



# **The Effects of Person-Job Fit on Employee Engagement Among Lecturers in Higher Education Institutions: Is There a Difference Between Lecturers in Public and Private Higher Education Institutions?**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The suitability between task/job characteristics and individual ability to perform tasks will strengthen the human resource engagement to their work. At higher education institutions, the person-job fit plays an important role. This study aims to examine the effects of person-job fit on employee engagement among lectures at higher education institutions and to find out whether there are significant differences regarding person-job fit and employee engagement between public higher education lecturers and private higher education lecturers. The populations in this study were all lecturers of higher education institutions in the Province of West Kalimantan, Indonesia, amounting to 2,686 people. The number of research samples was 160, with the composition of 80 public higher education lecturers and 80 private higher education lecturers. The hypothesis test used was linear regression and t-test. Based on the results of regression test, it can be concluded that there is an effect of person-job fit on employee engagement. From the result of t-test, it can be concluded that there are significant differences in person-job fit and employee engagement between public higher education lecturers and private higher education lecturers.

**Keywords:** Person-job fit, Employee Engagement, Higher Education

**JEL Classification:** I2

## **1. BACKGROUND**

Lecturers are one of the elements that determine the success of the educational process and are the spearhead of a higher educational institution. In the hands of qualified lecturers, students can be prepared to become intelligent human beings who serve as an element that improves the quality of human resources.

Human resources that have a high sense of engagement toward their organization will form the behavior it is expected to contribute to the progress of the organization. A lecturer's engagement as a knowledge-based employee is needed in improving the quality of educational process. Lecturers who engage on the college where they work will behave that support the performance of the college. A study by Ariani (2013) revealed that there is a negative and significant correlation between employee engagement and

counterproductive behavior among service industry. The literature study of Markos and Sridevi (2010) revealed that employee engagement is a strong predictor of the organization's positive performance. Employees who are engaged, emotionally attached to their organization and have high involvement in their work, have great enthusiasm for success.

Several studies on employee engagement in the context of higher education have been conducted (Rothman and Jordaan, 2006; Takawira, et al., 2014), but studies that analyze the effects of person-job fit on employee engagement are limited (Scroggins, 2008; Hamid & Yahya, 2011).

According to the theory of person job fit, the suitability between job/task characteristics and individual ability to perform the task will strengthen employees' engagement to their work,

namely the employee will be more committed to the job (Allen and Meyer, 1997). Job Fit can be defined the suitability of employees required in doing a job. Referring to self-concept job fit (Scroggins, 2008) employees tend to try to adapt themselves to fit their requirements.

Robbins and Judge (2013) stated that the theory of person-job fit is based on the idea of suitability between the characteristics of an individual with his or her work environment. To achieve this fit, it requires two types of suitability to be achieved, namely the suitability of individual knowledge, expertise and skills with work/tasks; and suitability between individual personalities, for example, their needs, interests, and values embraced by the firm's climate.

Maslach and Leiter's (2008) research emphasized that the greater the perceived job fit, the greater the likelihood of job engagement; the lower the person-job fit level is associated with the low engagement of the employee. The study was conducted on 466 business and administrative staff of a university in North America. Guan (2010) conducted a study on the Asian context, namely some organizations in Beijing, China. The research concluded that person-job fit had a significant effect on work attitude and behavior. The correlation is relatively stronger than previous studies in the western context (Cable and DeRue, 2002).

A lecturer should be an educator who has passed various selections that ensure compatibility between knowledge, skill and ability with his work. The phenomena which occur in higher education institutions in the province of West Kalimantan, especially in private higher education institutions is that less attention to the person-job fit. This is due to the lack of interest of individuals to be lecturers at private higher education institutions, thereby minimizing the opportunities of the higher education institutions to recruit appropriate lecturers. There are still many lecturers who do not teach in accordance with the field of knowledge as long as they have a graduate degree, and the institution is willing to accept a lecturer without prioritizing the field of science and other capabilities that a lecturer should have. In addition, many lecturers, especially in private higher education institutions have poor competencies and did not pass the certification of professional lecturers.

