

IMPACT OF NEWCOMERS’
ASSIMILATION INTO
PROJECT TEAMS’
EMOTIONAL CULTURE
ON THEIR WORK
ENGAGEMENT:
MEDIATING ROLES
OF ORGANIZATIONAL
IDENTIFICATION AND
PERSON-ORGANIZATION
FIT

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ABSTRACT: This study aims to investigate the influence of newcomers’ assimilation into the emotional culture of project teams on their work engagement. Specifically, it explores how newcomers’ integration into the emotional norms of project teams affects their engagement levels, while examining the mediating roles of organisational identification and person-organisation fit. The research seeks to address gaps in the literature concerning emotional culture and newcomer integration in project-based work environments. A quantitative research design was employed to achieve the study’s objectives. Data were collected from 470 newcomers who had recently joined project teams across various organisations in China. Participants completed a structured questionnaire, which was distributed both electronically and in person. The collected data were analysed using SPSS to assess correlations, perform regression analysis, and conduct mediation analysis. Statistical techniques were utilised to evaluate the direct and indirect relationships between newcomers’ emotional assimilation, organisational identification, person-organisation fit, and work engagement. The study found that newcomers’ assimilation into the emotional culture of project teams has a significantly positive impact on their work engagement. Additionally, organisational identification and person-organisation fit were identified as key mediators in this relationship. Newcomers who felt a strong alignment with their team’s emotional norms and perceived a good fit with the organisation exhibited higher levels of engagement, with organisational identification and person-organisation fit enhancing this effect. This research is original in its focus on the specific context of project teams and its examination of the mediating roles of organisational identification and person-organisation fit. The study extends existing knowledge on emotional culture and work engagement by providing insights into how these dynamics operate within project-based environments. Its findings offer valuable implications for improving newcomer integration and engagement in such settings, contributing to both theoretical understanding and practical management strategies.

Keywords: Newcomer Assimilation, Project Teams, Emotional Culture, Work Engagement, Organizational Identification, Person-Organization Fit.

1. Introduction

In today’s competitive and dynamic workplace, the integration of new hires into project teams is critical to organisational success (Nifadkar & Wu, 2022). New employees learn the company culture and their duties through the processes of assimilation or indoctrination. The performance, satisfaction, and retention of employees significantly impact team morale and productivity (Anaza & Rutherford, 2012). The effective integration of each team member influences all these factors (Suri & Nurjayanti, 2022). Organisations are increasingly focusing on emotional integration, which shapes new members’ experiences and outcomes. This emphasis on the value of the integration process underscores the importance of emotional characteristics (Saleem, Shenbei, & Hanif, 2020). Emotional culture refers to the shared emotional norms and practices within a team or organisation

that influence how employees feel and express their emotions at work. This aspect of business life is crucial as it impacts employee performance, behaviour, and cognition (Almerri, 2023). Recent research indicates that team members who successfully integrate into their teams’ emotional environment are more engaged, a key predictor of organisational commitment and job satisfaction (Ababneh, 2021). Emotional integration fosters acceptance and inclusion, motivating and engaging new hires in their roles. The relationship between job engagement and emotional integration suggests that employers should foster supportive emotional environments during induction (Abdullahi, Raman, & Solarin, 2021).

Organisational research has increasingly focused on how work engagement affects job performance and organisational outcomes (Saleem et al., 2020). Engaged employees are enthusiastic and committed to

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their work, which leads to higher productivity, reduced absenteeism, and lower turnover intentions (Fidyah & Setiawati, 2020). Organisational identification helps employees align their values with the company's goals (Anaza & Rutherford, 2012). Research shows that individuals with a strong organisational identification are more dedicated and motivated (Arshad, Dost, & Qasim, 2022). Effective emotional integration enhances organisational identification and job engagement (Zhang & Wang, 2022). In addition to organisational identification, person-organisation fit also promotes job engagement (Okolie, 2022). Job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and work engagement improve when there is a good person-organisation fit (Memon et al., 2018). New employees become more emotionally committed when their values align with the company's culture (Kodden & Kodden, 2020). Identifying the right fit during recruitment and selection enhances engagement and integration (Ilmia & Abadiyah, 2024). The integration of newcomers into the emotional culture of project teams, organisational identification, and person-organisation fit are increasingly recognised as key factors in fostering work engagement. Emotional integration enhances job engagement by strengthening both organisational identity and person-organisation fit (Arshad et al., 2022; Memon et al., 2018).

