

Building Teacher Engagement through Value Fit and Organizational Support: The Mediating Role of Commitment.

Simião de Andrade Martins¹, Lianto², Sunardi Ginting³

^{1,2,3} Universitas Widya Dharma Pontianak, Indonesia

Abstract

Employee engagement is a critical determinant of organizational effectiveness in the education sector, particularly in developing countries where institutional systems are still evolving. This study examines the effects of Person-Organization Fit (P-O Fit) and Perceived Organizational Support (POS) on Employee Engagement (EE), with Organizational Commitment (OC) as a mediating variable. A quantitative explanatory design was employed involving 163 teachers from Catholic private secondary schools in Dili, Timor-Leste. Data were collected through structured questionnaires and analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with WarpPLS 8.0. The results indicate that P-O Fit and POS have positive and significant effects on Organizational Commitment and Employee Engagement. Organizational Commitment also significantly influences Employee Engagement. Mediation analysis reveals partial mediation, with OC mediating the relationship between POS and EE and marginally mediating the relationship between P-O Fit and EE. The model explains 48.9% of the variance in employee engagement. These findings highlight the central role of organizational commitment in transforming value alignment and institutional support into stronger teacher engagement. The study contributes to engagement literature within faith-based educational institutions in developing country contexts.

Keywords: employee engagement; person-organization fit; perceived organizational support; organizational commitment; teachers.

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² Corresponding author :

Email Address : lianto@widyadharm.ac.id



INTRODUCTION

Employee engagement (EE) has become one of the most prominent constructs in contemporary human resource management literature due to its strong relationship with organizational performance, sustainability, and competitive advantage. In knowledge-based and service-oriented sectors, including education, human capital is increasingly recognized as the primary driver of institutional effectiveness. Kahn (1990) conceptualized engagement as the harnessing of employees' physical, cognitive, and emotional selves into work roles, characterized by meaningfulness, psychological safety, and availability. Later, Schaufeli et al. (2002) operationalized engagement as a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind reflected in vigor, dedication, and absorption.

Extensive empirical evidence demonstrates that higher levels of employee engagement are associated with increased productivity, profitability, improved work quality, and reduced absenteeism (Harter et al., 2002; Harter et al., 2020; Memon et al., 2018). Within educational institutions, teacher engagement plays a particularly critical role because teachers directly influence student achievement, classroom climate, and educational outcomes (Quinn & Buchanan, 2021; Thomas & Nair, 2022). However, engagement is not an inherent condition; it is shaped by psychological, relational, and organizational factors (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Therefore, identifying the antecedents of teacher engagement remains a significant managerial and scholarly concern.

Two organizational factors frequently linked to engagement are Person–Organization Fit (P–O Fit) and Perceived Organizational Support (POS). Drawing on the Interactionist Perspective (Kristof, 1996), employee attitudes and behaviors result from the interaction between individual characteristics and organizational environments. P–O Fit refers to the compatibility between employees' values, goals, and personal characteristics and those of the organization (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). Such compatibility may take the form of value congruence, goal congruence, and cultural fit. When employees perceive alignment between their personal and organizational values, they experience greater psychological meaningfulness and identity reinforcement, which enhances engagement and commitment (Biswas & Bhatnagar, 2013; Bono & Judge, 2003). Empirical findings indicate that P–O Fit positively relates to job involvement, organizational commitment, and work engagement across various sectors (Cao & Zhang, 2023; Hossain et al., 2023).

Complementing the interactionist explanation, Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964) provides a relational foundation for understanding Perceived Organizational Support. According to Organizational Support Theory (Eisenberger et al., 1986), POS reflects employees' perceptions that the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being. When employees perceive fairness, supervisor support, adequate rewards, and supportive job conditions, they develop a sense of obligation to reciprocate through positive attitudes and behaviors (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Studies consistently show that POS enhances engagement both directly and indirectly by fostering psychological well-being and reciprocal attachment (Shahid & Azhar, 2022; Park & Kim, 2024). However, some research suggests that contextual conditions, such as highly hierarchical or insecure environments may weaken this relationship (Atom et al., 2023; Lee & Shin, 2023), indicating the need for further investigation in diverse organizational contexts.