## 2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESIS

### 2.1. Person-Job Fit

According to Holland as cited by Robbins and Judge (2013) the theory of person-job fit is based on the idea of the fit between the characteristics of an individual with his work environment. Furthermore, Holland presented six types of individual characteristics and suggested that the satisfaction and tendency to leave a job depends on a work environment. While Chatman (1989) stated that the person-job fit is a fit between the norms and values of the organization with the values adopted by someone. Different individual characters have different types of job fit (Sims & Kroeck, 1994).

Person-job fit can be interpreted as the fit of the individual's ability with the demand of a job (Edwards, 1991). Kristof-Brown (2007) defined person-job fit as the fit between individuals and the work they do in the workplace which includes the fit based on the employee's needs and job equipment available to meet those needs, as well as job demand and the ability of employees to meet the demand. So person-job fit is the fit between the knowledge, expertise and skills of the employee with a particular job or task. With the fit, it is expected that the human resources can carry out their work well without significant constraints.

Cable & DeRue (2002) explained that there are two dimensional approaches to Person-job fit, namely Supply-Value Fit (S-V fit) and Demand-Abilities Fit (D-A fit). In the supply-value fit (S-V fit) the individual determines for themselves which environment or work is perceived to fit their needs or motifs. According to Boon and Biron (2016) individuals want the fit of values, goals and interests. The value is the fit to each given job. The goal is the understanding of the goal of the given job. Physiological needs are the physical needs of a person needed for working on a job which consists of the level of security of the working environment. Interest is how an employee can focus on the work being done and enjoy the work and understand the tasks and consequences of work done. While demand-abilities fit (D-A fit) is the extent to which individual skills meet the demand for work. In the D-A fit approach, it requires knowledge, skills, expertise, and other personalities to see how well the individual is able to accomplish the task for their job.

### 2.2. Employee Engagement

Employee engagement is an emotional engagement to the job and organization, being motivated and able to provide their best ability to help succeed in a series of tangible benefits to organizations and individuals (MacLeod and Clarke, 2009). Employee engagement can be described when the individual is very concerned about what he is doing and the commitment to do as well as possible, he will feel compelled to do rather than just be silent (Kahn, 1990). The first study that suggested the concept of employee engagement was conducted by Kahn (1990). According to Kahn, employee engagement is a multidimensional form of emotional, cognitive, and physical interconnected aspects of employees.

Engagement occurs when a person is consciously aware and emotionally connected with others. Disengaged employees, on the other hand, break away from work tasks and withdraw consciously and emotionally (Luthans and Peterson, 2002). Another definition was also expressed by Lockwood (2007) that employee engagement as a revelation by individuals emotionally and intellectually committed to the organization, as measured by three main behaviors: Positive speaking about the organization to colleagues and customers, having an intense passion for membership organizations, skiing actually despite job opportunities elsewhere, as well as showing extra effort and behavior and has contributed to the success of the organization.

Scaufeli and Bakker (2003) defined employee engagement as something positive, satisfying, work-related attitudes characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption. Vigor is characterized by high

energy levels, resilience, a desire to strive, and not give up in the face of challenges. Dedication is characterized by feeling worth, enthusiastic, inspiring, valuable and challenging. Absorption is characterized by full concentration for a task. Employee engagement refers to a state of feeling, and a genuine and consistent thought that not only focuses on the object, individual event or specific behavior.

The dimensions or aspects of employee engagement consist of three aspects (Schaufeli et al., 2003), namely vigor, dedication, and absorption. Vigor is an aspect characterized by high levels of strength and mental resilience in work, a desire to strive earnestly in work, persistent in the face of adversity (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003). The aspect of dedication is characterized by meaning, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride and challenges in work. People who have high dedication scores strongly identify their work because it makes a valuable, inspiring and challenging experience. In addition, they usually feel enthusiastic and proud of their work. While low scores on dedication mean not identifying with themselves or with the job because they have no meaningful, inspiring or challenging experience. Moreover they do not feel unenthusiastic and proud of their work (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2003). The absorption aspect is characterized by intense concentration and interest, drowning in the work, time passing so fast and the individual is difficult to escape from work so that they forget about everything around them. (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003) People who have a high score on absorption usually feel good about their attention consumed by work, feeling lost in the work and having difficulty separating themselves from work. As a result, anything around them is forgotten and time passes quickly. On the contrary, people with low absorption scores do not feel interested and are not immersed in the work, have no difficulty separating from work and they do not forget everything around them, including time (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).

