The Impact of the Employee-Organization Relationship on Engagement and Burnout: A Mixed Methods Study within the Tech Industry

by

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Abstract

This study examined the employee-organization relationship (EOR) in the technology industry, focusing on its implications for employee engagement, burnout, and turnover intentions. The study aimed to identify key factors and levers influencing these outcomes, using a mixed-methods approach that encompassed three phases: quantitative, qualitative, and synthesis. The quantitative phase involved 155 tech industry professionals who participated in online surveys, while 46 of these participants were involved in follow-up interviews for the qualitative phase. The quantitative analysis utilized descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression testing to explore the relationships between EOR, engagement, burnout, and turnover intent. The quantitative findings indicate a positive correlation between EOR and employee engagement and a negative association with burnout and turnover intentions. The qualitative phase used thematic analysis on open-ended survey responses and interview data to explore the employee experience of engagement, burnout, and EOR. This phase identified themes around engagement, burnout, and the employee-organization relationship. Engagement themes include alignment, satisfaction, autonomy, and empowerment, while burnout is marked by exhaustion and disengagement. Factors affecting EOR encompass organizational dynamics, relationship building, trust, and work-life balance. The study highlights the influence of technostress and changing work environments on EOR. The trend described as "quiet quitting" was found to be driven by negative work culture and insufficient leadership, leading to employee disengagement. The research implies that businesses can boost engagement and minimize burnout by focusing on relational aspects of work. However, limitations in sample size and industry specificity are acknowledged, indicating a need for more research. Overall, the study

emphasizes the critical role of EOR in shaping employee well-being and performance in the tech sector, advocating for organizational strategies that align with employees' relational needs.

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to several people. First and foremost, this dissertation is dedicated to my husband, Robert C. Hicks, who has made a dream come true. Bob has been my greatest cheerleader, coach, sounding board, and editor throughout the entire process. In times when the dissertation process felt like a never-ending battle, he would hold my hand, pass me a hankie, keep me well fed, and help me to forge on. Without his never-ending love and support, this dissertation would not be done.

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Lastly, this dissertation is dedicated to all the women who have ever been denied education. At a very young age, my grandmother had to withdraw from school to work on the farm and tend to the house. My mother was expected to become a secretary after high school and not attend college. These women instilled in me a value for education because they were not

allowed to pursue their educational dreams. We all have lifelong dreams and passions that tug at our heartstrings, engage our imagination, and motivate us. Achieving a doctorate has been one of my lifelong dreams. While in my own journey, people were skeptical and critical about achieving a doctorate, I followed my passion, blazed a new trail, and lived my dream! For all the women who seek education, let this dissertation be a reminder to reach for your dreams!

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction to the Study

Market shifts, competition, and customer needs are typical drivers of significant changes within an organization, yet the current employee experience of work is having an unprecedented impact on organizations. The contemporary experience of work has been marked by decreased engagement, quiet quitting, and burnout. Business journals and management consulting organizations report only 23% of the workforce is actively engaged and thriving in their work, 59% are disengaging and describe themselves as quietly quitting (Gallup, 2023), and 28% of the workforce is experiencing burnout due to their jobs (Brassey et al., 2022). These statistics indicate an emerging trend in business with lasting repercussions, underscoring the need for research to identify and understand the root causes and offer practical solutions.

On a spectrum of employee experiences ranging from engagement to burnout, where an employee operates is an indication of their well-being, individual performance, and turnover intent. High levels of engagement are characterized by employee satisfaction, motivation, and commitment in which employees are invested in their work (Sonnentag, 2017). The distinct and opposing end of this spectrum, burnout, is marked by a lack of energy, exhaustion, inefficacy, and cynicism (Maslach, 1993; Schaufeli et al., 2020a).

While engagement and burnout form the distinct bookends of the spectrum, quiet quitting has emerged as an indicator of the changing levels of engagement. Described as an employee's "limited commitment," low motivation, and only working to one's role (Formica & Sfodera,

2022, p. 900), quiet quitting has become evidence of disengagement and an employee's strategy for dealing with stress and burnout (Richardson, 2023).

As employees shift along this spectrum, going from engaged to quietly quitting and potentially burning out, the individual and operational impact can be significant (Gabriel & Aguinis, 2022). For individuals, low well-being and burnout reduce cognitive functioning such as memory and attention (Maslach & Leiter, 2017b), increase the risk of insomnia (Bouskill et al., 2022), and elevate health risks such as cardiovascular disease (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2014), diabetes (Melamed et al., 2006), and hypertension (Ahola et al., 2017).

Operationally, as employees disengage and experience poor well-being, performance degrades, and turnover intent increases (Saks, 2017). In *The State of the Global Workplace 2023* report, Gallup estimates the global cost of low engagement to be $8.8 trillion (Gallup, Inc., 2023). In the United States, the organizational cost of burnout is estimated at $300 billion annually in medical, turnover, and decreased productivity (Peart, 2019). While some people may leave an organization, others will stay, but their productivity and engagement will be negatively impacted (Maslach & Leiter, 2017b).

As employees disengage from work and experience dissatisfaction, low well-being, and burnout, what are the solutions? In the report *The State of Organizations 2023: Ten Shifts Transforming Organizations*, McKinsey describes a disconnect between employees and employers in the reasons for dissatisfaction and quitting (Guggenberger et al., 2023). According to the report, the survey showed employers to be transactionally oriented on business, whereas employees were focused on the relational nature of work. Employees want to "flourish" in their work without "burning out" (Pangallo et al., 2022, p. 2).

This disconnect is evidence of deeper problems between the employee and the organization at the relational level. Eldor and Vigoda-Gadot (2016) found a high level of engagement to be an indicator of a positive employee-organization relationship (EOR) in which employees experience a "mutually beneficial" relationship and work has meaning (p. 545). Maslach (2017) and Leiter (2022) describe burnout as a relationship problem as opposed to an individual problem or an imbalance of resources. While engagement is evidence of a balanced relationship, burnout is evidence of a dysfunctional relationship between an organization and its employees (Krekel et al., 2019; Maslach & Leiter, 2017b).

As with other relationships, both entities must be examined to address the problem (Leiter, 2022). The quality and nature of the relationship between an employee and their organization influence and affect employees' perceptions of work, day-to-day interactions, and the overall employee experience (Boccoli et al., 2022; Formica & Sfodera, 2022; Guest, 2017). This study is based on analyzing the quality and perceptions of the relationship between an employee and the organization. It aims to understand how the EOR influences and impacts the employee experience of engagement and burnout. The remainder of this chapter describes and expands upon the problem and purpose, research questions, and conceptual framework.

Statement of the Problem

The problem addressed in this study was the role of the employee-organization relationship in fostering engagement and mitigating the potential for burnout and to what degree it impacts the turnover intent. Maslach and Leiter (1997) initially described the experiences of engagement and burnout as a continuum. While there is an abundance of engagement-burnout literature (Bakker et al., 2023), what is not fully understood is what influences and impacts the individual experience, causing an employee to shift between engagement and burnout and to

what degree it impacts turnover intent in today's business landscape. Research has identified an extensive list of job resources and demands impacting an employee's experience of work, but at this writing, the impact of EOR has not been examined in this context (Lee et al., 2020; Schaufeli, 2017b).

The EOR is a key element in an employee's experience of work, as it forms the basis of the psychological, social, and contractual relationship with an organization (Jigjiddorj et al., 2021; Schauder, 2015). EOR serves as a backdrop to an employee's experience of work, influencing and impacting interactions and perceptions (Che et al., 2022). The relationship between an employee and their organization is based on a two-way exchange (Guest & Conway, 2002) in which the relationship is shaped by economic and social exchanges consisting of expectations, promises, and obligations (Cullinane & Dundon, 2006). A measure of the quality of the employment relationship is engagement and well-being. As a quality measure, engagement indicates a high level of commitment, performance, and well-being, while burnout indicates low well-being, high stress, and withdrawal (Bakker et al., 2023).

Engagement, described as one's investment in work and commitment to an organization, is an indicator of commitment, satisfaction, and well-being (Saks, 2017). Engaged employees bring a competitive advantage to their organization (Kim et al., 2012) as a source of innovation (Knox & Marin-Cadavid, 2022), creativity (Bakker, 2017), and individual and organizational performance (Motyka, 2018). As described in the previous section, the global cost of low engagement is estimated at $8.8 trillion (Gallup, 2023). The levels of productivity are 14% higher for engaged teams, while the estimated cost of disengagement is up to 18% of one's salary (Herway, 2023). For every 1% drop in engagement, researchers have estimated that turnover intent and attrition increase by 45% (Buckingham & Goodall, 2019).

Burnout is characterized by exhaustion, inefficacy, and cynicism (Maslach, 1993). At the organizational level, burnout is linked to job dissatisfaction (Maslach & Leiter, 2008), degraded performance (Lubbadeh, 2020), decreased organizational commitment (Salvagioni et al., 2017), absenteeism (Haar, 2021), and turnover intention (Swider & Zimmerman, 2010). As previously described, the organizational cost of burnout is estimated in the United States at $300 billion annually in medical, turnover, and decreased productivity (Peart, 2019). A study conducted in the Netherlands found, on average, that sick leave due to burnout resulted in 101 lost working days and an average of $20,174 per incident to the employer (Wolvetang et al., 2022). The additional healthcare costs in the United States are estimated at $125 to $190 billion per year (Garton, 2017).

While organizations acknowledge the importance of engagement and recognize the problem of quiet quitting, they struggle to identify solutions to increase engagement and elevate employee well-being (American Productivity & Quality Center, 2020). To understand what influences the employee experience and causes an employee to shift between engagement and burnout, it is necessary to have new insights and awareness that reflect today's business landscape. The pandemic resulted in an abrupt change in business models as organizations sought to stay relevant, competitive, and protect employee health and safety (Vyas, 2022). Employees dealt with stress around health and finances while balancing work and family life in the changing work relationship (Leiter & Cooper, 2022). The modern-day environment is marked by adaption to a new normal as organizations and individuals learn to operate alongside COVID-19 (Charumilind et al., 2022).

In the literature, the relationship between engagement and burnout is frequently studied using a quantitative approach (Bakker et al., 2023). A singular approach to the study such as

quantitative or qualitative creates a "partial view" of the problem (Creswell, 2019, p. 151). This study was conducted using mixed methods, which provided a methodology to examine and describe the problem from a quantitative and qualitative perspective. The quantitative phase was used to describe the magnitude and impact of the problem, while the qualitative phase provided insight into the individual experience and deeper dimensions of the problem. Using a synthesis phase to combine the quantitative and qualitative results identified new insights, patterns, and trends around the employee experience of engagement and burnout.

This study addressed the problem by using the lens of the EOR to examine the employee experiences of engagement and burnout. The following section describes the purpose of the study and how the study was conducted to address the problem.

Purpose Statement

The aim of this mixed methods study was to explore and understand the EOR as it relates to engagement and burnout in order to:

- describe the contemporary experience of engagement and burnout,
- identify the factors that impact the EOR,
- define levers that foster engagement and mitigate burnout, and
- examine turnover intent as a metric that impacts organizational performance.

A convergent mixed methods design was used, which consisted of three phases: quantitative, qualitative, and synthesis. The quantitative and qualitative phases were conducted in parallel; the results were analyzed separately. Then they were merged and analyzed in a synthesis phase.

The purpose of a mixed methods study was to corroborate and expand upon the results between the quantitative and qualitative phases. In the quantitative phase, statistical methods

such as correlation analysis and linear regression were used to examine the major variables: EOR, engagement, burnout, and turnover intent. During the qualitative phase, one-on-one interviews were conducted to explore the individual experience of engagement and burnout. In the synthesis phase, the results were combined, and the Burke-Litwin Causal Model (Burke & Litwin, 1992), referred to as Burke-Litwin in this study, was used to conduct cause and effect analysis. Six Sigma tools such as Pareto Analysis and fishbone diagrams were used to prioritize and display the data.

In this study, the population researched were individuals working in the technology (tech) sector. The tech industry is described as those organizations conducting business in information technology, such as computer software, hardware, cloud services, and related consulting services (Frankenfield, 2022). This industry is characterized by continuous innovation and invention, short life cycles of knowledge, and intensive competition (Sung & Choi, 2019). The tech industry is unique in that long hours and personal sacrifices are celebrated (Moss, 2021). The companies in this industry are commonly referred to as burnout shops, where employees work long hours and sacrifice to achieve goals with a promise of lucrative financial rewards (Maslach, 2018). With a high potential for burnout, the individuals working in the tech industry provided an opportunity to understand the contemporary employee experience of engagement and burnout (Guerra, 2022).

In summary, the study examined the experience of engagement and burnout and the effect on turnover intent in the tech industry using a relational lens of EOR. This study called for a mixed method approach to validate and elaborate on the results to discover new patterns and trends in how EOR causes a shift between engagement and burnout, affecting turnover intent.

Research Questions

The primary question that guided this research was:

RQ1: How does the EOR impact and influence engagement and burnout?

The sub-questions for this study included the following:

RQ2: What is the employee experience of engagement and burnout?

RQ3: What is the current experience of the EOR?

RQ4: What can be learned from the synthesizing the data regarding turnover intent?

The study was conducted using a mixed methods approach that included quantitative, qualitative, and synthesis phases. The quantitative phase involved statistical measures to explore and understand the data, test the findings, and determine the validity of the data. The qualitative phase consisted of interviews and focus groups to capture detailed information and give voice to the participants (Creswell et al., 2011). Sensemaking and thematic analysis were used to understand the individual's experience of engagement and burnout. The synthesis phase consisted of activities to integrate and analyze the data from the quantitative and qualitative phases. These activities included using Burke-Litwin to conduct cause and effect analysis on the data.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework describes how the research problem is framed and the high-level concepts that shape the study.

Engagement and Burnout

Maslach and Leiter (1997) initially described the experiences of engagement and burnout as a continuum where burnout was an "erosion of engagement" (p. 24). Thus, the continuum was

measured with a single construct using the Maslach Burnout Instrument (MBI). Schaufeli et al. (2002) agreed that engagement and burnout were opposite ends of the continuum but argued that engagement and burnout were two constructs as opposed to one, resulting in the development of Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) to measure engagement. Rather than engage in academic debate, this study examines engagement and burnout as a range of employee experiences.

At the intersection of an individual and the organization, much of the intervention research aimed at influencing and impacting engagement and burnout has been focused on the individual (Bakker et al., 2023). This approach has resulted in a lack of organizational and team approaches that moderate engagement and burnout. The employee experience of engagement and burnout occurs at the intersection of the individual and the organization. This overlap represents the EOR where each entity has different responsibilities and interests, and the relationship is managed as social and economic exchanges (Guest, 2017).

Employee-Organization Relationship

In examining the shift between engagement and burnout, the problem is not with the person, nor is it with the job. Instead, there is a problem between the person and the job, described as a relationship problem between an individual and an organization (Leiter & Wintle, 2021). This is a shift from the current narrative in which individuals are responsible for their own outcomes as opposed to examining accountability and mutuality of exchange between an individual and the organization (Boxall, 2013; Maslach, 2017).

Organizational Context

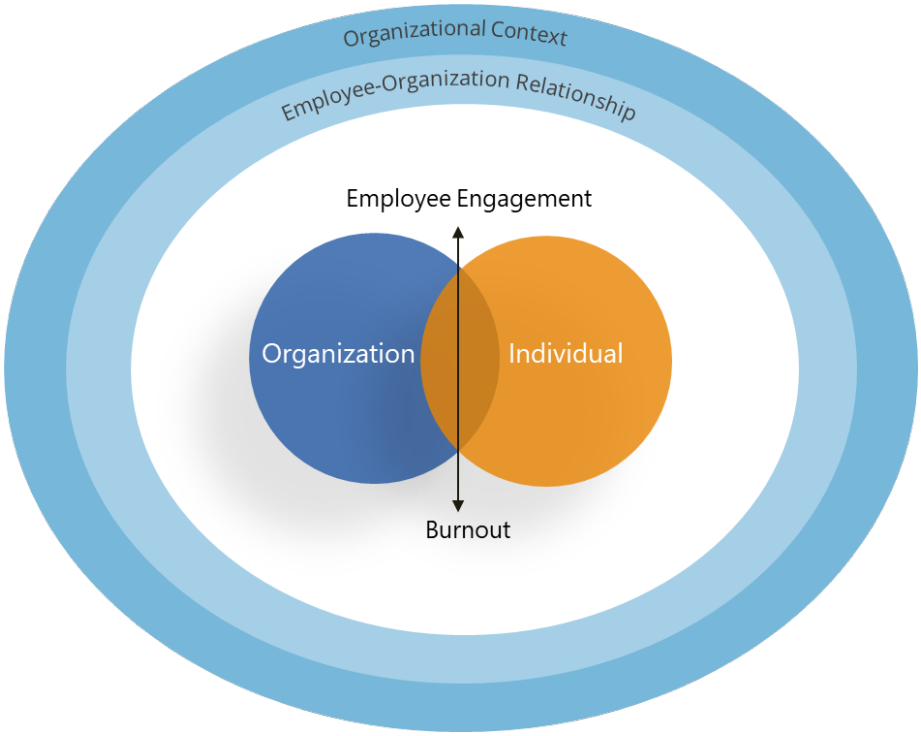
The dimensions and processes in which engagement and burnout affect the organization and individuals are understood by examining the organizational context. These can have a positive or negative impact on the EOR.

Conceptually, this study is designed to examine the impact of the EOR on engagement and burnout; and to what degree it impacts the turnover intent. The quantitative phase captures the statistical data to determine the predictive value of burnout and engagement in relationship with turnover intent. The qualitative phase captures the stories of the lived experience of engagement and burnout to identify themes and patterns that describe employees' perceptions and interpretations of organizational interactions and events. The synthesis phase combines the quantitative and qualitative data to conduct a cause-and-effect analysis. Using Burke-Litwin to categorize the data and describe the organizational context, the analysis examined how the EOR impacts and influences engagement and burnout and how it effects turnover intent.

Figure 1.1 (below) illustrates the conceptual framework for this study. The theoretical basis of the conceptual framework is discussed in Chapter 2.

Figure 1.1

Conceptual Framework



Significance of the Study

This study contributes to academic literature and business practice by examining the impact of the EOR on the experience of engagement and burnout in a modern-day setting. The constructs of engagement and burnout evolved out of the social and organizational challenges of the 1970s and early 2000s. This research is significant as it examined the contemporary experience of engagement and burnout, reflecting the post-pandemic environment in which organizations operate.

Today's business environment is marked by experimentation, adaption, and change as organizations and employees shift to the next "new normal" (Vyas, 2022). This research is significant as it measures the impact of continual change on engagement and burnout and

explores employee interpretations of organizational events and daily interactions. The tech industry, in particular, experienced rapid expansion during the pandemic, followed by an economic downturn, supply chain challenges, and large-scale layoffs (Deloitte, 2023). As organizational policies and processes change, the employee experience is marked by uncertainty and changing expectations (Gagné et al., 2021).

Academic research on engagement and burnout in the tech industry is sparse. While engagement research crosses all industries and professions (Turner, 2020), there have been limited studies conducted in the tech industry (Harter et al., 2003). There is also a lack of burnout research, as this research is heavily concentrated in the human services industries (Mauthe-Kaddoura, 2019). Initial burnout research was qualitative and reflected the lived experience of burnout for people working in human services. While burnout research evolved to include other professions, the most frequently researched professions are nurses, physicians, and teachers (Mauthe-Kaddoura, 2019).

The pressure to innovate within the tech industry creates a fast-paced culture of working long hours and high stress (Sull et al., 2022). The tech industry operates in continuous cycles of innovating and adapting, creating an environment for burnout (Zaza et al., 2022). Within the tech industry, engagement is key for innovation and performance, while burnout is prevalent (Guerra, 2022). This study contributes to research by examining the underexplored population of the tech industry.

This research is different as it examines engagement, burnout, and turnover intent using the lens of the EOR based on the employee analytic framework (Guest, 2017). Historically, engagement and burnout have been approached from the perspective of an imbalance between job demands and job resources. The relationships between engagement, burnout, and turnover

intent are frequently researched using the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model using quantitative methods (Bakker et al., 2023). In this study, engagement and burnout were studied from a relationship perspective as opposed to an imbalance of resources.

This project is different from previous studies in the proposed approach and execution as the study was conducted using mixed methods. In the quantitative phase, linear regression was used to describe the relationships and understand the impact of EOR on the other major variables. The qualitative data from interviews and open-ended survey questions captured the employee knowledge and experience. The quantitative and qualitative data provided a foundation to understand the employee experience with statistics and stories generating new insights.

Delimitations

The delimitations identify and establish the boundaries for the study, such as the population to study (Roberts & Hyatt, 2019). This study is limited to the following:

- Individuals in the tech industry. The pressure to innovate, sell and deliver products and/or services, and meet stakeholder goals makes the tech industry ripe for burnout (Sull et al., 2022). Tech companies include computer-related software, hardware, and related consulting services.
- Individuals who have experienced engagement and burnout. A mixed methods study aims to understand and explore an individual's lived experience (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Together, the common experiences form the basis of new insights and perspectives.
- Individuals who lead and manage and relate to engagement and burnout from a leadership perspective. The study will include various levels of leadership as agents of the organization (Coyle-Shapiro & Shore, 2007) to capture the organizational perspective and management strategies related to individual and group engagement and burnout.

The results of this study could be generalizable to employees and organizations who (a) provide services and products in the tech industry, (b) are experiencing turnover and performance issues related to engagement and burnout, or (c) are seeking proactive measures to foster engagement, improve well-being, and mitigate the potential for burnout.

Definition of Key Terms

The following operational definitions are utilized in this study.

Burnout

While research purports that burnout results from chronic job-related stress, there is disagreement among researchers regarding the operational definition of burnout (Guseva Canu et al., 2021). Thought leaders such as Maslach and Leiter (2016a) defined burnout as the result of chronic interpersonal and emotional job stressors. Schaufeli and Enzmann (1998) described burnout metaphorically as a battery that has slowly lost its charge. Bianchi et al. (2015) advocate that burnout is a form of depression. For this study, the definition of burnout leverages the following work:

- World Health Organization (2019) defines burnout as an occupational syndrome characterized by exhaustion, inefficacy, and cynicism.
- Leiter and Wintle (2021) describe burnout as a failed relationship between an employee and an organization.
- Desart and De Witte (2019) reconceptualized burnout symptoms to fall into the following categories: exhaustion, emotional impairment, mental distance, and cognitive impairment.

For the purposes of this study, burnout is defined as the result of a failed relationship between an organization and its employees, resulting in exhaustion, cynicism, and inefficacy.

The burnout symptoms reconceptualized by Desart and De Witte (2019) were then defined by Schaufeli et al. (2020a). These symptoms were defined and fall into four groups: exhaustion, emotional impairment, mental distance, and cognitive impairment (Schaufeli et al., 2020a).

Employee-Organization Relationship

EOR is "an overarching term describing the relationship between the employee and the organization" (Shore et al., 2004, p. 292). EOR includes multiple constructs such as employment relationship, social and economic exchange, psychological contracts, and perceived organizational support (Coyle-Shapiro et al., 2016). EOR is a construct for evaluating the quality of the relationship, understanding the employee experience, and measuring the level of participation (Shore et al., 2018).

Engagement

Engagement has 50 different definitions, creating confusion in both academia and business practice (Turner, 2020). Kahn (1990) is recognized as the first academic to define engagement: "the harnessing of organization members' selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances" (p. 694).

Schaufeli et al. (2002) are recognized in the literature as operationalization engagement based on the following characteristics: dedication, vigor, and absorption. Dedication refers to one's level of involvement in one's jobs, vigor characterizes the level of energy and resilience, and absorption refers to one's immersion in one's work and level of focus (Mills et al., 2011).

In the context of this study, engagement refers to employee engagement based on Kahn's work as it reflects the physical, emotional, and cognitive dimensions of an employee, their experience, and how they relate to work (Saks, 2017).

Factors

In statistics, factors are the components or dimensions of a larger construct (Johnson & Christensen, 2020). In this study, organizational factors such as psychological contract and social and economic exchange are dimensions of the larger EOR construct.

Impact

As defined by Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2023c), the word "impact" refers to a direct effect. Within the context of the research questions, impact refers to the direct effects of the EOR on engagement and burnout.

Influence

As defined by Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2023b), the word "influence" refers to an indirect effect. Within the context of the research questions, influence refers to the indirect effects of EOR on engagement and burnout.

Organizational Context

Context describes the characteristics, features, and dimensions of a phenomenon (Johns, 2006). In a literature review conducted by Porter and McLaughlin (2006), the most common components of organizational context included culture and climate, goals and purpose, processes, people, work conditions, and structure. Burke and Litwin (1992) describe the context of an organization in terms of transformational and transactional dimensions. These dimensions are further broken down into factors and processes to describe an organization. The proposed study will identify, define, and assess organizational context using Burke-Litwin.

Turnover Intent

Turnover intention is described as an employee's propensity to voluntarily leave an organization or change one's job (Schyns et al., 2007). Turnover is described as a multi-phase

process beginning with intention and potentially resulting in a change of job or employer (Martin & Roodt, 2008).

Summary

Chapter 1 of this study introduced the study, including the problem statement, purpose, research questions, overview of the conceptual framework, delimitations, the significance of the study, and key terms.

In summary, change and uncertainty continue to afflict the modern-day business environment in which organizations operate, such as:

- After experiencing economic growth during the pandemic, the tech industry has dealt with "softened consumer" spending as customers react to inflation and supply chain issues (Deloitte, 2023).
- Companies have undergone shifts in workforce supply and demand as a result of an aging workforce and employees reskilling to meet the demands of digital transformation brought on by new technologies such as generative artificial intelligence (Ng & Stanton, 2023).
- Companies have experienced continually changing work models and policies as organizations transition from all remote work environments to a hybrid model and, most recently, policies demanding employees return to the office (SHRM, 2023).

Management consultants and popular press assert that these continued changes are fueling employee disengagement and increased turnover intent described as the "Great Resignation" (Ng & Stanton, 2023). While today's employee experience of work is marked by an increase in employee disengagement and turnover intent (Gallup, 2023), this study researched

the problem by examining the range of employee experiences from engagement to burnout to understand the impact on turnover intent.

Frequently, the experiences of engagement, burnout, and turnover intent are studied using the Job Demands and Resources (JD-R) model (Bakker et al., 2023). The model examines well-being, performance, and outcomes as an imbalance of job demands and resources. Challenging and refining existing theories requires a different view of the problem. This study examined the problem using the relational lens of the EOR, which posits that the quality of this relationship determines where an employee operates on the spectrum of engagement and burnout and impacts turnover intent. Unaddressed and dysfunctional relationships lead to a failure in the employment-organization relationship, negatively impacting employee well-being and performance (Guest, 2017).

Employees and organizations are studied using a relationship perspective based on EOR literature to understand their role in fostering engagement and mitigating burnout. The results of this study have the potential to address engagement and burnout from a new perspective by examining the quality of EOR and the impact on turnover intent.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Chapter 2 presents the theoretical framework and reviews the literature. The theoretical framework describes the theories and constructs measured and analyzed in this study. The literature review examines the evolution of engagement and burnout to understand the gaps and deficiencies creating the need for this study.

Theoretical Framework

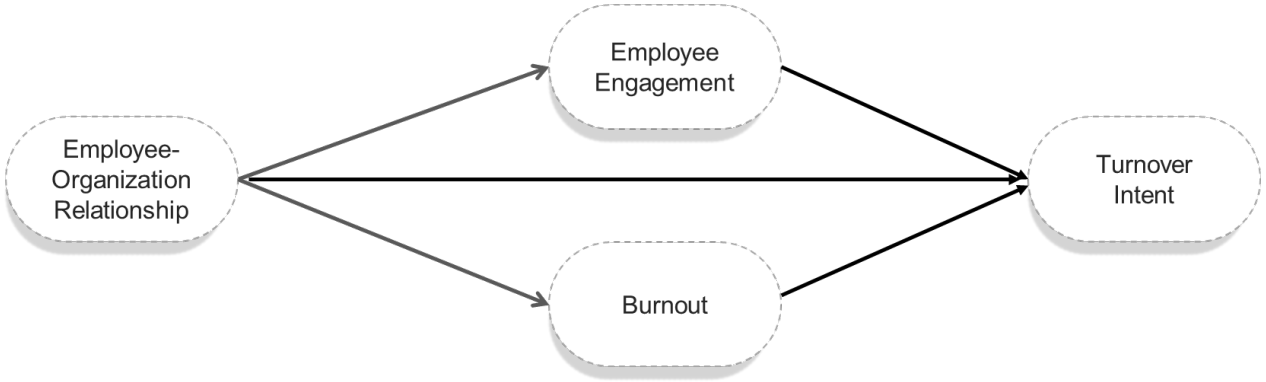
The theoretical framework provided a blueprint that framed the study (Grant & Osanloo, 2014). According to Grant and Osanloo (2014), the theoretical framework shapes the data collection in quantitative studies, whereas the theoretical framework emerges from the data analysis in qualitative studies. Within this study, the theoretical framework formed the basis of the research questions and hypothesis, created boundaries for the study, framed the data collection, and shaped the analysis (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2008).

