



# Unleashing the Antecedents and Consequences of Work Engagement in NGOs through the Lens of JD-R Model: Empirical Evidence from India

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**Abstract** With limited studies on antecedents and consequences of work engagement with special reference to NGOs, two novel antecedents of work engagement, namely workload (job demand) and proactive personality (job resource) are introduced in the study. By drawing on the revised JD-R model, the study empirically examines the indirect effects of job demands, job resources, personal resources, and ideological resources on organizational outcomes, i.e. intention to quit and organizational citizenship behaviour through work engagement in NGOs. The data collected from paid employees of registered NGOs operating in India were analysed using structural equation modelling. The study reveals that workload does not decrease employees' work engagement in NGOs. Whereas employment insecurity was negatively associated with work engagement. Besides, transformational leadership, intrinsic rewards, community service self-efficacy, proactive personality, and public service motivation played a vital role in fostering work engagement in NGOs. Furthermore, work engagement was negatively associated with the intention to quit and positively associated with organizational citizenship behaviour.

**Keywords** Antecedents and consequences · Work engagement · NGOs · NPOs · Workload · Proactive personality · Job demands-resources model · India

## Introduction

The rise of non-government organizations (NGOs) has been a vital process in the social and economic development of developing countries such as India (Baviskar, 2001). The success of NGOs significantly depends upon various social actors involved, which include partners, donors, members, volunteers, and employees. NGO employees play a vital role in emancipating the world from the shackles of poverty, illiteracy, violence, child abuse, harassment, etc. However, in contemporary times, NGOs have faced a dynamic environment, complexities from government and state regulations, and globalization (Aboramadan et al., 2020), which have impacted employees' commitment, performance, and engagement levels. These employees often undergo pressing job demands such as workload, burnout, and employment insecurity (Kostadinov et al., 2021; McEntee et al., 2021), which trigger their turnover (Kostadinov et al., 2021). With employee turnover becoming rampant in NGOs (Habib & Taylor, 1999; Benson, 2012; Kostadinov et al., 2021), it is imperative to address employee-related issues as turnover impacts their success quite intensely.

Work engagement is a gateway to the solution pertaining to employee turnover. It is not only a key indicator of employee retention (Memon et al., 2020) and organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB) but also an antidote to burnout (Meynaar et al., 2021). Engaged employees in NGOs can be a significant asset as they are constantly in a positive state of mind wherein they are fully invested,

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committed to their roles (Vecina et al., 2012), and show a higher tendency to remain associated (Huynh et al., 2014). Drawing from the most common theory to study engagement, job demands and resources theory (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007), we know that individuals with many job resources can cope better with their job demands and show higher levels of engagement (Xanthopoulou et al., 2007). Besides, every job may have specific job demands and resources depending on the specific job characteristics (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Since NGOs are not-for-profit organizations, their functioning is quite different from for-profit organizations. For instance, employees in NGOs have a different orientation towards their work as their values, strategic goals, and management are strongly aligned with each other (Ridder et al., 2010). They are intrinsically motivated due to their mission (Auriol & Brilon, 2018) and find meaningfulness in their jobs. Since they have a different outlook towards work, the job demands, job resources, and personal resources that lead to their engagement are also different from for-profit organizations as they are also endowed with ideological resources (Selander, 2015).

While the concept of work engagement has been extensively researched in the context of for-profit organizations, research and findings are inadequate in the context of NGOs (Abromadan & Dahleez, 2020; Park et al., 2018). There are studies on the predictors of work engagement in the third sector (Selander, 2015) and NPOs (Akingbola and Berg, 2019; Park, 2018; Aboramadan et al., 2020) but not on NGOs, which are a subset of NPOs (Salamon & Anheier, 1997). NGOs are proactive organizations that are engrossed in serving the nation (De Souza, 2010). Employees in NGOs are passionate about serving the communities; they are more inclined towards non-monetary aspects, such as intrinsic rewards (Borzaga & Tortia, 2006); and exhibit a great deal of transformational leadership (Aboramadan et al., 2020).

Prior studies state that NGOs in India generally function under the leadership and supervision of the main founder who exhibits a “one-man-show” (Shiva and Suar, 2012); is often supported only by a few professionals and even fewer staff employees; and lack in a proper hierarchy (Shiva and Suar, 2012). Since NGOs in India have scarce physical and financial resources (Shiva and Suar, 2012; Mer & Virdi, 2021), they find motivating and engaging their employees challenging. Moreover, NGOs are witnessing increasing job demands such as workload (Ariza-Montes & Lucia-Casademunt, 2016; McEntee et al., 2021) and employment insecurity (Zbucha et al., 2019; McEntee et al., 2021). In such contexts, it becomes imperative for NGOs to gain clarity on the job demands and resources that might impact their engagement levels. A deep understanding of the antecedents of work engagement is likely to decrease the

intention to quit the job, boost organizational citizenship behaviour and performance of the employees and subsequently contribute to the overall effectiveness of the NGOs (Mer & Vijay, 2021).

