

**PERSON-ENVIRONMENT FIT, JOB SATISFACTION  
AND INTENTIONS TO LEAVE: THE MODERATING  
EFFECT OF LEADER EMPOWERING BEHAVIOUR**

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## **COMMENTS**

The reader is reminded of the following:

- The references as well as the editorial style as prescribed by the Publication Manual (6th edition) of the American Psychological Association (APA) were followed in this mini-dissertation.
- The mini-dissertation is submitted in the form of a research article. The editorial style specified by the South African Journal of Industrial Psychology (which largely agrees with the APA style) is used, but the APA guidelines were followed in constructing tables.

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## **DECLARATION**

I, Kleinjan Redelinguys, hereby declare that “Person-environment fit, job satisfaction and intentions to leave: The moderating effect of leader empowering behaviour” is my own work and that the views and opinions expressed in this work are those of the author and relevant literature references as shown in the references.

**I further declare that the content of this research will not be handed in for any other qualification at any other tertiary institution.**

**KLEINJAN REDELINGHUYS**

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## SUMMARY

**Title:**

Person-environment fit, job satisfaction and intentions to leave: The moderating effect of leader empowering behaviour.

**Key words:**

Person-environment fit, job satisfaction, intentions to leave, leader empowering behaviour, retail, indirect effect, moderation.

South Africans are engaged in daily battles with work-related and non-work related issues. Although an organisation is not capable of addressing or changing all the issues experienced by the South African population, it can intervene in order to improve the quality of its employees' working lives. A suggested starting point is person-environment fit (PE fit), due to its effect on job satisfaction and intentions to leave. Consequently, when an individual experiences low PE fit, it will contribute to job dissatisfaction, and intentions to leave as international research has shown. To possibly decrease the impact of these relationships, it is important for leader empowering behaviour to be evident throughout the organisation. The objectives of this study were to determine possible relationships, indirect effects, and moderating effects between PE fit, job satisfaction, intentions to leave, and leader empowering behaviour.

A convenience sample of employees working under the guidance of a leader/manager/supervisor was taken from a retail company in Gauteng. Participation in the study was voluntary. A measuring battery measuring PE fit (i.e. person-organisation fit, needs-supplies fit, and demands-abilities fit), job satisfaction, intentions to leave, and leader empowering behaviour (i.e. delegation of authority, accountability, self-directed decision making, information sharing, skills development, and coaching for innovative performance) was used.

Descriptive and inferential statistics, Raykov's rho coefficients, Pearson product-moment correlations, measurement models, structural models, and goodness-of-fit statistics were used to analyse the data. The results indicate that PE fit has a positive relationship with job satisfaction. Job satisfaction has a negative relationship with intentions to leave. PE fit has an indirect effect



on intentions to leave via job satisfaction. Leader empowering behaviour moderates the relationship between job satisfaction and intentions to leave.

Various recommendations were made for the selected retail company as well as for future research. The retail company and employees should comprehend the impact of PE fit on outcomes such as job satisfaction and intentions to leave, as both parties are equally affected by its implications. Therefore, both pro-active and re-active measures should be institutionalised to address PE fit. Additionally, the retail company should understand the importance of leader empowering behaviour and the impact it can have on their business unit and the organisation as a whole.

Recommendations for future research include longitudinal research designs, as well as the expansion of research beyond the selected company in the retail industry.

# **CHAPTER 1**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This mini-dissertation focuses on person-environment fit, job satisfaction, intentions to leave, and leader empowering behaviour amongst employees in a selected company within the retail industry. This chapter contains the problem statement and the discussion of the research objectives (including the general and specific objectives). Furthermore, the research method is explained and the division of the chapters is given.

### **1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

South Africa, a country characterised by breath-taking landscapes, favourable weather conditions, a spectacular animal kingdom, global icons, and traditional delicacies. This creates a glorified impression of South Africa, but not everything is colourful and flavoursome. The South African population and workforce across all industries have to battle numerous aspects, such as unemployment, poverty, Broad-based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE), e-toll road system, widespread taxation, crime, and inflation, just to name a few. This suggests that South Africans are engaged in daily battles with work-related and nonwork-related issues. Although these issues affect all industries, the current study will focus on a selected company within the retail industry, due to its importance to South Africa's economy, its share in job creation, as well as its share in the provision of significant products locally and globally.

Even though the selected retail company is not capable of addressing or changing all the issues experienced by the South African population, it can intervene in order to improve the quality of its employees' working lives. This is crucial as work plays a major role in employees' lives, as they spend a large proportion of their time being involved in job-related tasks (Buitendach & Rothmann, 2009). Accordingly, it can be deemed necessary to improve the working experience of employees as it will increase their intentions to stay (Armstrong, 2006; Snyder & Lopez, 2002). This is essential as talent retention is a key challenge facing human resource managers nationally (Koketso & Rust, 2012). Therefore, in order to address these challenges, a suggested starting point could be person-environment fit (PE fit).

The congruence between employees and their work environments is one of the most extensively researched topics within the organisational behaviour domain (Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005; Schneider, 2001), emphasising its importance to all industries (Reh fuss, Gambrell, & Meyer, 2012). This congruence between individuals' characteristics and their work environments is generally referred to as PE fit or purely fit (Greguras & Diefendorff, 2009).

One of the elementary assumptions of psychology proposes that behaviour is a function of person and environment (Lewin, 1951; Murray, 1938). Theories and models focusing on PE interaction emerged in the twentieth century, referring to studies conducted by Parsons (1909), Lewin (1935), Murray (1938), Pervin (1968), and Ekehammer (1974) respectively (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). Accordingly, these theorists focused on the emergence of behaviour based on the interaction between people and their environments; thus emphasising the interactional element (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). Based on the premises of these interactionist theories, PE fit emerged (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). PE fit models have been applied in numerous domains (Livingstone, Nelson, & Bar, 1997), covering areas such as careers (e.g. Super, 1957), job characteristics (e.g. Hackman & Oldham, 1980), organisational climate (e.g. Joyce & Slocum, 1984), organisational design (e.g. Nadler & Tushman, 1988), personnel selection (e.g. Schneider, 1978), and stress (e.g. French, Rodgers, & Cobb, 1974). Although these models are significant in their own right, vocational theories (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984; Holland, 1985) related to PE fit is probably the most applicable to the current study. Accordingly, the theory of work adjustment (TWA; Dawis & Lofquist, 1984) and the vocational choice theory (Holland, 1985), postulate that the perception of fit between the individual and the environment will impact on factors such as job satisfaction and intentions to leave. These theories are also the most extensively applied and researched within the PE fit domain (Tinsley, 2000).

Since its introduction, fit or PE fit emerged as a multidimensional concept (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005), which includes person-vocation fit (PV fit), person-organisation fit (PO fit), person-job fit (PJ fit), person-group fit (PG fit), person-supervisor fit (PS fit), person-career fit (PC fit), demands-abilities fit (DA fit), and needs-supplies fit (NS fit) (Cable & DeRue, 2002; Kristof, 1996; Kristof-Brown et al., 2005; Parasuraman, Greenhaus, & Linnehan, 2000). Although PE fit incorporates numerous dimensions, the current study will focus on the conceptualisation of PE fit, according to Cable and DeRue (2002).

Cable and DeRue (2002) operationalised PE fit as a three-factor model, consisting of PO fit, NS fit, as well as DA fit. PO fit refers to the perceived congruence between employees and organisational values (Cable & DeRue, 2002). When employees experience PO fit, they feel attached to the organisation's mission, put organisational benefits above personal benefits, and find it difficult to leave the organisation (Cable & DeRue, 2002). NS fit refers to the perceived congruence between job rewards and the services provided by the employee (Cable & DeRue, 2002). This fit may be regarded as a necessary aspect of job satisfaction, reflecting the primary reason for employees entering the workforce (Hinkle & Choi, 2009). Consequently, Cable and DeRue (2002) argued that this type of fit may be the most important from an employee viewpoint. DA fit, sometimes referred to as PJ fit (Hinkle & Choi, 2009), refers to the perceived congruence between job demands and the possessed abilities of employees (Cable & DeRue, 2002). When the employee's abilities exceed the demands of his or her respective position, the employee poses a risk of becoming disinterested in his or her position. When the employee's abilities fail to meet the minimum requirements of a position, the employee will become less attracted to his or her occupation due to lost production and undermined development (Cable & DeRue, 2002).

Based on the preceding definitions, an emphasis is given to perceived fit rather than actual fit. Perceived fit can be defined as the direct assessment of compatibility between person and environment, suggesting a subjective rather than objective measurement (Kristof, 1996). According to Hood and Johnson (1991), the best person to determine the extent of congruence or fit, is the individual himself. Cable and DeRue (2002) suggest that subjective measures are more proximal predictors of employee attitudes and behaviours than objective measures. Studies have shown that perceived fit had better predictability of numerous criteria than objective fit had (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). Therefore, subjective measurement of PE fit will be utilised during the current study.

Although PE fit has been extensively researched, the majority of studies have been executed in the United States of America (e.g. Kristof-Brown et al., 2005; Verquer, Beehr, & Wagner, 2003), the United Kingdom (e.g. Furnham & Schaeffer, 1984; Payne, Lane, & Jabri, 1990), and Asian countries (e.g. Tak, 2011); whereas few published articles could be found within a South African context. This lack of published material suggests that the impact of PE fit within a South African context is generally unknown and overlooked. An exception to this is two fairly related studies where PE fit was incorporated into a human capital predictive model for agent performance (Jacobs & Roodt, 2011); and where work-role fit was examined

(Van Zyl, Deacon, & Rothmann, 2010). This poses numerous risks when taking into consideration the individual and organisational outcomes associated with PE fit or misfit.

PE fit boasts numerous positive outcomes for both the employee and the organisation. When employees experience PE fit, they are more likely to be productive and perform better within the organisational context (Greguras & Diefendorff, 2009; Rousseau & McLean Parks, 1992). They tend to illustrate positive behaviours and attitudes (Kristof, 1996; Tziner, 1987), decreasing their likelihood to ignite interpersonal conflict at work (Pseekos, Bullock-Yowell, & Dahlen, 2011). Employees are motivated and committed to the organisation, not being overly concerned about possible career changes (Behery, 2009; Kasl, 1973). Accordingly, they are able to experience career satisfaction and career success, which could be partially ascribed to their job stability (Cable & DeRue, 2002; Ehrhart & Makransky, 2007). This sense of stability is also reflected in employees' personal well-being, as PE fit is associated with factors such as anxiety and depression (Caplan, Tripathi, & Naidu, 1985), mental health (Furnham & Schaeffer, 1984), as well as psychological, physiological and behavioural strain (Caplan, 1987; French et al., 1974). Furthermore, when employees perceive to fit with their environment, they are more satisfied with their jobs (Bretz & Judge, 1994; Gregory, Albritton, & Osmonbekov, 2010), decreasing their susceptibility of intentions to leave or actual turnover (Wheeler, Gallagher, Brouer, & Sablynski, 2007).

According to Buitendach and Rothmann (2009), job satisfaction is an important research topic within I/O psychology. Job satisfaction refers to the extent to which employees experience a sense of enjoyment from their jobs (Spector, 1997). When employees are satisfied with their jobs, they are likely to perform better (Judge, Thoresen, Bono, & Patton, 2001; Susanty, Miradipta, & Jie, 2013), be committed to the organisation (Agho, Price, & Mueller, 1992; Lok & Crawford, 2001), and will be less inclined to report absent (Luthans, 1995; Obasan, 2011). They tend to adopt a positive work attitude (Robbins, 2003), enjoy their lives (Bowling, Eschleman, & Wang, 2010; Judge, Boudreau, & Bretz, 1994), and act as better ambassadors for their respective organisations (Agho et al., 1992). This positive impact of job satisfaction has also transferred to individual well-being, as it is associated with longevity, mental and physical health (Connolly & Myers, 2003; Locke, 1976). Furthermore, job satisfaction is also the most universally studied psychological trait or emotional state in relation to actual turnover or intent to turnover (Chiu & Francesco, 2003).