Engagement has a multidimensional construct in which it is not just the physical and cognitive emotional level. May et al. (2004) mentioned that the characteristics of engagement have three dimensions, the physical as energy to do the job, the emotional component with dedication given by the individual in doing the job, and the mind component where the individual dissolves in his job so as to put aside other things outside his work. Cook (1995) mentioned that engagement consists of three aspects, namely feeling, thinking and doing.

An engaged employee will feel loyal and care about the organization's future. The employee has a willingness to make extra efforts for the achievement of organizational goals to grow and develop. Gallup classified 3 types of employees based on engagement level that is engaged, not engaged, and actively disengaged (Azoury et al., 2013). Employees who are engaged are builders. They always show high level of performance. These employees will be willing to use their talents and strengths to work every day and always work with passion and develop innovations for the company to grow. Employees in the not engaged type tend to focus on tasks compared to achieving the goals of the job. They are always waiting for orders and tend to feel their contributions are being ignored.

Employees of actively disengaged type are cave dwellers. They consistently show resistance on all aspects. They only see the negative side on various occasions and every day this actively disengaged type weakens what the engaged workers are doing.

### **2.3. Correlation between Person-job fit and Employee Engagement**

The correlation between person-job fit and employee engagement is described in the theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), that workers with certain knowledge, skills and abilities gain high supervision in performing the job, which affects the employee's engagement to his job. Lewin's (1951) theory explains that if the worker is comfortable with his job then he will tend to do the job effectively and strive to achieve the vision and mission of the organization (Hussain, 2016).

A worker's psychological condition plays an important role in employee engagement with his job (May et al., 2004). One of these psychological conditions is the person-job fit (Juhdi et al., 2013). In other words, people who have high engagement to their job because of their skills and abilities are in accordance with the requirements of the job he does. Individuals who are fit with their job will feel confident with the work they do, more confidently, with their roles in the job and tend to be engaged with their job (Saks & Gruman, 2011). In addition, research conducted by Manson and Carr (2011) classified Person-Job Fit into three categories, namely Demand-abilities fit, value-fit, and perceived-fit. The three categories of the person-job fit are tested for their influence on three main outcomes: Job satisfaction, work engagement, and life satisfaction. Overall, this study concluded that person-job fit exerts a positive effect on the three outputs.

### **2.4. Difference Between Public Higher Education Institutions and Private Higher Education Institutions in Province of West Kalimantan**

Higher education institutions in Indonesia are generally divided into two categories, namely public higher education institutions and private higher education institutions. Public higher education institutions receive funding from the government while private higher education institutions rely on consumers and stockholders for their funding.

In West Kalimantan province there are 8 public higher education institutions and 66 private higher education institutions, where public higher education institutions are more developed compared to private higher education institutions. With a poor economy in this province it is not possible for private higher education institutions to charge high tuition fees to students, whereas the costs incurred in lecturing are quite high. It has an impact on the low chance of private college management choosing qualified lecturers to teach at the institution due to the low compensation that can be provided. Thus, the lecturers employed tend to have less person-job fit.

Based on the previous discussion, the hypotheses in this study are: Hypothesis 1: Person-Job fit affects employee engagement.

Hypothesis 2: There is a significant difference between employee engagement of public higher education institution lecturers and private higher education institution lecturers.

Hypothesis 3: There is a significant difference between person-job fit of public higher education institution lecturers and private higher education institution lecturers.

The theoretical framework of this research is described in Figure 1. The dependent variable is employee engagement, while the independent variable is person-job fit.

### 3. RESEARCH METHOD AND ANALYSIS

#### 3.1. Data Collection

The populations in this research were all lecturers of Higher Education Institutions in the Province of West Kalimantan, Indonesia, amounting to 2,686 people. The number of research sample is 160, with the composition of 80 lecturers of state higher education institutions and 80 lecturers of private higher education institutions. The sample criteria are the lecturers who have the national lecturer number and have worked for at least 3 years at a higher education institution.

