

Post-pandemic public personnel retention: A person-organization and person-supervisor fit analysis

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Abstract

This study examines person/organization and person/supervisor fit of public administration professionals in the context of hybrid work. A three-phase study was conducted among 411 public professionals in Quebec. Results show that person/organization and person/supervisor fit have declined over time, and that satisfaction with hybrid work played a role in this decline. Person/organization fit affects intention to stay with the public organization. These results show the importance for public organizations to take employees' needs, values and expectations into account to increase satisfaction with the hybrid work experience and foster the retention of public service employees in a post-pandemic era.

Sommaire

Cette étude examine l'adéquation personne/organisation et personne/superviseur des professionnels de la fonction publique québécoise en contexte de travail hybride. Une étude longitudinale en trois phases a été menée auprès de 411 professionnels du secteur public québécois. Les résultats montrent que l'adéquation personne/organisation et personne/superviseur ont diminué peu à peu et que la satisfaction envers le travail hybride joue un rôle

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dans cette baisse. L'adéquation personne/organisation influence l'intention de rester dans l'organisation du secteur public. Ces résultats montrent l'importance pour les organisations publiques de prendre en compte les besoins, les valeurs et les attentes des individus afin d'accroître la satisfaction à l'égard du travail hybride et de favoriser la rétention des fonctionnaires dans une période post-pandémique.

INTRODUCTION

The transition back to the office for public service employees, after a period where teleworking was widely adopted between 2020 and 2022, proved to be complex (Roy, 2022). The return-to-office plan for public service workers provoked opposition from provincial and federal public service workers, especially regarding personnel satisfaction within hybrid work arrangements (Lavoie, 2023). One of the main challenges for public organizations will thus be to manage employees' expectations and preferences regarding hybrid work (Williamson et al., 2022), to avoid seeing them leave for private employers whose hybrid work model better aligns with their needs. A recent study from Deloitte (2022) stated that hybrid workers expressed higher job satisfaction than other workers, but at the same time, that they are feeling the strain of juggling two work models. However, satisfaction toward hybrid work arrangements and the effect of hybrid work on public personnel retention is therefore not well known in the scholarly community. Moreover, in the hybrid work model, important questions about organizations' ability to stay connected with their employees in terms of values, culture, and expectations, despite the distance inherent in hybrid work, have been raised (Hinds and Elliott, 2021).

The importance of fit at work has been on academicians' and practitioners' radars for more than a decade. Person/environment fit refers to the degree of congruence, similarity or correspondence between a person and their work environment, occurring when their characteristics are well matched (Kristof, 1996). Four types of fit have been identified, namely person/organization (PO fit), person/job (PJ fit), person/group (PG fit) and person/supervisor (PS fit) (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). This study focuses on two types of fit, namely person/organization (PO) and person/supervisor (PS). Fit has repeatedly been shown to have a positive effect on many behaviors and attitudes at work (e.g., Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). This person/environment interface has traditionally been studied in a context where employees maintain a daily physical presence in the workplace. However, the spatial dispersion of hybrid work means that employees carry out their jobs without daily physical interaction with their work environment. It therefore becomes legitimate to ask whether the benefits of fit remain despite the distance induced by hybrid work; this question has not yet been studied. As Kristof-Brown et al. (2023, p. 386) stated in a recent integrative review on fit: "As working environments and the world changes, new issues will be salient to people and organizations, such as [...] opportunities for remote or hybrid work. Research needs to stay current with issues that matter." Thus, the mechanisms behind the effects of person/environment fit in a new context—that of hybrid work in the public sector—is an avenue of research that has yet to be explored fully.

This article revolves around examining the effect of PO fit and PS fit for public administration professionals' retention in the context of hybrid work. First, it examines the buffering role of satisfaction with the hybrid work experience in the evolution of the perception of fit. Second, it examines the longitudinal effect of PO fit and PS fit on intent to stay in the organization. This article looks at the Quebec public service, which employs over 62,000 people in 22 departments and 65 agencies across the province (Secrétariat du Conseil du Trésor, 2022). Professionals, who make up the population of this study, represent 41.8% of the total public service workforce. This case is particularly interesting to explore as before 2018, where a pilot project involving some 1,000 employees was launched (Secrétariat du Conseil du Trésor, 2022), teleworking was a marginal, if not entirely absent, practice in the Quebec public service.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

Telework in the public sector prior and after COVID-19 pandemic

Telework refers to completing work duties away from the traditional office (Bailey and Kurland, 2002). Most authors agree that it is characterized by two essential elements: (1) the work is done remotely from the usual workplace, and (2) it uses information and communication technology (ICT) (Athanasidou and Theriou, 2021). In the public sector, empirical research on telework began in the early 1990s. As a result of more women entering the workforce, the increase of households with dual careers, and the aspiration of employees to balance their professional and personal lives, the demand for more flexible working arrangements has increased (Baltes et al., 1999; Caillier, 2013). Teleworking is the most frequently adopted flexible work arrangement in public organizations. Pre-pandemic literature focuses on individual and organizational benefits, such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, job performance, turnover, professional isolation, relationship quality with supervisors and colleagues and cost reduction (e.g., Caillier, 2012, 2013; De Vries et al., 2019; Lee and Kim, 2018). In a recent review on telework in public organizations, Mele et al. (2023) have shown that telework is associated with a decrease in turnover intention and higher job satisfaction, but also consistently appears to be a predictor of professional isolation, indicating that the impact of teleworking might differ based on individual and organizational characteristics.

