

Work Engagement as a Mediating Mechanism between Person–Organization Fit and Turnover Intention in the Malaysian Oil and Gas Sector

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Abstract: This paper has a double focus. Firstly, this paper investigates the effect of person-organization fit on Work Engagement (WE) and the effect of work engagement on the turnover intention (TI). Secondly, the role of WE as a mediator in the relationship between person-organization fit (P-O fit) and TI is examined. The data were collected using a cross-sectional online survey design via a snowball sampling technique. This research was carried out by 420 oil and gas (O&G) experts. Initial screening omitted 17 incomplete questionnaires. Consequently, for the final analysis of the data, 403 questionnaires were used. The hypothesized model was evaluated using the partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) technique using smart PLS 3.0 software. Results of the present research showed a positive relationship among person-organization fit, WE, and the expectation for TI. In particular, it was found that person-organization fit is a strong antecedent of work engagement, and work engagement has a negative association with TI of its employees. The association between person-organization fit and TI was also mediated by WE. Literature outcomes indicate that oil and gas companies need to be more vigilant towards person-organization fit in order to strengthen their WE to minimize TI. Ultimately, the results provide professionals and key stakeholders with strategic perspectives. So far, the mediatory role of WE between person, organization, firm, and TI has not received much attention. This research deals with this literature lacuna.

Keywords: Person-Organization Fit, Intention to Leave, Employee Engagement, Malaysia, Oil and Gas

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1. Introduction

The turnover of staff was and continues to be a major topic of investigation, with thousands of publications in a couple of years (Bolt 2022) [1]. Higher volunteer turnover of employees costs organizations and is detrimental to the overall efficiency and performance of the company (Holtrop 2026) [2]. Although the literature has undesirable consequences, highly skilled employees globally continue to express high turnover. Malaysian companies do not have any exclusions, while there is a steady rise in voluntary turnover (VT). In the year 2023, 33 percent of the participants were searching for an active job, with 24 percent planning to change jobs within the next six months, as indicated in the report (Carnevale 2023) [3]. These statistics show that voluntary turnover stands in the way of business achievement.

A broad scope of research indicates the health of the employees and employers, Amirabdolalian (2025) [4], while the main task is intended for a wide variety of successful results in the

workplace. "Compatibility among individuals and organizations" refers to Personal fitness. Prior studies have shown that P-O-fit has a relationship between job satisfaction, retention, organizational citizenship behavior, job performance, and commitment (Kaur & Kang, 2021) [5]. That is to say, workers who feel good at their company have less desire to leave (Hur, 2022. [6] Nevertheless, little work has been done on how person organizations fit results, for instance, TI.

A new method (i.e., mediation) between human resource management (HRM) functions was proposed for black-box HRM theorists. The phenomenon of black box underlines the role of the intermediary factors (IF) among human resource management and results. HRM policies thus do not have a direct effect on organizational efficiency, but have a direct effect on the actions of workers Muduli 2024) [7]. Consequently, subsequent research has shown that the mechanisms by which HRM works influence performance results are important to be explored. Work engagement as a mediating mechanism connecting many HRM practices and positive results in the workplace in recent times has received considerable attention. WE is "an optimistic, satisfying, energetic, dedication-related mentality" (Urien 2026) [8]

Highly committed workers display high-quality attitudes and efficiency (Muduli & McLean, 2021) [9]. High WE naturally leads to customer satisfaction, efficiency, shareholder returns, and higher profitability. We have been recognized as an important mediating factor of human resource management models of turnover by an ever-growing number of scholars (Shabbir, Iqbal, Sandhu, Khan, & Zameer, 2017; Shah & Beh, 2018). The mediating position of work engagement among person-organization fit and the TI is scarcely discussed despite its significance. The literature investigates the effect of person-organization fit on work engagement and work engagement's effects on the purpose of TI. Secondly, it explores the role of WE as a mediator for P-O fit and TI. It is designed to ensure that workers are highly involved with their role performance through collaboration between individuals and the company they work for. Highly engaged workers would not be more willing to leave their employment by default.

