

## Mediation Analysis of Work Engagement: Relationship between Leader Member Exchange, Person Organisation Fit and Organisational Commitment.

<sup>1</sup>Dr Sunitaa Tank

Mentor, ATL, Niti Aayog, ICF PCC Coach, Founder, Leader in Making

<sup>2</sup>Dr Poonam Chawla

Independent Consultant  
LINC Education.

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### Abstract

The study examines the mediating effect of work engagement on the relationship between Leader Member Exchange, Person-organisation fit and Organisational Commitment. The participants of this study were 296 employees working in the service sector(IT, ITeS, KPO) in India. The researcher used structural equation modelling to test the relationships. The findings of the study highlight that LMX and PO fit have statistically significant relationship with Organisational Commitment. Work engagement has a partial mediating effect on the relationship between LMX and Organisational Commitment and partially mediates it between PO fit and Organisational commitment. Also, the study offers insights to practitioners to develop programs and activities which encourage high quality relationships amongst the leaders and subordinates. Secondly, it focuses on developing effective selection tools, so that individuals who have high value congruence could be selected for the organisation. Employees who exhibit high-value congruence with their respective organisations engage in behaviour which promotes the overall productivity of the firm and focuses on its sustainability in the changing business environment.

**Key Words :** Leader Member Exchange, Person-organisation fit, Organisational Commitment, Human Resource Management

### Introduction

Firms, small or large, performing in the volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) environment consistently look for sustainable sources of strategic advantage. Arguments that the performance of the employees is vital and has crucial implications on the overall performance of the organisations are prevalent amongst researchers and practitioners (Wright & McMahan, 2011). With the same premise in mind, scholars argue that the workforce of a firm lends a strategic edge and offers long term advantage to a firm which will be pre-emptive, in essence, not easy for the competitors to copy (Albrecht, Bakker, Gruman, Macey, & Saks, 2015). Therefore, in the era of 'war for talent,' it is important that organisations focus on engaging employees to sustain and succeed in the business world.

Organisations should actively develop strategies which will facilitate employees to work with passion and vigour to achieve the desired goals (Macey & Schneider, 2008). Work engagement

has across the board consequences on the performance of the employees and can be illustrated by dedication, participation, extra-role performance (Richardson, 2006; Crawford, Rich, Buckman, & Bergeron, 2014). Engagement is “a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigour, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Roma, & Bakker, 2002).” Furthermore, they argue that engagement cannot be termed as an ephemeral state, instead can be considered as “a more persistent and pervasive affective-cognitive state that is not focused on any particular object, event, individual, or behaviour” (Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Roma, & Bakker, 2002). Since engaged employees play an imperative role for the survival and growth of the firm, managers make efforts to develop a similar state of mind amongst the employees by creating favourable situations for them (Strom, Sears, & Kelly, 2014). Engagement encourages an employee to go the extra mile for the firm and inspires him to utilise his potential to enhance productivity (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1995). To engage employees is a daunting task faced by managers (Bakker, 2011). Although various factors influence the engagement of employees, for the purpose of current research leader-member exchange and person organisation fit are two factors that have been taken into consideration because of their practical implications for an organisation. Researchers suggest that the quality of relationships employees share with their managers or immediate supervisors is a vital factor in shaping their engagement levels and this relationship is termed as leader-member exchange (LMX) (Li, Sanders, & Frenkel, 2012; Matta, Scott, Koopman, & Conlon, 2015). The premise on which the LMX theory stands states that managers develop a distinct relationship with each of their subordinates, which is called as LMX differentiation, and this relationship has a considerable impact on the attitude of the employee as well as the leader (Henderson, Liden, Glibkowski, & Chaudhry, 2009). Thus, a firm can entrust its leaders with the responsibility of engaging employees so that there is an increase in overall productivity and commitment and reduction in turnover intentions (Maynard & Parfyonova, 2013). Apart from the relationship with the immediate supervisor plays a vital role in engaging the employee, value congruence amongst the employees and organisations has a central role in determining the attitude and behaviour of employees in the organisation (Memon, Salleh, Baharom, & Harun, 2014). Person organisation fit can be referred as “the fit and compatibility between the individual and the firm they are employed with” (Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005). The premise on which the concept of P-O fit focuses is the extent of similarity between the personality of the organisation and the individual (Chang, Chi, & Chuang, 2010). People who identify with their organisations and possess a sense of belongingness are more committed to their jobs and have reduced turnover intentions (Ng & Sarris, 2009).