In this backdrop, this study explores specific job demands, job resources, personal resources, and ideological resources as antecedents of work engagement, their interrelationships, their impact on intention to quit, and organizational citizenship behaviour in NGOs in India. This study contributes to the existing literature in two ways. First, this study takes novel factors such as workload (job demand) and proactive personality (personal resource) as antecedents of work engagement in the NGOs context. Second, it is the first study on NGOs that uses job demands and resources theory to examine the indirect effects of the job demands, job resources, personal resources and ideological resources on two very important organizational outcomes, i.e. intention to quit and organizational citizenship behaviour via work engagement. Thus, the study empirically answers three research questions:

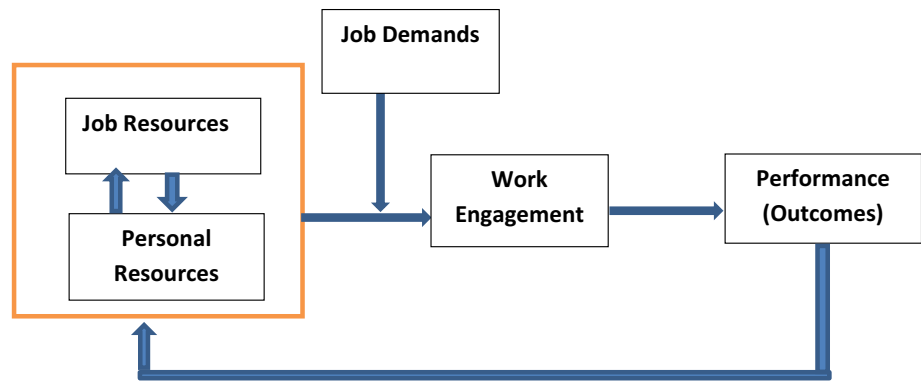
1. What are the antecedents of work engagement with respect to job demands, job resources, personal resources, and ideological resources as relevant in Indian NGOs?
2. What are the consequences of work engagement in Indian NGOs?
3. How does work engagement translate these demands and resources to intention to quit and organizational citizenship behaviour of the employees working in Indian NGOs?

### Job Demands-Resources Model: Theoretical Framework of the Study

The theoretical foundation of the proposed conceptual model is the job demands-resources (JD-R) model (Fig. 1), given by Bakker and Demerouti (2007). Job demands are the “physical, social, or organizational aspects of the job that require sustained physical and/or psychological (i.e. cognitive or emotional) effort or skills and are associated with certain physiological and/or psychological costs”. Role ambiguity, time pressure, workload, employment insecurity, etc., are examples of job demands. Stress results from job demands (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008), leading to employee disengagement.

On the other hand, job resources refer to “physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects of the job that are either/or: (i) functional in achieving work goals, (ii) reduce job demands and the associated physiological and psychological costs, and (iii) stimulate personal growth, learning, and development” (Bakker & Demerouti,

**Fig. 1** Revised JD-R model of Work engagement. *Source:* Bakker and Demerouti (2007)



2007). Job resources help accomplish organizational goals, decrease job demands and increase work engagement (Crawford et al., 2010). Job autonomy, social support, feedback, etc., are examples of job resources. At the same time, personal resources such as resilience, self-efficacy, and self-esteem are the “aspects of the self that are generally linked to resiliency and refer to individuals’ sense of their ability to control and impact upon their environment successfully” (Xanthopoulou et al., 2007).

## Background of Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) in India

The rise of concern for social justice, growth for everyone, and empowerment of the marginalized have given an impetus to the growth of civil society, which has encouraged the formation of open and secular institutions such as NGOs that serve as a mediator between the citizens and the state in modern democratic societies (Ghosh, 2009). In India, the government has launched several ambitious programs that involve NGOs in their execution, thus strengthening the role of leadership in NGOs in the success or failure of these programmes. There are more than 1,18,101 different types of NGOs operating in India (Niti Aayog, 2021). They hold a distinctive mediating position in moving inefficient states to efficient markets through services encompassing a wide range of services activities. Indian NGOs are shaped by Indian ethos and have a history of social reform movements that have taken place in India (Sengupta, 2014). The span of their activities is mainly related to religion, spirituality, humanity, environment, etc. While Indian NGOs support the nation’s public services significantly and contribute to mitigating the critical situation of India as a developing country (Ariza-Montes and Lucia-Casademunt 2016), their success largely depends on identified partners, donors, registered members, volunteers, and most importantly employees.

NGOs have a distinct cultural scenario (Sashkin, 1995) of change management, goal achievement, and coordination of efforts, led mainly by the founder’s vision (Schneider et al., 1995). Also, NGOs in India face erratic external factors and financial and resource crunch compared to for-profit organizations (Goel & Kumar, 2005). They have to keep functioning under the dynamically-changing external environment that comprises of their donors, stakeholders, government regulations, etc., which often puts challenges on the job demands for the few employees associated with them. For these reasons, NGOs face unique challenges in retaining, motivating, and engaging their employees.

