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# Positive consequences of intrinsically rewarding work: A model to motivate, engage and retain non-profit employees

M. Renard & R.J. Snelgar

A B S T R A C T

This study sought to empirically test a theoretical model outlining the relationships between intrinsic rewards, intrinsic motivation, work engagement and intention to quit, in an attempt to empirically assess whether intrinsic rewards result in improved levels of motivation, engagement and retention. Using a sample of 587 non-profit employees from Australia, Belgium, South Africa and the United States, structural equation modelling was employed as a multivariate technique that estimated a series of interrelated dependence relationships concurrently. The instruments utilised were translated from English into Dutch to ensure comprehension of items amongst Belgian respondents. The findings show that providing psychologically rewarding work to non-profit employees results in increased levels of intrinsic motivation and decreased levels of intention to quit; however, a significant relationship between intrinsic rewards and work engagement was not established. Intrinsic motivation was found to partially mediate the relationship between intrinsic rewards and both intention to quit and work engagement. This study contributes to the collection of empirical research studies that promote above-average working conditions and decent work in the form of effective work design.

**Key words:** intrinsic rewards, intrinsic work motivation, non-profit sector, retention, work engagement

## Background

The non-profit sector is commonly known as civil society or the third/voluntary/independent sector (Statistics South Africa [StatsSA] 2014: 1). It includes charities

Dr M. Renard and Prof. R.J. Snelgar are in the Department of Industrial and Organisational Psychology (IOP) at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University. E-mail: michelle.renard@nmmu.ac.za

and voluntary organisations whose purpose is either to provide services free of charge or to raise money for social causes (Surtees, Sanders, Shipton & Knight 2014). Non-profit organisations (NPOs) often perform a public service, and are not established for the purpose of making a profit for their owners (Lyons 1999). They result from groups of people committing to provide a service either for themselves or others, in order to practise a religion, represent the interests of others or lobby on behalf of them (Lyons 1999).

A category that is of particular importance in this sector is that of intrinsic rewards. Such rewards are derived from jobs that are well designed, and meet the needs and aspirations of employees (Jenkins 2014). Wilson (1995) refers to intrinsic rewards as natural consequences of the work an employee performs in and of itself, the presence of which results in greater work satisfaction. To tap into the potential of employees and ensure their job satisfaction, managers should provide them with intrinsically rewarding tasks that are inherently interesting and challenging yet achievable, and offer the chance for employees to grow, advance, feel responsible and be motivated to perform above the required minimum that is expected of them (Walters 1975).

Renard and Snelgar (2016a) discovered that five intrinsic aspects of work positively and psychologically reward employees in the non-profit sector. *Meaningful work* occurs when employees identify with fulfilling work tasks, such as being able to see the difference their work makes. This could entail recognising the positive, empowering or uplifting effect that their work has on the lives of others. *Flexible work* incorporates autonomy into work, including employees being given freedom to control work-related time frames, task content and the way they conduct job duties. *Challenging work* involves employees being allowed to take on work-related responsibilities, prove their competence at tasks, and grow in a practical and psychological manner as they use or develop their skills at work. *Varied work* allows employees the opportunity to complete non-standardised and diverse activities within the context of their jobs, without being bound by predetermined rules. Finally, *enjoyable work* entails employees finding their jobs stimulating, satisfying and interesting, which stems from their passion for their work.

## The positive consequences of intrinsically rewarding work

### Work engagement

Work engagement is a persistent affective-cognitive state of mind that is positive and fulfilling, and results in employees exhibiting vigour, dedication and absorption at work (Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Romá & Bakker 2002: 74). According to

Thomas (2009), intrinsic rewards are those reinforcements that keep employees actively engaged in their work. Indeed, Jacobs, Renard and Snelgar (2014: 7) found that intrinsic rewards correlate positively with work engagement, while Buys and Rothmann (2010: 6) discovered that ministers were more engaged with their work when they experienced a sense of job significance and task variety, as well as when given opportunities to learn and grow, which are all forms of intrinsic reward. Moreover, Rothmann and Rothmann (2010: 9) found that engagement is strongly related to a number of job resources, including growth opportunities such as variety, learning opportunities and autonomy. Owing to the fact that intrinsic rewards have been found to predict work engagement, the following is hypothesised:

*Hypothesis 1 ($H_1$): Intrinsic rewards lead to higher levels of work engagement.*

## Intrinsic motivation

Employees are intrinsically motivated to perform work when they receive no apparent rewards apart from performing the tasks themselves; i.e., performing their activities provides them with sufficient internal satisfaction (Deci 1971; 1972). Renard and Snelgar (2016c) reveal three dimensions that intrinsically motivate non-profit employees: being *personally connected to one's work* involves the personal values of employees aligning with the purpose for which their organisations exist, which results in them feeling both emotionally and affectively attached to their jobs. Intrinsically motivated employees *personally desire to make a difference* through their work, by longing to help others through meeting their needs and displaying prosocial behaviours. Finally, possessing a *personal desire to perform* implies that employees set goals for themselves and desire to create successes through their work by exerting additional effort and performing beyond their job descriptions.

Intrinsic motivation has been found to be predicted by employees being satisfied with their intrinsic, non-monetary rewards (Nujjoo & Meyer 2012: 6-7) . Moreover, Armstrong and Brown (2009) highlight that intrinsic motivation depends on the manner in which work is designed, and Janssen, De Jonge and Bakker (1999: 1366) discovered that intrinsic work motivation is determined primarily by work content variables, including elements of one's job that make the work itself worthwhile and challenging such as autonomy, opportunities to learn and skill variety. Since a number of intrinsic rewards (e.g. meaningful, challenging, flexible and varied work) can improve an employee's intrinsic motivation, it is hypothesised that:

*Hypothesis 2 ($H_2$): Intrinsic rewards lead to higher levels of intrinsic motivation.*

## Intention to quit

According to Kuttner (2008), high levels of turnover are an industry standard for casual, low-paid, human-service jobs such as those performed by employees in NPOs. When employees become psychologically detached and begin searching elsewhere for work, this may lead to turnover. Boshoff, Van Wyk, Hoole and Owen (2002: 14) define intention to quit as "the strength of an individual's view that he/she does not want to stay with his/her current employer", thus indicating how probable it is that he or she will leave the organisation in the near future.

Muteswa and Ortlepp (2011: 19–24) found that the absence of certain intrinsic rewards, such as challenging work and the freedom to act on the job, influenced South African managers' intentions to leave their organisations. Preenen, De Pater, Van Vianen and Keijzer (2011: 320–327) discovered that the provision of challenging assignments led to a decrease in turnover intentions amongst health care and welfare employees. Moreover, Walters (1975) states that turnover results from work lacking meaning and failing to fulfil the growth needs of employees. Owing to the fact that intrinsic rewards such as challenging, flexible and enjoyable work predict intentions to quit, it can be hypothesised that:

*Hypothesis 3 ($H_3$): Intrinsic rewards lead to lower levels of intention to quit.*

## Further relationships

In addition to the above hypotheses, three further relationships are proposed. First, engagement is of vital importance for organisations wishing to retain top talent, because work engagement is significantly negatively related to turnover intentions (Schaufeli & Bakker 2004: 307; Du Plooy & Roodt 2010: 9; Bothma & Roodt 2013: 7–9; Robyn & Du Preez 2013: 10). Moreover, work engagement was found to be negatively related to turnover intentions. Based on this knowledge, we hypothesise that:

*Hypothesis 4 ($H_4$): Work engagement leads to lower levels of intention to quit.*

Second, intrinsic motivation has been found to be significantly and negatively related to turnover (see Mobley, Griffeth, Hand & Meglino 1979: 504), with Cho and Perry (2012: 398) ascertaining that intrinsic motivation is substantively associated with turnover intentions. For this reason, it is hypothesised that:

*Hypothesis 5 ($H_5$): Intrinsic motivation leads to lower levels of intention to quit.*

Third, Woods and West (2010) note that engagement is derived from intrinsic motivation to work, resulting in work feeling meaningful and important to employees. Armstrong and Brown (2009) mention that engagement takes place when employees are motivated to achieve high levels of performance; the authors moreover provide a model indicating that intrinsic motivation in particular leads to engagement. It is therefore hypothesised that:

*Hypothesis 6 ($H_6$): Intrinsic motivation leads to higher levels of work engagement.*

## Problem statements and research question

It is apparent from the above overview of the literature that limited research has been conducted regarding the provision of intrinsic rewards positively influencing the intrinsic motivation and work engagement levels of NPO employees in particular; and whether such rewards decrease their levels of intention to quit. In addition, no theoretical model has been developed to display the causal relationships between intrinsic rewards, intrinsic motivation, work engagement and intention to quit – certainly within the context of the non-profit sector. As a result, no empirical research has been conducted that tests such a model statistically.

