees.

In comparison with other developed and developing countries, employees (Uganda and particularly the NGO sector not excluded) seem to lack compassionate acts. Employees such as in NGOs seem not to fit in the jobs they occupy (Wojtczuk-Turek and Turek, 2016). Such limitations have transformed into detrimental outcomes including the inability to exhibit discretionary tendencies like helping, civic virtue, being courteous, sportsmanship and conscientiousness (Meynhardt *et al.*, 2020). Additionally, disheartening is the fact that many managers in developing countries like Ugandan NGOs seem to neglect the significance of both compassionate acts such as collective noticing, collective feeling and collective responding (Tanwar and Kumar, 2019), and person-organization-fit such as supplementary fit and complementary fit (Kwon and Kang, 2019). Such inability for managers to exploit the advantages of compassionate acts (Tanwar and Kumar, 2019) and person-organization-fit (Kwon and Kang, 2019) has created adverse effect on performance outcomes like employee exhibition of discretionary behaviours. This observation is maintained by many researchers who aver that advancing organizational compassion acts (Tanwar and Kumar, 2019) and person-organization-fit endeavours (Kwon and Kang, 2019) in organizations yields a wealth of affirmative upshots. Moreover, both compassionate acts and person-organization-fit can allow a widespread range of results including exhibition of discretionary acts (Meynhardt *et al.*, 2020).

Accordingly, this study centres on employee-based organizational compassion acts namely collective noticing, collective feeling and collective responding (Rego and Cunha, 2008) as key antecedents of discretionary behaviours (Organ, 1988) with person-organization-fit i.e. supplementary fit and complementary fit (Piasentin and Chapman, 2007) as a moderator. Presently, whilst discretionary behaviours as a concept has received some attention in managerial enquiry, the researchers' appreciation of how it manifests in NGO manoeuvres is still emergent, principally concerning the interactive nature of its precursors. There exist numerous suggestions for additional scholarships so as to offer more refreshing approaches particularly to the voluntary organizations sector, mainly on the building blocks of discretionary behaviours in various settings (Kasekende, 2017). This study demonstrates the researchers' acquaintance in this area by exploring the interactive nature of organizational compassion (Rego and Cunha, 2008), and both supplementary and complementary fit (Piasentin and Chapman, 2007) on the under-investigated variable, discretionary behaviours (Organ, 1988) in a developing country's outlook.

In this paper, the authors employ quantitative substantiation from NGOs operating in Uganda, to provide a modest contribution by examining the interactive nature of organizational compassion and the two person-organization-fit dimensions on discretionary behaviours. Consequently, an interactive model of organizational compassion-supplementary fit and organizational compassion-complementary fit on discretionary behaviours is proposed.

This study is organized into four parts. Initially, the authors provide a brief overview of the study and contribution of the study. Part two is the theoretical perspective and literature review on previous studies on organizational compassion, person-organization fit and discretionary behaviours, and the development of hypotheses. The third part presents the methodology, testing the hypotheses and interpreting the findings. The last part presents the discussion, conclusion, implications, limitations and suggestions for future investigation.

## 2. Theoretical perspective, literature review and development of hypotheses

### 2.1 Theoretical underpinnings of the study

The authors hinge this study on the Social Exchange Theory (SET) as postulated by Blau (1964) to explain the practice in the association between organizational compassion and

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person-organization-fit, and discretionary behaviours. The SET assumes that human relationships are essential for survival and that individuals engage in interaction to satisfy their needs (Blau, 1964; Homans, 1958). The social exchange theoretical perspective explains social structure as a process of negotiated exchanges between parties founded on the expectation that actions will result in a proportionate return, and that human relationships are formed by the use of a subjective cost-benefit analysis and the comparison of alternatives (Homans, 1958). In this study, the assumption is that employment relationship is an exchange mechanism in which the employer provides a conducive environment in terms of organizational compassion and person-organization-fit arrangements for the employee in the NGO sector to exhibit discretionary behaviours at the workplace. According to Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005), the theory is moored on the principle of reciprocity, implying that one party's conduct is reliant upon the other party's actions. Consequently, the authors argue that discretionary behaviours emerge from an interaction of the perceptions of employees on the existing organizational compassion and person-job-fit practices at the workplace. The authors hence postulate that when employees perceive appropriate organizational compassion practices and both fair supplementary fit and complementary fit arrangements in the work environment, they develop a sense of concern and hence reciprocate to the organization by exhibiting discretionary tendencies such as helping or civic virtue.

The authors hence theorized the study based on the following model.

The authors now turn to the review of the current literature.