The effects of immigrant assimilation on job engagement, emotional integration, and organisational outcomes have been widely studied, with a significant body of research focusing on emotional culture and newcomer integration (Saleem et al., 2020). Emotional culture within a company or team plays a critical role in shaping employee emotions and behaviours. Studies indicate that emotional culture significantly influences immigrants' cultural adaptation and performance (Fidyah & Setiawati, 2020). Bhardwaj and Kalia (2021) found that employees who feel supported and engaged are more satisfied and committed, suggesting that positive emotional experiences enhance work productivity. Work engagement has been extensively researched due to its impact on organisational performance (Zhang & Wang, 2022). Engaged employees demonstrate passion, dedication, and focus, which contribute to lower turnover rates and increased productivity (Hui et al., 2021). Ababneh (2021) highlighted that organisational strategies and emotional experiences are key determinants of work engagement, noting that a secure emotional environment is essential for fostering employee involvement. Furthermore, Anaza and Rutherford (2012) found that newcomers who felt integrated

into their team's emotional culture exhibited stronger commitment, reinforcing the relationship between emotional assimilation and work engagement.

Despite extensive research, the relationship between emotional culture and job engagement, particularly the mediating roles of organisational identity and person-organisation fit, remains insufficiently explored (Guo, 2019; Rawshdeh, Makhbul, & Alam, 2019). While emotional culture is recognised as influencing work engagement, organisational identification, and person-organisation fit, there is a lack of empirical studies examining how these factors mediate this relationship within project teams. The intermediate functions of organisational identity and person-organisation fit in the association between emotional culture and work engagement are under-researched, particularly in the context of project-based work environments. This study investigates how newcomers' integration into the emotional culture of project teams impacts their job engagement, with a specific focus on organisational identity and person-organisation fit as mediating factors. It explores how newcomers adapt to and integrate into the emotional norms of project teams to better understand how emotional culture influences job engagement. Additionally, the study analyses how organisational identity and person-organisation fit contribute to this relationship, identifying key characteristics that facilitate newcomer integration and sustained engagement within project teams.

This study holds significant implications for the management of project-based organisations and academic research. By addressing a gap in the literature on emotional culture within project teams and its influence on work engagement, the study provides a nuanced perspective on how newcomers' emotional integration impacts their involvement in project teams. Unlike previous research, it emphasises the mediating roles of organisational identification and person-organisation fit, thereby strengthening the theoretical framework and enhancing understanding of the relationship between emotional culture and job engagement. The findings offer practical insights for project-based managers and leaders, particularly in designing effective onboarding and integration strategies. By identifying key factors that influence newcomers' assimilation and engagement, the study guides organisations in fostering a supportive emotional culture, enhancing organisational identification, and ensuring a strong person-organisation fit. These efforts can lead to improved job engagement, higher performance, and better retention rates. Furthermore,

the study suggests strategies to enhance newcomers' experiences, ultimately contributing to increased productivity, collaboration, and team cohesion in project-based environments.

2. Literature Review
2.1. Newcomers' Assimilation into Project Teams' Emotional Culture and Work Engagement

Assimilation into project teams can pose challenges to newcomers' work engagement, a critical factor for organisational success. Employee engagement is characterised by a positive job-related mood, encompassing energy, dedication, and immersion in work (Fidyah & Setiawati, 2020). However, newcomers often struggle to understand and navigate the emotions of their colleagues, an environment shaped by the emotional values, norms, and practices that regulate emotional expression and management (Bhardwaj & Kalia, 2021). Effective assimilation strategies can facilitate emotional integration, which is vital for sustaining engagement, aligning with team values, and fostering a sense of belonging. Ababneh (2021) found that newcomers who perceive their team's emotional culture as supportive are more likely to form strong emotional connections with colleagues, enhancing their workplace engagement.

The emotional culture of a team significantly impacts communication, problem-solving, and collaboration, ultimately influencing new members' involvement. A supportive emotional culture, characterised by empathy, compassion, and emotional support, helps newcomers feel valued and respected, thereby boosting engagement (Guo, 2019). Conversely, hostility, indifference, or a lack of emotional support can lead to isolation and diminish newcomers' enthusiasm for their work (Suri & Nurjayanti, 2022). Emotional support reduces stress and anxiety, enabling newcomers to concentrate on their tasks and contribute to team objectives (Soni, Jhajharia, & Nag, 2022). Team social support also plays a pivotal role in newcomers' inclusion and professional engagement. Nifadkar and Wu (2022) observed that colleagues' emotional and practical assistance enhances newcomers' satisfaction and involvement. Acknowledging achievements, offering encouragement, and providing mentorship demonstrate support, creating an environment where newcomers feel safe to express themselves and take risks (Chawla, 2020). Psychological safety fosters better work performance and open communication (Hicklenton, Hine, & Loi, 2019). Strong team support enables newcomers to be proactive, achieve better outcomes, and integrate effectively (Suri & Nurjayanti, 2022).