According to Mbah and Ikemefuna (2012), few areas within the I/O psychology domain have sparked as much interest as employee turnover. Intentions to leave can be defined as the cognisant and intentional frame of mind to leave the organisation (Tett & Meyer, 1993). When employees are experiencing intentions to leave, they are likely to be alienated, disengaged, and possibly burnt-out (Bothma & Roodt, 2013). They are likely to experience misfit with their environment; therefore not enjoying their work (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005; Verquer et al., 2003; Wheeler et al., 2007). Furthermore, previous studies demonstrate that behavioural intentions to leave is consistently correlated to actual turnover (Fox & Fallon, 2003; Mobley, 1982).

Turnover has detrimental consequences for the organisation. Employee turnover stretches beyond the cost of employing staff, as it also impacts on institutional knowledge and organisational reputation (Shaw, Gupta, & Delery, 2005). Furthermore, turnover increases the workloads and demands of existing employees, which may cause burnout, and subsequently even greater turnover (Stroth, 2010). In a South African context, high employee turnover costs organisations millions in revenue annually, through means of decreased productivity, increased accidents, and quality problems (Wärnich, Carrell, Elbert, & Hatfield, 2015).

The instilment of job satisfaction is a vital managerial task (Singh & Surujlal, 2006), together with the minimisation of employee turnover (Chatman & Flynn, 2001). This proposes the necessity for empowering leadership (Manz & Sims, 2001).

According to Liden, Sparrowe, and Wayne (2000), leaders play a significant role in the provision of empowering experiences to their employees. Empowering leadership can be defined as an approach where leaders are required to arrange the distribution and execution of power (Vecchio, Justin, & Pearce, 2010). Konczak, Stelly, and Trusty (2000) identified six dimensions of leader empowering behaviour, namely the delegation of authority, accountability, self-directed decision making, information sharing, skills development, and coaching for innovative performance. Delegation of authority refers to the bestowment of power upon employees, giving them additional power to exercise in the workplace (Konczak et al., 2000). Accountability refers to the increased responsibility bestowed upon subordinates due to their newly-found power, holding them accountable for controllable outcomes (Konczak et al., 2000). Self-directed decision making refers to the encouragement of independent decision making by subordinates (Konczak et al., 2000). Information sharing refers to the provision of information and knowledge, in order to enable subordinates to

contribute optimally towards organisational performance (Konczak et al., 2000). Skills development refers to the leader's facilitation of skills development, ensuring the provision of appropriate training for employees (Wellins, Byham, & Wilson, 1991). Coaching for innovative performance refers to the encouragement of calculated risk taking and original ideas, providing performance feedback, and handling setbacks as learning opportunities (Konczak et al., 2000).

When leaders within the organisation are illustrating leader empowering behaviour, their employees are likely to feel more psychologically empowered, engaged, and will be more committed to their organisation (Konczak et al., 2000; Mendes & Stander, 2011). When empowered, employees also experience a sense of enjoyment from their work (Konczak et al., 2000), making them less inclined to leave the organisation (Mendes & Stander, 2011; Van Schalkwyk, Du Toit, Bothma, & Rothmann, 2010). Therefore, leader empowering behaviour can be regarded as a crucial element of organisational effectiveness (Bartram & Casimir, 2007).

When addressing all the variables of concern to this study, the exact combination of variables has not been subjected to previous investigation. Numerous studies have, however, determined the impact of certain PE fit dimensions on job satisfaction and intentions to leave. Meta-analytic studies (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005; Verquer et al., 2003) have shown that PO and PJ fit have a strong positive correlation with job satisfaction and a weaker negative correlation with intentions to leave, when measured independently. This suggests that although employees experience poor PO fit or PJ fit and job dissatisfaction, they will not necessarily be inclined to quit the organisation.

This intrigued researchers (Wheeler, Buckley, Halbesleben, Brouer, & Ferris, 2005) with regard to why it is not the case, as well as what would influence an employee's decision to remain with or quit the organisation. Accordingly, Wheeler et al. (2005) delineated a multidimensional fit theory, utilising the unfolding model of voluntary turnover (UMVT; Lee & Mitchell, 1994) to describe how the assessment of PO fit may lead to job satisfaction and subsequently intentions to leave. Although Lee and Mitchell (1994) acknowledged that job dissatisfaction may result in turnover, they proposed that factors other than PO misfit would be more predominant originators of job dissatisfaction. Accordingly, Wheeler et al. (2005) proposed that PO misfit could act as an originator of job dissatisfaction in their multidimensional fit theory. They found that the combination of PO misfit and job

dissatisfaction would lead to turnover in the event of job mobility. Building on this study, Wheeler et al. (2007) suggested that PO misfit was yet to receive further examination. Accordingly, they proposed that the relationship between PO fit, job satisfaction, and intentions to leave should be measured concurrently instead of independently (e.g. (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005; Verquer et al., 2003). Therefore, when the impact of PO fit on job satisfaction and intentions to leave has been measured concurrently, results suggest a poor PO fit - dissatisfaction - turnover sequence (Wheeler et al., 2007).

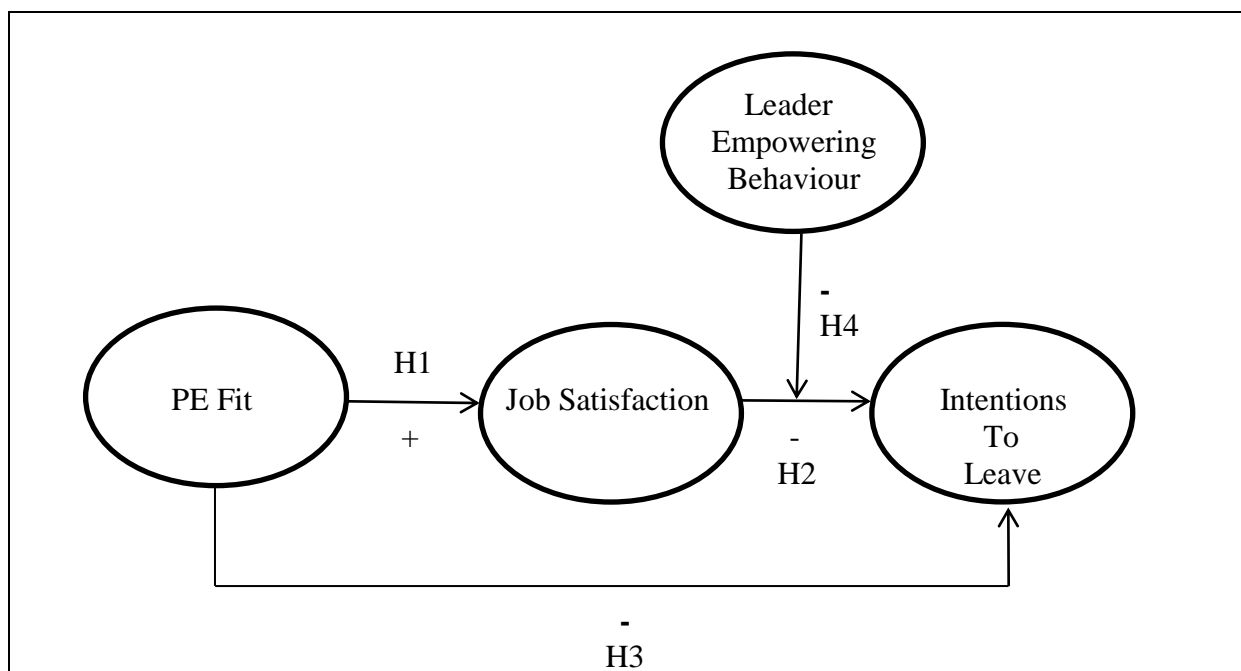
In other words, Wheeler et al. (2007) found that, within an educational setting, poor PO fit leads to dissatisfaction which ultimately results in intentions to leave. Job satisfaction has been shown to be a successful mediator in the relationship between PO fit and intentions to leave. Furthermore, these authors suggested that employees would be less inclined towards intentions to leave, despite poor PO fit and dissatisfaction in the event of job immobility (Wheeler et al., 2007). Job mobility has been shown to be a successful moderator in the relationship between job satisfaction and intentions to leave, as employees will not leave their current jobs if there are no alternative job opportunities available (Wheeler et al., 2007).

Although the study of Wheeler et al. (2007) was used as a guiding framework, the current study distinguished itself in terms of numerous fundamental aspects. Firstly, the current study focused on the three-factor model of PE fit as conceptualised by Cable and DeRue (2002), as opposed to focusing only on one dimension of PE fit. This rests on the motivation that PE fit is a multidimensional concept (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). Secondly, the current study investigated the moderating effect of leader empowering behaviour as opposed to job mobility. Although numerous studies have showcased the relationship of leader empowering behaviour with job satisfaction and intentions to leave independently (e.g. Konczak et al., 2000; Mendes & Stander, 2011; Van Schalkwyk et al., 2010), the moderating effect of leader empowering behaviour in this context has not been determined. According to literature, however, there might be evidence to suggest this moderating effect. Within a global and South African context, studies had found that employees place high value on factors such as empowerment and responsibility, autonomy, development opportunities, and open communication (Birt, Wallis, & Winternitz, 2004; Gaylard, Sutherland, & Viedge, 2005; Kaye & Jordan-Evans, 2002; Ramlall, 2004; Sutherland & Jordaan, 2004; Van Rooyen, Du Toit, Botha, & Rothmann, 2010). Therefore, when these factors were prevalent in the organisation, organisations were highly likely to retain their employees. In order to promote these factors within the organisation and increase the likelihood of employees remaining with



the organisation, leader empowering behaviour can be utilised. Leader empowering behaviour addresses the preceding talent retention factors directly as it focuses on the delegation of authority, accountability, self-directed decision making, information sharing, skills development, and coaching for innovative performance (Konczak et al., 2000). Based on this discussion, one can deduce that a vital or even the ultimate deciding factor in terms of whether an employee will stay or leave the organisation will be leadership. This can be ascribed to the fact that leaders play a pivotal role in employee empowerment (Liden et al., 2000). The notion of leadership being a vital or even the most significant retention factor is well supported in literature (Dobbs, 2001; Kreisman, 2002; Nedd, 2006; Taplin & Winterton, 2007), as Buckingham and Coffman (1999) stated “people leave managers, not companies” (p. 32).

Based on the preceding discussions, the current study proposes the following hypothesised relationships as partially adapted from Wheeler et al.’s (2007) model. This is illustrated in Figure 1.



*Figure 1.* Hypothesised relationships between PE fit, job satisfaction, intentions to leave and leader empowering behaviour.

The following research questions emerged from the above-mentioned problem statement:

- How are PE fit, job satisfaction, intentions to leave, and leader empowering behaviour conceptualised in literature?

- What is the relationship between PE fit, job satisfaction, and intentions to leave?
- Does PE fit indirectly affect intentions to leave via job satisfaction?
- To what extent does leader empowering behaviour moderate the relationship between job satisfaction and intentions to leave?

In order to answer the above research questions, the following research objectives have been set.

## **1.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

The research objectives are divided into general and specific objectives.

### **1.2.1 General Objective**

The general objective of the study is to determine possible relationships, indirect and moderating effects between PE fit, job satisfaction, intentions to leave, and leader empowering behaviour.

### **1.2.2 Specific Objectives**

The specific objectives of this research are to:

- Conceptualise PE fit, job satisfaction, intentions to leave, and leader empowering behaviour in literature;
- Study the relationships between PE fit, job satisfaction, and intentions to leave;
- Determine the indirect effect of PE fit on intentions to leave via job satisfaction; and
- Investigate the moderating effect of leader empowering behaviour on the relationship between job satisfaction and intentions to leave.

## **1.3 RESEARCH METHOD**

The research method consisted of two phases, namely a literature review and an empirical study. The results were presented in the form of a research article.

### **1.3.1 Research Design**

The current study is quantitative in nature. Quantitative research refers to the collection of numerical data and the utilisation of mathematically-grounded methods to analyse the data (Muijs, 2010). A cross-sectional research approach is utilised. According to Salkind (2009), a cross-sectional method allows the researcher to examine various groups of individuals during a single point in time. This approach was beneficial to the current study due to its cost-effectiveness and time-saving nature. The study is descriptive, as certain hypotheses are supported by existing theory. Additionally, the study is also exploratory, as little is known about the moderating effect of leader empowering behaviour on job satisfaction and intentions to leave. Primary data was collected, which was analysed through means of a correlation approach.

