The Mediating Role of Organizational Identification on the Relationship between Perceived External Image and Employees' Positive Outcomes: The Moderating Role of Perceived Organizational Distinctiveness

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Abstract

This study focuses on studying the mechanisms and conditions upon which perceived external image could play an important role in raising up employees' positive outcomes.

Using an integrative approach of the social identity, social exchange and stakeholders theories; the study aims at investigating the effect of perceived external image on employees' job satisfaction and job involvement, directly and indirectly through the mediating effect of organizational identification. The study also aims at determining the moderating role of perceived organizational distinctiveness on the relationship between perceived external image and organizational identification.

Using regression analysis, on a sample of 279 employees working in large food and beverages trade organizations in Alexandria, the hypotheses were supported; where perceived external image has positive total effects on both of job satisfaction and job involvement, in addition to the partial mediating role of organizational identification on the above relationships. The results also revealed that perceived organizational distinctiveness plays the moderating role in strengthening the relationship between perceived external image and organizational identification.

Key Words: Perceived External Image, Organizational Identification, Perceived Organizational Distinctiveness, Positive Outcomes, Job Satisfaction, Job Involvement, The Integarative Approach, Social Identity Theory, Social Exchange Theory, and Stakeholders Theory.

ملخص

تهتم الدراسة الحالية باختبار الآليات والظروف التي يمكن أن تؤثر فيها الصورة الخارجية المدركة للمنظمة على النواتج الايجابية للعاملين.

وباستخدام مدخل متكامل يربط بين نظريات الهوية الاجتماعية، والتبادل الاجتماعي، وأصحاب المصالح، قامت الدراسة الحالية باختبار أثر الصورة الخارجية المدركة للمنظمة على النواتج الايجابية للعاملين (والمتمثلة في الرضا الوظيفي، والاستغراق الوظيفي) بصورة مباشرة، وبصورة غير مباشرة من خلال اختبار الدور الوسيط للتوحد التنظيمي، بالإضافة إلى اختبار الدور الوسيط التفاعلي للتميز التنظيمي المدرك في العلاقة بين الصورة الخارجية المدركة للمنظمة وبين التوحد التنظيمي.

وبتطبيق تحليل الانحدار على عينة مكونة من 279 من العاملين في منظمات تجارة الأغذية كبيرة الحجم في مدينة الاسكندرية، تم قبول فروض الدراسة، حيث توصلت النتائج إلى توافر الأثر الاجمالي الايجابي للصورة الخارجية المدركة للمنظمة على كل من الرضا الوظيفي، والاستغراق الوظيفي، بالإضافة إلى توافر الدور الوسيط الجزئي للتوحد التنظيمي في العلاقة بينهم. توصلت الدراسة أيضا إلى أن التميز التنظيمي المدرك يلعب دور الوسيط التفاعلي في تقوية العلاقة بين الصورة الخارجية المدركة للمنظمة وبين التوحد التنظيمي.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الصورة الخارجية المدركة، التوحد التنظيمي، التميز التنظيمي المدرك، النواتج الايجابية، الرضا عن الوظيفة، الاستغراق الوظيفي، المدخل المتكامل، نظرية الهوية الاجتماعية، نظرية التبادل الاجتماعي، نظرية أصحاب المصالح.

Introduction

Nowadays, organizations are striving more than ever before to compete and succed in rapid changing environments. Yet, the main factor for achieving organization success is through its human capital. Having highly satisfied and involved employees is crucial to attain this success.

However, retaining highly satisfied employees and making sure that they are working with high involvement levels is not an easy task. Therefore, increasing both of employees' job satisfaction and job involvement have got great interest from both researchers and practitioners in business organizations over past years.

Nevertheless, still more variables affecting both of job satisfaction and job involvement are being introduced, and more research efforts are needed. One of these important factors are those that relate to different construed images of the organization. In other words, those that relate to employees' own perceptions of their organization as a reputable, prestigious and distinctive organization to work at.

Among these factors, is the organization's external image, which can be considered an important catalyst for raising competition between organizations, and increasing organization's value (Yildiz, 2018). Perceived External Image (PEI) is viewed as employees' perceptions and personal beliefs regarding how outside people (e.g. customers, competitors or suppliers) may judge and evaluate the prestige and status of their organization (Carmeli, 2005).

By reviewing the literature, it was found that employees who perceive their workplace as a reputable and a prestigious place, the more they will be more satisfied with their jobs (e.g. Abbas and Karage, 2015), more committed to their organization (e.g. Carmeli, Gilat and Weisberg, 2006), more engaged to their work (e.g. Dhir and Shukla, 2019), and more involved in their jobs (Carmeli, 2005), in addition, to having higher levels of performance (e.g. Dhir and Shukla, 2019).

However, despite the role of perceived external image in increasing employees' positive outcomes, still there is a need to understand the processes and situations driving these relationships. Therefore, the current study aims at detecting the effect of PEI on both of employees' job satisfaction and job involvement, and investigating the mechanisms and conditions that may explain those relationships.

Research Problem

By reviewing the literature, it was noted that a guaranteed "organizational image perception-employees' positive outcomes" relationship seems to be questionable. Some studies have detected negative effects (e.g. Dalton, Vison and Widener, 2019). Hence, it could be argued that other mediating factors may be incorporated to explain this relationship.

Among those important variables is the Organizational Identification (OI) variable. Based on the social identity theory, it is argued that when employees are identified with their organizations, they will perceive the organizations' success as their own achievements. Equally, they will also judge any failure of the

organizations as their own failures (Dutton, Dukerich, and Harquail, 1994; Yildiz, 2018).

As Van Knippenberg and Sleebos (2006) argue, social identification implies that individuals pshychologically merge themselves with some social groups such as organizations. They then define and attribute characteristics and traits of the collective of these social groups to themselves (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher and Wetherell, 1987).

Moreover, since individuals define, identify and categorize themselves with their membership to the organization they work for, their attitudes will then be governed by this memberhip (Tajfel and Turner, 1986, Turner, et al, 1987; Van Dick, 2004). In other words, since self-interest is perceived as a collective interest, then individuals will participate to this collective interest (Ashforth and Mael, 1989; Dutton, et al., 1994). Accordingly, by applying this notion on the organizational image, it can be claimed that employees who are identified with their organization will see their organization image as their own image.

Nevertheless, merging this assumption to the social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) and the norm of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960) could imply that not only individuals will identify themselves to their organization, and thus perceive their own interest as their organizations' interest, but also, they will exchange their benefits together. In other words, the organizational prestigious image will be seen as their own, which if perceived as favorable, then it would enhance their own organizational identification, which will in turn enhance their support for the organization (Mael and Ashforth, 1992).