The current research explores the influence of person-organization fit and leader-member exchange towards organisational commitment while examining the mediating effect of employee engagement. This research considers that LMX and P-O fit as antecedents of organisational commitment mediated by employee engagement. Needless, to mention that various studies have been conducted in this arena wherein the influence of P-O fit and LMX has been measured, but the studies are limited to western countries (Wollard & Shuck, 2011; Gutermann, Lehmann-Willenbrock, Boer, Born, & Voelpel, 2017; Garg & Dhar, 2017). Also, limited research in terms of P-O fit and LMX has examined its relationship with employee engagement and organisational commitment in the service sector in India. For the current study, engagement is considered as a mechanism to link LMX, P-O fit and organisational commitment.

## **Literature Review and Hypothesis Development**

### **Leader-Member Exchange**

The leader-member exchange theory draws attention to the dyadic relationship shared amongst the leaders and their subordinates in an organisation. The LMX theory states that relationships amongst leader and follower can be measured on a scale ranging from low-quality to high

quality (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Liden, 1997). Further, it is asserted that due to constrictions on time and resources, the high-quality association between the leader and followers are also limited (Wayne, Shore, & Liden, 1997). Therefore, the leader identifies a group of followers with whom he or she develops trust and respect and thus the development of a high-quality relationship (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman, & Fetter, 1990). Those subordinates who share a high-quality relationship with the manager receive resources which extend beyond their job description and in return may highlight the increased organisational commitment and organisational citizenship behaviour (Harris, Li, & Kirkman, 2014; Wang, Law, Hackett, Wang, & Chen, 2005). In contrast, low-quality relationships involve the exchange of limited contractual resources (Janssen & Van Yperen, 2004; Maslyn & Uhl-Bien, 2001). Employees who share high-quality relationships are likely to have positive work experience (Liden, Wayne, & Sparrowe, 2000; Volmer, Spurk, & Niessen, 2012). In a high-quality relationship, the leader is supportive of the follower and focuses on their development, while the followers reciprocate with a positive attitude and commitment, whereas in the case of low-quality relationship the converse holds true (G. Tummers & AC Bronkhorst, 2014).

High-quality LMX is represented through admiration and obligation amongst the leader and follower and furthermore leads to the development of a participative decision-making environment due to the presence of empowered employees (Jada & Mukhopadhyay, 2019). This leads to the higher in-role performance of employees and has an affirmative relationship with variables associated with job performance (Jada & Mukhopadhyay, 2019). Joo (2010) states that scarce studies are available on the link between LMX and organisational commitment. The available literature about LMX and organisational support states that high-quality relationship amongst leader and members support increases organisational support (Saks, 2006). A study by Allen & Meyer (1990) states that new recruits who experience support from their immediate supervisor and have high leader-member exchange relationships exhibit more commitment towards the organisation. Lee(2005) use hierarchical regression analysis to determine an affirmative association between LMX and organisational commitment. Joo (2010) also conducted research in the manufacturing sector, Korea and found a noteworthy positive relationship between LMX and organisational commitment. Based on the available literature it can be hypothesised:

H1: There is a positive relationship between LMX and organisational commitment

### **Person Organisation Fit**

Person organisation (P-O) fit is referred as the “congruence amongst the individuals’ values and the value of the organization in which they work” (Lovelace & Rosen, 1996; Yaniv & Farkas, 2005). The attraction-selection-attrition (ASA) model proposed by Schneider (1987) can be used to explain the concept of P-O fit. The underlying theory of ASA model states if individuals in an organisation are attracted to an organisation whose interests, needs and preferences are in congruence with their values (Slaughter, Stanton, Mohr, & Schoel III, 2005). Additionally, organisations also use appropriate recruitment and selection methods to attract people who are the best match for their values and goals (Lynn, Jr, R.J., & Sturman, 2011). It means that attraction is mutual amongst the prospective employee and the organisation and more the congruence amongst the values of both parties, higher is the person-organisation fit. Employees who validate a positive fit amongst themselves and the organisation tend to be satisfied and exhibit a higher commitment towards their job (Greguras & Diefendorff, 2009, Schneider, 2001). Commitment is a state wherein the employee with vigour wants to continue his membership with the organisation (Lawrence & Lawrence, 2009). The employees’ commitment towards the firm is not deterred by any favourable or unfavourable circumstances.

Employees believe that the firm values their contribution and shares similar goals, thus developing a positive psychological state wherein the employees also exhibit higher engagement levels (Ahmad, Veerapandian, & Ghee, 2011; Ng & Sarris, 2009). Employees who have a high P-O fit tend to have reduced intention to quit and do not show withdrawal behaviors (Boon, Den Hartog, Boselie, & Paauwe, 2011; Cable & DeRue, 2002).