As described in Chapter 1, conceptually, this study was designed to address the research questions by examining the employee experience of engagement and burnout using the relational lens of the employee-organization relationship (EOR). The theoretical framework (see Figure 2.1) was built upon Guest's (2017) employee analytic framework. In this model, Guest argued that processes that support a positive EOR are directly responsible for improving employee well-being and individual and organizational performance. The employee analytic framework expanded the conceptual framework and provided a theoretical structure that served as the foundation for my research.

The remainder of this section describes the theory and constructs that make up the theoretical framework for this study. With the employee-analytic framework serving as the overall theoretical framework in forming this study, the constructs to be investigated included EOR, engagement, burnout, turnover intent, and organizational context.

Figure 2.1

Theoretical Framework Based on Guest's Employee Analytic Framework



Employee-Organization Relationship

The employee analytic framework developed by Guest (2017) posits that employee well-being is the key to performance, which is measured by the quality of the EOR. EOR is an umbrella term that consists of multiple constructs, such as psychological contracts, social and economic exchange, employment relationships, and perceived organizational support. Together, these constructs are used to measure and examine the relationship between an employee and the organization (Shore et al., 2004). EOR is used for evaluating the quality of the relationship, understanding the employee experience, and measuring the level of participation (Shore et al., 2018).

Based on the employee analytic framework, a positive EOR is based on high levels of trust and commitment and a fulfilled psychological contract (Guest, 2017). Trust and

commitment are characteristics of social and economic exchange, while the psychological contract measures the degree to which employee expectations are met. Thus, EOR is a compound variable that includes the constructs of social and economic exchange and psychological contract. Social and economic exchange focuses on the quality and characteristics of the relationship, whereas psychological contract focuses on the fulfillment of promises (Guest, 2017).

Social exchange theory (SET) serves as the theoretical foundation for these constructs (Blau, 1964). SET examines and explains the exchange relationship between an organization and its employees (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). The premise of SET is that people engage in a reciprocal "process of give and take" (Blau, 1986, p. ix). The nature of the exchange relationship is determined by its characteristics, which Blau (1964) differentiated as social and economic. The exchange relationship results from interactions between people, generating reciprocating obligations (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005).

A key concept of the exchange relationship is an obligation. The *American Heritage Dictionary* defines an obligation as "a social, legal, or moral requirement, such as a duty, contract, or promise, that compels one to follow or avoid a particular course of action" (American Heritage Dictionary, n.d.). Economic exchanges are specific formalized obligations (Blau, 1964). Social exchanges are described as unspecified and evolve over time. Blau (1964) describes the social exchange as "favors that create diffuse future obligations, not precisely specified ones, and the nature of the return cannot be bargained about but must be left to the discretion of the one who makes it" (p. 93).

Economic exchanges are transactional, while social exchanges are characterized by communal relationships (Coyle-Shapiro & Shore, 2007). Social and economic exchanges are

studied based on various dimensions, such as the type of obligations, resources exchanged, and reciprocity (Shore et al., 2006). Within research, SET is used to study various phenomena such as turnover, well-being, and work attitude from an economic and social exchange perspective (Shore et al., 2018).

According to Rousseau (1989), the psychological contract is defined as "an individual's beliefs regarding the terms and conditions of a reciprocal exchange agreement between the focal person and another party" (p. 23). Beliefs refer to the promises and expectations made in the psychological contract. Explicit promises are typically in the form of written and verbal agreements. Implicit promises are expectations formed from previous behavior and observations.

Reciprocal exchange is based on the norm of reciprocity (Coyle-Shapiro et al., 2022). The norm of reciprocity was first described by Gouldner (1960) as "(a) people should help those who have helped them, and (b) people should not injure those who have helped them" (p. 171). Reciprocity is based on the value of the exchange and the intensity of the need at the time.

Psychological contract violation or breach refers to the failure of an organization to meet its obligations. There are outward and inward consequences as employees react to an organization's "broken promises" (Coyle-Shapiro et al., 2022, p. 271). According to Coyle-Shapiro et al. (2022), the outward consequences result in reduced trust and job satisfaction, cynicism, and turnover, whereas the inward consequences manifest in decreased well-being and burnout.

EOR has been used in multiple studies to examine different aspects of an organization. For example, Kang and Sung (2019) examined turnover intent as an outcome of the impact of interactive and procedural justice on the EOR. This study used EOR to assess the relational indictors of the employment relationship and social exchange theory to evaluate mutuality in the

relationship and fulfillment of expectations. Lee et al. (2021) used the EOR to examine the effects of internal communications. EOR was used to assess the quality of the relationships based on trust, commitment, satisfaction, and control mutuality.

In this study, the EOR was the independent variable that measured the quality of the relationship and the fulfillment of organizational promises (Guest, 2017). The construct was a compound variable that described the characteristics of the EOR. The subscales of EOR include social and economic exchange and psychological contract. Together, this construct was used to examine the effect of EOR on engagement, burnout, and turnover intent.

Engagement

Kahn (1990) is recognized in the literature as having first introduced the concept of engagement. He described engagement as "the harnessing of organization members' selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances" (p. 694).

Maslach and Leiter (1997) described engagement as involvement, energy, and efficacy. In their work, they assert that burnout is the "erosion of engagement" (p. 24), positioning the concepts of engagement and burnout as a continuum and measured using a single construct using the Maslach Burnout Inventory.

Schaufeli et al. (2002) also recognized engagement and burnout as opposite ends of a continuum. However, they argued that engagement and burnout were distinct constructs rather than a singular construct. Schaufeli et al. (2002) described engagement as "a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind and proposed that an engaged employee has a strong sense of vigor towards, dedication to, and absorption in work activities" (p. 74). Consequently, they introduced the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) as a means to measure engagement. The UWES

measure consists of three subscales to measure engagement: dedication, vigor, and absorption. Dedication refers to one's level of involvement in one's jobs, vigor characterizes the level of energy and resilience, and absorption refers to one's immersion in one's work and level of focus (Mills et al., 2011).

Since the introduction of engagement, 50 definitions have emerged, creating confusion in academia and practice (Turner, 2020). Bailey et al. (2015) distilled the definitions into the following major themes: personal engagement, job engagement, engagement as a management practice, multidimensional engagement, engagement as a behavior and attitude construct, and performance-related self-engagement. Described as the "engagement definition barrier," Saks (2017, p. 77) asserts that the definition and measure of engagement should incorporate fully investing one's self in their job with a willingness to dedicate one's cognitive, physical, and emotional resources to their work.

For this study, the definition of "engagement" aligns with Kahn (1990) and Saks (2017). Kahn's definition describes the elements of engagement such as engagement reflects the physical, emotional, and cognitive dimensions of an employee while Saks incorporates the application of engagement to one's work. Thus, this study explores how is engagement experienced at work; evaluating at an employee from the physical, emotional, and cognitive perspective.

The UWES is the most frequently used construct to measure engagement, having been used in 86.0% of academic research (Bailey et al., 2015). While UWES is used the most often, other validated scales have emerged, such as the Job Engagement Scale (Rich et al., 2010) and the Employee Engagement Scale (Shuck et al., 2017a).

The UWES, Job Engagement Scale, and Employee Engagement Scale are each composed of three subscales, while the Burnout Assessment Tool (BAT) consists of four subscales. The subscales between the engagement scales and the BAT does not align, making it difficult to compare the experience of engagement and burnout. The instrument developed and validated by May et al. (2004) aimed to measure the availability and engagement consisted of four subscales which could be aligned with the subscales of the BAT.

Burnout

Burnout as a construct evolved out of the research efforts of Freudenberger (1974) and Maslach (1976). It has been conceptualized as a syndrome resulting from occupational stress, resulting in cynicism, reduced professional efficacy, and exhaustion (Maslach, 1993). Historically, burnout research has been conducted using stress theories such as the effort-reward imbalance model (Siegrist, 2017), conservation of resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll et al., 2018), and job demands-resources model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007).

While the Maslach Burnout Instrument (MBI) is the most frequently used instrument to measure burnout, there are concerns about the psychometric properties, number of dimensions, and origins in human services (Tavella & Parker, 2020). The Burnout Assessment Tool (Schaufeli et al., 2020a) was developed to address these concerns. The BAT was developed using a multi-phase approach consisting of (a) qualitative interviews with burnout clinicians and practitioners to update the conceptualization of burnout, (b) a review of current literature to develop items for an instrument, and (c) testing to establish validity and reliability (Schaufeli et al., 2020b).

The Burnout Assessment Tool measures the core symptoms of burnout. The subscales consist of four primary dimensions: exhaustion, mental distance, and emotional and cognitive

impairment. Schaufeli et al. (2020a) described exhaustion as the lack of physical and mental energy. Mental distance describes the state in which one distances themselves psychologically, which includes cynicism, avoidance, and indifference. Emotional impairment refers to the emotional reactions and feelings of overwhelm in which one may experience irritability, frustration, and angry. Cognitive impairment is characterized by difficulties in concentrating, memory problems, and paying attention. The symptoms include the inability to think clearly, make decisions, or learn new things are symptoms of this condition.

As a tool based on the latest burnout research, the BAT serves as a screening instrument and diagnostic tool. Haar (2022) used the BAT to assess burnout risk and calculate the turnover intention between managers and employees. The study used two samples: managers (n = 313) and employees (n = 709). According to the study, managers are more prone to burn out and leave their organizations. Employees experiencing burnout had a 47.0% risk of quitting, while 51.0% of managers experiencing burnout were likely to resign.

The survey included 494 students, 49.6% of whom were female and 50.4% of whom were male. The researchers discovered differences in burnout experience based on students' gender and worker status using multivariate analysis of variance. According to the study, female students are more likely to experience burnout, particularly in the areas of exhaustion, emotional impairment, and cognitive impairment. The BAT was found to be more useable in comparison to the MBI as it covered a wider range of symptoms to examine the experience of burnout. Yanto et al. (2022) used the BAT to examine the relationship between burnout and perceived organizational support for nurses. Using linear regression, the researchers found that higher levels of perceived organizational support reduced burnout.

There are known limitations with the BAT. According to Schaufeli et al. (2020b), during the conceptualization, interviews were conducted with mixed general practitioners and psychologists who worked with burnout patients. The conceptualization did not include interviews with burnout patients. These findings create an opportunity for future research to validate and explore the individual burnout experience.

In this study, burnout is the dependent variable. The BAT is used to diagnose and measure the level of burnout. The instrument ranks the levels of burnout as low, average, high, and very high across the burnout symptoms of exhaustion, mental distance, emotional impairment, and cognitive impairment. This data served as the basis for describing burnout in the tech industry.

Turnover Intent

Turnover intent, defined by Tett and Meyer (1993) as "the conscious and deliberate willingness of an employee to leave an organization" (p. 262), describes the employee's voluntary desire to change jobs or leave an organization. The intention to leave is characterized by an employee's withdrawal or disengagement from work (Chen et al., 2011). Turnover is described as a multi-phase process beginning with intention and potentially resulting in a change of job or employer (Martin & Roodt, 2008).

Turnover has been studied for over 100 years. The concept of turnover was introduced by Diemer (1917) and Fisher (1917) in conjunction with high rates of turnover in manufacturing in the United States. These studies focused on understanding individual characteristics and costs of turnover (Bolt et al., 2022). Thirteen different theories and associated models have evolved since the first academic research on turnover (Hom et al., 2019). Key turnover research, theories, and models considered in this study include:

- March and Simon (1958) are recognized as the first researchers to apply the theory of organizational equilibrium to the concept of turnover.
- Mobley (1977) developed the Turnover Process Model to explain the turnover process.
- Lee and Mitchell (1994) proposed the unfolding model of turnover in which internal and external events described as "shocks" drive turnover intention.

March and Simon (1958) described the concept of organizational equilibrium of inducements and contributions. Inducements such as compensation and benefits are offered by an organization, while contributions are an employee's effort and outcomes. Turnover is influenced when (a) an employee's feels their contributions outweigh the inducements received and (b) the desire and ease of changing jobs (Bowen & Siehl, 1997).

The Turnover Process Model (Mobley, 1977) described the turnover process as beginning with job dissatisfaction and evolving into turnover. Described as a linear ten-step process, Mobley explained how withdraw conditions are triggered by dissatisfaction. In summary, the process includes thinking about quitting, evaluating the cost of quitting and alternatives, the intention to quit or stay, and quitting (Hom et al., 2019).

The Unfolding Model of Turnover (Lee & Mitchell, 1994) describes different paths an employee explores as a result of unexpected and unsettling events. These unforeseen events impact an employee's perspective of their job and organization, prompting a change. Shocks are both work-related and non work-related. Organizational changes, breaches of the psychological contract, and new policies are examples of work-related shocks, whereas personal and family-related crises such as marriage, divorce, and childbirth are examples of non-work-related shocks (Grotto et al., 2017).

The estimated cost to replace an individual employee can range from one-half to two times the employee's annual compensation (McFeely & Wigert, 2019). According to McFeely and Wigert (2019), understanding turnover intention supports an organization in reducing turnover costs, while improving employee experience.

Organizational Context

Context describes the characteristics, features, and dimensions of a phenomenon (Johns, 2006). In a literature review conducted by Porter and McLaughlin (2006), the most common components of organizational context included culture and climate, goals and purpose, processes, people, work conditions, and structure. Burke and Litwin (1992) described the context of an organization in terms of transformational and transactional dimensions. These dimensions are further broken down into factors and processes to describe an organization. For the current study, organizational context was defined and analyzed based on the Burke-Litwin, which is described in more depth below.

The modern-day experience of burnout is impacted by the organizational context. LeBlanc and Schaufeli (2008) describe organizational problems as causal factors to be addressed in burnout interventions. Burke and Litwin (1992) developed a framework for examining the organizational components that influence the relationship between EOR and burnout. The model provides a multidimensional diagnostic framework to assess organizational effectiveness (Martins & Coetzee, 2009).

Burke-Litwin is based on the concepts found in an open system framework (Katz & Kahn, 1978), which consists of the high-level processes of input, throughput, output, and feedback loops. The model consists of 12 organizational variables for analyzing and managing

organizational performance and change. The model maps the cause-and-effect relationships between the variables, providing a framework for understanding the organizational landscape.

The Burke-Litwin has been an effective tool for analysis in research. Martins and Coetzee (2009) used the Burke-Litwin to identify organizational factors impacting effectiveness. The model proved effective for wholistically examining organizational factors, diagnosing organizational performance, and communicating with stakeholders. Egitim (2022) used the Burke-Litwin as the basis of a qualitative study to examine organizational culture changes as a result of internationalizing Japanese universities. The study explored the challenges associated with adapting to the organization as international faculty joined the staff. The Burke-Litwin was used to develop the interview guide and frame the analysis.

The Burke-Litwin considers the impact of the external environment as an input and driver to performance and organizational change (Burke & Litwin, 1992). Market shifts, competition, and customer needs are examples of drivers of significant changes within an organization (Martins & Coetzee, 2009). Since the US shutdown in March 2020, the modern-day business landscape and employee experience have been impacted by the uncertainty and lack of control from COVID-19 (Leiter & Cooper, 2022). The post-COVID era shapes the modern-day landscape in which this study will be conducted.

The post pandemic era has not redefined engagement and burnout but has exposed existing problems in the workplace and exacerbated the problem of burnout (Lievens, 2021). In this study, the Burke-Litwin was used as a diagnostic tool to identify organizational factors influencing the EOR and burnout. Identified strengths and weaknesses impacting burnout were explored in the qualitative phase. The linkages were analyzed to understand cause and effect across the organization.

The theoretical framework identified the theories and models that guided the study. Operational definitions for the constructs established in the theoretical framework are described in Chapter 1. The remainder of this chapter builds on the literature to describe the problem and highlight the literature gaps that need to be filled.

Review of Literature

The review of the literature is organized into four sections: the relationship between engagement and burnout, the modern-day experience of engagement and burnout, the framing of the problem, and the gaps in the literature.

1. Engagement and Burnout: Linked or Distinct Concepts. Engagement and burnout were first described as opposite constructs on a continuum by Maslach and Leiter (1997). Since that time, there has been an ongoing debate as to whether burnout and engagement are linked or distinct concepts (Rożnowski, 2021). This section examines the shared evolution and resultant academic debate around engagement and burnout as a continuum.
2. Contemporary Experience of Work. This section describes the current business landscape and organizational interactions impacting the employee experience of engagement and burnout.
3. Framing the Problem. The organizational narratives that have evolved out of the research have fostered a bias that limits research. This section proposes an alternative frame to align with the modern-day experience and address engagement and burnout from a different perspective.
4. Gaps in the Literature. This section describes the gaps in the literature to be addressed in this study.

The literature search started in January 2021 and has been an ongoing process to examine new literature as it is published. The primary databases searched were ProQuest, EBSCO Host, Scopus, and Google Scholar. Articles were identified using the following search terms: "burnout," "stress," "job demands-resources," "employee-organization relationship," "psychological contract," "well-being," "performance," "engagement," and "turnover."

To date, the researcher has procured and examined over 600 articles, ranging in publication date from 1974 to 2023. Within this study, 278 articles were cited, and over 55.0% of the collected research had been published since 2017. Key researchers and contributors to engagement and burnout research include Christine Maslach (United States), Wilmar Schaufeli (Netherlands), Michael Leiter (Canada), Pines and Shirom (Israel), Arnold Bakker (Netherlands), Evangelia Demerouti (Netherlands), William Kahn (United States, and Brad Shuck (United States). The following section begins the review and synthesis of the literature, beginning with the Evolution of Burnout.

Engagement and Burnout: Linked or Distinction Concepts

Collectively, engagement and burnout research spans over 75 years. In academic research, engagement and burnout were initially described as a continuum by Maslach and Leiter (1997). There has been an ongoing debate as to whether burnout and engagement are linked or distinct concepts with empirical evidence supporting both sides of the debate (Leon et al., 2015). This section examines the shared evolution and resultant academic debate around engagement and burnout as a continuum.

Evolution of Burnout. As outlined in the theoretical framework, research on burnout first appeared in academic journals in the 1970s. The pioneering phase of burnout research evolved out of the United States. Herbert Freudenberger, a psychiatrist working in New York City

(Freudenberger, 1974), and Christine Maslach, a social psychologist conducting research on the West Coast (Maslach, 1976), have been attributed with the first academic research on burnout.

Maslach and Jackson (1981) operationalized burnout, defining it as a syndrome resulting in "emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment" (p. 1). Emotional exhaustion is related to the depletion of resources, depersonalization refers to detachment from people and work, and reduced personal accomplishment stems from a feeling of incompetence. These concepts formed the subscales for the MBI. Instrument items were statements constructed using the data from the pioneering phase. The statements were about attitudes and feelings in the three dimensions (Maslach & Jackson, 1981).

The initial release of the MBI was targeted at measuring burnout in human services (Maslach et al., 2001). In the 1990s, the MBI expanded beyond human services to include other occupations (Schaufeli, 2003). With the introduction of the MBI-General Survey, the construct of burnout was reworded as the following components: exhaustion, reduced professional efficacy, and cynicism (Maslach et al., 2001).

Since the operationalization of burnout, over 88.0% of the research has been conducted using the MBI (Hadžibajramović et al., 2022). This level of usage has given the MBI a monopoly status in burnout research. While the MBI might be considered the "gold standard" instrument, the monopolization in research has resulted in a lack of new ideas, fresh thought, or expansion of concepts (Hadžibajramović et al., 2022; Kristensen et al., 2005; Schaufeli & Taris, 2005).

Emergence of Engagement. As described in the theoretical framework, engagement emerged in the 1990s in academic research. Kahn (1990), using grounded theory, examined the work

conditions in which people engaged for two different populations: counselors at a summer camp and employees of an architecture company.

Kahn's work was framed by the following definitions: engagement as the "harnessing" of oneself to one's work role and disengagement as an "uncoupling" from work in which one withdraws oneself (p. 694). The outcomes of Kahn's research included a theoretical framework that identified three psychological conditions that influence engagement: meaningfulness, safety, and availability. Kahn's research been described as seminal in academic literature (Boccoli et al., 2022).

Maslach and Leiter (1997) described engagement as involvement, energy, and efficacy, in which burnout is the "erosion of engagement" (p. 24). Their work positions the dimensions of engagement as opposites to the three dimensions of the Maslach Burnout Inventory. In this scenario, engagement and burnout are studied as a continuum and measured using a single construct.

Schaufeli et al. (2002) agreed that the concepts of engagement and burnout as a continuum but viewed engagement and burnout as distinct constructs. The Utrecht Group, led by Schaufeli, viewed engagement as "a more persistent and pervasive affective–cognitive state" that could be measured using quantitative methods (Schaufeli et al., 2002, p. 74). Their work was influenced by the emergence of positive psychology, in which research was shifting from a negative bias to examining phenomena from a positive perspective (Schaufeli et al., 2009). As such, Schaufeli et al. (2002) defined engagement and developed the three dimensions of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES), in which engagement was the measure of vigor, dedication, and absorption.

A review of the literature conducted in January 2022 found 6,869 journal articles on Scopus and 7,323 articles on the Web of Science on engagement (Boccoli et al., 2022). Since the introduction and validation of the UWES, it has been used in 86.0% of the published studies (Bailey et al., 2015). While the UWES is the popular measure in academic research, there is no consensus on the definition and operationalization of engagement (Saks & Gruman, 2014; Shuck et al., 2017b), and researchers are encouraged to identify the measure that fits based on the strength of the scale (Byrne et al., 2016).

Linked or Distinct. Since Maslach and Leiter (1997) first described burnout and engagement as a continuum, there has been an ongoing academic debate as to whether engagement and burnout are related or distinct concepts.

Kahn's (1990) qualitative study, which led to the conceptualization of engagement, was framed by the work of Hackman and Oldham (1980) and Alderfer (1987). Hackman and Oldham asserted that behaviors and attitudes drive the experience of work, while Alderfer posited that organizational, group, and individual factors also influence the experience of work. In comparison, the concept of burnout emerged from the grassroots work of Freudenberger (1974) and Maslach (1976), who distilled and described the experience of burnout using the lens of clinical and social psychology (Maslach, 1998, p. 398; Schaufeli et al., 2009).

Engagement became linked to burnout in the operationalization of the concept. Schaufeli et al. (2002) operationalized engagement in response to the shift in burnout research from a negative bias to a focus on well-being. Bakker et al. (2008) contended that "research on burnout has stimulated most contemporary research on work engagement" (p. 188). In the operationalization of engagement, Schaufeli et al. (2002) believed a single construct was insufficient to measure engagement as the "opposite profile" of burnout (p. 75).

While engagement and burnout have been found to be negatively correlated at the construct level (Crawford et al., 2010), the testing of the relationship between engagement and burnout at the dimensional level has been mixed. A meta-analytic study conducted by Cole et al. (2012) found engagement and burnout to overlap, in contrast to a study of five samples conducted by Byrne et al. (2016) that found the constructs of engagement and burnout not to be opposites.

The ongoing debate as to whether burnout and engagement are related or distinct concepts has evolved into a narrow research focus based on examining the MBI and UWES measurements (Rożnowski, 2021). This myopic focus has hampered the expansion of theory and measurement (Saks & Gruman, 2014). In the range of experiences between engagement and burnout, there is a gap in the literature in understanding the process as people shift between engagement and burnout (Leiter & Frame, 2014).

Contemporary Experience of Work

The pandemic has reshaped economies and societies, changing the way in which organizations function and people work (Vyas, 2022). In a global research report produced by INPUT and ARUP (2020), the post-pandemic era has been described as a "recalibration of work and life." Fundamental changes have occurred to the way people work, including relationships with colleagues and leadership, location of work, and work-life balance (Vyas, 2022).

The business landscape and organizational environment continue to be affected by changes in the "social-political-economic environment," fostering a continued state of change and uncertainty. According to Peters et al. (2022), the business landscape is being shaped by the following:

- Globalization events such as supply chain issues and shifting customer demands.

- Technology advancements that automate jobs and require the reskilling of employees.
- Shifting organizational policies and work models in response to changes in job and customer demands.

Within the evolving business landscape, the tech industry has been impacted by an economic downturn following a rapid expansion during the pandemic, supply chain challenges, and large-scale layoffs (Deloitte, 2023).

As organizations and employees look to create a "new normal" (Vyas, 2022), the "traditional orthodoxies" of work, such as "work has to be done in the office" and "employee engagement will suffer," are being challenged (Braier et al., 2021, p. 2). In pursuit of a new normal, organizations and employees are contending with continually shifting paradigms. The following domains are fueling high levels of change and uncertainty:

- Where people work: The shifting between remote work to return to work has created conflict between organizations and their workforce.
- Technostress: Increased use of and adaption to technology is leading to technostress.
- Work-life balance: The increasing integration of work and life has led to changes in the balance and boundaries between these two domains.

Where People Work. Prior to the pandemic, some organizations had experimented with flexible work arrangements such as remote and hybrid work models (Vyas, 2022). In response to the pandemic and global lockdowns, organizations shifted from experimentation to implementation of remote work (Chan et al., 2022). As work and family became more intertwined, employees reflected on the role of work in their lives, assessing meaning, purpose, and value alignment. As a result, employee expectations regarding when and where work should be completed have shifted after several years of working remotely (Gibson et al., 2023). According to a global

survey of 1,341 office-based employees, 63.0% prefer to continue working remotely, while a smaller percentage (9.0%) indicated a desire to return to a traditional office setting (INPUT & ARUP, 2020).

As the perceived threat of the pandemic has shifted, organizations are now requiring employees to return to the office, citing that in-person fosters culture and collaboration (Mayer, 2023). Mandates requiring employees to return to the office are being met with resistance. Employees are concerned about the loss of flexibility and autonomy, the effect on productivity, and the need to travel to an office to conduct business that could be done remotely (Robinson, 2023).

The shifting models of where people work have created a conflict between organizations and their workforce. Organizations assert that working in person is better for business as it supports collaboration and builds culture while employees have expressed a preference to work remote as they feel more productive (Gibson et al., 2023). Management consulting organizations such as Deloitte propose a model based on an "adaptive workplace" in which employees are "empowered to work from where they are most productive" (Braier et al., 2021, p. 2). Some studies have found the type of workspace, such as flexible work arrangements, support engagement, and well-being, but overall research examining this relationship between workplace and engagement is limited (Surma et al., 2021).

Technostress. The contemporary experience of work is impacted by technostress. Technostress is a multifaceted concept as it relates to "stress caused by the use of information and computer technology (ICT)" (Tarafdar et al., 2007, p. 1) and factors associated with technology such as information overload, continued learning curve, and constant connectivity (Molino et al., 2020). As employees transitioned to remote work, organizations became reliant on technology to

conduct business, and expectations of when and how to work changed significantly (Bondanini et al., 2020). ICTs such as cell phones, video conferencing, email, and instant messaging were critical to conducting business (Bondanini et al., 2020).

Tarafdar et al. (2011) described technostress as the dark side of ICTs and has identified the following "techno" conditions impacting employees and fostering technostress:

- Techno-invasion is the expectation to always be connected.
- Techno-overload is caused by multiple streams of information impacting the volume and pace of work.
- Techno-complexity is the constant learning curve to keep up with technology.
- Techno-uncertainty is related to the pace of change in technology.

Bondanini et al. (2020) conducted a scientific meta-analysis of technostress to synthesize the existing body of knowledge. A total of 147 papers published between the years 1975 and 2019 were identified using the Web of Science. Research topics on technostress have been typically focused on technology use in business. Technostress has been described as an affliction related to adaption as employees struggle to cope with technology. The analysis found technostress contributed to role overload, impact job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and lead to burnout.

In today's work environment, the risk of technostress is high. Employees are expected to be connected and responsive (Chan et al., 2022). There has been a significant increase in the volume of communication, such as emails, texts, and back-to-back video meetings (Wang et al., 2020). In some organizations, the activity and performance of remote workers are monitored with surveillance software (Risi & Pronzato, 2021). Employees are in a continuous process of

learning new systems and troubleshooting their own technical problems (Molino et al., 2020). Together, these techno conditions impact the employee experience of engagement and burnout.

Work-Life Balance. The abrupt shift to remote work as a result of the pandemic resulted in an immediate melding of work and life (Becker et al., 2022). Overnight, households were sharing living and working spaces, and in many instances, there was not adequate space to meet work and family commitments (Shirmohammadi et al., 2022). While some employees contended with elevated work-family conflict, others dealt with isolation and loneliness from a lack of social interaction (Grant et al., 2019; Long et al., 2021). As online platforms shaped work and social relationships, privacy for employees and employers became a concern (Risi & Pronzato, 2021).

As the world moves beyond the pandemic, organizations and employees are left with residual effects, such as the impact of on work-life balance (Grant et al., 2019). The employee experience of work-life balance continues to be influenced by the culture of always on and permeable boundaries.

