

“Attrition” versus “intention to stay”: are *psychological empowerment* and *psychological well-being* viable retention strategies in the “Great Resignation” context?

Psychological well-being

Received 7 March 2023
Revised 27 May 2023
28 May 2023
Accepted 29 May 2023

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Abstract

Purpose – This paper aims to understand whether the relationship between *psychological empowerment*, *psychological well-being* and higher person–job fit based on the self-determination theory could have mitigated the Great Resignation crisis.

Design/methodology/approach – A cross-sectional study was conducted by collecting data from 351 respondents working in Indian organizations (Nifty, 2020) using a standardized questionnaire by using the multifaceted psychological construct within the work context.

Findings – This study highlights that a moderated mediation relationship between *psychological empowerment* (specifically “impact” or “choice”) and *psychological well-being* (specifically “environmental mastery”) is impacted by the person–job “demand–abilities” fit and enhances the intention to stay in the current “great resignation” context.

Practical implications – The authors map the theoretical and empirical research of the “intention to stay” by developing the “demand–abilities” fit, which leads to higher levels of *psychological empowerment* and *psychological well-being* to build adaptability through effective learning practices.

Originality/value – The authors establish the underlying linkages and future research agenda to strengthen the “intention to stay” during the extraordinarily stressful context of the covid-19 pandemic.

Keywords Great resignation, Intention to stay, Psychological empowerment, Psychological well-being, Person–job fit, Self-determination theory

Paper type Research paper

Data availability statement: The data supporting this study’s findings are available on request from the corresponding author, [WS]. The data are not publicly available due to their containing information that could compromise the privacy of research participants].



Over the past decades, the 21st-century interest in the intention to stay (instead of leaving) and attitudes that guided the path in forecasting the “intention to stay” have intrigued scholars and practitioners (Hom and Griffeth, 1995). Intention to stay (ITS) has been acknowledged as one of the most impactful indicators of retaining employees (Griffeth *et al.*, 2000). It reflects an employee’s level of attachment to the employer, expressed as an attitude (Mitchell *et al.*, 2001). The past five years arguably have been a period that brought unprecedented complexity, diversity, fast-paced world globalization and varying trends of consumption, forcing organizations to deal with novel demands and developing strains and their impact on the ITS (De Smet *et al.*, 2021). However, the onslaught of the pandemic in 2020 has made people endure extraordinary levels of stress for 18 straight months in isolation worldwide, struggling to stay alive, disrupting many aspects of their existence and leaving them confused, shocked and emotionally distressed to unimaginable levels (Sheather and Slattery, 2021). This unprecedented event triggered a realization and reevaluation of their organization, occupation and association to work, leading to a shift in priorities due to which people started looking for work–life balance, competitive salaries, job satisfaction, hybrid and remote job options making the job market belong to the jobseeker (Puri, 2022).

Consequently, the tsunami of the “great resignation,” i.e. a new-fangled pattern of quitting jobs *en masse* (Klotz, 2021; Rosalsky, 2022; Kaplan, 2021), unsettled businesses worldwide at an unprecedented scale and extraordinary pace. The Indian IT sector had to hire an additional 52% to meet the huge gap caused by the Great Resignation and the imminent requirement for capable employees (Kothari, 2021). Kapoor (2022) states, “Sectors most affected by the Great Resignation are e-commerce, FMCG, hi-tech jobs, and start-ups, despite being given the highest salary increment post-pandemic. Mostly, the resignation numbers in India were voluntary, comprising 17.5% of the overall resignation percentage”, leading us to the problem statement: Which aspects of work, empowerment and well-being will impact the decision of employees to continue doing jobs in their respective organizations amidst the “Great Resignation” context?

This study examines *psychological well-being (PWB)* as a mediator in the person–job fit (P-J fit) and ITS relationship. Many aspects triggered the Great Resignation, including breakdowns, uncontrollable managers and lethal job situations, as pandemics are beyond biological phenomena and create lasting psychosocial consequences (Wake, 2022). The pandemic made employees feel uncertain regarding job continuity, pay protection, job location and apprehension of losing jobs, which is detrimental to employees’ attitudes and connections toward their organization (Sverke *et al.*, 2002). Under such circumstances, a crucial role is played by *psychological empowerment* attributed to individuals’ attitudes, behaviors and outcomes, such as *psychological well-being* at work (McClain, 2001; Tahira *et al.*, 2010). P-J fit (Coomber and Barriball, 2007; Hayes *et al.*, 2006; Trevor, 2001) is also associated with increased intention to stay in organizations (Bordin *et al.*, 2006). Research also suggests that building adaptability addresses employees’ need for connection and well-being (Bromley *et al.*, 2021), and adaptive organization practices may support and replenish employees’ sense of control for the long-term accomplishment of their work (Lin *et al.*, 2021). It remains unclear why employees are less engaged than ever despite an increased emphasis on “meaning” at work, which is a job characteristic that improves employee attitudes and behaviors (Edwards, 1991; Cable and DeRue, 2002; Scroggins, 2007).

