# Does Person-Organization Fit Influence Higher Education Institutions Performance? A Literature Review

**[1]Syamira Ramli, [2]Nisrin Ishak* ,[3]Syafiq Ayop**

[1]Institute of Graduate Studies, Universiti Poly-Tech Malaysia
Syamiraramli98@gmail.com
[2]Institute of Professional Studies, Universiti Poly-Tech Malaysia
nisrin@uptm.edu.my
[3]Faculty Business and Accountancy, Universiti Poly-Tech Malaysia
dhamiri@uptm.edu.my

**ABSTRACT**

The implementation of Person-Organization Fit (PO Fit) within Malaysian higher education institutions is crucial for fostering a cohesive and effective work environment. PO Fit refers to the alignment between an individual's values, goals, and characteristics and the values, culture, and objectives of the organization. This study explores the challenges and potential solutions for integrating PO Fit in Malaysian higher education settings. Data for this study were derived from secondary sources, including scholarly articles and news reports related to higher education quality. This paper provides a comprehensive examination of PO Fit and proposes actionable strategies to enhance its application, thereby improving the quality of higher education in Malaysia.

**Keywords:** Person Organization Fit, Higher Education Sector, work environment

## INTRODUCTION

The notion of person-organization fit (POF) has garnered considerable attention within the realm of human resource management in recent times. The concept of Person-Organization Fit (PO Fit) pertains to the extent to which an individual's personal values, objectives, and personality traits are congruent with those of the organization. The significance of POF is rooted in its capacity to augment employee job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and ultimately, performance.

In the context of higher education in Malaysia, the implementation of PO Fit has been recognized as a domain that exhibits shortcomings. As exemplified by Hassan et al (2018), prior research has suggested that the concept of PO fit is of particular significance in the realm of education, due to the possibility of significant variations in job requirements and duties in comparison to other sectors. In order to establish effective connections with their students, educators, including teachers and lecturers, must possess not only a profound understanding of their respective fields, but also demonstrate proficient interpersonal skills, emotional intelligence, and cultural awareness. Thus, this paper aims to explores further on previous literature on PO Fit implementations.

Malaysian higher education and suggests solutions to address them. The implementation of this approach can potentially exert a substantial influence on the realization of the Ministry of Higher Education's objective to maintain a higher education system of high caliber that nurtures the growth of individuals to fulfil the country's aspirations (MOHE, 2021).

This research paper delves into the topic of PO fit and its implementation in higher education institutions in Malaysia. The information presented in this paper has been meticulously gathered from a variety of secondary sources, including published articles and news reports. The data and information collected from these sources

have been thoroughly reviewed and analyzed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter. The aim of this research is to shed light on the importance of person-organization fit in the context of higher education institutions in Malaysia and to explore the various ways in which it can be effectively implemented.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**
**PERSON OF ORGANIZATION FIT**
The concept of PO fit has been widely studied in the literature, with scholars defining it as the degree of alignment between an individual and their employing organization in terms of shared values, goals, and expectations. This construct has been found to be critical in determining employee job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and overall performance. As such, it has become an important consideration for both employers and employees in the recruitment and selection process, as well as in the ongoing management of the employment relationship. Kristof-Brown et al. (2005) have proposed that the evaluation of PO fit is frequently based on the congruence between an individual's values and those of the organization. The alignment between personal values and organizational values has been found to have a positive impact on employee satisfaction and sense of fit within the organization. This phenomenon has been observed in various studies and is considered an important aspect of organizational behavior. When employees perceive a high level of congruence between their personal values and the values promoted by the organization, it leads to a greater sense of belonging and motivation to contribute to the organization's goals.

The literature has extensively investigated the correlation between PO fit and various employee attitudes, such as satisfaction, commitment, retention, citizenship behaviors, and performance. This has been explored in several studies conducted by Hoffman and Woehr (2006), Sekiguchi et al. (2011), Deniz, Noyan, and Ertosun (2015), Jin, McDonald, and Park (2016), and Naz et al. (2020). The results of the study suggest that achieving PO fit is a critical factor that organizations must take into account when conducting their recruitment and selection processes. The correlation between an individual's values, personality, and skills with the organization's culture and objectives has been found to have a noteworthy influence on employee satisfaction, commitment, and performance. The concept of PO fit has been identified as a crucial factor in achieving a successful and productive workforce. Prioritizing this factor has been found to increase the likelihood of achieving this outcome. The alignment of values between an organization and its employees has been identified as a potential strategy to achieve organizational objectives. This approach involves selecting candidates whose values are congruent with those of the organization. The notion of utilizing this approach as a strategy to foster organizational fit and augment employee commitment and job satisfaction has been proposed in earlier scholarly works (Chatman & Barsade, 1995; Kristof, 1996).