## Hypotheses Development

### *Job Demands as Antecedents of Work Engagement in the Context of Indian NGOs*

NGOs are witnessing an increasing magnitude of job demands like workload (Ariza-Montes and Lucia-Casademunt 2016; McEntee et al., 2021) and job insecurity (Baluch, 2017; Zbucheá et al., 2019; McEntee et al., 2021). Humanitarian organizations confront high employee turnover due to job insecurity and workload. The growing magnitude of workload in NGOs has led to high employee turnover (Mer & Viridi, 2021). Studies indicate that a high workload decreases work engagement (Llorens et al., 2007; Taipale et al., 2011; Ahmed et al., 2017; Zhang et al., 2021). Similarly, studies suggest that job insecurity also decreases work engagement (Mauno et al., 2007; Karatepe et al., 2020). However, there has been no attempt to investigate the effect of workload on work engagement in the context of NGOs. The current study analyses the effect of two job demands, namely workload and employment insecurity on work engagement. Based on the above literature, the researchers hypothesize that:

**H1** Job demands, specifically the workload, has a significant negative effect on work engagement.

**H2** Job demands, specifically employment insecurity, has a significant negative effect on work engagement.

### **Job Resources as Antecedents of Work Engagement in the Context of Indian NGOs**

As per the job demands-resources model, job resources enhance work engagement (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). The study analyses two job resources, namely transformational leadership and intrinsic rewards, as predictors of work engagement in NGOs. Studies indicate that transformational leadership is positively associated with work engagement in non-profit organizations (Freeborough & Patterson, 2016; Aboramadan et al. 2020). In addition to transformational leadership, intrinsic rewards emanate from the job itself (Kim, 2017). Studies indicate that the employees in NGOs are more inclined towards non-monetary aspects and are more committed to work (Borzaga & Tortia, 2006; Aboramadan et al. 2020). Greater learning opportunities are positively associated with work engagement in NPOs (Kim, 2017).

It is interesting to note here that in Indian NGOs, it is generally the main founder who leads and supervises the functioning of the NGO. With a limited number of employees and less salaries due to financial constraints, job autonomy, a vital job resource in NPOs in developed countries, is not visibly seen in Indian NGOs. Most employees in NGOs are made to work in bookkeeping, general administration, raising money, and operations, wherein the extent of autonomy is either limited to setting deadlines or substantially missing. As such, job autonomy is not a salient feature in Indian NGOs, due to which the researchers have selected two salient job resources—transformational leadership and intrinsic rewards. Based on the above literature, the researchers hypothesize that:

**H3** Job resources, specifically transformational leadership, positively influence work engagement.

**H4** Job resources, specifically intrinsic rewards, positively influence work engagement.

### **Personal Resources as Antecedents of Work Engagement in the Context of Indian NGOs**

The current study analyses two personal resources: proactive personality and community service self-efficacy as predictors of work engagement in NGOs. People who exhibit proactive personalities impact environmental change, take initiative, seek better ways of doing their work, and persevere until they bring about meaningful

change. NGOs demand employees who prefer challenging work, struggle for continuous improvement, and search for new opportunities (Rank et al., 2004). Studies indicate that NGOs are very proactive organizations driven by innovative and altruistic people (Souza, 2010). Similarly, community service self-efficacy is “the individual’s confidence in his or her own ability to make clinically significant contributions to the community through service” (Reeb et al., 1998). In the face of organizational demands, employees in NGOs with greater community service self-efficacy enjoy greater work engagement (Harp et al., 2017). Based on the above literature, the researchers hypothesize that:

**H5** Personal resources, specifically proactive personality, positively influence work engagement.

**H6** Personal resources, specifically community service self-efficacy, positively influences work engagement.

### **Ideological Resources as Antecedents of Work Engagement in the Context of Indian NGOs**

According to Selander (2015), ideologically oriented employees with public service motivation join third sector organizations. NGOs are unique organizations and, therefore, cannot be compared with business or government organizations. The factors like value delivery to society, self-motivation, commitment to a cause, voluntary spirit, and strong internal vision make NGOs unique and help in bringing social change (Sridhar & Nagabhushanam, 2008). Based on the above literature, the researchers hypothesize that:

**H7** Ideological resource, specifically public service motivation, positively influences work engagement.

### **Intention to Quit and Organizational Citizenship Behaviour as Consequences of Work Engagement**

Intention to quit is a deliberate and willful attempt by employees to leave their organizations, and organizational citizenship behaviour is the behaviour that goes beyond the basic requirements of the job, discretionary to a large extent, and is of benefit to the organization. While work engagement is negatively associated with quitting (Park et al., 2018), it is positively associated with OCB in NGOs (Gupta et al., 2017). Based on the above literature, the researchers hypothesize that:

**H8** Work engagement has a significant negative effect on the intention to quit.

**H9** Work engagement has a significant positive effect on organizational citizenship behaviour.

### Work Engagement as a Mediator Between its Antecedents and Consequences

Kahn (1990) proposed that individual and organizational factors influence work engagement, driving individual attitudes and behaviour such as turnover intention and affective commitment. In other words, work engagement is believed to mediate the relationships between job demands and resources on one hand and job outcomes on the other hand (Schaufeli, 2015).