Thus, to understand the effect of PWB on the ITS, examining the level of *psychological empowerment (PE)* is essential (Medley and Larochelle, 1995; Nielsen *et al.*, 2008). Appropriately, in response to literature suggestions, the PWB construct is meaningful to examine, considering its association with PE, as it has been seen as an essential outcome of PE (Tashan, 2013). High PWB tends to motivate employees to stay with the organization

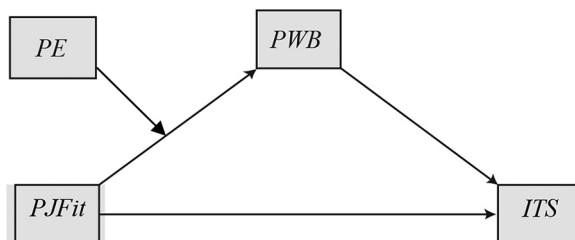
and not change jobs, whereas low PWB tends to demotivate employees, further diminishing their ITS (Hobfoll, 1989). Therefore, this paper investigates the PWB and ITS when PE is high, medium or low. While research has been done to uncover the factors responsible for the Great Resignation which amplified its effects (Smet *et al.*, 2021), especially in an extraordinarily stressed environment, it is limited. Hence, research is required to reexamine employee needs during extraordinarily stressful times – more profound empathy, purpose, flexibility, sense of unity and connectivity that employees crave (Smet *et al.*, 2021), which can further strengthen employee’s intention to stay by prompting businesses to accommodate employee’s needs and avoid getting perished due to the “Great Resignation” (Wake, 2022).

The incremental contributions of our study are twofold. First, our study explores the underlying cognitions of PE and PWB, considering that PE is assumed to be a prerequisite of a more civil workplace with high morals. Second, our analysis highlights that a higher performance level, specifically “impact” (Thomas and Velthouse, 1990; Spreitzer *et al.*, 1999; Menon, 2001; Meyerson and Kline, 2008) and PWB, specifically “environmental mastery” is influenced by the P-J “demand-abilities” fit, which influences the psychological processes underlying the P-J fit association to stay. These dimensions make individuals function at a higher performance level, enhancing the ITS of employees, which can influence and mitigate the Great Resignation crisis in India.

Though most organizations need help to keep pace with rapidly evolving business requirements and practices to enhance the intention to stay, the literature needs to be more robust in evidencing means to identify, develop and retain committed employees (Dalal and Akdere, 2021). This inadequacy can have critical ramifications since companies that cannot survive the Great Resignation might perish or fail to realize their future goals (Vaiman *et al.*, 2021). Thus, our review focuses on the following research objective:

Research objective (RO): This paper examines the moderated mediation impact of *psychological empowerment* and *psychological well-being* in the relationship between P-J fit and the intention to stay in the context of the Great Resignation crisis (Figure 1).

This study encompasses a comprehensive review of literature that highlights the criticality and deficit of *psychological empowerment* and *psychological well-being* given the context of the extraordinary stress which led to the “Great Resignation” – enabled by a sharply defined methodology carried out the analysis to explore the above-mentioned specific research objective. Subsequently, the discussion section highlights the need to balance and provide an accurate view of mitigating the Great Resignation crisis. To



Notes: ITS = Intention to stay; P-J Fit = Person-job fit;
PE = Psychological empowerment; PWB = Psychological well-being

Source: Figure created by the author

Figure 1.
Hypothesized
research model

conclude our study, we recommend directions for future research (DFR), augmented by potential solutions to take care of the post-pandemic scenario.

Literature review

Theoretical background and hypothesis

The three theories which provide valuable insights into different aspects of *psychological empowerment* and *psychological well-being* are expectancy theory (Vroom, 1960), empowerment theory (Spreitzer, 1995) and self-determination theory (SDT; Deci and Ryan, 1985).

Expectancy theory

Expectancy theory focuses on motivation and the belief that individuals are motivated to engage in actions based on their expectations of the outcomes. It suggests that people's behavior is influenced by their expectations of achieving desired outcomes and the perceived value of those outcomes (Vroom, 1960). In the context of *psychological empowerment* and *well-being*, Expectancy theory suggests that when individuals perceive a strong link between their efforts and positive outcomes, they tend to experience higher motivation and *psychological well-being* levels (Yang and Li, 2021).

Empowerment theory

Empowerment theory emphasizes on the importance of individuals experiencing control, mastery and influence by being in charge of micro and macro aspects of their lives. It suggests that when individuals perceive themselves as empowered, they feel positive psychological outcomes, including increased well-being. This theory focuses on enhancing personal and collective strengths, facilitating participation and involvement and promoting social justice. It suggests that people who feel a sense of control over their lives tend to experience higher *psychological well-being* (Spreitzer, 1995; Rappaport, 1987; Dee et al., 2003).

Self-determination theory

SDT emphasizes the role of intrinsic motivation, autonomy and relatedness in promoting *psychological well-being* (Deci and Ryan, 1985). In the context of the Great Resignation, where many individuals are leaving their jobs, SDT provides a relevant framework for understanding how *psychological empowerment* is associated with *psychological well-being* (Ryan and Deci, 2000; Tessema et al., 2022).