### **1.3.2 Participants and Procedure**

In this study, a convenience sample ( $N = 398$ ) was taken from employees working under the guidance of a leader/manager/supervisor at a retail company in Gauteng. Firstly, permission was obtained from management at the selected retail company to distribute the questionnaires amongst employees who met the criteria. Questionnaires were handed out at the premises of the selected retail company. An information letter was also attached to the questionnaire, clarifying the purpose of the study as well as ethical considerations. Assisted by a gatekeeper, the researcher personally disseminated the questionnaires. A training venue was booked for participants to complete the questionnaires on a specific day. Additional participants were given a week to complete the questionnaire. The confidentiality and anonymity of participants were assured as questionnaires were placed into a box, and collected personally by the researcher.

### **1.3.3 Measuring Instruments**

The following questionnaires were used in the empirical study:

*PE fit:* PE fit was measured by the *Perceived Fit Scale* (PFS; Cable & DeRue, 2002). The PFS consisted of nine items which were scored on a seven-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The PFS encompassed three dimensions, namely person-organisation fit (PO fit), need-supplies fit (NS fit), and demands-abilities fit (DA fit). PO fit was measured by three items (e.g. “The things that I value in life are very similar to the things that my organisation values”). NS fit was measured with three items (e.g. “There is a good fit between what my job offers me and what I am looking for in a job”). DA fit was measured by three items (e.g. “The match is very good between the demands of my job and my personal skills”). Cronbach alpha coefficients ranging from 0.84 and 0.98 had been reported for the PFS subscales (Cable & DeRue, 2002; Hinkle & Choi, 2009). Cable and DeRue (2002) established good convergent and divergent validity for the PFS, while it was also further validated by Hinkle and Choi (2009). The PFS had not been utilised in a South African study as far as could be established.

*Job satisfaction:* Job satisfaction was measured by a *Job Satisfaction Scale* developed by Hellgren, Sjöberg, and Sverke (1997), which was based on the work of Brayfield and Rothe (1951). The scale consisted of three items which were scored on a five-point scale ranging from 1 (disagree) to 5 (agree). Encompassing a single dimension, a sample item of the scale included: “I am satisfied with my job”. Hellgren et al. (1997) reported a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.86 for the scale. Within a South African context, Cronbach alpha coefficients ranging between 0.75 (Masia & Pienaar, 2011) and 0.80 (Pienaar, Sieberhagen, & Mostert, 2007) had been established.

*Intentions to leave:* Intentions to leave were measured by the *Turnover Intentions Scale* (TIS; Sjöberg & Sverke, 2000). The TIS consisted of three items which were scored on a five-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Encompassing a single dimension, a sample item of the scale included: “I am actively looking for other jobs”. Sjöberg and Sverke (2000) reported a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.83 for the scale. Within a South African context, Cronbach alpha coefficients ranging between 0.74 (Pienaar et al., 2007) and 0.79 (Diedericks, 2012) had been established.

*Leader empowering behaviour:* Leader empowering behaviour was measured by the *Leader Empowering Behaviour Questionnaire* (LEBQ; Konczak et al., 2000). The LEBQ originally consisted of seventeen items, but added two additional items from Arnold, Arad, Rhoades,

and Drasgow (2000) in order to strengthen the information-sharing dimension. Therefore, the LEBQ was a nineteen-item measure which was scored on a seven-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The LEBQ encompassed six dimensions, namely the delegation of authority, accountability, self-directed decision making, information sharing, skills development, and coaching for innovative performance. Delegation of authority was measured by three items (e.g. “My manager gives me the authority I need to make decisions that improve work processes and procedures”). Accountability was also measured by three items (e.g. “My manager holds me accountable for the work I am assigned”). Self-directed decision making was measured by three items (e.g. “My manager encourages me to develop my own solutions to problems I encounter in my work”). Information sharing was measured by four items (e.g. “My manager shares information that I need to ensure high quality results”). Skills development was measured by three items (e.g. “My manager provides me with frequent opportunities to develop new skills”). Coaching for innovative performance was measured by three items (e.g. “I am encouraged to try out new ideas even if there is a chance they may not succeed”). Cronbach alpha coefficients ranging from 0.82 to 0.93 had been established for the LEBQ subscales (Konczak et al., 2000). Within a South African context, Cronbach alpha coefficients ranging between 0.92 (Tjeku, 2006) and 0.96 (Van Schalkwyk et al., 2010) had been established. Confirmatory factor analyses supported a six-dimension model of leader empowering behaviour (Konczak et al., 2000). Within South Africa, Maré (2007) found a one-factor structure for the LEBQ, while other studies (e.g. Dwyer, 2001; Mendes & Stander, 2011; Tjeku, 2006) found a three-factor structure.

*Biographical information:* The biographical information collected during this study encompassed gender, age, racial group, highest level of education, job title, years of service at the company, and the personal area where participants were situated.

#### **1.3.4 Statistical Analysis**

The Mplus 7 statistical program (Muthén & Muthén, 1998-2012) was employed to conduct the statistical analysis. Descriptive statistics (e.g. means, standard deviations, skewness, and kurtosis) and inferential statistics (e.g. correlations) were utilised for data analysis. Raykov's rho coefficients were used to assess the reliability of measuring instruments. In order to measure the proposed relationships between constructs in the study, Pearson product-moment

correlation coefficients were used. Effect sizes were used to determine the practical significance of the results (Cohen, 1988). A cut-off point of 0.30 (medium effect) and 0.50 (large effect) was set for the practical significance of the correlation coefficients (Cohen, 1988). The confidence interval level for statistical significance was set at a value of 95% ( $p \leq 0.05$ ). A measurement model was specified and tested against numerous goodness-of-fit indices.

In order to facilitate a comparative analysis, three competing measurement models were similarly specified and tested. The best fitting model was re-specified as a structural model and compared with competing structural models. The following Mplus indexes were used in the study: the Chi-square statistic, the Standardised Root-Mean Residual (SRMR), the Root-Means-Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), and the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) (Hair, Black, Babin, & Andersen, 2010). CFI and TLI values of 0.90 and higher were regarded as acceptable. RMSEA and SRMR values of 0.08 and lower indicated close fit between the model and the data.

### **1.3.5 Ethical Considerations**

The questionnaires used were completed in an anonymous capacity. When the questionnaires had been completed and submitted, they were placed into a box and collected personally to ensure confidentiality. Participation in the study was voluntary.

## **1.4 OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS**

In Chapter 2 an empirical study was conducted, according to the objectives as set out in Chapter 1. Chapter 3 provided the conclusion as well as limitations and recommendations of the study.

## **1.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter provided a discussion of the problem statement and research objectives. Furthermore, the research method and the measuring instruments were explained, followed by a brief overview of the chapters to follow.

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## **CHAPTER 2**

### **RESEARCH ARTICLE**



## **Person-environment fit, job satisfaction and intentions to leave: The moderating effect of leader empowering behaviour**

### **ABSTRACT**

**Orientation:** Although person-environment fit (PE fit) has been researched quite extensively on an international basis, its impact within national borders has been largely overlooked. Little emphasis has also been given to the multidimensionality of PE fit.

**Research purpose:** The aim of this study is to determine possible relationships, indirect effects and moderating effects between PE fit, job satisfaction, intentions to leave, and leader empowering behaviour.

**Motivation for the study:** It is clear from literature that certain PE fit dimensions are associated with job satisfaction and intentions to leave. It is therefore important to establish if leader empowering behaviour can have an influence on people who experience low PE fit, job dissatisfaction, and intentions to leave.

**Research design, approach and method:** A cross-sectional survey design was used in this study. The target population was employees working under the guidance of a leader/manager/supervisor at a retail company in Gauteng ( $N = 398$ ).

**Main findings:** PE fit has a positive relationship with job satisfaction. Job satisfaction has a negative relationship with intentions to leave. PE fit has an indirect effect on intentions to leave via job satisfaction. Leader empowering behaviour moderates the relationship between job satisfaction and intentions to leave.

**Practical/managerial implications:** The results give managers insight into the impact of PE fit on job satisfaction and subsequently intentions to leave. Accordingly, managers can devise interventions pro-actively or re-actively. The results also give managers insight into the importance of leader empowering behaviour when employees experience low PE fit, job dissatisfaction, and intentions to leave.

**Contribution/value-add:** The study contributes to PE fit literature, especially within a South African context. Furthermore, the study adds to literature by indicating the moderating effect of leader empowering behaviour on job satisfaction and intentions to leave.

**Key words:** Person-environment fit, job satisfaction, intentions to leave, leader empowering behaviour, retail, indirect effect, moderation

The South African population and workforce across all industries have to battle numerous aspects such as unemployment, poverty, Broad-based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE), the e-toll road system, widespread taxation, crime, and inflation; just to name a few. This suggests that South Africans are engaged in daily battles with work-related and non-work related issues. Although these issues affect all industries, the current study focused on a selected company within the retail industry, due to its importance to South Africa's economy, its share in job creation, as well as its share in the provision of significant products locally and globally.

Even though the selected retail company is not capable of addressing or changing all the issues experienced by the South African population, it can intervene in order to improve the quality of its employees' working lives. This is crucial for work plays a major role in employees' lives, as they spend a large proportion of their time involved in job-related tasks (Buitendach & Rothmann, 2009). Accordingly, it can be deemed necessary to improve the working experience of employees as it will increase their intentions to stay (Armstrong, 2006; Snyder & Lopez, 2002). Talent retention is a key challenge facing human resources managers nationally (Koketso & Rust, 2012). Therefore, in order to address these challenges, a suggested starting point could be person-environment fit (PE fit).

The congruence between employees and their work environments is one of the most extensively researched topics within the organisational behaviour domain (Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005; Schneider, 2001), emphasising its importance to all industries (Reh fuss, Gambrell, & Meyer, 2012). This congruence between individuals' characteristics and their work environments is generally referred to as PE fit or purely fit (Greguras & Diefendorff, 2009).

Although PE fit has been extensively researched, the majority of studies have been executed in the United States of America (e.g. Kristof-Brown et al., 2005; Verquer, Beehr, & Wagner, 2003), Europe (e.g. Furnham & Schaeffer, 1984; Payne, Lane, & Jabri, 1990), and Asia (e.g. Tak, 2011); whereas few published articles could be found within a South African context. This lack of published material suggests that the impact of PE fit within a South African context is generally unknown and overlooked; with the exception of two fairly related studies where PE fit was incorporated into a human capital predictive model for agent performance (Jacobs & Roodt, 2011), and where work-role fit was examined (Van Zyl, Deacon, & Rothmann, 2010). This poses numerous risks when taking into consideration the individual

and organisational outcomes associated with PE fit or misfit; for example, its impact on job satisfaction and intentions to leave (e.g. Bretz & Judge, 1994; Wheeler, Gallagher, Brouer, & Sablinski, 2007). Accordingly, supplementary challenges surface for organisational leaders, as they are responsible for addressing these outcomes (Chatman & Flynn, 2001; Singh & Surujlal, 2006). Consequently, attention should be given to the behavioural types adopted by leaders (Arnold, Arad, Rhoades, & Drasgow, 2000), for example leader empowering behaviour in this study.

Based on the aforementioned discussion, the core objectives of this study were to determine possible relationships, indirect effects, and moderating effects between PE fit, job satisfaction, intentions to leave, and leader empowering behaviour.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Person-environment fit**

Since its introduction, fit or PE fit emerged as a multidimensional concept (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005), which includes person-vocation fit (PV fit), person-organisation fit (PO fit), person-job fit (PJ fit), person-group fit (PG fit), person-supervisor fit (PS fit), person-career fit (PC fit), demands-abilities fit (DA fit), and needs-supplies fit (NS fit) (Cable & DeRue, 2002; Kristof, 1996; Kristof-Brown et al., 2005; Parasuraman, Greenhaus, & Linnehan, 2000). Although PE fit incorporates numerous dimensions, focus is given to the conceptualisation of PE fit, according to Cable and DeRue (2002).