Management researchers have constantly identified that person-organisation fit has an impact on the commitment level of the employees (Boon, Den Hartog, Boselie, & Paauwe, 2011; Lauver & Kristof-Brown, 2001; Shelton, Gartland, & Stack, 2011; Saks & Ashforth, 1997). The high-value congruence between employees and organisations lead to open communication and mutual trust which has a positive effect on the employees' performance and reduced intention to quit the firm, thus citing higher commitment towards the goals of the organisation (Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005; Edwards & Cable, 2009). From the available literature, it can be hypothesised that :

H2: There is a positive relationship between P-O fit and organisational commitment

### **Work Engagement**

Work engagement is a “positive mental state of mind which is illustrated by vigor, dedication and absorption” (Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Roma, & Bakker, 2002). Vigour can be defined to elevated energy and passion, intention to completely utilise their potential and persevere during challenges at the workplace. Dedication can be defined as the significance, allegiance, devotedness and pride an individual has towards one's work and lastly, absorption can be referred to the extent of involvement and concentration with the task in hand (Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Roma, & Bakker, 2002). In consequence, workforce who is highly engaged exhibit mental resilience, enthusiasm and are proud of their work with no signs of fatigue or burnout whilst performing tasks (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008). In today's dynamic business world, engaged employees provide a plethora of benefits as engagement has an affirmative relation with vital outcomes like organisational commitment and well-being of the employee (Halbesleben, 2010). Kahn (1992) puts engagement as a discretionary effort wherein the employees invest his "hands, head and heart" and thus leverage their potential for meaningful performance. The genesis of the term of engagement is contributed to Kahn (1990) while he conducted an ethnographic study and referred to engagement as “the harnessing of organisation members to their work role by which they employ and express themselves physically, cognitively and emotionally during work performances” (Kahn, 1992). Apart, from Kahn many authors like Schaufeli(2002) and Macey (2009) have made an attempt to understand and broaden the concept of engagement. Schaufeli et al. (2002) considers that an engaged employee has high energy and vigour and is dedicated and absorbed to completely utilise his potential to achieve the desired goals. According to Macey et al. (2009), it is the amount of investment employees have in their work roles and the extent of engagement can be a determinant of the organisational citizenship behaviour and commitment of the employees. Organisations strive to develop work engagement amongst its employees as it has various benefits for the workforce experiencing it (Saks, 2006). Apart, from utilising their complete potential and achieving desired goals, engaged employees have good health, reduced or no stress and display innovative behaviour and commitment (Halbesleben, 2010). Provided the given argument, it has become more or less imperative for organisations to identify factors that encourage employee work engagement.

### **Mediating Role of Work Engagement**

The Job Demand-Resources model states that job resources correlate with various organisational output through work engagement. For the current research, LMX is the job resource which facilitates employees to achieve organisational goals and enhances their

commitment (Breevaart, Bakker, Demerouti, & van den Heuvel, 2015). The fundamentals of Social Exchange Theory (SET) explain the link amongst LMX and work engagement (Volmer, Spurk, & Niessen, 2012). SET prostates that leaders and subordinates undergo a series of interactions which leads to the development of obligations amongst both the parties (Gutermann, Lehmann-Willenbrock, Boer, Born, & Voelpel, 2017). If a leader develops an open and transparent culture, provides autonomy and resources and opportunities for development for the employees, in return the employees offer their commitment, innovation and use their complete potential and exhibit high engagement levels to achieve the desired objectives (Epitropaki & Martin 2005, Lee, 2007, Bhal, 2006). The reciprocal obligations developed between the supervisor and the subordinate can be explicated by the psychological contract. A psychological contract can be defined as promises, employees believe will be realised in exchange for their efforts (Rousseau, 1998). Thus, if the leader fulfils the psychological contracts of the employees by providing them with perceived resources and benefits, the employees in reciprocation conduct their tasks with high energy, vigour, dedication and absorption (Bal, Kooij, & De Jong, 2013).

High-quality LMX relationship can influence the intrinsic motivation of the employees, encouraging them to perform their task with vigour and energy (Breevaart, Bakker, Demerouti, & van den Heuvel, 2015). Scholars have suggested that immediate supervisors who share a high-quality relationship with their subordinates provide intrinsic and extrinsic rewards to their employees, which leads to an affirmative attitude towards their job (Agarwal, 2014, Saks, 2006). Such employees also exhibit optimism, resilience and self-efficacy and such variables are antecedents for work engagement, furthermore are more committed to their work (Halbesleben, 2010).