Organizational Commitment (OC) represents another key construct that may bridge the relationship between alignment, support, and engagement. Meyer and Allen's (1991) Three-Component Model conceptualizes commitment as affective, continuance, and normative attachment to the organization. Commitment reflects a psychological bond that influences employees' decisions to remain with and contribute to the organization (Mowday et al., 1979). From a theoretical standpoint, alignment (P–O Fit) fulfills identity and value congruence needs, while perceived support (POS) fulfills socio-emotional needs. Both mechanisms can strengthen commitment, which in turn enhances engagement. Empirical evidence supports positive relationships between commitment and engagement, with commitment often functioning as a mediating mechanism (Cenkci et al., 2021; Ly, 2023; Rayton et al., 2019).

Despite the growing body of literature, several research gaps remain. First, most empirical studies have focused on corporate or business environments, with limited attention to educational institutions, particularly in developing countries (Farrukh et al., 2016; Zaharuddin, 2024). Second, inconsistent findings regarding the strength and direction of relationships among P–O Fit, POS, and engagement suggest that contextual and

mediating factors warrant further examination. Third, in countries such as Timor-Leste where the education system continues to undergo institutional development and where generational changes among teachers may influence professional attitudes-empirical evidence on teacher engagement remains scarce.

This study addresses these gaps by examining the direct and indirect relationships among Person-Organization Fit, Perceived Organizational Support, Organizational Commitment, and Employee Engagement among teachers in Catholic private secondary schools in Dili. By integrating Interactionist Perspective and Social Exchange Theory, this research proposes a structural model in which P-O Fit and POS influence engagement both directly and indirectly through Organizational Commitment.

H1: Person-Organization Fit positively and significantly influences Employee Engagement.

H2: Person Organization Fit positively and significantly influences Organizational Commitment.

H3: Perceived Organizational Support positively and significantly influences Employee Engagement.

H4: Perceived Organizational Support positively and significantly influences Organizational Commitment.

H5: Organizational Commitment positively and significantly influences Employee Engagement.

H6: Organizational Commitment mediates the relationship between Person-Organization Fit and Employee Engagement.

H7: Organizational Commitment mediates the relationship between Perceived Organizational Support and Employee Engagement.

Through this integrative framework, the study contributes to the human resource management literature in educational settings and provides practical insights for school leaders in strengthening teacher engagement through alignment and supportive organizational practices.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative explanatory design to examine the causal relationships among Person-Organization Fit (POF), Perceived Organizational Support (POS), Organizational Commitment (OC), and Employee Engagement (EE). A quantitative approach was selected to enable hypothesis testing and simultaneous examination of direct and indirect relationships among latent constructs using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) (Hair et al., 2021). The study aimed to validate a theoretically grounded structural model integrating interactionist and social exchange perspectives within the educational context.

The population comprised all teachers working in eight Catholic private secondary schools in the municipality of Dili, as recorded by the Ministry of Education-Municipal Education Services (2025). Given the relatively manageable population size, this study applied a saturated sampling (census) technique, in which all eligible teachers were invited to participate (Sugiyono, 2017). A total of 163 teachers responded and completed the questionnaire, and all responses were included in the analysis, thereby ensuring comprehensive representation of the institutional context.

Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire distributed electronically via Google Forms. The instrument consisted of closed-ended statements measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The items were developed based on established theoretical frameworks and prior empirical studies to

ensure content validity. POF was measured through indicators of value and goal congruence (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005); POS reflected employees' perceptions of organizational care and support (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002); OC was operationalized following Meyer and Allen's (1991) three-component model; and EE was measured using indicators of vigor, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli et al., 2002). In addition, a literature review was conducted to support the theoretical foundation and operationalization of variables.