Culture of Always On. In Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2023a), "always on" is defined as always active and operating. In this context, always on refers to an expectation of an employee's availability in which an employee is available, connected, and responsive (Barber et al., 2023). The flexibility to vary one's work schedule and distribute hours throughout the day has resulted in employees "always being on" (Kossek, 2016). Parents, especially mothers, balance work and family by dispersing work throughout the day and into the evenings (Shirmohammadi et al., 2022).

The use of ICTs, such as smartphones, has made it easy to be accessible, thereby fostering a culture of *always on* and always connected (Molino et al., 2020). Employees would feel pressured to be available and responsive 24 hours (Wang et al., 2020). Pressure to be

available and productive, coupled with ease of access, has created a situation where work has become the primary focus (Risi & Pronzato, 2021).

Molino et al. (2020) described this constant availability and connection to work as a "spillover" into family life. The *always on* culture of being available, connected, and responsive has been a source of erosion for employees' work-life balance (Kossek, 2016).

Permeable Boundaries. The boundaries separating work and personal life have grown increasingly permeable, resulting in a state of "boundarylessness" where activities, responsibilities, and interactions between work and non-work domains have become indistinct and intertwined (Kossek, 2016). As employees navigate blurred boundaries, they contend with different types of interruptions (LeRoy et al., 2021) and difficulty "switching off" work (Cropley & Millward, 2009).

According to LeRoy et al. (2020), interruptions are events that cause an individual to shift their time and attention. Interruptions are not momentary disturbances but have a negative impact on performance and quality of work when resuming the interrupted task. Interruptions are categorized as intrusions, distractions, breaks, multitasking, and surprises. While transitioning to remote work removed office intrusions, such as an urgent demand from colleagues, it introduced non-work intrusions, such as family members walking into a meeting or the dog vomiting on the carpet (LeRoy et al., 2021).

LeRoy et al. (2021) conducted a study of 249 remote employees during the pandemic. The research revealed several key findings. Firstly, both work-related and non-work-related interruptions experienced a significant increase during the pandemic. Secondly, work-related intrusions were found to contribute to increased work-family conflict and negatively impact job performance. Thirdly, a dedicated office space was found to mitigate the frequency of

interruptions. Lastly, women faced a greater number of work-related intrusions, which led to an increase in multitasking behaviors.

As employees work remotely and contend with blurred boundaries, there has been a reported increase in the inability to switch off from work (Felstead & Henseke, 2017). Switching off is the process of mentally detaching from work (Weigelt et al., 2019). The inability to switch off is described as work-related rumination in which employees continue to think about unfinished work (Cropley & Millward, 2009). Employees who struggle to mentally "switch-off" and transition fully from work to family are described as high ruminators. High levels of rumination have been linked to fatigue, stress, and reduced performance (Weigelt et al., 2019). Extended work hours (Schlachter et al., 2017), increased workload (Gifford, 2022), and the demands of balancing work and home life have contributed to high rumination (Cropley & Millward, 2009).

In the contemporary work environment, employees continue to be affected by change and uncertainty as organizations transition to a post-pandemic normal. While there is an abundance of information to support change, employee uncertainty and stress result from the rapid rate of change (Gagné et al., 2021). Practices implemented during the pandemic are likely to affect employees and organizations for years to come (Gifford, 2022). Beyond the pandemic, the experience of work is continuing to be influenced by the effects of where people work, technostress, and balancing of work and life (Grant et al., 2019).

Framing the Problem

The study employed the processes of framing and reframing from Design Thinking to expand the definition of the problem and support the development of solutions. As an approach to problem-solving, the process of frame and reframe is used to understand and describe the

problem (Beckman, 2020). Frames describe the current narrative and point of view associated with the problem. Reframing offers a different perspective or lens by which to examine the problem. Together, framing and reframing were used to identify constraints, challenge assumptions and norms, and describe the problem (Dorst, 2015; Micheli et al., 2018).

Current Frames. The current frames for the experience of engagement and burnout describe how the problem is approached based on business practice and academic literature. How an organization frames engagement and burnout will inform its strategies for addressing the problem, while how academia frames the problem determines the research approach.

Within business practice, engagement is framed as a tool for increased performance and productivity (Caesens et al., 2014). Empirical research supports this focus as it has shown that engagement is linked to a wide range of motivational and positive job outcomes, such as increased performance, organizational commitment, and reduced turnover (Bakker et al., 2023; Halbesleben, 2010). Engagement surveys are the most frequently used tool to examine the drivers of employee engagement (Hanscome & Poitevin, 2022). Organizations use a variety of surveys to examine job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Saks, 2017).

Burnout has a negative connotation within the organizational setting (Schaufeli et al., 2020a, p. 102) and carries a stigma that prevents employees from seeking support (May et al., 2020). Employees who voice concerns about workload and intensity of tasks are labeled as "whiny" (Maslach, 2017, p. 146). The result has been an assumption that burnout is an individual's problem and is viewed as a personal failing (Leiter, 2022). Sterkens et al. (2022) found that employees who returned to work after burnout faced discrimination in promotions. Based on the study, the organization perceived returning employees as lacking in leadership abilities the employee's ability to be a role model.

Since the operationalization of engagement and burnout, a large body of knowledge has been generated (Boccoli et al., 2022; Mauthe-Kaddoura, 2019). Research on engagement and burnout is frequently studied using the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model (Leiter & Frame, 2014). Using this model, engagement is framed as a result of high job resources and low job demands, while burnout is framed as a result of high job demands and low job resources (Bakker et al., 2023).

In the literature, the JD-R is the most widely cited describing the framework as a "holistic model" for examining antecedents and outcomes (Boccoli et al., 2022, p. 80; Maslach & Leiter, 2016b). A literature review examining studies using the JD-R model to study burnout and engagement found that the primary instruments were the MBI to measure burnout and the UWES to measure engagement and using quantitative methods (Galanakis & Tsitouri, 2022)

The current frames of engagement and burnout can be summarized as:

- Engagement is a high priority of organizations as they look to improve performance using frequent surveys to manage and monitor.
- Burnout is a stigmatized topic preventing employees from seeking support. As burnout has a negative connotation, organizations frequently use the label "well-being" (Schaufeli et al., 2020a, p. 102).
- A large body of literature has been generated on the topics of engagement and burnout.
- Research on engagement and burnout has been primarily quantitative using the MBI and UWES.

Reframing the problem of engagement and burnout encourages the development of solutions by applying a different perspective to a problem (Beckman, 2020).

Reframe. Reframing is the process of examining a problem from a different perspective. Historically, engagement and burnout have been approached from the perspective of job demands and job resources. In this study, engagement and burnout were examined from the perspective of the EOR. Changing the context of the problem by conceptualizing engagement and burnout as a relationship problem, as opposed to an individual problem or a resource problem, challenges existing norms and assumptions. This approach encourages new research by applying a different perspective to a problem (Beckman, 2020).

From the relational perspective, Boccoli et al. (2022) asserted that engagement be examined from the perspective of a social construct, while Leiter (2022) described burnout as a breakdown in an individual's relationship with their work. When using a relational lens, the source of the problem is neither the person nor the job. Instead, the problem is between the individual and the job. Engagement and burnout are viewed as a "relationship problem" to be addressed by both parties (Leiter & Wintle, 2021, p. 2).

Engagement and burnout as a relationship problem can be measured by the quality of the EOR. Within the literature, Schaufeli and Buunk (2003) described burnout as a lack of reciprocity and a breakdown in social relationships at the interpersonal and organizational levels. Leiter (2021) described work as a network of relationships consisting of informal and formal contracts in which burnout is a breakdown in the relationship to work. Boccoli et al. (2022) describe social relations and interactions as influencing the level of engagement.

Guest (2017) asserts that the EOR provides a framework for evaluating the quality of the relationship between employees and the organization. In this study, the EOR included analyzing trust, commitment, social, and economic exchange relationship.

Social and Economic Exchange Relationships. The quality of the exchange relationship is measured by the type of exchange either social or economic (Coyle-Shapiro et al., 2016). Social exchanges are socio-emotional and communal, with a concern for the other party and strong interpersonal attachments (Hon & Grunig, 1999; Mitchell et al., 2012). Economic exchanges are tangible, transactional, and typically formal, such as pay and benefits in exchange for work (Mitchell et al., 2012).

The norm of reciprocity shapes and guides the exchange relationship. Between two parties, reciprocity measures the equality and fulfillment of the exchange (van der Ross et al., 2022). It is based on the type of exchange, the value of the exchange, and the intensity of the need at the time (Gouldner, 1960). Within an exchange relationship, the exchange is typically of similar types of resources to create balance in the relationship (Dabos & Rousseau, 2004).

Trust. Trust as a measure of quality is defined as a level of confidence in the other party (Hon & Grunig, 1999). A high degree of trust is evidence of a high-quality social exchange relationship, which leads to a willingness to make personal investments (Andersen et al., 2020). Rose et al. (2019) examined trust and reciprocity in organizational relationships. The study was conducted with clinical psychology trainees (N = 214). During clinical training, trainees manage relationships with peers, clinical staff, supervisors, and clients. Reciprocity and trust contributed to positive peer and organizational relationships, reducing burnout, while client relationships contributed to emotional exhaustion, leading to burnout.

Commitment. Commitment is described as the level to which each party is willing to invest resources in the relationship (Hon & Grunig, 1999). Veld and Van De Voorde (2013) conducted a study of 271 nurses to examine the impact of the different exchange relationships on affective commitment and job strain. The study found that a climate of well-being in which the nurses felt

valued and cared for shaped the exchange relationship. The feeling of wellbeing contributed to high-quality social exchanges, increasing affective commitment and reducing job strain. In a climate where nurses evaluated their relationship with the organization as economic, they experienced less commitment to the organization.

In summary, reframing the problem of engagement and burnout encourages the development of solutions by applying a different perspective to a problem (Beckman, 2020). Examining the problem using the relational lens of the EOR incorporates social and economic exchange, trust, and commitment as measures of the quality of the relationship. High-quality EORs are evidenced by social exchanges and high levels of trust. In contrast, low-quality EORs are evidenced by economic exchange and low levels of trust and commitment (Shore et al., 2018). This study used the works of Schaufeli and Buunk (2003) and Boccoli et al. (2022) along with the employee analytic framework (Guest, 2017) to examine the type of relationship, fulfillment or breach of the psychological contract, and the impact contemporary work experience to understand the quality of the EOR.

Gaps in the Literature

The review of the literature identified gaps and deficiencies that support the need for this study including the following:

- limited research of the modern-day experience,
- lack of research in the tech industry, and
- lack of research using a relational lens.

Limited Research of the Modern-Day Experience. First, there is limited research that explores the modern-day experience of engagement burnout using a mixed-methods approach. In research, context is described as a rich examination and understanding of the 5 W's: who, what,

when, where, and why to explore a phenomenon (Johns, 2006). The modern-day experience establishes the distal context for this study, describing the wider organizational environment in which burnout occurs (Veldhoven & Peccei, 2015).

As defined in Chapter 1, modern-day refers to occurring in the present time. The modern-day context is characterized by the post-pandemic environment in which organizations operate. The definition and operationalization of burnout evolved out of the social and cultural factors of the 1970s while the operationalization of engagement evolved out of the positive psychology movement in 2000 (Schaufeli et al., 2009).

In contrast, the modern-day context is shaped by abrupt organizational changes (Vyas, 2022), a shift to hybrid work models (Best, 2021), and the psychological impact of COVID-19 (Bueno-Guerra, 2022). Understanding the modern-day context creates a multi-dimensional framework to identify and examine different relationships impacting burnout (Kelly & Hearld, 2020).

This study addressed the need for research using a mixed methods approach to examine engagement and burnout through a modern-day lens. Organizational culture and supporting systems such as human resources have been described as stuck in a "time warp" (Emerald Publishing, n.d.). A modern-day lens addresses that deficiency.

Lack of Research in the Tech Industry. Second, there is a lack of research in the tech industry. While engagement research crosses all industries and professions (Turner, 2020), there are limited engagement studies conducted in the tech industry (Harter et al., 2003). There is also a lack of academic burnout research in the tech industry, as burnout research is heavily concentrated in the human services industries (Mauthe-Kaddoura, 2019).

The pressure to innovate within the tech industry creates a fast-paced culture of working long hours and high stress (Sull et al., 2022). The tech industry operates in continuous cycles of innovating and adapting, creating an environment for burnout (Zaza et al., 2022). As described in Chapter 1, the tech industry employs approximately 3 million people (CompTIA, 2023). This study expanded engagement and burnout research by examining the impact and unique context within the tech industry.

Lack of Research Using a Relational Lens. Last, there is a gap in the literature around the approach to researching engagement and burnout. The current approach to research is performance-centered, using JD-R to examine imbalances between demands and resources and mismatches between a person and their job (Boccoli et al., 2022; Maslach & Leiter, 2016b). This approach is resource-driven based on job resources and demands.

Schaufeli (2003) described burnout as a failed relationship that results from an imbalance in relationships based on reciprocity and social exchange theory. Additionally, Boccoli et al. (2022) found that social exchange, interaction, and acknowledgment all influence engagement. As an exchange relationship of "give and take," when employees give of time and effort, and the rewards do not match their investment, burnout is an indicator of the imbalance (Desart & De Witte, 2019). Over time, this imbalance in the "give and take" relationships becomes a drain of energy, resulting in burnout.

Social exchange theory is a dimension of the EOR. Guest (2017) described the EOR as a multi-dimensional construct that includes social exchange, mutuality, and the psychological contract. Guest's description of the EOR widens the lens for researching the relational impact on engagement and burnout.

In summary, this study began to address the need for an examination of engagement and burnout using a modern-day lens to explore the under-researched area of the tech industry. Reframing the problem by conceptualizing engagement and burnout as a relationship problem, as opposed to an individual problem or a resource problem, challenges existing norms and assumptions. A conceptual framework based on the EOR widens the research lens beyond the traditional exploration of performance and well-being due to an imbalance in job demands and resources.

Summary

In summary, Chapter 2 presented the theoretical framework and synthesized the literature to identify gaps and deficiencies that limit research. The literature review covered three areas in the literature impacting research and praxis in understanding the employee experience of engagement and burnout: whether engagement and burnout are linked or distinct constructs, the contemporary experience of work, and framing of the problem.

The review of the literature focused on three areas impacting the research and business practice in understanding the employee experience of engagement and burnout. These areas are (a) whether engagement and burnout are linked or distinct conceptions, (b) the contemporary experience of work, and (c) framing the problem.

The debate around engagement and burnout being linked or distinct concepts. This section examined the ongoing academic debate as to whether burnout and engagement are linked or distinct constructs. There are empirical studies that support both sides of the debate. With the MBI being the primary measure for burnout and UWES the most frequently used measure for engagement, the debate has evolved into a comparison of constructs (Rożnowski, 2021). This narrow focus has hampered the expansion of theory.

The contemporary experience of work examined the post-pandemic business landscape. The pandemic has significantly impacted economies and societies, transforming the way organizations function and people work (Vyas, 2022). The post-pandemic era has been described as a "recalibration of work and life," affecting fundamental aspects such as relationships, leadership, work location, and work-life balance. Employees are still affected by change and uncertainty as organizations transition to a post-pandemic normal (Gagné et al., 2021). Implemented practices during the pandemic are likely to impact employees and organizations for years to come (Gifford, 2022). Beyond the pandemic, work experiences are influenced by work location, technostress, and work-life balance.

The study used Design Thinking's framing and reframing processes to expand the problem's definition and support the development of solutions. Framing describes the current narrative, while reframing offers a different perspective. This approach helps identify constraints, challenge assumptions, and describe the problem. The relational lens of the Employee Organization Relationship (EOR) was used to examine engagement and burnout. High-quality EORs are evidenced by social exchanges and fulfilled psychological contracts while low-quality EORs are evidenced by economic exchange and psychological contract breaches.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

Chapter 3 details the research methodology and design for this study. This chapter includes the research design, research questions, data collection, data analysis, and ethical considerations. For review, the problem to be addressed in this study is the role of the EOR in fostering engagement and mitigating the potential for burnout; and to what degree it impacts the turnover intent. The purpose of this mixed methods study was to explore and understand the EOR as it relates to engagement and burnout in order to (a) describe the contemporary experience of engagement and burnout, (b) identify the factors that impact the EOR, (c) define levers that foster engagement and mitigate burnout, and (d) examine turnover intent as a metric that impacts organizational performance. The study was conducted using a convergent mixed methods design.

Research Questions

The primary question that guided this research was:

RQ1: How does the EOR impact and influence engagement and burnout?

The sub-questions for this study included the following:

RQ2: What is the employee experience of engagement and burnout?

RQ3: What is the current experience of the EOR?

RQ4: What can be learned from synthesizing the data regarding turnover intent?

The phases of this study are designed to address specific research questions. See Table 3.1 for the alignment of the research questions and hypotheses to the study phases.

Table 3.1

Research Questions and hypotheses by Phase

Phase	Research Question	Hypothesis
Phase 1: Quantitative Research	RQ1: How does the EOR impact and influence engagement and burnout?	H1: EOR has a positive relationship to engagement. H2: EOR has a negative relationship to burnout. H3: EOR has a negative relationship to turnover intent. H4: Engagement has a negative relationship to turnover intent. H5: Burnout has a positive relationship to turnover intent. H6: EOR, burnout, and engagement together predict employee turnover.
Phase 2: Qualitative Research	RQ2: What is the employee experience of engagement and burnout? RQ3: What is the current experience of the EOR?	
Phase 3: Synthesis	RQ4: What can be learned from the synthesizing the data regarding turnover intent?	

Research Design

A single research paradigm, such as qualitative or quantitative, is insufficient to lay the groundwork for addressing the multifaceted problem of engagement and burnout. A mixed

methods study is characterized as mixing quantitative and qualitative research methodologies, concepts, techniques, and methods in the same research study (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). This strategy "mixes" quantitative and qualitative methodologies to provide a depth and breadth of information for analysis (Halcomb & Hickman, 2015). Data is collected independently in the quantitative and qualitative phases of a convergent design and then integrated for total analysis (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

Rationale

A convergent mixed methods approach provides the data in the form of statistics and stories to better describe and understand the employee experience of engagement and burnout (Molina-Azorin, 2016). Incorporating quantitative and qualitative methods expands the research inquiry to a wider range of stakeholders (Bazeley, 2015). The mixing of methods such as statistical analysis to assess the magnitude of a problem and interviewing to understand the problem increases the validity and supports knowledge creation (McKim, 2016). A convergent mixed methods study creates a foundation for planning and decision-making through stronger findings and conclusions (Hurmerinta-Peltomäki & Nummela, 2006).

While mixed methods studies incorporate the strengths of quantitative and qualitative methods, there are challenges that have been taken into account for this design. Key challenges associated with a convergent mixed methods design are the scope of the project and the skills of the researcher (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

Mixing quantitative and qualitative methodologies increases the scope and complexity of the project. This challenge was addressed by using a matrix to clarify and align the study goals, research questions, methods, and variables (Maxwell, 2013). While mixed methods research is one of the three research paradigms, this approach necessitates knowledge and skills in both

quantitative and qualitative procedures (Johnson & Christensen, 2020). This difficulty was handled by bringing in committee team members with experience in all three paradigms to participate in the study.

Research Design Dimensions

According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2018), the primary dimensions of a mixed methods design include strands, the timing and sequence of the strands, the priority of the methods, and the integration approach. In mixed methods, a strand is a distinct and encapsulated phase of the study, which may include research questions to be addressed, data collection and analysis, and interpretation of results (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). The concept of a strand is likened to a phase, which is the term used in this study.

This design's convergent mixed approach consists of three distinct phases: a quantitative phase executed concurrently with a qualitative phase, followed by a synthesis to examine the blended data (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). In this design, data was collected in the quantitative phase to answer the research questions through statistical methods, while the qualitative phase explored the individual experience of engagement and burnout through one-on-one interviews. Maxwell (2013) advised pilot-testing the interview guide and the process to be utilized in conducting interviews in qualitative research. The pilot test results focused on lessons learned and refinement rather than simply documenting the actions accomplished. In the synthesis phase, the data from various phases was converged and analyzed (Schoonenboom & Johnson, 2017).

The quantitative and qualitative phases were based on concurrent timing in which the phases were conducted in parallel (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). A parallel design created a framework to fully understand the problem by enabling synergy between the quantitative and

qualitative phases (Stentz et al., 2012). Halcomb and Hickman (2015) described the inability of one phase to inform the subsequent phases as a risk of the parallel design. An iterative approach of collecting and analyzing the data between the phases was used to mitigate this risk (Venkatesh et al., 2013).

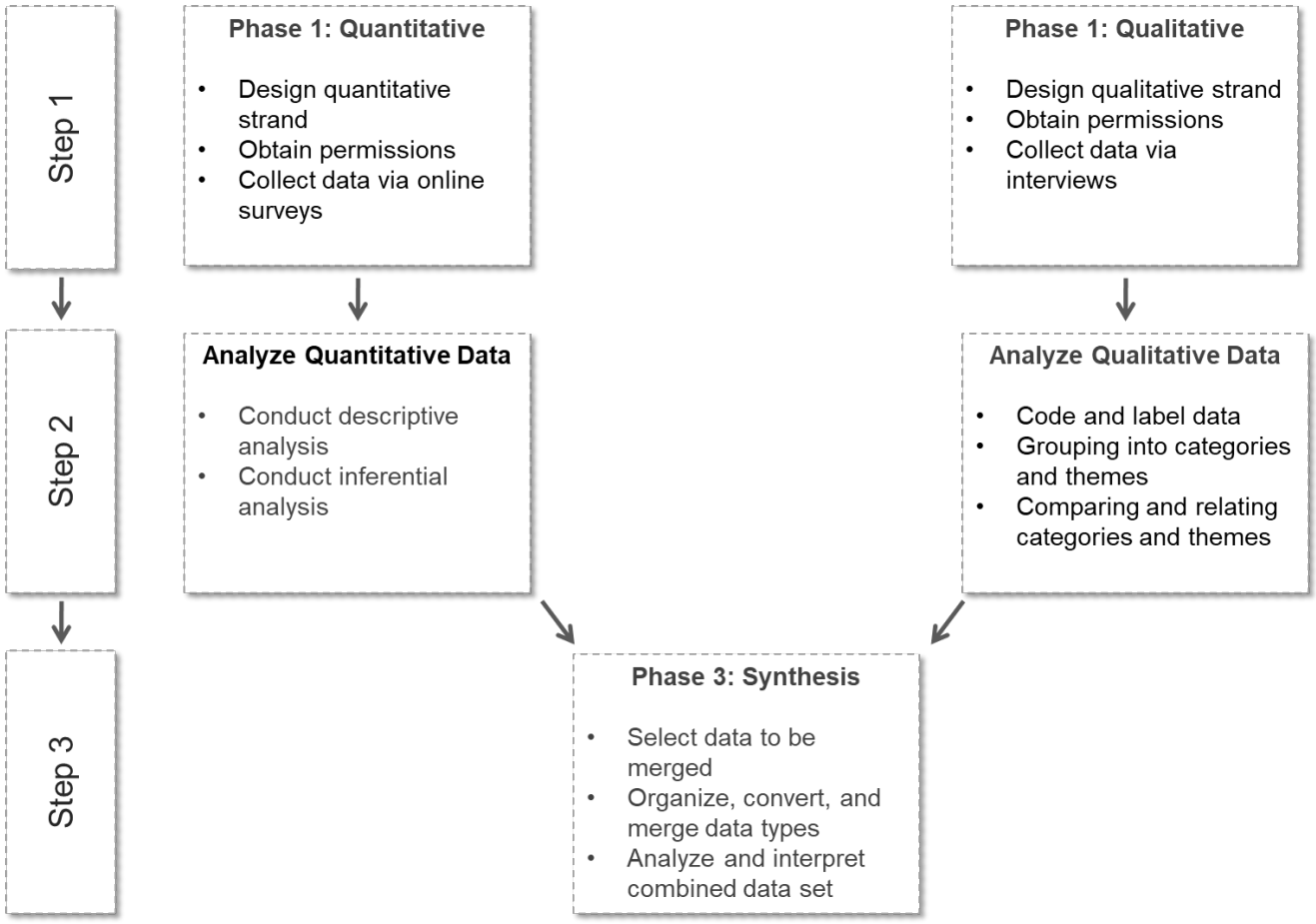
The data collected in the quantitative and qualitative phases had equal weight and priority. Throughout the data collection, each phase informed the other in the process of abduction, in which the research moves between induction and deduction to understand relationships, examine variables, and test theories (Morse & Niehaus, 2009). As a result, each phase was independent, with different but complementary data to address the research questions (Halcomb & Hickman, 2015). This approach benefited the study as qualitative results provided an illustrative description of the statistical results while the statistical results validated the qualitative findings (Creswell, 2014).

During synthesis, the data from each phase was compared and integrated to address the research question. This process included examining the quantitative and qualitative data sets to determine data fit, complementarity, and expansion of findings (Fetters & Molina-Azorin, 2017). The synthesis integrated the findings and insights from the quantitative and qualitative phases (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2015).

Figure 3.1 provides a high-level flow chart of the study. This chart includes the phases, study steps, sequencing, and activities (Onwuegbuzie & Dickinson, 2015). Based on the notation system described by Morse and Niehaus (2009), the study is notated as QUAN + QUAL. QUAN indicates the quantitative phase, and QUAL represents the qualitative phase. The plus sign "+" designates that the phases are conducted in parallel, with each phase having equal weight and priority.

Figure 3.1

Flowchart of Convergent Mixed Methods Design



The remainder of this section describes the research design for each section, including the goals, procedures, and outcomes of the phase. Figure 3.2 provides a procedural diagram of the study.

Phase 1: Quantitative Method

The goal of the quantitative phase was to improve the understanding of engagement and burnout in the tech industry by testing hypotheses. The quantitative phase was based on a

correlational research design that statistically examines the relationship between variables (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). The major variables were organized, measured, and described using descriptive statistics (McCombes, 2022). Inferential statistics were used to identify and quantify the relationships between variables (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). For the quantitative phase, an online cross-sectional survey was used to collect the data. The quantitative phase's outcomes include numerical survey data, charts, and graphs related to the statistical findings.

Phase 2: Qualitative Method

The goals of the qualitative phase were to pilot the interview guide and conduct interviews to understand the employee experience of engagement and burnout. The qualitative research design was based on phenomenology. Phenomenology is used to understand the essence of the participant's experience. While each participant's perspective is unique, the shared qualities of the experience describe the context and characteristics of the overall experience (Johnson & Christensen, 2020). Individual interviews were conducted with a subset of the participants from the quantitative phase. The outcomes of the qualitative phase include transcribed data, codes and themes, structural and textural descriptions, and a causal prediction model (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Miles et al., 2019).

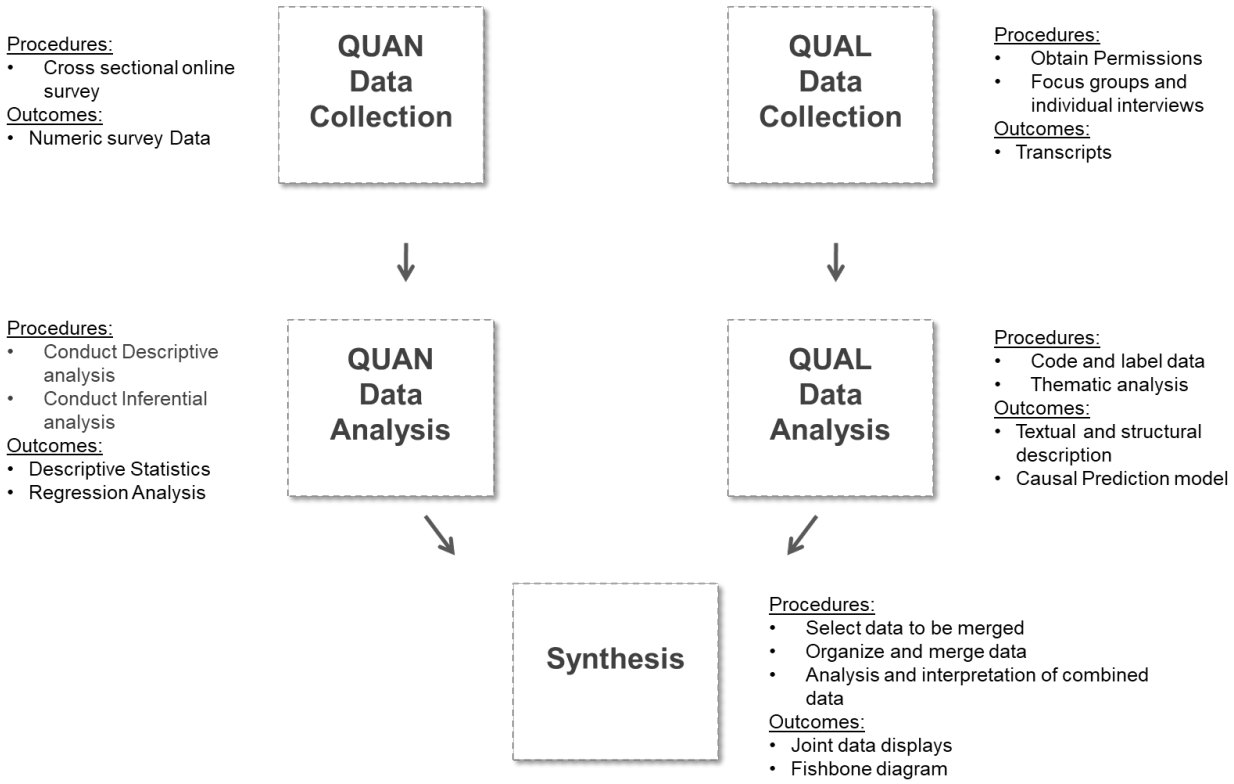
Phase 3: Synthesis

The goal of the synthesis phase was to combine and integrate the results of the quantitative and qualitative phases to address the research question. Synthesis is an interactive process of mixing the data sets for analysis (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Johnson & Christensen, 2020). Based on the data analysis of the previous phases, synthesis included (a) the selection of data to be merged, (b) organizing, converting, and merging data types as needed, and (c) analysis and interpretation of the combined data set (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Joint

displays of quantitative and qualitative data provided a visual display of the synthesis process (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). These integrated tables and graphics provided visual displays to answer the research question and tie the academic findings to practical applications (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2008; Johnson & Christensen, 2020).