Based on these problem statements, the proposed research question for this study is: *Do intrinsic rewards play a significant role in increasing the intrinsic motivation and work engagement levels, and reducing the intention to quit levels, of employees working within NPOs?*

The aim of this article is therefore to investigate whether intrinsic rewards play a role in the intrinsic motivation, work engagement and retention of employees working within NPOs. The theoretical model in Figure 1 is tested empirically in this study on a global non-profit sample.

## Methodology

This quantitative empirical study involved administering a composite questionnaire to a cross-cultural sample of non-profit employees from Australia, Belgium, South Africa (SA) and the United States (US). Non-probability sampling in the form of convenience, snowball and purposive sampling was used in an attempt to gather sufficient responses from non-profit employees in these four countries. Personal NPO contacts were e-mailed to request their participation in the study, and they were asked to forward the e-mail to their NPO colleagues or other individuals employed in the non-profit sectors of the four countries under study. The e-mail

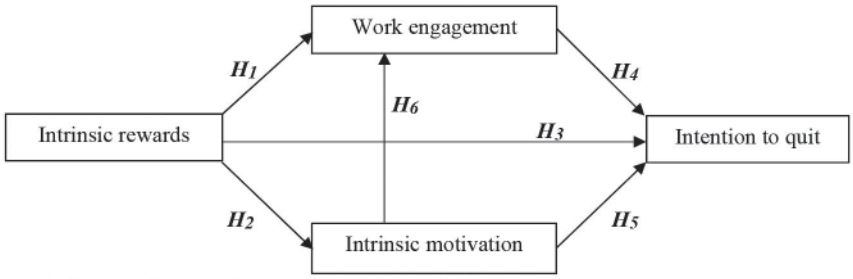


**Figure 1:** Proposed theoretical model

addresses of NPO employees were also sourced via Google, after which e-mails were sent to request their participation in the research.

A total sample of 587 NPO employees was gained, indicating a response rate of 11.2 per cent of the 5 256 employees contacted across the four countries. It is apparent from Table 1 that a relatively equal distribution of respondents was gathered across the four countries under study, as well as the five age categories. The majority of the sample, however, was female (72%), married (58%), worked as managers or supervisors (54%) and operated either in the NPO fields of Education and development (20%), Health care (21%) or Welfare and humanitarian (41%).

**Table 1:** Frequency distribution of demographic variables

| Demographic variable | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| ***Country*** | | |
| Australia | 150 | 26 |
| Belgium | 101 | 17 |
| SA | 192 | 33 |
| US | 144 | 24 |
| ***Gender*** | | |
| Male | 166 | 28 |
| Female | 421 | 72 |
| ***Age*** | | |
| 18–27 | 70 | 12 |
| 28–37 | 155 | 26 |
| 38–47 | 140 | 24 |
| 48–57 | 125 | 21 |
| 58+ | 97 | 17 |
| ***Marital status*** | | |
| Married | 342 | 58 |
| Living with partner | 68 | 12 |

| Demographic variable | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Divorced/separated | 57 | 10 |
| Widow/widower | 9 | 2 |
| Never married | 111 | 19 |
| ***Non-profit category in which respondents work*** | | |
| Conservation and environment | 26 | 4 |
| Education and development | 118 | 20 |
| Health care | 123 | 21 |
| Religion, belief and philosophy | 28 | 5 |
| Welfare and humanitarian | 238 | 41 |
| Other | 54 | 9 |
| ***Job level*** | | |
| Managerial/supervisory | 318 | 54 |
| Professional | 178 | 30 |
| Administrative/clerical/office work | 62 | 11 |
| Operational/technical | 19 | 3 |
| Other | 10 | 2 |
| **Total** | **587** | **100** |

## Data collection

Data were collected by administering an electronic composite questionnaire to paid employees working within NPOs in Australia, Belgium, SA and the US. The electronic distribution of questionnaires was the most convenient and cost-effective way of collecting data across multiple countries. E-mails sent to potential respondents served as the questionnaire cover letter. These e-mails, which provided potential respondents with a consent form to peruse, aimed at gaining consent from individual employees (as opposed to organisational consent being gained from each NPO). A web link was provided in both the e-mail and consent form, from which the questionnaire could be accessed.