Data analysis was conducted using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with WarpPLS software. This approach was chosen for its suitability in predictive research, its robustness in handling complex models with latent constructs, and its ability to assess both linear and non-linear relationships (Hair et al., 2021; Kock, 2015). The analysis followed a two-stage procedure involving evaluation of the measurement model and the structural model.

The measurement model assessment included convergent validity (outer loadings ≥ 0.70 ; AVE ≥ 0.50), discriminant validity, internal consistency reliability (Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha ≥ 0.70), and multicollinearity (VIF < 5.0). After establishing measurement adequacy, the structural model was evaluated through the coefficient of determination (R^2), path coefficients (β), effect sizes, predictive relevance (Q^2), and overall model fit indices. Hypothesis testing was performed using bootstrapping procedures, with statistical significance determined at $p < 0.05$ (Hair et al., 2021). Mediation analysis was conducted by examining the significance of indirect effects to determine whether Organizational Commitment functioned as a mediating variable between POF and EE and between POS and EE.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Tabel 1. Model Fit and Quality Indices

Model Fit	Fit Criteria	P-Value	Marc	Category
Average path coefficient (APC)	$p < 0,05$	$p < 0,001$	0,272	Fit
Average R-Squared (ARS)	$p < 0,05$	$p < 0,001$	0,398	Fit
Average adjusted R-Square (AARS)	$p < 0,05$	$p < 0,001$	0,389	Fit
Average block VIF (AVIF)	≤ 5 , ideally $\leq 3,3$		2,718	Fit (good)
Average full collinearity VIF (AFVIF)	≤ 5 , ideally $\leq 3,3$		2,139	Fit (good)
Tenenhaus GoF (GoF)	Small $> 0,1$; medium $> 0,25$; large $> 0,36$		0,475	Fit (large)
Simpson's paradox ratio (SPR)	$\geq 0,7$, ideally =1		1,000	Fit (perfect)
R-Squared contribution ratio (RSCR)	$\geq 0,9$, ideally -1		1,000	Fit (perfect)
Statistical suppression ratio (SSR)	$\geq 0,7$		1,000	Fit (perfect)

Nonlinear bivariate causality direction ratio (NLBCDR)	$\geq 0,7$	1,000	Fit (perfect)
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The model fit results indicate that the structural model meets all criteria. The APC, ARS, and AARS values are significant, confirm that the proposed relationships are statistically significant and that the model explains the variance in the endogenous variables, reflecting moderate explanatory power. The AVIF and AFVIF values are below the ideal threshold of 3.3, indicating no multicollinearity issues. The GoF value demonstrates a large overall model fit. Furthermore, the SPR, RSCR, SSR, and NLBCDR values confirm the absence of suppression effects, collinearity bias, and incorrect causal directions. Overall, the model is statistically robust and appropriate for hypothesis testing.

Evaluation of the Measurement Model (Outer Model)

The measurement model assessment included convergent validity, discriminant validity, internal consistency reliability, and multicollinearity.

Table 2. Result of Convergent Validity and Reliability Analysis

Variables	Code	Loading Factor	AVE	Composite Reliability	Chronbach Alpha
Person-Organization Fit	P-O Fit2	0.532	0,559	0,832	0,727
	P-O Fit3	0.774			
	P-O Fit5	0.834			
	P-O Fit6	0.812			
Perceived Organizational Support	POS1	0.701	0,531	0,871	0,821
	POS2	0.753			
	POS3	0.775			
	POS4	0.818			
	POS6	0.683			
	POS7	0.624			
Organizational Commitment	OC1	0.787	0,656	0,884	0,825
	OC3	0.813			
	OC4	0.856			
	OC6	0.781			
Employee Engagement	EE1	0.760	0,524	0,843	0,764
	EE2	0.824			
	EE3	0.765			
	EE4	0.742			
	EE5	0.478			