In this review, two key gaps within research literature are discussed. First, previous studies explored the mediating impact of several constructs, including job satisfaction, employee engagement, psychological environment, and coordinating dedication between P-O fit and TI (Muse, 2021) [10]. Nevertheless, the role of WE in mediating the association between P-O fit and TI is understood. While there have been few attempts to conceptualize the association among person-organization fit, work engagement, and the purpose for turnover (McDonald,

Park, & Jin, 2018), there is rather little evidence behind such concepts. This research gap is filled by this report.

Furthermore, current research has an important methodology. Most of the previous studies used methods of data analysis of the first generation. There have been several drawbacks of first-generation methods in recent quantitative method development. The suggestion is to use second-generation, in particular structural equation modeling (Katrín, 2026) [11] as an essential component of social science research. Yet PLS-SEM has been seldom used in HRM and in organizational behavior studies, unexpectedly. This research deals with this simple methodological gap by using PLS-SEM. The following part describes the primary study variables. In this section, the conceptual ties among person-organization fit, work engagement, and TI are established based on Lewin's field theory (LFT) and social exchange theory (SET). This is a short account of the methods of analysis used to attain the goals of the research. Literature results can be found in the following part. This research discusses the analysis and practical contribution.

2. Literature Review and Development of Hypotheses

2.1 Lewin's Field Theory

LFT is a systematic method for explaining the cognitive, physiological, and affective characteristics of individuals (Bettencourt, Houston, & Wenger, 1998). Lewin's field theory was used as the theoretical basis for the connection between attitude and associated behaviorality and P-O fit, in particular in various models of HRM-performance. In addition, Julien and Bruyat (2001) argued that the two dimensions of individual behavior, the present conditions in which behavior occurs in circumstances and forces individuals at a given stage, should be understood. The interrelationships between the actors can thus contribute to subjective and collective culture. The LFT is integrated into the work in which the relationship among the Person, organization fit, work engagement, and the TI is conceptualized.

The action of individuals depends on their workplace. Interaction among people and their work environment contributes to individual behaviors and attitudes. Individuals who have a positive view of their organization (the working environment) continue to show positive behavior. In this sense, a high level of WE is expected to result in the perceived adaptation among workers and their organizations (Raoush, 2023, [12] Jiatong et al., 2022) [13]. That is demonstrated when

workers execute the duties efficiently, demonstrate strong workplace power, and show a lower probability of leaving their organizations.

2.2 Social Exchange Theory

- The SET describes the linkages among constructs in models of HRM and is considered to be the most appropriate theory to understand activities related to work[14]. The key premises of the SET are social interactions and responsibilities, which can be established through a variety of interaction arrangements among parties. In addition, social interchange rules control the reciprocity (Davis & Evans, 2005). As such, the mechanism of social exchange is known as a reciprocal and mutually rewarding activity. Social interaction depends on the relationship between the worker and the employer.

To illustrate this, organizational policies such as the provision of socio-economic and infrastructure, the maintenance of a harmonious and comfortable working environment, and equal partnership will place the responsibility on employees. As a result, workers tend to pay back their constructive, beneficial behaviors and actions in the context of reciprocity (Kee & Gadi, 2018). Based on these premises, compatibility of people is likely to be seen as a beneficial act aimed at employees and thus their commitment to work efficiency, a high level of work effort, emotional attachment, and longer-lasting relationships.

2.3 Hypotheses Development

Person-organization fit highlights the consistency among individuals and organizations and will have an impact on the level of employees' WE. This simply increases the WE level by balancing employees' talents, skills, beliefs, and goals with those of the company. In contrast, there is little WE for those who are less suited to the company. In addition, workers' good fitness experiences in the company increase their psychological trust. The engagement theory of Kahn (1990) indicates that psychological security is one of the main aspects of the workforce; thus, a high degree of psychological security will lead to high rates of involvement. However, the congruence between interest and purpose between the employee and the employer gives meaning and psychological attachment to the basic conditions of engagement. Haque et al. (2020) [15] obviously claimed Person-Organization Fit is strongly associated with employee participation in Malaysian organizations.

H1: Person-organization fit impacts WE positively.