Cable and DeRue (2002) operationalized PE fit as a three-factor model, consisting of PO fit, NS fit, as well as DA fit. PO fit refers to the perceived congruence between employees and organisational values (Cable & DeRue, 2002). When employees experience PO fit, they feel attached to the organisation's mission, put organisational benefits above personal benefits, and find it difficult to leave the organisation (Cable & DeRue, 2002). NS fit refers to the perceived congruence between job rewards and the services provided by the employee (Cable & DeRue, 2002). This fit may be regarded as a necessary aspect of job satisfaction, reflecting the primary reason for employees entering the workforce (Hinkle & Choi, 2009). Consequently, Cable and DeRue (2002) argued that this type of fit may be the most important from an employee viewpoint. DA fit, sometimes referred to as PJ fit (Hinkle & Choi, 2009), refers to the perceived congruence between job demands and the possessed abilities of employees (Cable & DeRue, 2002). When an employee's abilities exceed the demands of his

or her respective position, the employee poses a risk of becoming disinterested in his or her position. When the employee's abilities fail to meet the minimum requirements of a position, the employee will become less attracted to his or her occupation due to lost production and undermined development (Cable & DeRue, 2002).

Based on the preceding definitions, emphasis is given to perceived fit rather than actual fit. Perceived fit can be defined as the direct assessment of compatibility between person and environment, suggesting a subjective rather than objective measurement (Kristof, 1996). According to Hood and Johnson (1991), the best person to determine the extent of congruence or fit, is the individual himself. Cable and DeRue (2002) suggest that subjective measures are more proximal predictors of employee attitudes and behaviours than objective measures. Studies have shown that perceived fit had better predictability of numerous criteria than objective fit (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). Therefore, subjective measurement of PE fit is utilised in this study.

PE fit boasts numerous positive outcomes for both the employee and the organisation. When employees experience PE fit, they are more likely to be productive and perform better within the organisational context (Greguras & Diefendorff, 2009; Rousseau & McLean Parks, 1992). They tend to illustrate positive behaviours and attitudes (Kristof, 1996; Tziner, 1987), decreasing their likelihood to ignite interpersonal conflict at work (Pseekos, Bullock-Yowell, & Dahlen, 2011). They are motivated and committed to the organisation; not being overly concerned about possible career changes (Behery, 2009; Kasl, 1973). Accordingly, they are able to experience career satisfaction and career success, which could be partially ascribed to their job stability (Cable & DeRue, 2002; Ehrhart & Makransky, 2007). This sense of stability is also reflected in their personal well-being, as PE fit is associated with factors such as anxiety and depression (Caplan, Tripathi, & Naidu, 1985), mental health (Furnham & Schaeffer, 1984), as well as psychological, physiological, and behavioural strain (Caplan, 1987; French et al., 1974). Furthermore, when employees perceive to fit in with their environment, they are more satisfied with their jobs (Bretz & Judge, 1994; Gregory, Albritton, & Osmonbekov, 2010); decreasing their susceptibility of intentions to leave or actual turnover (Wheeler et al., 2007).

### **Job Satisfaction**

According to Buitendach and Rothmann (2009), job satisfaction is an important research topic within I/O psychology. Job satisfaction refers to the extent to which employees

experience a sense of enjoyment from their jobs (Spector, 1997). When employees are satisfied with their jobs, they are likely to perform better (Judge, Thoresen, Bono, & Patton, 2001; Susanty, Miradipta, & Jie, 2013), are committed to the organisation (Agho, Price, & Mueller, 1992; Lok & Crawford, 2001), and are less inclined to report absent (Luthans, 1995; Obasan, 2011). They tend to adopt a positive work attitude (Robbins, 2003), enjoy their lives (Bowling, Eschleman, & Wang, 2010; Judge, Boudreau, & Bretz, 1994), and act as better ambassadors for their respective organisations (Agho et al., 1992). This positive impact of job satisfaction has also transferred to individual-well-being, as it is associated with longevity, as well as mental and physical health (Connolly & Myers, 2003; Locke, 1976). Furthermore, job satisfaction is also the most universally studied psychological trait or emotional state in relation to actual turnover or intent to leave (Chiu & Francesco, 2003).

### **Intentions to Leave**

According to Mbah and Ikemefuna (2012), few areas within the I/O psychology domain have sparked as much interest as employee turnover. Intentions to leave can be defined as the cognisant and intentional frame of mind to leave the organisation (Tett & Meyer, 1993). When employees are experiencing intentions to leave, they are likely to be alienated, disengaged, and possibly burnt-out (Bothma & Roodt, 2013). They are likely to experience misfit with their environment; therefore not enjoying their work (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005; Verquer et al., 2003; Wheeler et al., 2007). Furthermore, previous studies demonstrate that behavioural intentions to leave is consistently correlated to actual turnover (Fox & Fallon, 2003; Mobley, 1982). Turnover has detrimental consequences for the organisation. Employee turnover stretches beyond the cost of employing staff, as it also impacts on institutional knowledge and organisational reputation (Shaw, Gupta, & Delery, 2005). Furthermore, turnover increases the workloads and demands of existing employees, which may cause burnout, and subsequently even greater turnover (Stroth, 2010). In a South African context, high employee turnover costs organisations millions in revenue annually as a result of decreased productivity, increased accidents, and quality problems (Wärnich, Carrell, Elbert, & Hatfield, 2015).

### **Leader Empowering Behaviour**

The instilment of job satisfaction is a vital managerial task (Singh & Surujlal, 2006), together with the minimisation of employee turnover (Chatman & Flynn, 2001). This proposes the necessity for empowering leadership (Manz & Sims, 2001).

According to Liden, Sparrowe, and Wayne (2000), leaders play a significant role in the provision of empowering experiences to their employees. Empowering leadership can be defined as an approach where leaders are required to arrange the distribution and execution of power (Vecchio, Justin, & Pearce, 2010). Konczak, Stelly, and Trusty (2000) identified six dimensions of leader empowering behaviour, namely the delegation of authority, accountability, self-directed decision making, information sharing, skills development, and coaching for innovative performance.

Delegation of authority refers to the bestowment of power upon employees, giving them additional power to exercise in the workplace (Konczak et al., 2000). Accountability refers to the increased responsibility awarded to subordinates due to their newly-found power, holding them accountable for controllable outcomes (Konczak et al., 2000). Self-directed decision making refers to encouraging subordinates towards independent decision making (Konczak et al., 2000). Information sharing refers to the provision of information and knowledge in order to enable subordinates to contribute optimally towards organisational performance (Konczak et al., 2000). Skills development refers to the leader's facilitation of skills development, ensuring the provision of appropriate training for employees (Wellins, Byham, & Wilson, 1991). Coaching for innovative performance refers to the encouragement of calculated risk taking and original ideas, providing performance feedback, and turning setbacks into learning opportunities (Konczak et al., 2000).

When leaders within the organisation illustrate leader empowering behaviour, their employees are likely to feel more psychologically empowered, engaged, and will exhibit more commitment towards their organisation (Konczak et al., 2000; Mendes & Stander, 2011). When empowered, employees also experience a sense of enjoyment from their work (Konczak et al., 2000), making them less inclined to leave the organisation (Mendes & Stander, 2011; Van Schalkwyk, Du Toit, Bothma, & Rothmann, 2010). Therefore, leader empowering behaviour can be regarded as a crucial element of organisational effectiveness (Bartram & Casimir, 2007).

### **PE fit, Job Satisfaction, Intentions to Leave, and Leader Empowering Behaviour**

Although the impact of certain PE fit dimensions on job satisfaction and intentions to leave has been determined previously, the exact combination of variables of concern for the current study has not previously been investigated. Meta-analytic studies (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005; Verquer et al., 2003) have shown that PO and PJ fit both have a strong positive correlation

with job satisfaction and a weaker negative correlation with intentions to leave, when measured independently. This suggests that although employees experience poor PO fit or PJ fit and job dissatisfaction, they will not necessarily be inclined to quit the organisation. This finding intrigued researchers (Wheeler, Buckley, Halbesleben, Brouer, & Ferris, 2005) with regard to why it is not the case, as well as what would influence an employee's decision to remain with or quit the organisation. Accordingly, Wheeler et al. (2005) delineated a multidimensional fit theory, utilising the unfolding model of voluntary turnover (UMVT; Lee & Mitchell, 1994) to describe how the assessment of PO fit may lead to job satisfaction and subsequently intentions to leave. Although Lee and Mitchell (1994) acknowledged that job dissatisfaction may result in turnover, they proposed that factors other than PO misfit would be more predominant originators of job dissatisfaction. As a result, Wheeler et al. (2005) in their multidimensional fit theory proposed that PO misfit could act as an originator of job dissatisfaction. They found that the combination of PO misfit and job dissatisfaction would lead to turnover in the event of job mobility.

Building on this study, Wheeler et al. (2007) suggested that PO misfit was yet to be further examined; consequently proposing that the relationship between PO fit, job satisfaction, and intentions to leave should be measured concurrently instead of independently (e.g. Kristof-Brown et al., 2005; Verquer et al., 2003). Therefore, when the impact of PO fit on job satisfaction and intentions to leave was measured concurrently, results suggested a poor PO fit – dissatisfaction – turnover sequence (Wheeler et al., 2007). This suggests that poor PO fit leads to dissatisfaction which ultimately results in intentions to leave; identifying job satisfaction as a successful mediator. Furthermore, these authors discovered that employees will be less inclined towards intentions to leave, despite poor PO fit and dissatisfaction in the events of job immobility; thus identifying job mobility as a successful moderator (Wheeler et al., 2007).

Based on findings from previous meta-analytic studies (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005; Verquer et al., 2003), and Wheeler et al.'s multidimensional fit theory (2005) and their poor PO fit - dissatisfaction - turnover sequence (2007), the current study posits the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: PE fit and job satisfaction are positively related.

Hypothesis 2: Job satisfaction and intentions to leave are negatively related.

Hypothesis 3: PE fit indirectly affects intentions to leave via job satisfaction.

Although Wheeler et al.'s (2007) study served as a guiding framework for the current study; numerous distinctions can be noted. Firstly, attention was given to a three-factor model of PE fit (Cable & DeRue, 2002), as opposed to merely focusing on a single PE fit dimension. This can be ascribed to the multidimensionality of PE fit (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). Secondly, the current study investigated the moderating effect of leader empowering behaviour, as opposed to job mobility.

Even though numerous studies have showcased the relationship of leader empowering behaviour with job satisfaction and intentions to leave independently (e.g. Konczak et al., 2000; Mendes & Stander, 2011; Van Schalkwyk et al., 2010), the moderating effect of leader empowering behaviour in this context has not been determined. According to literature, however, there might be evidence to suggest this moderating effect. Within a global and South African context, studies have found that employees place high value on factors such as empowerment and responsibility, autonomy, development opportunities, and open communication (Birt, Wallis, & Winternitz, 2004; Gaylard, Sutherland, & Viedge, 2005; Kaye & Jordan-Evans, 2002; Ramlall, 2004; Sutherland & Jordaan, 2004; Van Rooyen, Du Toit, Botha, & Rothmann, 2010). Therefore, when these factors are prevalent in the organisation, organisations are highly likely to retain their employees.

In order to promote these factors within the organisation and increase the likelihood of employees remaining with the organisation, leader empowering behaviour can be utilised. Leader empowering behaviour addresses the preceding talent retention factors directly, as it focuses on the delegation of authority, accountability, self-directed decision making, information sharing, skills development, and coaching for innovative performance (Konczak et al., 2000). Based on this discussion, one can deduce that the vital or even ultimate deciding factor in terms of whether an employee will stay or leave the organisation, will be leadership. This can be ascribed to the fact that leaders play a pivotal role in employee empowerment (Liden et al., 2000). The notion of leadership being a vital or even the most significant retention factor is well supported in literature (Dobbs, 2001; Kreisman, 2002; Nedd, 2006; Taplin & Winterton, 2007); as Buckingham and Coffman (1999) stated "people leave managers not companies" (p. 32).

Based on the possibility of influencing talent retention factors through means of leader empowering behaviour, the current study additionally posits the following hypothesis:



Hypothesis 4: Leader empowering behaviour moderates the relationship between job satisfaction and intentions to leave.

## **RESEARCH DESIGN**

### **Research Approach**

A cross-sectional research approach was utilised. According to Salkind (2009), a cross-sectional method allows the researcher to examine various groups of individuals during a single point in time. This approach was beneficial to the current study due to its cost-effectiveness and time-saving nature.