### *2.2 Organizational compassion and discretionary behaviours*

This study theorizes organizational compassion as a precursor to discretionary behaviours (Baverstock and Finlay, 2016). Thomas *et al.* (2019) highlight the role played by individual-associated attitudes to help those in problems and associate them with the exhibition of discretionary behaviours. According to Ho *et al.* (2017), both men and women, who are satisfied with the relationship that they have with the organization, tend to show willingness to contribute to the organization by displaying discretionary behaviours. But Henshall *et al.* (2018) have found an association between satisfaction at the workplace and compassion. This may imply that since compassion is a result of satisfaction and causes discretionary behaviours, definitely a link exists between compassion and discretionary behaviours. This is supported by several previous studies that have shown a positive association between compassion and discretionary behaviours (Baverstock and Finlay, 2016). Baverstock and Finlay (2016) argue that compassion is instinctive in human beings and hence creates a deep awareness of the suffering of another individual, coupled with the wish to relieve it; this wish being a discretionary helpful act. Similarly, when compassion is propagated among organizational members, organizations are better able to learn so they obtain a competitive advantage that is difficult to imitate; which in turn leads to higher firm performance outcomes such as discretionary behaviours (Guinot *et al.*, 2020). Compassion as experienced by members within an organization is manifested as acts of responding to not only the mental but also the physical suffering experienced by members (Ko and Choi, 2020). Of late, Thomas *et al.* (2019) have established a positive and significant connection between organizational compassion and work performance-related outcomes like discretionary work behaviours. In their study of nurses, MacClelland *et al.* (2018) state that compassion practices are significantly and negatively associated with nurses' emotional exhaustion and positively associated with nurses' psychological vitality. Psychological vitality is a positive performance outcome [like discretionary behaviours] of organizational compassion. The above works and others prove that organizational compassion assumes a critical precursor role to discretionary behaviours at the workplace. Nonetheless, whereas extant literature suggests discretionary behaviours to have received some attention, its development is still nascent as an emerging employee–employer concept (Kasekende, 2017), more so in voluntary

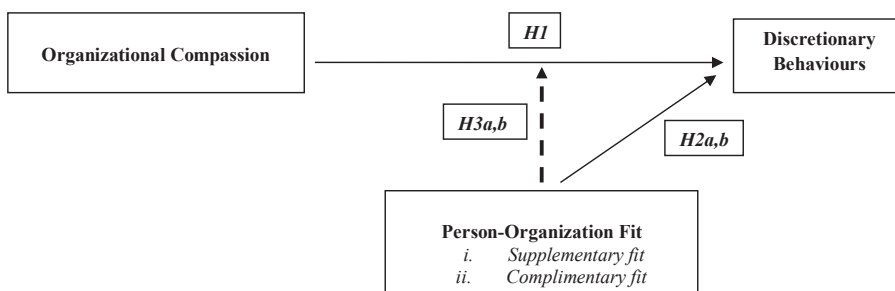
organizations sector such as NGOs. This gap hence calls for supplementary enquiry to improve our conceptualization of the yet to be known, especially regarding its vital precursors. Besides, given the dearth of discretionary frameworks, data and material ambiguities and absence of adequate empirical evidence for the NGO sector, there is a need for more context-specific studies to validate the existing assumptions (see Figure 1).

The authors hence hypothesize the following:

*H1.* Organizational compassion will be positively correlated with employee discretionary behaviours.

### 2.3 Person-organization fit and discretionary behaviours

For purposes of performance and its aftermaths, practitioners in the voluntary organizations sector have broadly espoused and applied attractive employee–employer relationship practices (Meynhardt *et al.*, 2020). Ideally, it is regularly testified in the current literature that person-organization-fit in the form of supplementary fit and complementary fit can help drive employee exhibition of discretionary behaviours (Memon, 2018). In this study, the authors explore the effect of these two dimensions of person-organization-fit on exhibition of discretionary behaviours among employees working in the NGO sector in Uganda. Complementary fit occurs when a person or the organization provides attributes that the other party needs; for example, the person may have skills needed by the organization (Khaola and Sebotsa, 2015). Under complementary fit, the organization and the individual contribute to the fulfilment of the needs of the other. Complementary fit can further be divided into need supplies fit (an organization fulfils the needs of an individual) and demands-abilities fit (the characteristics of the individual fulfil the needs of the organization) (Khaola and Sebotsa, 2015). Conversely, supplementary fit occurs when a person and organization are similar in fundamental characteristics (Khaola and Sebotsa, 2015). For supplementary fit to exist, the organization and the individual must share similar characteristics. Supplementary fit is achieved when individuals possess characteristics that are similar to other individuals in an organization, i.e. when both the individual and the organization are similar (Kilroy *et al.*, 2016). Consequently, there are certain values that the individual carries over into his or her role, certain values that the organization imposes and certain values that the two share. The extent to which the role-related values of the organization and those of the individual are shared indicates the degree of the individual’s “fit” with the organization. Khaola and Sebotsa (2015) found both supplementary and complementary fit to enable employees to help the organization because they integrate their self-concept with the organization and hence consider the success of the organization as their own achievement. Indeed, according to Wojtczuk-Turek and Turek (2016), individuals that perceive a strong sense of both



**Figure 1.**  
The organizational  
compassion – person-  
organization fit –  
discretionary  
behaviour model

Source(s): Literature review

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supplementary and complementary fit with their employing organization tend to be good organizational citizens by regularly engaging in discretionary behaviours that benefit both workers and the firm. Seminal works by [Mitonga-Monga and Cilliers \(2016\)](#) have found employee perceptions of high ethical leadership (such as appropriately fitting employees in the organization) to translate into willingness to engage in positive behaviours such as in this case helping, courteousness and public virtue. [Kwon and Kang \(2019\)](#) found an association between supplementary fit and complementary fit and reduced turnover intentions; an implication that the employees were satisfied with the organizational arrangements hence able to exhibit performance and performance outcomes such as discretionary behaviours. [Kwon and Kang \(2019\)](#) argue that willingness to engage in discretionary behaviours is a function of increased practices in person-organization-fit. However, the exhibition of discretionary behaviours may be unsuccessful unless employers engage in identifying appropriate person-organization-fit practices, suggesting that the employees' decision to engage in discretionary tendencies is determined by several factors. In this study, the authors focus on two associations, namely (1) the extent to which supplementary fit affects discretionary behaviours and (2) the extent to which complementary fit affects discretionary behaviours. Thus, the authors hypothesize as follows:

- H2a.* Supplementary Fit will be positively related to exhibition of discretionary behaviours.
- H2b.* Complementary Fit will be positively related to exhibition of discretionary behaviours.