**THE IMPACT OF PERSON OF ORGANIZATION FIT IN HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR IN MALAYSIA**

A considerable body of research also has been devoted to examining the implications of PO fit in the context of educators operating in higher education environments. In a study conducted by Chang and Wang (2011), it was discovered that there exists a significant positive correlation between PO fit and job satisfaction, as well as organizational commitment among faculty members in Taiwanese universities. Ali Jazil and Robil (2016) conducted a study on Malaysian public universities to investigate the relationship between PO fit, faculty job satisfaction, and turnover intentions. The study revealed that P-O fit was a significant predictor of both faculty job satisfaction and turnover intentions. These findings suggest that PO fit is an important factor to consider in understanding the job satisfaction and retention of faculty members in Malaysian public universities.

Similarly, Ramlee and Noor (2017) conducted a study to investigate the relationship between PO fit and job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and turnover intentions among higher education staff in Malaysia. The findings of their study revealed that PO fit was a significant predictor of job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and turnover intentions. These results are consistent with previous research that has highlighted the importance of PO fit in promoting positive outcomes for employees within organizations. Overall, the study by Ramlee and Noor (2017) adds to the growing body of literature on the importance of PO fit in the workplace,

particularly in the context of higher education in Malaysia. The authors of the study noted that the concept of PO fit had a more pronounced effect on employees' level of commitment to the organization, as opposed to their likelihood of leaving the company (turnover intentions). In addition, Bakar and Ismail (2018) conducted a study in Malaysia to investigate the relationship between Person-Organization (P-O) fit and Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) among employees in public universities. The study found a positive correlation between PO fit and OCB, indicating that employees who perceive a good fit between themselves and their organization are more inclined to exhibit behaviors that go beyond their job requirements and contribute to the betterment of the organization. This finding highlights the importance of PO fit in promoting desirable employee behaviors and enhancing organizational effectiveness.

The present study concludes that the concept of PO fit holds great importance in the higher education sector of Malaysia. The findings suggest that PO fit has a noteworthy influence on several dimensions within this sector. The correlation between the values, objectives, and cultural norms of individuals and those of the organization has been found to have a significant impact on various aspects of organizational functioning. Specifically, this alignment has been shown to be a key determinant of job satisfaction, organizational commitment, performance, productivity, employee retention, organizational citizenship behavior, and the overall reputation and culture of the institution. Numerous research studies have been conducted to investigate the impact of PO fit on employee outcomes within the context of higher education institutions in Malaysia. The findings of these studies have consistently revealed that PO fit has a positive influence on various aspects of employee outcomes. According to Kristof-Brown et al. (2005), there exists a positive correlation between job satisfaction and employees' perception of a strong alignment with the organizational culture. This finding highlights the importance of organizational culture in shaping employees' attitudes towards their work and the organization they work for. The establishment of alignment between an individual and their work environment has been shown to have a positive impact on their sense of belonging, motivation, and overall job satisfaction.

## WEAKNESSES IN IMPLEMENTING PERSON-ORGANIZATION FIT IN HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR IN MALAYSIA

The implementation of PO fit has been identified as a challenging task in the higher education sector of Malaysia. This is primarily due to the presence of certain weaknesses and limitations that hinder the successful execution of PO fit. Lokman and Jusoff (2014) have identified a significant challenge in higher education institutions (HEIs), namely the cultural diversity of the workforce and the absence of diversity management practices. This issue has been acknowledged as a pressing concern, as it poses a potential barrier to the effective functioning of HEIs. The authors' findings suggest that addressing this challenge is crucial for HEIs to foster an inclusive and supportive environment for their diverse workforce. The challenge of establishing a comprehensive and widely applicable definition of organizational culture and values that resonates with all members of an organization is a well-documented issue. This difficulty stems from the complex and multifaceted nature of organizational culture, which can vary significantly across different industries, sectors, and organizational structures. As a result, creating a shared understanding of the values and norms that guide an organization's behavior and decision-making processes can be a daunting task. This challenge is further compounded by the need to ensure that all employees can relate to and internalize these cultural values, which requires a nuanced and thoughtful approach to organizational culture development. As a result, there may be a problem with the validity and dependability of PO fit measurements.

In addition, the significance of PO fit has been found to be overlooked by Higher Education Institution (HEI) administrators and managers, which poses a limitation to the existing literature. The lack of structured recruitment and selection processes that incorporate PO fit as a criterion is a clear indication of this. Arshad and Jusoff (2010) conducted a study on the recruitment and selection practises of higher education institutions (HEIs) in Malaysia. The researchers found that these institutions tend to prioritize academic qualifications and experience when selecting candidates, while neglecting the crucial aspect of fit between the candidate's personality, values, and goals with the organizational culture and values. This oversight may have significant implications for the effectiveness of the recruitment and selection process, as well as the overall success of the organization. The

misalignment of values and objectives between employees and their organization can lead to a decline in job satisfaction and suboptimal performance.

## ENHANCING PERSON-ORGANIZATION FIT THROUGH TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The concept of PO fit has been widely studied in the field of organizational behavior. Scholars have suggested that one of the crucial factors in enhancing the effectiveness of this concept is to provide a clear understanding of the organizational culture. This notion has been supported by empirical evidence, which indicates that a strong alignment between an individual's values, beliefs, and goals, and the values, beliefs, and goals of the organization, can lead to positive out. The process of establishing the principles, convictions, and standards that steer conduct and judgement within an institution is commonly referred to as organizational culture. The establishment of clarity is a crucial aspect of effective communication, particularly in the context of cultural exchange. To achieve this, it is necessary to disseminate information about the culture in question and employ consistent communication methods. By doing so, individuals can better understand and appreciate the nuances of the culture, leading to more meaningful and productive interactions. The approach in question has garnered support from research, as it has been shown to have a positive impact on employee engagement, productivity, and satisfaction (Cameron & Quinn, 2011).