The measurement model meets the established criteria for convergent validity and internal consistency reliability. All constructs achieved AVE values above 0.50 (ranging from 0.524 to 0.656), indicating that more than half of the variance of the indicators is explained by their respective latent constructs (Hair et al., 2021). Composite Reliability values (0.832–0.884) and Cronbach's Alpha coefficients (> 0.70) further confirm strong internal consistency. Although two indicators (P-O Fit2 = 0.532; EE5 = 0.478) fall below the ideal 0.70 loading threshold, Hair et al. (2021) and Sarstedt et al. (2019) caution against mechanical deletion when overall AVE and reliability remain satisfactory, as indicator removal may reduce content validity. Given that all constructs maintain acceptable AVE and CR values, convergent validity is not compromised. Moreover, Hofstede (2011) suggests that measurement instruments developed in Western contexts may demonstrate moderate

loading variations when applied in collectivist and high power-distance cultures such as Timor-Leste, where relational, communal, and religious values shape meaning construction. Therefore, retaining these indicators is theoretically justified and does not weaken the robustness of the measurement model.

Evaluation of the Structural Model (Inner Model)

The evaluation of the structural model (inner model) aims to assess the strength and significance of the hypothesized relationships among latent variables.

Table 3. R-Square Test Result

Endogenous Variables	R-Square	Adjuster R-Square	Category
Organizational Commitment	0.307	0.298	Moderate
Employee Engagement	0.489	0.479	Substantial

The explanatory power of the structural model was evaluated using R^2 values for the endogenous variables. Organizational Commitment achieved an R^2 of 0.307, indicating that 30.7% of its variance is explained by Person–Organization Fit and Perceived Organizational Support, which represents moderate explanatory power in behavioral research. Employee Engagement obtained an R^2 of 0.489, suggesting that 48.9% of its variance is explained by POF, POS, and Organizational Commitment. This value approaches substantial explanatory strength, demonstrating that nearly half of the variability in Employee Engagement is accounted for by the proposed model. In the context of social science research, this level of explanation is considered strong and indicates meaningful predictive relevance.

Table 4. Effect Size Result

Direct Relationships	Effect Size (f^2)	Category
POF → OC	0.141	Weak
POF → EE	0.152	Medium
POS → OC	0.166	Medium
POS → EE	0.264	Medium
OC → EE	0.181	Medium

The effect size (f^2) results indicate weak to moderate practical impacts among the structural relationships. The effect of Person–Organization Fit on Organizational Commitment ($f^2 = 0.141$) is weak, while its effect on Employee Engagement ($f^2 = 0.152$) is moderate. Perceived Organizational Support shows moderate effects on both Organizational Commitment ($f^2 = 0.166$) and Employee Engagement ($f^2 = 0.264$), with the latter representing the strongest practical influence in the model. Organizational Commitment also demonstrates a moderate effect on Employee Engagement ($f^2 = 0.181$). Overall, these

findings suggest that Perceived Organizational Support is the most influential predictor in enhancing engagement within the model.

Table 5. Predictive Relevance Test Result (Q^2)

Endogenous Variables	Q-Square (Q^2)	Category
Organizational Commitment	0,312	Moderate
Employee Engagement	0,489	Substantial

Predictive relevance was evaluated using Stone–Geisser’s Q^2 , where values greater than zero indicate adequate predictive capability (Hair et al., 2021). With R^2 values of 0.31 for Organizational Commitment and 0.49 for Employee Engagement, the model demonstrates moderate explanatory power. Given the significant structural paths, the positive Q^2 values confirm that the model possesses satisfactory predictive relevance within the context of Catholic private secondary schools in Dili.