#### *2.4 The moderator role of person-organization fit*

Of late, research has moved from demonstrating the association between antecedent variables such as organizational compassion or supplementary fit or complementary fit (singularly) and performance outcomes such as discretionary behaviours, towards examining the combined interplay of such antecedent variables on given outcome variables. However, not many studies have examined supplementary fit or complementary fit as moderators of antecedent-outcome variables association. The few studies where the moderator role of person organization fit has been studied include, for example, [Tanwar and Kumar \(2019\)](#) who studied the moderating role of person organization fit on relationship between work culture and employer of choice and that of diversity and employer of choice. Nonetheless, [Tanwar and Kumar \(2019\)](#) studied person-organization-fit as a global variable, and not its distinct dimensions. On the other hand, [Kooij and Boon \(2018\)](#) found person-organization fit to moderate the association between high-performance work practices and affective commitment. Still [Kooij and Boon \(2018\)](#) studied person-organization-fit as a universal variable, and not its discrete measures. In the same study, [Kooij and Boon \(2018\)](#) verified the moderating effect of person organization fit (as an overall variable and not its specific factors) on the career stage-affective commitment association. None of these studies has tested the moderator role of supplementary fit and complementary fit in the association between organizational compassion and discretionary behaviours. Already, extant literature has provided an association between organizational compassion and performance-related outcomes though not yet discretionary behaviours ([Baverstock and Finlay, 2016](#)). Similarly, several studies have provided a link between person-organization fit (globally) and performance-related outcomes like discretionary behaviours ([Kwon and Kang, 2019](#)). Yet according to [Friedrich \(1982\)](#) in instances where two or more variables predict a criterion variable, the researcher must suspect an interaction effect. Given that no study appears to have tested the organizational compassion-supplementary fit and organizational compassion-complementary fit association with discretionary behaviours, the authors hence hypothesize as follows:

- H3a. The influence of Organizational Compassion on Discretionary Behaviours will vary with the level of Supplementary Fit.
- H3b. The influence of Organizational Compassion on Discretionary Behaviours will vary with the level of Complementary Fit.

### 3. Methods

#### 3.1 Study 1

3.1.1 *Research design and participants.* In the first study, the researchers obtained data from West Nile Region [a rural setting] in Uganda. West Nile was identified because it's one of the remote rural areas where there has been an influx of displaced people both internally and from the neighbouring countries creating necessity for NGOs to come in. West Nile borders South Sudan and DRC, where there have been a number of civil wars resulting in displacement of people. The researchers identified NGOs and approached the officers in charge of staffing to assist in the distribution and collection of completed questionnaires.

The researchers measured organizational compassion in terms of collective noticing, collective feeling and collective responding using a scale developed by [Rego and Cunha \(2008\)](#). Organizational compassion was measured at individual level. The study adopted items such as “*employees in this organization are concerned about each other's wellbeing*”. Discretionary behaviours were measured using an instrument developed by [Organ \(1988\)](#). The tool had items such as “*I help others who have heavy work load*”. To measure Person Organization Fit, the researchers adopted [Piasentin and Chapman \(2007\)](#) tool. The tool had items such as “*My skills and abilities match the skills and abilities this company looks for in coworkers*”. The variables were scored on a 7- point Likert scale.

To identify the actual respondents per NGO, the researchers used a two-stage sampling procedure. First, the study applied proportionate stratified random sampling to arrive at how many questionnaires to administer to the targeted NGO. The NGO with the largest number of staff got more questionnaires than the one with less staff. Second, the authors applied simple random sampling to select the respondents from each NGO. The researchers used a table of random numbers to pick the required number of respondents from each NGO following alphabetical order. The researchers based the selection criterion on the length of the largest numbers on the population list. They selected digits in groups of two and three for the numbers that were in tens and hundreds, respectively. Consistent with rules of sampling, the researchers only selected cases from the list for the sample which corresponded with the identified number from the table. Using this process, the researchers ignored all repeated numbers and numbers that were not on the population list. The researchers continued this process until they obtained the required sample size of 242.