Four measuring instruments made up the structured composite questionnaire distributed to the sample. The Intrinsic Work Rewards Scale (IWRS) (Renard & Snelgar 2016b) is a 25-item instrument comprising five factors. *Meaningful work* uses six items to assess how employees make a positive impact in others' lives through their work; *flexible work* uses four items to determine whether an employee's work allows him or her to control his or her own agenda and schedule, and make decisions; *challenging work* uses three items to evaluate whether employees are provided with opportunities to grow personally at work; *varied work* analyses whether employees'

work is diverse and assorted, using five items; and *enjoyable work* uses seven items to examine the extent to which work is both satisfying and pleasurable to perform.

The Intrinsic Work Motivation Scale (IWMS) (Renard & Snelgar 2016d) comprises 14 items and three subscales: *personal connection to one's work* is measured by means of six items that evaluate how passionate employees are about their work and how emotionally connected they are to it; *personal desire to make a difference* assesses the extent to which employees desire to improve the lives of others through their work, using five items; and *personal desire to perform* uses three items to evaluate how employees are internally propelled to achieve their goals to the best of their abilities.

The three-item Job Withdrawal Intention Scale (JWIS), developed by Cohen (1993: 79), was employed to measure intention to quit. Finally, the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) was used to measure work engagement: it comprises three factors, namely *absorption* (measured by six items assessing to what extent employees are engrossed in their work, finding it difficult to separate themselves from it); *dedication* (evaluating how employees feel proud, enthusiastic, challenged and inspired by their work, using five items); and *vigour* (analysing whether employees willingly, resiliently and energetically invest effort at work, using six items) (see Schaufeli & Bakker 2003: 48).

The IWRS, IWMS and JWIS made use of a five-point Likert scale, ranging from '1' (Strongly Disagree) to '5' (Strongly Agree). The UWES used a six-point Likert scale to measure responses, ranging from '0' (Never; if respondents have never experienced that feeling at work) to '6' (Always; if respondents experience that feeling every day).

## Translating the measuring instruments

Researchers collecting data cross-culturally must ensure that their measures are understood comparably in every country under study (Smith, Bond & Kağitçibaşi 2006). Since data were being collected in Belgium, there was a need for the composite questionnaire to be provided in both English and Dutch. We therefore made use of the Dutch version of the UWES (see Schaufeli & Bakker 2003: 46), and used the process of back translation to translate the IWRS, IWMS and JWIS into Dutch. According to Smith et al. (2006), this entails a translation being made from the initial language in which a test was originally developed (in this case, English), into the language spoken in a different society (in this case, Dutch) by a bilingual speaker. A second bilingual speaker is then asked to translate all items into the original language without having viewed the original version. Finally, the original version and the retranslated version are compared, to pick up on problematic translations.

The English versions of the IWRS, IWMS and JWIS (as well as all demographic items) were translated by a Dutch academic proficient in both languages. The Dutch versions of the instruments, together with the English versions, were then reviewed by eight Dutch-speaking Belgians and South Africans, to ascertain how well the Dutch items captured the meaning portrayed in each English item. Grammatical improvements were made so that Belgians would better comprehend the meaning of the items, thus preventing ambiguity or uncertainty. This ensured that the Dutch versions of the measuring instruments comprised items with equivalent English meanings (see Smith et al. 2006).

To follow the process of back translation, the revised versions of the Dutch instruments were finally sent to a Dutch speaker who had not previously viewed the items in either language. She translated the questionnaire from Dutch into English, and as a result final minor changes to the Dutch versions of the instruments were made prior to distribution to the sample.