PE refers to individuals experiencing control, mastery and influence regarding their lives and work. When individuals perceive themselves as empowered in their jobs, they tend to feel positive psychological outcomes, such as increased well-being (Diener and Biswas-Diener, 2005). Thus, the concept of PE is fundamentally situated in the SDT, which emphasizes the importance of independence, capability and affiliation at work and how these factors contribute to individuals' feelings of empowerment and overall well-being. SDT suggests that when employees have their fundamental psychological needs for independence, capability and affiliation met in their work setting, they tend to feel more empowered and have a higher sense of enhanced well-being (Deci and Ryan, 1985). In the Great Resignation context, individuals may leave their jobs due to a lack of autonomy or feeling unfulfilled in their work. SDT would suggest that when individuals have the opportunity to make choices aligned with their values and interests, have a sense of work competence and experience positive relations with coworkers, they are more likely to feel psychologically empowered and have a greater sense of well-being (Forner et al., 2020). SDT also recognizes the importance of inherent motivation, which refers to engaging in actions

for intrinsic satisfaction and personal growth (Ackerman, 2018). In the context of the Great Resignation, individuals may be leaving their jobs because they feel disconnected from their intrinsic motivation and seek greater fulfillment and alignment with their values.

PWB (Ryff, 1989) integrated different perspectives and tapped six fundamental *psychological well-being* factors that cut across psychological health, medical and evolving lifelong concepts of functioning psychologically more optimally. These six factors are *self-acceptance* (positive attitudes toward oneself), *positive relations* (with people, including the ability to forge a close association with them), *autonomy* (qualities of self-determination, autonomy and self-regulating behaviors), *environmental mastery* (the ability of individuals to involve, manage and participate in their respective ecosystems), *purpose in life* (beliefs that make individuals experience their *raison d'être*) and *individual development* (ongoing development and motivation to accomplish growth based on individual potential). SDT suggests that when individuals are free to pursue meaningful work that aligns with their intrinsic motivations, they tend to experience greater *psychological well-being* (Rigby and Ryan, 2018).

In summary, SDT best explains the connection between empowerment and well-being from a psychological perspective in the context of the Great Resignation.

Person–job fit and intention to stay. Intention to stay (ITS) is the predictability of an employee's expectation to continue one's job in the future. Inoue and Alfaro-Barrantes (2015) explained the intention to stay in an organization as the willingness to work continuously for the organization. Numerous studies show that low intention to stay leads to attrition (Coomber and Barriball, 2007; Hayes *et al.*, 2006). Hence, working on aspects related to employees' decision to stay in an organization can curtail attrition rates (Maertz and Campion, 1998).

P-J fit denotes the equivalence between what individuals need to do their jobs and the stimulus was given to perform the same (Bretz *et al.*, 1993; Edwards, 1991). Edwards (1991) stated that P-J fit must be segregated into separate fit perspectives, namely, *demand–abilities fit*, which equates an individual's skills and capabilities with the precise job requirements wherein workers tend to perform their work more efficiently and continue with their respective jobs. Conversely, *need–supplies fit* is accomplished by providing the supplies (rewards) individuals need to perform their jobs. However, these two distinct fit types are now aggregated as the general construct of P-J fit (Cable and DeRue, 2002; Scroggins, 2007).

The positive impact of P-J fit on the ITS has been corroborated by many studies (Trevor, 2001), wherein employees grow and navigate professionally in their careers using their perception of fit. Kristof (1996) analyzed P-J fit based on the job's needs and the employee's ability to do their jobs effectively, evidencing that a good P-J fit will positively impact the ITS (Li *et al.*, 2018). Additionally, a rapidly growing number of studies have established that the closer the fitment of an employee and the job, the higher the probability of integration, satisfaction and commitment toward the organization. This congruence happens due to the equivalence between individuals' traits and their surrounding environment, leading to optimistic feelings and actions (Lewin, 1951; Pervin, 1989), increasing the intention to stay.

Mediating effect of psychological well-being. Psychological well-being (PWB) has conventionally been assumed to be the total efficacy of individuals functioning psychologically (Gechman and Wiener, 1975; Martin, 1984; Wright and Cropanzano, 2000). To clarify PWB, Ryff (1989) integrated different perspectives and tapped six core factors of *psychological well-being* stated above, namely: *self-acceptance*, *positive relations* with others, *autonomy*, *environmental mastery*, *purpose in life* and *personal growth* (Ryff, 1989; Clarke *et al.*, 2001). Substandard levels of PWB enhance stress, possibly leading to an emotional

state of burnout and amplified intention to quit (Høigaard *et al.*, 2012), which is why job attrition is often attributed to a reduction in PWB (Høigaard *et al.*, 2012). High PWB tends to motivate employees to stay with the organization and not change jobs, as it entails an additional investment of precious resources, i.e. time and effort, to accomplish higher levels of PWB. Low PWB tends to demotivate employees, further diminishing their ITS and consequently initiating the search for a new job in the hope of increasing PWB (Hobfoll, 1989).