Accordingly, some prior recent studies (e.g. Kok, Sarikaya, Çoban and Mert, 2018; Yildiz, 2018) adopting such above argument have urged the incorporation of the organizational identification as an important variable that could mediate the relationship between perceived external image and employees' positive outcomes.

Other examples of these studies are those who tested its mediating role between perceived external prestige and affective commitment (Carmeli, et al., 2006), voice behavior (Fuller, Hester, Barnett, Frey, Relyea and Beu, 2006), employees' self-esteem, motivation and performance (Yildiz, 2018), and emotional responses (Anwar, Ahmed, Waqas, Khairuzzaman, Ismail and Islam, 2019). However, there is a need for examining its role on the relationship between perceived external image and both of job satisfaction and job involvement.

This urgent call for testing the organizational identification factor role on the relationship between perceived external image and job satisfaction and job involvement could explain why in some studies (e.g. Dalton, et al., 2019) the perceived organizational image had a negative relation with job satisfaction. Therefore, the current research would be interested to test the mediating role of organizationl identification on the relationship between perceived external image and job satisfaction and job involvement.

The above discussion has highlighted the importance of organizational identification as an explanatory factor to the relationship between PEI and job-related positive outcomes. However, this conclusion led the researcher to question if the prestigious image of the organization would be enough to drive the positive identification towards the organization. In other words, questioning whether perceiving the organization as having a

reputable image by outsiders is a guarantee of higher OI by the employees? Do employees' perceptions of outsiders' positive views of the organization have to be translated into higher identification? Different studies that have tried to answer such questions have suggested other factors that may be important to guarantee this relationship; for example, Jones and Volpe (2011) suggested social interaction as a moderator to the PEI-OI relationship. In the current study, "Perceived Organizational Distinctiveness" (POD) is suggested to be an important moderator to this relationship.

Although perceived organizational prestige and perceived organizational distinctiveness were used by many studies (e.g. Dutton, et al., 1994; Jones and Volpe, 2011; Mael and Ashforth, 1992; Kok, et al., 2018) as two close concepts reflecting organizational image, however, there seem to be some differences between the two terms. It is noted that PEI is an organizational prestige that has been identified as an organizational "external image", while organizational distinctiveness is an organizational identity dimension that reflects organizational "internal image" (Dutton, et al. 1994; Kok, et al., 2018).

Therefore, it could be argued that organizational distinctiveness is not merely an organizational image, but actually an image that reflects the uniqueness of the organization in the eyes of its employees (Jones and Volpe, 2011). Hence the source of the image is the employees themselves, opposite to PEI, where the reference of the image are the outsiders.

From this noted difference, one can argue that employees' perceptions of their organizational image brought by external sources (PEI) may not be enough to create a stronger bond or identification to the organization. A positive internal image (i.e.

POD) may furtherly strengthen this bond or identification. In other words, if employees themselves perceive that their organization has unique practices, values or culture that would differentiate them from other organizations, this would enhance the positive image drawn to their organization, and thus level up their sense of identification.

Moreover, most studies in the organizational image literature have used both terms as drivers to OI (e.g. Dutton, et al., 1994; Mael and Ashforth, 1992; Kok, et al., 2018). However, according to the researcher's recent review, no studies have used POD as a moderator in this relationship. Interestingly though, Jones and Volpe (2011) findings have shown that POD had an explanatory power on OI, while PEI has failed to affect OI directly, unless being moderated by the social network relationships factor.

Therefore, having few studies that have investigated POD interactive role, this research proposes that organizational distinctiveness could work as a powerful moderator in the PEI-OI relationship.

Additionally, the importance of the above suggested variables was not only elaborated from the literature, but their importance was also supported by the qualitative interviews run in this research's pilot study (pilot study will be discussed in details later in a separate section).

To sum up, based on an extensive reading in the literature, and the arguments presented above, it can be seen that there is a need to address the relationships between perceived external image and employees' positive job-related outcomes. Nevertheless, despite that this relationship seems to be a simple or a straight forward one,

yet studies that investigated this relationship have not reached unified nor consistent results as mentioned before, and thus urged for more investigations to be done.

Objectives of the study

The current study aims at understanding how organizations can raise their employees' positive job-related outcomes, through leveling up their organizational external image perception effect, and through clarifying the mechanisms and conditions which are driving this relationship. These objectives could be achieved by answering the following questions:

1- What is the effect of perceived external image on job satisfaction?
2- What is the effect of perceived external image on job involvement?
3- Does organizational identification mediate the relationship between perceived external image and job satisfaction?
4- Does organizational identification mediate the relationship between perceived external image and job involvement?
5- Does perceived organizational distinctiveness play the moderating effect in the relationship between perceived external image and organizational identification?

Importance of the study

This research is an attempt to offer business practitioners new tools for retaining employees' positive outcomes and also raising their awareness to certain unattended variables, such as organizational external image (PEI) and organizational internal image (POD) in improving employees' positive outcomes.

Next, theoretical background, literature review and developed hypotheses are presented. Following this section, is the pilot study, population and sampling, data collection, and measures. Finally, data analyses, reliability and validity tests, and study findings will be presented. That will be followed by research discussion, conclusion, recommendations, limitations of the study and suggestions for future research.

Theoretical Background

Before going into details about addressing and explaining the mechanisms, conditions and relationships of the study, a theoretical briefing on the study variables will be first provided as follows:

Job satisfaction and Job involvement

Job satisfaction has been studied as a key and overall attitude often measured by organizations, and may be applied to the components of individuals' jobs. It is dynamic, acquired and developed over time, where employees gain more information regarding their workplaces. It describes the degree to which individuals may be content with their jobs (Singh and Sinha, 2013). It may be also regarded as the complex emotional reactions towards the job (Locke, 1969), and the degree to which individuals positively and negatively feel regarding their jobs (Steyn and van Wyk, 1999).

Increasing employees' job satisfaction still remains a main interest among management and researchers in the 21st century (Ivancevich, Konopaske and Matteson, 2008). It has got great intersest from Organizational Behavior and Human Resources Management researchers, due to its desirable positive organizational outcomes

(Cheng, 2020), such as increasing performance (e.g. Laosebikan, Odepidan, Adetunji and Aderinto, 2018), and decreasing employees' turnover intentions (e.g. O'Connor, 2018). Additionally, other streams of research still investigate more antecedents and mechanisms such as work characteristics ('Culibrk, Delic´, Mitrovic´ and ´Culibrk, 2018) and individual characteristics (e.g. Abbas and Karage, 2015). The current study is trying to contribute to those streams that are interested in studying the mechanisms that may level up employees' job satisfaction.