3.1.2 *Control of common methods bias (CMB).* Consistent with [Podsakoff et al. \(2003\)](#), the authors controlled for CMB and hence common methods variance by applying both procedural and statistical techniques. Subsequently, the authors reduced measurement errors (random and systematic) that usually affect the validity and conclusions about the relationships between measures ([Podsakoff et al., 2003](#)). In developing the questionnaire, the authors incorporated negatively worded or *reverse-coded* items ([Hinkin, 1998](#)). The aim of such items was to act as cognitive speed bumps in an effort to reduce the respondents from automatically answering the questions but to rather engage them to respond to the items in a more controlled manner. The authors also used different scale anchors like *Disagree completely without any doubt* to mean an anchor of 1 and *Agree most of the time* to mean an anchor of 7 for some variables; while for other variables the authors used *This is extremely untrue* to mean an anchor of 1 and *This is extremely true* to mean an anchor of 7. In terms of statistical remedy, exploratory factor analysis ([Podsakoff and Organ, 1986](#)) yielded many

factors from each of the variables of study without any single factor emerging to account for more than half the variance in the variables; implying there was absence of considerable quantity of common method variance in the study. A review of Haman's single factor test established minimal method bias for it extracted 23 factors (eigenvalues greater than 1; total variance 76.858) where the first factor (11.929%) did not explain majority of the variance.

**3.1.3 Demographic characteristics.** The employee in the NGO was the unit of analysis. Of a population of 667 NGO employees (National Bureau of NGOs, 2019) across the West Nile region, a sample of 242 was derived (Krejcie and Morgan, 1970). Out of the 231 questionnaires collected, 216 were identified as useable making a response rate of 89%.

**3.1.4 Validity and reliability.** As guided by Anderson and Gerbing (1988), the authors followed a two-step approach, i.e. first, they used AMOS (version 18.0) to conduct a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). The researchers conducted a CFA to either confirm or reject the researchers' preconceived theory on the items that measure the study variables (Hair *et al.*, 1998). The items that provided fit for the CFA model are the ones that were retained. Second, the authors constructed a Structural Equation Model (SEM) to test the hypotheses developed from literature review (Jöreskog and Sörbom, 2005). Consistent with Schermeller-Engel *et al.* (2003), the cut-off points of indices for acceptability of model fit were at  $\geq 0.90$  for the Tucker–Lewis Index, the Normed Fit Index and the Goodness of Fit Index; at  $\leq 0.08$  for the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation and at  $\geq 0.5$  for both the  $\chi^2$  and Average Variance Extracted (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). The CFA results revealed acceptable model fit for all the measurement models.

Convergent validity was measured using normed fit index (NFI). The NFI indices (not shown) for all the variables were above 0.90 indicating strong convergent validity (Hair *et al.*, 1998). Discriminant validity was established by comparing the average variance expected (AVE) and the square of the coefficient(s) of correlation(s). The results indicate that the constructs' AVEs were greater than the CFA-squared latent correlations (Table 1), thus indicating the measurement scales' ability to discriminate between measures that are supposed to be distinct (Farrell, 2010). The observed multiple regressions (standardized coefficients) for all the variables were all above 0.5 (Bollen, 1987) indicating item reliability.

Variable	AVE	SF*CF	SF*OC	SF*DB	CF*OC	CF*DB	OC*DB
Squared latent correlations		0.107	0.108	0.072	0.076	0.060	0.109
SF	0.799						
CF	0.713						
OC	0.769						
DB	0.698						

**Table 1.**  
Discriminant validity

**Note(s):** DB – Discretionary Behaviours; OC – Organizational Compassion; SF – Supplementary Fit; CF – Complementary Fit

**Table 2.**  
Descriptive statistics, validity, reliability and zero-order correlations among research variables (Study 1 – West Nile)

Variable	AVE	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4
Organizational compassion (1)	0.799	5.36	0.96	<i>0.874</i>			
Supplementary fit (2)	0.713	5.50	0.75	0.328**	<i>0.738</i>		
Complementary fit (3)	0.769	5.54	0.77	0.276**	0.327**	<i>0.810</i>	
Discretionary behaviours (4)	0.698	5.70	0.68	0.330**	0.268**	0.245**	<i>0.738</i>

**Note(s):** \*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)  
The diagonals represent the reliability statistics



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Similarly, for reliability, the Cronbach's alpha statistics for all variables were above 0.7 (Nunnally, 1978) (Table 2).

**3.1.5 Descriptive statistics.** The summary descriptive statistics for organizational compassion, person organization fit dimensions and discretionary behaviours are presented in Table 2. In comparison to the mean, the standard deviations range from 0.68 to 0.96. The petite standard deviations in relation to the mean values illustrate a closeness of the data points to the means – suggesting the mean represents the data observed (Field, 2009).

**3.1.6 Correlations.** Table 2 shows that discretionary behaviours are significantly and positively associated with supplementary fit, complementary fit and organizational compassion. Additionally, organizational compassion is also significantly and positively associated with both supplementary fit and complementary fit. These initial results propose two noteworthy messages. First, when positive changes happen in the organizational compassion, supplementary fit and complementary fit, there is a likelihood that positive changes also happen in discretionary behaviours.