Table 6. Path Coefficients Test Result

Direct Relationships	Path Coefficients	P-Values	Significance
POF → OC	0.269	<0.001	Strong
POF → EE	0.167	0.014	Moderate
POS → OC	0.313	<0.001	Strong
POS → EE	0.319	<0.001	Strong
OC → EE	0.293	<0.001	Strong

All hypothesized direct relationships were positive and statistically significant, supporting the proposed structural model. Person–Organization Fit significantly influences Organizational Commitment ($\beta = 0.269$, $p < 0.001$), while Perceived Organizational Support shows a stronger effect on commitment ($\beta = 0.313$, $p < 0.001$). In predicting Employee Engagement, Person–Organization Fit has a positive but relatively weaker impact ($\beta = 0.167$, $p = 0.014$), whereas Perceived Organizational Support emerges as the strongest direct predictor ($\beta = 0.319$, $p < 0.001$). Organizational Commitment also significantly enhances Employee Engagement ($\beta = 0.293$, $p < 0.001$), confirming its role as a key psychological mechanism linking organizational factors to engagement. Overall, Perceived Organizational Support stands out as the most influential predictor in the model.

Table 7. Mediation Effect Test (Indirect Effect)

Connection	Path Coefficient	P-Value	Mediation Proportion
POF→OC→EE	0,079	0,075	32,1%
POS→OC→EE	0,092	0,047	22,4%

The mediation analysis shows that Organizational Commitment does not significantly mediate the relationship between Person–Organization Fit and Employee Engagement at the 5% level ($\beta = 0.079$; $p = 0.075$; $VAF = 32.1\%$), indicating that POF primarily influences EE through its direct effect. However, at the 10% significance level, the indirect effect becomes marginally significant, which is defensible in exploratory research conducted in developing contexts such as Timor-Leste, where institutional systems are still evolving and the risk of Type II error should be considered. This suggests that value congruence may represent an emerging, though not yet fully institutionalized, pathway toward strengthening teachers’ commitment and engagement. In contrast, Organizational Commitment significantly mediates the relationship between Perceived Organizational Support and Employee Engagement ($\beta = 0.092$; $p = 0.047$; $VAF = 22.4\%$), indicating partial mediation, as both the direct and indirect effects are significant.

Hypothesis Testing Summary

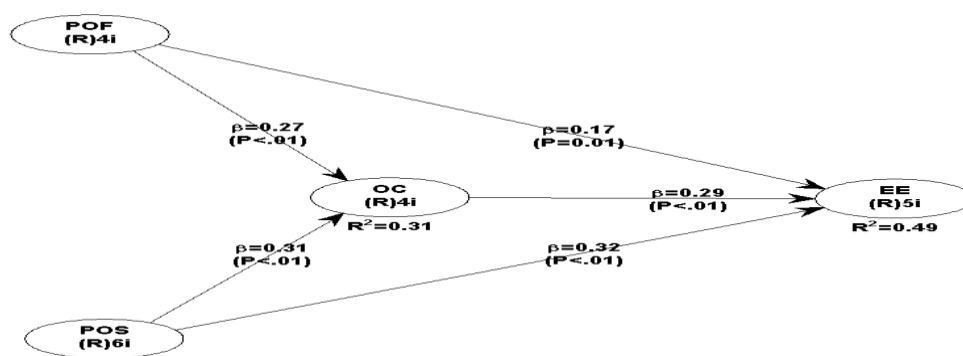


Figure 1. Hypothesis Testing Summary

Table 8. Summary of Hypothesis Testing Results.

Hypothesis	Path Coefficient	P-Value	Results
POF → OC	0,17	0,01	Supported
POF → EE	0,27	< 0,01	Supported
POS → OC	0,32	< 0,01	Supported
POS → OC	0,31	< 0,01	Supported
OC → EE	0,29	< 0,01	Supported
POF → OC → EE	0,79	0,075	Supported (partial mediation)
POS → OC → EE	0,92	0,047	Supported (partial mediation)

H1: Person–Organization Fit → Organizational Commitment

The positive relationship between Person–Organization Fit and Organizational Commitment is supported by recent empirical evidence. Kristof-Brown, Schneider, and Su (2023) confirm the consistent positive association between P–O Fit and commitment across sectors, emphasizing that value congruence strengthens employees’ emotional attachment. Similarly, Chen et al. (2024) demonstrate that alignment with organizational values

enhances affective commitment through increased trust and sense of belonging. These findings justify that teachers who perceive strong value alignment with their schools are more likely to develop stronger organizational commitment.