2.2. Person-Organization Fit as Mediator
Person-organisation fit highlights how new team members' emotional integration into a team's culture influences work engagement. It refers to the alignment between an individual's values, beliefs, and behaviours with an organisation's ideology, culture, and norms, significantly impacting employee conduct (Okolie, 2022). Memon et al. (2018) found that newcomers aligned with organisational values report higher job satisfaction, commitment, and engagement. A welcoming emotional culture fosters this alignment, enhancing team spirit and the sense of fit (Kodden & Kodden, 2020). Fit influences assimilation, as well-integrated newcomers are more engaged (Ilmia & Abadiyah, 2024).

Socialisation focused on emotional culture aids adaptation by aligning newcomers with organisational values and standards (Bhattarai & Budhathoki, 2023). Open communication, respect, and emotional support within a healthy emotional culture optimise this alignment (Chawla, 2020). New hires are more engaged when their values align with the company's culture, making person-organisation fit essential for emotional integration and engagement. The psychological contract—informal, implicit agreements between employer and employee—also plays a role. A strong emotional culture fulfils newcomers' expectations for recognition, support, and team integration, enhancing their fit and engagement (Ashfaq & Hamid, 2021; Sabrina, Harahap, & Datuk, 2023). Conversely, mismatches in emotional culture can disrupt this agreement, limiting compatibility and engagement (Gomes, Curral, & Caetano, 2015). Lastly, colleagues shape newcomers' perceptions of organisational values and emotional culture. Team emotional culture establishes norms for emotional expression and support, crucial for successful integration (Hicklenton et al., 2019).

2.3. Organizational Identification as Mediator
Organisational identity significantly impacts newcomer work engagement and emotional integration within project teams. It reflects the extent to which employees value their organisation and adopt its principles, fostering loyalty and engagement (Hui et al., 2021; Zhang & Wang, 2022). Newcomers who align with a team's emotional culture are more likely to adopt its values, forming a strong organisational identity. A supportive emotional culture of respect, empathy, and encouragement enhances newcomers' sense of value and engagement (Arshad et al., 2022). Effective socialisation strategies focusing on emotional culture

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help newcomers adapt to team norms, strengthening their organisational identity and emotional connection (Anaza & Rutherford, 2012). Congruence between personal and team values reinforces the emotional bond between employees and the organisation, boosting dedication and enthusiasm. Supportive emotional climates increase organisational attachment and professional engagement among newcomers (Eriş & Kökalan, 2022), highlighting the mediating role of organisational identity. A team's emotional culture shapes newcomers' perceptions of belonging, as empathy and support signal organisational care (Blader, Patil, & Packer, 2017). Providing meaningful assistance during integration fosters appreciation, inclusion, and stronger organisational connections, which enhance workplace engagement (Bhardwaj & Kalia, 2021).

2.4. Theoretical Framework

According to Castañer and Ketokivi (2018), Socialization Theory links new members' emotional integration into project team cultures to their level of commitment. According to Socialization Theory which explains how new workers adapt to organisational culture, standards, and expectations. This concept examines how newcomers' emotional integration into a team's culture influences their professional dedication (Kozlowski, 2012). Organisational socialisation comprises three phases: anticipatory, encounter, and transformation. During these stages, new recruits learn to perform and adjust within their roles (Steven & Paul, 2009). The theory emphasises that socialisation requires vocational knowledge and cooperation, with integration enhancing workplace happiness and engagement. The emotional culture of a team, encompassing shared ideas, rituals, and practices, significantly affects how emotions are expressed and regulated (Ge, Su, & Zhou, 2010). Socialization Theory asserts that newcomers who align with a team's emotional culture develop a sense of belonging and shared values. This alignment facilitates immigrants' assimilation and work engagement, especially in environments that foster empathy, respect, and encouragement. Successfully integrating new members into a team's emotional culture enhances job engagement, as employees feel connected to their teammates and roles (Castañer & Ketokivi, 2018). Bhardwaj and Kalia (2021) describe engagement as a state of work-related well-being marked by active workplace involvement, accomplishment, and positive emotions.

Positive emotional cultures that promote engaging interactions and compassionate support contribute to job satisfaction and enthusiasm (Ababneh, 2021). Socialization Theory also highlights how organisational identity and person-organisation fit mediate the process of engagement (Ge et al., 2010). Newcomers who successfully integrate into a team's emotional culture develop stronger organisational identification, enhancing their engagement (Chawla, 2020). By aligning new hires' values and expectations with the organisation's, person-organisation fit is improved, fostering a sense of purpose and belonging that drives engagement (Okolie, 2022). The Socialization Theory provides a comprehensive framework for studying how immigrants' emotional and cultural integration influences occupational participation. This approach underscores the importance of infusing emotions into workplace environments to enhance engagement and accountability among new hires. Team members establish and maintain emotional standards that foster organisational identity and person-organisation harmony, ultimately boosting work engagement. Based on this theoretical framework, the following hypotheses and framework are developed (Figure 1).