To study the mediating effect of work engagement between its antecedents like job demands (workload and employment insecurity), job resources (transformational leadership and intrinsic rewards), personal resources (proactive personality and community service self-efficacy), ideological resource (public service motivation) on one hand and intention to quit, on the other hand, the following hypothesis is formulated:

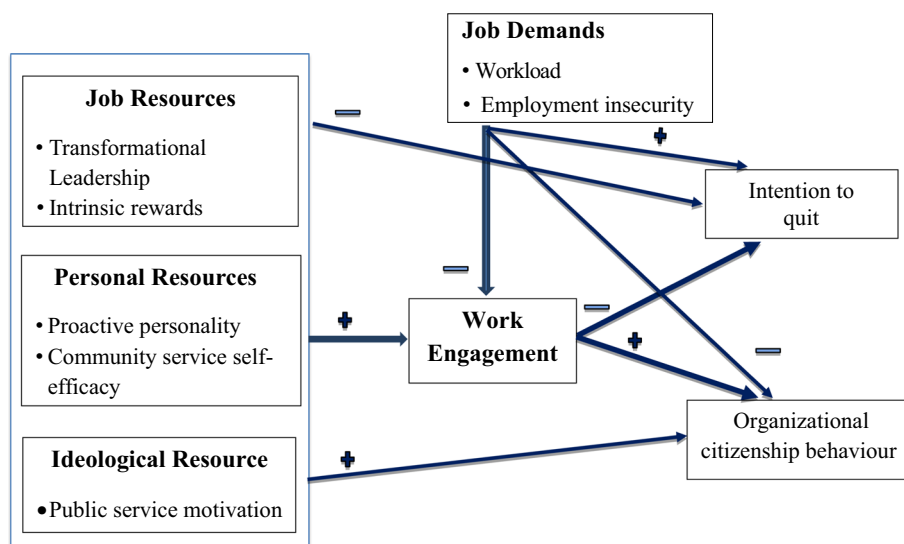
**H10** Work engagement mediates the relationship between its antecedents and intention to quit.

To study the mediating effect of work engagement between its antecedents like job demands (workload and employment insecurity), job resources (transformational leadership and intrinsic rewards), personal resources (proactive personality and community service self-efficacy), ideological resource (public service motivation) on one hand and organization citizenship behaviour on the other hand, the following hypothesis is formulated:

**H11** Work engagement mediates the relationship between its antecedents and organizational citizenship behaviour.

These hypotheses lead to a conceptual model as presented in Fig. 2.

**Fig. 2** Conceptual model.  
Source: Author



### Method

The study employed a quantitative research design. The data were collected from paid employees of registered NGOs operating in education, livelihood, and environment/disaster relief operations in the Uttarakhand state in India. The total number of registered NGOs in Uttarakhand is 386 (Source: uttarakhand.ngosindia.com). While the researchers considered both national and international NGOs as the samples, the data were collected from only Indian nationals working here. Expatriates or volunteers working in NGOs were not a part of the study.

### Participants and Procedure

Total forty-eight NGOs expressed their willingness to be a part of the study. The data were collected through an online link to the questionnaire and through a hard copy of the questionnaire, where there was a lack of access to the internet. Multistage sampling method was used for data collection. Out of 650 employees who took part in the study, 444 employees responded with full details, indicating a response rate of 68%. The participants were selected based on a minimum of 3 years of service or more with the organization. Data collection spanned over eight months. Refer to Table 1 for the respondents’ profiles.

### Measures

The participants answered all measures on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (Strongly agree) to 5 (Strongly disagree).

*Work engagement* comprising vigour, dedication, and absorption was captured by Schaufeli et al. (2006) nine-item Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-9)

**Table 1** Respondents' profile

Variable	Description	Frequency	N (444) (%)
Gender	Male	252	57
	Female	192	43
Age (in years)	Less than 25	70	16
	25–29	107	24
	30–34	112	25
	35–39	73	16
	More than 39	82	19
Educational qualification	Senior secondary	88	20
	Graduation	151	34
	Post-graduation	166	37
	PhD	39	9
Experience in NGO (in years)	3–4	160	36
	5–9	129	29
	10–14	83	19
	15–19	39	9
	More than 19	33	7
Occupational class	Managerial level	117	26
	Experts/trainers	132	30
	Front line employees	195	44

Source: Author

(Cronbach's  $\alpha > 0.80$ ). A sample item is "At my work, I feel bursting with energy". *Workload* was measured by two items drawn from Nordic Questionnaire (QPS Nordic) (Cronbach's  $\alpha > 0.70$ ). A sample item is "Do you have too much to do". *Employment insecurity* was measured using the Job Insecurity Scale (JIS), comprising of four items developed initially by De Witte (2000) (Cronbach's  $\alpha > 0.80$ ). A sample item is "Chances are, I will soon lose my job".

*Intrinsic reward* was captured by four items drawn from Sak's (2006) rewards and recognition scale (Cronbach's  $\alpha > 0.80$ ). A sample item is "My organization gives me learning and development opportunities". *Transformational leadership* was captured by seven items (Carless et al., 2000) (Cronbach's  $\alpha > 0.80$ ). A sample item is "My supervisor fosters trust, involvement and cooperation among team members". *Community service self-efficacy* was gauged with a three-item scale developed by (Reeb et al., 1998) (Cronbach's  $\alpha > 0.70$ ). A sample item is "I am confident that, through community service, I can help in promoting social justice".