Another important variable that reflects employees' positive outcomes is job involvement. Job involvement concept was first introduced by Lodahl and Kejner (1965); who claimed that it is the extent to which individuals are psychologically identified with their work. The concept was then refined by Lawler and Hall (1970); who conceptualize it as the extent to which the job situation is crucial to the individuals and their own identity. Later, the concept was expanded and solidified by Kanungo (1979; 1982), who mentioned that employees cognitively and psychologically identify themselves with their own jobs; and referred to as the extent to which individuals view how their jobs are important in their lives. Recently, the concept was referred to as the extent to which an employee is devotionally attached to his job (Nwankwo, Ohakwe, Okeke, Ike and Ekebosi, 2020).

It is argued that employees with high levels of job involvement give their jobs priorities over their life interests. It has been said that "eating, living and breathing jobs" would be the best statement describing employees with very high levels of job involvement. However, low levels of job involvement describe employees who give priorities to other things (like hobbies, families and interests

for their lives) rather than their jobs (DeCarufel and Schaan, 1990, Griffin, Hogan, Lambert, Tucker – Gail and Baker, 2010; Qureshi, Lambert and Frank, 2019).

To conclude, both job satisfaction and job involvement are crucial and important for employees and organizations, and thus organizations have to work hard to get to achieve high degrees of their employees' satisfaction and involvement. Among many things that the organization can make to guarantee employees' job satisfaction and job involvement would be to keep a good image. Both definitions of job satisfaction (Singh and Sinha, 2013), and job involvement (Kanungo, 1979; 1982) will be used for the purposes of the current study.

Perceived External Image

Employees construe images about their organizations; as they evaluate its status and prestige depending on outsiders' evaluations, views or judgments about these organizations. Researchers have used interchangeable terms referring to this image as construed external image (Dutton, et al., 1994), perceived external image (Smidts, Pruyn and Van Riel, 2001), corporate image (Riordan, Gatewood and Bill, 1997), perceived organizational prestige (Mael and Ashforth, 1992) and perceived external prestige (Carmeli, 2004; 2005).

In 1958, March and Simon were the first to introduce the organizational prestige concept, they have explained the term as the employees' evaluations of their institutions, both individually and as a society. Four decades later, Mael and Ashforth (1992) introduced organizational prestige as the emerged perceptions of the

employees for their organization, based upon the degree their institution is well regarded in both absolute and comparative terms.

Later on, Dutton and her colleagues (1994) referred that construed external image results from employees' beliefs concerning the external evaluations of their organization. It is described as the evaluation the employees do or hold for their organization based on outsiders' views and judgements.

Smidts and his colleagues (2001) furtherly described perceived external image as it implies institutions' evaluations concerning their own prestige, relying on the obtained information from different sources. Recently, Yildiz (2018) declared that organizational prestige is considered as the sum of outside parties' impressions about the organization, resulting from their connections and associations with it.

According to the stakeholders' theory, studies have suggested that perceived external image construct can be assessed differently according to the type of the "external or outsider" stakeholder of the organization (Carmeli, et al., 2006). It has been argued that there could be two outsiders, one "general outsider" which aggregates all outsiders' judgments and evaluations of the organization (Dutton and Dukerich, 1991; Mael and Ashforth, 1992; Smidts et al., 2001), and another "specific outsider", which refers to only specific stakeholder's judgement such as customers view for example (Carmeli, 2005; Carmeli and Freund, 2002; Smidts et al., 2001).

Although that the first perspective has some benefits, in which it aggregates all general outsiders' judgements and views about the organization together; yet it ignores the different points of view and interests that single outsider or stakeholder might hold separately.

Nevertheless, although the second alternative perspective may contribute to a deeper understanding with regard to a specific stakeholder; still, it does not take into consideration other key outsiders' points of view (Carmeli, et al., 2006).

As a remedy and to reach mid-way between the above two perspectives, a third alternative approach has been introduced by Carmeli and his colleagues (2006), in which they intentionally identified three main outsider beneficiaries, namely: customers, suppliers and competitors.

However, in order to capture the views of all different perspectives and judgments regarding the organization, and to obtain a wide idea about the organization's value in the eyes of most of its stakeholders, the present study will use the "general" outsider perspective as a measure for the perceived external image. In addition to using Smidt and his colleagues' definition (2001) of perceived external image.

Organizational Identification

Organizational identification has always been introduced in behavioral studies as a key important construct. It has been recognized from different approaches, such as Organizational Behavior, Marketing and Human Resources Management (Subba, 2019).   It has been referred to as the oneness perceived by individuals with their organizations (Ashforth and Mael, 1989; Mael and Ashforth, 1992). It also reflects the psychological merger between the individual's self and the organization (Haslam, 2004).

Early attempts trying to introduce the social identity theory and the organizational identification term were proposed by Tajfel and Turner (1986), Turner and his colleagues (1987), Ashfoth and Mael

(1989) and Haslam (2004). As Van Dick (2004) declared, the social identity approach introduced by Haslam (2004) consists of two main interrelated theories; namely, the social identity theory (Tajfel and Turner, 1986) and the self-categorization theory (Turner, et al., 1987). These two main theories are used in organizational contexts to reflect that when individuals define themselves with their membership to organizational groups such as teams, organizations, or jobs, their behaviors and attitudes will be then governed by these memberhips (Van Dick, 2004).

Moreover, the relationship between organizations and individuals may be explained through the social identity approach, social identification and self-categorization (Van Knippenberg and Sleebos, 2006). Individuals define themselves in both unique traits distinguishing individuals from each other, and their memberships in different social groups (Tajfel and Turner, 1986; Turner, et al., 1987). In other words, individuals' memberships with different groups are self defined in some different degrees (Ashforth and Mael, 1989). Individuals' self referring to social groups as "We" rather than "I" is known as social identity (Tajfel and Turner, 1986), or as collective self (Turner et al., 1987).

Additionally, based on the social exchange theory and the norm of reciprocity (Blau, 1964; Gouldner, 1960), and using Ashforth and Mael (1989); Mael and Ashforth (1992) OI's definition, the current research may claim that employees will also exchange good relationships with their organizations in terms of higher identification and higher positive job outcomes, in case of perceiving their organization as a prestigious one.