### **Research Participants**

A cross-sectional survey research design was conducted amongst employees working under the guidance of a leader/manager/supervisor at a retail company in Gauteng. A total of 432 questionnaires were distributed, of which 398 were completed satisfactory (response rate 92%). Personal characteristics of the sample are provided in Table 1; followed by the professional characteristics of the sample in Table 2.

Table 1

*Personal Characteristics of the Participants (N = 398)*

Item	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	125	31.4
	Female	273	68.6
Age	Under 20 years	11	2.8
	Under 30 years	124	31.2
	Under 40 years	185	46.5
	Under 50 years	51	12.8
	Under 60 years	14	3.5
	60 years +	7	1.8
	Missing values	6	1.5
Racial group	African	231	58.0
	Coloured	20	5.0
	Indian	13	3.3
	White	132	33.2
	Other	1	0.3
	Missing values	1	0.3

As seen in Table 1, more than two-thirds of the participants were female (68.6%), while 31.4% were male. Almost half of the participants fell within the 31-40 years age category (46.5%), 2.8% within the 0-20 years age category, 31.2% within the 21-30 years age category, 12.8% within the 41-50 years age category, 3.5% within the 51-60 years age category, and 1.8% older than 60 years. The majority of participants were African (58%), while 5% were Coloured, 3.3% Indian, 33.2% White, and 0.3% belonged to another racial group.

The professional characteristics of the participants are provided in Table 2 below.

Table 2

*Professional Characteristics of the Participants (N = 398)*

Item	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Highest level of education	Grade 12	242	60.8
	Diploma	88	22.1
	Degree	15	3.8
	Post-graduate degree	14	3.5
	Technical qualification	22	5.5
	Missing values	17	4.3
Job title	Manager	23	5.8
	Supervisor	21	5.3
	Employee	350	87.9
	Missing values	4	1.0
Years of service at company	Less than 1 year	52	13.1
	1-3 years	102	25.6
	3-5 years	111	27.9
	5-7 years	72	18.1
	7 years +	60	15.1
	Missing values	1	0.3
Personal area	Head office	259	65.1
	Warehouse	2	0.5
	Security	125	31.4
	Store	5	1.3
	Missing values	7	1.8

As seen in Table 2, almost two-thirds of participants possessed grade 12 certificates (60.8%), while 22.1% possessed diplomas, 3.8% possessed degrees, 3.5% possessed post-graduate degrees, and 5.5% possessed technical qualifications. The majority of participants were employees at the company (87.9%), while 5.8% were managers, and 5.3% were supervisors. Almost a third of participants had 3 to 5 years of service at the company (27.9%), while 13.1% had less than 1 year of service, 25.6% had 1 to 3 years of service, 18.1% had 5 to 7 years of service, and 15.1% had more than 7 years of service at the company. Almost two-thirds of the participants were from head office (65.1%), 0.5% from the warehouse, 31.4% from security, and 1.3% from a store.

## Measuring Instruments

The following measuring instruments were used in the empirical study:

**PE Fit.** PE fit was measured by the *Perceived Fit Scale* (PFS; Cable & DeRue, 2002). The PFS consists of nine items which are scored on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The PFS encompasses three dimensions, namely person-organisation fit (PO fit), need-supplies fit (NS fit), and demands-abilities fit (DA fit). PO fit was measured by three items (e.g. “The things that I value in life are very similar to the things that my organisation values”). NS fit was measured by three items (e.g. “There is a good fit between what my job offers me and what I am looking for in a job”). DA fit was measured by three items (e.g. “The match is very good between the demands of my job and my personal skills”). Cronbach alpha coefficients ranging from 0.84 and 0.98 have been reported for the PFS subscales (Cable & DeRue, 2002; Hinkle & Choi, 2009). Cable and DeRue (2002) established good convergent and divergent validity for the PFS, while it was also further validated by Hinkle and Choi (2009). The PFS has not been utilised in a South African study as far as could be established. The current study found a three-factor structure, as established by the authors.

**Job Satisfaction.** Job satisfaction was measured by a *Job Satisfaction Scale* developed by Hellgren, Sjöberg, and Sverke (1997), which is based on the work of Brayfield and Rothe (1951). The scale consists of three items which are scored on a five-point scale ranging from 1 (disagree) to 5 (agree). Encompassing a single dimension, a sample item of the scale includes: “I am satisfied with my job”. Hellgren et al. (1997) reported a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.86 for the scale. Within a South African context, Cronbach alpha coefficients ranging between 0.75 (Masia & Pienaar, 2011) and 0.80 (Pienaar, Sieberhagen, & Mostert, 2007) have been established.

**Intentions to Leave.** Intentions to leave was measured by the *Turnover Intentions Scale* (TIS; Sjöberg & Sverke, 2000). The TIS consists of three items which are scored on a five-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Encompassing a single dimension, a sample item of the scale includes: “I am actively looking for other jobs”. Sjöberg and Sverke (2000) reported a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.83 for the scale. Within a South African context, Cronbach alpha coefficients ranging between 0.74 (Pienaar et al., 2007) and 0.79 (Diedericks, 2012) have been established.

**Leader Empowering Behaviour.** Leader empowering behaviour was measured by the *Leader Empowering Behaviour Questionnaire* (LEBQ; Konczak et al., 2000). The LEBQ originally consisted of seventeen items, but added two additional items from Arnold, Arad, Rhoades, and Drasgow (2000) in order to strengthen the information-sharing dimension. Therefore, the LEBQ is a nineteen-item measure which is scored on a seven-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The LEBQ encompasses six dimensions, namely the delegation of authority, accountability, self-directed decision making, information sharing, skills development, and coaching for innovative performance. Delegation of authority was measured by three items (e.g. “My manager gives me the authority I need to make decisions that improve work processes and procedures”). Accountability was measured by three items (e.g. “My manager holds me accountable for the work I am assigned”). Self-directed decision making was measured by three items (e.g. “My manager encourages me to develop my own solutions to problems I encounter in my work”). Information sharing was measured by four items (e.g. “My manager shares information that I need to ensure high quality results”). Skills development was measured by three items (e.g. “My manager provides me with frequent opportunities to develop new skills”). Coaching for innovative performance was measured by three items (e.g. “I am encouraged to try out new ideas even if there is a chance they may not succeed”). Cronbach alpha coefficients ranging from 0.82 to 0.93 have been established for the LEBQ subscales (Konczak et al., 2000). Within a South African context, Cronbach alpha coefficients ranging between 0.92 (Tjeku, 2006) and 0.96 (Van Schalkwyk et al., 2010) have been established. Confirmatory factor analyses supported a six-dimension model of leader empowering behaviour (Konczak et al., 2000). In South Africa, Maré (2007) found a one-factor structure for the LEBQ, while other studies (e.g. Dwyer, 2001; Mendes & Stander, 2011; Tjeku, 2006) found a three-factor structure. The current study found a six-factor structure as established by the authors.

### **Research Procedure**

Permission was obtained from management at the participating company to distribute the questionnaires amongst the employees who fit the criteria (e.g. good understanding of English, working under the guidance of a leader/supervisor/manager). With the assistance of a gatekeeper, the researcher personally disseminated the questionnaires. A training venue was booked for participants to complete the questionnaires on a specific day. Additional participants were given a week to complete the questionnaire. An information letter was also

attached to the questionnaire, clarifying the purpose of the study as well as providing ethical considerations.

### **Statistical Analysis**

The Mplus 7 statistical program (Muthén & Muthén, 1998-2012) was employed to conduct the statistical analysis. Descriptive statistics (e.g. means, standard deviations, skewness, and kurtosis) and inferential statistics (e.g. correlations) were utilised for data analysis. Raykov's rho coefficients were used to assess the reliability of measuring instruments. Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients were used to measure the proposed relationships between the study variables. Effect sizes were used to determine the practical significance of the results (Cohen, 1988). A cut-off point of 0.30 (medium effect) and 0.50 (large effect) was set for the practical significance of the correlation coefficients (Cohen, 1988). The confidence interval level for statistical significance was set at a value of 95% ( $p \leq 0.05$ ). A measurement model was specified and tested against numerous goodness-of-fit indices. In order to facilitate a comparative analysis, three competing measurement models were similarly specified and tested. The best fitting model was re-specified as a structural model and compared with competing structural models. The following Mplus indexes were used in the study: the Chi-square statistic, the Standardised Root-Mean Residual (SRMR), the Root-Means-Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), and the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) (Hair, Black, Babin, & Andersen, 2010). CFI and TLI values of 0.90 and higher were regarded as acceptable. RMSEA and SRMR values of 0.08 and lower indicated close fit between the model and the data.

## **RESULTS**

### **Descriptive Statistics and Product-moment Correlations**

The descriptive statistics and Raykov's rho coefficients of the measuring instruments, as well as the product-moment correlation coefficients between the constructs are reported in Table 3.

From the results in Table 3, it can be seen that the Raykov's rho coefficients of all the measuring instruments were acceptable, ranging from 0.79 to 0.97. Raykov's rho coefficients share the same acceptable cut-off point as Cronbach alpha coefficients, acknowledging values of  $\geq 0.70$  as acceptable (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Furthermore, Table 3 provides the correlation coefficients of the study variables. Person-environment fit, needs-supplies fit, and

demands-abilities fit were all practically and statistically significantly related to job satisfaction, intentions to leave, and leader empowering behaviour (large effect). Person-organisation fit was practically and statistically significantly related to job satisfaction (large effect), and intentions to leave and leader empowering behaviour (medium effect). Job satisfaction was practically and statistically significantly related to intentions to leave and leader empowering behaviour (large effect). Intentions to leave were practically and statistically significantly related to leader empowering behaviour (medium effect).

Delegation of authority, self-directed decision making, information sharing, skills development, and coaching for innovative performance were all practically and statistically significantly related to person-environment fit and job satisfaction (large effect), and intentions to leave (medium effect). Accountability was practically and statistically significantly related to person-environment fit, job satisfaction, and intentions to leave (medium effect). Person-organisation fit was practically and statistically significantly related to delegation of authority, accountability, self-directed decision making, information sharing, skills development, and coaching for innovative performance (medium effect). Needs-supplies fit was practically and statistically significantly related to delegation of authority, self-directed decision-making, information sharing, skills development, and coaching for innovative performance (large effect), and accountability (medium effect). Demands-abilities fit was practically and statistically significantly related to information sharing and coaching for innovative performance (large effect), and delegation of authority, accountability, self-directed decision-making, and skills development (medium effect).

It should be noted that intentions to leave were negatively related to all the variables, suggesting that if one variable increases (e.g. job satisfaction), intentions to leave will decrease.

Based on these results, support was found for Hypotheses 1 and 2.