Figure 3.2

Procedural Diagram of Convergent Mixed Methods Design



Setting and Sample

The sample of interest for this study were professionals working in the tech industry. The tech industry is defined as those organizations that conduct business in computer software, hardware, cloud services, and related consulting services. Globally recognized tech organizations

include Microsoft, Accenture, and IBM (Statista, n.d.). Participation was based on an individual's self-reported experience of engagement and burnout.

As of January 2022, the tech industry employed almost three million people in the US (Statista, n.d.). Gallup, Inc. (2020) reported that 28.0% of employees were experiencing feelings of burnout. Based on these data points, the target population at risk for burnout in the tech industry at any given time is 840,000 employees.

Quantitative Sampling

The quantitative phase used convenience and snowball sampling. In convenience sampling, every individual in the target population has an opportunity to participate in the study (Morse & Niehaus, 2009). Snowball sampling is the process in which existing participants refer other participants for the study (Creswell, 2019). Onwuegbuzie and Collins (2015) described a minimum sample size of 84 participants for a correlational research design. To achieve statistical accuracy at a 95% confidence level, a minimum sample size of 96 is needed when using a survey based on a five-point and seven-point Likert scale. Individuals were recruited for the study via LinkedIn. Snowball sampling, in which existing participants refer other participants for the study, was used to extend invitations to additional individuals who met the criteria for inclusion.

Qualitative Sampling

The qualitative phase used a combination of convenience and purposeful sampling. Convenience sampling in which participants are accessible and willing to participate (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009) was used to pilot the interview guide. Purposeful sampling is based on selecting participants based on the needs of the study and achieving a saturation point (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2015). Saturation in qualitative studies refers to the point at which additional interviews do not yield additional insights or findings (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009).

Participants in the quantitative phase were extended an invitation to participate in the qualitative phase. For this phase, an estimated sample size of 20 – 50 interviews were recommended (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009).

As the quantitative and qualitative phases were to be executed independently, the next section is organized by phase to enable other researchers to replicate the study.

Phase 1: Quantitative Method

The quantitative phase uses statistical measures to explore and understand the data, distribution, and relationships (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). The goals of the quantitative phase were to describe the major variables and examine their relationships. The remainder of this section describes the instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis for the quantitative phase.

Instrumentation

An online cross-sectional survey was used to collect data during the quantitative phase. The following instruments were used to create the survey:

- Burnout Assessment Tool (Schaufeli et al., 2020a)
- Guidelines of Measuring Relationships in Public Relations (Hon & Grunig, 1999)
- Engagement (May et al., 2004)
- Turnover Intent Scale (Roodt, 2004)

Burnout Assessment Tool. Over 88.0% of research is conducted using the Maslach Burnout Instrument (Schaufeli, 2021). Criticisms of the MBI have emerged, such as weak psychometric properties and wording of questions (Hadžibajramović et al., 2022). Additionally, the "monopoly status" of the MBI in burnout research has hindered the emergence of innovative

research and fresh thought (Kristensen et al., 2005, p. 193). The Burnout Assessment Tool addresses these deficiencies.

The BAT is an open-access tool that is free to use without restrictions. The BAT is appropriate for this study as it has been used by research in peer-reviewed journals (Haar & O'Kane, 2022; Innstrand, 2022) and tests for primary and secondary symptoms and provides a single and group burnout score (Schaufeli et al., 2020a).

The BAT is a 12-item survey with four subscales. The subscales include exhaustion, emotional impairment, cognitive impairment, mental distance, and secondary symptoms. The secondary symptoms consist of psychosomatic complaints and psychological distress, scoring together as a single scale. The items are measured on a five-point Likert scale. Sample items can be found in Appendix F. Internal consistency for the BAT was above 0.70, with Cronbach's alpha ranging from 0.90 to 0.92 for the subscales. Content validity is based on confirmatory factor analysis, which was evaluated by the standards proposed by Brown (2015) and Suhr (2006), in which the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) is greater than 0.90. In model testing, the CFI = 0.95 (Schaufeli et al., 2020b).

Guidelines of Measuring Relationships in Public Relations. The relationship between an employee and the organization is frequently measured using the Guidelines of Measuring Relationships in Public Relations (Lee, 2021; Men & Robinson, 2018; Zhang et al., 2021). Hon and Grunig (1999) developed an instrument that measures employee trust, control mutuality, commitment, and satisfaction. Guest (2017) described these components as key in evaluating the quality of the EOR.

This instrument is appropriate for measuring the quality of the EOR as it has been validated, used in similar industries, and serves as a research instrument in other peer-reviewed

literature. In the tech industry, this instrument has been used to measure relationships at Microsoft, a global tech company that includes hardware, software, and consulting services (Kim et al., 2013). The Cronbach's alpha for reliability testing ranged between 0.70 and 0.91 (Hon & Grunig, 1999). Based on George and Mallery (2019), an $\alpha \geq .070$ is acceptable, $\alpha \geq .080$ is good, and $\alpha \geq .090$ is excellent. Based on validity and reliability testing conducted by Ki and Hon (2007), CFI equals 0.98, which meets the criteria (0.90 or larger) for an acceptable model fit. This instrument has been used to measure multiple aspects of the EOR, such as relational satisfaction and trust (Wang, 2020), diversity and organizational trust (Alshaabani et al., 2021), and communications (Lee, 2018).

The quality of the EOR is measured on the dimensions of trust, commitment, economic exchange relationship, and social exchange relationship. A nine-point Likert scale was used, with the responses ranging from 1 (Never) to 9 (Always). Sample items can be found in Appendix F.

Engagement. A review of the literature found over ten different instruments used for measuring engagement (Dhanda & Shrotryia, 2019). While the UWES is the most frequently cited and used, the instrument does not align with the sub-dimensions for the BAT. May et al. (2004) operationalized the concept of engagement. This construct was based on the work of Kahn (1990), in which engagement includes physical, emotional, and cognitive attachment. To measure the experience of engagement, the study used the following dimensions of the construct developed by May et al. (2004): physical, psychological availability, emotional, and cognitive.

The items were measured using a seven-point Likert scale. Sample items can be found in Appendix F. May et al. (2004) validated the construct in a study of a large insurance agency with 213 participants. Subsequent studies conducted by Diedericks and Rothmann (2013) and

Rothmann and Baumann (2014) validated the construct with Cronbach's alpha ranging between 0.78 and 0.82.

Turnover Intent Scale Burnout has been found to be linked with turnover intentions (Aldossari & Chaudhry, 2020; Haar, 2022). Turnover intention is described as an employee's desire to voluntarily leave an organization or change one's job (Schyns et al., 2007). Turnover is described as a multi-phase process beginning with intention and potentially resulting in a change of job or employer (Martin & Roodt, 2008). The estimated cost to replace an individual employee can range from one-half to two times the employee's annual compensation (McFeely & Wigert, 2019). According to McFeely and Wigert (2019), understanding turnover intention supports an organization in reducing turnover costs while improving employee experience.

Turnover Intent was measured using the six-item turnover intention scale (TIS) by Roodt (2004). The TIS is appropriate for this study as it examined the behavioral intentions of employees, which can then be examined in the context of the EOR and burnout. The items were measured using a five-point Likert scale. Sample items can be found in Appendix F. The instrument was validated by Bothma and Roodt (2013). The internal consistency reliability of the turnover intention scale is 0.80, according to Cronbach's alpha.

Appendix F provides a detailed mapping of the proposed study constructs and subconstructs to the selected instruments. Following is a summary of the constructs and instruments for this study.

Table 3.2

Summary Construct and Instrument Matrix

Construct	Instrument	Author
Engagement	Engagement	May et al. (2004)
Employee-Organization Relationship	Guidelines for Measuring Relationships in Public Relations (OPR)	Hon and Grunig (1999)
Burnout	Burnout using Burnout Assessment Tool (BAT)	Schaufeli et al. (2020a)
Turnover Intent	Turnover Intent Scale (TIS)	Roodt (2004)

Data Collection

This section describes the steps and techniques for collecting data in the study. Data collection for the quantitative phase consisted of the following procedures:

1. Obtaining permissions. The procedures to secure institutional review board (IRB) approval and consent to participate.
2. Collecting the information. Processes to collect, record, and secure participant data.

Obtaining Permissions. Obtaining permissions began with securing approval from the IRB. The informed consent described the study and all features that would affect a participant's decision to participate (Johnson & Christensen, 2020). Upon agreement to participate in the study, participants received a copy of the *Informed Consent Information Sheet RP 2301* (Appendix B) and a link to the survey. Before beginning the survey, the participant acknowledged their consent to participate.

Collecting the Information. Collecting the information consisted of developing the cross-functional online survey and administering the survey. Items for the survey were based on

the instruments provided in the preceding section. The survey was developed using SurveyMonkey.

Before commencing the survey, each participant acknowledged the online agreement to participate form. The survey data was collected anonymously and password-protected in the SurveyMonkey. SurveyMonkey was integrated with Excel to record and capture the data. The variables captured during data collection are listed in Table 3.3 below:

Table 3.3

Summary of Major Variables and Instruments

Instrument	Construct	Variable	Dependent (DV) or Independent Variable (IV)	Number of Items
Burnout Assessment Tool (BAT)	Burnout	Burnout	DV (Scale)	12
		Exhaustion	DV (Scale)	8
		Mental Distance	DV (Scale)	5
		Emotional Impairment	DV (Scale)	5
		Cognitive Impairment	DV (Scale)	5
Employee-Organization Relationship (EOR)	Employee-Organization Relationship	EOR	IV (Scale)	19
		Economic Exchange Relationship	IV (Scale)	4
		Social Exchange Relationship	IV (Scale)	5
		Trust	IV (Scale)	5
		Commitment	IV (Scale)	5
Engagement	Engagement	Physical	DV (Scale)	5
		Psychological Availability	DV (Scale)	5
		Emotional	DV (Scale)	4
		Cognitive	DV (Scale)	4
Turnover Intent Scale (TIS)	Turnover Intent	Turnover Intent	DV (Scale)	6

Note. A summary of construct and variable details, including the scale, can be found in Appendix F.

Data Analysis

The goals of the data analysis were to describe the major variables collected during the survey and examine their relationships. Descriptive statistics include measures of frequency, central tendency, and dispersion to identify trends and patterns (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). Inferential statistics, such as correlation testing and regression analysis, were used to identify and quantify the relationships between variables (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019).

Following is the series of hypotheses tested in Phase 1 of this study. The null hypotheses are that there are no statistically significant relationships between EOR, Burnout, Engagement, and Turnover Intent. The specific alternate hypotheses are listed below:

1. Hypothesis 1: EOR has a positive relationship to engagement.
2. Hypothesis 2: EOR has a negative relationship to burnout.
3. Hypothesis 3: EOR has a negative relationship to turnover intent.
4. Hypothesis 4: Engagement has a negative relationship to turnover intent.
5. Hypothesis 5: Burnout has a positive relationship to turnover intent.
6. Hypothesis 6: EOR, burnout, and engagement together predict employee turnover.

As described in Table 3.3, the following major variables were analyzed in the data analysis:

- Dependent variable (DV): Engagement, Burnout, and Turnover Intent
- Independent variables (IV): EOR and the subconstructs: Economic Exchange Relationship, Social Exchange Relationship, Trust, Commitment; and Turnover Intent

An alpha level (α) of .05 was used for all statistical tests to test significance. The following statistical methods were used to examine the survey data: descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and hypothesis testing using Ordinary Least Squares (OLS).

Based on Creswell and Plano Clark (2018), the steps in data analysis include (a) cleaning and formatting raw data, (b) conducting an exploratory analysis of data, including conducting descriptive analysis, (c) conducting inferential analysis, and (d) summarizing and interpreting statistical results. The data analysis was conducted using Excel and SAS.

1. Clean and format raw data: Checking for data entry problems such as missing fields, inaccurate values, or duplicates is the first step in cleaning the data (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). The raw data was prepared in accordance with the code book and entered into SAS for analysis.
2. Conduct exploratory analysis of data: According to Komorowski et al. (2016), exploratory data analysis (EDA) examines the data for anomalies and outliers while also obtaining an understanding of the data structure and distribution. A descriptive analysis was conducted for each variable.
3. Conduct inferential analysis: Inferential analysis was used to determine the statistical significance of relationships using correlation testing and regression analysis.
4. Summarize and interpret statistical results: The results were summarized in the form of charts and tables.

Phase 2: Qualitative Method

The qualitative phase applied the principles of phenomenology to identify patterns, trends, and concepts in order to describe the employee experience based on data collected from interviews (Johnson & Christensen, 2020). The goals of this phase included the following (a) to understand the modern-day experience of engagement and burnout; (b) to explore the EOR; and (c) to describe the factors that contribute to engagement and burnout.

The qualitative phase incorporated sensemaking. Sensemaking is an ongoing process of examining events through a retrospective lens to understand confusing or unexpected events (Maitlis et al., 2013; Weick et al., 2005). This process captures individual perspectives and interpretations of the employee experience, which were analyzed to understand the common patterns and themes (Morse & Niehaus, 2009).

This section describes the interview guide, data collection, and data analysis for the qualitative phase.

Interview Guide

The interview guide found in Appendix C consists of open-ended questions to probe the following areas:

- participants' definitions and experiences of engagement and burnout
- job, work group, and organizational factors contributing to their experience
- measures to foster engagement and mitigate burnout

The interview guide was pilot tested with a sample of six participants. The pilot assessed the recruitment process and usability of the interview guide (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). Data collected during this process was used to refine the data analysis process.

Data Collection

Data collection for the qualitative phase consisted of the following procedures:

1. Obtaining permissions. The procedures to secure IRB approval and consent to participate.
2. Collecting the information. Processes to collect, record, and secure participant data.

Obtaining Permissions. Obtaining permissions began with securing approval from the IRB. The informed consent described the study and all features that would affect a participant's

decision to participate (Johnson & Christensen, 2020). Prior to starting the interview, consent to participate and be recorded was verbally confirmed.

Collecting Information. The data for this phase was collected using semi-structured interviews. Upon completion of consent to participate, the participants received a link to schedule their interview. Interviews were scheduled for 30 minutes and conducted in Zoom. The Zoom meeting was password protected to ensure privacy and confidentiality. The interviews were transcribed using Sonix.ai, a password-protected environment that integrates with Zoom. Using an automated transcription maintains participant anonymity and privacy.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted in waves until a point of saturation was reached in the analysis. For qualitative studies, up to 50 interviews are recommended (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). The interviews were conducted via the internet using Zoom. Zoom is an accepted research tool that provides video conferencing, secured recording of interviews, and integrates with transcription software (Johnson & Christensen, 2020).

Data Analysis

The qualitative data was analyzed using a process of thematic analysis to address the research questions. In this process, frequently used words and concepts were categorized to identify themes (Johnson & Christensen, 2020). The steps in data analysis include (a) coding and labeling the data and (b) conducting thematic analysis (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

Coding and Labeling the Data. Codes are described as labels assigned to information collected during interviews (Miles et al., 2019). In phenomenology, coding consists of identifying significant statements that describe how the individual experiences engagement and burnout (Creswell & Poth, 2017). The significant statements were grouped into themes for analysis. Coding consists of open coding and axial coding. Open coding identifies the categories of

information, such as values and emotions. Axial coding connects the categories to describe the context and identify causation.

Conduct Thematic Analysis. The outcomes of the thematic analysis were textual and structural descriptions and a causal prediction model. The textural description explains the context of the experience by answering the question "what was experienced," whereas the structural description reveals "how the phenomenon is experienced" (Creswell & Poth, 2017, p. 315). The causal-prediction model provides a map of variables, relationships, and events to define cause and effect (Miles et al., 2019).

The qualitative analysis was conducted using MaxQDA. MaxQDA provides functionality to quantitize the qualitative data. Quantizing is the process of converting qualitative data, such as text and words, into quantitative data. MaxQDA, for this process, supports linking text to variables for analysis and joint displays (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

Phase 3: Synthesis

Phase 3 consists of synthesizing the results of the quantitative and qualitative phases. Synthesis is an interactive process of mixing the data sets for analysis (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Johnson & Christensen, 2020). Based on the data analysis of the previous phases, synthesis includes (a) the selection of data to be merged; (b) organizing, converting, and merging data types as needed; and (c) analysis and interpretation of the combined data set (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

The synthesis used the following techniques to merge and analyze the data:

- Linking quantitative and qualitative themes to perform analysis by construct (Fetters et al., 2013).

- Data transformation to support the correlation between quantitative and qualitative variables (Johnson & Christensen, 2020).
- Consolidation of data to create new variables (Johnson & Christensen, 2020).

Joint displays of quantitative and qualitative data provide a visual display of the synthesis process (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). These integrated tables and graphics provide visual displays to answer the research question, support the development of business storyboards, and tie the academic findings to practical application (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2008; Johnson & Christensen, 2020).

Quality

Quality in research refers to the justification of the research, transparency of the methods, and defensibility of the outcomes (Collins, 2015). Assuring high-quality research requires strategies to address concerns in the areas of data collection, analysis, and interpretation that could compromise the conclusions and outcomes (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Within each phase, strategies have been implemented to mitigate concerns and assure research quality.

As quantitative and qualitative methods have different processes for evaluating quality, the following are the processes for this study by phase.

Table 3.4

Quality Risk Mitigation Strategies by Phase

Phase	Criteria	Threat / Issues	Addressed By
Quantitative	Internal Validity	Issues related to the validation of inferences and findings (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019)	Triangulate between methods to corroborate results and findings (Greene et al., 1989)
	External Validity (Generalizability)	The sample is statically representative of the population (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2015)	Use a sample size based on the estimated population (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009)
	Reliability	Over time, the consistency of an instrument's scores (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019)	Cronbach's alpha is evaluated for the selected instrument
Qualitative	Credibility	Ability to represent the "multiple realities" and perspectives (Hoepfl, 1997, p. 58)	Within the study, triangulation of data and findings (Rowland & Parry, 2009)
	Transferability	Ability to use the results and findings in other settings and contexts (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009)	Using a case-by-case construct that provides detailed context and procedures (Polit & Beck, 2010)
	Dependability	Consistency of the results and ability to repeat the study (Swanson & Holton, 2005)	Document the methodology and process to support study repeatability (Gauche et al., 2017)

Phase	Criteria	Threat / Issues	Addressed By
	Confirmability	Identifying and addressing researcher bias (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019)	Researcher to engage in reflexivity (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009)

Ethical Considerations

Critical to this study is ensuring the ethical treatment of participants, which includes protecting their well-being and rights (Johnson & Christensen, 2020). To ensure study integrity and ethical treatment, this study took into account the following ethical considerations (a) protecting the privacy and confidentiality of participants, (b) procedures for informed consent, and (c) data security.

Privacy and Confidentiality

Privacy ensures that participant information is protected. This includes anonymity, which protects the participant's identity, and confidentiality, which refers to what can be done with a participant's information. In this study, participant privacy and confidentiality were addressed as follows:

Surveys. The survey was developed and administered using SurveyMonkey, which is encrypted and password protected. The collection of identifying information, such as email addresses, was optional.

Interviews. Interviews were recorded in a password-protected Zoom meeting environment and integrated directly with Sonix.ai for transcription. These sessions began with a debriefing of the study and obtaining verbal consent to participate.

Pseudonyms were used for individuals to report findings and quotes. Participants had the option to withdraw themselves and their information from the study at any time.

Informed Consent

Informed consent refers to the participant's agreement to participate in this study. The process of informed consent consists of three steps (a) educating participants, which includes individuals and organizations; (b) ensuring participants understand the study purpose, procedures, benefits, and risks; and (c) obtaining consent to participate (Johnson & Christensen, 2020).

In addition to the IRB-approved consent form, an invitation to participate in the study (Appendix E) study was provided during the recruitment process. This document provided an overview of the study, the purpose, process, and benefits of participation. Question-and-answer sessions were scheduled as needed to respond to questions before and after the data collection process to support the education process.

This study included multiple types of informed consent. First, individuals received an IRB informed consent form explaining the study's details. Second, survey participants were provided an online consent form and pressed the "Next" button indicating voluntary consent to participate before commencing the survey. Third, interviewees gave verbal consent after an introductory debriefing.

Data Security

The following procedures were used to protect and secure data:

- The survey form was stored in SurveyMonkey and encrypted in transit and rest.
- All data was secured in a password-protected environment with access only to the researcher.
- All data will be destroyed three years after completing the study.

Before commencing the participant recruitment, the researcher applied for Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval from Northwood University. IRB approval included completing the Northwood University IRB Protocol. The researcher sought IRB-exempt status as this study does not include vulnerable participants such as the elderly or children; the risk level is minimal as participants "will not experience stress beyond normal daily life" (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009, p. 199).

Summary

In summary, Chapter 3 documented the study methodology in a fashion that answers the research questions and enables replication by other researchers. The study was a convergent mixed methods study to address the research questions. Independent quantitative and qualitative phases were conducted in parallel. The quantitative and qualitative phases included their respective research design, data collection, and analysis. A synthesis phase was conducted upon completion of the quantitative and qualitative phases. This phase included merging the data to support combined data analysis.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Results

Introduction

Chapter 4 presents the data analysis and study findings based on the data collection process detailed in Chapter 3: Methodology. This chapter describes the sample, summarizes the data collected in each quantitative and qualitative phase, the analysis process, and presents the results.

As described in previous chapters, the problem to be addressed in this study is the role of the employee-organization relationship (EOR) in fostering engagement and mitigating the potential for burnout; and to what degree it impacts the turnover intent. The purpose of this mixed methods study was to explore and understand the EOR as it relates to engagement and burnout to (a) describe the modern-day experience of engagement and burnout, (b) identify the factors that impact the EOR, (c) define levers that foster engagement and mitigate burnout, and (d) examine turnover intent as a metric that impacts organizational performance.

The data analysis was guided by the following research questions in Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1

Research Questions by Mixed Methods Phase

Phase	Approach	Research Questions Addressed
Phase 1: Quantitative Method	Phase 1 conducted statistical analysis using data from the online survey conducted on SurveyMonkey.	RQ1: How does the EOR impact and influence engagement and burnout?
Phase 2: Qualitative Method	Phase 2 conducted thematic analysis using the open-ended survey questions collected in the online survey.	RQ2: What is the employee experience of engagement and burnout? RQ3: What is the current experience of the EOR?
Phase 3: Synthesis	Phase 3 combined data from the follow-up interviews, statistical analysis, and thematic analysis to analyze the combined data set.	RQ4: What can be learned from synthesizing the data regarding turnover intent?

The remainder of this chapter describes the sample, the data collection process, and data analysis and results for each phase.

Description of the Sample

The study was conducted with professionals working in the tech industry. Participants were identified and recruited using two different methods. The first method consisted of sending emails to technical professionals identified using Dun & Bradstreet's online directory. The second method consisted of emails to first and second-level connections on LinkedIn. The size of the sample was expanded as participants shared the recruitment emails and LinkedIn posts. The sample consisted of 155 tech professionals.

One hundred and fifty-five tech professionals (N = 155) participated in the study. The sample consisted of 103 (66.4%) men and 52 (33.5%) women. The participants ranged between the ages of 21 and 60+. Out of 155 participants, 9 (5.8%) were aged 21–29, 13 (8.3%) were aged 30–39, 31 (20.0%) were aged 40 – 49, 67 (43.2%) were aged 50-59, and 35 (22.5%) were 60+. The self-reported job roles included individual contributor (42.5%), new manager (1.9%), mid-level manager (16.7%), senior-level manager (19.3%), executive level (12.2%), C-Suite executive (3.8%), and other roles such as retired or self-employed (3.2%). The majority of the participants (36.1%) had been with their company for one to three years, while 18.0% of the participants had less than one year, and 17.4% had been with their organization for more than 10 years. In terms of work location, 61.2 % of the participants work from home, 35.4% work in a hybrid situation, and 3.2% work onsite.

Table 4.2

Participant Demographics (N = 155)

Demographic	*n*	%
Gender		
Man	103	66.5%
Woman	52	33.6%
Age Group		
21–29	9	5.8%
30–39	13	8.4%
40–49	31	20.0%
50–59	67	43.2%
60+	35	22.6%
Tenure		
Less than 1 year	28	18.1%
1–3 years	56	36.1%
4 –5 years	23	14.8%
6–10 years	21	13.6%
More than 10 years	27	17.4%
Role		
Individual Contributor	66	42.6%
New Manager	3	1.9%
Mid-level Manager	26	16.8%
Senior-level Manager	30	19.4%
Executive Level (Non-C-Suite)	19	12.3%
C-Suite Executive	6	3.9%
Other (please specify)	5	3.2%
Work Location		
Hybrid	55	35.5%
Onsite	5	3.2%
Work at Home	95	61.3%

Data Collection

As described in Chapter 3: Methodology, both quantitative data and qualitative data were collected using an online survey conducted on SurveyMonkey. The quantitative data was collected using Likert scale questions based on established instruments. Qualitative data was collected through open-ended questions and follow-up interviews. Upon agreement to participate in the study, participants received a copy of the Informed Consent Information Sheet RP 2301 and a link to the survey. Before beginning the survey, the participant acknowledged their consent to participate. The survey consisted of 85 questions, which took participants an average of 14 minutes to complete. The data was exported as a spreadsheet for data formatting from SurveyMonkey. The data formatting consisted of assigning variable names, reverse coding seven questions, and calculating scores for the major variables.

Of the 155 survey participants, 87 (56.0%) participants volunteered to participate in a follow-up interview. Forty-six participants scheduled a 30-minute follow-up interview. The interview participants consisted of 30 (65.2%) men and 16 (34.8%) women. Sixty-five percent of the interview participants were over 49 years of age while the remainder of the interview participants ranged between 21 and 49. The interviews were conducted on Zoom and transcribed using Sonix.ai. The transcriptions were reviewed and cleaned up in Sonix.ai. The clean process consisted of removing repeated phases and extraneous words such as “um.”

Each interview was parsed by interview question. Significant quotes and themes were highlighted. A summary of the interview was generated using the interview summary feature of Sonix.ai. The themes were compared with the interview summary to check for congruency and overall understanding. The interviews and summary information were imported into MaxQDA for further analysis.

The remainder of this chapter is broken into the phases of the mixed methods study. Each phase describes the data analysis and findings.

Phase 1: Quantitative Method

The quantitative analysis phase used the data collected in the survey to describe the relationship between the major variables and the strength of those relationships in order to respond to the following research question:

RQ1: How does the EOR impact and influence engagement and burnout?

In order to answer this research question, a series of hypotheses are tested. The null hypotheses are that there are no statistically significant relationships within EOR, Burnout, Engagement, and Turnover Intent. The specific alternate hypotheses are listed below:

1. Hypothesis 1: EOR has a positive relationship to engagement.
2. Hypothesis 2: EOR has a negative relationship to burnout.
3. Hypothesis 3: EOR has a negative relationship to turnover intent.
4. Hypothesis 4: Engagement has a negative relationship to turnover intent.
5. Hypothesis 5: Burnout has a positive relationship to turnover intent.
6. Hypothesis 6: EOR, burnout, and engagement together predict employee turnover.

Data Preparation

Prior to analysis the data was exported from SurveyMonkey and prepared for analysis. The data preparation was a multistep process that consisted of exporting a spreadsheet of the raw data from SurveyMonkey, formatting the variables for analysis, and calculating scores for the major variables. Following are the data preparation steps conducted:

1. Export data as a spreadsheet from SurveyMonkey. One hundred fifty-five records were exported.

2. Format Participant ID from numeric to text.
3. Format variable names for ingestion into statistical software.
4. Reverse code the four items from the Employee Engagement (EE) instrument and three items from the Employee-Organization (EOR) instrument. Following variables that were reversed coded and the question.
    a. EE_P3_R: I avoid working overtime whenever possible.
    b. EE_P5_R: I avoid working too hard.
    c. EE_E3_R: I often feel emotionally detached from my job.
    d. EE_C2_R: I often think about other things when performing my job.
    e. EOR_SER1_R: This organization does not especially enjoy giving others aid.
    f. EOR_SER3_R: I feel that this organization takes advantage of people who are vulnerable.
    g. EOR_SER4_R: I think that this organization succeeds by stepping on other people.
5. Score the major variables as described by the instrument.

