

KNEE JERK SATISFACTION: DISPLAYING SATISFACTION AS AN OUTCOME OF INTEREST

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We hypothesize a causal linkage between the employee engagement mediator to the organizational commitment mediator such that a third specific indirect effect began with workplace civility (X) through employee engagement (M1) through organizational commitment (M2) to employee satisfaction (Y).

ABSTRACT

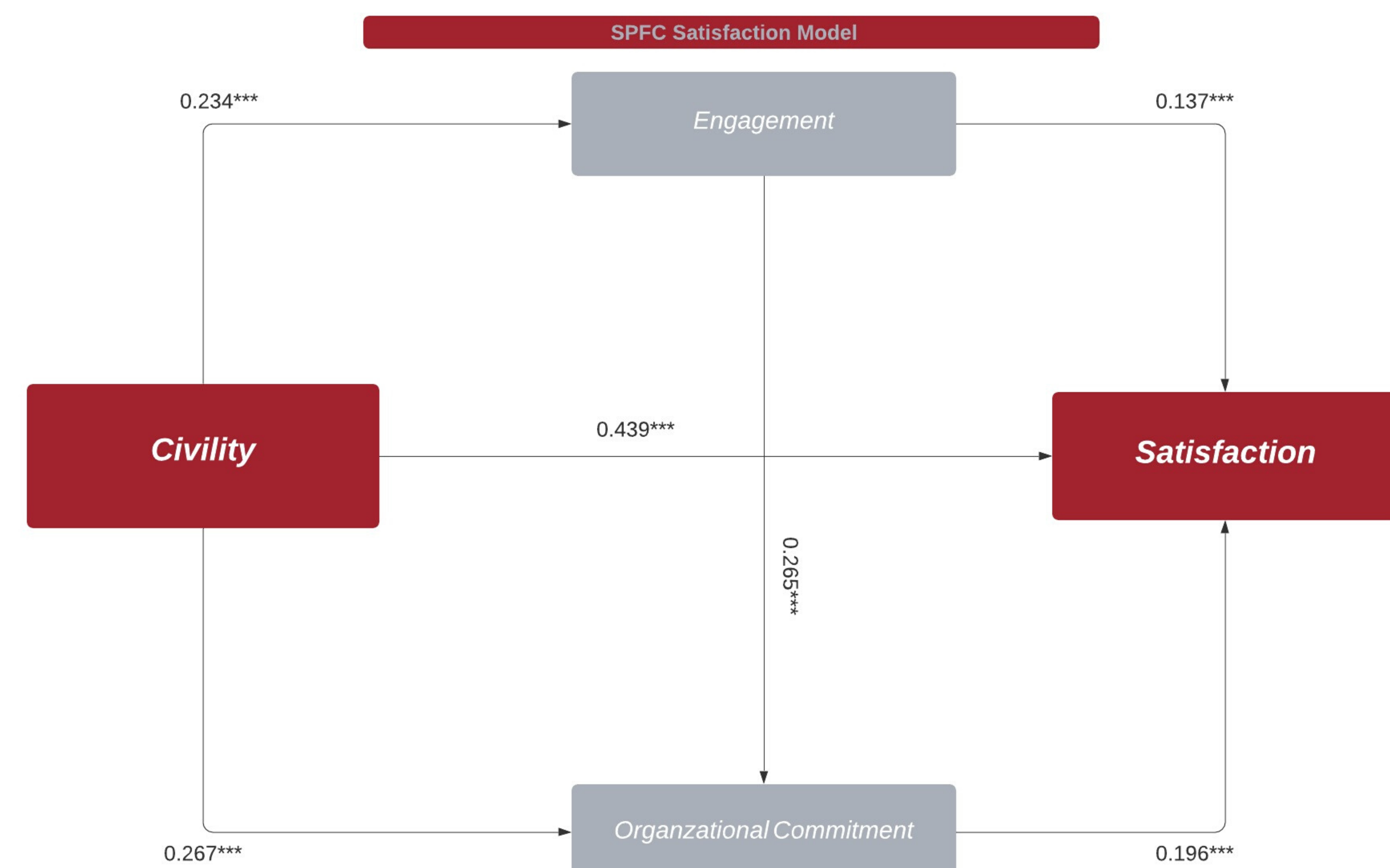
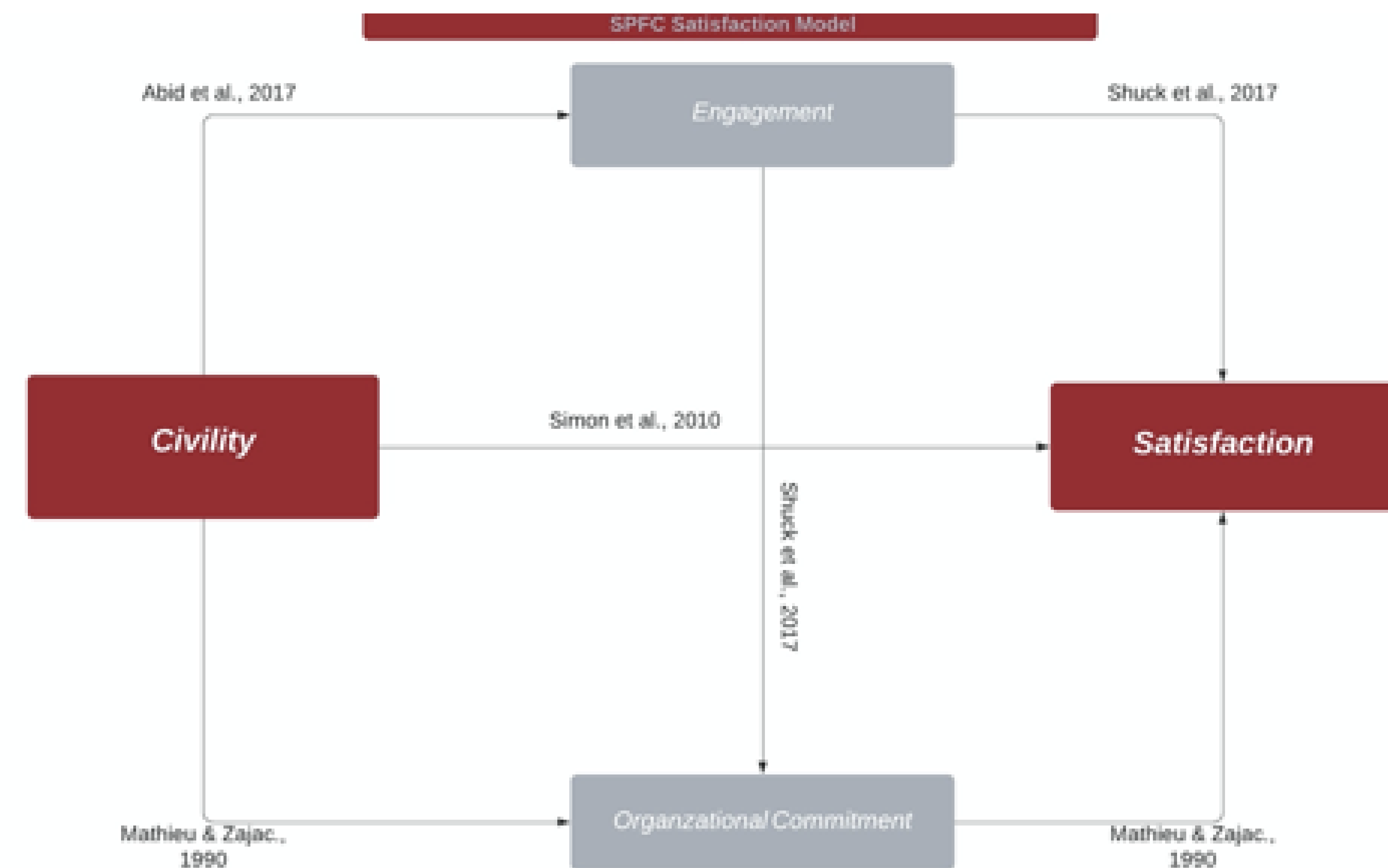
Satisfaction among applied psychological literature has been often viewed as a correlate to constructs of interest in the same field (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Shuck, Adelson & Reio, 2017) While literature exists in promotion of employee job satisfaction, satisfaction is often tied to the ultimate fiscal criterion or productivity of an organization. Employee job satisfaction can be catalytic in an individual's personal, professional, and their organizational goals. This paper seeks to explore job satisfaction as an outcome variable of workplace civility. Additionally, both employee engagement and organizational commitment will be assessed as potential mediators for the relationship between workplace civility and job satisfaction. Looking to the data comprised from a state agency we find evidence to suggest further research should be conducted on the antecedents and correlates of job satisfaction. In particular, we suspect workplace civility is a predictor of job satisfaction and employee engagement alongside organizational commitment mediate the relationship between the predictor and the outcome of interest.