Table 3

*Descriptive statistics, Raykov's rho coefficients, and correlation coefficients of the measuring instruments*

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	$\rho$	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1 Person-Organisation Fit	4.64	1.51	0.85	1.00											
2 Needs-Supplies Fit	4.39	1.66	0.88	0.64 <sup>++**</sup>	1.00										
3 Demands-Abilities Fit	4.94	1.51	0.85	0.54 <sup>++**</sup>	0.77 <sup>++**</sup>	1.00									
4 Person-Environment Fit	4.65	1.32	0.95	0.67 <sup>++**</sup>	0.95 <sup>++**</sup>	0.80 <sup>++**</sup>	1.00								
5 Job Satisfaction	3.78	1.22	0.90	0.52 <sup>++**</sup>	0.74 <sup>++**</sup>	0.62 <sup>++**</sup>	0.77 <sup>++**</sup>	1.00							
6 Delegation of Authority	4.28	1.78	0.89	0.37 <sup>++</sup>	0.53 <sup>++**</sup>	0.44 <sup>++**</sup>	0.55 <sup>++**</sup>	0.52 <sup>++**</sup>	1.00						
7 Accountability	5.29	1.44	0.85	0.30 <sup>++</sup>	0.42 <sup>++</sup>	0.35 <sup>++</sup>	0.44 <sup>++</sup>	0.41 <sup>++</sup>	0.51 <sup>++**</sup>	1.00					
8 Self-Directed Decision Making	4.39	1.78	0.87	0.37 <sup>++</sup>	0.53 <sup>++**</sup>	0.45 <sup>++</sup>	0.55 <sup>++**</sup>	0.52 <sup>++**</sup>	0.65 <sup>++**</sup>	0.51 <sup>++**</sup>	1.00				
9 Information Sharing	4.69	1.59	0.89	0.42 <sup>++</sup>	0.60 <sup>++**</sup>	0.50 <sup>++**</sup>	0.63 <sup>++**</sup>	0.59 <sup>++**</sup>	0.73 <sup>++**</sup>	0.58 <sup>++**</sup>	0.73 <sup>++**</sup>	1.00			
10 Skills Development	4.04	1.73	0.87	0.41 <sup>++</sup>	0.58 <sup>++**</sup>	0.49 <sup>++</sup>	0.61 <sup>++**</sup>	0.58 <sup>++**</sup>	0.72 <sup>++**</sup>	0.57 <sup>++**</sup>	0.72 <sup>++**</sup>	0.81 <sup>++**</sup>	1.00		
11 Coaching for Innovative Performance	4.24	1.69	0.79	0.42 <sup>++</sup>	0.59 <sup>++**</sup>	0.50 <sup>++**</sup>	0.62 <sup>++**</sup>	0.58 <sup>++**</sup>	0.72 <sup>++**</sup>	0.57 <sup>++**</sup>	0.72 <sup>++**</sup>	0.82 <sup>++**</sup>	0.80 <sup>++**</sup>	1.00	
12 Leader Empowering Behaviour	4.49	1.37	0.97	0.46 <sup>++</sup>	0.66 <sup>++**</sup>	0.55 <sup>++**</sup>	0.69 <sup>++**</sup>	0.65 <sup>++**</sup>	0.80 <sup>++**</sup>	0.64 <sup>++**</sup>	0.81 <sup>++**</sup>	0.91 <sup>++**</sup>	0.89 <sup>++**</sup>	0.90 <sup>++**</sup>	1.00
13 Intentions to Leave	2.91	1.23	0.90	-0.43 <sup>++**</sup>	-0.61 <sup>++**</sup>	-0.51 <sup>++**</sup>	-0.64 <sup>++**</sup>	-0.66 <sup>++**</sup>	-0.39 <sup>++</sup>	-0.31 <sup>++</sup>	-0.39 <sup>++</sup>	-0.45 <sup>++</sup>	-0.44 <sup>++</sup>	-0.44 <sup>++</sup>	-0.49 <sup>++</sup>

<sup>+</sup> Correlation is practically significant  $r \geq 0.30$  (medium effect) <sup>++</sup> Correlation is practically significant  $r \geq 0.50$  (large effect)

\* Statistically significant ( $p \leq 0.05$ ) \*\* Statistically significant ( $p \leq 0.01$ )



## **Testing the Measurement Model**

Using Mplus (Muthén & Muthén, 1998-2012), confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was carried out with the scales used in the study. Therefore, an initial measurement model (Model 1) was specified and tested for fit. Additionally, three competing models (Models 2, 3, and 4) were similarly specified and tested to determine whether the initial measurement model represented the best fit.

Model 1 consisted of four first order latent variables, namely person-environment fit with three factors, including person-organisation fit (on which three observed variables loaded), needs-supplies fit (on which three observed variables loaded), and demands-abilities fit (on which three observed variables loaded); job satisfaction with one factor on which three observed variables loaded; intentions to leave with one factor on which three observed variables loaded; leader empowering behaviour with six factors, including delegation of authority (on which three observed variables loaded), accountability (on which three observed variables loaded), self-directed decision making (on which three observed variables loaded), information sharing (on which four observed variables loaded), skills development (on which three observed variables loaded), and coaching for innovative performance (on which three observed variables loaded).

Model 2 consisted of four first order latent variables, namely person-environment fit with one factor on which nine observed variables loaded; job satisfaction with one factor on which three observed variables loaded; intentions to leave with one factor on which three observed variables loaded; leader empowering behaviour with six factors, including delegation of authority (on which three observed variables loaded), accountability (on which three observed variables loaded), self-directed decision making (on which three observed variables loaded), information sharing (on which four observed variables loaded), skills development (on which three observed variables loaded), and coaching for innovative performance (on which three observed variables loaded).

Model 3 consisted of four first order latent variables, namely person-environment fit with three factors, including person-organisation fit (on which three observed variables loaded), needs-supplies fit (on which three observed variables loaded), and demands-abilities fit (on which three observed variables loaded); job satisfaction with one factor on which three observed variables loaded; intentions to leave with one factor on which three observed variables loaded; leader empowering behaviour with three factors, including authority (on

which seven observed variables loaded), development (on which ten observed variables loaded), and accountability (on which three observed variables loaded).

Model 4 consisted of four first order latent variables, namely person-environment fit with three factors, including person-organisation fit (on which three observed variables loaded), needs-supplies fit (on which three observed variables loaded), and demands-abilities fit (on which three observed variables loaded); job satisfaction with one factor on which three observed variables loaded; intentions to leave with one factor on which three observed variables loaded; leader empowering behaviour with one factor on which nineteen observed variables loaded.

Table 4 presents the goodness-of-fit statistics for the four competing measurement models described above.

Table 4

*Goodness-of-Fit Statistics of Competing Measurement Models*

Model	$\chi^2$	RMSEA	SRMR	Df	TLI	CFI	AIC	BIC
Model 1	891.54	0.04	0.05	512	0.94	0.95	44325.15	44791.56
Model 2	1212.62	0.06	0.06	515	0.89	0.90	44763.33	45217.79
Model 3	1138.05	0.06	0.05	514	0.90	0.91	44662.90	45121.35
Model 4	1565.87	0.07	0.06	518	0.84	0.85	45261.53	45704.03

*Note:*  $\chi^2$  = Chi-square; *df* = degrees of freedom; TLI = Tucker-Lewis Index; CFI = Comparative Fit Index; RMSEA = Root-Mean-Square Error of Approximation; SRMR = Standardized Root-Mean Square Residual; AIC = Akaike Information Criterion; BIC = Bayes Information Criterion.

From Table 4 it is evident that Model 1 has the best statistical fit of the four models. A  $\chi^2$  of 891.54 was obtained for the initial measurement model. The fit indices for CFI and TLI were acceptable ( $> 0.90$ ), as was the model fit for the RMSEA ( $< 0.05$ ). The SRMR for Model 1 was 0.05 and was lower compared to the alternative models, except for Model 3 ( $< 0.05$ ). The AIC and BIC fit indices were used to compare alternative models with the initial model, with the lowest value indicating the best fit, which was Model 1 in this case. The BIC value indicated that Model 1 had the most parsimonious fit of the compared models. From Table 4, it can thus be deduced that Model 1 fitted the data best.

### Testing the Structural Model

A structural model (Model 5) was specified and tested, based on the best fitting measurement model (Model 1). Given the cross-sectional nature of the data, three competing models,

Models 5a to 5c, were tested to determine comparable fit with Model 5, as recommended by Hancock and Mueller (2010). The fit statistics of the four models are presented in Table 5.

Table 5

*Goodness-of-Fit Statistics of Competing Structural Models*

Model	$\chi^2$	RMSEA	SRMR	Df	TLI	CFI	AIC	BIC
Model 5	891.54	0.04	0.05	512	0.94	0.95	44325.15	44791.56
Model 5a	910.60	0.04	0.05	513	0.93	0.94	44348.31	44810.74
Model 5b	1071.35	0.05	0.15	513	0.91	0.92	44567.59	45030.02
Model 5c	1056.08	0.05	0.23	515	0.91	0.92	44539.47	44993.93

*Note:*  $\chi^2$  = Chi-square; *df* = degrees of freedom; TLI = Tucker-Lewis Index; CFI = Comparative Fit Index; RMSEA = Root-Mean Square Error of Approximation; SRMR = Standardized Root-Mean-Square Residual; AIC = Akaike Information Criterion; BIC = Bayes Information Criterion.

The MLR estimator was used in the above calculations, taking into account the skewness and kurtosis of frequencies. Accordingly, the chi-square values for MLR cannot be used for chi-square difference testing in the regular way (Satorra & Bentler, 2010). Consequently, the difftest option in Mplus was used for difference testing. Table 6 below shows the difference testing for the competing structural models and indicates Model 5a as the best fitting competing structural model.

Table 6

*Difference Testing for Competing Structural Models*

Model	$\Delta\chi^2$	$\Delta df$	p-value
Model 5a	24.15	1	<0.0001**
Model 5b	118.13	1	<0.0001**
Model 5c	214.94	3	<0.0001**

\*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$

Figure 2 below shows the standardised path coefficients estimated by Mplus 7 (Muthén & Muthén, 1998-2012) for Model 5.

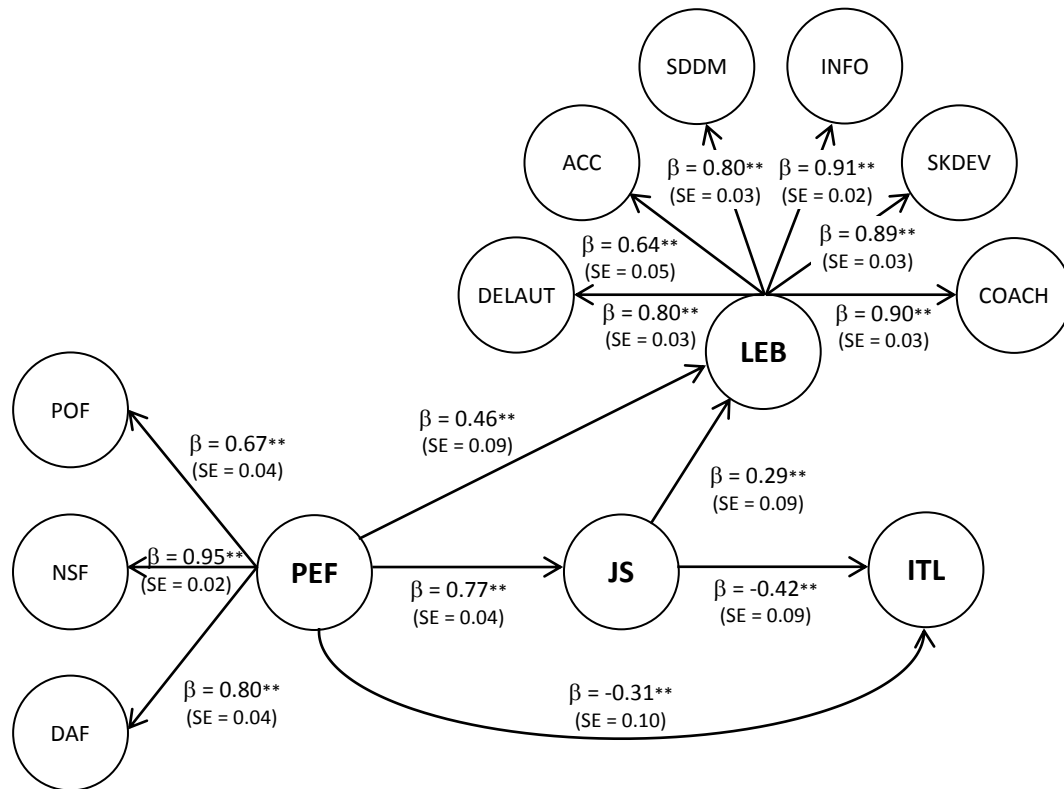


Figure 2. Standardised path coefficients.

Figure 2 shows the standard path coefficients found with person-environment fit (PEF) as independent variable and job satisfaction (JS), leader empowering behaviour (LEB), and intentions to leave (ITL) as dependent variables; and also job satisfaction (JS) as independent variable with leader empowering behaviour (LEB) and intentions to leave (ITL) as dependent variables.

For the portion of the model that predicts job satisfaction (JS), Figure 2 shows that the path coefficient of person-environment fit (PEF) ( $\beta = 0.77$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ) was statistically significant and had the expected sign. Person-organisation fit (POF), needs-supplies fit (NSF), and demands-abilities fit (DAF) had a positive relationship with job satisfaction (JS).

Based on these results, support was found for Hypothesis 1.

For the portion of the model that predicts intentions to leave (ITL), the path coefficient of job satisfaction (JS) ( $\beta = -0.42$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ) was statistically significant and had the expected sign.