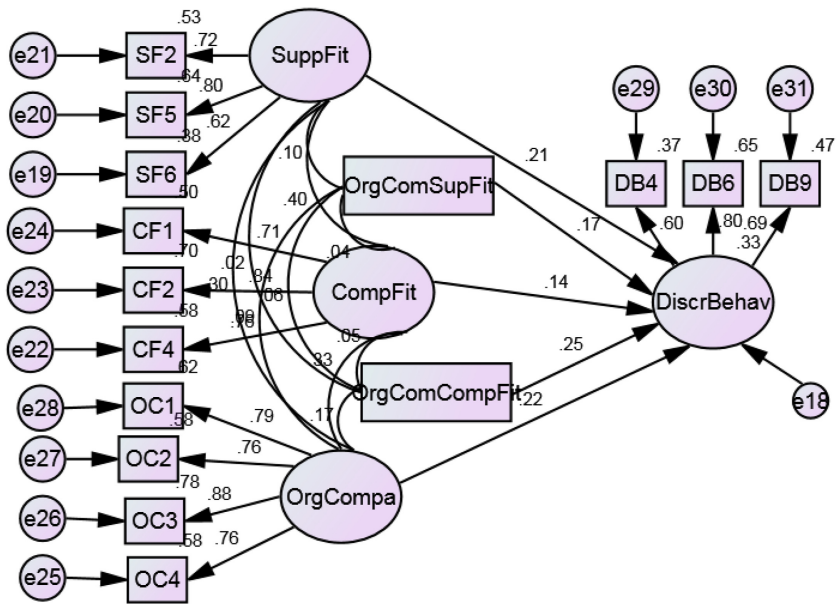
**3.1.7 Structural equation modelling.** The authors constructed several nested SEMs to test both the direct relationships and the moderation effects. First, the authors entered organizational compassion alone to predict discretionary behaviours. In the second model, the authors added supplementary fit to organizational compassion to predict discretionary behaviours. In the third model, the authors added complementary fit to both organizational compassion and supplementary fit to predict discretionary behaviours. In the fourth model, the authors added the interactive term (organizational compassion\* supplementary fit) to organizational compassion, supplementary fit and complementary fit to predict discretionary behaviours. In the fifth model, the authors added the interactive term (organizational compassion\*complementary fit) to organizational compassion, supplementary fit, complementary fit and organizational compassion\*supplementary fit to predict discretionary behaviours. Model 5 is presented in Figure 2. The results of all the five models are shown in Table 3. The authors tested the hypotheses developed using the results of Model 5 (Table 4).

To establish the significance of the moderation results, the authors performed bootstrapping by requesting 5,000 samples with bias-corrected confidence interval (CI) at 99%. The authors used a bootstrap approximation by constructing two-sided bias-corrected CIs for each of the associations. The bootstrap results are provided in Table 5.

**3.1.8 Interpretation of results.** Results indicate that OrgCompa is a positive and significant predictor of DiscrBehav ( $\beta = 0.224$ , CR > 1.96) (Table 4). The bootstrap results confirm this significance since the significance level is at  $p < 0.05$  and that “zero” does not lie between the lower and upper bounds (Table 5). This implies that H1 which states “Organizational compassion will be positively correlated with employee discretionary behaviours” has been supported. Positive variations in OrgCompa may result in positive variations in DiscrBehav.

Results also indicate that SuppFit is a positive and significant predictor of DiscrBehav ( $\beta = 0.211$ , CR > 1.96) (Table 4). The bootstrap results confirm this significance since the significance level is at  $p < 0.05$  and that “zero” does not lie between the lower and upper bounds (Table 5). This implies that H2a which states “Supplementary fit will be positively correlated with employee discretionary behaviours” has been supported. Positive changes in SuppFit may result in positive variations in DiscrBehav.

Conversely, results in Table 4 indicate that although CompFit is a positive predictor of DiscrBehav ( $\beta = 0.138$ , CR < 1.96), its prediction is non-significant. The bootstrap results attest to this insignificance since the significance level is at  $p > 0.05$  and that “zero” lies between the lower and upper bounds (Table 5). This implies that H2b which states “Complementary fit will be positively correlated with employee discretionary behaviours” has been rejected. Hence, positive changes in CompFit may not result in positive variations in DiscrBehav.



CMIN=128.229; df=77; p=0.000; CMIN/df=1.665;  
 GFI=0.928; AGFI=0.888; NFI=0.992; TLI=0.935;  
 CFI=0.952; RMSEA=0.056; SMC=.328

SuppFit: Supplementary Fit  
 CompFit: Complementary Fit  
 OrgCompa=Organizational Compassion  
 DiscrBehav=Discretionary Behaviours

OrgComSupFit-Interaction Term for OrgCompa and SuppFit  
 OrgComComFit: Interaction term for OrgCompa and CompFit

**Figure 2.**  
 SEM testing for  
 interaction effect –  
 Study 1 – West Nile

Results in [Table 3](#) indicate that the Squared Multiple Correlations (SMC) in Model 1 OrgComp (SMC = 0.152); Model 2 OrgCompa and SuppFit (SMC = 0.223); Model 3 OrgCompa, SuppFit and CompFit (SMC = 0.235); Model 4 OrgCompa, SuppFit, CompFit and OrgCompa\*SuppFit (SMC = 0.272) and Model 5 OrgCompa, SuppFit, CompFit, OrgCompa\*SuppFit and OrgCompa\*CompFit (SMC = 0.328) of the exogenous variables on – DiscrBehav varied at an increasing rate. Additionally, the predictive potential of the interactive term (OrgCompa\*SuppFit) on the endogenous term DiscrBehav is significant ( $\beta = 0.174$ , CR > 1.96) ([Table 4](#)). The bootstrap results corroborate this significance ([Table 5](#)). Undoubtedly, these results proffer sufficient confirmation that [H3a](#) which states that “*The influence of organizational compassion on discretionary behaviours will vary with the level of supplementary fit*” is supported. Consistent with [Friedrich \(1982\)](#), the SEM used to test the hypothesis implies that the contribution of OrgCompa is dependent on the contribution of SuppFit in explaining DiscrBehav among employees in NGOs in Uganda.