- H1: Newcomers' assimilation into a project team's emotional culture positively impacts their work engagement.
H2: Organizational identification mediates the relationship between newcomers' assimilation into a project team's emotional culture and their work engagement.
H3: Person-Organization fit mediates the relationship between newcomers' assimilation into a project team's emotional culture and their work engagement.

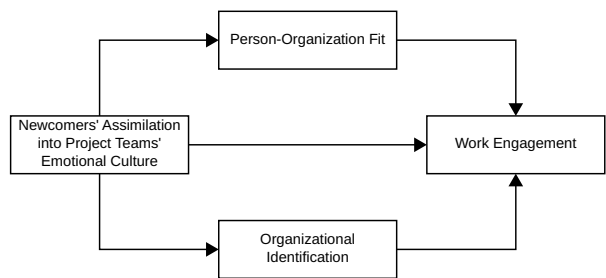


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

The study employed a quantitative approach to investigate how newcomers' emotional integration into project teams influences work engagement, with organizational identity and person-organization compatibility serving as mediators. This method used

statistical analysis to reveal relationships among components. Data was collected through surveys targeting diverse individuals across various sectors. The survey assessed aspects such as employee alignment, organizational belonging, job dedication, and workplace culture using standardized measures. Structural equation modelling (SEM), as outlined by Hair Jr, Howard and Nitzl (2020), was applied to analyse complex relationships and measure the direct and indirect effects of the variables.

3.2. Population

The research focused on project teams in Chinese companies employing newly hired expatriates. It targeted team members with less than one year of tenure, as their recent integration into the team's emotional culture provided an ideal context for examining work engagement and emotional dynamics. Participants were drawn from sectors such as technology, manufacturing, finance, and services to enhance the generalisability of findings and explore the influence of emotional culture on work engagement across diverse organisational contexts. The study concentrated on the early stages of integration to analyse organisational identity and employee-organisation alignment.

3.3. Sample Size Determination and Sampling Technique

The study's sample size, determined through statistical power analysis, required 300 participants for reliability and generalisability. G*Power and historical effect sizes (Javed et al., 2021) were used to assess correlations and mediation effects. Stratified random selection ensured diversity across industries, including technology, manufacturing, finance, and services. Organisations randomly selected qualified volunteers, minimising selection bias and ensuring the sample accurately represented new project team members across various sectors (Javed, Nawaz, & Javed, 2023). This approach allowed for the evaluation of how emotional culture influences work engagement in different organisational contexts.

3.4. Data Collection Technique

The research distributed 800 questionnaires via email and in-person to assess emotional culture, work engagement, organizational identity, and person-organization fit among new project team members. Email distribution allowed participants to respond at their convenience, while face-to-face distribution reached employees without email access. The sample

included workers from technology, manufacturing, finance, and services sectors to ensure a representative immigrant group. Using validated instruments ensured reliable and valid responses (Zaman et al., 2020). With 470 completed surveys, a 58.75% response rate, the data was sufficient for statistical analysis. The high response rate and dual distribution methods enhanced the study's validity.

3.5. Data Analysis Technique

The data for this study were analysed using SPSS, a widely used statistical software program known for its robust data management and analytical capabilities, including regression modelling, correlation analysis, and descriptive statistics. SPSS was selected for its effectiveness in handling complex data analysis processes. The analysis proceeded in several stages, beginning with descriptive statistics to summarize responses and outline sample demographics. This phase involved calculating means, standard deviations, and frequencies to better understand the data distribution. Cronbach's alpha was then employed to assess the construct reliability and internal consistency of the questionnaire. To explore the relationships between newcomers' integration into organizational identity, emotional culture, work engagement, and person-organization fit, correlation analysis was conducted. Following this, regression analysis was utilized to test the study's hypotheses and to assess both direct and indirect effects.

4. Results

4.1. Descriptive Statistics

The mean and standard deviation for the study's major variables—new hire integration, job commitment, organisational identity, and person-organization alignment—are shown in Table 1. Participants report emotionally supportive and inclusive team environments, as evidenced by the newcomers' emotional cultural integration mean score of 3.85 with a standard deviation of 0.75. With a standard deviation of 0.68 and an average work engagement score of 4.10, they exhibit a strong degree of passion for their profession. With a mean score of 3.95 and a standard deviation of 0.70, organisational identification indicated a strong bond with the business and its principles. The mean score for person-organization fit was 4.05, with a standard deviation of 0.72, demonstrating a substantial alignment between individual values and organizational principles. This data highlights participants' perceptions of these critical factors in the workplace.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics.