Perceived Organizational Distinctiveness

Organizational identity has got attention from researchers over years. It was regarded as the image that results from employees' perceptions about the enduring characteristics and traits that differentiate and distinguish their organization from other organizations (Albert and Whetten, 1985; Dutton, et al., 1994). According to Albert and Whetten (1985), identity statement answers some questions represented in who we are? What do we need to be? What is our business? Organizational identity will be perceived cognitively and collectively by employees. It will also have positive effects on their behaviors and their organizational identification (Albert and Whetten, 1985; Yueh-Ysen, 2004).

This definition reveals that organizational identity embraces three main attributes or criteria: centrality, which refers to features and characteristics being key and essential for the organization. Durability or enduring, which includes sustainability and identity level over time. And finally, distinctiveness, or distinctive organizational identity, which differentiates and distinguishes the organization from other organizations. It is seen as the ideologies of the organization, philosophy of the management, and organizational culture which help the organization locating itself in some specific classifications, or self classifaction (Albert and Whetten, 1985).

Perceived organizational distinctiveness; also regarded as the organization's practices and values compared to other groups (Oakes and Turner, 1986; Mael and Ashforth, 1992). In other words, it describes different values, attitudes and practices that may differ across organizations (Mael and Ashforth, 1992). In addition, that it provides a clearer definition for members of the organization; that is why organizations attempt to make a definition about their

identities by finding a different and distinctive niche (Albert and Whetten, 1985; Mael and Ashforth, 1992).

For the purposes of the current study, Albert and Whetten' definition (1985) will be used to investigate if the PEI-OI relationship would be conditioned by employees' perceptions of their organizational internal image or distinctiveness.

Next section will introduce the suggested relationships of the research variables, upon which the research hypotheses will be developed and research model will be proposed.

Literature Review and Hypotheses of the study

Studies that have tested the PEI-job satisfaction, and the PEI-job involvement relationships will be first presented. This will be followed by sections that will introduce in details the mechanisms and conditions upon which the perceived image of the organization would work to enhance these desired job outcomes.

Perceived External Image and Job Satisfaction

The social exchange theory and the norm of reciprocity imply that the relationships between employees and their organizations depend on the exchange of positive attitudes for organizational benefits (ie: payment, recognition or support) (Blau, 1964; Gouldner, 1960).

Studies examining the relationship between perceived external image and job satisfaction have revealed a positive relationship (Carmeli, 2005; Carmeli and Freund, 2009; Helm, 2013; Kamasak, 2011; Riordan, et al, 1997). Similarly, Abbas and Karage (2015) have found that organizational prestige was the most influential factor affecting Nigerian governmental employees' job satisfaction,

among other independent variables (including education, age and gender).

As noted, the above studies that tested the PEI-job satisfaction relationship have revealed a positive relationship, however, only few studies did not reach this result. For example, Yahya, Rashid and Aly (2017) found that there is no significant effect of perceived external prestige on job satisfaction within nurses in Pakistan. This unexpected result was due to some contextual factors such as time, lack of resources and the population characteristics, who have not take the research seriously. Moreover, in their recent study, Dalton and his colleagues (2019) have found a negative effect, where they suggested that perceived external prestige could have side negative effects on employees' job satisfaction.

Therefore, based on the the social exchange and stakeholders theories discussed earlier, and their role in boosting employees' job satisfaction via perceived external image, plus the stream of research that has revealed the significant positive PEI-job satisfaction relationship, the current study suggests that perceived external image would positively affects employees' job satisfaction. More precisely, this research claims that the more employees perceive their organization's prestige, taking into consideration different points of view of its general stakeholders, the more they will exchange good relationships with the organization, reflected in high levels of job satisfaction. This relationship is elaborated through the following hypothesis:

H1: Perceived external image positively affects employees' job satisfaction.

Perceived External Image and Job Involvement

Although a number of studies of external image have mainly focused on studying its relationship with job satisfaction (e.g. Carmeli and Freund, 2009; Dalton, et al., 2019; Yahya, et al., 2017); and work engagement (eg. Dhir and Shukla, 2019); yet, researchers have given less attention for studying its relationship with job involvement, with the exception of Carmeli (2005), who found that perceived external image positively affects job involvement.

Since this research views job involvement as a crucial outcome for the organization, and relying on the social exchange and stakeholder theories discussed before, the researcher would also be interested to see if the employees' perceptions of their organizational image would make them more involved in their jobs, as a way of exchanging benefits with their organization, suggesting a positive relationship. Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

H2: Perceived external image positively affects employees' job involvement.

The Mediating Role of Organizational Identification

As mentioned before, organizational identification is suggested to explain the PEI-positive outcomes relationships. Studies that have examined these relationships will be presented next. However, it should be noted that because PEI-OI relationship is a common track in both mentioned relationships, then it will be introduced first. Next, the second part of each relationship will be presented as follows: OI-job satisfaction and OI-job involvement relationships.

Perceived External Image and Organizational Identification

Relying on the social identity approach, Dutton and her colleagues (1994) referred to the positive outcomes resulting from employees' beliefs that their organizations is seen positively. If individuals identify themselves with their organization, they will consider their organization's success as their own; in addition, when the organizational image increases individuals' self-esteem, the more they will be identified with their organization. Van Dick (2004) has also declared that organizational identification is closely related to the image of the organization. In other words, organizational identification represents an evaluative part which indicates the extent to which individuals consider their organization as negative or positive, as being perceived from outsiders' perspectives.

Several studies investigated the relationship between perceived external image and organizational identification, and revealed that PEI fosters employees' OI (Akgunduz and Bardakoglu, 2017; Anwar, et al., 2019; Carmeli, 2005; Carmeli and Freund, 2002; Dutton, et al., 1994; Fuller, et al., 2006; Hasan and Hussain, 2015; Klimchak, Ward, Matthews, Robbins and Zhang, 2019; Kok, et al., 2018; Mael and Ashforth, 1992; Riketta, 2005; Smidts, et al., 2001, Yildiz, 2018).

Organizational Identification and Job Satisfaction

According to Van Dick (2004), social identity approach can be applied to study the relationships between employees' organizational identification and their behaviors and attitudes. He has noted that individuals' identification with their organization will result in positive attitudes and behaviors related to that membership.