Based on these results, support was found for Hypothesis 2.

Although it was not part of the study hypotheses, the study additionally found path coefficients between person-environment fit (PEF) and intentions to leave (ITL) ( $\beta = -0.31$ ;  $p = < 0.01$ ); between person-environment fit (PEF) and leader empowering behaviour (LEB) ( $\beta = 0.46$ ;  $p = < 0.01$ ); as well as job satisfaction (JS) and leader empowering behaviour (LEB) ( $\beta = 0.29$ ;  $p = < 0.01$ ). All the path coefficients were statistically significant and had the expected sign.

### Testing the Indirect Effect

To determine whether person-environment fit indirectly affected intentions to leave, the author used the procedure as explained by Hayes (2009). Bootstrapping was used to construct two-sided bias-corrected 95% confidence intervals (CIs) to evaluate indirect effects.

Table 7

*Indirect Effect of Person-environment Fit on Intentions to Leave via Job Satisfaction*

Variable	Estimate	SE	95% BC CI
Sum of indirect effects	-0.33	0.07	[-0.47, -0.19]
Person-environment fit	-0.33	0.07	[-0.47, -0.19]

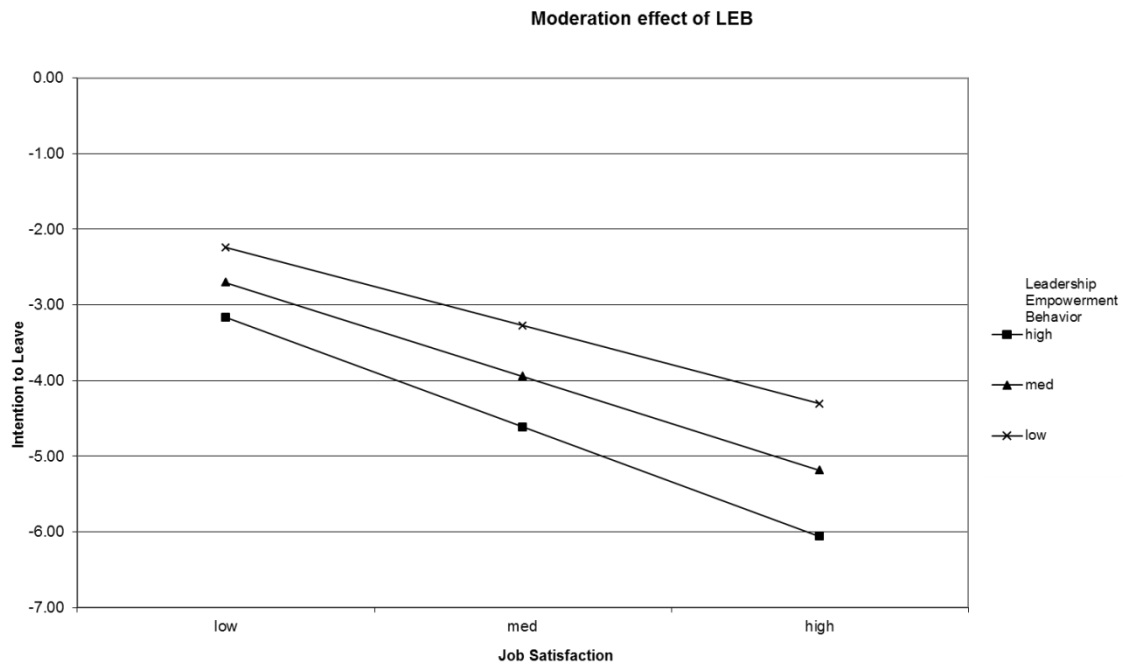
SE, standard error; BC CI, bias-corrected confidence interval.

Table 7 shows the indirect effect of person-environment fit on intentions to leave. The 95% CIs of job satisfaction did not include zero. Hence, person-environment fit had a statistically significant ( $p = < 0.01$ ) indirect effect on intentions to leave via job satisfaction.

Based on these results, support was found for Hypothesis 3.

### Testing the Moderating Effect

The last objective of the study was to determine if leader empowering behaviour moderates the relationship between job satisfaction and intentions to leave. The moderating effect is illustrated in Figure 3.



*Figure 3.* Moderation effect of leader empowering behaviour.

Leader empowering behaviour was found to moderate the relationship between job satisfaction and intentions to leave. Figure 3 illustrates that employees in the retail company who experience high leader empowering behaviour will be more satisfied with their jobs, resulting in lower intentions to leave. However, when employees experience low leader empowering behaviour, they will be less satisfied with their jobs, resulting in higher intentions to leave.

Based on these results, support was found for Hypothesis 4.

## Discussion

The objectives of this study were to determine possible relationships, indirect effects, and moderating effects between PE fit, job satisfaction, intentions to leave, and leader empowering behaviour.

The results indicate that PE fit is positively related to job satisfaction. When employees experience higher levels of perceived fit with their work environment, they should also experience higher levels of job satisfaction. Therefore, when employees perceive high congruence between their personal values and organisational values, between the rewards

they receive in return for the services they provide, and congruence between the demands of their job and their abilities, they ought to experience increased satisfaction and enjoyment from their jobs. This is especially true for needs-supplies fit, as it correlated the highest with job satisfaction. The results are consistent with previous research which also established that needs-supplies fit had the highest correlation with job satisfaction between the three PE fit dimensions (Cable & DeRue, 2002; Hinkle & Choi, 2009). In terms of the other two PE fit dimensions, previous studies (Cable & DeRue, 2002; Hinkle & Choi, 2009) established that there is a higher correlation between person-organisation fit and job satisfaction, than between demands-abilities and job satisfaction. The current study, however, showed a shift in the ranking order, indicating a higher correlation between demands-abilities fit and job satisfaction.

In terms of the relationship between job satisfaction and intentions to leave, the current study found a negative correlation. Therefore, when employees experience a sense of enjoyment and satisfaction from their job, they will be less likely to contemplate leaving their current jobs. The results are consistent with previous research, which also established that job satisfaction and intentions to leave are negatively related (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005; Verquer et al., 2003; Wheeler et al., 2007).

In terms of the indirect effect of person-environment fit on intentions to leave via job satisfaction, results confirmed the indirect effect. Therefore, the relationship between person-environment fit and intentions to leave is not a direct one, suggesting that person-environment fit decreases participant intent to leave in so far as levels of participant job satisfaction remain sufficiently high. Consequently, person-environment fit must first increase levels of job satisfaction in order to subsequently decrease intent to leave. The results are consistent with previous research which also established that person-organisation fit indirectly affects intentions to leave via job satisfaction (Wheeler et al., 2007). This study, however, focused on more than one dimension of person-environment fit, as it is a multidimensional concept (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005).

Results confirmed the moderating effect of leader empowering behaviour on the relationship between job satisfaction and intentions to leave. Therefore, when employees experience low person-environment fit, job dissatisfaction, and intentions to leave the organisation, leader empowering behaviour will ultimately influence an employee's decision to stay with or leave the organisation. The notion that an organisational leader is the ultimate determinant of an

employee's decision to stay with or leave the organisation is well supported in literature (Buckingham & Coffman, 1999; Dobbs, 2001; Kreisman, 2002; Nedd, 2006; Taplin & Winterton, 2007). The moderating effect of leader empowering behaviour in the context of this study has not been determined by previous research; therefore no comparisons could be made with previous studies. Previous research (Wheeler et al., 2007) have, however, established that job mobility can act as a moderator when an employee experiences low person-organisation fit, job dissatisfaction, and intentions to leave the organisation. Therefore, when employees experience low person-organisation fit, job dissatisfaction, and intentions to leave, they will only leave the organisation when they perceive that there are alternative jobs available (Wheeler et al., 2007).

Various study limitations should be noted. Firstly, the use of a cross-sectional design hinders the determination of causal relationships amongst the study variables. Secondly, the use of a self-reported measure may lead to "common method variance". Thirdly, due to the restriction in geographic location to the Gauteng province, the generalisation of findings to other contexts should be done cautiously.

Despite the noted limitations, various recommendations can be made for the individual, as well as the organisation and the Human Resources (HR) department. It is vital for both the employees and HR department to comprehend the impact of PE fit on outcomes such as job satisfaction and intentions to leave, as both parties are equally affected by its implications. Therefore, pro-active measures should be institutionalised to ensure that the impact of low PE fit does not further spread throughout the organisation. Pro-active measures to holistically address PE fit may include, but are not limited, to:

1. Conducting a job analysis, as well as organisational analysis before initiating the recruitment and selection process. This will allow the HR representative to thoroughly understand which type of person, in terms of personality, values, abilities etc., would fit into the position and the organisation as a whole. The vacant position can then be advertised accordingly.
2. Constructing competency profiles against which potential candidates can be assessed, after having conducted the abovementioned analyses. It may be worthwhile to invest more money into the selection process by utilising a variety of assessment techniques. Possible assessment techniques may include psychometric testing, structured interviewing, workplace simulations etc. The utilisation of a variety of assessment measures may contribute towards richer selection data and more informed decision



making. Although numerous assessments may be quite expensive, it will still be a lot more cost-effective than employing the wrong candidate for the position.

Additionally, the impact of low PE fit can also be addressed re-actively by pinpointing the specific dimensions where employees are experiencing low PE fit. This can be done through a variety of methods, for example questionnaires, focus groups, meetings etc. When an employee experiences low person-organisation fit, there are not many practical recommendations that can be brought to the forefront. A possible solution may, however, include a comprehensive induction programme for new employees. When an employee's knowledge of the organisation increases, there should be a bigger chance of the employee finding commonalities between him/her and the organisation.

When an employee experiences low demands-abilities fit, suggesting that the employee's abilities either exceed or fall below the demands of the job, a variety of measures can be explored. When an employee's abilities exceed the demands of the job, a possible solution could be job enrichment. Job enrichment can be defined as the process of making a job more satisfying and fulfilling (Van Tiem, Moseley, & Dessinger, 2012). This can be achieved through either adding tasks (horizontal job enrichment) or adding responsibilities (vertical job enrichment) (Van Tiem et al., 2012). Furthermore, alternative positions within the organisation can also be sought to better complement the employee's abilities, where possible. When an employee's abilities fall below the demands of the job, possible solutions may include on-the-job training, coaching, mentoring, formal education etc., depending on the employee's training needs or training resources at the disposal of the organisation. When an employee experiences low needs-supplies fit, attention may be cast to the reward and recognition structure of the organisation. Although the organisation may not be able to afford higher salaries, there are numerous non-monetary alternatives. Possible non-monetary ways of rewarding employees may include extended leave, employee of the month initiatives, extended lunch breaks, shortened work days, flexi-time, special mentions in the company newsletter etc.

Furthermore, the incorporation of leader empowering behaviour should be evident throughout the organisation. Leaders in all spheres of the organisation should understand the importance of leader empowering behaviour and the impact it can have on their business unit and the organisation as a whole. The following can serve as guidelines on how leaders can implement leader empowering behaviour:

1. Delegation of authority: leaders should foster inclusivity of employees when it comes to decision-making processes within the business unit.
2. Accountability: leaders should strive to create a culture of accountability within the business unit to ensure employees are held accountable for their work, performance, as well as customer satisfaction.
3. Self-directed decision making: leaders should allow employees the freedom to devise their own solutions to work-related problems they encounter.
4. Information sharing: leaders should ensure that employees have adequate access to information to enable them to execute their work tasks optimally.
5. Skills development: leaders should prioritise skills development to ensure that employees are equipped with the right skill sets to effectively drive the business unit.
6. Coaching for innovative performance: leaders should create an environment where employees are encouraged to innovatively approach work tasks.

In addition to the recommendation made for the organisation, various recommendations can also be made for future research. Firstly, it is recommended that longitudinal research designs or diary studies are employed in future research studies to allow researchers to determine the causal relationships amongst the study variables. Secondly, it is recommended that the study should be expanded to other industries, organisations, occupations, and provinces as each category may pose its own unique challenges.

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## **CHAPTER 3**

### **CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This chapter consists of conclusions pertaining to this study, according to the specific objectives. The limitations of this research are discussed, followed by recommendations for the organisation. Furthermore, recommendations and suggestions are made for future research.