#### 3.2. Measurement

The indicator of the research variables is measured with the Likert scale of 5 points; namely 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree and 5 = strongly agree.

The indicators of the variables used to measure job-person fit are: Fit of job demands and worker’s abilities, fit of worker’s ability with job requirements, fit of work discipline, fit of skill with job requirements, ability to use talent, skills, and competence in working, fit between what is obtained from the job and the needs of the workers and the fulfillment of worker satisfaction in carrying out the work. While the indicators used to measure employee engagement are: Being eager to work, being able to work for a long time, never giving up, enthusiasm to work, pride of work, challenging job, being happy when busy with the work, being absorbed in the job, being difficult to stay away from the job.

### 4. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

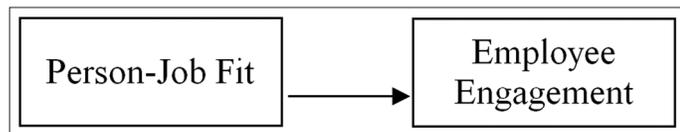
#### 4.1. Characteristics of Respondents

The respondents consisted of lecturers of several different higher education institutions in West Kalimantan Province, Indonesia, with composition of 50% from state higher education institutions and 50% from private higher education institutions. The average age of the respondents was 41 years old and 80% of respondents had a master’s degree, 15% had a doctoral degree, and 5% had a undergraduate degree.

#### 4.2. Validity Test

To determine the validity of the question items used in the research implementation, the validity test is used. The validity test of all research variables are as follow in Table 1.

Figure 1: Theoretical framework



Corrected item-total correlation value compared with r table value with significance of 5%, that is 0.3610. If the coefficient of corrected item-total correlation >0.3610 then the instrument is regarded as valid. Based on the validity test results conducted, all questions in the questionnaire are valid.

#### 4.3. Reliability Test

Reliability test was conducted with Cronbach coefficient alpha test on both variables. This is done to determine the consistency of test instruments used. The value of Cronbach alpha coefficient is described in Table 2. All Cronbach alpha values are >0.7, so it can be concluded that the test instruments are reliable (Hair et al., 2006).

#### 4.4. Descriptive Statistics and Analysis

Table 3 shows the mean values, standard deviations and correlations between both dependent and independent variables. The results of descriptive statistics generally indicate that the person-job fit and employee engagement among lecturers in West Kalimantan province are positive. The correlation value of 0.9899 shows a strong correlation between person-job fit and employee engagement.

#### 4.5. Regression Analysis

To test the hypotheses 1, a regression analysis was performed. While t-test analysis is used to test the hypotheses 2 and 3. Regression analysis test results are presented in Table 4.

Table 1: Validity test

| Variables               | Indicators  | Corrected item-total correlation | Standard |       |
|-------------------------|-------------|----------------------------------|----------|-------|
| Person-Job Fit (X)      | Statement 1 | 0.7812                           | 0.3610   | Valid |
|                         | Statement 2 | 0.8241                           | 0.3610   | Valid |
|                         | Statement 3 | 0.8053                           | 0.3610   | Valid |
|                         | Statement 4 | 0.6581                           | 0.3610   | Valid |
|                         | Statement 5 | 0.7346                           | 0.3610   | Valid |
|                         | Statement 6 | 0.8044                           | 0.3610   | Valid |
| Employee engagement (Y) | Statement 7 | 0.6905                           | 0.3610   | Valid |
|                         | Statement 1 | 0.7583                           | 0.3610   | Valid |
|                         | Statement 2 | 0.7958                           | 0.3610   | Valid |
|                         | Statement 3 | 0.7767                           | 0.3610   | Valid |
|                         | Statement 4 | 0.4788                           | 0.3610   | Valid |
|                         | Statement 5 | 0.7360                           | 0.3610   | Valid |
|                         | Statement 6 | 0.7479                           | 0.3610   | Valid |
|                         | Statement 7 | 0.7859                           | 0.3610   | Valid |
|                         | Statement 8 | 0.7583                           | 0.3610   | Valid |
| Statement 9             | 0.7957      | 0.3610                           | Valid    |       |