INTRODUCTION

A sizeable body of research has demonstrated that job attitudes and behaviors are related to a variety of organizationally desired outcomes. That said, researchers in the field of industrial and organizational psychology have long examined job attitudes such as organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and employee engagement due to the impact they have on organizations (Christian et al., 2011; Judge & Kammeyer-Muller, 2012). While a large body of knowledge exists pertaining to how job attitudes relate to overall organizational success there is a lack of understanding and agreement on what comprises and predicts desired outcomes, such as, job satisfaction. We look to the data collected by Collin's Alliance, that included 1484 participants at a state agency, to understand the predictors of satisfaction. From the vast body of research on civility, satisfaction, engagement, and organizational commitment, we find a number of articles that highlight the statistical associations between these four variables. According to Abid and colleagues (Abid, Sajjad, Elani, Farooqi & Nisar, 2018), there is a link between civility and engagement. Additional research indicates a correlation between engagement and satisfaction and a link between engagement and organizational commitment (Shuck, Adelson & Reio, 2017). Moreover, Mathieu and Zajac (1990) discuss the link between civility and organizational commitment alongside the link between organizational commitment and satisfaction. Lastly, Simon and colleagues (Simon, Judge, & Halvorsen-Ganepola, 2010) link civility, our predictor, to satisfaction. Given the prior research on these four constructs, we have created a model which seeks to explore and understand how these four constructs relate to each other. Moreover, after analyzing research on these constructs we can argue that satisfaction is often tied to behaviors like performance. That said, the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB, Ajzen, 1991), also aided the framework of the model we present. The Theory of Planned Behavior links general attitudes (e.g., civility) to specific attitudes (e.g., engagement and organizational commitment) and then to intentions to perform the behavior in question (e.g., performance). Thus, the variable we present are general and specific attitudes which may lead to satisfaction and then performance.

METHOD

Sampling and Data Collection: The data for this study was collected through an All Employee Survey conducted at a state agency. Within this survey there were four separate measures: a 31-item employee satisfaction scale, a 12- item employee engagement scale based on Shuck, Adelson, and Reio (2017), a 8-item workplace civility scale, and a single-item organizational commitment measure. Additionally, the survey included a demographic selection that asked participants to specify the amount of time they have been with the company, their approximate age, their gender identity, their status as a supervisor, and the number of employees they are responsible for (assuming they are a supervisor). The demographic variables collected in this survey were not included in the analysis as an effort to create a more parsimonious exploratory model and minimize the degrees of freedom in the analysis. The completed survey included 1484 responses, however, only 1340 responses were included in the analysis due to missingness. **Data Missingness and Preliminary Analysis:** A missingness analysis was conducted in R utilizing the packages mice (v. 3.7.0) and Amelia (v. 1.7.6). Following the recommendations of Parent (2013), all cases within the dataset that had more than 20% missingness were removed. This left 1340 cases to be utilized in the analysis, with a total of 0.05% of the values within the dataset missing. The preliminary analysis of the data included a calculation of alpha coefficients and the distribution of the data. The alpha coefficients for each scale was above .80, indicating a sufficient level of internal reliability. Additionally, none of the variables were found to be significantly skewed or kurtotic. All alpha coefficients, skew, and kurtosis values can be seen in Table 1. **Data Analysis:** We conducted serial multiple mediation analysis was to test the influence of workplace civility (X) on employee satisfaction (Y) directly as well as indirectly through the mediators employee engagement (M1) and organizational commitment (M2). We conducted the analysis in R using the lavaan (v. 0.6-3) package by followed the procedure outlined in Hayes (2013). The analysis included an assessment of the strength and significance of the specific indirect effects, total indirect effect, direct effect, and total effect. The significance of each effect was tested using a nonparametric sampling procedure called a bootstrap analysis. An effect was declared to be statistically significant if the 95% bias-corrected bootstrap confidence interval for the parameter estimate did not contain zero.