## Data analysis

Data processing and analysis were performed by means of descriptive and inferential statistical analysis. The statistical packages Statistica version 12.0, SPSS version 22 and Amos version 22 were utilised for this purpose. The descriptive statistics were presented in the form of mean values and standard deviations, whereas the inferential statistics included Cronbach's alpha testing, Pearson's Product Moment Correlations and Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). Cronbach's alpha was calculated as a form of item analysis, examining each item in the measuring instruments to determine whether it served the purposes for which it had been developed. Pearson's Product Moment Correlations investigated the relationships between the four constructs under study to summarise the strength of association between metric variables, indicating the degree to which the variation in one variable is related to the variation in another (Malhotra 2010). SEM was conducted to assess the relationships among the set of variables used in the theoretical model. It is a multivariate technique combining aspects of multiple regression and factor analysis to estimate a series of interrelated dependence relationships simultaneously (Hair, Black, Babin & Anderson 2010). It thus tested the set of relationships between the aforementioned variables, which allowed us to assess whether the data fit with the proposed theoretical model (Woods & West 2010).

### Reliability and validity

The reliability of both the Dutch (n=89) and English (n=498) versions of the measuring instruments was determined separately using Cronbach's alpha testing, a form of internal consistency reliability. As noted by Smith et al. (2006), researchers must collect evidence that instruments maintain reliability and validity in every new cultural context in which they are used, particularly once items have been satisfactorily translated. This is because it is necessary to evaluate whether responses to separate items comprising a scale actually correlate in the same way as in the original language in which they were constructed.

Construct validity was determined through the use of Pearson's Product Moment Correlations and concurrent criterion validity was assessed through the use of SEM. The latter statistical test provided evidence for whether the IWRS predicted levels of intrinsic motivation, work engagement and intention to quit, and whether the IWMS predicted levels of intrinsic rewards, work engagement and intention to quit.

### Ethical considerations

Ethics approval was gained from Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, which granted permission to conduct the study. It was ensured that study participation was worthwhile for respondents, since no adverse consequences or risks were present; no unreasonable demands were placed on those participating; participation was entirely voluntary with respondents not being coerced or pressurised to take part; and anonymity and confidentiality were respected through the research process. The process of informed consent was explained in both the e-mail and consent form sent to respondents. As previously noted, individual consent from employees (as opposed to organisational consent) was gained through the provision of a consent form sent via e-mail. This form explained to potential respondents that clicking on the questionnaire link in the e-mail provided their consent to participate in the study.

## Results

### Descriptive statistics, Cronbach's alpha and correlations

Table 2 provides the descriptive statistics for the data obtained across the four countries, together with the Cronbach's alpha values and the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation coefficients. It is apparent that the mean values for intrinsic motivation, intrinsic rewards and work engagement are positive, whereas intention

to quit is negative. The responses for intention to quit and work engagement were more dispersed than those for intrinsic rewards and intrinsic motivation, according to the standard deviation scores obtained.

Tabachnick and Fidell (2001) state that Cronbach's alpha values that fall above 0.90 are deemed to be excellent, thus the scores obtained for the English and Dutch versions of the UWES (work engagement) and the JWIS (intention to quit) can be classified as such. The English and Dutch versions of the IWRS (intrinsic rewards) as well as the Dutch version of the IWMS (intrinsic motivation) obtained good values, falling between 0.80 and 0.89, while the English form of the IWMS obtained an adequate value of between 0.70 to 0.79 (Tabachnick & Fidell 2001).

Gravetter and Wallnau (2009) highlight that correlations are statistically significant at the 0.05 level for n=587 if the correlation coefficient (|r|) is greater than or equal to .081, and practically significant if |r| is greater than or equal to .300. Positive and practically significant correlations were obtained between intrinsic rewards and both intrinsic motivation and work engagement, as well as between intrinsic motivation and work engagement. This implies that providing intrinsic rewards to employees at work is associated with an improvement in intrinsic motivation and work engagement; and improving employees' levels of intrinsic motivation may assist in cultivating how engaged they are in their work. Negative, practically significant relationships were obtained between intention to quit and both intrinsic rewards and work engagement, while a negative, statistically significant relationship occurred between intention to quit and intrinsic motivation. This provides evidence that NPO employees' intentions to leave their organisations can be decreased by providing them with higher levels of intrinsic rewards, and by ensuring that they are intrinsically motivated and engaged with their work.