Descriptive Statistics

From the sample of 155 survey participants, descriptive statistics were calculated for the major variables: engagement, EOR, burnout, and turnover intent. The descriptive statistics are provided in Table 4.3.

Engagement. Engagement consisted of 18 items measured on a seven-point Likert scale with the responses ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree). The average response for engagement was 5.36 with a standard deviation of 0.62. The participant responses ranged between 3.39 and 6.78. The skewness equals -0.46 indicating a left skew in which more

participants responses on the high end of the scale. The kurtosis equals 0.38 suggesting a normal shaped curve.

Employee-Organization Relationship (EOR). EOR consisted of 23 items measured on a seven-point Likert scale. The responses ranged between 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree). The average response was 4.82 with a standard deviation of 0.99. The responses varied between 2.26 and 7.00. The distribution was slightly left skewed (−0.66) indicating more responses on the higher end of the scale. A kurtosis value (−0.22) of less than 3 indicates a normal shaped curve.

Burnout. The Burnout variable was constructed from 12 survey items measured on a five-point Likert scale from 1 (Never) to 5 (Always). The average response was 2.23 and deviated 0.59 from the mean. The participant responses ranged between 1.00 and 3.67. Burnout has a bi-modal distribution with peaks at 1.95 and 2.55. This may indicate two different groups within the sample population. Overall, the burnout is skewed right with a higher concentration of scores on the lower end of the scale.

Turnover Intent. Turnover intent was constructed from four survey items measured on a five-point Likert scale from 1 (Never) and 5 (Always). The average turnover intent score was 2.80 which deviated 0.71 from the mean. The turnover intent responses varied between 1.40 and 4.20. The distribution was symmetric with no significant right or left skew.

Table 4.3

Descriptive Statistics Table Major Variables

Variable	N	Mean	Median	Std Dev	Minimum	Maximum
Engagement	155	5.36	5.44	0.62	3.39	6.78
EOR	155	4.82	5.04	0.99	2.26	7.00
Burnout	155	2.23	2.17	0.59	1.00	3.67
Turnover Intent	155	2.80	2.80	0.71	1.40	4.20

Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis was conducted to examine the possibility of linear relationships between the major variables. The Pearson correlation coefficient was used to measure the direction and strength of the linear relationships. The significance level for the correlation analysis was set at 0.05. Interestingly, all the correlation coefficients were statistically significant.

A moderate positive correlation of 0.33 exists between EOR and engagement. A strong negative correlation coefficient of -0.60 exists between EOR and burnout. A strong negative correlation of -0.69 was found between EOR and turnover intent. Burnout and turnover intent show a strong positive correlation of is 0.63. A weak negative correlation of -0.27 was observed between engagement and turnover intent.

Table 4.4

Correlation Analysis of Major Variables: EOR Relationship, Burnout, Engagement, and Turnover Intent

Variable	EOR	Burnout	Engagement	Turnover Intent
1. EOR	-			
2. Burnout	-.60*	-		
3. Engagement	.33*	-.52*	-	
4. Turnover Intent	-.69*	.63*	-.27*	-

Hypothesis Testing using OLS Models

To develop a prediction model that assesses the impact of the EOR on fostering engagement and reducing the potential for burnout, a series of hypothesis tests were performed utilizing linear regression analysis. Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) method was used in

developing the linear regression model. The equation $\hat{y} = b_0 + b_1x$ represents a linear regression model. Hypotheses 1 to 5 were examined using simple linear regression, whereas Hypothesis 6 was assessed using multiple linear regression. The chosen significance level for testing was 0.05.

Assumptions

Before performing Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) linear regression modeling, several tests were conducted to ensure the reliability and validity of the data. The tests assessed linearity, independence of errors, homoscedasticity, normality of errors, and the absence of multicollinearity. The following relationships were tested:

- EOR (IV) and Engagement (DV)
- EOR (IV) and Burnout (DV)
- EOR (IV) and Turnover Intent (DV)
- Engagement (IV) and Turnover Intent (DV)
- Burnout (IV) and Turnover Intent (DV)

Linearity. The assumption of linearity posits that a linear relationship exists between the independent and dependent variables. Linearity was tested by visually examining the scatterplots. The scatterplots displayed a linear relationship with the data points, showing a consistent trend and no apparent curvature. The correlation analysis in the previous section described relationships as significant and the strength varying from weak (r = -.027) to strong (r = -.069).

Independence of Errors. A visual inspection of the plots between residuals and predicted values was conducted to test for independence of errors. A random scatter of the data points and no discernable pattern supports an independence of errors. The independence of errors was further evaluated using the Durbin-Watson to test for autocorrelation between the values. The test

revealed values ranging between 1.967 and 2.147. According to the Durbin-Watson test, when the values are near 2, it indicates the absence of autocorrelation among the residuals.

Homoscedasticity. Homoscedasticity tests for a constant level of variance among the residuals. Testing involved a visual examination of the residuals and expected values. The presence of a discernible pattern or trend among the data points plotted on the x-axis suggests the existence of variance in the residuals. Although no discernible patterns or trends were detected, White's Test was conducted to test for heteroscedasticity. Testing was conducted using an alpha level of .05. The results showed no significant relationship, suggesting that the data meets the assumption of constant variance.

Normality of Errors. The normality of errors assumption tests for a normal distribution of the residuals. A visual inspection of the residual histograms revealed a normal distribution of the residuals for all relationships. Shapiro-Wilk (*W*) test was conducted for each relationship. The output for Shapiro-Wilk ranges between 0 and 1, in which 1 indicates a normal distribution. The residuals follow a normal distribution, as indicated by the value of *W* being 0.99 for each connection.

Table 4.5

Summary of Assumptions Testing

		White's Test		Normality of Residuals	
Relationships Examined	**Durbin-Watson**	**Statistic**	**Pr > ChiSq**	**Value (*W*)**	**Prob**
EOR (IV) → Engagement (DV)	1.995	4.18	0.124	0.99	0.228
EOR (IV) → Burnout (DV)	2.147	0.34	0.843	0.99	0.784
EOR (IV) → Turnover Intent (DV)	2.086	1.92	0.384	0.99	0.769
Engagement (IV) → Turnover Intent (DV)	1.988	0.37	0.832	0.99	0.129
Burnout (IV) → Turnover Intent (DV)	1.968	2.11	0.348	0.99	0.777

Hypothesis 1: EOR has a positive relationship to Engagement. In the linear regression model, $\hat{Y}$ represents the level of engagement and X represents EOR. The coefficient of determination (R^2) was calculated to be 0.1081, indicating that EOR explains about 10.8% of the fluctuation in engagement. The slope ($b_1 = 0.205$) and *t*-value (4.31) are significant. There is a positive relationship between the EOR connection and engagement in which a one-unit improvement in the EOR connection results in a 0.205 increase in engagement. The model is therefore expressed as follows:

$$\hat{Y} = 4.368 + 0.205X$$

Hypothesis 2: EOR has a negative relationship to Burnout. In the linear regression model, $\hat{Y}$ represents the level of burnout and X represents the EOR. The coefficient of determination (R^2) was calculated to be 0.361, indicating that EOR explains about 36.1% of the variance in burnout. The slope ($b_1 = -0.358$) and *t*-value (-9.30) are significant. There is a negative relationship between EOR and burnout in which a one-unit improvement in EOR results in a 0.358 decrease in burnout. The model is therefore expressed as follows:

$$\hat{Y} = 3.953 - 0.358X$$

Hypothesis 3: EOR has a negative relationship to turnover intent**.** In the linear regression model, $\hat{Y}$ represents the level of turnover intent, and X represents EOR. The coefficient of determination (R^2) was calculated to be 0.472, indicating that EOR explains 47.2% of the variance in turnover intent. The slope ($b_1 = -0.489$) and t-value (-11.7) are significant. There is a negative relationship between EOR and turnover intent in which a one-unit improvement in EOR results in a 0.489 decrease in turnover intent. The model is therefore expressed as follows:

$$\hat{Y} = 5.155 - 0.489X$$

Hypothesis 4: Engagement has a negative relationship to turnover intent. In the linear regression model, where $\hat{Y}$ represents the level of turnover intent, and X represents the engagement. The coefficient of determination (R^2) was calculated to be 0.073, indicating that engagement explains 7.3% of the variance in turnover intent. The slope ($b_1 =$ -0.307) and t-value (-3.46) are significant. There is a negative relationship between engagement and turnover intent, in which a one-unit increase in engagement results in a 0.307 decrease in turnover intent. The model is therefore expressed as follows in:

$$\hat{Y} = 4.446 - 0.307X$$

Hypothesis 5: Burnout has a positive relationship to turnover intent. In the linear regression model, $\hat{Y}$ represents the level of turnover intent, and X represents the burnout.

The coefficient of determination (R^2) was calculated to be 0.400, indicating that burnout explains 40.0% of the variance in turnover intent. The slope ($b_1 =$ 0.755) and t-value (10.10) are significant. There is a positive relationship between burnout and turnover intent, in which a one-unit increase in burnout results in a 0.755 increase in turnover intent. The model is therefore expressed as follows:

$$\hat{Y} = 1.119 + 0.755X$$

Hypothesis 6: EOR, Burnout, and engagement together predict employee turnover. The multiple linear regression model is expressed as $\hat{Y} = b_0 + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + ... + bpXp$, where $\hat{Y}$ represents the level of turnover intent, X_1 represents EOR, X_2 represents engagement, and X_3 represents burnout.

The coefficient of determination (R^2) was calculated to be 0.554, indicating that engagement, EOR, and burnout explain 55.4% of the variance in turnover intent. The $b_1 =$ -0.344, and $b_3 = 0.464$ were significant, while b2 = 0.104 was not significant.

The model is therefore expressed as follows:

$$\hat{Y} = 2.865 - 0.344X_1 + 0.104X_2 + 0.464X_3$$

The following table is a summary of the results from the hypothesis testing.

Table 4.6

Summary of Results from Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	X (IV)	Y (DV)	Slope	SE	t-value	R^2	Significant
H1	EOR	Engagement	0.205	0.048	4.31	0.108	Yes
H2	EOR	Burnout	-0.358	0.039	-9.30	0.361	Yes
H3	EOR	Turnover Intent	-0.489	0.042	-11.70	0.472	Yes
H4	Engagement	Turnover Intent	-0.307	0.089	-3.46	0.073	Yes
H5	Burnout	Turnover Intent	0.755	0.075	10.10	0.400	Yes
H6	Engagement	Turnover Intent	0.104	0.073	1.43	0.554	No
	EOR		-0.344	0.048	-7.10		Yes
	Burnout		0.464	0.090	5.18		Yes

RQ1: How does the EOR impact and influence engagement and burnout? In this phase, the data was examined using statistical measures to describe and understand the major variables: EOR relationship, engagement, burnout, and turnover intent. Correlation analysis was used to determine the strength and direction of the relationships between the variables. Regression analysis was used to develop models to predict the dependent variables based on the independent variables.

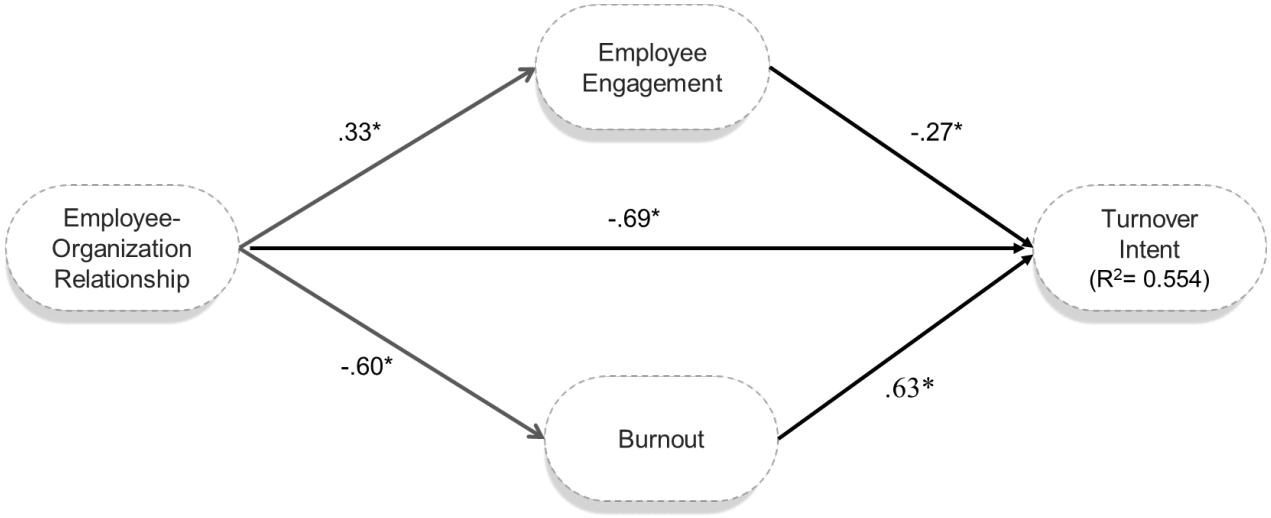
The EOR was found to have a positive but weak relationship with engagement (r = .33), a moderate negative relationship with burnout (r = -.60) and moderate negative relationship with turnover intent (r = -.69).

The hypothesis testing consisted of testing six different hypothesis to explore the different relationships using ordinary least squares regression. The relationships were found to be

statistically significant. Refer to Figure 4.1 and Table 4.7 for a summary of the hypothesis testing.

Figure 4.1

Summary of Hypothesis Testing



Note: *p < .05.

Table 4.7

Descriptive Summary of Hypothesis Testing

Hypotheses	Model	Outcomes
Hypothesis 1: EOR has a positive relationship to Engagement.	Linear Regression	Supported
Hypothesis 2: EOR has a negative relationship to Burnout.	Linear Regression	Supported
Hypothesis 3: EOR has a negative relationship to Turnover Intent.	Linear Regression	Supported
Hypothesis 4: Engagement has a negative relationship to Turnover Intent.	Linear Regression	Supported
Hypothesis 5: Burnout has a positive relationship to Turnover Intent	Linear Regression	Supported
Hypothesis 6: EOR, Burnout, and Engagement together predict employee turnover	Multiple Regression	Mixed support. Engagement was not significant.

Phase 2: Qualitative Method

The qualitative analysis phase used the data from the open-ended survey and one-on-one interviews to examine the role of the EOR in fostering engagement and mitigating burnout. The goals of this section were to:

- To describe the modern-day experience of engagement and burnout.
- To understand the modern-day experience of the EOR.

By understanding the employee experience of engagement, burnout, and the EOR, this phase addresses the following research questions:

RQ2: What is the employee experience of engagement and burnout?

RQ3: What is the current experience of the EOR?

The remainder of this section describes the qualitative data analysis and results.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis to identify themes, patterns, and trends in the qualitative data. The data were segmented and coded using a top-down deductive approach. Deductive coding is used in research where the analysis is guided by existing theories and frameworks (Saldaña, 2021). The analysis was framed using Guest's (2017) employee analytic framework to identify high-level categories and organize themes.

Employee Analytic Framework. According to Guest (2017), the quality of the EOR affects employee well-being and performance. As described in the literature review, low well-being is experienced as burnout, while engagement is an indicator of high well-being and performance. The employee analytic framework outlines principles that foster positive EORs. The following principles Guest (2017) described formed the basis of initial themes and codes for analysis.

- A positive EOR is characterized by high levels of trust, respect, and fairness.
- Quality of work life describes an employee's overall experience and satisfaction with work. The factors that comprise the quality of work-life influence engagement and burnout.

Following is the list of codes developed using the employee analytic framework and used for the thematic analysis process.

Table 4.8

Initial Codes based on the Employee Analytic Framework

Dimension	Code	Description (Guest, 2017; Walton, 1973)
Characteristics of the EOR	Trust	The level of confidence in the other party's abilities, integrity, and openness.
	Fairness	Decisions and rewards are made without favoritism.
	Respect	To see the value of another and relate with dignity.
	Autonomy	The degree of freedom and discretion within one's work.
	Meaningful work	One's work contributes to the organization.
	Social interaction	Social relationships and socialization with peers and team members.
	Open communication and feedback	Communication is open, transparent, and bi-directional.
Quality of Work-Life Factors	Value and importance of work	One's work is important and has a positive impact.
	Skill utilization and engaging work	Employees are engaged in their work, and their skills are valued.
	Workload management	Balancing of job resources and demands.
	Participative management	Employees are engaged in decision-making when it affects their jobs.
	Reward systems	Employees are appreciated, recognized, and rewarded for their work.
	Opportunities for growth and development	Employees are provided opportunities for training and advancement.

The employee analytic framework and Burke-Litwin provided a framework and code system in which to conduct deductive coding to organize and categorize the data. The following section describes the thematic process followed by the findings and results.

Thematic Analysis Process

Thematic analysis was a multi-step process that included importing survey data into MaxQDA for coding and analysis. MaxQDA is data analysis software used in qualitative and mixed methods studies. The analysis consisted of coding and analyzing 297 survey responses. Out of 155 survey participants, 150 participants responded to the question, "How would you describe burnout?" and 147 participants responded to the question, "How would you describe engagement?"

The Artificial Intelligence (AI) Assist functionality within MaxQDA was used to generate codes and sub-codes based on the high-level coding of the survey. These codes were analyzed using the codes list based on the employee analytic framework described previously. Leveraging AI Assist aligns with leading practices in generative AI in which large volumes of data can be analyzed to extract insights (Hassan et al., 2023). The process resulted in the coding of 2,815 data segments for analysis.

The thematic analysis process consisted of the following steps:

1. Survey data from SurveyMonkey was imported into MaxQDA for coding and analysis.
2. Initial coding was conducted on large segments of data. For survey data, responses to the question "How would you describe burnout?" were coded as burnout.
3. MaxQDA AI Assist was used to identify themes and sub-codes for the large segments of data.

4. AI Assist in MaxQDA was used to identify high-level themes and sub-codes across the segments.
5. Themes and sub-codes were examined to determine fit and congruence with the data.
6. The initial code book was expanded to include themes and sub-codes proposed by MaxQDA.
7. The survey data were coded using an iterative process of identifying and labeling the words and phrases that best describe the participant's response.
8. The coded data segments were analyzed to identify elements, patterns, and relationships.
9. The causal themes and relationships were identified by applying the categories from Burke-Litwin.
10. The coded segments were grouped and re-grouped to define connections, patterns, and relationships between the themes and codes.
11. The major themes were summarized in Table 4.9 below and graphically in Figure 4.1.
12. The qualitative data was quantitized to identify the number of times in which themes and codes were expressed in the data. The quantitized data is represented by frequency (Table 4.9).

Results

The results section is structured to present the major themes that emerged from the data analysis, followed by the research questions addressed in the qualitative phase. The high-level themes that evolved from the open-ended survey questions are summarized in Table 4.9 (below). The description provides an overview of the theme based on the data analysis. The frequency

displays how often a theme was discussed in data. The following graphic provides a visual illustration of the major themes.

Table 4.9

Major Themes from Thematic Analysis of Survey Data

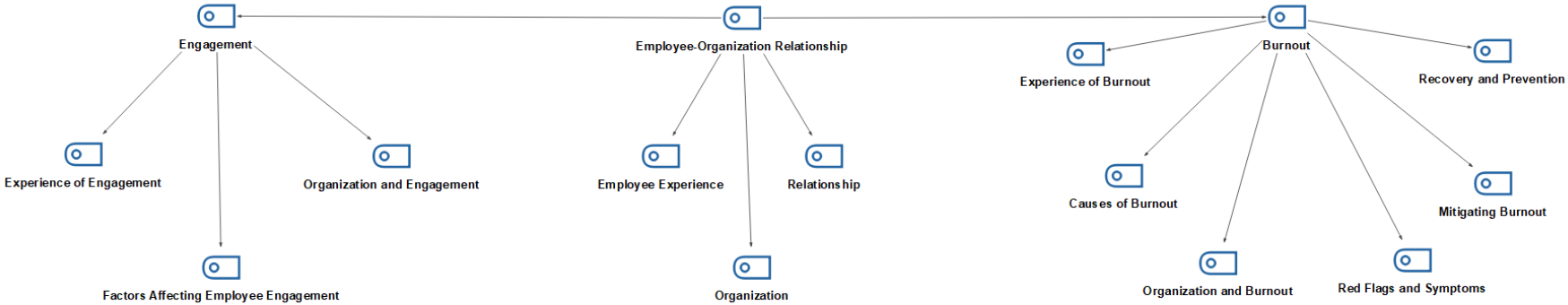
Themes	Frequency	Description
Engagement	**338**	
Experience of Engagement	109	Participant's feelings, perceptions, and interpretations of employee engagement. Participants responded to the question, "How would you describe engagement?"
Factors Affecting Employee Engagement	61	Conditions and events that impact employee engagement.
Organization and Engagement	168	Organizational factors that impact employee engagement. Participants responded to questions such as "What could organizations do to foster engagement?"
EOR	**127**	
Employee Experience	36	Participant's perceptions of the of the relationships and interactions within the organization. Participants responded to questions such as "What are your views of leadership?"
Organization	37	Participant's description of the organization as it relates to leadership, communication, and management practices. A sample question, "What could organizations do to create more understanding and clarity?"
Relationship	54	Perceptions and interpretations of organizational events and dynamics. Participants responded to questions such as, "Do you see a shift in overall relationships moving to a virtual model?"

Table 4.9, continued.

Themes	Frequency	Description
Burnout	**415**	
Experience of Burnout	179	Participant's feelings, perceptions, interpretations, and outcomes of burnout. Participants responded to the question, "How would you describe burnout?"
Causes of Burnout	76	The events and conditions that lead to burnout.
Organization and Burnout	35	The organizational factors and causes that lead to and foster burnout. Participants responded to the question, "What could companies do differently to mitigate burnout?"
Red Flags and Symptoms	29	The personal and organizational signs of burnout. Participants responded to the question, "Have you noticed any red flags or warning signs of burnout?"
Mitigating Burnout	31	Steps and actions taken by participants to reduce the impact of burnout. Participants responded to the question, "When did you decide you were burned out? What did you do?"
Recovery and Prevention	65	Steps to prevent burnout and support to recovery from burnout. Participants responded to the question, "How do you recover from burnout?"

Figure 4.2

Major Themes



Research Questions

RQ2: What is the employee experience of Engagement and Burnout?

Employee Experience of Engagement. One hundred nine data segments were coded in the data analysis describing the employee experience of engagement. These codes reflect the participants' views, interpretations, and effects of engagement. The coded segments were grouped into 20 distinct codes. The top seven codes were selected using Pareto Analysis (Table 4.10). The Pareto Principle also referred to as the 80/20 rule, in which 80.0% of the results are produced by 20.0% of the efforts (Koch, 1999). The qualitative themes and sub-themes were quantitized to identify the frequency of the data expressed in surveys and interviews. The themes were prioritized using the Pareto Principle.

The most significant theme described by participants was a sense of alignment and contribution (22.0%). Participants expressed the need to feel aligned with the organization's mission and goals. A strong feeling of alignment is reflected in work that contributes to goals as opposed to busy work, "needless meetings," and "corporate minutiae."

Employee satisfaction (16.0%) was a strong theme, indicating a need for the participants to feel good about their work. Autonomy and empowerment (15.0%) reflect the need for organizations to trust employees to make decisions and empower employees to work in ways that enable success, such as the flexibility to work from home (Participant 118354048222).

Participants described connection and commitment (12.0%) as the sense of belonging, loyalty, and dedication they experience when they feel engaged (Participant 118354048222). Fostering engagement strengthens the relationships within the organization and the connection employees have with their organization (Participant 118354048222).

The following table lists the major codes describing the employee experience of engagement.

Table 4.10

Top 7 Codes Describing the Employee Experience of Engagement

Code	Frequency	%	Actual Quote
Alignment and Contribution	24	22.0%	"When an individual feels connected to the goals and mission of their organization and are stimulated by their day-to-day work, they feel kinship with their peers and leadership and can envision a path to professional growth within the organization." (Participant 118339615053)
			"I think employee engagement is best measured in terms of meaningful contribution. If I can see that my efforts contribute to the work at hand." (Participant 118342772051)
Employee Satisfaction	17	16.0%	"I would describe employee engagement as the enthusiasm of employees in both their work and in the workplace. A concept where the employee is fully engaged and committed to helping move the organization forward. Relates to satisfaction of their work—where they feel connected to the culture of the organization - and are valued for their contributions." (Participant 118337166825)
Autonomy and Empowerment	16	15.0%	"Employees feel supported and empowered. Autonomy to work from a home office and complete tasks relevant to the job." (Participant 118337083164)
Connection and Commitment	13	12.0%	"Employee engagement is the connection employees have with the organization and their work. A strong connection between management and staff employees as well as strong inter-connection in peer groups. Employee engagement is the connection employees have with the organization and their work." (Participant 118339553813)

Table 4.10, continued.

Code	Frequency	%	Actual Quote
Recognition and Respect	8	7.0%	"Management fosters an environment of respect and value towards employees. In a company that has a culture rich in respect for individuals, engagement would include the emotional engagement with achieving company goals." (Participant 118337083164)
Communication and Relationship with Management	7	6.0%	"Understanding the company mission, believing in the mission and the company's ability to execute, and being committed to the cause." (Participant 118349916776)
Work-life Balance	5	5.0%	"When your successes impact the team/company causes you to have a personal satisfaction which carries over beyond work." (Participant 118337277958)

Employee Experience of Burnout. One hundred seventy-nine data segments were coded describing the employee experience of burnout. The employee experience encapsulates the participant's perceptions, interpretations, and consequences of burnout. Thirty-nine different codes emerged from analyzing the coded segments. Using Pareto Analysis, the top 10 codes were identified in Table 4.11.

The most prevalent experience of burnout is a chronic state of stress, fatigue, and exhaustion. This is evidenced by the frequency in which participants described their experience as "mental, emotional, and physical exhaustion" (15.0%) and a "chronic state of fatigue and stress" (11.0%). Participants described a lack of motivation (4.0%) and no longer caring about their job (4.0%). This experience is coupled with feelings of overwhelm (3.0%) and being underappreciated (2.0%).

The levels of stress, fatigue, and exhaustion being experienced were summarized by the following survey participants:

> Unable to keep up with 100s of daily emails. Too much on my plate and feeling guilty about things falling off of it (being forgotten) and not delivered in a timely manner. Unable to fall asleep at night thinking about the above. Snapping at family and pets for interrupting me getting things done. Just trying to make it thru the day/week, living for the weekends. Reluctance to start work on Monday. Unable to transition from work mode on Friday night/Saturday and from home mode on Monday. (Participant 118341486253)

> Burnout, which I have experienced in my career, especially in this past year, is related to that feeling of dread in getting out of bed to perform work duties (my last job), or when you catch yourself having less of a filter towards decisions or people at work that you disagree with. It also may involve the concern that your company no longer has your back or when you lose trust in your manager or others, that causes you to share openly. In general, it's when I feel I need a break, whether the fact work has me in a negative mood, feeling tired or spent or wanting to take a break from work, all together ... whether to take a vacation or even walk away, all together. (Participant 118357918002)

The effects of burnout are experienced in the participant's professional and personal life, expressed by many respondents as a lack of work-life balance. In the participant's professional life, they struggled to focus (4.0%) and had no energy for the job (4.0%). Participants described an overall lack of effectiveness and productivity (3.0%). The following table encapsulates the codes that describe the experience of burnout.

Table 4.11

Top 10 Codes Describing the Employee Experience of Burnout

Code	Frequency	%	Actual Quote
Mental, emotional, and physical exhaustion	26	15.0%	"Mental, emotional, sometimes physical, exhaustion caused by a pattern of repeated excessive hours or unrealistic expectations imposed upon the employee." (Participant 118354048222) "Mental, emotional, and physical exhaustion. Disassociating from anything going on in the 'real world'." (Participant 118314871030) "Lack of support or hollow promises contribute to the situation." (Participant 118354048222)
Chronic state of fatigue and stress	20	11.0%	"I would describe burnout as employees who become exhausted in their workplace. The employee experiences frustration, exhaustion, and even signs of discontent—often caused by prolonged stress or excessive work hours." (Participant 118337166825)
No longer caring about work	9	5.0%	"A condition in which an employee is completely uncommitted to the success of their employer. 'People that are burned out simply don't care anymore.'" (Participant 118337173154)
Lack of motivation	8	4.0%	"Lack of meaningful success or value to the business. Lack of motivation/excitement to overachieve goals and objectives. Tired of trying/fighting the bureaucracy while many have lower deliverables/expectations." (Participant 118349577897)
Lack of work-life balance	8	4.0%	"Not feeling like I have a proper work/life balance. Feeling like extra efforts are not recognized or rewarded." (Participant 118340387823)
Inability to focus	7	4.0%	"Being overtaxed and overworked to the point that you cannot perform on a manageable consistent level or basis." (Participant 118338597179)

Table 4.11, continued.