The strong association between WE and TI has been illustrated in prior studies. Engagement offers stimulating, optimistic, employment-related interactions and an attitude linked to good health and constructive work. Such positive experiences and feelings lead to better work-related outcomes for each employee, give their employer greater respect, and make them less vulnerable to leaving the company (Praveen Kumar et al., 2026) [16]. Staff are emotionally attached to their current jobs and prefer not to apply for other jobs (Harbridge et al., 2022) [17]. 21 studies show a significant negative association between WE and TI, and the correlation between these systems was demonstrated. Keeping in view the above discussion, the following hypothesis has been developed:

H2: Work Engagement is negatively and significantly related to TI.

The positive experience of workers connecting with their employer company is based on the values of SET. In this regard, as stated by Saks (2006, p. 602), “one way for employees to respond to their employers is through their level of engagement”. It is consistent with the concept of engagement as a dual employee partnership. The relationship generates positive outputs of attitude and behavior and, in particular, low turnover. Clearly, the association between person-organization fit and several results variables (for example, organizational commitment) has been mediated through employee involvement. As such, work engagement will be a possible method that combines person-organization fit with the goal of TI. We therefore assume:

H3: The association between person-organization fit and TI is mediated by WE.

3. Methodology

The collection of data was through email survey questionnaires. Non-probability sampling uses the method of snowball sampling for data collection. E-mails were floated to 1800 O&G experts who work in Malaysia, requesting oil and gas companies to take part, and expand the survey connection to their colleagues from the same industry, including their hyperlink to the questionnaire, which is distributed online.

Malaysian O&G experts tend to deprive local organizations of their talents in other countries that have a lot of oil and gas resources (Kasahara et al., 2026)[18]. Therefore, it is important to mention that this study aims to find ways of keeping skilled Malaysians employed in the domestic sector. Over a span of three months, 402 questionnaires have been received. 21 incomplete questionnaires have been removed. The questionnaires for data analysis were 381. Table 1 summarizes participants' profiles.

Table 1 Respondents Demographic Profile (n=381)

Demographic Variable	Group	Frequency Distribution	Percentage
Gender	Male	227	55.1%
	Female	183	44.2%
	No response	3	0.7%
Age (years)	18–29 years	159	39.0%
	30–39 years	248	60.5%
	No response	3	0.50%
Tenure (years)	1–2 years	47	11.3%
	3–4 years	60	14.5%
	5–6 years	68	16.2%
	7–8 years	130	31.7%
	9–10 years	61	15.1%
	> 10 years	41	10.2%
	No response	4	1.00%

3.1 Measurement Scales

Person-organization fit scale with six (6) items was adopted from Yoon and Jung (2013). Person-organisation fit operationalized in terms of “general compatibility” values, objectives, and capabilities, and with other members of the same organisation, was evaluated by asking target participants to state their fitness with their current organisation. P-O fit scale sample item is, “I really fit this company”. The scale of work engagement with nine (9) items, a short version scale with 3 dimensions of “vigor, dedication, and absorption,” was measured in the widely accepted UWES-9 (Utrecht Work Engagement Scale), developed by Schaufeli.

“My work inspires me” was one sample item of the work engagement scale. The scale of turnover intention with five (5) items was adopted from Yoon and Jung (2013). This study refers to the willingness of staff to give up their jobs on a voluntary and permanent basis. The turnover intention scale sample item is, “I seriously plan to leave my current job for another company”. The items of the measurement scale have been assessed on a 5-point Likert-type scale, which ranges from 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly disagree.

3.2 Test of Common Method Bias

Due to a single source of information, O&G experts are used to mitigate traditional process biases in this study. Given the data collected by the individual source of data. For example, (a) participants have been ensured anonymity and confidentiality; (b) the questionnaire has been pre-examined to eliminate vague, irrelevant, and complicated questions, ensuring fair efforts by all

respondents; (c) clear instructions, including study definitions, for completing the survey were given to prevent confusion; and participants were told that they had not obtained desired answers. Researchers wanted honest replies, (d) and participants were notified there were no preferred answers. Standard process bias in this study was therefore of little concern.