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	N
Newcomers' Assimilation into Emotional Culture	3.85	0.75	470
Work Engagement	4.10	0.68	470
Organizational Identification	3.95	0.70	470
Person-Organization Fit	4.05	0.72	470

4.2. Normality Assessment

Values for skewness and kurtosis are essential for evaluating the data distribution. A normal distribution is indicated by kurtosis values within ± 2 , but a skewness value within ± 2 is typically regarded as normal (Garit et al., 2021). To evaluate the distribution of the study variables, skewness and kurtosis were computed. With a skewness of 0.15 and a kurtosis of 0.32, the emotional cultural integration variable indicated a distribution that is almost symmetrical and normal, devoid of an excessive peak. The skewness and kurtosis of work involvement

were 0.12 and 0.40, respectively, suggesting a normal distribution. With a skewness of 0.18 and kurtosis of 0.29, organisational identification also approximated a normal distribution. Further supporting the normal distribution was the person-organization fit, which had a skewness of 0.10 and kurtosis of 0.35. All variables' skewness and kurtosis values are within allowable bounds, suggesting that the data deviates from normalcy only slightly. This validates the robustness and dependability of the study's statistical techniques, including regression analysis, and justifies the use of parametric analysis.

Table 2: Normality Assessment.

Variable	Skewness	Kurtosis
Newcomers' Assimilation into Emotional Culture	0.15	0.32
Work Engagement	0.12	0.40
Organizational Identification	0.18	0.29
Person-Organization Fit	0.10	0.35

4.3. Correlation Analysis

Table 3 presents the correlation coefficients for the main variables, indicating the direction and strength of their relationships. A correlation of +1 denotes a perfect positive correlation, -1 represents a perfect negative correlation, and 0 indicates no correlation. According to Khatoon, Zhengliang and Hussain (2020), modest correlations range from 0.10 to 0.29, medium correlations from 0.30 to 0.49, and large correlations from 0.50 and above. The results show a strong positive correlation between work engagement and emotional cultural integration ($r = 0.55$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that higher emotional integration is associated with increased job engagement among newcomers. Emotional integration and organisational identification have a somewhat positive link ($r = 0.49$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that newcomers who experience emotional integration are

more likely to identify with the organisation. Likewise, there is a slight positive association between person-organization fit and emotional integration ($r = 0.52$, $p < 0.01$), suggesting that greater emotional integration synchronises individual values with organisational ones.

Work engagement is positively correlated with organisational identification ($r = 0.60$, $p < 0.01$) and person-organization fit ($r = 0.58$, $p < 0.01$). This suggests that aligning with organisational values and identifying with organisational values increases work engagement. A substantial correlation exists between organisational identification and person-organization fit ($r = 0.62$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that employees who identify more with the organisation experience a better match with its ideals. These findings show that emotional culture assimilation, organisational identity, and person-organization fit promote work engagement.

Table 3: Correlation Analysis.

Variable	EC	WE	OI	POF
Newcomers' Assimilation into Emotional Culture	1			
Work Engagement	0.55**	1		
Organizational Identification	0.49**	0.60**	1	
Person-Organization Fit	0.52**	0.58**	0.62**	1

4.4. Reliability Analysis

The reliability analysis's Cronbach's alpha values for each variable are shown in Table 4. Internal consistency is measured by Cronbach's alpha, and reliability is shown by values greater than 0.70 (Jia-Qi et al., 2024). With seven items, the emotional cultural integration variable has a Cronbach's alpha of 0.87, indicating high internal consistency in gauging the emotional culture of the team. Five items are used to measure job engagement, and the results reveal a Cronbach's alpha of 0.85, indicating that the evaluation

is reliable. While the person-organization fit variable, which is measured using six items, has a Cronbach's alpha of 0.86, indicating consistent measurement of alignment between individual and organisational values, organisational identification, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.88, exhibits excellent reliability across five items. All things considered, the reliability analysis demonstrates that the study's measuring tools are reliable and consistent in gathering information about organisational identity, job engagement, emotional cultural integration, and person-organization fit.

Table 4: Reliability Analysis.