Code	Frequency	%	Actual Quote
Reduced energy	7	4.0%	"When a person has reached a point that they no longer have the personal energetic resources to perform their accountabilities, even those that used to feed their energy. "(Participant 118342827092)
Feeling overwhelmed	5	3.0%	"I would describe burnout as a situation in which the volume of work facing an employee exceeds their bandwidth for an extended period of time, overwhelming them and leading to lower motivation and potentially turnover." (Participant 118343039800)
Lack of productivity and effectiveness	5	3.0%	"Lack of motivation, not seeing what/why you are doing something, lack of productivity, lack of efficiency, having your mental health be affected by work." (Participant 118357776719)
Feeling unappreciated and undervalued	4	2.0%	"Doing your best work with no recognition or appreciation." (Participant 118342480115)
Feeling dread	3	2.0%	"Dreading going to work each day, metaphorically spending the day under your desk to avoid new challenges." (Participant 118337433560)

RQ3: What is the current experience of the EOR?

Relationships within an organization were discussed in-depth during the follow-up interviews. By exploring the employees' experiences of their relationships with the organization, we can gain insight into the tacit knowledge and culture of an organization, its operations, and the employees. Participants responded to questions that explored interactions with management, peer and team relationships, and the relationship between engagement and burnout.

A sampling of questions included the following:

- What are your views of leadership?
- What could organizations do to create more understanding and clarity?

- How has the shift to remote work impacted your relationships with colleagues and clients?
- What fosters building strong relationships for you?
- How do you navigate building relationships in a virtual work environment?
- Do you see a relationship between engagement and burnout?

One hundred twenty-seven data segments were coded from the interviews describing the current employee-organization experience. The employee experience describes and encapsulates the following:

- Interactions with their organization in the current business environment.
- Descriptions of the organization as it relates to leadership, communication, and management practices.
- Perceptions and interpretations of organizational events and dynamics.

The codes were summarized into themes that describe the employee experience, relationship, and organization. The coded segments were grouped into 13 distinct codes.

Table 4.12

Themes and Codes Describing the EOR

Theme	Codes	Description (based on data analysis)
Employee Experience	Employee Satisfaction and Fulfillment	The level of satisfaction an employee experiences and well-being, impact on individual performance, and the factors influencing satisfaction.
	Quality of Relationship	The qualities of the relationships include depth and strength of relationship, value and importance of relationships, and team dynamics.
	Communication	The importance and challenges of communication in building trust, fostering relationships, and managing expectations.
	Work-Life Balance	Employee experience and current levels of work-life balance and the impact of virtual work, boundaries, and workload.
	Flexibility and Adaptability	The pace of change in technology and the impact to relationships.
Relationship	Building Relationships	The importance of building relationships and the factors impacting relationships, such as connection, proximity, and presence.
	Connection and Relationships	Factors that impact the strength of relationships and level of connection such as respect and appreciation.
	Importance of Trust and Communication	The importance of building trust and open communication to foster relationships.
	Engagement and Team Dynamics	Dynamics and climate of work teams and the impact on relationships and performance.
	Professional Development and Growth	The investment in employees and opportunities for growth and development as related to the quality of the EOR.
Organization	Organizational Dynamics	Leadership, management practices, and communication that impact the EOR.
	Culture and Mission	An employee's experience of the organization's values, beliefs, and norms.
	Organizational Events	Events (internal and external) that impact an employee's relationship with the organization.

Using Pareto Analysis (Table 4.13), the top eight themes were identified that describe the current experience of the EOR.

Table 4.13

Top Eight Themes and Codes Describing the Experience of the EOR

Theme	Codes	Freq	%
Organization	Organizational Dynamics	20	16.0%
Relationship	Building Relationships	17	13.0%
Relationship	Connection and Relationships	16	13.0%
Organization	Culture and Mission	12	9.0%
Employee Experience	Employee Satisfaction and Fulfillment	11	9.0%
Employee Experience	Quality of Relationship	11	9.0%
Relationship	Importance of Trust and Communication	10	8.0%
Relationship	Engagement and Team Dynamics	6	5.0%

Organizational Dynamics (16.0%) was a significant topic impacting the quality of the EOR. The interview participants described the impact of leadership styles and communication in fostering relationships and the effect of management decisions and processes.

Participant 118337433560 described the leadership style of the CEO as relatable. The CEO would share personal stories and make himself available to employees. For Participant 118337433560, this style creates a strong sense of community within the organization.

> Our CEO tries to talk to as many people as he can. It's important to him for everyone to feel like he's not just this person who you can't talk to. He makes himself a human instead of just the CEO of the company. I feel like when people see a human versus just this man who created a company; it makes it that much better to work for him in general. He tells everybody, look, we are all doing something together.

Participant 118308046043 shared about challenging organizational processes that have a negative impact on efficiency and engagement. Multiple acquisitions resulted in overlapping processes. The Participant described the “corporate minutiae” and bureaucracy as draining and taking time away from meaningful work.

Participant 118308046043 describes the “roller coaster” of organizational change as having a negative impact on relationships and engagement. After the expansion in the tech industry and the shift to working virtual in response to the pandemic, there have been waves of layoffs, cost cutting, and shifting of benefits. The waves of change over a short time period have negatively impacted engagement and the employee’s relationship with the organization.

Participant 118314871030 shared about unrealistic expectations: the participant described constant expectations to be available and always on, which created a highly competitive and high-pressure environment. These unrealistic organizational expectations lead to stress, disengagement, and burnout.

Building relationships (13.0%) emerged as an important theme in the data analysis. The interviews revealed that trust and connection were important in building and maintaining relationships. In a research project conducted by Participant 118337425057, he found trust in management to be directly linked to increased job satisfaction and decreased turnover intent. His study found that trust telegraphs down the organization as many as four levels in the organization chart. In this participant’s career managing large-scale project teams with 100 to 275 people, he put these findings into practice by building strong relationships “with his direct reports and encouraging them to do the same.” Overall, this participant found strong relationships to foster trust, satisfaction, and performance.

As shared by Participant 118308046043,

> The degree of job satisfaction was directly linked and almost identically scored as the level of trust between the consultant and their manager. That level of trust drove job satisfaction and inversely drove the interest in seeking new employment elsewhere. One of the big surprises for me was to realize that the level of trust telegraphed its way down the org chart at least four layers so that the front level person in the trenches delivering work trusted their team leader.
>
> I made a point of having a decent, you know, a good relationship with my directs. And that then in turn, gave me a very low turnover rate from a staffing perspective. Do things to build personal relationships and go out of your way to build relationships with your directs and then give them some latitude to do the same with their directs so that the protocol, the culture telegraphs its way all the way down. To the extent that that doesn't happen, trust and job satisfaction erodes.

The shift to virtual work environments has changed how relationships develop with clients and colleagues. While clients have embraced virtual meetings, it takes longer to establish and build relationships. Participant 118308046043 was surprised by how quickly organizations were able to shift from in-person meetings to virtual, as they shared the following:

> Definitely, customers are more than happy now to engage virtually and build a relationship that way than they were before. It was remarkable how quickly and how effectively it kicked in. I am still amazed, really.
>
> You can build really good relationships online, but there is still a sort of slight gap there in actually seeing people in person. From a business perspective, it doesn't quite fill

> the gap. In fact, what I've found is that meeting somebody in person, then contacting them virtually is a much more effective.

In shifting to a virtual work environment, Participant 118341685317 found it difficult to build personal relationships. Within an organization, personal relationships foster community and form the foundation of one's support network. As this participant described, as employees gravitate towards virtual communities, there is an impact on the quality and depth of the relationships. Participant 118341685317 described,

> Years ago, you either had a personal contact or you did not know somebody. Nowadays, you have this intermediate thing, which is called friends, in an online community. But are those people the ones you would support any time of the day? Definitely not."

Connections and Relationships (13.0%) was a notable theme encompassing the factors describing the quality and strengthening of the EORs. Participants shared that respect, appreciation, and recognition fostered stronger relationships and loyalty. When efforts and experience go unrecognized, the relationship erodes, leaving people "feeling disrespected and devalued," as described by Participant 118339200170. Participant 118342772051 shared, "Having your effort or your opinion disregarded or devalued was always difficult for me." Participant 118341999662 that recognition and feeling valued for his work and the team's work are key. He said, "I think making sure people are valued is that's a big thing for me. Myself, the team that they're getting, that they have that appreciation and that we're investing in them so that they can leave the organization better than they came in."

The codes Organizational Dynamics, Building Relationships, and Connection account for 42% of the coded data segments relating to EORs. This analysis provided insight into the employee experience of work and the relationships that influence engagement and burnout.

To reiterate, the goals of Phase 2: Qualitative Method were to describe the modern-day experience of engagement and burnout and understand the experience of the EOR using data from the open-ended survey questions to describe the themes and codes; follow-up interviews were used to examine the EOR. Over 2,815 data segments were coded in the thematic analysis process. Outcomes from the thematic analysis included themes, patterns, and trends in the qualitative data for engagement, burnout, and the EOR. The themes were prioritized using the Pareto Principle, which states that 80.0% of results are produced by 20.0% of efforts.

The top themes describing the employee experience of engagement consisted of the following:

- Alignment and contribution in which an employee feels aligned to their work and makes a contribution to an organization's mission and goals.
- Employee satisfaction expressed as an employee's level of enthusiasm for their work and workplace and satisfaction with their work.
- Autonomy and empowerment in which employees were trusted and empowered to work in ways that enabled success.

The key themes that described the employee experience of burnout consisted of the following:

- Mental, emotional, and physical exhaustion described as the result of lack of support, hallow promises, unrealistic expectations, and a reoccurring pattern of excessive hours.
- Chronic state of fatigue and stress described as the prolonged stress or excessive hours leading to discontent, frustration, and exhaustion.

- No longer caring about work was consistently described as the state in which an employee is no longer committed to the success of the organization.

The key themes describing the current experience of the EOR consisted of:

- Organizational dynamics described the impact of leadership styles and communication in fostering relationships and effect of management decisions and processes.
- Building relationships in which trust and connection were described by the participants as crucial for building and maintaining relationships.
- Connections and relationships encompassed factors which described the quality of the EOR and factors which strengthened the EOR such as respect, appreciation, and recognition.

The following section, Phase 3: Synthesis, organizes the quantitative and qualitative data to support organizations moving from insights and awareness to action.

Phase 3: Synthesis

The goal of the synthesis phase was to integrate, organize, and then analyze the results of the quantitative and qualitative phases (Burke Johnson & Christensen, 2019). Synthesis is an interactive process of mixing the data sets for analysis and developing diagrams for communicating insights and findings.

The goals of synthesis were to:

- Conduct data analysis on the integrated data set using quantitative data to statistically describe the problem and qualitative data from follow-up interviews to clarify and expand the results.
- Identify the levers that foster engagement and mitigate the potential for burnout.

- Examine the potential impact on organizational performance using turnover intent as a metric.

By combining the quantitative and qualitative data, this phase addresses the following research question:

RQ4: What can be learned from the synthesizing the data regarding turnover intent?

The remainder of this section describes the approach to synthesis and analysis of the combined data set.

Approach to Synthesis

The synthesis phase was guided by the rationale and purpose for integrating quantitative and qualitative data: complementarity and expansion. Greene et al. (1989) defined complementarity as the clarification of outcomes between the quantitative and qualitative phases, whereas expansion is the widening of the overall results using both quantitative and qualitative data. As a strategy guiding the integration and analysis, the quantitative data describes the magnitude of the problem by identifying the significance of the relationships between the major variables and the impact on turnover intent. The qualitative data provides rich descriptions, stories, and narratives that illustrate, clarify, and expand the quantitative results.

The following business process tools were used to support synthesis:

- Burke-Litwin Causal Model of Organization Performance and Change (Burke, 2018). The qualitative themes and sub-themes were classified based on the Burke-Litwin dimensions and processes to support the analysis process. This data was used to identify relationships between the organizational processes and conduct cause and effect analysis.

- Pareto Analysis. The Pareto Principle also referred to as the 80/20 rule, in which 80.0% of the results are produced by 20.0% of the efforts (Koch, 1999). The qualitative themes and sub-themes were quantitized to identify the frequency of the data expressed in surveys and interviews. The themes and sub-themes were prioritized using the Pareto Principle.
- Fishbone. A fishbone diagram was used to communicate the combined data analysis. The fishbone diagram developed by Kaoru Ishikawa is used to model and diagram cause and effect relationships (Juran, 1999). To communicate the results of the synthesis, the fish head quantitatively described the problem, and the fish bones communicated the combined quantitative and qualitative data.

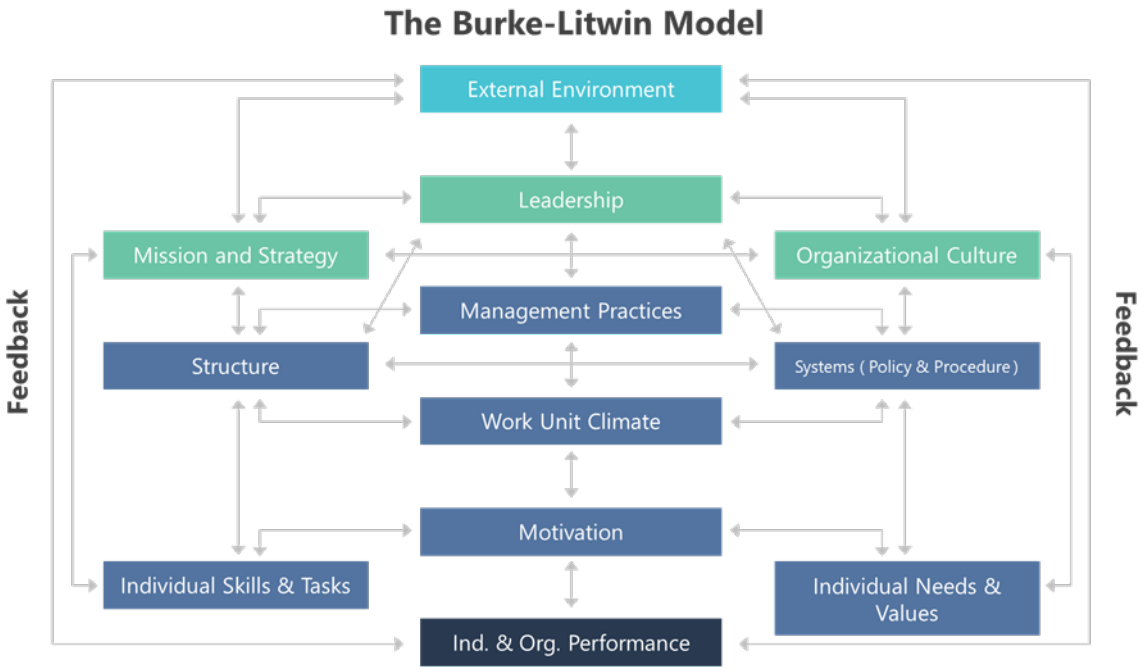
The synthesis process consisted of the following steps:

1. Summarizing quantitative data to describe the impact of EOR, engagement and burnout on the problem of turnover intent.
2. Categorize the qualitative themes and codes based on the dimensions from Burke-Litwin.
3. Conduct Pareto Analysis on the data.
4. Using a fishbone diagram, communicate the findings.

The Burke-Litwin Causal Model (Burke & Litwin, 1992) is an organizational diagnostic tool that describes an organization in terms of transformational and transactional dimensions. These dimensions are further subdivided into twelve different processes, which are linked by arrows indicating flow and causation. As a diagnostic tool, the Burke-Litwin shown below (Figure 4.2) provided a framework to categorize and re-group the themes to conduct cause and effect analysis.

Figure 4.3

Burke-Litwin Causal Model used to Categorize Themes and Sub-Themes



The previously coded data and themes were organized and classified based on the dimensions and processes of the Burke-Litwin outlined in Table 4.14. Following the categorization, the data was analyzed to identify the relationships and causal links based on the flow between the different processes.

Table 4.14

Burke-Litwin Dimensions and Processes

Dimensions	Processes	Descriptions (Burke, 2018)
External	External Environment	Conditions, events, and variables outside the organization
Transformational	Leadership	Those who provide direction within the organization to inform, influence, and persuade in pursuit of mission and strategy
	Mission And Strategy	Organization's purpose and how it will be accomplished.
	Culture	The values, norms, rules, and ways of working within the organization.
Transactional	Management Practices	The role and processes focused on meeting everyday goals and objectives.
	Structure	Design and layout of functions within the organization to achieve its mission.
	Systems (Policies and Procedures)	Policies and procedures that enable work to be done.
	Work Unit Climate	Collective feelings, expectations, and perceptions of the members of a workgroup.
	Task Requirements/Individual Skills	Requirements and responsibilities of the role and function.
	Motivation	Desire to achieve the goals of the organization.
	Individual Needs and Values	The values and needs of an individual which are met through their work.
Performance	Individual and Organizational Performance	Results and outcomes of both the individual and organization.

Analysis

Quantitative Findings. As described in the quantitative phase, the findings revealed a strong negative correlation of 0.69 between EOR and turnover intent. Burnout and turnover intent show a strong positive correlation of is 0.63. A weak negative correlation of -0.27 was observed between Engagement and Turnover Intent.

The factors impacting turnover intent were assessed using multiple linear regression. The analysis found that turnover intent ($\hat{Y}$) is predicted based on EOR (X1), engagement (X2), and burnout (X3) with the equation being $\hat{Y} = 2.865 - 0.344X1 + 0.104X2 + 0.464X3$. In the analysis, 55.4% of the variation in turnover intent can be accounted for by these three predictors which is evidenced by a coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.554.

As described in Table 4.15, EOR and burnout were found to be significant contributors with coefficients of -0.344 and 0.464 respectively, while engagement, with a coefficient of 0.104, was not statistically significant in predicting turnover intent.

Table 4.15

Quantitative Results related to Turnover Intent

Hypothesis	X (IV)	Y (DV)	r	Slope	SE	t-value	R^2	Significant
H3	EOR	Turnover Intent	-.69					
H4	Engagement	Turnover Intent	-.27					
H5	Burnout	Turnover Intent	.63					
H6	Engagement	Turnover Intent		0.104	0.073	1.43	0.554	No
	EOR			-0.344	0.048	-7.10		Yes
	Burnout			0.464	0.090	5.18		Yes

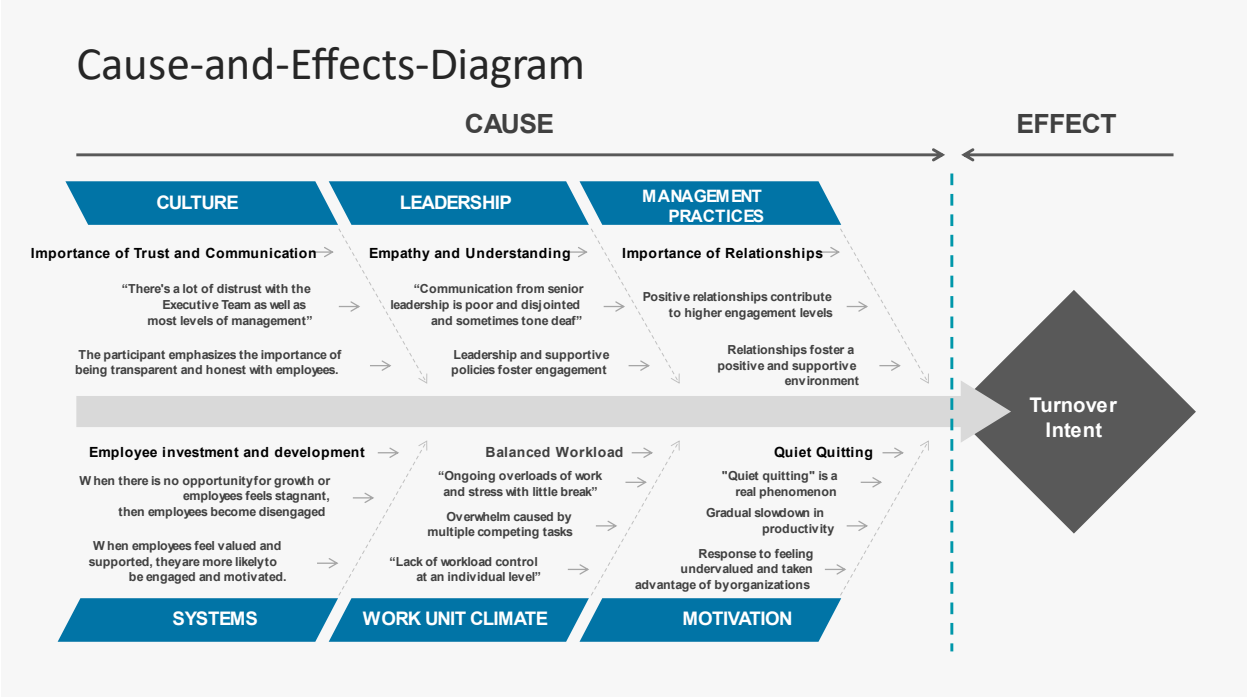
Categorization of Themes and Pareto Analysis. The themes and codes were categorized based on the Burke-Litwin dimensions and processes. For example, data in which a participant discussed culture, beliefs, and values was categorized under "Culture," while references to daily operations were categorized under "Management Practices." Pareto Analysis was used to prioritize the newly added Burke-Litwin categories to identify the most relevant dimensions and processes and create a focused data set for analysis. Categorizing the qualitative

themes and codes using Burke-Litwin provided a model that describes the organizational context for the employee experience of EOR, engagement, and burnout. The prioritized themes by Burke-Litwin dimensions and participant quotes are described in Appendix G.

Fishbone Analysis. A fishbone diagram (Figure 4.3) was used to communicate the findings of the synthesis. The fish head quantitatively described the organizational problem of turnover intent, and the fish bones communicated the combined quantitative and qualitative data. The main bones of the diagram represent the Burke-Litwin processes: culture, leadership, management practices, systems, work unit climate, and motivation. For each process, a major cause was identified and described. The causes identified represent a summary of 38 sub-themes that support fostering a positive EOR and engagement while mitigating the potential for burnout. Following are the main themes based on the Burke-Litwin category.

Figure 4.4

Fishbone Cause and Effects Diagram Based on Analysis using Pareto Analysis and Burke-Litwin

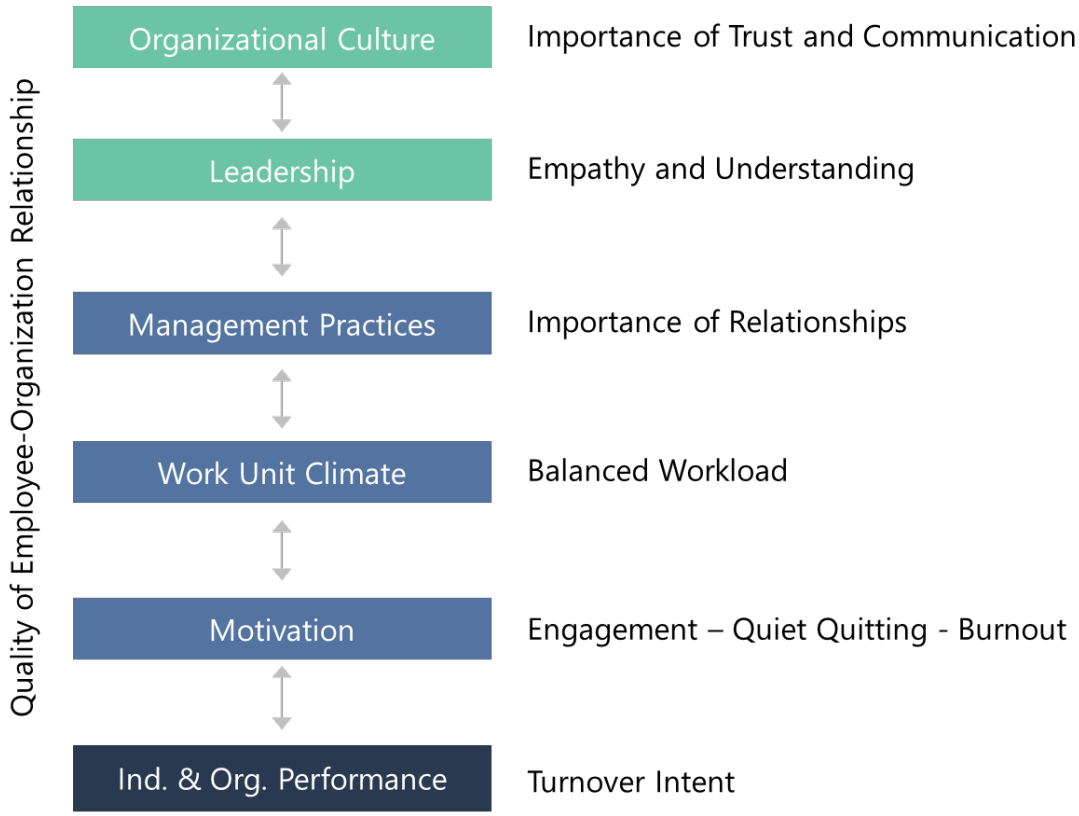


RQ4: What can be learned from the synthesizing the data regarding Turnover Intent?

Burke-Litwin serves as a framework to support the cause-and-effect analysis. Mapping the qualitative themes and codes of EOR, engagement, and burnout onto to the model provided a mechanism for answering the research question. Following are the qualitative themes and codes mapped onto the Burke-Litwin model (Figure 4.4).

Figure 4.5

Mapped Model of Qualitative Themes onto the Burke-Litwin Model



The mapped model provides an overview the current employee experience of work. At the level of Organizational Culture, participants described the importance of trust and value of communication as a core value of the company's culture. At the level of Leadership, participants

described the behaviors and qualities impacting the employee experience of work. In Management Practices, participants identified the quality of and types of relationship within the organizational environment. The Work Unit Climate was described by participants in the context of a balance workload. Motivation, as the desire to achieve organizational goals was characterized by participants as a scale ranging from engagement to quiet quitting to burnout. While Systems such as policies and procedures influence the employee experience of work, it was not part of the direct causal chain between Organizational Culture and Motivation.

Within Burke-Litwin, the arrows between the processes are bidirectional. The direction of arrows indicates the direction of influence and impact. For example, an employee who is quietly quitting may be impacted by an imbalance in workload. In the interviews, participants described job creep in which the scope of their current duties expanded, and other participants shared about excessive hours worked. In these instances, participants were actively disengaged and feeling exhausted. Specific participant quotes can be found in Appendix A.

Each process within the mapped model affects the EOR positively or negatively thereby influencing engagement and burnout; and impacting turnover intent. Based on the quantitative data, as shown in Table 4.15, as the quality of the EOR increases, engagement increases while burnout and turnover intent decrease. Conversely, as the quality of the EOR decreases, engagement decreases, and the potential for burnout and turnover intent increase. Based on the qualitative data, the themes and processes were identified that impact the quality of the EOR and turnover intent.

Table 4.16 below summarizes the mapped model identifying the effect of downward causal chain and upward impact of feedback.

Table 4.16

Causal Linkages and Feedback Using Burke-Litwin

Burke-Litwin	Theme	Cause and Effect	Feedback
Culture	Importance of Trust and Communication	When trust is woven into an organization's culture, it has the potential to cascade throughout the organization.	Participants described the importance of trust and the value of communication. Good communication processes support employees in feeling heard and valued, while trust is key to building relationships.
Leadership	Empathy and Understanding	Leaders, as role models within the organization, are tasked with carrying out the organization's mission and strategy. When leaders interact with empathy and understanding, they build and cascade strong positive relationships and open communications throughout the organization.	Empathy and understanding were identified as essential leadership qualities for building positive relationships and fostering open communications. Participants described a lack of empathy and understanding as fostering a culture of fear and toxicity, leading to disengagement and potentially burnout. Empathy and understanding are necessary to understand different perspectives and strengthen relationships.
Management Practices	Importance of Relationships	Relationships have become more transactional in nature due to the transition to virtual environments. There is a loss of personal relationships; relationships take longer to build, and connections lack depth and meaning.	While working virtual enables employees to work without disruption, there is a negative impact on the formation of support networks, positive relationships, and a sense of community and belonging

Table 4.16, continued.

Burke-Litwin	Theme	Cause and Effect	Feedback
Work Unit Climate	Balanced Workload	While the shift to virtual environment provides for less disruption, the time has been consumed with needless meetings, micromanagement, and permeable boundaries.	Some forms of burnout are associated with workload. Employees report experiencing multiple competing tasks, excessive workload, and job creep.
Motivation	Current Employee Experience	Motivation reflects the current employee experience ranging between engagement and burnout. it is an indicator of one's desire to achieve organizational goals.	Engagement reflects one's alignment with organizational goals and a feeling of contribution and commitment. Quiet quitting is a form of disengagement in response to toxic cultures, poor leadership, work overload, feeling dismissed or devalued, and a lack of appreciation or recognition. Burnout is described as a state of chronic stress and fatigue in which an employee no longer cares.