By reviewing the literature covering the relationship between OI and job-related outcomes, it was noted that several studies revealed that OI explains the variance in job satisfaction, in other words, OI has a positive influence on job satisfaction (Başar and Basım, 2015; Collins, Galvin and Meyer, 2019; Hwang and Jang, 2020; Karanika-Murray, Duncan, Pontes and Griffiths, 2015; Mete, Sokmen and Biyik, 2016; Ngo, Loi, Foley, Zheng and Zhang, 2013; Oktug, 2013; Riketta; 2005; Subba, 2019; Tuzun, 2013; Van Dick, 2004; Van Dick, Wagner, Stellmacher and Christ, 2004; Van Dick, Van Knippenberg, Kerschreiter, Hertel and Wieseke, 2008)

To sum up, based on both of social identity and social exchange theories, and drawing on the previous reviewing of litterature, which indicated that PEI affects OI positively, and that OI in its turn affects job satisfaction positively, the present study hypothesizes that OI may play the mediating role on the relationship between PEI and job satisfaction as follows:

H3: Organizational identification mediates the relationship between perceived external image and employees' job satisfaction.

Organizational Identification and Job Involvement

By reviewing the literature, it was noted by the researcher that although the majority of studies were interested in studying the relationship between organizational identification and job satisfaction as mentioned in the previous section, yet, few prior research were interested in studying the relationship between organizational identification and job involvement. For example, Carmeli (2005) showed that strong organizational identification is likely to be translated to a high level of job involvement. Also, Lee,

Park and Koo (2015) showed in their Meta analysis that organizational identification has a significant association with job involvement. Additionally, in her Meta analysis study, Riketta (2005) revealed that although job satisfaction is a correlate of OI, yet OI is less strongly correlated to job satisfaction, while more strongly correlated to job involvement.

In conclusion, relying on both of social exchange and social identity approaches, and prior research which revealed that there is a positive effect of perceived external image on organizational identification, and that organizational identification affects job involvement positively, the current research will contribute to the few research studying the above relationship, and will hypothesize the following:

H4: Organizational identification mediates the relationship between perceived external image and employees' job involvement.

Perceived Organizational Distinctiveness as a moderator on the relationship between Perceived External Image and Organizational Identification

According to Dutton and her colleagues (1994), employees perceive both internal and external images. Additionally, it was noted that previous studies reached some interesting results, such as Mael and Ashforth (1992) who found that both of perceived external image and perceived organizational distinctiveness as antecedents positively affect organizational identification. Furthermore, in their model, Dutton and her colleagues (1994) declared that both images, perceived organizational identity and construed external image of their organization tend to influence employees' organizational

identification strength. Lately, in their recent study, Kok and his colleagues (2018) noted that both perceived internal image and perceived external image have positive effects on employees' organizational identification. Meanwhile, a different result was recorded by Jones and Volpe (2011), who found that perceived organizational distinctiveness explained the variance in OI, while PEI has not any effect on OI, unless the relationship was moderated by social network relationships.

From this literature, it could be noted that the above studies were interested in studying both PEI and POD as antecedents to OI, and revealed some diverse results. Hence, the current study would furtherly argue that employees' perceptions about their organization's external image may work for lifting up their organizational identification, but while perceiving their organization as being unique and distinctive one, this will work to add up more to their organizational identification.

Accordingly, the interplay between both variables may be crucial to explain the variance in organizational identification, as it was found that still there is a dearth of research in investigating the interactive role of perceived organizational distinctiveness with perceived external image in strengthening employees' identification. Therefore, the present research would hypothesize the following:

H5: Perceived organizational distinctiveness moderates the relationship between perceived external image and organizational identification.

The following figure represents the research model, designed to investigate the relationships between variables of the study:
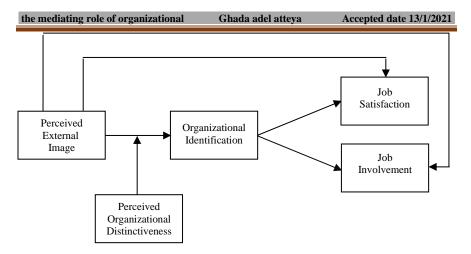
Figure (1): Research Model

Research Methodology

Pilot study

The current research has conducted a pilot study in an earlier phase. The researcher employed semi-structured interviews for the purpose of identifying the research variables, understanding the nature of the sampled population and for assessing situational factors related to data access, especially during Covid 19 pendemic quarantine. The interviews were conducted on 15 subjects working across some private organizations in Alexandria. Those respondents were approached during attending an online EMBA course in the faculty of commerce-Alexandria University in the spring semester 2020.

To identify those antecedents, mechanisms and situations relevant to the research, a number of questions were discussed. Most

respondents agreed that among many factors, both of external and internal images of the organization (PEI and POD) are main factors affecting employees' positive outcomes, especially, organizational identification, job satisfaction and job involvement.

Population and Sampling

The current research was conducted during the period of Covid 19 pendemic. Therefore, due to the closing conditions which accompanied the time of data collection, and the difficulty in accessing the sampling frames for organizations, a convenient sampling technique was employed.

Accordingly, the researcher has approached the employees working in the large size private organizations in the food and beverages trade industry in Alexandria governorate, as a population for the study. This specifc sector was selected for two main reasons: first, some referent persons working in those organizations have helped the researcher to an easy access, to reach the sampled elements during the pendemic. Second, this sector serves a large number of customers and areas in Alexandria, and thus has a well-Known reputation and image within the Alexandrian region. Therefore, this would make it a relevant population to the current research, and an applicable context upon which the variables understudy could be tested.

As mentioned before, due to the corona virus conditions, only three organizations have agreed to participate. These organizations are: Fathalla gomla market, Aswaq Fathalla market, and Metro. It is important to note that only workers and employees who have been working as full time, with duration more than two years were included in this study. This limitation was employed to assure that

the participants are aware of the value of the organization they are working at, and have enough time to perceive how this value is being viewed by others in the society, and thus can answer the research questions objectively. A number of 450 questionnaires were equally distributed on the three participating organizations, of which 279 questionnaires were returned, recording a 62 % total response rate.