4. Data Analysis and Results

To evaluate the study model, PLS-SEM was used. Smart PLS 3.0 is used to assess the measurement model, for instance, convergent validity, internal consistency reliability, and discriminant validity in the first stage and structural model assessment in the second stage (e.g., testing of hypotheses) (Hult, Hair Jr, Sarstedt, & Ringle, 2016). For several reasons, PLS-SEM was used in the present research. Firstly, due to the research's exploratory characteristics, the causal relation among person-organization fit, work engagement, and TI was not properly understood in prior studies. Secondly, the main focus was on prediction. In particular, PLS-SEM is also suggested for mediating processes for complex models. In light of the current study, smart PLS is the best approach to assess data and investigate the mediation function of work engagement between a fit person organization and TI.

4.1 Measurement model

Measurement model evaluation includes convergent validity, discriminant validity, and internal consistency reliability. In comparison to Cronbach's alpha, the test of composite reliability (CR) gives much better results and has a better internal consistency measure. For exploratory research, a composite reliability value of “0.6 is acceptable in exploratory research, but values above 0.950 indicate redundancy” as recommended by Avkiren (2018).

This research confirms the internal consistency of the instrument. The results of the current study composite reliability for the person-organization fit was 0.940, work engagement 0.920, and the TI was 0.917. The “extent to which a measure correlates positively with alternative measures of the same construct” is called convergent validity (CV). Average variance extracted (AVE) and indicators' outer loadings are used to assess the CV. The outer loadings with higher values show that indicators are extremely illustrative of the latent variables. However, latent variables will describe at least 50 percent of the variance of each indicator.

Therefore, indicator outer loadings should be above 0.70. Nonetheless, 0.70 is usually seen as very close to all practical tasks (Hullend, 1999). Each construct has a suitable convergent validity, with the exception of work engagement. For the improvement of the AVE, item seven

of the work engagement was therefore excluded. The outer loadings of the person-organization fit have values from 0.769 to 0.810, the value of TI was between 0.850 and 0.889, and work engagement was between 0.589 and 0.876. In addition, the AVE values of person-organization fit (0.774), work engagement (0.587), and TI were 0.621.

It is highly recommended to test the discriminant validity (DV) with a heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT). The value of HTMT should not be more than 0.85 (Clerk & Wetson, 1995) or 0.90 (Gold, Segars, & Malhotra, 2001). In this research, the findings of HTMT indicate that all the latent variables have met all the HTMT 0.85 criteria satisfactorily and confirm that each of these latent variables measures a distinct subject.

4.2 Assessment of the Structural Model

Structural model findings indicate a moderate R^2 (0.140) for TI, and for work engagement, the R^2 value is 0.354, which is considered substantial. The findings also show the effect size (f^2) of Person-organization fit was ($f^2 = 0.554$), which is considered a large effect of P-O fit, and the effect size of work engagement was ($f^2 = 0.167$) and considered a moderate effect size of WE on TI. The findings from Q^2 also show the predictive value of the model for work engagement ($Q^2 = 0.097$) and TI ($Q^2 = 0.198$).

Moreover, the findings of the study indicate that the path coefficient value of person-organization fit was positive and significant with work engagement ($\beta = 0.597$, $t=19.033$, $p < 0.06$), thus supporting the hypothesis H1. Similarly, the findings of the study indicate that the path coefficient value of work engagement was negative and significant with TI ($\beta = -0.374$, $t=8.776$, $p<0.06$), thus supporting hypothesis H2. Prechar and Heyas (2004) used to check the mediating influence of work engagement among person-organization fit, along with TI, in the Third Hypothesis to test the mediating effect of WE ($\beta = -0.234$, $t=5.893$, $p<0.05$). Table 2 summarizes the effects of the path coefficients.

Table 2: Direct and indirect results

H	Path	β value	SD	t-value	Lower Level	Upper Level	f^2	Q^2	R^2
H1	Work Engagement->Turnover intention	-0.374	0.039	8.776	-0.449	-0.290	0.167	0.198	0.140
H2	Person organization fitness->work engagement->turnover intention	-0.234	0.029	5.893	-0.279	-0.160			
H3	Person-organization fitness ->work engagement	0.597	0.035	19.033	0.519	0.660	0.554	0.097	0.354

5. Results Discussion

The research aims to investigate the causal link among person-organization fit, work engagement, and TI. The mediator of work engagement among person-organization fit and TI was also investigated. The findings of this research showed that person-organization fit is a good indicator for oil and gas experts in Malaysia. Person-organization fit provides conceptual coherence amongst employees and organizational expectations and principles. The action of individuals depends upon their work environment according to Lewin's field theory. Furthermore, there is a variety of expectations, structures, and principles within a work environment. Therefore, when people are able to find a good balance among goals, values, organizational principles, and co-workers, they show good attitudes and behavior.