Examining the causal linkages and feedback using Burke-Litwin provides a roadmap for understanding how to improve the quality of the EOR, foster engagement, mitigate the potential for burnout, and reduce turnover intent.

Summary

In summary, Chapter 4 presented the data analysis and results of the study by phase. The study consisted of three phases to analyze the data and report the findings. Together, the findings from these phases were used to address the four research questions.

Phase 1 addressed the analysis of the quantitative data in order to examine and describe the major study variables: EOR, engagement, burnout, and turnover intent. This phase consisted of correlation analysis, linear regression analysis, and testing the six hypotheses.

Phase 2 addressed the data analysis of the qualitative data in order to understand the employee experience of the EOR, engagement, and burnout. In this phase, thematic analysis was used to explore the open-ended survey data and interview data to identify themes, patterns, and trends in the qualitative data.

Phase 3 synthesized the quantitative and qualitative data to conduct data analysis on the integrated data set. The quantitative data described the problem by identifying the significance of the relationships between the major variables and the impact on turnover intent. The qualitative data provided narratives and descriptions that clarified and illustrated the quantitative results.

The next chapter, Chapter 5, provides an interpretation and discussion of the results. This chapter includes a discussion of the results, limitations, implications for practice, and recommendations for future research.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations

Introduction

Chapter 5 presents a summary of the study, the findings related to the literature, and discusses the limitations and recommendations for further research.

Summary

The modern-day employee experience of work ranges from employees feeling engaged to employees experiencing burnout. Research reports that 23% of the workforce is reportedly engaged and thriving, 59% are disengaging or "quietly quitting," and 28% are experiencing job-induced burnout (Brassey et al., 2022; Gallup, Inc., 2023).

As employees shift along this range of experiences, the individual and operational impacts can be significant (Gabriel & Aguinis, 2022). Low wellbeing and burnout can reduce cognitive functioning, increase the risk of insomnia, and elevate health risks such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and hypertension. Operationally, performance degrades, and turnover intent increases as employees disengage and experience poor wellbeing (Saks, 2017). The global cost of low engagement is estimated at $8.8 trillion, while the organizational cost of burnout is estimated at $300 billion annually in medical, turnover, and decreased productivity (Gallup, Inc., 2023; Peart, 2019).

Recent research, including McKinsey's, "The State of the Organizations 2023," highlights a disconnect in how employers and employees perceive job dissatisfaction and reasons for leaving a role (Guggenberger et al., 2023). The survey found employers to be transactionally focused and oriented on the business, while employees valued the relational aspects of work.

This disconnect suggests fundamental relational issues between employees and their organizations.

The disconnect between employees and organizations indicates underlying relational issues. Eldor and Vigoda-Gadot (2016) described high levels of engagement an indicator of a positive employee-organization relationship (EOR). While, Maslach (2017) and Leiter (2022) view burnout as evolving from relationship problems rather than individual factors or resource imbalances. Thus, engagement is evidence of a balanced relationship, while quiet quitting and burnout are evidence of a dysfunctional relationship between an organization and its employees (Krekel et al., 2019; Maslach & Leiter, 2017b).

The purpose of the study was to explore the role of the employee-organization relationship on engagement, burnout, and its impact on turnover intentions. While there is an abundance of engagement-burnout literature (Bakker et al., 2023), what is not fully understood is what influences and impacts the individual experience, causing an employee to shift between engagement and burnout and to what degree it impacts turnover intent in today's business landscape. Despite extensive research on how job resources and job demands affect an employee's work experience, the specific role of the employee-organization relationship (EOR) in this context is not fully understood (Lee et al., 2020; Schaufeli, 2017b).

The goal of this mixed methods study was to explore and understand the EOR as it relates to engagement and burnout in order to:

- describe the contemporary experience of engagement and burnout,
- identify the factors that impact the EOR,
- define levers that foster engagement and mitigate burnout, and
- examine turnover intent as a metric that impacts organizational performance.

A convergent mixed methods design was used to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: How does the EOR impact and influence engagement and burnout?

RQ2: What is the employee experience of engagement and burnout?

RQ3: What is the current experience of the EOR?

RQ4: What can be learned from the synthesizing the data regarding turnover intent?

The study used a mixed methods approach with three phases: quantitative, qualitative, and synthesis. The quantitative and qualitative phases were conducted in parallel; the results were analyzed separately. The data was merged and analyzed in a synthesis phase. This approach provided a methodology to examine and describe the problem from a quantitative and qualitative perspective. The quantitative phase was used to describe the magnitude and impact of the problem, while the qualitative phase provided insights into the individual experience and deeper dimensions of the problem. Using a synthesis phase to combine the quantitative and qualitative results identified new insights, patterns, and trends around the employee experience of engagement and burnout.

The sample of interest for this study included professionals working in the tech industry. The tech industry is described as those organizations conducting business in information technology, such as computer software, hardware, cloud services, and related consulting services (Frankenfield, 2022). Using convenience and snowball sampling, 155 tech professionals participated in an online survey. While 87 participants volunteered for a follow-up interview, 46 tech professionals participated in 30-minute follow-up interviews.

Phase 1: Quantitative Method

The goal for this phase was to improve the understanding of engagement and burnout in the tech industry by applying the lens of the EOR and using statistical measures to explore and understand the data. Phase 1 addressed the following research question: how does the employee-organization relationship (EOR) impact and influence engagement and burnout?

The study used a correlational design to analyze the relationships and predictive value of the major variables: EOR, engagement, burnout, and turnover intent. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the variables, while correlation analysis and regression testing were employed to identify and quantify their relationships.

The EOR was found to have a positive but weak relationship with engagement ($r = .33$), a moderate negative relationship with burnout ($r = -.60$), and a moderate negative relationship with turnover intent ($r = - -.69$). The hypothesis testing consisted of testing six different hypotheses to explore the different relationships using ordinary least squares regression.

Phase 2: Qualitative Method

The goals of Phase 2 were to:

- describe the modern-day experience of engagement and burnout; and
- understand the modern-day experience of the EOR.

Phase 2 used the data from the open-ended survey and one-on-one interviews to address the following research questions:

RQ2: What is the employee experience of engagement and burnout?

RQ3: What is the current experience of the EOR?

In this phase, thematic analysis was used to explore the open-ended survey data and interview data. The employee analytic framework (Guest, 2017) was used to develop an initial

code book for the deductive coding of data. MaxQDA was used to code 46 interviews and 297 responses from the open-ended survey questions. Over 2,815 data segments were coded in the thematic analysis process. Outcomes from the thematic analysis included themes, patterns, and trends in the qualitative data for engagement, burnout, and the EOR. The themes were prioritized using the Pareto Principle, which states that 80.0% of results are produced by 20.0% of efforts (Koch, 1999).

The primary themes describing the employee experience of engagement included alignment and contribution, employee satisfaction, and autonomy and empowerment. The current experience of burnout is characterized by mental, emotional, and physical exhaustion, a chronic state of fatigue, and no longer caring. The key themes describing the experience of EOR included organizational dynamics, building relationships, and connections and relationships.

Phase 3: Synthesis

The goal of the synthesis phase was to integrate, organize, and then analyze the results of the quantitative and qualitative phases (Burke Johnson & Christensen, 2019). Synthesis is an interactive process of mixing the data sets for analysis and developing diagrams for communicating insights and findings. The goals of synthesis were to:

- Conduct data analysis on the integrated data set using quantitative data to statistically describe the problem and qualitative data from follow-up interviews to clarify and expand the results.
- Identify the levers that foster engagement and mitigate the potential for burnout.
- Examine the potential impact on organizational performance using turnover intent as a metric.

By combining the quantitative and qualitative data, this phase addresses the following research question:

RQ4: What can be learned from the synthesizing the data regarding turnover intent?

Phase 3 used the following business process tools to support the synthesis: the Burke-Litwin Causal Model of Organization Performance and Change, Pareto Analysis, and Fishbone Analysis. The Burke-Litwin Causal Model (Burke, 2018) was used to categorize the qualitative themes and sub-themes to identify relationships between organizational processes and support cause and effect analysis. The Pareto Principle (Koch, 1999), which asserts that 80% of results come from 20% of efforts, was used to prioritize the themes and sub-themes based on the frequency of the data expressed in surveys and interviews. Additionally, the fishbone diagram, conceived by Kaoru Ishikawa (Juran, 1999), was leveraged to visually represent and communicate the integrated data analysis, with the fish head defining the problem and the fish bones depicting quantitative and qualitative data insights.

Mapping the categorized themes and sub-themes onto the Burke-Litwin model provided a visual diagram of the organizational context as it relates to EOR, engagement, burnout, and turnover intent. Together, this diagram provides an overview of the current employee experience of work. Each process within the mapped model affects the EOR positively or negatively, influencing engagement and burnout, and impacting turnover intent. Based on the quantitative data, as shown in Table 4.15, as the quality of the EOR increases, engagement increases while burnout and turnover intent decrease. Conversely, as the quality of the EOR decreases, engagement decreases, and the potential for burnout and turnover Intent increases. Based on the qualitative data, the themes and processes that impact the quality of the EOR and turnover intent were identified. The mapped model based on Burke-Litwin provides a roadmap for

understanding how to improve the quality of the EOR, foster engagement, mitigate the potential for burnout, and reduce turnover intent.

The remainder of this chapter addresses the major findings related to the literature and discusses the limitations and recommendations for further research.

Major Findings

The study revealed how the contemporary experience of work is impacting the relationship between employees and their organization. The quality and nature of the relationship between an employee and their organization affects the employee's perceptions of work, day-to-day interactions, and impacts engagement and well-being (Guest, 2017). This finding is supported by the quantitative findings where the EOR was found to have a positive relationship with engagement (0.33) and a negative relationship with Burnout (−0.60). Linear regression in the quantitative phase indicates that EOR explains approximately 10.8% of the variance in Engagement ($R^2 = 0.1081$). With a significant t-value of 4.31, every unit increase in EOR results in a 0.205 increase in engagement. For the relationship between EOR and burnout, the linear regression analysis shows that EOR accounts for about 36.1% of Burnout's variance ($R^2 = 0.361$). The significant t-value (−9.30) implies that for every unit increase in EOR, Burnout drops by 0.358.

The literature describes the business landscape as continually being transformed as organizations work towards a new normal (Vyas, 2022). In the qualitative findings, employees describe this continuous change and uncertainty as a "roller coaster" of change having a negative impact on relationships and engagement (Participant 118308046043).

Beyond the pandemic, the experience of work continues to be influenced by the effects of where people work, technostress, and the balancing of work and life (Grant et al., 2019).

Where People Work. The shifting between remote work to return to work has created conflict between organizations and their workforce. Organizations assert that working in person is better for business as it supports collaboration and builds culture, while employees have expressed a preference to work remote as they feel more productive (Gibson et al., 2023). Employees are concerned about the loss of flexibility and autonomy, the effect on productivity, and the need to travel to an office to conduct business that could be done remotely (Robinson, 2023).

In the qualitative findings, employees illuminated the need for organizations to trust employees to make decisions and empower employees to work in ways that enable success, such as the flexibility to work from home (Participant 118354048222). As characteristics of the EOR, the levels of perceived autonomy and trust contribute to the quality of the EOR (Guest, 2017). Participant 118337083164 described employees feeling engaged when "they feel supported and empowered and have the autonomy to work from a home office and complete tasks relevant to the job." Participant 118354048222 shared that leaders should trust their team members to do their jobs and make decisions, allowing individuals to work in their preferred manner to be successful. Without trust, a toxic work environment can develop.

Technostress. The contemporary experience of work is impacted by technostress. Technostress is a complex concept related to the stress caused by using information and computer technology (ICT) (Tarafdar et al., 2007, p. 1). Various factors contribute to technostress, such as dealing with information overload, continuously adapting to new technologies, and always being connected to technology (Molino et al., 2020). As employees transitioned to remote work, organizations became reliant on technology to conduct business, and expectations of when and how to work changed significantly (Bondanini et al., 2020). Described as the dark side of technology, technostress has been found to contribute to the potential for burnout (Bondanini et

al., 2020; Ferrara et al., 2022). This aligns with the qualitative findings in which employees share about unrealistic expectations to always be connected. Participant 118314871030 described constant expectations to be available and "always on," which created a high-pressure environment.

Technostress can potentially erode the quality of the EOR with demands for constant connectivity and information overload (Tarafdar et al., 2011). While organizations have become increasingly reliant on technology to conduct business, the increased volume of communication, such as emails, texts, and back-to-back video meetings, has led to information overload and multitasking, which erodes performance and contributes to exhaustion and potential burnout (Wang et al., 2020). Participants describe the need for boundaries to disconnect from technology, no-call zones, enforced breaks, and email restrictions during vacations (Participant 118344291080).

Work-Life Balance. The boundaries separating work and personal life have grown increasingly permeable, resulting in a state of "boundarylessness" where activities, responsibilities, and interactions between work and non-work domains have become indistinct and intertwined (Kossek, 2016). As employees navigate blurred boundaries, the qualitative findings illuminate the need for meaningful work, balanced workloads, and the impact of blurred boundaries on relationships.

Meaningful work, described as how one's work contributes to an organization, is a characteristic describing the quality of the EOR (Guest, 2017). Employees want their work to have value and a positive impact (Walton, 1973). The qualitative findings support this point, as the participants described alignment and contribution as significant in the experience of work and engagement. Participant 118342772051 shared, "I think employee engagement is best

measured in terms of meaningful contribution. If I can see that my efforts contribute to the work at hand." Participant 118349577897 described the "lack of meaningful success and value to the business," which leads to a "lack of motivation and excitement to overachieve goals and objectives." "When an individual feels connected to the goals and mission of their organization and are stimulated by their day-to-day work, they feel kinship with their peers and leadership" (Participant 118339615053).

Participants described the need for balanced workloads. Workload management is a component of the quality of work-life factors that impact the EOR (Guest, 2017; Walton, 1973). Participants shared that as more tasks are added to their workload, it becomes harder to disconnect from work. Participant 118342483914 shared, "the expected workload/hours/output exceeds the capacity of the employee to deliver quality output for extended period(s) of time is creating a work-life imbalance." The qualitative findings provided insights based on the need for workload management as participants expressed concerns over the lack of work-life balance, the inability to focus, and feeling overwhelmed. Participants shared the following:

- "Not feeling like I have a proper work/life balance. Feeling like extra efforts are not recognized or rewarded" (Participant 118340387823).
- "Being overtaxed and overworked to the point that you cannot perform on a manageable consistent level or basis" (Participant 118338597179).
- "I would describe burnout as a situation in which the volume of work facing an employee exceeds their bandwidth for an extended period of time, overwhelming them and leading to lower motivation and potentially turnover" (Participant 118343039800).

Impact on Relationships. Relationships, such as social relationships, are a characteristic of the quality of the EOR (Guest, 2017). Fundamentally, how people work has changed, including relationships with customers, colleagues, and leadership (Vyas, 2022). In the virtual setting, it is more difficult to develop relationships (Braier et al., 2021). Meaningfulness impacts work and relationships such that employees want "good social relationships," and the quality of the relationship fosters engagement (Boccoli et al., 2022, p.81).

Themes identified in the qualitative findings describe the qualities of the relationships, including the depth and strength of the relationship, the value and importance of relationships, and team dynamics. Participants shared:

- "You can build really good relationships online, but there is still a sort of slight gap there in actually seeing people in person. From a business perspective, it doesn't quite fill the gap" (Participant 118308046043).
- "Years ago, you either had a personal contact or you did not know somebody. Nowadays, you have this intermediate thing, which is called friends, in an online community. But are those people the ones you would support any time of the day? Definitely not" (Participant 118341685317).
- "One hard thing that changes the entire work environment is, as we're mostly working virtual in the tech environment, it is very hard to get to a more personal relationship, to have a more personal engagement" (Participant 118341685317).
- "I think just having the relationships at work that we have, we're in the office two days a week, and I will say it's kind of a lot better because seeing each other live makes us closer" (Participant 118337098062).

Within an organization, personal relationships foster community and form the foundation of one's support network. As described by Participant 118337425057, trust is built through strong personal relationships within an organization, and trust fosters job satisfaction and has a cascading effect in an organization.

In the contemporary work environment, employees continue to be affected by change and uncertainty as organizations transition to a post-pandemic normal. The "roller coaster" of change, which has been shown in the findings to impact the quality of the EOR, has implications on turnover intent. The quantitative findings found a strong negative correlation of -0.69 between EOR and Turnover Intent. Linear regression indicates that EOR explains approximately 47.2% of the variance in Engagement ($R^2 = 0.472$). With a significant t-value of -11.7, every unit increase in EOR results in a 0.498 decrease in turnover intent. While there is an abundance of information to support change, employee uncertainty and stress result from the rapid rate of change (Gagné et al., 2021). Practices implemented during the pandemic will likely affect employees and organizations for years to come (Gifford, 2022). As the business landscape continues to evolve and organizations contend with change leading to employees experiencing high levels of uncertainty, a focus on improving the quality of the EOR mitigates the potential for burnout and turnover intent.

In summary, the study revealed how the contemporary work experience impacts the relationship between employees and their organization. Fostering a high-quality EOR reduces the potential for burnout and mitigates turnover while increasing engagement. The following highlights the key points of this section:

- The quality of the EOR either fosters engagement or has the potential to contribute to burnout.

- Autonomy and trust increase the quality of the EOR, impacting engagement and burnout.
- Empowering employees to determine the work environment that best supports their ability to be productive positively impacts autonomy and trust.
- Understanding the factors contributing to technostress can increase the quality of the EOR and mitigate the potential of burnout.
- Meaningful work improves the quality of the EOR as employees feel their work contributes to organizational goals.
- Workloads have increased over time, exceeding an employee's capacity, impacting work-life balance, ability to focus, and leaving employees feeling overwhelmed.
- Developing relationships in the virtual setting is difficult, impacting an employee's support network and sense of community.

Unexpected Findings

In this study, three unexpected findings evolved from the synthesis phase: the mapped model, quiet quitting, and the culture of *always on.*

Mapped Model

The mapped model developed in the synthesis phase (Figure 4.4) was an unexpected finding. Mapping the themes of the major variables onto the Burke-Litwin model provided organizations with an overview of the current experience of work and a tool to conduct root cause analysis on the employee experience of engagement and burnout. The model includes the following processes: Organizational Culture, Leadership, Management Practices, Work Unit Climate, and Motivation.

- Organizational Culture: Participants highlighted the importance of trust and communication as core values of the company's culture. Trust and good communication were seen as critical for building strong relationships within the organization.
- Leadership: Empathy and understanding in leadership were identified as essential qualities for fostering positive relationships and open communication. Lack of empathy and understanding in leadership leads to disengagement and potential burnout.
- Management Practices: Due to the transition to virtual work environments, relationships have become more transactional. This shift has led to a loss of personal relationships, making it harder to build meaningful connections and support networks.
- Work Unit Climate: Participants emphasized the need for a balanced workload. The shift to virtual work has brought about challenges such as excessive meetings, micromanagement, and unclear boundaries. These factors can contribute to burnout.
- Motivation: Motivation reflects the current employee experience, ranging between engagement and burnout. It is an indicator of one's desire to achieve organizational goals.

As a tool for root cause analysis, the mapped model can be used in a bottom-up approach to examine the current employee experience. Turnover rates and engagement surveys provide indications of the employee experience where:

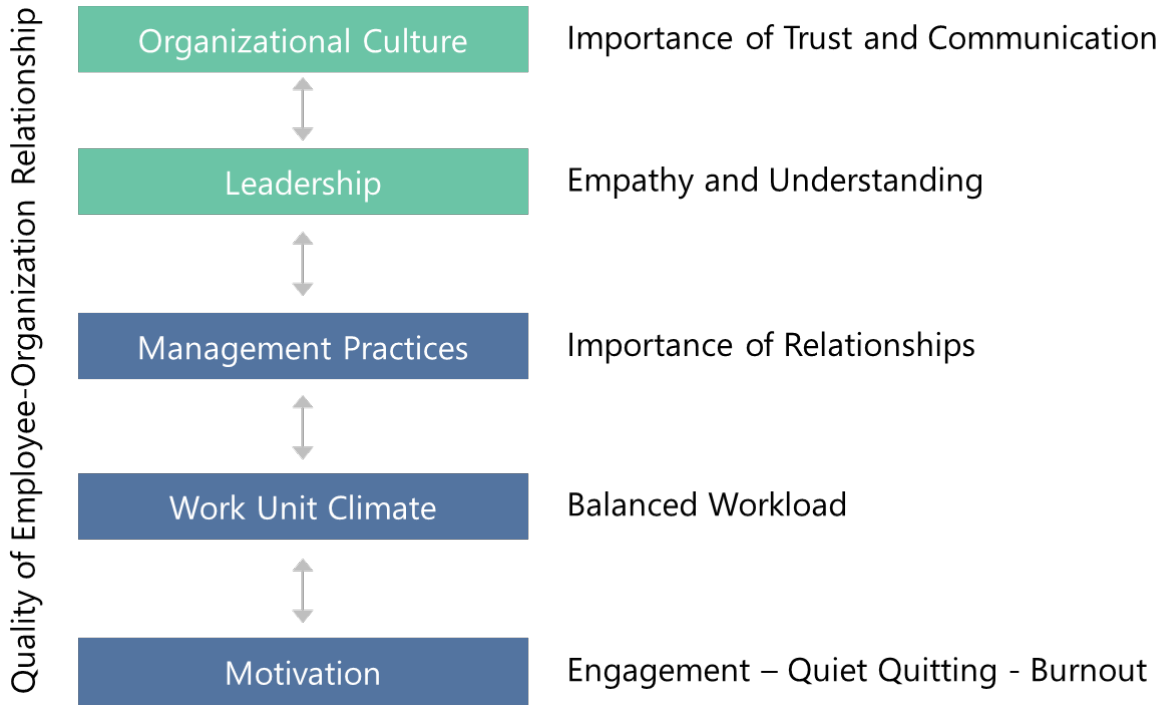
- Engagement reflects one's alignment with organizational goals and a feeling of contribution and commitment.
- Quiet quitting is a form of disengagement that is a response to toxic cultures, poor leadership, work overload, feeling dismissed or devalued, and a lack of appreciation or recognition.

- Burnout is described as a state of chronic stress and fatigue in which an employee no longer cares.

The mapped model provides a framework for understanding the organizational context. Examining each process within the causal chain provides insights into the current employee experience.

Figure 5.1

Mapped Model for Practical Application



Quiet Quitting

"Quiet Quitting was an unexpected finding in this study. Participants described quiet quitting as a real "phenomenon" in the workplace where employees disengage from work or

simply “work to role.” Working to role describes employees who work strictly in accordance with their job description (Formica & Sfodera, 2022). In the qualitative findings, the participants shared:

- The concept of “quiet quitting” refers to an employee going through the motions at work without being fully engaged or motivated. (Participant 118342639585).
- Participant 118337513977 discussed the concept of “quiet quitting” and how the lack of in-person interaction may lead to disengagement and a gradual slowdown in productivity.
- Quiet quitting, where employees disengage and mentally check out, is a phenomenon that has been happening for a long time (Participant 118340380767).
- Participant 118341999662 shares his perspective on “quiet quitting,” suggesting that it may be a response to feeling undervalued and taken advantage of by organizations.

In the literature, quiet quitting is evidence of disengagement and an employee’s strategy for dealing with stress and burnout (Richardson, 2023). The qualitative findings identified signs of quiet quitting, including reduced productivity and disinterest. While the term may be a result of social media, the practice of disengaging from work is not. As shared by the participants, quiet quitting was a response to toxic cultures, poor leadership, work overload, feeling dismissed or devalued, and a lack of appreciation or recognition.

Culture of Always On

The concept of *always on* in the organizational context refers to the expectation that employees should always be available, connected, and responsive (Barber et al., 2023). The *always on* culture has intensified due to remote work and the use of technology such as smartphones (Molino et al., 2020). Constant connection and responsiveness have led to increased

emotional exhaustion and disrupted work-life balance (Belkin et al., 2020). Overall, the organizational demands have exceeded employees' capacities with a negative impact to well-being and performance (Molino et al., 2020)

While the concept of *always on* was not examined in the quantitative phase, it was a prevalent theme in the literature describing the contemporary work experience and a strong theme in the qualitative phase as participants described their experiences of burnout. The themes identified in the qualitative findings are presented in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1

Themes associated with the Culture of Always On and Burnout

Theme	Description	Participant Quote
Unrealistic Expectations and Insufficient Support	The expectation to "always be on" leads to increased pressure and job demands, with support available to manage the demands or expectations.	"Corporate burnout to me is the increased expectation on performance by management while not supporting, new, creative or innovative approaches to help contributors navigate the new hybrid/ remote landscape" (Participant 118365017478). "Unable to keep up with 100s of daily emails. Too much on my plate and feeling guilty about things falling off of it (being forgotten) and not delivered in a timely manner" (Participant 118341486253).
Overwork and Time Imbalance	In the *always on* culture, employees find themselves working longer days, impacting needs for rest and daily recovery.	Being overtaxed and "overworked to the point that you cannot perform on a manageable consistent level or basis" (Participant 118338597179). "When effort and demands outstrip interest and time available" (Participant 118344520637).
High-Stress Environments with Few Breaks	The continuous connectivity of *always on* fuels stress as days become fractured, and there is less time for breaks	"I would describe burnout as the process of working in a high stress environment with few breaks for a period of time until you can no longer sustain the pace and crash either in terms of professional output, mental well-being, or both" (Participant 118343318256).
Lack of Recognition and Growth	As *always on* has shifted to the norm, individual efforts go unappreciated.	"Feeling like extra efforts are not recognized or rewarded. Giving too much personally and not taking proper care of myself "(Participant 118340387823)."Doing your best work with no recognition or appreciation" (Participant 118342480115).
Work-life Imbalance	Being *always on* disrupts work-life balance.	"Individual work activities performed without understanding overall objective, or not performed with care and thought about outcomes. Work responsibility intrudes on personal life" (Participant 118342639585).

Based on the literature and qualitative findings, the culture of *always on* can be a reality in organizations. It will become imperative for organizations to manage expectations and provide leadership to support employees in navigating the *always on* culture and balancing work and life (Belkin et al., 2020).

Implications

The purpose of this mixed methods study was to explore and understand the EOR as it relates to engagement and burnout in order to (a) describe the contemporary experience of engagement and burnout, (b) identify the factors that impact the EOR, (c) define levers that foster engagement and mitigate burnout, and (d) examine turnover intent as a metric that impacts organizational performance. The findings of this study contribute to the existing knowledge base and business practice. This section includes the theoretical and practical implications, the study's limitations, and recommended future research.

Theoretical Implications

This study has multiple implications for the existing body of knowledge: (a) expanding the use of the employee analytic framework, (b) examining the experience of engagement and burnout using a relational lens, and (c) enhancing the burnout assessment tool with qualitative findings.

Expanding the Use of the Employee Analytic Framework. In this study, the employee analytic framework (Guest, 2017) served as the basis for the theoretical framework and the initial codes for the qualitative analysis. In this model, Guest argues that processes that support a positive EOR are directly responsible for improving employee well-being and individual and organizational performance. The study provided empirical evidence that the quality of the EOR impacts the employee experience of engagement and burnout. The mixed methods findings

support a positive relationship between the EOR and engagement, such that efforts to improve the quality of the EOR will increase engagement. As previously stated, a strong finding was the negative relationship between EOR, in which increasing the quality of the EOR will decrease burnout and turnover intention.

Examining the Experience of Engagement and Burnout Using a Relational Lens. Historically, engagement and burnout have been approached from the perspective of balancing job demands and job resources. Examining engagement and burnout using the EOR widens the research lens beyond the traditional research approach. The emergent themes from the qualitative findings, such as organizational dynamics, building relationships, and connections, expand the understanding of how the EOR impacts engagement and burnout. The qualitative narratives and employee experiences describe the importance of building relationships and connections, supporting the assertion that the relationship between an employee and their organization impacts engagement and burnout.

Enhancing the Burnout Assessment Tool with Qualitative Findings. There are known limitations with the BAT. According to Schaufeli et al. (2020b), during the conceptualization, interviews were conducted with mixed general practitioners and psychologists who worked with burnout patients. However, the conceptualization did not include interviews with burnout patients. This study provides qualitative findings that explore the employee experience of burnout. Qualitative themes such as mental, emotional, and physical exhaustion and chronic state of fatigue and stress validate the BAT (Schaufeli et al., 2020b), while detailed narratives expand the understanding of the burnout experience.

Practical Implications

The study has multiple implications for supporting business practice by providing a foundation for informed decision-making that reflects the needs and expectations of employees in the modern-day environment.