Various scholars have demonstrated the mediating effect of work engagement amongst the relation between job resources and organisational output (Park, Song, Yoon, & Kim, 2014; Bakker & Schaufeli, 2008 ;Salanova, Lorente, Chambel, & Martínez, 2011). Salanova and Schaufeli (2008) also found mediating effect of work engagement amongst job resources and proactive behaviour. Saks (2006) demonstrates the relationship between job characteristics, procedural justice, perceived organisational support, perceived supervisor support, distributive justice and rewards and recognition with organisational commitment, turnover intention etc. Similarly, Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) also highlight that work engagement has a mediating effect on the relation between job resources and intention to quit. A partial mediating effect is observed between job resources and organisational commitment (Richardsen, 2006).

Rich et al (2010) also identified the mediating effect of work engagement on the relationship between value congruence, perceived organisational support, core self-evaluations and organisational citizenship behaviour. Employees who have high-value congruence tend to consider organisational goals as their own goals and are engaged to achieve them (Rich, Lepine, & Crawford, 2010). Employees who perceive that there is value congruence between the beliefs of the organisation and themselves continue to show more engagement and perform their job with passion (Li, Wang, You, & Gao, 2015). Employees who exhibit high P-O fit tend to be more immersed with their job and secondly feel a positive connection with the mission of the organisation. They consider themselves an integral part of the organisation and have a high sense of belongingness with the firm (Chalofsky & Krishna, 2009). Research scholars state that if employees sense an optimal fit between their goals and organisational goals, they tend to exhibit a higher level of engagement (Rich, Lepine, & Crawford, 2010; Li, Sanders, & Frenkel, 2012; De Clercq, Bouckennooghe, Raja, & Matsyborska, 2014). With a similar premise, it can be stated that a good fit will lead to higher engagement and furthermore highly engaged employees will have decreased intention to quit and higher organisational commitment. The available discussion puts together the study variables namely LMX, P-O fit, employee engagement and organisational commitment with the help of the hypothesis to be tested.



Needless to mention, that simply hypothesizing work engagement as the product of LMX and P-O fit or as the predictor of organisational commitment may not suffice that work engagement has a mediating effect. To investigate the mediating effect of work engagement, researchers test the model as presented in figure 1 and drawing from the available literature following hypothesis are presented:

H3. LMX has a positive association with work engagement

H4. Work engagement mediates the relationship between LMX and organisational commitment.

H5. P-O fit has a positive association with work engagement

H6. Work engagement mediates the relationship between P-O fit and organisational commitment.

### **Sample and Study Procedure**

The sample for the current research was drawn from the service sector in India. According to the Economic Survey 2018-19 service sector in India is one of the ascendant sectors and is the key driver of India's economic growth with approximately 54% of Gross Value Added (GVA) growth in 2018-19 (Govt. of India, 2018). The sector has continually invited foreign direct investments and has been an extensive source of employment, which furthermore enhances the demand for skilled manpower (Donnelly, 2015). However, it is pertinent to cite that the service sector in India experiences high turnover in the workforce (Guchait, Cho, & Meurs, 2015). A large amount of workforce leaves their current job in search of better opportunities, thus raising the recruitment costs and making it difficult for organisations to survive. The desire for better opportunities and fatigue in the service sector contribute to the high attrition and the firms are constantly involved in the cycle of recruitment and retention strategies (Agarwal, Datta, Blake-Beard, & Bhargava, S. 2012). Therefore, it is necessary for the firms to take into account the factors influencing engagement levels of the employees so that they can develop meaningful strategies for recruiting and retaining engaged and committed employees. The organisations selected for the study were located in the capital city Delhi and National Capital Region (NCR). The sample population of the study involved executives working in the service sector.

The sample was drawn from September 2018 to January 2019 through non-probability purposive sampling. Initially, the human resource department of 12 organisations wherein five information technology(IT), two Knowledge Process outsourcing and five information technology-enabled services (ITeS) were contacted and 10 organisations confirmed to participate in the study. The purpose of the study was conveyed to them and permission was sought to collect data from the executives of the organisation.