There has been a significant increase in telework research since the mandatory introduction of teleworking in 2020 due to the pandemic, in Canada and elsewhere. These studies have shed light on various consequences of teleworking albeit within a very specific context: mandatory teleworking. Several scholars have recognized the exceptional characteristics of full-time mandatory telework abruptly induced by the pandemic (e.g., Boulet and Parent-Lamarche, 2022), which is a type of telework that requires an evaluation distinct from traditional telework (Kim, 2023). This experience of enforced telecommuting has not only helped to democratize telecommuting, but above all to make employees aware of the individual benefits they gain from telecommuting, and of their desire to retain this opportunity to work remotely once health restrictions have been lifted.

The post-pandemic literature tends to focus on a mode of work organization that combines distance and presence, often called "hybrid work." Hybrid work encompasses both office-based and remote work, typically including the employee's home as an alternate location. Halford (2005) defined it as a mode of work organization that combines work at

home and work at the workplace, using information and communication technologies (ICTs) to connect the two places. Studies are now focusing on organizational and team cohesion and knowledge sharing, the use of collaborative technologies, the challenges for public sector managers, and the preferences for hybrid working (e.g., Deschênes, 2024; Oppong Peparah, 2024; Williamson et al., 2022).

Hybrid work context in the Quebec public service

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, flexible work arrangements were available for very few Quebec public servants. A pilot project involving some 1,000 employees was launched in 2018 (Secrétariat du Conseil du Trésor, 2022). In this project, people teleworked one or two days a week, and no one had tested full-time telecommuting. These pilot projects target certain types of jobs and employees compatible with this type of work. The advent of the mandatory telework, induced by the COVID-19 pandemic, did not allow a formal evaluation of this project, which was only offered to a few ministries and agencies.

In the aftermath of this project, and of the pandemic experience, Quebec public service has opted for a structured hybrid work model, through its policy on telework for public service personnel (Secrétariat du Conseil du Trésor, 2021). The policy stipulates that telework is permitted for up to three days per week, with a presence equivalent to two days per week being favored on the employer's premises. The policy was rolled out in April 2022, as part of a gradual return to the workplace permitted by health authorities. Between March 2020 and the policy's implementation in April 2022, most public service personnel were teleworking due to health guidelines. The terms and conditions of this policy were adopted with some uncertainty, while no data on public personnel satisfaction or performance was collected by the ministries or the Treasury Board Secretariat of Quebec. In Quebec, as in Canada, estimation states that over 80% of public personnel are working remotely for at least part of their working week, and about 5% are unable to carry out their role remotely (Global Government Forum, 2023; Syndicat de la fonction publique et parapublique du Québec [SCFP], 2020).

Public personnel satisfaction with their work arrangements

While there is widespread acknowledgment of the usefulness and efficiency of hybrid work policies, there is still progress to be achieved to understand public personnel satisfaction with their work arrangements. This is mainly due to the existing disagreement on how these policies should be defined and implemented within the public sector (Champagne et al., 2023). Due to the recency of the phenomenon, public personnel satisfaction with hybrid work arrangements has not been well documented scientifically (Carrasco-Garrido et al., 2023). In Canada, recent studies focus mainly on perceptions on transitioning to hybrid work (Gintova, 2024) and on the need for flexibility expressed by staff (Roy, 2022), in terms of choice of working time and place. Recently, Gintova (2024) suggests that many public employees had neutral or positive sentiments regarding the hybrid work model and were predominantly focused on the need to understand the value of being in the office and reasons behind government decisions and teleworking policies.

A study of American federal government employees, where about 28% spend either two or three days working remotely, indicated that 91% reported feeling either very or somewhat

satisfied with their current work arrangements (Castillo, 2022). As in the Global Government Forum Survey (2023), Canadian public servants value remote working possibilities as the most attractive benefits considered in applying for a new role. In Quebec, a study made by the *Syndicat de la fonction publique et parapublique du Québec* (SFPQ, 2020) during the pandemic indicated that most respondents were quite satisfied or even very satisfied with their telework situation, both those who work only from home (90% satisfaction) and those who combine working remotely and in their usual workplace (84% satisfaction).

One of the main changes between pre- and post-pandemic is the democratization of communications technologies, particularly collaborative platforms. These enable greater proximity to the team and to the supervisor, so that both remote and face-to-face people can share information and stay connected (Deschênes, 2024; Taskin et al., 2024). However, hybrid work entails employees performing their job responsibilities without daily physical interaction with their work environment. This spatial dispersion brings about a shift in the relationship between individuals and their work environment, giving rise to the challenge of sustaining a certain level of fit, despite the geographical separation.