Furthermore, the process of recruitment and selection is a crucial component of achieving a suitable match between individuals and organizations. This is because it enables the identification of candidates who possess the necessary skills, experience, and values that are in line with the organization's objectives. The optimization of the selection process is a crucial aspect of human resource management. One effective approach to achieving this goal is through the utilization of evidence-based selection methods. These methods include psychometric tests, interviews, and assessment centers. By incorporating these techniques, organizations can enhance the accuracy and reliability of their selection process, leading to better hiring decisions and improved organizational outcomes. Schneider and Goldstein (2010) have demonstrated that utilizing this particular approach can enhance the precision of candidate selection, mitigate bias, and heighten the probability of a favorable person-organization match. Thus, the misalignment of values and objectives between employees and their organization that can lead to a decline in job satisfaction and suboptimal performance can be mitigated.

An alternative method for enhancing the execution of PO fit is through the cultivation of employee engagement and participation. The implementation of participatory decision-making, employee empowerment, and feedback mechanisms has been identified as a means to attain the desired outcome. These strategies have been shown to be effective in enabling employees to take ownership of their work and contribute to the decision-making process. By providing employees with a voice and a sense of control, organizations can foster a culture of engagement and commitment. This, in turn, can lead to improved performance, increased job satisfaction, and reduced turnover rates. Therefore, the utilization of participatory decision-making, employee Deci and Ryan (2008) have conducted research that highlights the potential of certain activities to positively impact employee motivation and satisfaction. Specifically, these activities are believed to increase employees' sense of control and involvement within the organization.

In the realm of organizational psychology, one strategy for fostering a harmonious relationship between employees and their workplace is to offer ample opportunities for training and development. By doing so, employees are able to acquire the necessary skills, knowledge, and abilities to carry out their job responsibilities with greater proficiency and ease. This, in turn, can lead to increased job satisfaction and a stronger sense of alignment between the individual and the organization. The provision of opportunities for skill development and knowledge acquisition is a crucial aspect of organizational growth and development. These opportunities can be delivered through a range of methods, including on-the-job training, job rotation, coaching, and mentoring. Each of these approaches has been shown to be effective in enhancing employee performance, promoting knowledge transfer, and facilitating the acquisition of new skills. By providing employees with access to these opportunities, organizations can create a culture of continuous learning and development, which can ultimately lead to improved

organizational performance and competitiveness. Baldwin et al (2012) have conducted research in the area of job-related training and have found that it has the potential to enhance job satisfaction, commitment, and performance. This finding is significant as it highlights the importance of providing employees with adequate training opportunities to not only improve their individual performance but also to increase their overall job satisfaction and commitment to the organization.

The present study concludes that enhancing the implementation of PO fit in the higher education sector of Malaysia necessitates a comprehensive strategy that encompasses various aspects. These include elucidating the organizational culture, simplifying the recruitment and selection procedures, promoting employee engagement and participation, and offering training and development prospects. The findings of this study suggest that a multifaceted approach is essential to ensure the successful implementation of PO fit in the higher education sector of Malaysia. The effectiveness of the strategies mentioned has been substantiated by prior research and can serve as a means to augment employee performance motivation and job satisfaction.

**DISCUSSIONS**

The concept of PO fit has been recognized as a critical factor in the success of higher education institutions in Malaysia. Its importance lies in its ability to foster a conducive and productive work environment. Consequently, implementing PO fit has become a key focus of organizational management in the higher education sector. By aligning employees' values, goals, and skills with the institution's mission and culture, PO fit contributes to creating a harmonious and effective work environment that enhances employee satisfaction and organizational success. Ishak (2018) supports this notion, emphasizing that employee engagement plays a crucial role in maintaining a positive work environment, which in turn promotes employee well-being. Furthermore, Ishak and Ayop (2023) explore how providing employees with opportunities to voice their concerns, particularly when related to dissatisfaction, is vital for ensuring a healthy organizational culture. Overall, ensuring person-organization fit is essential for creating a supportive and productive work environment, ultimately contributing to institutional performance.

While the significance of PO fit in fostering a positive work environment has been established, future research should focus on enhancing the mechanisms through which employees can voice their concerns within higher education institutions. Creating structured platforms and safe spaces where employees feel empowered to express their dissatisfaction, without fear of retaliation, is crucial for sustaining a healthy work environment. Further investigation is needed to explore the effectiveness of these platforms and the role of leadership in facilitating open communication. Additionally, research could examine how institutions can create a feedback loop where employees' concerns are not only heard but addressed in a way that aligns with organizational goals and improves overall performance. Understanding the long-term impact of these practices on employee retention, satisfaction, and institutional success would provide valuable insights for higher education management.

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