Descriptive Statistics for the Study Sample

Tables (1) and (2) show the response rate for each of the sampled organizations, and the sampling description consequtively, as follows:

Table (1): Response Rates for the Sampled Organizations

Organization	Fathallah Gomla Market	Aswaq Fathallah	Metro	Total
Distributed Questionnaires	150	150	150	**450**
Returned Questionnaires	83	129	67	**279**
Response Rates	55.3%	86%	44.6%	**62%**

Table (2): Sampling Description

Category	Number	Percentage
Gender		
Male	247	88.5%
Female	31	11.1%
Missing Value	1	0.4%
Total	**279**	**100%**
Age		
Less than 30	170	60.93%
30 – less than 40	74	26.52%
40 – less than 50	20	7.17%
50 and more	13	4.66%
Missing Value	2	0.72%
Total	**279**	**100%**
Managerial Level		
Top Management	27	9.7%
Middle Management	54	19.4%
Functional Management	182	65.2%
Missing Value	16	5.7%
Total	**279**	**100%**

As noted from table (1), Aswaq Fathalla Market came with the highest response rate (86%), then Fathalla Gomla market with (55.3%), and lastly Metro with (44.6%). Description of the sampled participants can be seen in table (2), where male participants accounted for almost 89 % (n =247) of the total respondents, whereas the female sample totaled 31 employees, which represents about (11%). The main reason having low female numbers is due to their high turnover in these organizations, therefore most of the workers are male. Most of the sample are below 30 years old (about 61%), and work at the first managerial level (65.2 %).

Data Collection

A cross-sectional survey design (Oppenheim, 2000) was employed through developing a quantitative self-administered questionnaire. The questionnaire comprises six main sections. The first five sections measure the research variables, while the sixth section collects demographic information (i.e. age, gender and managerial level). All items on the questionnaire were translated into Arabic. Moreover, the content validity of the questionnaire was cleared by academic Human Resource Management professors, at the faculty of Commerce, Alexandria University. Next is a detailed explanation of these research variables and their associated measures.

Measures

The Independent Variable: Perceived External Image

It was measured using Mael and Ashforth's Likert scale (1992). It is a unidimensional construct, consisting of 8 statements. Statements 4, 6, 7 and 8 are inverse statements, and thus their scores were reversed in the analysis. The scale has been rated on a five-point scale ranging from 1 completely disagree to 5 completely agree.

The Mediating Variable: Organizational Identification

It was measured using the six-item Likert scale developed by Mael and Ashforth (1992). The measure is unidimensional (Yildiz, 2018). The scale has been rated on a five-point scale ranging from 1 completely disagree to 5 completely agree.

The Dependent Variables: Employees' Positive Outcomes

1- **Job satisfaction**, was measured using the six-item scale developed and used by Schriesheim and Tsui (1980), and Tsui, Egan and O'Reilly (1992). The scale has been rated on a five-point scale ranging from 1 very unsatisfied to 5 very satisfied.

2- **Job Involvement**, was measured with Kanungo's measure (1982), it consists of 10 items. Statements 22 and 25 are inverse statements. The scale was rated on a five-point scale ranging from 1 completely disagree to 5 completely agree.

The Moderating Variable: Perceived Organizational Distinctiveness

Jones and Volpe (2011) have introduced a seven-item Likert scale to measure perceived organizational distinctiveness. The scale was developed specifically to fit the personal communication institution chosen for their study. For the purposes of the current study, five items have been selected to fit the organizations under study. The scale has been rated on a five-point scale ranging from 1 completely disagree to 5 completely agree.

Data Analysis

Research data was analysed using the statistical package of SPSS – version 25. Regression analysis was conducted for testing the

research hypotheses, additionally, factor analysis was employed for determining factor loadings and average variances for the study variables.

Validity and Reliability Tests

As a preliminary step of analysis, data was first tested for its reliability and construct validity. Reliability is the degree of consistency between items of one construct, while Validity is the degree of measuring the items of a certain construct in the right way (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016). Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO), Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and Factor Loadings (FL) were computed using principal component method to test for the convergent validity. Additionally, Cronbach's alpha (Cronbach, 1951) was computed to test reliability.

Table (3) shows the results obtained for the convergent validity and the reliability test, as follows:

Table (3): Convergent Validity and Reliability Measures

Variables	KMO	AVE	Cronbach's Alpha	Items	Factor Loadings
Perceived External Image	0.694	72.848%	0.813	1	0.786
				2	0.747
				3	0.652
Organizational Identification	0.825	56.447%	0.840	9	0.511
				10	0.684
				11	0.618
				12	0.643
				13	0.512
				14	0.419
Job Satisfaction	0.758	55.536%	0.794	15	0.429
				16	0.618
				18	0.570
				19	0.572

Variables	KMO	AVE	Cronbach's Alpha	Items	Factor Loadings
				20	0.588
Job Involvement	0.748	61.133%	0.786	24	0.588
				25	0.682
				28	0.568
				29	0.607
Perceived Organizational Distinctiveness	0.841	68.955%	0.884	31	0.667
				32	0.691
				33	0.716
				34	0.719
				35	0.655

The results shown in table (3) imply that data under study are reliable and valid. Cronbach alpha (> 0.7), showed acceptable reliability coefficients. Also, AVE (>50%), and FL (>0.4) were accepted for items of the questionnaire (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016), except for some items with low factor loadings that have been deleted.

Discriminant validity was also tested to avoid common method variance (CMV) problem. Discriminant validity exists when the average value extracted (AVE) for each construct is greater than its squared correlation with other constructs (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). Table (4) shows means, standard deviations, squared correlations and AVEs of the study variables, as follows:

Table (4): Discriminant Validity and Descriptive Statistics

	Means	S.D.	Perceived External Image	Job Involvement	Job Satisfaction	Perceived Organizational Distinctiveness	Organizational Identification
Perceived External Image	4.000	1.01429	0.72848				
Job Involvement	4.0179	0.91138	0.187**	0.61133			
Job Satisfaction	3.8889	0.86406	0.384**	0.303**	0.55536		
Perceived Organizational Distinctiveness	4.0251	0.95365	0.248**	0.214**	0.378**	0.68955	
Organizational Identification	4.1075	0.89518	0.312**	0.273**	0.340**	.287**	0.56447

N= 279; ** Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed); AVEs appear on the diagonal.

The results presented in table (4) indicated that AVE's for all constructs are greater than their squared correlations with other constructs, implying a discriminant validity for all the study variables.

Descriptive satatistics, also presented in table (4) show that variable means are between 3.8 to 4.1; with all of them are within the 4 range, whereas standard deviation scores are between 0.86 to 1. By looking closely to the results, it was noted that all variables means are above the average scores, additionally, OI came with the highest mean: 4.1075.

Results

Table (5) shows the regression analysis results for H1-H4, as follows:

Table (5): Regression Analysis Results (H1-H4)

		Job Satisfaction				Job Involvement			
		Beta	R2	Sig	F	Beta	R2	Sig	F
Perceived External Image	Total Effect	0.528	0.384(*)	0.001	172.754	0.388	0.187(*)	0.001	63.532
	Direct Effect	0.364	0.466(*)	0.001	120.195	0.183	0.301(*)	0.001	59.528

* Correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed)

The first two hypotheses proposed positive total relationships between PEI and job satisfaction (H1), and PEI and job involvement (H2). These hypotheses were tested using regression analysis, in which the results came to support both of them.