Fit with the work environment: person/organization and person/supervisor fit

Person/environment fit is defined as the degree of congruence, similarity or correspondence between a person and their work environment that occurs when their characteristics are well matched (Kristof, 1996). Empirical research consistently indicates that a good fit at work is associated with higher levels of job satisfaction, performance, organizational citizenship behavior, organizational and occupational commitment, and lower turnover (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). Two forms of fit have been identified: 1) *supplementary fit*, which involves a comparison between the individual and their work environment, and 2) *complementary fit*, which occurs when an individual fills an absence in their work environment, or adds a contribution to it (Kristof, 1996). Fit has mainly been operationalized through subjective comparisons of individual values, objectives, organizational culture and personality.

Scholars have long noted that “individuals are simultaneously nested” and interact in multiple layers in the work environment, suggesting a co-existence of multiple dimensions of fit (Kristof-Brown et al., 2002). As such, four types of person/environment fit are identified at different levels of the work environment: person/job (PJ), person/organization (PO), person/group (PG) and person/supervisor (PS). Traditionally, interest has primarily focused on PO and PJ fit (e.g., Chatman, 1989; Edwards, 1991), but greater attention is now being paid to relational types of fit, such as PS fit (Oh et al., 2014).

In a hybrid work context, supervisors play a key role in the employee's experience at work, as they are often the pivotal point between the organization and the employee (Park and Cho, 2022). Through their support, management practices and communication, supervisors are thought to be a key determinant of employee job satisfaction and teleworking satisfaction (Kowalski and Swanson, 2005; Park and Cho, 2022). PO fit concerns the perceived fit between employees' values and those of the organization, while PS fit concerns the compatibility between an employee's characteristics and those of their supervisor, in terms of values, personality and behavioral styles (van Vianen et al., 2011). PO fit concerns the wider work context, while PS fit concerns the most salient person in the direct work environment.

Consequently, PO and PS fit are conceptually different and are treated as such in existing research on fit (van Vianen et al., 2011).

Because of the centrality of the supervisor in the individual's representation of their organization (Schein, 2010), and because of their daily interaction with employees, the supervisor becomes an agent of the organization. They embody the character or culture of the organization and are therefore strongly identified with the organization in the eyes of employees (Eisenberger et al., 2002). Because supervisors tend to fit with the values of the organization (e.g., Giberson et al., 2005), fit with the supervisor may promote work attitudes and behaviors that concur with the values, goal, and culture of the organization, which result in person/organization fit (van Vianen, 2018). Consequently, employees are likely to perceive an alignment with the values of their larger organization, not just their supervisor. Thus, we formulate this hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1 (H1). Person/supervisor fit positively influences person/organization fit.

Fit in a hybrid context

The fit between the individual and their environment is not a static concept. Instead, it can vary over time (Vleugels et al., 2023), underlining the importance of examining it longitudinally. The implementation of the teleworking policy, and the new hybrid work environment, is a major organizational change likely to involve change in fit. Hybrid work essentially changes the relationship between the individual and the organization, and between the individual and its supervisor. This change is characterized by a certain distancing and less frequent face-to-face contact with the organization, its members, and its supervisors.

The emergence of new expectations and needs and the modification of individual values induced by the pandemic could affect—positively or negatively—the perception of fit, both with the organization and with the supervisor. In addition, changes in the organizational context and in the dyadic relationship with the immediate supervisor could affect the employee's assessment of their fit with the organization and with the supervisor. Yu (2009) proposed that affective self-regulation may be one of the driving forces behind change in fit, either because people seek to maintain consistency between experienced affect and fit. Gabriel et al. (2014) demonstrate that job satisfaction and affect influence the perceptions of fit in a context of organizational change. In a hybrid environment, the evaluation of the hybrid work experience may play a role in the relationship between fit at T1 and fit at T2. Employees' satisfaction with hybrid work is thus likely to shape their affective evaluation of the new work environment (Lopes et al., 2023). This affective evaluation of the new work environment imposed by the telework policy framework could thus moderate the relationship between fit at T1 and T2.

Thus, previous results and the person-environment fit theory (Boon and Biron, 2016; Jansen and Shipp, 2019) lead us to expect that fit at T1 will be a predictor of fit at T2:

Hypothesis 2 (H2). Person/organization fit at T1 positively influences person/organization fit at T2.

Hypothesis 3 (H3). Person/supervisor fit at T1 positively influences person/supervisor fit at T2.

And drawing on previous studies (Gabriel et al., 2014; Lopes et al., 2023; Yu, 2009), the following hypotheses are formulated:

Hypothesis 4a (H4a). Satisfaction toward the hybrid work experience moderates the relationship between person/organization fit at T1 and T2.

Hypothesis 4b (H4b). Satisfaction toward the hybrid work experience moderates the relationship between person/supervisor fit at T1 and T2.