Assessment of the match between P-J fit accounts for what an employee needs and gets by accomplishing a task, which further relates to increased job satisfaction and the ITS. PWB, by definition, is a broader construct than job satisfaction and denotes characteristics of one personal as well as professional life (Diener, 1984; Wright *et al.*, 2004), which encompasses the comparative presence of positive feelings as well as the comparative absence of negative feelings (Argyle, 1987; Diener and Larsen, 1993). Thus, higher PWB leads to lower negative and higher positive feelings simultaneously and correlates with increased ITS. Finally, PWB denotes an individual's comprehensively (Cropanzano and Wright, 2001; Diener *et al.*, 1993) without being bound to any specific situation (Wright, 2006), unlike job satisfaction, which specifically relates to an individual's job leading to the following hypothesis:

H1. PWB mediates the relationship between P-J fit and the ITS.

Moderating effect of psychological empowerment

Psychological empowerment (PE) means "increased intrinsic task motivation, manifested in a set of four cognitions, depicting an individual's orientation to his or her work role: *meaning, competence, self-determination and impact*" (Thomas and Velthouse, 1990). These are elaborated as:

- *meaning* which is the equivalence of an individual's job and beliefs, values and behaviors;
- *competence* which is the confidence to perform a job to the best of one's capability;
- *self-determination*, which is the feeling of being in control of his/her work by an individual; and
- *choice* (referred to as *impact* by Spreitzer (1995) which is the feeling that an individual can impact the outcome of his/her work (Menon, 2001; Spreitzer *et al.*, 1999; Thomas and Velthouse, 1990; Meyerson and Kline, 2008).

In that context, we can say that PE is associated with individuals who feel capable of achieving results about work in an empowered work environment and nurturing higher ITS in the organization, compared to individuals who experience a lower degree of PE (Meyerson and Kline, 2008). Alternatively, psychological framework research proposes that empowerment exemplifies the relationship between an individual and the organization and may impact turnover intention choices, besides affecting numerous psychological situations and behaviors (Dee *et al.*, 2003). Additionally, there is adequate evidence in previous research about the association between the perception of PE, PWB (McClain, 2001) and increased ITS (Bordin *et al.*, 2006). Moreover, while PWB is a broader concept that denotes aspects of professional and personal life (Diener, 1984; Wright *et al.*, 2007) and does not get constrained by any specific state (Wright, 2006), previous research has demonstrated that PWB can get impacted by several environmental actions (Wright, 2006; Wright and Staw, 1999), which is very important here considering the effects of the "great attrition." The

linkages between the cognitions of PE and PWB in a moderated mediation relationship between P-J fit and ITS are aligned with our research objective, which prioritizes the cognitions that can have the maximum impact in mitigating the Great Resignation crisis, leading to the following hypothesis:

- H2. An increase in PE leads to a stronger P-J fit's impact on PWB.
- H3. PWB will be a more vital mediator between P-J and ITS when PE is higher than PE is lower.

Methods

Data and sample

We used a cross-sectional survey design using a structured questionnaire. We got 351 respondents from organizations that are part of the Nifty 50 list (the benchmark Indian stock market index of 50 major Indian companies covering 13 sectors of the Indian economy using cluster sampling and including all units of each sector in our sample). The study was facilitated by identifying the variables impacting the "Great Resignation" trends based on a literature review that associated the relevance of P-J fit, PE, PWB and the ITS in extraordinarily stressful times. The origination of data from a single source made it crucial to examine common method bias. We employed the common latent factor approach and unmeasured latent method construct (Williams *et al.*, 1989). This approach is reliable compared to other methods for detecting common method bias (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003; Richardson *et al.*, 2009), although only some statistical methods effectively eliminate common method bias.

Measures

Person-Job fit. Needs-supplies fit was evaluated by using a three-item scale (Cable and DeRue, 2002), which indicated an internal consistency reliability varying between 0.76 and 0.96 (Cable and DeRue, 2002; Duffy *et al.*, 2015; Gabriel *et al.*, 2014; Rehfuss *et al.*, 2012) when used in the western part of the world. Abilities-demand fit was measured by using a five-item scale (Abdel-Halim, 1981; Xie and Johns, 1995), which had a reliability measure of 0.85. Measurement items included "There is a good fit between what my present job offers and what I am looking for in a job" A five-point Likert scale was used to assess these items from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Cronbach's alpha for this scale was 0.85.

Psychological well-being. PWB was measured by the usage of an 18-item scale, i.e. an abridged version of the original Ryff (1989) scale which encompasses six elements (self-acceptance, positive relations, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life and personal growth) of PWB associated with mental well-being, medical and life-course evolving concepts of psychologically functioning optimistically. Negatively phrased questions were reverse-coded to indicate greater well-being for higher scores for all items. Psychometric analyses using American data confirmed that every item showed a more substantial and positive correlation with only its scale and intercorrelations between scales were low, which ranged from 0.13 (autonomy and purpose in life) to 0.46 for (environmental mastery and self-acceptance) (Ryff and Keyes, 1995). Measurement items included "I have confidence in my own opinions, even if they are different from the way most other people think." A five-point Likert scale assessed these items from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Cronbach's alpha for this scale was 0.55.