Variable	$\chi^2$	df	<i>p</i>	$\chi^2/df$	GFI	AGFI	NFI	TLI	CFI	RMSEA	SMC
Cut-off	>5			<3	>0.900	>0.850	>0.900	>0.900	>0.900	<0.08	
OC	23,273	13	0.039	1.790	0.968	0.931	0.962	0.972	0.983	0.061	0.152
OC and SF	46,223	32	0.050	1.444	0.960	0.931	0.914	0.977	0.982	0.046	0.223
OC, SF and CF	84,100	59	0.018	1.425	0.945	0.914	0.924	0.968	0.976	0.045	0.235
OC, SF, CF and OC*SF	103,797	68	0.003	1.526	0.937	0.903	0.909	0.967	0.966	0.050	0.272
OC, SF, CF, OC*SF and OC*CF	128,229	77	0.000	1.665	0.928	0.888	0.992	0.935	0.952	0.056	0.328

**Note(s):** OC – Organizational Compassion; SF – Supplementary Fit; CF – Complementary Fit; OC\*SF – Interaction term for Organizational Compassion and Supplementary Fit; OC\*CF – Interaction term for Organizational Compassion and Complementary Fit; SMC – Squared Multiple Correlations

**Table 3.**  
Fit indices for the  
several nested models  
– Study 1 – West Nile

Additionally, for H3b, there is a varied increase in the SMC of the exogenous variables on the endogenous variable. Furthermore, the predictive potential of the interactive term (OrgCompa\*CompFit) on DiscrBehav is significant ( $\beta = 0.254$ , CR > 1.96) (Table 4). Similarly, the bootstrap results corroborate this significance (Table 5). Indisputably, these results extend adequate validation that H3b which states that “*The influence of organizational compassion on discretionary behaviours will vary with the level of complementary fit*” is supported.

### 3.2 Study 2

**3.2.1 Measurement and participants.** The second study was carried out after six months from the first study. It was carried out in Kampala District, a district where still many displaced people flock. Kampala is the capital city of Uganda; hence an urban setting. The researchers’ aim was to validate the results of the first study [see similar validated cross-sectional studies by Bundred *et al.* (2001)]. The researchers adopted the same questionnaire with the same measurements as in the first study. Similar modus operandi as those in Study 1 were used to come up with the sample size, approach NGOs in Kampala District, distribute and collect the questionnaires, and test for CMB and CMV, validity, reliability and analyze the data.

Of a population of 1,740 NGO employees (National Bureau of NGOs, 2019) across the district, a sample of 317 was derived (Krejcie and Morgan, 1970). Out of the 298 questionnaires collected, 239 were identified as useable making an 80.2% response rate.

**3.2.2 Validity and reliability.** The authors followed the same steps as in Study 1 to establish validity and reliability. The CFA results revealed acceptable model fit for all the measurement models.

**3.2.3 Descriptive statistics.** The small SDs relative to the mean values exemplified a nearness of the data points to the means.

**3.2.4 Correlations.** There were significant and positive associations between supplementary fit, complementary fit, organizational compassion and discretionary behaviours.

	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label	Standardized estimates
DiscrBehav ← OrgCompa	0.157	0.060	2.612	0.009	par_11	0.224
DiscrBehav ← CompFit	0.114	0.075	1.525	0.127	par_12	0.138
DiscrBehav ← SuppFit	0.190	0.091	2.094	0.036	par_13	0.211
DiscrBehav ← OrgCom*SuppFit	0.102	0.043	2.405	0.016	par_15	0.174
DiscrBehav ← OrgCom*CompFit	0.182	0.053	3.428	***	par_16	0.254

**Note(s):** DiscrBehav – Discretionary Behaviours; OrgCompa – Organizational Compassion; SuppFit – Supplementary Fit; CompFit – Complementary Fit; OrgCom\*SuppFit – Interaction term for Organizational Compassion and Supplementary Fit; OrgCom\*CompFit – Interaction term for Organizational Compassion and Complementary Fit

**Table 4.**  
Paths analysis for  
Study 1 – West Nile

Parameter	Lower	Upper	p
DiscrBehav ← OrgCompa	0.047	0.393	0.037
DiscrBehav ← CompFit	−0.073	0.339	0.259
DiscrBehav ← SuppFit	0.051	0.427	0.046
DiscrBehav ← OrgCom*SuppFit	0.044	0.328	0.026
DiscrBehav ← OrgCom*CompFit	0.095	0.412	0.008

**Table 5.**  
Bootstrap results for  
Study 1 – West Nile

*3.2.5 Structural equation modelling.* The authors followed similar steps as in the first study, i.e. to construct several nested SEMs and test both the direct relationships and the moderation effects. The authors applied bootstrapping to test the significance of the results. Except for the CompFit and DiscrBehav association, the bootstrap results indicated a significance level at  $p < 0.05$  and that “zero” was out of the range between the lower and upper bounds.