Person-organization and person-supervisor fit and intent to stay in a hybrid environment

Previous studies (Hoffman and Woehr, 2006; Kristof-Brown et al., 2005; Oh et al., 2014; Verquer et al., 2003) have demonstrated a negative association between PO fit and turnover intention, as well as between PS fit and turnover intention (e.g., Kristof-Brown et al., 2005; Tak, 2011). Findings have consistently shown that individuals with high PO fit tend to stay longer in an organization. This relationship can be explained by attraction-selection-attrition (ASA) theory, according to which individuals prefer organizations and supervisor that match their own characteristics, with value congruence being one of the most critical considerations (Schneider et al., 1995). Indeed, value alignment facilitates the resolution of work-related problems and improves adaptation to the organization (Schneider et al., 1995), creating stronger bonds between the employee and the organization. We therefore make the following assumptions:

Hypothesis 5 (H5). Person/organization fit at T2 positively influences intent to stay in the organization at T3.

Hypothesis 6 (H6). Person/supervisor fit at T2 positively influences intent to stay in the organization at T3.

METHODS

Sample and procedure

In February 2022 (T1), October 2022 (T2) and March 2023 (T3), members of a union of professional employees of Quebec's public administration were asked to complete an online survey via an email sent by their union. The union acted as a facilitator between the research team and the respondents. The union forwarded the invitation to participate to its members, and the research team was fully responsible for questionnaire design, data collection and analysis. A report on the results was submitted to the union and subsequently circulated to its members. This approach has some limitations, mainly that it does not reach all public employees, but only those affiliated with the partner union. Professionals unionized with other unions, or non-unionized professionals, are not included in our sample.

The T1 survey covered the Omicron lockdown (February 2022), while T2 (October 2022) and T3 (March 2023) surveys were conducted when public health restrictions were lifted. The hybrid work policy was introduced between T1 and T2 of the survey. The target sample at T1, T2 and T3 comprised all members of the union during the survey administration. At T1, invitations to participate in the study were sent to 20,284 employees, with 2,986 employees providing completed questionnaires (a response rate of 17.7%). At T2, 20,892 employees received a questionnaire, and 3,904 employees provided completed questionnaires (a response rate of 18.7%). At T3, 20,689 employees received a questionnaire, and 5,141 employees provided completed questionnaires (a response rate of 24.8%). In the three questionnaires, respondents were invited to provide their email addresses so that their questionnaires could be matched at T1, T2 and T3, which let us obtain a final sample of 411 employees. At T1, most respondents teleworked 5 days a week (88.0%). At T2 and T3, most respondents teleworked 3 days a week (respectively 60.6% and 58.6%). Not all employees could work remotely during and post-pandemic, and a small percentage of respondents were working at the office 5 days a week (respectively 0.5%, 1.7% and 1.9%). These questionnaires have been kept for analysis, since it is the hybrid work context that interests us. Although an employee may be in the office daily, his or her colleagues and supervisor may be at a distance, which has an impact on the work environment.

Women comprised 65.3% of the sample, and 57.3% of all respondents reported having children at home. The mean age of respondents at T1 was 45.6 years ($SD = 8.1$) and ranged from 24 to 67. Their average organizational tenure was 9.9 years ($SD = 8.2$), ranging from 1 month to 34.0 years. Their average job tenure was 5.3 years ($SD = 5.2$), ranging from 1 month to 29.8 years. The average length of relationship with the supervisor was 2.4 years ($SD = 2.6$), ranging from 1 month to 18.0 years. Most respondents held a bachelor's degree (44.8%) or postgraduate degree (23.6%).

Measure

The survey was administered in French. All measures were translated into French following Brislin's (1970) translation and back-translation procedure. If not otherwise indicated, items had to be answered on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 "Totally disagree" to 5 "Completely agree." Survey items are presented in the Appendix.

Hybrid work was measured with the number of weekly teleworking days. Intent to stay ($\alpha = 0.948$) was measured with Cohen and Freund's (2005) four-item scale. PO fit ($\alpha = 0.917$ [T1]; $\alpha = 0.921$ [T2]) was assessed using Cable and DeRue's (2002) six-item measure. PS fit ($\alpha = 0.962$ [T1]; $\alpha = 0.958$ [T2]) was measured with six items (three for supplementary fit and three for needs-supplies fit) adapted from Cable and DeRue's scale (2002). Satisfaction with hybrid work experience was measured with a single item. Assessing satisfaction by using single-item measures is effective and more favorable in some respects than by using multiple-item measures (Wanous et al., 1997). Other studies on telework satisfaction have adopted this approach (e.g., Fonner and Rollof, 2010; Kim, 2023). The response to this question was on a 5-point Likert-type scale, with 1 = very dissatisfied and 5 = very satisfied.

Based on prior research, participants' age (in years), organizational tenure (in years), length of the relationship with the supervisor (in years), time spent teleworking (in days per week) (T3) were controlled.