Psychological empowerment. PE was measured using Spreitzer's (1995) scale, which encompasses four elements (meaning, competence, self-determination and choice/impact), and responses were captured on a five-point scale. Measurement items included "I have great control

over what happens in my department.” A five-point Likert scale assessed these items from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Cronbach’s alpha for this scale was 0.89.

Intention to stay. ITS was measured by using the four-item scale developed by Price and Mueller (1986). Measurement items included “I plan to stay in my organization as long as possible.” A five-point Likert scale assessed these items from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Cronbach’s alpha for this scale was 0.79.

Control variables. The mediator (PWB) and outcome (i.e. ITS) were measured at the same time, and we controlled for the levels of outcomes. We controlled for demographic variables, i.e. age, sex, work experience, organization category and management level) in Table 1. Age was measured using a scale variable, gender was measured using a dichotomous categorical variable (Male = 1, Female = 2), work experience was measured using a scale variable, organization category was measured using a dichotomous categorical variable (Services = 1, Manufacturing = 2). Management level was measured by using an ordinal scale with three levels (junior = 1, middle = 2 and senior = 3). These covariates’ means, SDs and correlations have been reported with study variables in Table 3, whereas the main findings have been reported without these covariates.

Analysis

Confirmatory factor analysis. The measurement model (Table 2) was estimated using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) for assessing the reliability and validity of P-J fit, PWB and the ITS multi-item scales, and a maximum likelihood estimation was used along with Mplus 8.3 to ascertain the measurement model. The average variance extracted (AVE) was above 0.5 for all the constructs except for *psychological well-being*, where it was relatively low. Literature suggested that in such cases, if the composite reliability of the construct is

Demographic variables		(%)
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	238	68
Female	113	32
<i>Age</i>		
Between 20 and 25 years	14	4
25–40 years	208	59
40–50 years	107	6
Above 50 years	22	6
<i>Work experience</i>		
Less than 5	51	15
5–15 years	145	41
15–25 years	123	9
Above 25 years	32	9
<i>Management level</i>		
Senior	122	35
Middle	188	54
Junior	41	12
<i>Organization sector</i>		
Manufacturing	43	12
Services sector	308	88

Table 1.
Demographic
variables

Source: Table created by the authors

Indicator	PJF	PWB	PE	ITS
PJF1 (<i>Demand–Abilities</i>)	0.92*** (0.01)			
PJF2 (<i>Demand–Abilities</i>)	0.83*** (0.02)			
PJF3 (<i>Demand–Abilities</i>)	0.80*** (0.02)			
PJF4 (<i>Demand–Abilities</i>)	0.54*** (0.04)			
PWB1 (<i>Environ Mastery</i>)		0.63*** (0.06)		
PWB2 (<i>Environ Mastery</i>)		0.60*** (0.06)		
PWB3 (<i>Environ Mastery</i>)		0.60*** (0.06)		
PE1 (<i>Impact</i>)			0.89*** (0.02)	
PE2 (<i>Impact</i>)			0.88*** (0.02)	
PE3 (<i>Impact</i>)			0.79*** (0.02)	
ITS2				0.87*** (0.03)
ITS3				0.70*** (0.04)
ITS4				0.62*** (0.04)
Cronbach's alpha (reliability)	0.85	0.55	0.89	0.79
Omega total (% variance explained)	0.86	0.55	0.89	0.76
Average variance extracted (AVE)	0.61	0.38	0.73	0.55

Table 2. Standardized factor loadings for the measurement model

Notes: Model Fit: χ^2 ($df = 48$) = 112.668; $p = 0.000$; CFI = 0.969. RMSEA = 0.062. SRMR = 0.042; * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

Source: Table created by the authors

more than 0.6 (Fornell and Larcker, 1981), then it can act as a substitute for AVE. The composite reliability in the case of *psychological well-being* was 0.64.

Path model. After completing the CFA, the path model was estimated by merging mediation and moderation (Edwards and Lambert, 2007) using Mplus 8.3 and the mean composite scores of P-J fit, PWB and ITS. The effect of randomly measuring errors on path coefficient approximations (Kline, 2005) was mitigated, as we used all multi-item measures from validated unidimensional scales, and the CFA results additionally established the reliability and validity of the same (Cole and Preacher, 2014; Kline, 2005). For *H1*, P-J fit was treated as an external variable to predict the intention to stay directly and indirectly via the mediating effect of PWB for *H2* in the path model. In addition, PE was treated as an exogenous variable basis on which PWB and the ITS were regressed. The interaction effect (P-J fit \times PE) to predict PWB and the ITS was also specified in the model. Subsequently, the significance and path directly from the interaction term to:

- ITS (*H2*); and
- PWB (*H3*) were used to ascertain the moderating effects (Kenny and Judd, 1984).

Moderated mediation analysis. The conditional indirect effects of P-J fit on the ITS through PWB at high and low levels of the moderator (i.e. PE) were calculated by using the path coefficients obtained (Stride *et al.*, 2015). The moderated mediation was predicted (*H3*) by calculating the z -score for the difference in value amongst the two indirect effect approximations (Paternoster *et al.*, 1998; Edwards and Lambert, 2007).