*Proactive personality* was measured with four items from Bateman and Crant (1993) (Cronbach's  $\alpha > 0.80$ ). A sample item is "I like to use my know-how to reach good results".

*Public service motivation* was measured by a three-item scale developed by (Perry, 1996) (Cronbach's  $\alpha > 0.80$ ). A sample item is "I consider my work to be socially beneficial".

*Intention to quit* was measured by two items from the validated scale of Colarelli (1984) (Cronbach's  $\alpha > 0.70$ ). A sample item is "I frequently think of quitting my job". *Organizational citizenship behaviour* was measured with four items from the validated scale of Lee and Allen (2002) (Cronbach's  $\alpha > 0.70$ ). A sample item is "I feel that problems faced by my organization are also my problems".

## Results

The hypotheses were tested using structural equation modelling. A two-step approach comprising of measurement and structural model was adopted (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). Data were analysed using AMOS 22.0. Multicollinearity was checked through the variance inflation factor (VIF). All the items on the questionnaire had VIF values ranging from 1.567 to 2.800. Since the VIF values were less than 5, this ruled out the potential collinearity problem (Hair et al., 2016). To test the measurement model, various fit measures were analysed. The mediating effects were tested by the bootstrap method in AMOS (Shrout & Bolger, 2002). This procedure is done by resampling with replacement, repeated several times. The indirect effect of each subsample is computed. This leads to an overall confidence interval. The reported results are based on bias-corrected and confidence intervals set at 0.95 with 5,000 resamples (Preacher & Hayes, 2008).

### Measurement Model

Confirmatory Factor Analysis was used to assess the distinctiveness of various variables. A measurement model was constructed to assess the convergent and discriminant validity. The measurement model comprised ten variables: workload, employment insecurity, transformational leadership, proactive personality, community service self-efficacy, public service motivation, work engagement, intention to quit and OCB. The values of measurement model are:  $(\chi^2) = 1551.354$ ,  $(\chi^2/df) = 2.114$ ,  $RMSEA = 0.050$ ,  $CFI = 0.933$  and  $TLI = 0.925$  and thus, the confirmatory factor analysis showed an acceptable overall model fit. Table 2 depicts CR and AVE. Since all the standardized factor loadings are greater than the threshold limit of 0.60 (Barclay et al., 1995) therefore, construct reliabilities are greater than the threshold limit of 0.80 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), and the average variance extracted are greater than the threshold limit of 0.50. Thus, convergent validity is established (Table 2).

### Structural Model

The hypotheses were tested using a structural model. The values of measurement model are:  $(\chi^2) = 1553.317$ ,  $(\chi^2/df) = 2.113$ ,  $RMSEA = 0.050$ ,  $CFI = 0.933$  and  $TLI = 0.925$ . This indicates that the fit indices of the structural model showed a good fit of the data. The results of direct

effects are represented in Table 3, and the results of bootstrapped indirect (mediating effects) are shown in Tables 4 and 5. As shown in Table 3, Hypothesis 1 is rejected because workload (job demand) does not negatively affect NGOs’ workforce work engagement ( $\beta = 0.015$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ). On the contrary, Hypothesis 2 is accepted as employment insecurity (job demand) negatively affects work engagement ( $\beta = - 0.090$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ).

The results indicate that job resources are positively associated with work engagement. As hypothesized, intrinsic rewards have a positive effect on work engagement ( $\beta = 0.155$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), whereas transformational leadership has comparatively a small positive on work engagement effect ( $\beta = 0.136$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Thus, hypotheses 3 and 4 are accepted. Similarly, as hypothesized, personal resources are positively associated with work engagement. Proactive personality has a notably robust effect on work engagement ( $\beta = 0.387$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), whereas community service self-efficacy has comparatively a small positive on work engagement effect ( $\beta = 0.113$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Thus, hypotheses 5 and 6 are accepted. The results indicate that ideological resource like public service motivation is positively associated with work engagement ( $\beta = 0.227$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Regarding the consequences of work engagement, the results indicate that work engagement strongly affects the employees’ intention to quit the job ( $\beta = - 0.403$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). On the other hand, work engagement exerts a robust positive effect on

**Table 2** Descriptive statistics and inter-construct correlations and the square root of average variance extracted

Variables	M	SD	CR	AVE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Intention to quit	2.720	0.820	0.835	0.717	0.847									
2. Work engagement	4.120	0.640	0.934	0.611	- 0.500	0.782								
3. Transformational leadership	4.120	0.650	0.900	0.600	- 0.338	0.655	0.775							
4. Employment insecurity	3.090	0.930	0.923	0.749	0.358	- 0.244	- 0.234	0.865						
5. Proactive personality	4.210	0.650	0.916	0.731	- 0.414	0.696	0.554	- 0.173	0.855					
6. Intrinsic rewards	4.240	0.610	0.871	0.629	- 0.240	0.590	0.643	- 0.178	0.448	0.793				
7. Organizational citizenship behaviour	4.050	0.540	0.846	0.581	- 0.239	0.611	0.471	- 0.107	0.526	0.398	0.762			
8. Public service motivation	4.280	0.590	0.886	0.723	- 0.298	0.594	0.538	- 0.099	0.459	0.416	0.423	0.850		
9. Community service self-efficacy	4.060	0.620	0.803	0.577	- 0.239	0.562	0.533	- 0.089	0.505	0.555	0.456	0.372	0.759	
10. Workload	3.730	0.650	0.811	0.682	0.130	0.059	0.058	0.349	0.069	0.056	0.155	0.074	0.135	0.826