Table 2: Reliability tests

| Variables           | Cronbach Alpha Values |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Person-Job Fit      | 0.8177                |
| Employee engagement | 0.9388                |

Table 3: Descriptive statistics

| Variable              | Mean±SD       | Korelasi |
|-----------------------|---------------|----------|
| 1 Person-Job Fit      | 3,7625±0,6322 |          |
| 2 Employee engagement | 3,7528±0,6084 | 0.9899   |

Based on the results of regression test in Table 4, it can be concluded that there is an effect of person-job fit on employee engagement. This answers hypothesis 1. R<sup>2</sup> value is 0.9799 which shows that 97% variation of employee engagement is explained by person-job fit, while the rest equal to 3% affected by other factors.

#### 4.6. T-Test

T-test is used to examine the differences between state higher education institutions and private higher education institutions. Based on Table 5, P < 0.05, it means there are significant differences in person-job fit and employee engagement between lecturers of public and private higher education institution lecturers. This supports hypothesis 2 and hypothesis 3.

### 5. IMPLICATIONS, CONCLUSIONS, AND LIMITATIONS OF RESEARCH

This research aims to examine the effects of person-job fit on employee engagement among lecturers at higher education institutions in West Kalimantan province, Indonesia.

Furthermore, it also examine whether there are differences between lecturers working in state higher education institutions and lecturers working in private higher education institutions in terms of person-job fit and employee engagement. In general, lecturers at higher education institutions in the Province of West Kalimantan, Indonesia, have a fit with their job, as well as engagement to job in high category. However, both person-job fit and employee engagement between public higher education institution lecturers and private education institution lecturers have significant differences.

Person-job fit is a fit between a person's ability with his job (Sekoguchi, 2004). Person-job fit is difficult to achieve in private higher education institutions because of the limited ability of these institutions to perform maintenance functions in human resource management, so that people who actually have the ability as a lecturer are not interested in working in private higher education institutions. Private higher education institutions cannot impose

lecturer's qualifications because they are aware of their incapacity. This has resulted in private higher education institutions being forced to hire people who are less suited to work as lecturers. Lack of person-job fit has resulted in low employee engagement, so high human resource performance is difficult to achieve.

The management of private higher education institutions should increase efforts to improve the person-job fit and employee engagement of lecturers. Increased person-job fit can be done with the improvement of knowledge, skill, and attitude in order to meet the qualifications of professional lecturers. Furthermore, to ensure that fit can be achieved, it should start from the recruitment of lecturers, namely to give priority to qualification requirements in accordance with the tasks as a lecturer. In such efforts private higher education institutions may consider adding stockholder or exploring other business opportunities that can improve the ability of the management to perform the function of maintaining the human resources.

This study has several limitations. Among them, the number of samples being studied is relatively small compared to the total population, and not all higher education institutions in the province of West Kalimantan are sampled because some higher education institutions are located in areas that require a lot of money and a long time to reach.

This research is specifically in the context of higher education institutions in West Kalimantan province, Indonesia, where demographic, geographic and economic factors are different from other provinces, especially in Java island, where educational progress is faster. Consequently, the conclusions drawn here cannot be generalized in the context of Indonesian higher education institutions. Further research should be done with larger samples, and expand the scope of research at higher education institutions across Indonesia, or in several countries with different characteristics.

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**Table 4: Regression result on the effects of person-job fit and employee engagement**

| Variable       | Coefficients | Standard Error | t Stat  | P           |
|----------------|--------------|----------------|---------|-------------|
| Intercept      | 0.1682       | 0.041413701    | 4.0605  | 7.68552E-05 |
| Person Job Fit | 0.9527       | 0.010855735    | 87.7621 | 5.768E-136  |

R<sup>2</sup>=0.9799, F=77.02, Sig=0.0000; \*\*p<0.05, (N=160)

**Table 5: T-Test**

| Variable            | Education sector | Mean        | ρ       |
|---------------------|------------------|-------------|---------|
| Person Job Fit      | Public           | 4.266071429 | 0.000** |
|                     | Private          | 3.258928571 |         |
| Employee Engagement | Public           | 4.226388889 | 0.000** |
|                     | Private          | 3.279166667 |         |

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