Data analysis

Data were analyzed through confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural equation modeling (SEM). In human resource management and organizational behavior, interesting attributes such as attitudes or intentions cannot be observed directly and are often called latent variable (Yuan and Bentler, 2006). SEM is an analytical approach that simultaneously combines factor analysis and linear regression models for theory and hypotheses testing, allowing researchers to assess the direct and indirect effects of the latent variable. They offer robust statistical techniques for analyzing complex relationships and exploring the underlying structure of the data, aligning with the research objectives and hypotheses.

The first step was to conduct a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to assess construct validity and the convergent and discriminant validity of the latent variables (Hair et al., 2010). Structural equation modeling (SEM) with Mplus v8.10 (Muthén and Muthén, 2017) was performed to test the research hypotheses. Moderation hypotheses were tested with the latent moderated structural equations (LMS) method in Mplus (Cheung et al., 2021), with the XWITH command. The interaction effect was created by combining the latent (PO and PS fit) and observed variables (satisfaction toward hybrid work) (Muthén and Asparouhov, 2003). Once the measurement model's fit is confirmed, the structural model is estimated through a two-step process. Initially, the structural model is estimated without including the interaction term in the first step. Subsequently, in the second step, the structural model is re-estimated, this time incorporating the interaction term. To probe the moderation, the Johnson-Neyman region of significance analysis was used (Bauer and Curran, 2005; Johnson and Neyman, 1936), and graphical representations were plotted to interpret and visualize the simple slope analysis.

Confirmatory factor analysis and reliability

The construct validity of the variables was assessed using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). The measurement model showed an acceptable fit to the data ($\chi^2 = 959,016$, $DF = 450$, Comparative Fit Index [CFI] = .957; Tucker Lewis Index [TLI] = .953, Root Mean Square Error of Approximation [RMSEA] = .056, 90% CI [.051;.061], Standardized Root Mean Square Residual [SRMR] = .051).

To test for measurement invariance of the fit scales (PO fit at T1 and T2; PS fit at T1 and T2), we used measurement invariance for single-group longitudinal models in Mplus (Leitgöb et al., 2022). We examined the configural (constrain the number of factors to be identical across time points), metric (constrain factor loadings to be equal), and scalar (constrain the factor loadings and intercepts to be equal) measurement invariance of PO and PS fit across the two-time points. The change in CFI, TLI and RMSEA values were calculated across adjacent models, with a decrease in CFI/TLI (<0.01) and an increase in RMSEA (<0.015) regarded as evidence of invariance (Chen, 2007; Cheung and Rensvold, 2002).

Regarding construct reliability, all Cronbach's α values were above the suggested threshold of 0.70, as was the composite reliability ratio (Hair et al., 2010). Factor loadings were statistically significant ($p < .001$) and over the cut-off value of 0.50 for all variables (Hair et al., 2010). The AVE values exceeded the suggested cut-off value of 0.50, indicating appropriate convergent validity levels (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). Discriminant validity analyses (Fornell and Larcker, 1981) were also performed. As shown in Table 1, the square

TABLE 1 Descriptives statistics.

Variables	M	SD	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.
1. Intent to stay (T3)	3.69	1.11	.904											
2. PO fit (T1)	3.48	0.79	.451**	.869										
3. PO fit (T2)	3.15	0.80	.524**	.622**	.907									
4. PS fit (T1)	3.71	0.94	.329**	.486**	.358**	.947								
5. PS fit (T2)	3.60	0.90	.336**	.326**	.462**	.549**	.944							
6. Satisfaction with hybrid work (T2)	2.84	1.29	.154**	.123*	.346**	.102*	.142**	-						
7. Satisfaction with hybrid work (T3)	3.19	1.30	.213**	.119*	.308**	.132**	.140**	.592**	-					
8. Number of days teleworking (T2)	2.98	0.91	-.056	-.010	-.009	-.041	.042	.037	.077	-				
9. Number of days teleworking (T3)	3.07	0.95	-.099*	-.029	-.093	.023	-.033	.007	.138**	.590**	-			
10. Age	45.6	8.07	-.181**	-.094	-.071	-.012	-.068	.037	.088	.007	.064	-		
11. Tenure	9.9	8.17	-.041	.005	.023	-.040	.026	.116*	.112*	.028	.372**	-		
12. Length of the relationship with supervisor	2.4	2.56	.125*	.051	.053	0.043	0.046	.100*	.111*	.007	.011	.077	.299**	-

Note: N = 411. M = mean; SD = standard deviation. PO fit = person/organization fit; PS fit = person/supervisor fit. The square roots of the AVE values are shown in bold on the diagonal.

** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$.

root of the AVE of each construct exceeds the correlations it shares with the other constructs, supporting discriminant validity.