H2: Person-Organization Fit → Employee Engagement

The significant effect of Person-Organization Fit on Employee Engagement is consistent with recent findings. Cao and Zhang (2023) report that value congruence directly increases teachers' enthusiasm and engagement at work. Furthermore, Na-Nan et al. (2025) show that employees with high P-O Fit contribute significantly to organizational effectiveness, both directly and indirectly, indicating that value alignment fosters sustained work involvement. These studies reinforce that engagement is strengthened when employees perceive compatibility with organizational culture.

H3: Perceived Organizational Support → Organizational Commitment

The positive influence of Perceived Organizational Support on Organizational Commitment is strongly supported by recent studies. Hong et al. (2023) identify POS as a crucial predictor of commitment, particularly in mitigating job insecurity effects. Additionally, Chen et al. (2025) demonstrate that employees who perceive strong organizational assistance exhibit higher levels of commitment. These findings align with social exchange theory, suggesting that perceived institutional support fosters reciprocal loyalty and attachment.

H4: Perceived Organizational Support → Employee Engagement

Recent empirical evidence supports the positive relationship between POS and Employee Engagement. Park and Kim (2024) confirm that Perceived Organizational Support significantly enhances work engagement. Similarly, Opoku et al. (2024) find that organizational support positively influences performance engagement. These findings suggest that when employees feel valued and supported, they are more energized and dedicated to their work.

H5: Organizational Commitment → Employee Engagement

The positive effect of Organizational Commitment on Employee Engagement is supported by recent research. Cenkci et al. (2021) demonstrate that commitment directly influences engagement and may function as a mediating variable. More recently, Ly (2023) confirms that affective commitment plays a partial mediating role in strengthening employee engagement. These studies indicate that emotionally attached employees are more likely to invest effort and dedication in their work.

H6: POF → OC → EE (Mediation)

The mediating role of Organizational Commitment between P-O Fit and Employee Engagement is supported by Chen et al. (2024), who show that value alignment strengthens affective bonds that subsequently influence positive work attitudes. Kristof-Brown et al. (2023) also highlight that P-O Fit enhances attitudinal outcomes through commitment mechanisms. These findings justify the psychological pathway in which value congruence fosters engagement via strengthened commitment.

H7: POS → OC → EE (Mediation)

The mediating role of Organizational Commitment in the relationship between POS and Employee Engagement is supported by Chen et al. (2025), who demonstrate that perceived support strengthens commitment, which then enhances positive work behaviors. Park and Kim (2024) further confirm that supportive organizational climates indirectly foster

engagement through attitudinal mechanisms. These findings validate commitment as a key psychological pathway linking institutional support to engagement.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the influence of Person–Organization Fit (P–O Fit) and Perceived Organizational Support (POS) on Employee Engagement (EE), with Organizational Commitment (OC) as a mediator among teachers in Catholic private secondary schools in Dili, Timor-Leste. The findings confirm that both P–O Fit and POS positively and significantly affect Organizational Commitment and Employee Engagement, with POS emerging as the strongest predictor.

Organizational Commitment significantly enhances Employee Engagement and partially mediates the relationships between P–O Fit and EE as well as between POS and EE. These results indicate that value alignment and organizational support not only directly increase engagement but also strengthen teachers' psychological attachment, which in turn fosters higher dedication and involvement at work.

Theoretically, this study integrates the Interactionist Perspective and Social Exchange Theory by demonstrating that alignment and support operate through commitment as a key psychological mechanism. Practically, the findings highlight the importance for school leaders in Timor-Leste to cultivate supportive environments and reinforce shared institutional values to sustain teacher engagement. Strengthening commitment is essential for transforming organizational practices into meaningful and lasting engagement.

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