Source: Author

M = Mean; Sd = Standard deviation; CR = Composite reliability; AVE = Average variance explained

**Table 3** Results of SEM analysis

	Work engagement		Intention to quit		Organizational citizenship behaviour	
	$\beta$	SE	$\beta$	SE	$\beta$	SE
Workload	0.015	0.044	0.081	0.066	0.102	0.058
Employment insecurity	– 0.090*	0.044	0.223***	0.058	– 0.001	0.050
Transformational leadership	0.136*	0.073	– 0.020	0.072	0.058	0.093
Intrinsic reward	0.155*	0.062	– 0.098	0.076	0.018	0.086
Proactive personality	0.387***	0.052	– 0.131**	0.080	0.143**	0.078
Community service self-efficacy	0.113*	0.056	– 0.029	0.075	0.118*	0.065
Public service motivation	0.227***	0.051	– 0.024	0.077	0.061	0.068
Work engagement	-	-	– 0.403**	0.102	0.372***	0.102

Source: Author

\* $p < 0.05$ . \*\* $p < 0.01$ . \*\*\* $p < 0.001$

**Table 4** Bootstrap results: work engagement as a mediator

	Intention to quit			
	Effect	SE	Lower bound	Upper bound
<i>Workload</i>				
Total	0.075	0.067	– 0.061	0.206
Direct	0.081	0.066	– 0.048	0.207
Indirect	– 0.006	0.018	– 0.045	0.029
<i>Employment insecurity</i>				
Total	0.259***	0.060	0.140	0.375
Direct	0.223***	0.058	0.106	0.337
Indirect	0.036*	0.021	0.002	0.083
<i>Transformational leadership</i>				
Total	– 0.075	0.083	– 0.225	0.099
Direct	– 0.020	0.072	– 0.155	0.125
Indirect	– 0.055*	0.032	– 0.123	– 0.004
<i>Intrinsic reward</i>				
Total	– 0.160**	0.081	– 0.128	0.186
Direct	– 0.098	0.076	– 0.054	0.241
Indirect	– 0.062*	0.031	– 0.134	– 0.012
<i>Proactive personality</i>				
Total	– 0.287**	0.071	– 0.420	– 0.141
Direct	– 0.131	0.080	– 0.288	0.028
Indirect	– 0.156**	0.044	– 0.245	– 0.073
<i>Community service self-efficacy</i>				
Total	– 0.075	0.076	– 0.171	0.132
Direct	– 0.029	0.075	– 0.128	0.172
Indirect	– 0.046*	0.025	– 0.099	– 0.001
<i>Public service motivation</i>				
Total	– 0.115	0.071	– 0.252	0.022
Direct	– 0.024	0.077	– 0.174	0.126
Indirect	– 0.091**	0.034	– 0.166	– 0.034

Source: Author

\* $p < 0.05$ , \*\* $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.001$

**Table 5** Bootstrap results: work engagement as a mediator

	Organizational citizenship behaviour			
	Effect	SE	Lower bound	Upper bound
<i>Workload</i>				
Total	0.108	0.058	– 0.009	0.221
Direct	0.102	0.058	– 0.011	0.214
Indirect	0.006	0.017	– 0.028	0.042
<i>Employment insecurity</i>				
Total	– 0.035	0.051	– 0.132	0.072
Direct	– 0.001	0.050	– 0.096	0.102
Indirect	– 0.034*	0.018	– 0.074	– 0.003
<i>Transformational leadership</i>				
Total	0.109	0.089	– 0.051	0.295
Direct	0.058	0.093	– 0.114	0.255
Indirect	0.051*	0.031	– 0.004	– 0.119
<i>Intrinsic reward</i>				
Total	0.076	0.083	– 0.129	0.200
Direct	0.018	0.086	– 0.197	0.144
Indirect	0.058*	0.030	0.011	0.129
<i>Proactive personality</i>				
Total	0.287***	0.072	0.147	0.427
Direct	0.143***	0.078	– 0.010	– 0.293
Indirect	0.144***	0.046	0.066	0.245
<i>Community service self-efficacy</i>				
Total	0.160*	0.071	0.018	0.297
Direct	0.118*	0.068	– 0.020	– 0.247
Indirect	0.042*	0.026	0.000	0.102
<i>Public service motivation</i>				
Total	0.145*	0.059	0.026	0.256
Direct	0.061	0.065	– 0.074	0.182
Indirect	0.084***	0.030	0.035	0.155

\* $p < 0.05$ , \*\* $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.001$



organizational citizenship behaviour among employees in NGOs ( $\beta = 0.372$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Thus, Hypotheses 8 and 9 are accepted.