RESULTS

Table 1 (see previous page) presents the means, standard deviations and correlations. All variables in the research model are positively and significantly correlated. Correlation analysis revealed a significant positive relationship between the weekly number of days teleworking and satisfaction with the hybrid work experience at T3 ($r = .138, p < 0.01$), and between satisfaction with the hybrid work experience and intent to stay in the organization at T3 ($r = .213, p < 0.01$). It also revealed a significant negative relationship between the weekly number of days teleworking and intent to stay in the organization at T3 ($r = -.099, p < 0.05$). Even if it is small effect size (Cohen, 1988), these results indicate that the more time employees spend teleworking in a week, the more satisfied they are with their hybrid work experience, but the less likely they are to stay in the organization. At the same time, the more satisfied they are with the hybrid work experience, the more they intend to stay in the organization.

Standardized results of the research model are presented in Figure 1. PS fit at T1 influences PO fit at T1 ($\beta = 0.579, p < 0.001$) and PS fit at T2 ($\beta = 0.652, p < 0.001$). PO fit at T1 influences PO fit at T2 ($\beta = 0.785, p < 0.001$), supporting H1, H2 and H3. PO fit at T2 influences intent to stay in the organization at T3 ($\beta = 0.591, p < 0.001$), confirming H5. PS fit at T2 has no effect on intent to stay in the organization at T3 ($\beta = 0.035, p < 0.001$), invalidating H6.

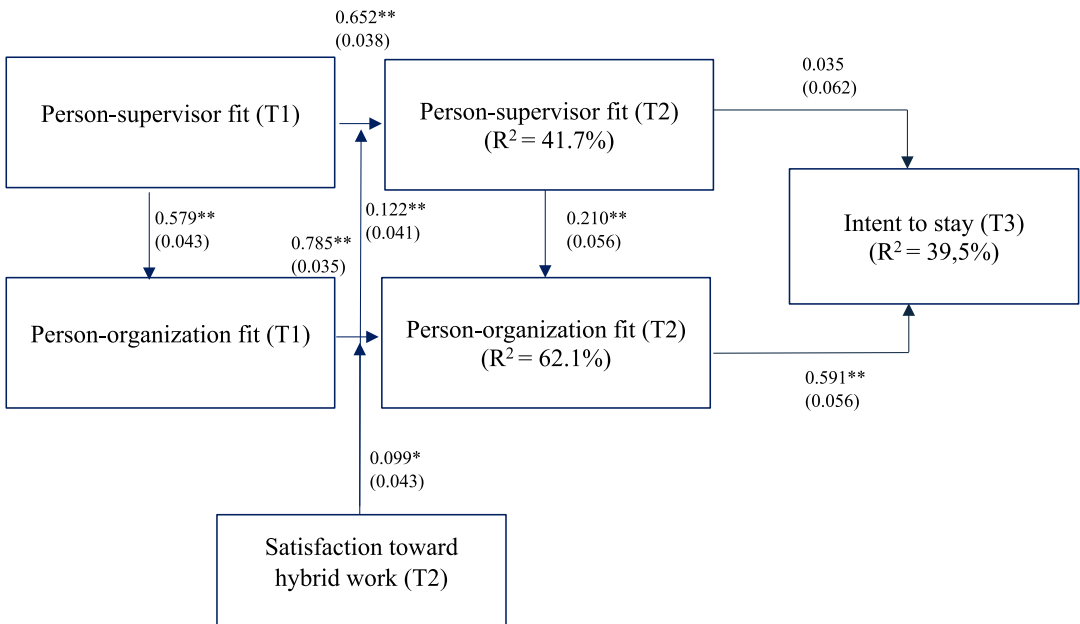


FIGURE 1 Standardized results of the research model. $N = 411$. Standard errors (S.E.) are indicated in parentheses. Age, tenure, length of the relationship with the supervisor and time spent teleworking (T3) were controlled on intent to stay. $*p > .05$; $**p > .01$.