The researcher sent invitations to 500 executives to participate in research, wherein 400 executives gave their consent to participate in the study. The data was collected with the help of a self-report questionnaire. The self-report questionnaire was developed from previous studies and has been explained in the next section. The questionnaire was distributed to the respondents with the help of an HR personnel of the human resource department of the respective organisation. The beginning of the questionnaire cited the purpose of the research and offered a set of instructions for filling the questionnaire. Further, the question was divided into two parts wherein the first part collected the target audiences' demographic details. The second section included the Likert statements used for measuring various constructs in the study. The questionnaire was administered electronically to the respondents and the HR departments of the respective organisations helped in the process. The respondents were provided with a time frame of three weeks to fill the questionnaire and send it back. An ethics statement assuring the participants that the information provided by them shall be kept confidential was provided and doubts were also cleared. The researcher received 350 questionnaires in the stipulated time and after the removal of incomplete questionnaires, 296 usable questionnaires were left citing a response rate of 72 percent.

Out of 296 respondents, 60 percent were male and 40 percent were females. The average age of respondents participating in the survey was 33 years. The average duration spent on the current job was three years and, 40 percent was graduate (bachelors' degree), 60 percent of the sample was postgraduate (with a master's degree/Postgraduate diploma). The functional background of people participating in the survey was diverse and included engineering (20 per cent), sales and marketing (40 percent), customer care (20 percent) human resource department (10 per cent), and R&D (10% per cent).

### Measures

Each latent construct was measured with the help of indicators. All the measures with the help of a response scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

**Work Engagement:** Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) proposed by Schaufeli et al. (2006) was used to measure work engagement. The subdimensions of work engagement are vigor, dedication and absorption. A sample item for the scale "I get carried away when I am working".

**Leader-Member Exchange:** Leader-Member Exchange was measured with the help of a seven-item scale proposed by Graen & Uhl Bien (1995). A sample item included in the instrument was "does your leader understand your job problems and needs"?

**PO fit:** PO fit was measured with the help of a six-item scale and the items were taken from Piasentin and Chapman (2006) and Edward (1991). A sample item included 'I feel that my personal values are a good fit with this organization'

**Organisational Commitment:** Organisational Commitment was measured with six items adapted from Meyer and Allen (1991) three-component organisational commitment scale. A sample item included in the survey was "I feel a strong sense of belongingness to my organisation".

The researcher also collected demographic variables like gender, age, educational backgrounds and work experience to cognize with the features of the sample. The effects of demographic variables were controlled so that the effect of independent variables could be described on dependent variables. The value of Cronbach's alpha for the scales is given below in Table I. The value of Cronbach's alpha for the constructs is more than the benchmark value of 0.70 (Nunnally, 1978).

**Table I: Reliability Coefficient**

S.No	Construct	Cronbach's alpha
1	Leader Member Exchange	0.91
2	PO fit	0.86
3	Work Engagement	0.90
4	Organisational Commitment	0.83

### Data Analysis Techniques

Structural equation model (SEM) was employed to assess the relationship amongst the given constructs. Structural equation modelling helps in identifying error at measurement level and also takes into consideration the normality assumption in multivariate data analysis (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010). The next section provides the findings of the research.

### Results

Descriptive statistics amongst the proposed constructs are given in Table II. The correlations amongst the constructs highlight that they align with the hypothesised relationships.

**Table II: Means, Standard Deviations and Correlations**

	CR	AVE	MSV
<b>LMX</b>	0.901	0.603	0.246
	0.867	0.522	0.350
<b>PO FIT</b>			
<b>Work Engagement</b>	0.902	0.507	0.246
	0.859	0.513	0.246
<b>Organisational Commitment</b>			

Notes: n=296, LMX= Leader Member Exchange, PO= Person Organisation fit, WE= Work Engagement, OC= Organisational Commitment

### Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and Common Method Bias

To ensure data fit, reliability and construct validity of the proposed constructs in the framework was investigated through CFA using AMOS 20. To investigate the sample covariance model fit with the population covariance model, all the latent constructs were covaried in the measurement model (Hair et al., 2010). The model fit indices were calculated to ascertain the fit of the measurement model. It is evident from the available literature that a model is considered to be a good fit if  $\chi^2/df < 3$ , comparative fit index (CFI) > 0.90 and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) has a value < 0.08 (Kline, 2015). The measurement model displayed good fit with  $\chi^2/df = 1.43$ , GFI=0.896, CFI=0.964, RMSEA=0.039. Composite Reliability (CR), Convergent Validity and Discriminant Validity of the constructs under study were assessed to establish the construct validity. The reliability of a scale is established if the value of CR should be more than 0.70. The latent constructs under investigation had values more than 0.70 (Refer to Table III). Average variance extracted (AVE) was measured to establish convergent validity. The value of AVE for the construct

	MEAN	S.D.	LMX	PO	EE	OC
LMX	3.72	0.61	1			
PO	3.72	0.52	0.592**	1		
WE	3.61	0.58	0.527**	0.412**	1	
OC	3.46	0.53	0.443**	0.405**	0.496**	1

should be more than 0.50 to establish convergent validity. For the current research, the value of AVE was more than 0.5 (Refer to Table III). The value of Maximum Shared Variance (MSV)



should be less than the AVE of the constructs. The MSV values for the current study are less than AVE (Refer to Table III).