Results

Our analysis of cross-sectional data from 351 employees in India corroborated a positive correlation between P-J fit and ITS. This finding is in congruence with prior research suggesting a positive correlation between P-J fit and ITS (Chhabra, 2015). The indirect effect

of PWB on ITS was also positive and significant. Additionally, moderated mediation relationship between PE and PWB was evidenced, wherein the mediation effect of PWB increased as PE increased. Overall, since the direct effect of P-J fit on ITS was insignificant, it was essential to ascertain other variables that impact the *conditional* influence of P-J fit on ITS. Specifically, PE moderated the impact of P-J fit on PWB, subsequently positively influencing ITS.

Date normality for all variables was ensured prior to the approximation of the measurement and path models by analyzing the data distribution for P-J fit, PWB, PE and the ITS. The absence of abnormal distribution was also confirmed since absolute skewness and kurtosis values were below 1.0 (Kim, 2013), alleviating the apprehension of multivariate abnormality for CFA (Kline, 2005).

Measurement model

Model fit was substantiated via the indices: χ^2 ($df = 48$) = 112.668, Comparative Fit Index (CFI) = 0.969, Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) = 0.042 and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) = 0.062. The multi-item scales for all three constructs demonstrated validity (both reliable and convergent) with values beyond the minimum level for construct reliability and average variance extracted (AVE) (mentioned in Table 1). Additionally, the square root value of the AVE was higher than the correlation coefficients between any pair of constructs (mentioned in Table 3) for each multi-item scale, thereby providing proof of discriminant validity (MacKenzie, Podsakoff and Podsakoff, 2011).

Path model

The path model fit is substantiated by the data: $\chi^2/df = 124.27/50 = 2.48$, CFI = 0.964, RMSEA = 0.065, SRMR = 0.048, and the values of *R*-square for PWB ($R^2 = 0.34$, $p < 0.01$) and the ITS ($R^2 = 0.48$, $p < 0.01$) justify statistical significance. The values in Table 4 indicate the standardized results of the path model. First, the P-J fit correlation with the ITS is justified in the correlational analysis ($r = 0.80$, $p = 0.045$; see Table 4), and second, the path model values indicate that the direct path from P-J fit to ITS is significant ($\beta = 0.59^{***}$, $t = 0.09$, $p = 0.50$), thereby confirming *H1*, which had predicted that P-J fit had a direct association with the ITS.

Variables	Mean	SD	OrgCat	MgmtLvl	Sex	Age	WkExp	PJFDA	PWB	PE	ITS
OrgCat	1.12	0.328	1								
MgmtLvl	2.23	0.645	0.097	1							
Sex	1.32	0.468	-0.108*	-0.110*	1						
Age	36.82	7.824	-0.043	0.456**	-0.153**	1					
WkExp	13.23	7.928	-0.035	0.481**	-0.168**	0.860**	1				
PJFDA	3.98	0.798	0.022	0.146**	-0.068	0.134*	0.142**	1			
PWB	3.61	0.751	0.082	0.161**	-0.016	0.108*	0.117*	0.224**	1		
PE	4.35	0.787	-0.065	0.172**	0.013	0.243**	0.175**	0.572**	0.312**	1	
ITS	3.19	1.085	0.039	0.037	-0.073	0.011	0.015	0.500**	0.084	0.294**	1

Table 3. Means, standard deviations and correlations among variables

Notes: $N = 352$; OrgCat = Organization Category; MgmtLvl = Management Level; WkExp = Work Experience; PJFDA = Person-Job Fit: Demand Abilities; PWB = Psychological Well-being; PE = Psychological Empowerment; ITS = Intention to Stay; * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

Source: Table created by the authors

Path	β	t	Psychological well-being
<i>Direct effects</i>			
Person–job fit → Intention to stay	0.59***	0.09	
Person–job fit → Psychological well-being	0.28***	0.06	
Psychological well-being → Intention to stay	0.45**	0.16	
<i>Indirect effects</i>			
Person–job fit → Psychological well-being → Intention to stay (<i>H1</i>)	0.50***	0.07	
<i>Hypothesized moderating effects</i>			
Person–job fit × Psychological empowerment → Psychological well-being (<i>H2</i>)	0.13**	0.04	
<i>Effects of Psychological Empowerment</i>			
Psychological empowerment → Psychological well-being	0.20***	0.06	

Notes: $n = 351$; β = Standardized coefficients; * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$; Model Fit: χ^2 (df = 48) = 112.668; $p = 0.000$; CFI = 0.969. RMSEA = 0.062. SRMR = 0.042

Source: Table created by the authors

Table 4.
Standardized results of the path model

Also, the P-J fit showed a positive relationship with *psychological well-being* ($\beta = 0.28$, $t = 0.06$, $p < 0.001$), which positively impacted the ITS ($\beta = 0.45$, $t = 0.16$, $p < 0.001$), thereby confirming *H1* which stated that PWB positively mediates the association between P-J fit and the ITS ($\beta = 0.50$, $t = 0.07$, $p = 0.001$).