Emerging Trends. The study provides data on emerging trends to support strategic planning and prioritization of initiatives. Key trends to be considered include the importance of the employee-organization relationship in fostering engagement and well-being, the level of disengagement evidenced by quiet quitting, and workload and work-life imbalances fostered by a culture of *always on.*

Tools for Analysis. Using Burke-Litwin as the basis for the mapped model provides a holistic view of the employee experience of work. Changes in any of the processes have the potential to cascade change throughout the organization (Burke & Litwin, 1992). The mapped model provides a tool for top-down cause and effect analysis and bottom-up root cause analysis.

Leadership. Leaders are provided with insights to foster engagement and empower the workforce. Themes from the qualitative findings identified key employee needs and expectations: (a) open and transparent communications, (b) an environment that supports building relationships, (c) work that is recognized as valuable and contributes to the organization, and (d) autonomy to work in a manner and environment that supports productivity.

Performance Metrics. Turnover is a frequently tracked organizational metric. The study provides a foundation for expanding metrics to include turnover intent related to engagement and wellbeing. Expanded performance metrics enhance retention strategies, and interventions focused on improving engagement and mitigating the potential for burnout.

Limitations

The following section describes the limitations of this study, which can be summarized as the sample size, industry, and study demographics.

Sample Size

The quantitative sample size consisted of 155 tech professionals. Of the 155 survey participants, 87 (56.0%) participants volunteered to participate in a follow-up interview. Forty-six participants scheduled a 30-minute follow-up interview. While the quantitative sample size was large enough to test for statistical significance, a larger sample size would be needed for generalization.

Industry

The study was conducted with professionals in the tech industry. The tech industry is described as those organizations conducting business in information technology, such as computer software, hardware, cloud services, and related consulting services (Frankenfield, 2022). This industry is characterized by continuous innovation and invention, short life cycles of knowledge, and intensive competition (Sung & Choi, 2019). The tech industry is unique in that long hours and personal sacrifices are celebrated (Moss, 2021). As the study was conducted in the tech industry, the findings may not be extrapolated to other industries.

Demographics

The study sample's demographics are limited due to a lack of diversity in gender and age. The sample is primarily male, consisting of 103 (66.4%) men and 52 (33.5%) women. Within the tech industry, women represent 26% of the workforce (CompTIA, 2023). The sample has a representation above the industry standards but has the potential for gender bias. In terms of age, the sample is skewed towards the older demographic, with 65.7% over the age of 40. The other

age groups consisted of 5.8% between the ages of 21 – 29 and 8.3% between the ages of 30 – 39. The smaller sample size of the age group for the quantitative sample could limit the application of the quantitative findings.

Recommendations for Future Research

The section describes recommendations for future research. The recommendations for future research address the limitations of this study and expand upon the unexpected findings. The recommendations include study limitations, culture of *always on,* and using the mapped model.

Study Limitations

The study was limited by sample size, industry, and study demographics, which impacts the generalizability of the findings. A recommendation would be to conduct the quantitative phase using a larger sample size across industries to enhance gender and age diversity. Together, these recommendations expand the generalizability of the study.

Culture of Always On

The culture of *always on* was identified as an unexpected finding. The *always on* culture in organizations refers to the expectation that employees should always be available, connected, and responsive (Barber et al., 2023). This expectation has become more prevalent due to remote work and the use of technology like smartphones. The findings identified that the organizational expectation to always be on is eroding work-life balance, contributing to work overload and potentially burnout. A recommendation for future research includes examining how to lead in a culture of *always on*.

Using the Mapped Model

The mapped model evolved out of the study synthesis. Recommendations for future research involve using the mapped model in an organizational setting to support strategic planning and organizational change. The mapped model could be used to support Root Cause Analysis and SWOT Analysis. For example, in a scenario where employees are experiencing low morale and have disengaged, a root cause analysis begins with examining the Work Unit Climate. This examination may identify excessive meetings or paperwork creating an imbalance in the workload. Similarly, in SWOT Analysis, the mapped model forms the basis for examining organizational strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. As a model for understanding and enhancing the employee experience, the mapped model supports the investigation of the current environment and planning of improvement.

Concluding Remarks

In conclusion, the study examined the role of the employee-organization relationship in fostering engagement and mitigating the potential for burnout and to what degree it impacts turnover intent. Using a mixed methods approach, the study described the contemporary experience of engagement and burnout, identified the factors that impact the EOR, defined levers that foster engagement and mitigate burnout, and examined the impact on organizational performance using turnover intent as a metric.

The quantitative and qualitative findings suggested that the quality of the EOR has the potential to increase engagement and mitigate burnout. A positive relationship was found between EOR and engagement, while there was a negative relationship with burnout. Thus, an increase in EOR improves engagement and reduces burnout. Together, the factors impact turnover intent.

In summary, the factors that impact the quality of the EOR include the changing nature of work, the culture of *always on*, work-life balance, and relationships.

- Nature of Work. The transition from remote work back to in-person has created conflict between employees and organizations, impacting the quality of the EOR. Employees have expressed a preference to work remotely as they feel more productive, while organizations assert that working in person is better for business (Gibson et al., 2023).
- Culture of *Always On*. The findings identified that the organizational expectation to always be on erodes work-life balance, contributing to work overload and burnout.
- Work-Life Balance. As the boundaries have blurred between work and personal life, employees are experiencing increased workloads and overwhelm without appreciation or recognition.
- Relationships. The transition to remote work has impacted the ability to develop and maintain strong relationships. This has affected the ability to develop support networks, a sense of community, and trust in the organization.

The findings of this study contribute to both theory and business practice. From a theoretical perspective, this study expands the use of the employee analytic framework. Using the relational lens of the EOR shifts the research approach and expands the understanding of how to cultivate organizational environments that foster wellbeing and performance. From the perspective of business practice, this study provides insights into the needs and expectations of employees in the modern-day environment. This study provides a foundation to inform decision-making and strategic planning.

Recommendations for future research include addressing study limitations, examining the culture of *always on* in organizations, and expanding the use of the mapped model. The study's limitations include a small sample size and demographics, which may impact the generalizability of the findings. The culture of *always on* is eroding work-life balance and potentially leading to burnout. To address this problem, future research should explore how to lead in this culture of always-on. The mapped model, developed from the study, has the potential to inform decision-making, support strategic planning, and organizational change.

In closing, this study highlights the significance of the employee-organization relationship and its impact on engagement, burnout, and turnover intent. It identifies the factors that contribute to the quality of the employee-organization relationship, offering a roadmap to foster engagement, reduce burnout, and mitigate turnover intentions. The findings emphasize the disconnect between employer and employee perceptions, suggesting a need for a more relational focus to improve the contemporary work experience. Understanding the role of the employee-organization relationship provides organizations with strategies to enhance employee wellbeing, performance, and retention, with the potential to reduce organizational costs related to disengagement and turnover. This study suggests the necessity of aligning organizational strategies more closely with employees' relational needs and expectations.

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Appendix A: Operational Definitions

The following table provides the operational definitions for the constructs identified in the theoretical framework.

Construct	Sub Construct	Operational Definition
Burnout	Exhaustion	The term refers to the lack of physical and mental energy. Physical exhaustion is evidenced by feeling weak and tired, whereas mental exhaustion is the feeling of being drained. (Schaufeli & De Witte, 2020).
	Mental Distance	Mental distance describes the state in which one distances themselves psychologically. This is evidenced by cynicism, avoidance, and indifference. One may distance themselves from colleagues and clients (Schaufeli & De Witte, 2020).
	Emotional Impairment	Emotional impairment refers to the emotional reactions and feelings of overwhelm. The experience of emotional impairment includes irritability, frustration, angry, and the inability to manage one's emotions (Schaufeli & De Witte, 2020).

Construct	Sub Construct	Operational Definition
Burnout	Cognitive Impairment	Cognitive impairment is characterized by difficulties in concentrating, memory problems, and paying attention. The inability to think clearly, make decisions, or learn new things are symptoms of this condition (Schaufeli & De Witte, 2020).
Employee-Organization Relationship	Social and Economic Exchange	Exchange relationships are based on social exchange theory. Social exchange theory (SET) is predicated on the idea that people engage in a mutually beneficial process of give and take (Blau, 1986). As described by Blau (1964), there are two types of exchanges: social and economic. The characteristics of the exchange determine the type of exchange relationship.
	Economic Exchange Relationship	Economic exchanges are transactional as opposed to relational. The economic exchange relationship is characterized as tangible and typically formal, such as pay and benefits in exchange for work (Mitchell et al., 2012). The economic exchange relationships are built upon specific obligations

Construct	Sub Construct	Operational Definition
		and are not dependent upon trust (Coyle-Shapiro et al., 2016).
Employee-Organization Relationship	Social Exchange Relationship	Social exchange relationships are relational and communal in which employees feel cared for by their employer (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). The resources in a social exchange relationship are socio-emotional. The strength and quality of the relationship are built upon trust over time and are characterized by how people feel about and behave towards each other (Coyle-Shapiro & Shore, 2007). Social exchange relationships are reciprocal and consider the other party's needs (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005).
	Trust	Trust as a measure of quality is defined as a level of confidence in the other party (Hon & Grunig, 1999). A high degree of trust is evidence of a high-quality social exchange relationship which leads to a willingness to make personal investments (Andersen et al., 2020). Trust is characterized by integrity and dependability. It develops over time, impacting the exchange

Construct	Sub Construct	Operational Definition
		relationship's nature and quality (Coyle-Shapiro et al., 2016).
Employee-Organization Relationship	Commitment	Commitment is described as the level to which each party is willing to invest resources in the relationship (Hon & Grunig, 1999). The type of commitment (affective or continuance) measures the quality of the EOR (Shore et al., 2006). Continuance commitment refers to the level of commitment in which an employee views the costs of leaving an organization as greater than the benefits of a new employer (Oxford University Press, n.d.-a). A continual cost-benefit analysis drives an employee's decision process. This type of commitment is linked to economic exchange interactions (Shore et al., 2006). Affective commitment refers to the degree to which employees feel emotionally connected and committed to their employer (Hon & Grunig, 1999). This type of commitment is an indicator of loyalty and alignment with organizational values (Oxford University Press, n.d.-b). High

Construct	Sub Construct	Operational Definition
		degrees of affective commitment are related to social exchange relationships.
Employee Engagement	Physical	Measures one's ability to engaged in the physical demands of work (May et al. 2004).
	Psychological Availability	Measure one's perceived capacity to commit emotional, cognitive, and physical resources to work (May et al. 2004).
	Emotional	Emotional engagement measures the one's commitment and connection to work (May et al. 2004).
	Cognitive	Cognitive measures one's alertness, focus, and involvement with their work (May et al. 2004.
Turnover Intent		Turnover intention is described as an employee's propensity to voluntarily leave an organization or change one's job (Schyns et al., 2007). Turnover is described as a multi-phase process beginning with intention and potentially resulting in a change of job or employer (Martin & Roodt, 2008).

Appendix B: Informed Consent

Informed Consent Information Sheet RP 2301

Study title: Exploring the Modern-Day Experience of Employee Engagement and Burnout as a Continuum in the Tech Industry

Researcher[s]: Bonnie A Bailey, Doctoral Student at DeVos Graduate School

What is the purpose of this study?

The purpose of this study is to explore and understand the modern-day employee experience of engagement on the continuum between engagement and burnout for individuals working in the tech industry. To support organizations in understanding their levels of employee engagement, this research examines where employees operate on this continuum by:

- Identifying the factors and drivers that impact the employee engagement-burnout continuum.
- Defining measures and solutions that foster employee engagement while mitigating burnout.

Participation. This research study consists of an online survey and follow up interviews and focus groups.

Online Survey

If you participate in this research, you take a survey that explores your employee experience working in the tech industry. This includes measuring:

- Employee engagement
- Well-being
- Job Demands and Resources
- Quality of employee-organization relationships

The survey will take about 15 – 20 minutes.

Interviews and Focus Groups

Subsequent interviews and focus groups with individuals at various levels of an organization to understand their employee experiences. The follow-up sessions will take 30 – 45 minutes.

- Participants will be asked a series of questions about their employee experiences exploring the continuum between engagement and burnout.
- Participants are not required to answer the questions.
- A participant may pass on any question that makes them feel uncomfortable.
- At any time, a participant may notify the researcher that they would like to stop the interview and participation in the study. There is no penalty for discontinuing participation.

Risks: There are minimal risks in this study.

Some possible risks include the stress of being asked questions about one's employee experiences related to engagement and burnout. To decrease the impact of these risks, you can: skip any question, and/or, stop participation any time.

Benefits: Your participation contributes information towards understanding the modern day experience of employee engagement and supports the development of solutions that have the potential to foster engagement while mitigating burnout.

Compensation: None

Confidentiality and Data Security

The interview will be recorded; however, any identifying information will be removed.

The information you provide will be kept confidential to the extent allowable by law.

Steps that will be taken to keep your identity confidential:

- All identifying information is removed and replaced with a participant ID.
- We'll keep your identifying information separate from your research data.
- Access to your data will be limited to the researcher, dissertation chair, and dissertation committee.
- All electronic data will be stored on a password-protected, encrypted computer.
- Any paper documents will be kept in a locked filing cabinet.
- Data will be kept for three (3) years after the completion of the study. At that time, all electronic and paper data will be destroyed.

Who can see my data?

- We (the researchers) will have access to coded information in which names are removed and labeled with a study ID and pseudonym (fake name). This is so we can analyze the data and conduct the study.
- Agencies that enforce legal and ethical guidelines, such as
    - The Institutional Review Board (IRB)
- We may share our findings in publications or presentations. If we do, the results will be aggregated (group) data with no individual results. Pseudonyms will be used for any type of quote.

Contact Information: For questions, please contact

- Researcher: Bonnie A. Bailey; baileyb@northwood.edu; 616.446.7796
- Dissertation Chair: Dr. David Lyman; lymand@northwood.edu; 989-837-5164

If you have questions about your rights in the research, or if a problem has occurred, or if you are injured during your participation, please contact Dr. David Lund, Northwood Institutional Review Board, at: lundm@northwood.edu; 989-837-5147

Please print or save this document if you want to be able to access the information later.

IRB #: 2301

IRB Approval Date: 02/27/2023

Informed Consent to Participate in Research
Online Survey

This study examines the employee experience along the continuum between engagement and burnout.

Your information is invaluable and contributes to creating solutions that cultivate engagement while mitigating burnout. The survey should take approximately 20 minutes to complete.

Agreement to Participate

- I am at least 18 years old.
- I am currently working in or have worked in the tech industry.
- I have been provided and read the Informed Consent to Participate in Research Study #2301 Information Sheet
- I understand this research study will be submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Business Administration at Northwood University.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary.
- I understand that I will not be identified by name in the final product.
- I am aware that all records will be kept confidential in the secure possession of the researcher.
- I understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time.

Statement of Consent
I feel I understand the study well enough to make a decision about my involvement. If you meet these criteria and would like to take the survey, click the button labeled “Next” below to start.

This study has been reviewed and approved by Northwood University’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) – Research Project #2301

If you meet these criteria and would like to take the survey, click the “Next” button below to start.

Appendix C: Interview Protocol and Guide

General Information and Introduction

Will kick off each interview with an overview of the project and a review of the housekeeping items, which include:

- The interview consists of 6–12 questions and should last approximately 30 minutes.
- Participation is voluntary
- Data is aggregated and pseudonyms will be used in the study for quotes
- All research records are kept confidential
- Request permission to record the call

The interview questions are mapped to the dependent and independent variables and form a framework to guide the interviews and focus groups.

Open-ended Interview / Focus Group Questions

1. Tell me about your background in the tech industry

Questions to examine the engagement and burnout

- How would you define engagement?
- What impacts your level of engagement?
- How does the organization impact the level of engagement?
- Have you ever experienced burnout?
- How did you recover from the experience?
- Were there red flags along the way?
- What would you do differently now?
- What could the organization do differently?

Appendix D: Permissions

Permission to Use the BAT

2/20/23, 4:51 PM Mail - Bailey, Bonnie A - Outlook

Re: US Sampling of BAT

Schaufeli, W.B. (Wilmar) <w.schaufeli@uu.nl>
Mon 11/7/2022 4:23 PM
To: Bailey, Bonnie A <baileyb@northwood.edu>

Dear Bailey,

The BAT can be used freely by everybody without any restrictions. Please visit www.burnoutassessmenttool.be for more information.
Foe US studies with the Bat you should search the internet yourself as I do not have any US-studies

With kind regards,
Wilmar Schaufeli

Wilmar B. Schaufeli, PhD | Full Professor of Work and Organizational Psychology | *Social, Health & Organizational Psychology* | Utrecht University | P.O. Box 80.140, 3508 TC Utrecht, The Netherlands | Phone: (31) 6514 75784 | Site: www.wilmarschaufeli.nl | citations |

Van: "Bailey, Bonnie A" <baileyb@northwood.edu>
Datum: dinsdag 25 oktober 2022 om 23:49
Aan: "info@burnoutassessmenttool.be" <info@burnoutassessmenttool.be>
Onderwerp: US Sampling of BAT

Greetings -

I am evaluating the BAT as the burnout measurement tool for my dissertation which is studying burnout in US tech companies. I am looking for any previous studies that may have used the BAT to measure burnout with US participants. Would you be able to help me?

Thanks in advance!!

Kind Regards
Bonnie Bailey

Permission to use the Guidelines for Measuring Relationships in Public Relations

The Guidelines for Measuring Relationships in Public Relations is copyrighted by the The Institute for Public Relations. Permission for using the Guidelines for Measuring Relationships in Public Relations is provided on the organization's website (Institute for Public Relations, n.d.) and documented below.

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The Guidelines for Measuring Relationships in Public Relations was downloaded from the IPR website at the following link: https://instituteforpr.org/measuring-relationships/

Permission to use the Employee Engagement Construct

From: May, Douglas R <drmay@ku.edu>
Sent: Saturday, April 22, 2023 11:40 AM
To: Bailey, Bonnie A
Subject: RE: Measuring Employee Engagement

Follow Up Flag: Flag for follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Bonnie,

You have my permission to use the scale. Perhaps you can find articles that have used the scale by looking at articles that cite the 2004 JOOP article with the scale. You may look at my Google Scholar page to find those.

Good luck!

Douglas
.....
Douglas R. May
Professor Emeritus
Positive Organizational Scholarship
and Business Ethics
The University of Kansas
1654 Naismith Drive, CFH #4137
Lawrence, KS 66045

Sent from my Samsung Galaxy smartphone.

-------- Original message --------
From: “Bailey, Bonnie A” <baileyb@northwood.edu>
Date: 4/22/23 10:36 AM (GMT-06:00)
To: “May, Douglas R” <drmay@ku.edu>
Subject: Measuring Employee Engagement

Dear Dr. May -

I am a doctoral candidate at Northwood University conducting a mixed methods study examining the continuum between employee engagement and burnout in the tech industry.

In my review of the literature, I have found your article, “The Psychological Conditions of Meaningfulness, Safety and Availability and the Engagement of the Human Spirit at Work”, to

provide the best measurement to examine employee engagment when comparing to the Burnout Assessment Tool.

With the UWES being the primary tool to measure engagement, I am having difficulty finding other studies that have used your instrument to measure engagement.

My request is two fold:

1. May I have permission to use the instrument that you developed in my doctoral study?
2. Would you be able to direct me to other studies which have used or validated your instrument?

Thank you in advance for your support in my doctoral journey!

Kind Regards
Bonnie Bailey

Permission to use the Turnover Intentions Scale

RE: Turnover Intention Scale

roodtg8@gmail.com <roodtg8@gmail.com>
Sat 1/21/2023 8:03 AM
To: Bailey, Bonnie A <baileyb@northwood.edu>

1 attachments (59 KB)
Turnover intentions questionnaire - v4.doc;

Dear Bonnie

You are welcome to use the TIS for your research (please accept this e-mail as the formal permission letter). For this purpose please find the TIS-15 attached for your convenience. The TIS-6 (version 4) consists of the first six items high-lighted in yellow. You may use any one of these two versions. The TIS is based on the Theory of Planned Behaviour.

The only two conditions for using the TIS are that it may not be used for commercial purposes (other than for post graduate research) and second that it should be properly referenced as (Roodt, 2004) as in the article by Bothma & Roodt (2013) in the SA Journal of Human Resource Management (open access).

It is easy to score the TIS-6. Merely add the item scores to get a total score. The midpoint of the scale is 18 (3 x 6). If the total score is below 18 then the it indicates a desire to stay. If the scores are above 18 it indicates a desire to leave the organisation. The minimum a person can get is 6 (6 x 1) and the maximum is 30 (5 x 6). No item scores need to be reflected (reverse scored) for the TIS-6. Please note that there are items that need to be reverse scored for the TIS-15 (indicated by an R before the item number).

It is recommended that you conduct a CFA on the item scores to assess the dimensionality of the scale. We found that respondents with a matric (grade12) tertiary school qualification tend to understand the items better and consequently an uni-dimensional factor structure is obtained.

If you wish to translate the TIS in a local language, you are welcome to do so. It is recommended that a language expert is used in the translate - back translate method. I wish you all the best with your research!

Best regards

Gert

Prof Gert Roodt

Appendix E: Invitation to Participate

Re: Invitation to Participate – Organizational Study on Burnout

Dear *Name:*

My name is Bonnie Bailey, and I am a doctoral student at Northwood University. As part of my dissertation, I am conducting a study of organizational burnout.

Forty percent of women are seeking new employment, citing burnout as the driver (Deloitte, 2022). Thirty-five percent of men report feeling burnt out (Gartner, 2021). Even before the Great Resignation, organizations lost $50 billion per year due to attrition related to organizational culture, which led to burnout (Society for Human Resource Management, 2019). Organizations are dealing with unprecedented levels of burnout, resulting in decreased morale and well-being, reduced productivity, and increased turnover.

This study aims to examine the burnout experience in order to (1) identify the organizational factors contributing to burnout and (2) define preventative measures and solutions for addressing burnout.

I would like to extend an invitation to you and your organization to participate in this study. By participating, your organization will have access to leading-edge solutions for not only improving employee well-being but also creating a burnout-resilient organization.

For your organization, the benefits of this study include:

- Insights and tools to foster employee-organization relationships that potentially improve well-being and enhance employee productivity and morale
- Overall burnout mitigation solutions that can potentially influence the effectiveness and performance of the organization by fostering well-being and empowering people that results in burnout resilience

The organizational investment will consist of participation in the following activities

- Organizational-wide survey on burnout. Employee participation in the survey is anonymous and voluntary. The survey will take approximately 15 – 20 minutes to complete.
- Follow-up interviews and focus groups will be conducted with up to 50 employees at various levels of the organization to understand their organizational experience. While an employee may not be presently experiencing burnout, there may be early indicators that potentially lead to burnout. The follow-up sessions will take about an hour, and participation is voluntary.
- An organizational debrief and next steps will be conducted to share the study findings.

The research is set to start in April 2023. Your participation is completely voluntary and confidential. For more information or to have a more in-depth discussion of this study, please contact me at baileyb@northwood.edu.

Thank you for your time and consideration

Kind regards

Bonnie A Bailey

Confidentiality

Participation is completely voluntary, and your information is confidential. Participants will receive an early copy of the full dissertation report.

References

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Appendix F: Study Constructs and Measures

Construct	Sub Construct	Author (s)	Number of Items	Example Item	Scale
Burnout	Exhaustion	Schaufeli et al. (2020a)	3	• At work, I feel mentally exhausted. • After a day at work, I find it hard to recover my energy. • At work, I feel physically exhausted	5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Never) to 5 (Always)
	Mental Distance	Schaufeli et al. (2020a)	3	• I struggle to find any enthusiasm for my work. • I feel a strong aversion towards my job. • I'm cynical about what my work means to others	
	Emotional Impairment	Schaufeli et al. (2020a)	3	• At work, I feel unable to control my emotions. • At work I may overreact unintentionally	
	Cognitive Impairment	Schaufeli et al. (2020a)	3	• At work, I have trouble staying focused. • When I'm working, I have trouble concentrating. • I make mistakes in my work because I have my mind on other things.	
Employee Organization Relationship	Economic Exchange Relationship	Hon & Grunig (1999)	4	• Whenever this organization gives or offers something to people like me, it generally, expects something in return. • This organization will compromise with people like me when it knows that it will gain something.	7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree)

Construct	Sub Construct	Author (s)	Number of Items	Example Item	Scale
	Social Exchange Relationship	Hon & Grunig (1999)	5	• This organization is very concerned about the welfare of people like me. • I think that this organization succeeds by stepping on other people.	
	Trust	Hon & Grunig (1999)	5	• This organization treats people like me fairly and justly. • This organization can be relied on to keep its promises	
	Commitment	Hon & Grunig (1999)	5	• I can see that this organization wants to maintain a relationship with people like me. • There is a long-lasting bond between this organization and people like me.	
Engagement	Physical	May et al. (2004)	5	• I exert a lot of energy performing my job. • I stay until the job is done. • I avoid working overtime whenever possible. (r)	7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree)
	Psychological Availability		5	• I am confident in my ability to handle competing demands at work. • I am confident in my ability to deal with problems that come up at work.	
	Emotional		4	• I really put my heart into my job. • I get excited when I perform well on my job. • I often feel emotionally detached from my job. (r)	

Construct	Sub Construct	Author (s)	Number of Items	Example Item	Scale
	Cognitive		4	• Performing my job is so absorbing that I forget about everything else. • I often think about other things when performing my job. (r)	
Turnover Intent		Turnover Intent Scale (Roodt, 2004)	6	• How often have you considered leaving your job? • How satisfying is your job in fulfilling your personal needs?	5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Never) to 5 (Always)

Appendix G: Burke-Litwin Processes Applied to Themes

Burke-Litwin	Theme	Description	Quotes
Culture	Importance of Trust and Communication	Participants provided insight into the importance of trust and the value of communication as an element of the company's culture.	"I think that's one of the most important things, being transparent, being clear in all aspects, because this will help to get the trust from the from the people or from the employees." (Participant 118343965211) "It also may involve the concern that your company no longer has your back or when you lose trust in your manager" (Participant 118357918002) "There's a lot of distrust with the Executive Team as well as most levels of management." (Participant 118314871030)
Leadership	Empathy and Understanding	Participants described the behavior and qualities of leadership impacting the employee experience.	"Recognizing the importance of considering other people's perspectives, challenges, and circumstances, and how this can foster engagement and create stronger connections." (Participant 118342959564) "Communication from senior leadership is poor and disjointed. And sometimes tone deaf. Burnout is

Burke-Litwin	Theme	Description	Quotes
			extremely high" (Participant 118341999662)
Management Practices	Importance of Connection and Relationships	Participants described the quality and types of the relationships within the organizational environment.	"You feel you're making a difference, right? And you feel that you're working on behalf of the customer for your company. And when you're doing that, where you're bringing in the best of your company to the customer's world, I think that in itself is you realize that it's not just a transactional based relationship." (Participant 118338003502). "We're mostly working virtual in the tech environment, it is very hard to get to a more personal relationship, to have a more personal engagement." (Participant 118341685317) "You have to find ways for people to connect and develop relationships, not just a transaction." (Participant 118308278364)
Systems	Employee Investment and development	Participants describe how investing in employee develop can either	"Burnout is also a result of work that isn't recognized or if it is repetitive with no real growth or interesting

Burke-Litwin	Theme	Description	Quotes
		foster engagement or fuel burnout.	challenges for an employee to grow." (Participant 118343014936)
			"Employee engagement may involve engagement of myself; as they employee, with my organization and how my organization connects with me or offers opportunities for growth, education or overall shares company information, options, news, goals, etc." (Participant 118357918002)
Work Unit Climate	Balanced Workload	Participants describe the impact of workload on their experience of work.	"Expected workload/hours/output exceeds the capacity of the employee to deliver quality output, for extended period(s) of time. Work-life imbalance." (Participant 118342483914)
			"Ongoing overloads of work and stress with little break, and a lack of workload control at an individual level." (Participant 118341287321)
			"It's basically like scope creep on any project. More and more stuff gets added, and it's only when you get to a breaking point where you realize my job was this, and

Burke-Litwin	Theme	Description	Quotes
			now it's like five times as big, and that's why things are falling over." (Participant 118338954933)
Motivation	Quiet Quitting	Participants described quiet quitting as a response to toxic cultures, poor leadership, work overload, feeling dismissed or devalued, and a lack of appreciation or recognition.	"Quiet quitting is a term used to describe a process of disengagement where people work just to fulfill their role and do not actively engage or seek growth opportunities." (Participant 118338665668)
			"Quiet quitting" is a real phenomenon." (Participant 118343785673)
			"The concept of "quiet quitting" and the lack of in-person interaction may lead to disengagement and a gradual slowdown in productivity." (Participant 118337513977)
			"'Quiet quitting', is a response to feeling undervalued and taken advantage of by organizations. The participant believes it is important for employers to recognize and appreciate their employees' efforts to

Burke-Litwin	Theme	Description	Quotes
			prevent them from disengaging." (Participant 118341999662)