*3.2.6 Interpretation of results.* OrgCompa significantly predicts DiscrBehav ( $\beta = 0.228$ ,  $CR > 1.96$ ). SuppFit significantly predicts DiscrBehav ( $\beta = 0.272$ ,  $CR > 1.96$ ). The bootstrap results indicated the significance since the significance level was at  $p > 0.05$  and that “zero” did not lie between the lower and upper bounds. The implication is that H1 and H2 were supported. Contrariwise, while CompFit positively predicted DiscrBehav ( $\beta = 0.160$ ,  $CR < 1.96$ ), its prediction was non-significant. The bootstrap results attest to this insignificance given the significance level was at  $p > 0.05$  and that “zero” lay between the lower and upper bounds. H2b was rejected. In the various nested SEMs, the predictive potential of the exogenous variables on the endogenous variable varied at a cumulative proportion. The SMC in Model 1 (SMC = 0.182); Model 2 (SMC = 0.266); Model 3 (SMC = 0.282); Model 4 (SMC = 0.312) and Model 5 (SMC = 0.377) confirmed this effect. Besides, the predictive potential of the interactive term (OrgCompa\*SuppFit) on DiscrBehav was significant ( $\beta = 0.615$ ,  $CR > 1.96$ ). The bootstrap results corroborated this significance. Indisputably, these results extend satisfactory validation that H3a was supported. Regarding H3b, there was a varied increase in the SMC of the exogenous variables on the endogenous variable; similarly, the predictive potential of the interactive term (OrgCompa\*CompFit) on the endogenous variable (DiscrBehav) was significant ( $\beta = 0.810$ ,  $CR > 1.96$ ). Correspondingly, the bootstrap results substantiated this significance. Incontrovertibly, these results extend sufficient justification that H3b was accepted.

Generally, Study 2 provides similar findings to Study 1.

## 4. Discussion, conclusion, implications, limitations and suggestions for future studies

### 4.1 Discussion

The study sought to test the association between organizational compassion and discretionary behaviours. The findings attest to earlier scholars' findings such as Baverstock and Finlay (2016) whose study found organizational compassion to significantly predict discretionary behaviours. The findings imply that among NGO staff, changes that occur in collective noticing, collective feeling and collective responding may lead to positive changes in the exhibition of employee discretionary behaviours. The study affirms that when employees in NGOs freely disclose their challenges to colleagues without fear or embarrassment, this in turn results in the exhibition of discretionary behaviours such as helping colleagues or involvement in virtues that promote the organization. In this study, the authors affirm that the tendency for employees in NGOs to get involved in extra-role behaviours is usually a result of both perceptions that their skills and abilities match the skills and abilities their organizations look for in employees, and the employees being sensitive about the character of others. The findings have implications for the SET in that they extend the debate on the principle of reciprocity which argues that one party's conduct is reliant upon the other party's actions. In this study, high-quality connections portray a strong relationship between members of an organization bringing them closer to each other; building a mutual relationship, making it easy to care about each other; hence ready to help a member who is in pain; and a gesture that depicts discretionary behaviour. This study argues that one way for NGO employees to demonstrate discretionary behaviours is through acts of sportsmanship such as doing one's job without constant requests from one's boss, not wasting time

complaining about trivial matters or avoiding creating problems for co-workers. These gestures may be attributed to management of NGOs initiating acts of compassion among employees. Furthermore, the authors aver that employee sensitivity about the character of others leads to exhibition of conscientious acts such as attendance to work as a norm or guiding other employees even though it's not their required responsibility. These findings support earlier studies by [Ko and Choi \(2020\)](#) who discovered a positive link between compassion and several outcome variables such as discretionary behaviours. The study demonstrates that in NGOs in Uganda, acts of collective noticing such as the employees effectively creating norms that prevent compassion fatigue, gathering in venues where members converge voluntarily or employees creating a spirit of close connection amongst each other; and acting as building blocks for exhibition of discretionary behaviours. The authors argue that employees in NGOs promote stories of compassion and concern and circulate them among organization members reap in terms of employee exhibition of extra-role tendencies.

The study found a positive and significant association between supplementary fit and discretionary behaviours. When employees in NGOs in Uganda perceive the underlying philosophy of their organization to reflect what they value in a company, such perception is likely to result in the exhibition of discretionary behaviours. The study further finds that for employees to exhibit tendencies of civic virtue as reflected through acts such as attending functions that are not required of them, but help the company image, may be a result of individual perception that their personality is well suited for the personality or "image" of the company. Furthermore, this study demonstrates that when employees in NGOs in Uganda perceive that their skills and abilities match the skills and abilities their organizations look for in employees, this may lead to exhibition of discretionary behaviours. In this study, the authors affirm that discretionary behaviours may be a function of employee perception that their personality is similar to the employees they work with and that they share a lot in common with people who they work with in the NGO. The findings corroborate those of earlier scholars such as [Mitonga-Monga and Cilliers \(2016\)](#) who state that employee perceptions of high ethical leadership translate into willingness to engage in positive behaviours like helping, courteousness and public virtue. Complementary fit did not significantly predict discretionary behaviour. This finding deviates from that of earlier scholars like [Khaola and Sebotsa \(2015\)](#) who affirm that person-organization fit enables employees to help the organization for they integrate their self-concept with the organization thereby considering the success of the organization as their own achievement. However, we note that [Mitonga-Monga and Cilliers \(2016\)](#) explored the global variable and not one of its dimensions in isolation. The finding calls for further investigation since it is not in consonance with extant literature.