#### Table III: Results of CFA

The study was prone to common method bias as it used self-reported measures to assess the interplay between the leader-member exchange, PO fit, work engagement and organisational commitment. Harman single factor test was conducted to investigate the issue of common method bias (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). All the variables were loaded on a single factor to assess whether

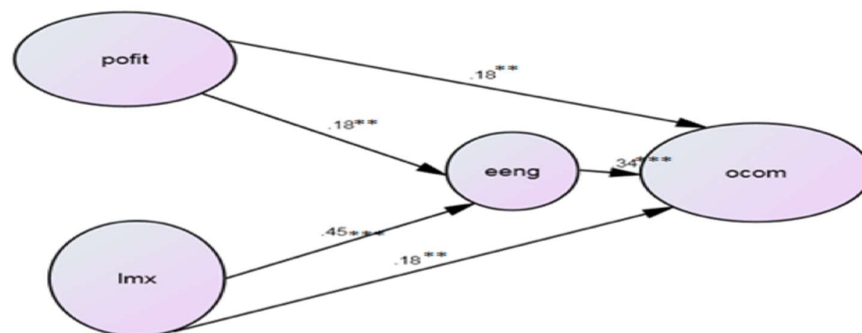
it led to the majority of covariance among all the measures. Harman single factor test revealed that only 32.90 percent of variance for a single factor. It is observed that 32.90 percent is less than the benchmark value of 50 percent. Thus, common method bias was not an issue for the current research.

#### Structural Model Estimation

To investigate the proposed model, the researcher used structural equation modelling. The conceptual model which was tested is shown in Figure 1. It can be observed from the diagram that LMX and PO-fit have both direct and indirect effects( through employee engagement) on organisational commitment. To test the mediating effect of work engagement, method proposed by Mostafa and Gould-Williams (2014) was used. In this method the fit indices of a fully mediated and partially mediated model were compared and the model displaying a better fit was selected (Mostafa & Gould-Williams, 2014).

The model fit indices for the proposed structural model highlighted ( $\chi^2/df=1.71$ , GFI=0.88, CFI=0.94, RMSEA=0.04) a good fit with the data. In this model LMX, PO- fit and WE together explained 25.7% in organisational commitment ( $R^2 = 0.257$ ) and LMX and PO-fit together explained 23.9% of the variance in WE ( $R^2 = 0.239$ ).

The findings of the current study supported all the hypothesised direct relationships. The findings are consistent with the available literature of LMX, PO fit and WE. It was observed that LMX posited a significant relationship with organisational commitment ( $\beta= 0.184$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). Further PO fit also exhibited a positive relation with organisational commitment ( $\beta= 0.176$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). Work engagement shared a significant positive relationship with organisational commitment ( $\beta= 0.339$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). LMX shared a positive significant relationship with employee engagement ( $\beta= 0.454$ ,  $p<0.001$ ) and PO fit were also found to have a positive influence on employee engagement ( $\beta= 0.181$ ,  $p<0.01$ ).



Notes  $p < 0.01$

**Figure 1**  
**Hypothesized relationships**

## Test of Mediation

Two structural models were evaluated to investigate the mediating role of work engagement. In the first model wherein LMX and PO fit influenced organisational commitment, work engagement had a fully mediating influence. In contrast, the second model allowed for direct as well as indirect effects (through work engagement) of LMX and PO fit on organisational commitment. Since the first model is nested in the second model a  $\chi^2$ -difference test between the two models was conducted to check whether work engagement mediates fully or partially the impact of LMX and PO fit on organisational commitment. This approach is reliable and agrees with previous studies which test mediation models (Mostafa and Gould-Williams, 2014). The results for full as well as partial mediation models are exhibited in Table IV. It can be observed from the available data that although both the models fit well, a partial mediation model has an improved fit in contrast to full mediation. It can also be observed from the outcome of  $\chi^2$ -difference test that partial mediation model and full mediation model are significantly distinct from each other ( $\Delta\chi^2 = 18.596$ ,  $df=2$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ). The outcome of the research suggest that work engagement partially mediates the relationship between LMX and organisational commitment, and partially mediated the relationship between PO fit and organisational commitment. Therefore, from the current study, it can be stated that LMX and PO fit have both direct and indirect effect on organisational commitment.