**Table 2:** Descriptive statistics, Cronbach's alpha and correlations

| | Mean | SD | Cronbach's alpha: English questionnaire | Cronbach's alpha: Dutch questionnaire | 1 | 2 | 3 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1. Intrinsic rewards** | 4.11 | 0.55 | 0.86 | 0.87 | – | – | – |
| **2. Intrinsic motivation** | 4.21 | 0.52 | 0.76 | 0.81 | .655** | – | – |
| **3. Work engagement** | 4.31 | 0.84 | 0.91 | 0.91 | .706** | .744** | – |
| **4. Intention to quit** | 2.25 | 1.26 | 0.91 | 0.93 | -.515** | -.277* | -.424** |

*|r| >= .081 (statistically significant); **|r| >= .300 (practically significant)

## Structural Equation Modelling

SEM was utilised to empirically test the proposed theoretical model. The first model, together with its standardised regression weightings, is shown in Figure 2. According to Landy and Conte (2010), an independent variable describes the treatment or antecedent condition, whereas a dependent variable is the subsequent behaviour of the research participant. In Figure 2, intrinsic rewards is the independent variable, while the remaining three variables are dependent variables. Statistical significance for n = 587 is shown by values greater than or equal to 0.081, and practical significance is shown by values greater than or equal to 0.300 (Gravetter & Wallnau 2009). The observed SEM fit statistics are provided in Table 3.

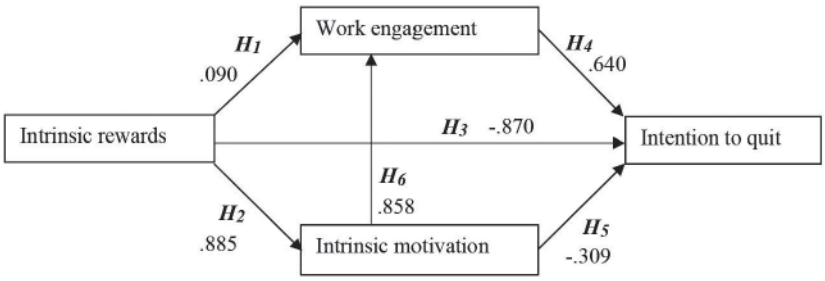


**Figure 2:** Diagram of Structural Model 1 with standardised regression weightings

It can be deduced from Figure 2 that the standardised regression weightings for Hypotheses 2 to 6 are above 0.300, indicating that they are practically significant. The regression weighting for Hypothesis 1 is statistically significant, since it is above 0.081. However, Table 3 indicates that the Chi-square statistic for Model 1 is above the suggested target of 3, with the p-value less than the recommended target of 0.05. For the Bentler-Bonnet normed fit index (NFI) and Bentler comparative fit index (CFI), values less than the recommended 0.90 level were obtained. The results of the Joreskog adjusted goodness of fit index (AGFI) were less than the required 0.95. These results indicate an unacceptable fit. For the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), the values were less than the suggested 0.08, indicating satisfactory fit; however, based on these results overall, it can be deduced that Model 1 has an unacceptable fit.

This model was therefore revised to improve its fit, but this resulted in the standardised regression weighting for Hypothesis 1 dropping to -0.014, which is below the statistical significance level of 0.081 and resulted in a loss of statistical significance for Hypothesis 1. The results of this intermediate revision are not included in this article because the general guideline for reporting the results of an iterative process is to report statistics only for one's initial and final models.

**Table 3:** Observed SEM fit statistics

| **Indices for single models** | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Sample size: n = 587**<br>**No. of items: m = 59** | | | **Model 1 (with $H_1$)** | **Model 2 (without $H_1$)** |
| **Absolute/predictive fit** | **Abbr.** | **Target** | **Observed** | **Observed** |
| Chi-square (Maximum likelihood) | $\chi^2$ | | 5536.92 | 4541.61 |
| | df | | 1637 | 1614 |
| | **p** | ≥ .050 | < .0005 | < .0005 |
| | **$\chi^2$/df** | ≤ 3 | 3.38 | **2.81*** |
| **Comparative fit indices** | | | | |
| Bentler-Bonnet normed fit index | **NFI** | ≥ .90 | .77 | .81 |
| Bentler comparative fit index | **CFI** | ≥ .90 | .82 | .87 |
| **Other** | | | | |
| Joreskog adjusted GFI | **AGFI** | ≥ .95 | .69 | .74 |
| Root mean square error of approximation | 95%Lo | | **.062*** | **.054*** |
| | **RMSEA** | ≤ .08 | **.064*** | **.056*** |
| | 95%Hi | | **.066*** | **.058*** |
| **Indices for comparison of multiple models** | | | | |
| **Absolute/predictive fit** | | | | |
| Akaike information criterion | **AIC** | < better | 5802.917 | 4853.611 |
| Browne-Cudeck criterion | **BCC** | < better | 5833.259 | 4889.201 |