On the other hand, the study found a moderator effect of supplementary fit on the organizational compassion – discretionary behaviour association. This means that organizational compassion and supplementary fit pose a magnitude effect on discretionary behaviours among employees in NGOs. The results signify that organizational compassion and supplementary fit must coexist to influence discretionary behaviours among employees in Ugandan NGOs. In this study, the researchers confirm that discretionary behaviours increase as organizational compassion and supplementary fit levels are increased. These findings bring into practice the assumptions of SET by arguing that the relational condition as portrayed in exhibiting both, for example, collective responding and valuing the individuals in the organization facilitates compassionate responses such as increased exhibition of discretionary acts. This illustrates that merging the two concepts (organizational compassion and supplementary fit) will boost further employee exhibition of discretionary behaviours and chronicle higher discretionary behaviours exhibition, than what a single variable would have. These findings support earlier scholars like [Tanwar and](#)

Kumar (2019) whose studies found a moderator role of person-organization fit among different predictor-criterion variable relationships.

#### 4.2 Conclusion

The study found a positive and significant association between compassion and discretionary behaviours, and supplementary fit and discretionary behaviours. The significant multiplicative effects of organizational compassion-supplementary fit and organizational compassion-complementary fit on discretionary behaviours confirm conditional relationships. Besides, the interactions are non-additive and their inclusion in the models gave rise to monotonic interactions (Friedrich, 1982). Since the interaction terms between organizational compassion and supplementary fit and organizational compassion and complementary fit were multiplicative, there is more to consider than simply the main effects of each of these independent variables.

#### 4.3 Theoretical implications

The study has addressed pragmatic concerns that have for some time been unattended to by the literature, more especially in the NGO sector. In spite of different researchers' contradictory observations on what constitutes person-organization-fit, this study highlights the accurate composition of person-organization-fit in the Ugandan NGO sector. In addition, the study has thrown more light on the multiplicative effect of organizational compassion and supplementary fit and organizational compassion and complementary fit on discretionary behaviours. These findings on multiplicative effect of organizational compassion and supplementary fit and organizational compassion and complementary fit in the NGO sector have thus shown the substance of various exogenous variables that combine to elucidate discretionary behaviours, thereby enabling this study to tackle the uncertainty that is pertaining in extant literature. The findings of this study have therefore proved that interplay of organizational compassion and supplementary fit is material in influencing discretionary behaviours of employees among NGOs in Uganda. Similarly, the study found complementary fit to interact with organizational compassion to build exhibition of discretionary behaviours among NGOs in both the rural and urban settings, implying that complementary fit boosts organizational compassion to enhance discretionary behaviours.

#### 4.4 Practical implications

This promotes management endeavours in NGOs to employee exhibition of discretionary behaviours which can be facilitated through improvements in collective noticing, collective feeling and collective responding. Consequently, management can strengthen plans to promote better appreciation and reception of organizational compassion-supplementary fit mix that boosts discretionary behaviours in NGOs in Uganda. The managers of NGOs need to value acts of collective noticing, collective feeling, collective responding and supplementary fit, particularly with the global changing trends in managing human resources.

Outstandingly, existing and prospecting managers need to appreciate that NGOs are shifting so fast that everything is reliant on their policies on how to handle employees especially through compassion and fitting them rightly on the job. It is hence imperative for NGOs to change their management approaches and conventional administrative forms that do not appreciate organizational compassion and supplementary fit as major components. In order to boost the exhibition of discretionary behaviours among NGO employees in Uganda, management needs to explore and employ an organizational compassion-supplementary fit mix that enhances discretionary tendencies.

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Prominence should be placed in refining policies that augment fitting organizational compassion and both supplementary and complementary fit because they make a feasible recipe that envisages discretionary behaviours. Furthermore, the managerial inferences involve elucidating how organizational compassion can be applied as a vital approach to amplify discretionary behaviours. Management in the NGO sector should explore avenues to generate an appropriate organizational compassion climate for their employees. For example, NGO management may initiate some plans that engage employees to take part in decisions that affect their suffering experiences. It is also essential to work on the determinants of both supplementary and complementary fit as they moderate the relationship between organizational compassion and discretionary behaviours. These findings also hold extensive inferences for human resource managers as they need to grab the chance to support with the evaluation tools that make organizations excel. By so doing, they will apply instant and clear-cut measures that entail organizational effort in terms of compassion, and both supplementary and complementary fit.

#### *4.5 Limitations and suggestions for future research*

First, findings of this study are based only on a sample of one country. However, efforts to lower this challenge may have been ameliorated by carrying out the same study in two different populations. The study may not be fully representative for all developing countries' NGO sectors, and hence the necessity to replicate the study in other developing countries with different socio-economic backgrounds to generalize the research findings. Although the constructs have been defined as precisely as possible by drawing relevant literature *as validated* by practitioners, the measurements used may not perfectly represent all the dimensions of each variable. Future studies could use the same basic hypotheses and SEM construction, but implement the study in terms of a longitudinal rather than a cross-sectional design. The fact that complementary fit did not significantly predict discretionary behaviour for both studies requires to be explored further. Notwithstanding possible limitations of using cross-sectional data, the outcomes of this study offer priceless insights into the effect of organizational compassion and person-organization fit on discretionary behaviours.

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