**Table IV: Structural Analysis: Results for Full Mediation and Partial Mediation Models**

Structural Path	Full Mediation	Partial Mediation
LMX $\rightarrow$ OC	--	0.18
PO $\rightarrow$ OC	---	0.18

LMX-→ WE	0.46	0.45
PO -→ WE	0.19	0.18
WE-→OC	0.50	0.34
<b>Model fit statistics</b>		
$\chi^2/df$	1.75	1.71
GFI	0.87	0.88
CFI	0.93	0.94
RMSEA	0.05	0.04

## Discussion

The current study investigated the relationship between LMX, PO fit and organisational commitment, whilst assessing the mediating effect of work engagement. The findings of the study support H1 which states that LMX has a positive relationship with organisational commitment. In the dynamic business environment wherein firms are increasingly searching for employees who are committed and display discretionary behaviour and go an extra mile to achieve the stated goals. Employees who experience high-quality LMX are engaged employees and display more vigour and passion (Agarwal, Datta, Blake-Beard, & Bhargava 2012). The findings of the study support this argument as H3 as LMX positively relates to work engagement. The findings of the study exemplify that the immediate supervisor or leader has an important role in cultivating work engagement amongst the subordinates. Effective leaders direct their efforts in providing professional and emotional support to their subordinates and facilitate them to realise their potential and capabilities to meet the objectives in hand. Thus, to foster willingness amongst the employees so that they direct their efforts in the right direction, the relationship between immediate leader and subordinate holds a high significance. India displays a collectivist culture and employees performing in such environment give importance to organisational hierarchy and look towards their immediate supervisors to guide their efforts in the organisation (Restubog, Bordia, & Bordia, 2009). They view their immediate supervisors as their role models and expect them to nurture their talent (Vidyarthi, Liden, Anand, Erdogan, & Ghosh, 2010). Consequently, when leaders inspire and support their subordinates, they in return show high vigour and passion to perform the task in hand.

The results of the study also showed support for H2, H4 by exhibiting the statistically positive relationship between PO fit, employee engagement and organisational commitment. The findings thus suggest that employees who recognise a suitable fit with the organisation exhibit high engagement levels and are more committed towards their job. The study takes into account the employees' viewpoint about person organisation fit and ascertains that the fundamental of PO fit theory is applicable beyond the western countries. Employees who exhibit high-value congruence with their respective organisations engage in behaviour which promotes the overall productivity of the firm and focuses on its sustainability in the changing business environment (Katou, Budhwar, & Patel, 2014; Mostafa & Gould-Williams, 2014). The findings underline the crucial role of selecting people who have similar values as that of the organisation as such individuals would exhibit high levels of engagement and may also show innovative work behaviour (Memon, Salleh, Baharom, & Harun, 2014; Li, Wang, You, & Gao., 2015).

It is necessary to state that developing an effective selection process which attracts people with similar value congruence and establishment of appropriate human resource policies and behaviour facilitate higher levels of engagement and thus wholehearted commitment towards the task in hand (Mitchell, Parker, Giles, Joyce, & Chiang, 2012; Karatepe, 2013).

This study supports H5 and H6 which propose the mediating effect of work engagement between PO fit, LMX and organisational commitment. Schaufeli et al (2006) suggest that employees who have engaged display happiness, passion, positive emotions towards their job,

thus providing them with greater vigor and passion leading to high organisational commitment. Highly engaged employees display discretionary behaviour which promotes overall productivity and organisational effectiveness (Saraç, Meydan, & Efil, 2017).

A vital contribution of research states that LMX and PO fit do not influence organisational commitment directly rather they have an indirect relationship through work engagement. Therefore, the extent of engagement of an employee determines the commitment of an employee. Work engagement thus is necessary for firms as it plays a pivotal role in facilitating the firm to achieve competitive advantage and also enhances the commitment levels of the employees. It is of paramount importance that leaders develop high quality relationships with their employees and guide them in the right direction and high value congruence which will lead to high engagement levels amongst the employees and thus more commitment towards their job and commitment.