Variable	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Newcomers' Assimilation into Emotional Culture	7	0.87
Work Engagement	5	0.85
Organizational Identification	5	0.88
Person-Organization Fit	6	0.86

4.5. Outer Loadings

Table 5 presents the peripheral loadings for each item across the key variables in this study, which are crucial for evaluating the accuracy of the structural equation modelling measurement model. The peripheral loadings link each item to the latent variable it is intended to measure, with higher loadings indicating a stronger relationship. According to Hair Jr et al. (2020), an external loading of 0.70 or higher is considered acceptable for accurately reflecting a construct. For emotional culture absorption, the loadings range from 0.75 to 0.82, all exceeding the threshold, with item 2 having the highest loading (0.81) and item 7 the lowest (0.76), confirming that these items are strong indicators of the emotional culture newcomers will adopt. For work engagement, the external loadings range from 0.79 to 0.84, with item 1 showing the highest loading (0.84), indicating a strong association with work engagement. Item 2, with a loading of 0.79, still significantly contributes to the construct. Organizational identification has loadings from 0.84 to 0.88, with item 4 having the highest loading (0.88), reflecting a strong relationship with organizational identity. Item 5 also shows a strong loading of 0.84. Finally, the person-organization fit variable has loadings between 0.77 and 0.82, all above the threshold, suggesting that all items are credible indicators of individual-organization compatibility. Item 4 has the highest loading (0.81), and item 3 the lowest (0.77), but each item significantly contributes to the construct. Overall, the external loadings confirm that the items are reliable indicators of their respective constructs, validating the study's measurement approach.

Table 5: Outer Loadings.

Variable	Item	Outer Loading
Newcomers' Assimilation into Emotional Culture	1	0.78
	2	0.81
	3	0.75
	4	0.80
	5	0.77
	6	0.82
	7	0.76
Work Engagement	1	0.84
	2	0.79
	3	0.80
	4	0.81
	5	0.83
Organizational Identification	1	0.86
	2	0.87
	3	0.85
	4	0.88
	5	0.84
Person-organization Fit	1	0.80
	2	0.79
	3	0.77
	4	0.81
	5	0.82
	6	0.78

4.6. R-Square Values

Table 6 presents the R-squared values for the dependent variables, indicating how much the independent variables explain their variance. An R-squared of 0.62 for work engagement suggests that emotional cultural integration significantly impacts job engagement. The R-squared of 0.55 for organizational

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identification indicates that 55% of its variance is explained, highlighting the model's ability to assess factors influencing employee loyalty. Similarly, the R-squared of 0.58 for person-organization fit shows the model's effectiveness in capturing key elements affecting value alignment. These high R-squared values confirm the model's robustness in explaining job engagement, organizational identification, and person-organization fit.

Table 6: R-Square Values.

Dependent Variable	R-Squared
Work Engagement	0.62
Organizational Identification	0.55
Person-Organization Fit	0.58

4.7. Regression Analysis

The findings of the regression analysis looking at the connection between immigrant emotional-cultural integration and job engagement are shown in Table 7 and Figure 2. A greater relationship is indicated by a higher absolute value of the beta coefficient (β), which measures the direction and intensity of the relationship

between the independent and dependent variables. The t-value is used to determine the statistical significance of the beta coefficient; at the 0.05 level, significance is shown by a t-value greater than 1.96 (Field, 2013). If the null hypothesis is correct, the p-value indicates the probability of seeing the data or more extreme outcomes; a p-value of less than 0.05 indicates statistical significance (Cohen, 2013). The regression analysis's β coefficient of 0.50 indicates that immigrant emotional-cultural integration has a beneficial impact on work engagement. With a p-value less than 0.01, the statistical significance of this association is confirmed by the t-value of 7.25, which is higher than the cut off of 1.96. These results strongly support the idea that emotional integration within teams promotes higher employee engagement by showing that immigrants' emotional integration into organisational cultures greatly improves job engagement.

Table 7: Regression Analysis.