#### **3.1 CONCLUSIONS**

South Africans are engaged in daily battles with work-related and non-work related issues. Although the selected company within the retail industry is not capable of addressing or changing all the issues experienced by the South African population, it can intervene in order to improve the quality of its employees' working lives. This is crucial as work plays a major role in employees' lives; employees spending a large proportion of their time being involved in job-related tasks (Buitendach & Rothmann, 2009). Accordingly, it can be deemed necessary to improve the working experience of employees as it, in turn, will increase their intentions to stay (Armstrong, 2006; Snyder & Lopez, 2002). Talent retention is a key challenge facing human resource managers nationally (Koketso & Rust, 2012). Therefore, in order to address these challenges, a suggested starting point could be to address person-environment fit (PE fit) and subsequently job satisfaction, as these have been found to be precursors of intentions to leave (Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005; Verquer, Beehr, & Wagner, 2003; Wheeler, Gallagher, Brouer, & Sablinski, 2007).

The first objective of this study was to determine if a relationship exists between person-environment fit and job satisfaction. Research has shown that when employees fit into their work environment, they should also experience enhanced satisfaction and enjoyment from their jobs (Cable & DeRue, 2002; Hinkle & Choi, 2009). Therefore, when employees perceive high congruence between their personal values and organisational values, between the rewards they receive in return for the services they provide, and congruence between the demands of their job and their abilities, they ought to experience increased satisfaction and enjoyment from their jobs. Furthermore, research has shown that between the three PE fit

dimensions, needs-supplies fit has the highest correlation with job satisfaction, emphasising the importance of perceived congruence between employee rewards and the services they provide. Additionally, research has shown that between the remaining two PE fit dimensions, person-organisation fit has a higher correlation with job satisfaction than demands-abilities fit.

The results of the current study were consistent with previous research (Cable & DeRue, 2002; Hinkle & Choi, 2009), in establishing a positive relationship between PE fit and job satisfaction. Furthermore, results were also consistent with previous research with regard to the correlation between needs-supplies fit and job satisfaction. This suggests that South Africans from the selected retail company in Gauteng and Americans from a variety of occupational backgrounds equally value needs-supplies fit when it comes to job satisfaction. A possible explanation for these results is that one of the basic motivating factors for individuals to enter the labour market is to gain access to organisational rewards (Simon, 1951). Therefore, from an employee's viewpoint, needs-supplies fit can be regarded as the most important type of fit (Cable & DeRue, 2002).

Furthermore, results from the current study deviated from previous studies, indicating that demands-abilities fit had a higher correlation with job satisfaction, as opposed to person-organisation fit. This suggests that South Africans from the selected retail company in Gauteng place a higher value on demands-abilities fit, while Americans from a variety of occupational backgrounds place a higher value on person-organisation fit in order to experience job satisfaction. A possible explanation for these results is that South African talent places a higher value on factors associated with demands-abilities, such as challenging and meaningful work, new opportunities and challenges, and development and learning opportunities (Birt, Wallis, & Winternitz, 2004; Sutherland & Jordaan, 2004; Van Rooyen, Du Toit, Botha, & Rothmann, 2010).

The second objective of this study was to determine if a relationship exists between job satisfaction and intentions to leave. Research has shown that when employees are satisfied with their jobs, they should be less likely contemplating leaving their current jobs (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005; Verquer et al., 2003; Wheeler et al., 2007). The results of the current study were consistent with previous research (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005; Verquer et al., 2003; Wheeler et al., 2007), in establishing a negative relationship between job satisfaction and intentions to leave. A possible explanation for these results is that when people do not

enjoy their jobs, they will be more inclined to leave the organisation, especially due to the fact that they spend a large proportion of their time involved in job-related tasks (Buitendach & Rothmann, 2009). Van Rooyen et al. (2010) also established the value of job satisfaction as retention factor amongst South African talent.

The third objective of this study was to determine if PE fit indirectly affects intentions to leave via job satisfaction. Research has shown that person-organisation fit will only decrease participants' intentions to leave as long as levels of participant job satisfaction remain sufficiently high (Wheeler et al., 2007). The results of the current study were consistent with previous research, with the exception that the current study incorporated three dimensions of PE fit, acknowledging its multidimensionality (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). Accordingly, person-environment fit will only decrease participant intent to leave as long as levels of participant job satisfaction remain sufficiently high. A possible explanation for these results is that low PE fit on its own is unlikely to result in intentions to leave; however, if low PE fit results in job dissatisfaction, it is more likely to result in intentions to leave. Consequently, it seems that South African talent places a higher value on job satisfaction as a retention factor than on PE fit, suggesting that it is more important for employees to enjoy their work than to experience fit with the company.

The last objective of this study was to determine if leader empowering behaviour moderates the relationship between job satisfaction and intentions to leave. Research has shown that when employees experience low PO fit, job dissatisfaction and intentions to leave, they will only leave their respective organisations in the event of job mobility (Wheeler et al., 2007). Therefore, employees are most likely to leave their organisations when they perceive that there are alternative job opportunities available. The results from the current study were somewhat consistent with previous research. The current study, however, focused on three dimensions of PE fit, and the moderating effect of leader empowering behaviour. Thus, when employees experience low PE fit, job dissatisfaction, and intentions to leave, leader empowering behaviour will ultimately influence an employee's decision to stay with or leave the organisation. A possible explanation for these results as stated by Buckingham and Coffman (1999) is that "people leave managers not companies" (p. 32). Although numerous factors will contribute towards an employee's decision to leave an organisation, leadership behaviour will ultimately be the deciding factor (Dobbs, 2001; Kreisman, 2002; Nedd, 2006; Taplin & Winterton, 2007). This could be ascribed to the fact that leader empowering behaviour directly addresses various retention factors valued by South African talent (see Birt

et al., 2004; Gaylard, Sutherland, & Viedge, 2005; Sutherland & Jordaan, 2004; Van Rooyen et al., 2010).

### **3.2 LIMITATIONS**

Various study limitations should be noted. Firstly, the use of a cross-sectional design hinders the determination of causal relationships amongst the study variables. Consequently, the causal relationship amongst the study variables could merely be interpreted, and not determined. This restricted the examination of more complex forms of non-recursive linkages. In order to address this limitation, the use of a longitudinal research design or diary approach is suggested.

Secondly, the study utilised self-reported questionnaires which in some cases can be regarded as a limitation. A problem associated with self-reported questionnaires is “common method variance”, as the use of a single data collection method can enhance the likelihood of false or insignificant associations (Oosthuizen, 2005). Several studies have, however, shown that “common method variance” is not always problematic, especially if interactions are found between study variables (Dollard & Winefield, 1998; Semmer, Zapf, & Grief, 1996; Spector, 1992). According to Frese and Zapf (1999), employees are considered the most important source to accurately report on aspects related to their work environment. Additionally, in terms of the measurement of PE fit, the best person to determine the extent of congruence or fit is the individual himself (Hood & Johnson, 1991).

Thirdly, due to the restriction in geographic location to the Gauteng province, the generalisation of findings to other contexts should be done cautiously. Furthermore, the sample only included individuals from one specific industry and company representing a specific organisational culture. In terms of diversity, the study participants were not representative of South Africa’s general demographics. Different results might be obtained at organisations that are more inclusive of all the official cultural and language groups of South Africa.

### **3.3 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Regardless of the limitations of this study, the present findings have important implications for practice and future research.

#### **3.3.1 Recommendations for the Organisation**

Firstly, it is vital for both the employees and Human Resources (HR) department to comprehend the impact of PE fit on outcomes such as job satisfaction and intentions to leave, as both parties are equally affected by its implications. Results from the study showed that PE fit has a positive relationship with job satisfaction; job satisfaction has a negative relationship with intentions to leave; and PE fit indirectly affects intentions to leave via job satisfaction. Therefore, pro-active measures should be institutionalised to ensure that the impact of low PE fit does not further spread throughout the organisation. Pro-active measures to holistically address PE fit may include, but are not limited, to:

- Conducting a job analysis and organisational analysis before initiating the recruitment and selection process. This will allow the HR representative to thoroughly understand which type of person in terms of personality, values, abilities etc. would fit into the position and the organisation as a whole. The vacant position can then be advertised accordingly.
- After conducting the abovementioned analyses, competency profiles can be constructed against which potential candidates can be assessed. It may be worthwhile to invest more money in the selection process by utilising a variety of assessment techniques. Possible assessment techniques may include psychometric testing, structured interviewing, workplace simulations etc. The utilisation of a variety of assessment measures may contribute towards richer selection data and more informed decision making. Although numerous assessments may be quite expensive, it will still be a lot more cost-effective than employing the wrong candidate for the position.

Additionally, the impact of low PE fit can also be addressed re-actively by pinpointing the specific dimensions where employees experience low PE fit. This can be done through a variety of methods, for example questionnaires, focus groups, meetings etc. Results from the

current study indicated that needs-supplies fit had the highest correlation with job satisfaction, followed by demands-abilities fit, and lastly person-organisation fit. Therefore, when interventions are devised, a suggested starting point would be to address needs-supplies fit. When an employee experiences low needs-supplies fit, attention may be cast to the reward and recognition structure of the organisation. Although the organisation may not be able to afford higher salaries, there are numerous non-monetary alternatives. Possible non-monetary ways of rewarding employees may include extended leave, employee of the month initiatives, extended lunch breaks, shortened work days, flexi-time, special mentions in the company newsletter etc.

Demands-abilities had the second highest correlation with job satisfaction. When an employee experiences low demands-abilities fit, i.e. suggesting that the employee's abilities either exceed or fall below the demands of the job, a variety of measures can be explored. When an employee's abilities exceed the demands of the job, a possible solution could be job enrichment. Job enrichment can be defined as the process of making a job more satisfying and fulfilling (Van Tiem, Moseley, & Dessinger, 2012). This can be achieved through either adding tasks (horizontal job enrichment) or adding responsibilities (vertical job enrichment) (Van Tiem et al., 2012). Furthermore, alternative positions within the organisation can also be sought to better complement the employee's abilities where possible. When an employee's abilities fall below the demands of the job, possible solutions may include on-the-job training, coaching, mentoring, formal education etc., depending on the training needs of the employee or training resources at the disposal of the organisation.

Person-organisation fit had the lowest correlation with job satisfaction. When an employee experiences low person-organisation fit, there are not many practical recommendations that can be brought to the forefront. A possible solution may, however, include a comprehensive induction programme for new employees. When an employee's knowledge of the organisation increases, there should be a bigger chance of the employee finding commonalities between him/her and the organisation.

Furthermore, the incorporation of leader empowering behaviour should be evident throughout the organisation. Results from the current study indicated that leader empowering behaviour moderates the relationship between job satisfaction and intentions to leave. Therefore, when employees experience low PE fit, job dissatisfaction, and intentions to leave, leader empowering behaviour would ultimately determine if employees will stay with or leave the



organisation. Consequently, leaders on all spheres of the organisation should understand the importance of leader empowering behaviour and the impact it can have on their business unit and the organisation as a whole. The following can serve as guidelines on how leaders can implement leader empowering behaviour:

- Delegation of authority: leaders should foster inclusivity of employees when it comes to decision-making processes within the business unit.
- Accountability: leaders should strive towards creating a culture of accountability within the business unit to ensure employees are held accountable for their work, performance, and customer satisfaction.
- Self-directed decision making: leaders should allow employees the freedom to devise their own solutions when encountering work-related problems.
- Information sharing: leaders should ensure that employees have adequate access to information to enable them to optimally execute their work tasks.
- Skills development: leaders should prioritise skills development to ensure that employees are equipped with the right skill sets to effectively drive the business unit.
- Coaching for innovative performance: leaders should create an environment where employees are encouraged to innovatively approach work tasks.

### **3.3.2 Recommendations for Future Research**

The following recommendations can be made for future research. Firstly, it is recommended that longitudinal research designs or diary studies are employed in future research studies. This may enable researchers to further validate the hypothesised causalities of the relationships and to determine if these relationships remain true over an extended period of time.

Secondly, it is recommended that the study should be expanded to other industries, organisations, occupations, and provinces in South Africa. Every industry, organisation, occupation, and province may have its own challenges, advantages, and disadvantages relating to the study variables. In terms of PE fit, future research might show that different

types of fit are more important for job satisfaction for some industries or occupations than others.

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