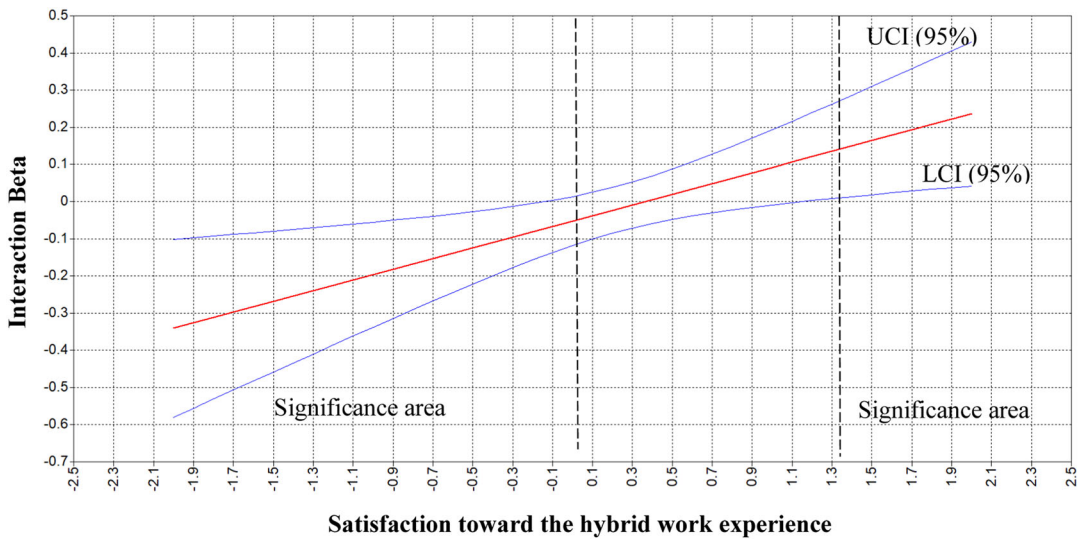


FIGURE 2 Johnson-Neyman graph for interaction between person/organization fit at T1 and satisfaction with the hybrid work experience to predict person/organization fit at T2. UCI = upper confidence interval; LCI = lower confidence interval.

Hypotheses 4a and 4b, which predicted that satisfaction with the hybrid work experience moderates the effect of PO fit at T1 on PO fit at T2 and the effect of PS fit at T1 on PS fit at T2, were supported ($\beta = 0.122$, 95% CI [0.055; .189]; $\beta = 0.099$, 95% CI [0.027; 0.170]). The positive coefficient value of the interaction term suggests that the interaction of satisfaction with hybrid work and PO fit at T1 tends to increase its effect on PO fit at T2 as the level of satisfaction with hybrid work decreases. Using a probe of the interaction, we ascertained that this interaction becomes significant at a value of -0.01 SD below the mean and at a value of 1.225 SD beyond the mean. Similarly, the positive coefficient value of the interaction term suggests that the interaction of satisfaction with hybrid work and PS fit at T1 tends to increase its effect on PS fit at T2 as the level of satisfaction with hybrid work decreases. Using a probe of the interaction, we observed that this interaction becomes significant at a value of -0.095 SD below the mean and at a value of 1.95 SD beyond the mean. The interactions and their zones of significance are illustrated in Figures 2 and 3, suggesting insights regarding the influence of satisfaction with the hybrid work experience on the relationship between PO and PS fit over time.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Our study confirms the theoretical premises of PO fit in a new context, that of hybrid work in public service. Despite the distance induced by hybrid work, individuals can understand their fit with the organization, and the benefits (i.e., intent to stay) of these fits remain. In view of our results, PO has a positive effect on intent to stay, even if the individual is not present in the office every working day. The organizational level (PO fit) explains the intention to stay in the organization, but not the individual level (PS fit). This suggests that public personnel retention strategies should focus more on organizational policies and on the way they are implemented

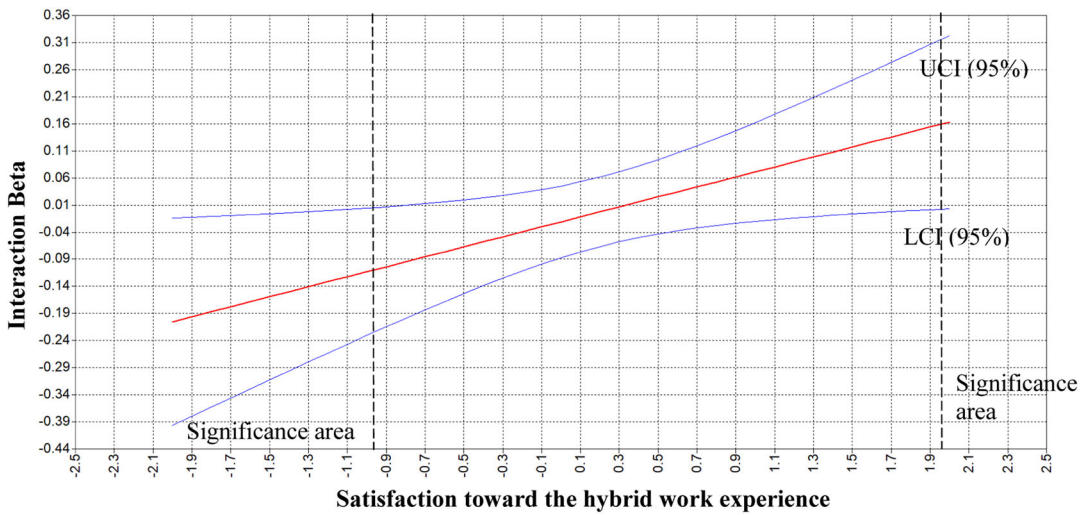


FIGURE 3 Johnson-Neyman graph for interaction between person/supervisor fit at T1 and satisfaction with the hybrid work experience to predict person/supervisor fit at T2. UCI = upper confidence interval; LCI = lower confidence interval.

and managed by the supervisor to ensure a more significant impact on the intention to stay within the organization.