The results provide partial support for Hypothesis 10. As regards workload, both direct and indirect effects are insignificant. Thus, there is no evidence of mediation of work engagement between workload and intention to quit. On the other hand, there is partial mediation of work engagement between employment insecurity and intention to quit. There is evidence of full mediation of work engagement between transformational leadership, intrinsic rewards, proactive personality, community service self-efficacy, public service motivation on the one hand, and intention to quit on the other hand.

Similarly, hypothesis 11 is partially accepted. There is no evidence of mediation of work engagement between workload and organizational citizenship behaviour. There is partial evidence of work engagement as a mediator between community service self-efficacy, proactive personality on one hand and OCB on the other hand. There is evidence of full mediation of work engagement between employment insecurity, transformational leadership, intrinsic rewards and public service motivation on one hand and OCB on the other hand.

## Discussion

The study examines the antecedents and consequences of work engagement in NGOs by drawing on the JD-R model of work engagement. Taking into account the hypotheses related to the antecedents of work engagement in NGOs, the study suggests that job demands may not necessarily decrease work engagement. The study indicated that workload (job demand) in NGOs does not negatively affect the work engagement of its employees. The finding resonates with prior studies (Bormann, 2013; Crawford et al., 2010). A possible explanation could be that employees in NGOs have a different orientation towards work, unlike employees in for-profit organizations, such that they are mission-driven rather than money-driven (Towers Perrin, 2003) and the main “perk” is “working for an NGO” itself (Werker & Ahmed, 2008). On the contrary, some studies found workload to adversely affect work engagement (Llorens et al., 2007; Ahmed, 2017), possibly because workload makes employees stressed at work, thus making them feel a dearth of energy and mental connectivity (Taipale et al., 2011). Interestingly, Mauno et al. (2007) divulged different results, indicating workload to foster employees’ work engagement. Thus, there are inconsistent results in the literature, challenging established paradigms regarding workload.

Employment insecurity was reported to have a significant negative relationship with work engagement. Findings reveal employment insecurity as the sixth most crucial antecedent of work engagement in NGOs and also corroborate with the findings of Park et al. (2018). Interestingly, there is an inconsistent finding reported by Selander (2015), wherein employment insecurity is not associated with work engagement. Employment insecurity in NGOs emanates due to the contractual nature of the job (Zbuchea et al., 2019; Baluch, 2017), time-bound projects, the uncertainty of extension of projects by funding agencies, etc.

Findings further suggest that job resources such as transformational leadership and intrinsic rewards are positively associated with work engagement. Transformational leadership is the fourth most crucial antecedent of work engagement in NGOs. The findings corroborate with previous studies (Freeborough & Patterson, 2016; Gözükkara & Şimşek, 2015). This is because transformational leaders transfer their zeal to their subordinates through modeling (Breif & Weiss, 2020). It should be noted here that the absence of job autonomy does not bring any difference in the work engagement of the employees in NGOs as transformation leadership plays an important role in inspiring the employees to think creatively and help them to be successful so that they may raise the level of work engagement by bringing in them the needed energy (Terry et al., 2000). Transformational leaders instil values and self-motivation among employees (Shamir et al., 1993), wherein employees work intrinsically without demanding any autonomy in their work. Regarding intrinsic rewards, findings indicate that intrinsic reward is the third most crucial antecedent of work engagement in NGOs. Hulkko-Nyman et al. (2012) and Akingbola & Berz (2019) also divulged similar findings in their study. This is because employees who join the NGOs are mission-driven rather than money-driven (Surtees et al., 2014), work with full dedication and commitment, and are attracted by factors other than monetary compensation (Borzaga & Musella, 2003).

The study further indicates that personal resources such as proactive personality and community service self-efficacy positively relate to work engagement. Proactive personality stands out as a significant antecedent of work engagement in NGOs. The findings corroborate with the findings of Mastebroek et al. (2017) and Yan et al. (2019). This is because employees in NGOs take personal initiative and persist until and unless they bring a meaningful change in their work (Bakker et al., 2012). Regarding community service self-efficacy, the findings suggest that community service self-efficacy is the fifth most crucial antecedent of work engagement in NGOs. A possible reason could be that when employees are confident that by serving the

community, making a positive change in their community, and using their knowledge to resolve “real-life” problems, the employees in NGOs feel engaged in work. The study is in congruence with the study conducted by Harp (2017).

Regarding ideological resources, the result indicates that public service motivation is the second major antecedent of work engagement in NGOs. The main aim of employees in NGOs is to achieve social outcomes, as opposed to making profits (Surtees et al., 2014). Employees in the social service sector are oriented towards serving society (Werker & Ahmed, 2008). The study is congruent with prior studies (Kahn, 1990; Selander, 2015; Park, 2018), which state that employees’ perception of their work role induces the investment of physical, cognitive, and emotional energy.