	B	T-Value	P-Value
EC -> WE	0.50	7.25	<0.01

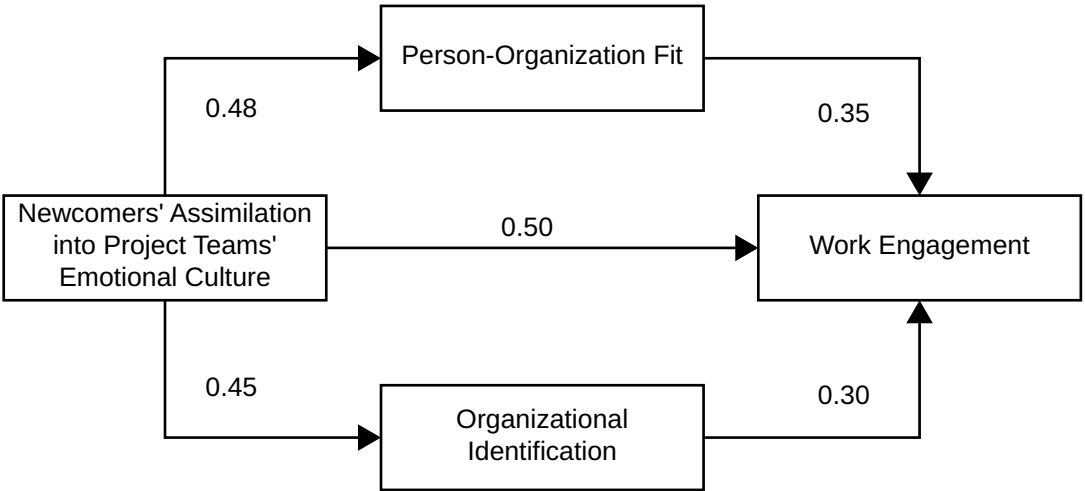


Figure 2: Structural Model.

4.8. Mediation Analysis

Mediation analysis examines the role of intermediary variables in the relationship between predictors and outcomes. The mediation effect is quantified by the beta coefficient (β), with higher values indicating larger indirect effects. Statistical significance of the mediation effect is confirmed if the t-value exceeds 1.96 (Cohen, 2013), with a p-value below 0.05 indicating significance. Table 8 presents the mediation analysis results, showing that immigrants' integration enhances job engagement through organizational identification,

with a β of 0.14, t-value of 4.00, and p-value < 0.01. This demonstrates that immigrant inclusion indirectly boosts organizational identification, which, in turn, positively impacts work engagement. The statistical significance of the mediation effect is confirmed by the t-value exceeding 1.96. The findings emphasize the critical role of organizational identification in enhancing immigrants' engagement. Additionally, the relationship between immigrants' assimilation and job engagement, mediated by person-organization fit, shows a β of 0.17, with a t-value of 4.50 and a p-value < 0.01. This

indicates a strong positive indirect effect, highlighting that when personal values align with organizational values, emotional integration significantly increases job engagement. Thus, person-organization fit serves as a key mediator in the assimilation-work engagement link.

Table 8: Mediation Analysis.

Path	B	T-Value	P-Value
EC $\rightarrow$ OI $\rightarrow$ WE	0.14	4.00	<0.01
EC $\rightarrow$ POF $\rightarrow$ WE	0.17	4.50	<0.01

5. Discussion

This study aimed to explore the impact of newcomers' assimilation into project teams' emotional culture on their work engagement, with a focus on the mediating roles of organizational identification and person-organization fit. The findings contribute to the existing literature by demonstrating that emotional integration enhances work engagement. Hypothesis 1 proposed that emotional integration, through alignment with the team's emotional culture, would increase work engagement, and the results support this hypothesis. Emotional integration, the process by which newcomers align their emotions with the team, fosters a sense of belonging, which, as Bhardwaj and Kalia (2021) note, is essential for promoting integration and belonging. Emotional bonds with co-workers, as Fidyah and Setiawati (2020) highlight, positively influence job satisfaction and engagement, and this study corroborates that emotional integration boosts work engagement among newcomers. Abdullahi et al. (2021) also found that emotional alignment with organizational culture enhances employee engagement, further supporting the current study's findings.

Psychological factors, such as emotional integration, foster a cohesive and supportive work environment, reducing stress and uncertainty for newcomers (Almerri, 2023). This cohesion encourages increased involvement and collaboration, which are key factors in workplace engagement. Moreover, as organizational socialization research suggests, cultural integration improves employee engagement, and the study contributes to this growing body of knowledge by illustrating the positive impact of emotional integration on immigrant labour participation. The study reinforces that emotional integration plays a critical role in boosting job engagement, particularly by enhancing organizational commitment and involvement, which ultimately leads to greater workplace productivity and engagement. These findings underscore the importance of emotional support in facilitating newcomers' adjustment and enhancing their engagement within the team.

Hypothesis 2 posited that organizational identity mediates the relationship between project team emotional culture and new hire job engagement. The findings of this study support the notion that emotional integration and job devotion are significantly influenced by the alignment of newcomers with their organization's identity. Organizational identification, which reflects how well employees align their self-perception with their organization's values and goals, plays a crucial role in enhancing engagement. Newcomers who successfully integrate into their team's emotional culture are more likely to develop a strong sense of connection to the company, leading to increased job engagement. According to social identity theory, social institutions such as workplaces shape individuals' identities (Chawla, 2020), and as such, organizational identity serves as a key mediator in this process. Emotional integration helps newcomers adjust to their team's emotional climate, fostering a sense of loyalty to the organization. New employees who bond with colleagues and align with organizational values demonstrate greater commitment. Zhang and Wang (2022) found that employees who feel connected to their organization are more motivated and dedicated. The study also supports the idea that organizational identification enhances both emotional absorption and work engagement. Furthermore, alignment between personal values and organizational goals, as noted by Hui et al. (2021), boosts job satisfaction and engagement, with employees more enthusiastic and committed when their work reflects their personal ideals.