The path from the interaction term (P-J fit \times PE) to the ITS generated a significant coefficient ($\beta = 0.13^{**}$, $t = 0.04$, $p < 0.001$), thereby confirming *H2*, indicating the moderating role of PE on the association between P-J fit and PWB. The findings of the other paths specified in the model justified that PE positively predicted PWB ($\beta = 0.20^{***}$, $t = 0.06$, $p < 0.01$).

In order to check the moderated mediation predicted in *H3*, the conditional indirect effects on the ITS through PWB at low and high levels of PE were calculated, for which unstandardized coefficient estimates were used. The indirect effect calculated via the variances in the two path coefficients was statistically more substantial for higher PE than for low PE (Paternoster *et al.*, 1998). The interaction plot (Figure 2) shows that for high PE of employees (i.e. green plot line), the indirect effect of P-J fit on the ITS via PWB increases as the value of P-J fit increases. The green plot line recommends that respondents with the lowest P-J fit (-3.5) reported higher ITS to stay scores than those with the highest P-J fit (3.5). Contradictory to the same, the indirect effect of the team with low PE (i.e. red plot line) resulted in a minor downward pattern as the value of P-J fit increased. These findings established that PE positively moderated the mediating effect of PWB between the P-J fit and the ITS (*H3*).

Discussion

The fact that employee retention warrants a lot more than just a salary increment has become more evident. Also, flexible work timings and the option to work from home or anywhere would not significantly differentiate one organization. Building multi-level adaptability for individuals, teams, interpersonal and organizations, addressing employees' need for connection and well-being (Bromley *et al.*, 2021) is essential for employees to replenish and experience the freedom to pursue meaningful work over which they have control (Huang *et al.*, 2012; Keim *et al.*, 2014; Kurtessis *et al.*, 2017; Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002; Thompson and Prottas, 2006). This need aligns with their intrinsic motivations, making them experience greater levels of PWB (Rigby and Ryan, 2018) as per the SDT

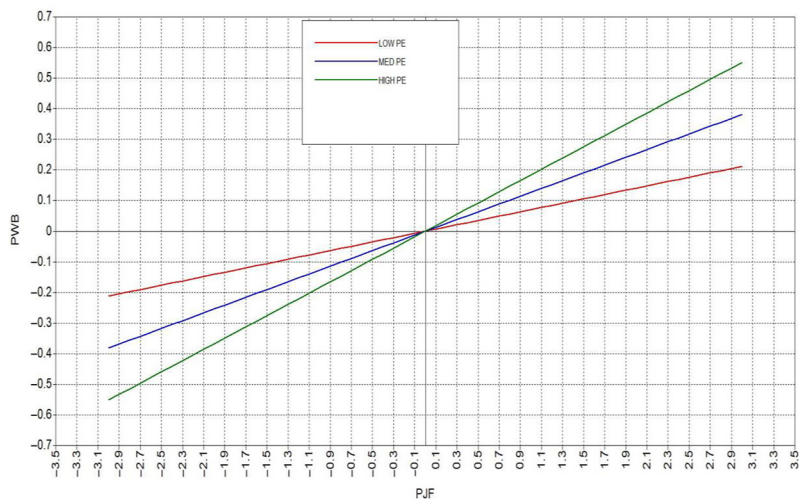


Figure 2. Interaction plot of the indirect effect of person-job fit on intention to stay via psychological well-being with psychological empowerment as the moderator variable

Notes: PJF = Person-job fit; PWB = Psychological wellbeing; PE = Psychological empowerment

Source: Figure created by the authors

theory. To enhance the ITS, we have found that individuals with low PE provide meaningful sources of opportunity to provide independence and enhance capability and affiliation at work to strengthen their feelings of empowerment and overall well-being, which is fundamentally situated in the SDT. Also, having or developing adaptability can enhance well-being fundamentally through the ongoing adoption of adaptable attitudes and healthy behaviors under pressure, which propels consistent self-care required to cope with changing demands and the adversity of Covid-19 (Bromley *et al.*, 2021).

Thus, our findings illustrate that organizations focusing on PE and PWB can positively impact their employees' ITS. This impact of *demand-abilities fit* substantiates how this study connects with HRD practice theory and literature, wherein organizations can develop their human capital in line with company-specific competencies (Pralhad and Hamel, 1990), which resonates with the resource-based view (RBV) theory (Barney, 1991) wherein enterprises focus on internal resources for identifying assets and capabilities that facilitate higher competitive advantage (Chatterjee *et al.*, 2022).

Theoretical implications

While job satisfaction and organizational commitment have been consistently connected with increasing the ITS (Chhabra, 2015; Leng and Chin, 2016), employee expectations during extraordinarily stressful times involve taking appropriate actions to turn attrition into PE, PWB and the ITS. Employees expect to restore their work-life balance and prioritize physical and emotional well-being again, especially during extraordinarily stressful times (Bromley *et al.*, 2021), predominantly when managers sensitively handle the changeover to a hybrid-work situation – or do not obstinately refuse to offer this option at all (Smet *et al.*, 2021), which is corroborated by our findings mentioned above. To replenish the feeling of control in impacting the long-term accomplishment of their work, employees want the empowerment (specifically “impact” or “choice”) to select more “location agnostic” positions which can impact outcomes and not prompt them to start rethinking their commitment to their respective organizations.