From table (5), the result of H1 shows a significant positive effect of PEI on job satisfaction, with a value of beta coefficient equals to 0.528, and at a significant level=0.05 (p value= 0.001). It also indicates that for one standard unit increase in PEI, there is a corresponding increase in job statisfaction by 0.528 units.

Similar results were obtained for the second hypothesis (H2), where the result recorded a significant effect of PEI on job involvement (beta=0.388), at an accepted significant level of 0.05 (p=0.001). Also the result reflects that for each standard unit increase in the PEI, there is 0.388 unit increase in employee's job involvement.

By looking at the R squared (R²) values, it can be noticed that PEI has explained 38.4% (R²= 0.384) of the total variance in job satisfaction, while explained almost 19% (R²= 0.187) of the variance in job involvement (H2).

To sum up, the above results indicate that PEI as an independent variable is significantly affecting job satisfaction (H1), as well as job involvement (H2). Thereby, accepting the first two research hypotheses.

Hypotheses 3 and 4 aimed at detecting the mediating effect of OI on the relationships between PEI and job satisfaction on the one hand (H3), and PEI and job involvement (H4) on the other hand. The results of the analyses came to support both hypotheses. OI was found to partially mediate the hypothesized relationships.

Before analyses were conducted, the three steps conditioning the mediation testing were applied (Baron and Kenny, 1986). First, the total effect between the independent and dependent variables were supported (as stated earlier in H1 and H2).

Second, the relationships between the independent variable and the mediator (PEI-OI), where (R^2=0.312, beta=0.493, F=125.638) was cleared, and the mediator and each of the two dependent varaibles (OI-job satisfaction), where (R^2=0.340, beta=0.563, F=142.525); and (OI-job involvement), where (R^2=0.273, beta=0.532, F=103.916) were also cleared. All these relationships were accepted at a significant level of 0.05 and a p value of 0.001.

Finally, the test for the mediation effect (the direct effect) was analysed. The results shown in Table (5) have revealed a significant positive direct effect of OI as a mediatior on the PEI-job satisfaction relationship (R^2=0.466, beta=0.364, sig=0.05, p= 0.001); as well as on the PEI-job involvement relationship (R^2= 0.301, beta=0.183, sig=0.05, p=0.001). These results reflect a partial mediation effect of the OI on both PEI-dependent variables relationships. The partial mediation occurs when there is a significant total effect that stands in the presence of the direct mediation effect (Baron and Kenny, 1986). This means that PEI has its own individual effect, additionally, OI can work as an explanatory tool to the above proposed relationships.

To conclude, these findings support the role of OI as an important mechanism, through which PEI affects both of job satisfaction (H3), and job involvement (H4).

Table (6) shows the results of hypothesis 5 as follows:

Table (6): H5 Testing Results

	Organizational Identification			
	Beta Coefficients	**(R^2)**	**Sig**	**F**
Perceived External Image	0.493	0.312(*)	0.001	125.638
Perceived External Image (x) **Perceived Organizational Distinctiveness**	0.082	0.394(*)	0.001	89.552

* Correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed)

This hypothesis proposed that POD could work as a moderator to the PEI-OI relationship. Therefore, the interaction effect of PEI and POD on OI, was assessed. The results supported the moderation effect of the POD variable, and thus H5 was accepted.

It could be observed from table (6) that when the regression analysis was run on the PEI-OI relationship, there was a significant positive effect with $R^2 = 0.312$, at a significant level equals to 0.05, p=0.001. However, after the interaction between POD and PEI, a higher R^2 of 0.394 was recorded, indicating an increase by 8% in the variance explained in OI. This result proves the moderating role of the POD variable on the PEI-OI relationship, hence, supporting the H5 hypothesis.

Discussion

The aim of this study was to examine the role of external organizational image as perceived by employees, on their level of job satisfaction and job involvement at work. Two hypotheses (H1 and H2) were first drawn to achieve such aim. These hypotheses proposed that the more employees see their organization's external image as being positively perecived by external stakholders, the more they get involved to and will be satisfied with their jobs. The results on both hypotheses proved this proposal correct. Specifically, the results emphasized on the significant role of perceived external image in explaining the variance in employees' job Satisfaction (H1), and job involvement (H2).

These findings agree with the vein of research which proved the positive effect of PEI on job satisfaction (e.g. Abbas and Karage, 2015; Carmeli, 2005; Carmeli and Freund, 2009; Helm, 2013; Kamasak. 2011; Riordan, et al., 1997), and to the limited research that investigated the effect of PEI on job involvement (e.g. Carmeli, 2005).

The above results could be explained by referring to the social exchange theory and the recprocity norm (Blau, 1964; Gouldner, 1960), which indicate that the relationships between employees and

their organizations rely on the exchange of their positive behaviors and attitudes for the organizational benefits.

It is suggested that employees normally exchange their attitudes with their organization, based on their experienced relationship with this organization. If this relationship is positive, then they will reciprocate positive gains with positive reactions, and vice versa. Therefore, as per the study's hypotheses, the more employees perceive their organization's external image, as prestigious and reputable, the more they will reciprocate good relationships with this organization, reflected in high levels of positive outcomes, either in terms of job satisfaction or job involvement.

Nevertheless, the above PEI-job positive outcomes relationships were then furtherly challenged by the researcher to investigate the mechanism or the process through which those exchanged relationships are performed. In other words, the researcher wanted to understand why in some cases those exchanged relationships succeed, while in others they do not (e.g. Dalton, et al., 2019).

The answer to this qerry was reached through depending on the social identity theory, which introduces OI as a key mechanism to understand the exchanged relationships between employees and their organization (Yildiz, 2018). According to this notion, the research suggested OI as a key mechanism to explain the relationships between PEI and positive outcomes. Hypotheses 3 and 4 were therefore extracted, to examine the mediating role of OI on the PEI-job satisfaction, and PEI-job involvement relationships. Interestingly, both hypotheses were accepted.

The results of H3 and H4 have supported the mediating role of OI on both relationships. The results here justify and explain why high employee's positive outcomes are exchanged for good PEI, as shown in H1-2. It seems that individuals with perceived sense of

belongingness to their organization, will behave for its interests. Meaning that employees will not merely exchange or automatically react to positive PEI by favorable outcomes, but they will do this because they feel themselves as members of the organization of which they belong and are attached to. Therefore, they will react to what of benefit to this organization. Accordingly, it can be assumed that these employees' attitudes and behaviors could be governed by the extent employees define themselves with their organizations.