Hypothesis 3 suggests that person-organization fit influences immigrant professional participation and emotional integration. The findings confirm that alignment between individual values and company culture enhances emotional absorption and job engagement. Person-organization fit, where an individual's values align with an organization's goals, boosts engagement, as newcomers who share the team's values feel more involved (Memon et al., 2018). This mediation effect highlights the importance of emotionally acclimating new hires and aligning them with business values to enhance engagement. Person-environment fit theory supports this, noting that individuals thrive in compatible environments (Bhattarai & Budhathoki, 2023). The research indicates that strong emotional connections and value alignment with the company increase job satisfaction and participation (Okolie, 2022). Employee happiness, commitment, and engagement improve with alignment between individuals and organizations. This study highlights

that emotional integration and values alignment can enhance new recruits' work engagement, emphasizing the importance of cultural and emotional compatibility.

6. Conclusion

This study examines how organizational identification and person-organization fit moderate the impact of emotional culture on newcomers' work engagement. It finds that emotional integration into a team enhances engagement by fostering a positive environment and collaboration. The study highlights the role of organizational identity and person-organization fit in mediating this relationship, showing that newcomers who align emotionally and value-wise with their organization are more committed. These findings extend existing research on the importance of emotional culture, organizational identity, and value alignment in employee engagement. They offer practical insights for improving newcomer integration and boosting work engagement.

6.1. Implications

6.1.1. Practical Implications

The findings of this study carry significant implications for organizations seeking to enhance employee engagement, particularly among new recruits. A key practical implication is the development and implementation of induction programs centred on emotional integration. Organizations should adopt structured onboarding strategies to facilitate newcomers' emotional integration into project teams. The use of mentors, team-building activities, and support networks can foster connections between new hires, their colleagues, and the organization, ultimately enhancing productivity, retention, and job satisfaction. Additionally, the study underscores the importance of strengthening organizational resilience through effective communication of organizational identity. Organizations should invest in initiatives that clearly convey their values, mission, and goals to potential hires. Orientation programs, exposure to corporate principles, and active participation in organizational activities can help newcomers align with the organization's culture, thereby boosting job commitment and engagement. Furthermore, the study highlights the importance of person-organization fit in recruitment and selection processes. Organizations should prioritize cultural and value congruence when hiring new employees. This can be achieved through hiring practices that emphasize alignment with organizational values, as well as providing realistic job previews to help candidates better understand

the company culture before joining. Ensuring a strong fit between employees' personal values and organizational values supports emotional integration and fosters greater workplace engagement.

6.1.2. Theoretical Implications

This study enhances our theoretical understanding of how emotional absorption influences task engagement. The empirical findings, which demonstrate that organizational identity and person-organization fit mediate this relationship, support theoretical models that highlight the role of emotional connections and shared values in employee outcomes. This suggests that emotional absorption extends beyond team dynamics, encompassing a sense of identification with the organization, which in turn may increase engagement. These insights contribute to employee engagement models by incorporating organizational identity and person-organization fit as key mediators. The study also shows that emotional absorption both directly and indirectly boosts job engagement, thus refining our theoretical understanding of how emotional culture affects engagement. The significant role of organizational identity and person-organization fit underscores the complex interaction between emotional culture and engagement, building upon theoretical frameworks that explore the impact of emotional and cultural factors on employee behaviour. The findings suggest the need to explore moderating variables that might influence the strength of the observed relationships and the broader effects of emotional culture on job engagement. Future research could also examine longitudinal impacts to assess how emotional assimilation evolves over time and how organizational changes affect immigrant integration and engagement. These areas of inquiry could further deepen our understanding of employee engagement and performance.

6.2. Limitations and Future Direction

This study offers insights into how newcomers' integration into project teams' emotional culture affects job engagement but has limitations. The cross-sectional design limits causal conclusions, and self-reported survey data may introduce response biases. Future research could use longitudinal designs to explore cause-and-effect relationships and incorporate supervisor assessments or behavioural observations to validate findings and better understand emotional integration and professional commitment. The study's focus on Chinese enterprises, while broad in scope, limits the generalizability of the findings to other cultural and organizational contexts. Since person-organization

fit, organizational identity, and emotional culture can vary significantly across countries and industries, future research should include a diverse range of organizations to test the robustness of these findings and explore cultural influences on emotional absorption and job engagement. Finally, the study highlights the importance of emotional culture, organizational identity, and person-organization fit in immigrant integration and work engagement, but further research should consider additional mediators and moderators—such as job roles, organizational support, and individual personality traits—that may also influence these relationships.

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