RESULTS

The results suggest that 53% of the variance in employee satisfaction is accounted for by the three variables in the model. As depicted in Figure 1 and presented in Table 3, All three of the indirect effects were statistically significant and all but two of the indirect effects were statistically significantly different from each other. Specifically, indirect effect 2, the effect of civility through organizational commitment to satisfaction ($B = 0.052, p < .001, CI95 [0.040, 0.067]$), was slightly stronger than indirect effect 1 from civility through engagement to satisfaction ($B = 0.032, p < .001, CI95 [0.018, 0.049]$) and even stronger than indirect effect 3 from civility through engagement, through organizational commitment, to satisfaction ($B = 0.012, p < .001, CI95 [0.007, 0.019]$). Additionally, the associated pairwise contrast between indirect effects 1 and indirect effect 2 was $B = -0.020$ ($p = 0.074, CI95 [-0.042, 0.002]$). Given that this contrast was not statistically significant, we can assume that there is not a statistically significant difference between indirect effect 1 and indirect effect 2. The two contrasts that were statistically significant were between indirect effect 1 and indirect effect 3 $B = 0.020$ ($p < .01, CI95 [0.006, 0.035]$) and between indirect effect 2 and indirect effect 3 $B = 0.040$ ($p < .001, CI95 [0.026, 0.056]$). Furthermore, the total indirect effect (i.e., the sum of the specific indirect effects, [$B = 0.096, p < .001, CI95 [0.078, 0.119]$]) was statistically significant. Both the total effect ($B = 0.536, p < .001, CI95 [0.498, 0.573]$) and direct effect ($B = 0.439, p < .001, CI95 [0.403, 0.475]$) of civility on satisfaction were statistically significant. That is, the effect of workplace civility on employee satisfaction did have a statistically significant effect when ignoring the effects of the mediators (i.e., the total effect). Also, when employee engagement and organizational commitment were statistically controlled, the relationship between civility and satisfaction remained significant (i.e., the direct effect). These results suggests that, while civility does have a significant effect on satisfaction through both, engagement and organizational commitment, it also has a significant effect on its own. play an important role in an employees overall satisfaction. Interestingly, while the relationship between engagement and organizational commitment was found to be significant, both contrast 2 and contrast three, as well as the overall b-weight of the relationship, indicated that this relationship may not be as important to explaining the overall model.

CONCLUSION

What we conclude from this information is that a serial mediation is present from civility to satisfaction through both engagement and organizational commitment. However, we found that the correlation between engagement and organizational commitment was not strong enough to be considered as vital to the overall model. We conclude that a parallel mediation may be a more appropriate model given that the serial mediation does not explain above and beyond a simple mediation of civility to satisfaction through engagement or civility to satisfaction through organizational commitment. Alternatively, a less complex model using a simple mediation for civility to satisfaction through either engagement or organizational commitment may be a more interpretable model.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for Composite Scores

Variable	n	M	SD	Skew	Kurtosis	Cronbach's α
Organizational Commitment	1308	3.41	0.92	-1.48	1.10	–
Satisfaction	1339	4.46	0.73	-0.56	0.22	0.95
Engagement	1340	5.26	0.65	-1.65	5.69	0.92
Civility	1332	4.76	0.92	-0.89	0.68	0.91

Table 2

Correlation between Variables

Variables	1	2	3	4
1. Organizational Commitment	–			
2. Satisfaction	0.37***	–		
3. Engagement	0.68***	0.33***	–	
4. Civility	0.46***	0.27***	0.33***	–

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Table 3

Path Coefficients and Significance Values

Relationship	B	95% Confidence Interval	
		Lower	Upper
Indirect 1	0.032***	0.018	0.049
Indirect 2	0.052***	0.040	0.067
Indirect 3	0.012***	0.007	0.019
Contrast 1	-0.020	-0.042	0.002
Contrast 2	0.020**	0.006	0.035
Contrast 3	0.040***	0.026	0.056
Total Indirect Effect	0.096***	0.078	0.119
Total Effect	0.536***	0.498	0.573
Direct Effect	0.439***	0.403	0.475

Note. Indirect 1 = The effect of civility through engagement on satisfaction, Indirect 2 = The effect of civility through organizational commitment on satisfaction, Indirect 3 = The effect of civility through engagement through organizational commitment on satisfaction, Contrast 1 = Indirect 1 – Indirect 2, Contrast 2 = Indirect 1 – Indirect 3, Contrast 3 = Indirect 2 – Indirect 3, Total Indirect Effect = the sum of all indirect effects, Total Effect = the effect of civility on satisfaction ignoring all mediators, Direct Effect = the effect of civility on satisfaction controlling for the mediators. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