Furthermore, the results of the analysis show that work engagement is a positive indicator to the aim for turnover of employee turnover. (Kasahara et al., 2026) indicate that engaged workers also have a better relationship with their employers, which leads to positive attitudes, behavior, and intentions. It indicates that highly dedicated people are more mentally, emotionally, and cognitively connected to their work and organization. Highly dedicated workers, therefore, show great strength, determination, and are less prone to leaving work.

Finally, the results confirm the position of the WE mediator among person-organization fit and TI. It showed that work engagement is an important method that transmits the impact of person-

organization fit for TI. While people consider that they are well in relation to the ideals of the organization, consider their organization well in line with their interests, and have the same qualities as other workers, they will get people to be closely involved with the organization.

5.1 Managerial Implications

Person-organization fit is a good antecedent of work engagement, which decreases the TI of employees in Malaysia's oil & gas experts, according to the results of this study. The consequences are that O&G organizations must focus more on P-O fit. From a manager's point of view, the person-organization fit training at the recruiting and selection stage is one way to achieve this. This can be useful for organizations whose priorities and values are well-suited to those of the company to recruit and retain people, to ensure that the candidates know their respective organizations and can decide how similar the organizational characteristics are to themselves. The organizations will give a complete explanation of their community, principles, and regulations.

In addition, the O&G industry is often seen as an area of high risk. Understanding a company's goals, overall performance requirements, job challenges, work culture, and appraisal criteria allows individuals to become workers in the organization they choose and to fulfill their individual career objectives and values. It is not wrong to say in this case that commitment among the employees must prevail for a P-O fit strategy to work efficiently. One way to do this is from time to time to assess the number of employees who are engaged.

The "engagement assessment" can be an essential effort, and the structured evaluation process can go hand in hand. It allows top management to consider how their workers are motivated and to figure out what they can do to further boost their WE level. When engagement has been established, the employee and the employer will become deeply emotionally involved, which will, in effect, ensure that O&G practitioners live longer in their organizations, as demonstrated in the results of prior studies.

6. Conclusion

Results of this research show that person-organization fit and engagement are both significant factors that affect employee TI. Next, the main conclusion of the analysis is that work engagement intermediates among person organization fit and TI. Person-organization fit, as well as employee engagement, will therefore be regarded as key points to reduce voluntary turnover. Thus, these conclusions theoretically take part in the discussion on HRM success by offering

empirical proof of WE as a method by which human resource activities have an impact on results, in particular, employees' expectations of turnover. The present findings of the study often provide analytical power in addition to the theoretical contributions. In the context of a highly risky working environment, oil and gas in particular, a comprehensive review of previous literature has not shown any HRM, engagement-turnover studies that have used PLS-SEM. With PLS-SEM, this research contributes significantly to methods by confirming that PLS-SEM is effective in the broader context.

6.1 Limitations of this Research

There is no study without limitations. The current study has been planned as a cross-sectional study. In light of the study, future studies should also use a mediating test and could have superior results through a longitudinal study. Future studies should use longitudinal studies to obtain superior causality results among constructs. The data have only been obtained by oil and gas experts who work in the Malaysian oil and gas industry. Therefore, workers from other industries do not reflect the results of this study. In order to confirm the value of the model tested, a comprehensive analysis, including sample recruitment from different industry sectors, is highly recommended.

Therefore, the current study was further limited by a non-probability sampling method. Considering that this research's primary objective was to test the hypotheses, and the target population's sampling setting was absent, it was considered acceptable to choose the non-probability sampling of the current research (Mukti, 2025) [19]. To enhance the generalizability of results, probability sampling methods (PSM) should be used in future studies, particularly for sampling generalization.

Ultimately, this investigation followed a mediating process and had no moderating effects. It will be fascinating to investigate further, together with organizational moderators or individual moderators, to see whether it contributes to the root cause association among person-organization fit, work engagement, and TI.

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