Our results support previous studies showing that flexible works arrangements, and that the opportunity to telework, can reduce turnover in the public sector (Caillier, 2013; Choi, 2020). Our results show, however, that it is the satisfaction toward hybrid work—and its arrangements—that is decisive. Public sector employees who perceive their hybrid work experience positively maintain their level of fit with the organization, demonstrating its ability to deploy teleworking arrangements that meet its values and needs. Thus, public organization, in Quebec and elsewhere, should adopt a policy that takes into consideration individual employee’s needs and values to maintain organizational fit levels and encourage retention. Furthermore, our results confirmed that PO fit at T1 positively influences PO fit at T2, and that PS fit at T1 has an impact on PS fit at T2. However, both types of fit decreased between T1 and T2. Our results suggest that this decline is moderate by (dis)satisfaction with hybrid work experience, which is the main contribution of the article. Results indicate that people who are satisfied with the hybrid work perceive a better fit with their organization and with their supervisor over time. Conversely, people with an unsatisfactory hybrid work experience are more inclined to have a misfit, or poorer fit, between organization, supervisor and self.

These results then add to the pre-pandemic studies, which indicated that the more salient predictors of the government respondents’ job satisfaction for most countries were intrinsic workplace attributes, such as an interesting job, autonomy and flexibility (Taylor and Westover, 2011). Past studies also highlight the complexity of employee retention in public organizations, noting factors like workplace environment, managerial style, and HR practices significantly impact employee turnover (Fahim, 2018). These factors could be extrapolated to consider how hybrid work arrangements might influence public service employees’ decisions to stay or leave, especially when they perceived lower fit with their organization and supervisor. These findings imply that Quebec public organizations should pay close attention to employees’

satisfaction with hybrid work arrangements, as it plays a crucial role in shaping the impact of their fit perceptions on work-related outcomes over time.

While individual needs and expectations may differ greatly, organizations have a responsibility to structure teleworking in a way that accounts for the associated limits and benefits. Our results contribute to the literature on human resource management in the public sector, in that they show that satisfaction with hybrid work can be a determining factor in the perception of fit with the supervisor and the organization, and ultimately in retention. By deploying strict, overarching teleworking practices that do not align with employees' expectations, needs and values, public employers run the very real risk of diminishing the perception of fit with the organization. The Treasury Board Secretariat of Quebec, along with other jurisdictions interested in developing enhanced hybrid work policies, must address the diverse needs, expectations, and values of public employees.

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APPENDIX

Survey items (in French)

In the questionnaire, the term *organization* refers to the employer, which is the employing government department, institute, or agency. The term *immediate superior* refers to the person who has a direct hierarchical link with the respondent, i.e. the immediate manager.

1. Hybrid work

Actuellement, combien de jours par semaine êtes-vous en télétravail?

- Aucun, je suis présent physiquement sur mon lieu habituel de travail tous les jours
- 1 jour
- 2 jours
- 3 jours

- 4 jours
- 5 jours

2. Satisfaction with hybrid work experience

Dans quelle mesure êtes-vous satisfait de votre expérience de télétravail hybride, actuellement?

- Pas du tout satisfait
- Peu satisfait
- Ni satisfait, ni insatisfait
- Satisfait
- Très satisfait

3. Person-organization (PO) fit (Cable & DeRue, 2002)

Voici un certain nombre d'énoncés relatifs à l'adéquation avec votre organisation. Indiquez dans quelle mesure vous êtes en accord avec chacun d'eux.

- Ce que j'estime dans la vie est très semblable à ce que mon organisation estime.
- Mes valeurs personnelles correspondent aux valeurs de mon organisation.
- Les valeurs de mon organisation s'harmonisent avec ce que je considère comme important dans la vie.
- Ce que m'offre mon organisation correspond à ce que j'attends d'un employeur.
- Les caractéristiques que je recherche chez un employeur sont comblées par mon organisation.
- Mon organisation me donne exactement ce que je recherche chez un employeur.

4. Person-supervisor (PS) fit (Cable & DeRue, 2002)

Voici un certain nombre d'énoncés relatifs à l'adéquation avec votre supérieur immédiat. Indiquez dans quelle mesure vous êtes en accord avec chacun des énoncés suivants.

- Mes valeurs personnelles correspondent aux valeurs de mon supérieur immédiat.
- Ce que j'estime dans la vie est très semblable à ce que mon supérieur immédiat estime.
- Les valeurs de mon supérieur immédiat s'harmonisent avec ce que je considère comme important dans la vie.
- Ce que m'offre mon a supérieur immédiat correspond à ce que j'attends d'un gestionnaire.
- Les caractéristiques que je recherche chez un supérieur sont comblées par mon gestionnaire immédiat.
- Mon supérieur immédiat me donne exactement ce que je recherche chez un supérieur.

5. Intent to stay (Cohen & Freund, 2005)

Dans quelle mesure êtes-vous en accord avec les énoncés suivants?

- Je me vois encore travailler dans mon organisation dans trois ans.
- J'ai l'intention de quitter mon organisation. [*Reverse*]
- Je considère que les probabilités que je reste au sein de mon organisation sont fortes.
- J'aimerais continuer à travailler pour mon organisation pour une longue période.