H3 results support the above argument, and came to collaborate with studies that have examined the PEI-OI relationship (e. g. Anwar, et al., 2019; Klimchak, et al., 2019), and the OI-job satisfaction relationship (e. g. Collins, et al., 2019; Hwang and Jang, 2020). Similarly, H4 came to support studies that examined the OI-job involvement relationship (e. g. Lee, et al., 2015).

Nevertheless, it has to be noted that the mediation effect of the OI in both H3 and H4 hypotheses had only a partial role. This note would imply two important remarks: first, is that PEI has its own individual effect on positive outcomes. However, the second remark still implies that the mechanism through which the PEI-positive outcomes relationships are proceeded, are done via the OI factor. This factor translates the perceived prestigious image of the organization into higher identification, and thus employees react back with higher positive outcomes.

So far, the above discussion has confirmed the importance of organizational identification as an explanatory factor to the relationships between PEI and job-related outcomes as hypothesized. Nevertheless, since the OI is believed to be an important mediating factor, the researcher has furtherly questioned if this factor can be raised to gurantee favorable job positive outcomes. Accordingly, POD was suggested as a moderator to the PEI-OI relationship. It was argued that if the positive external

image of the organization can play an important role in raising up the sense of belongingness to the organization, then if this perception was accompanied by a positive inner image of the organization, the effect on OI could be even higher. To detect this argument, H5 was proposed to test the interaction effect of PEI and POD on OI.

Interestingly, the results showed that PEI on its own has explained 31% of the variation in OI, yet, when PEI-OI relationship was moderated by the POD, the explained variation of OI was raised by 8%, reaching 39%.

From this result, one can conclude that employees' perceptions of their organizational image brought by external sources (PEI), if associated with a perception of the organization's distinctiveness (POD), this would eventually create a stronger bond or identification to the organization.

Moreover, some interesting notes could be detected, that is, all the research variables are above the mean, and that OI recorded for the highest mean. These results also highlighted the importance of employees' high perceptions of their organization's external image in raising up employees' job satisfaction and job involvement. This conclusion was also explained by the mechanism OI partially plays in explaining the process through which PEI is translated into high job positive outcomes. Also, it was noted that if PEI was combined with favorable employees' views to their organization's distinctiveness, this could even have higher effect on leveling up employees' OI.

Conclusion

Based on these results, the research concludes that perceived external image is not only an important issue due to its great effect on customer satisfaction as generally known, but also, can draw positive effects on employees' job satisfaction and job involvement as well. Moreover, it seems that raising up employees' organizational identification could be an important key to turn the organizational external image into high employees' job satisfaction and job involvement. Finally, raising the perceived organizational distinctiveness, through shaping favorable culture, management philosophies, practices and values would also boost the external organization's image effect on OI.

Recommendations of the Study

Relying on the study's results, some recommendations could be proposed to the practitioners and managers inside organizations as follows:

1. Taking into consideration outside stackeholders' judgments about the organization; as employees' perceptions will be affected by these judgments when forming their own perceptions about organizational external image. Leveling up outside stackeholders' judgments could be done through improving organizational reputation, applying total quality management programs, offering high quality products, increasing organizational competitive advantage, practicing corporate social responsibility, and offering fair human resources practices. These programs and practices will in their turn participate in increasing organizational image and reputation, and would help in increasing employees' perceptions about the organizational external image, when affected by these positive outsiders' judgments.

2. Directing attention into the direct significant role of perceived external image in changing and increasing employees' positive attitudes towards their jobs. Meaning that when employees perceive organizational external image positively, they will exchange those good transactions through increased positive attitudes towards the jobs (ie: both of job satisfaction and job involvement).

3. Arousing attention into the significant role of organizational identification as a powerful way in explaining how perceived external image participates in leveling up employees' positive outcomes towards their jobs. This means that employees' positive perceptions about their organization's external prestige, would in their turn participate in reciprocating those good relations through increased organizational identification, and increased job satisfaction and job involvement.

4. Taking into consideration both of social exchange and social identity approaches, to explain employees' exchanged processes and relations with their organizations. This could be done through giving interest to the main variables affecting OI, and positive outcomes, such as effective corporate social responsibility programs, integrated accountability and control systems, organizational support programs, fair payment systems, in addition to good corporate reputation, and external image of the organization.

5. Enabling good conditions, which strengthen the relationship between perceived external image and employees' organizational identification; through enabling and increasing perceived organizational distinctiveness as a main dimension of organizational identity. This may be done through raising up employees' perceptions of the uniqueness of their organization's values, ideologies, management practices, and shaping favorable organizational culture. This could be also done through raising

up management's respect and recognition for their employees, and giving them challenging missions and tasks, offering fair rewarding programs, depending on employee's excellence, skills and competencies, in addition to building trust between employees and both of managers and colleagues.

Limitations of the Study

Due to the lack of getting a complete sampling frame, a convenient sample has been conducted to collect data from respondents, with a response rate of 62%. This sampling technique and relatively low response rate may affect the generalizability of the study results. However, this low response rate was affected by the corona virus closing circumstances.

Suggestions for Future Research

1. The current study has investigated the effects of employees' perceived external image on employees' positive outcomes towards their jobs. Therefore, it recommends other studies to apply the research model on employees' attitudes towards their organizations, such as organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB), either individual OCB, or OCB directed for the organization.
2. The study has only investigated perceived organizational distinctiveness, as a dimension of organizational identity. Accordingly, it recommends other researchers applying the research model using the other two dimensions: centrality and durability, as two moderator variables in strengthening the relationship between PEI and OI.
3. The partial mediation results revealed in H3 and H4 could imply that other mediating variables may be incorporated to convey and give more explanations to the PEI-positive outcomes relationships. Examples of these mediating variables are

supportive attitudes, such as belongingness to the organization, and trust in the organization.

4. The research also recommends future studies to apply the specific outside stakeholders' perspective. This would help capturing and differentiating between specific stakeholders' points of view regarding the organization's external image, and comparing the results with the current study results.

5. A convenient sample of employees working in large trading food and beverages organizations has been used to collect data. Therefore, the current study recommends other researchers to use random sampling techniques, and apply the current research model on other sectors, such as banks and communication. It also recommends applying the research model on small and medium enterprises, and governmental institutions, and comparing the results with those of the current study.

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