By evaluating the cognitions of PE and PWB in conjunction with the elements of P-J fit for mitigating the Great Resignation crisis, our study indicated that individuals who increasingly felt that they could *impact* the outcome of their work (Menon, 2001; Spreitzer *et al.*, 1999; Thomas and Velthouse, 1990; Meyerson and Kline, 2008; Spreitzer, 1995) could have positive consequences for the PWB of employees who achieve “environmental mastery.” Out of the six elements of PWB (Ryff, 1989), individuals who achieved *environmental mastery* (ability to involve themselves and accomplish activities in their surrounding ecosystem) experienced greater PWB when PE increased, enhancing their ITS. Additionally, PE and PWB associated by a moderated mediation relationship indicate that these two aspects must be considered to fully understand the deadly psychological effects of the pandemic while unveiling the underlying person–job *demand–abilities* fit and the ITS dynamics to determine the choice between attrition or the ITS. These findings validate the additional theoretical proposition regarding the conditional indirect effects of P-J fit on the ITS through PWB at high and low stages of the moderator (PE) (Stride *et al.*, 2015). Thus, our study showed that the underlying association between P-J fit and ITS in the “great resignation” context is impacted solitarily by the *demand–abilities* fit and not by the *needs–supplies* fit due to the mediator role of PWB in conjunction with the moderator role of PE. More specifically, the strength of the indirect effect was statistically more significant for higher PE than for low PE (Paternoster *et al.*, 1998), and the indirect effect of P-J fit on ITS via the mediation of PWB increased as the value of P-J fit increased as seen in the interaction plot (Figure 2) for high PE of employees (i.e. green plot line).

Practical implications

Organizations can foster PE by providing employees with opportunities for decision-making, autonomy, skill development and recognition (Xiang *et al.*, 2021). Empowering employees can increase their feeling of control and impact over their work, which may positively affect their PWB and, consequently, their ITS amidst the Great Resignation crisis (Kim and Beehr, 2018). Organizations should prioritize employee well-being by implementing strategies such as work–life balance initiatives, mental health support and creating a positive work environment translating into improved levels of overall job satisfaction, engagement and commitment, potentially reducing the likelihood of turnover (Mugayar-Baldocchi, 2021; Amin and Akbar, 2013). Organizations should also provide ongoing employee support by assessing and developing their skills, interests, learning capability and values (McDonnell *et al.*, 2016; Afshari and Hadian Nasab, 2021) in line with the enhanced *demand–abilities* fit requirements during extraordinarily stressful situations. Customized approaches that promote an excellent *demand–abilities* fit can enhance employees’ job satisfaction and ITS, even during increased turnover like the Great Resignation crisis. By using the insights gained from understanding the moderated mediation relationship to develop and embed the most significant retention factors, organizations are to reduce the impact of the toxicity of significant resignations by incentivizing loyalty, providing growth opportunities, elevating employees’ purpose, prioritizing culture and connection, investing in caring for employees and their families and providing flexible work environments [Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), 2021]. Finally, a compelling employee value proposition coupled with inspirational leaders who empower and support their team members will not only help employees perform better. However, it will also become a catalyst for attracting and retaining talent (Schaninger, 2021).

Limitations and directions for future research

The following limitations of this study can become DFR.

DFR1: Future studies could consider extending the scope of this study beyond a specific context since the work itself can be applied to diverse contexts enabled by compelling arguments for broader contribution.

DFR2: Future research could also focus on other possible influences which are related to psychological effects, possibly psychological climate (Hassan *et al.*, 2012), psychological attachment (Chiaburu and Byrne, 2009), psychological capital (Zhou *et al.*, 2018) and ascertain the impact of these influences or variables on the association amongst P-J fit and ITS.

DFR3: Finally, this study sample comprises only Indian residents, thereby limiting the generalizability of the results.

Conclusion

It would not be unfair to say that the current period is by far the most critical and urgent, warranting expeditious action for leaders to comprehend the diversity of impact of psychological factors due to the pandemic and the mechanisms to adequately handle situations in diverse, multi-dimensional and integrated ways. Employees have recalibrated their lifestyle by prioritizing their work–life balance and well-being over everything else, which, after the offices reopened, made them demand multiple options for working (e.g. remote or hybrid) and not just paychecks. Retaining top talent requires Indian businesses to focus on becoming flexible, transparent and empathetic and provide their employees with a customized and good work environment to instill a sense of belonging akin to being part of a family (Rauniyar, 2022). Organizational survival and growth depend on retaining talented employees; therefore, identifying those factors responsible for sustaining high retention levels is paramount and non-negotiable (Chakraborty and Alam, 2018). In closing, the research on the intention to stay or quit is dynamic and ever-changing and is at the tipping point of a shift in the paradigm of work, workers and the workplace.

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