Considering the hypotheses related to the consequences of work engagement in NGOs, the study’s findings suggest that work engagement is inversely related to intention to quit. The more the employees are engaged in NGOs, the less is their intention to quit the organization. This suggests that employees engaged in volunteering and altruistic work have less intention to quit the job (Park et al., 2018). Possible reasons for engaged employees’ decreased intention to quit are that, first, the passion for serving society propels the individuals to join the NGOs and stay with the organization (Park et al., 2018). Secondly, engaged employees in NGOs brim with a positive state of mind and indulge in serving society in such a manner that they are not touched by the thought of quitting their jobs (Gupta & Shaheen, 2017). Thirdly, since engaged employees are endowed with positive emotions coupled with joy and zeal in their work to serve society (Schaufeli et al., 2006), their tendency to quit their job is low. The result is in congruence with prior studies (de Oliveira & da Silva, 2015; Akingbola & Van den Berz, 2019; Park et al., 2018; Aboramadan et al., 2020).

Taking into account the work engagement as a mediator, the study’s findings also indicate that there is no evidence of mediation of work engagement between workload on one hand and intention to quit and OCB on the other hand. Besides, work engagement partially mediates the relationship between employment insecurity and intention to quit and fully mediates the relationship between employment insecurity and OCB. Our findings provide strong evidence of the indirect effect of transformational leadership, intrinsic reward, proactive personality, community service self-efficacy, and public service motivation on intention to quit and OCB through work engagement.

### Theoretical and Managerial Implications

This research empirically tests the effect of novel job demand (workload) and personal resource (proactive personality) on work engagement in NGOs. The study’s

novelty stems from using the JD-R model to empirically examine the indirect effects of job demands, job resources, personal resources, and ideological resources on two significant organizational outcomes, i.e. intention to quit and organizational citizenship behaviour through work engagement in NGOs.

The current study has specific managerial implications for the practitioners, such as founders and leaders of NGOs in India, Bangladesh, and other Southeast Asian countries that have similar work cultures and working conditions of NGOs. NGOs need to know factors fostering and impeding work engagement. Since employment insecurity hinders work engagement, therefore to overcome employment insecurity, the HR Managers can resort to the social enterprise concept in some of their activities for self-sustenance, i.e. apart from the regular free operations of NGOs, they can also run a hospital/school for nominal fees for supporting the mission of the NGO.

Since transformational leadership, intrinsic reward, proactive personality, community service self-efficacy, and public service motivation lead to work engagement, the managers should recruit transformational leaders as supervisors, people with proactive personality, high community service self-efficacy, public service motivation and selfless attitude. This can be ensured by conducting a psychometric test during recruitment and selection. Managers should also provide intrinsic rewards to the employees in NGOs. Corporates that play an essential role in the success of NGOs can help facilitate work engagement by fostering transformational leadership. The corporates can identify people in corporates who exhibit transformational leadership and are an epitome of a just leader. Such leaders can conduct youth leadership programs to foster transformational leadership in NGOs. To boost intrinsic rewards, corporates should provide learning and development opportunities to the employees of NGOs by conducting capacity-building programs and providing peer-to-peer learning platforms at the national level, wherein the employees of various NGOs can come together and learn from each other.

Even government can take initiatives to enhance transformational leadership, intrinsic rewards, community service self-efficacy, and proactive personality in NGOs, which will enhance work engagement. The government can take the initiative to facilitate digital learning in NGOs. Just as SWAYAM is an initiative of the government for promoting e-learning among students and faculty members, similar initiatives can be taken by the government wherein advanced programmes on leadership (with a focus on transformation leadership), community service self-efficacy and proactive personality can be conducted. This will, in turn, enhance work engagement in NGOs.

## Conclusion, Limitations and Future Research

Notwithstanding the study's essential implications, it has a few limitations too. First is the research design, which might limit the causality among the selected variables. The current study used a cross-sectional approach, and therefore one cannot confidently claim causal relations based on cross-sectional studies. For this, future research can focus on longitudinal studies. Second, the sample used is employees from Indian NGOs in the northern part of the country, which might limit the generalizability of the study. Although our study is contextualized in Indian NGOs, and our results are consistent with the prior theoretical and empirical literature on the JD-R model, there is a need to replicate the study using a larger sample from other parts of the country, as India is a culturally and geographically diverse country. Similarly, studies can be replicated in other developing or Asian countries whose work culture resonates with Indian culture. Third, our study chooses only selected job resources and personal resources as deemed fit for employees working in Indian NGOs. Future studies can include a host of other job demands and job resources as applicable in the context of NGOs.

The study leaves ample scope for future research. There is a dearth of research on work engagement in NGOs based on Indian cultural values and philosophy. First, ancient Indian wisdom emphasizes nishkam karm (selfless action). Since the NGOs' employees are altruistic and aim to achieve social outcomes instead of making a profit (Surtees et al., 2014), therefore nishkam karm can be another antecedent of work engagement under ideological resources in NGOs. Second, the studies indicate that the employees in NGOs are benevolent, and they join the organization because of the cause served by the organization. Therefore, empirical studies can be conducted by studying the effect of belief in human benevolence (ideological resource) on work engagement in NGOs. Third, studies can also be conducted by adding control variables like gender, age, occupational class, etc., in the proposed model, which has not been explored yet.

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### Declarations

**Conflict of interest** It is to specifically state that “No Competing interests are at stake and there is No Conflict of Interest” with other people or organizations that could inappropriately influence or bias the content of the paper.

**Human and Animal Rights** As a corresponding author along with co-authors of this paper, the paper has been submitted with full responsibility, following due ethical procedure, and there is no

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