### **Managerial and Theoretical Implications**

High level of work engagement predicts organisational success and enhances the productivity of the firm, thus emerging as an imperative state which can be related to various positive outcomes (Bates, 2004; Richman, 2006). The results of the current study focus on the vital role high leader member exchange plays in enhancing engagement. Subsequently, the study also explores the need for high value congruence amongst the employees and the firm to achieve desired goals. This leads to many implications for academicians as well as practitioners. To encourage supervisors to use supportive work techniques, organisations can have assessments wherein supervisors can practice their skills. Apart, from training and developing the supervisors in experiential settings, the organisations should develop a culture of coaching and mentoring wherein the immediate supervisors hand hold their subordinates in work related issues (Bhal, Gulati, & Ansari, 2009). Research also cites that supervisor support leads to organisational citizenship behaviour (Macey et al., 2009). Firms should focus on developing programs which nurture and nourish the relationship amongst employees and their managers. Company outings, offsite training which develop a strong informal bond amongst the employees especially in a collectivist culture like India shall develop high quality relationship amongst the employees. The supervisor's role towards employee engagement cannot be undermined and to ensure that employees especially managers must understand their responsibility towards developing positive and transparent relations with their subordinates, the HR department should develop policies wherein the engagement level of the subordinates determine an aspect of managerial effectiveness of the respective manager.

Subsequently, to enhance value congruence between the individual and the organisation, it is necessary that the firm develops an effective recruitment and selection process wherein employees who have similar values and have a fit with job and organisation are selected. The human resource department of the organisation should develop a robust recruitment and selection plan for the job and then use appropriate selection to get the right person on the right job (Heneman, Judge, & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2012; Wagstaff, Triana, Kim, & Al-Riyami, 2015).

Organisations should plan workshops and stress intervention programs for employees to enhance positive emotions to increase work engagement and efficacy at work (Breso', Schaufeli, & Salanova, 2008). However, it is imperative to mention that organisations must develop a culture which promotes engagement. Fair employment policies and an environment wherein employees have trust in management and their immediate managers can help in increasing the sense of belongingness amongst the employees and thus enhance their engagement levels (Byrne, 2005). Organisations can develop a strong on-boarding process wherein the engagement culture of the organisation is communicated to the recruits. Engagement initiative taken by managers should be rewarded to encourage similar behaviours

(Alfes, Shantz, Turss, & Soane, 2013).

The research makes identifiable theoretical contributions in the sphere of work engagement, as it identifies and assesses the role of LMX and P-O fit as the antecedents of work engagement especially in the Indian context. The research addresses the scarce investigation which has been done in identifying LMX, PO fit and work engagement as the predictors of organisational commitment in service sector in India. The growing economy of India has attracted many multinational organisations who have established their base in the country. It is important for corporations to understand the factors which enhance engagement in the Indian context. This research thus focuses on the rare investigation of engagement status of employees in the service sector in India.

### Limitations and Future Research

The current research investigated the relationship between LMX, PO fit and organisational commitment through work engagement, however, it adopted a cross-sectional design and not a longitudinal study. It is possible that these factors might change after a certain period, therefore it is important to study the factors longitudinally. The research is specifically conducted in the Indian service sector, therefore, the findings of the study cannot be generalised in other countries. It is suggested that such research is undertaken in different regions and markets to generalise the results. All the factors were measured with the help of reliable and valid scales which reduced the risk of measurement error and reduced common bias. The results of the Harman test also revealed that there was no risk of common method bias. However, future researchers can collect data from multiple sources to avoid any issues.

Future research studies can replicate the findings in other sectors, for example, in the manufacturing sector or choose other locations leading to enhanced validity. The researchers can also examine the relationship of LMX, PO fit and organisational citizenship behaviour and positive work climate and employee voice as these research areas have not been appropriately addressed in the Indian context (Chaudhary & Rangnekar, 2017). Such studies could have meaningful theoretical and managerial implications. Also, more mediators and moderators could contribute to the relationship between LM , PO fit and organisational commitment, making it a relevant area for future studies.

### Conclusion

Engaged employees enhance the overall productivity of the firm and also contribute to developing a positive work climate. The outcome of the current research state that to have employees who are engaged and committed to organisations it is necessary to encourage managers in the firm to develop high quality relationships with their subordinates which will enhance their sense of belongingness and engagement and thus they will be more committed to the organisation. Another antecedent PO fit also plays an important role as the findings suggest that people who have value congruence with the firm display discretionary behaviour and high levels of engagement leading to more commitment towards the organisation. All the proposed hypothesis in the current study were supported and a notable contribution in terms of managerial implications was made as LMX and PO fit as variables are under control of the firm.

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