* indicates acceptable fit for single models

Hypothesis 1 was omitted from the second revised model (Model 2), resulting in this hypothesis being rejected. Model 2 was therefore developed as a result of the unacceptable fit of Model 1, by means of removing the non-significant Hypothesis 1 relationship and by adding co-variances according to modification indices reported by AMOS. The standardised regression weightings for Model 2, the simplified revised model, are shown in Figure 3 and the observed SEM fit statistics are indicated in Table 3.

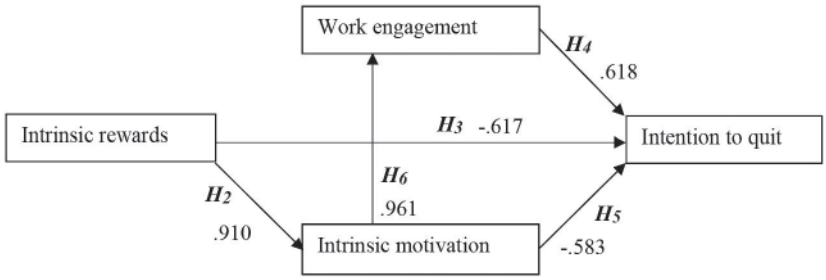


**Figure 3:** Diagram of Structural Model 2 with standardised regression weightings

It is apparent from Figure 3 that the standardised regression weightings for Hypotheses 2 to 6 are above 0.300, indicating that they are practically significant and can thus be accepted. The correlations for Hypotheses 3 and 5 are negative in nature, implying that an increase in intrinsic rewards and intrinsic motivation will lead to a decrease in intention to quit, while the correlations for Hypotheses 2, 4 and 6 are positive in nature, indicating that the provision of intrinsic rewards will lead to higher levels of intrinsic motivation; improving work engagement will cause an increase in intention to quit; and higher levels of intrinsic motivation will cause improved work engagement.

Table 3 shows that the Chi-square statistic for Model 2 is less than the suggested target of 3, indicating acceptable fit. With regard to the Bentler-Bonnet NFI and Bentler CFI, values less than the recommended 0.90 level were obtained, and the results of the Joreskog AGFI were also less than the required 0.95, indicating unacceptable fit. However, the RMSEA values were less than the suggested 0.08, demonstrating acceptable fit. Comparing Model 2 to Model 1 using the indices for comparison of multiple models in Table 3, it can be deduced that Model 2 has a more satisfactory fit, since the Akaike information criterion (AIC) and Browne-Cudeck criterion (BCC) are lower in Model 2.

The proposed theoretical model implies that work engagement and intrinsic motivation serve as mediators between intrinsic rewards and intention to quit. A mediator is a factor that accounts for, or explains, the relationship between variables (Woods & West 2010). According to Baron and Kenny (1986), three conditions must be met for mediation to be established: first, variations in levels of the independent variable (intrinsic rewards) should significantly account for variations in the presumed mediator(s) (work engagement and intrinsic motivation), known as Path A; second, variations in the mediator(s) (work engagement and intrinsic motivation) should significantly account for variations in the dependent variable (intention to quit), known as Path B; and third, previously significant relations between the independent and dependent variable(s) should no longer be significant when Paths A and B are controlled. This implies that a significant relationship between the independent and dependent variable(s) will be reduced (that is, partially mediated) or will no longer be significant (that is, fully mediated) when the mediator is controlled for (Saks 2006: 612). Since Hypothesis 1 was removed in Model 2, work engagement cannot be established as a mediator between intrinsic rewards and intention to quit. However, intrinsic motivation was found in Model 2 to partially mediate the relationship between intrinsic rewards and intention to quit, since Paths A (Hypothesis 2) and B (Hypothesis 5) are practically significant in each case. Additionally, intrinsic motivation was found to partially mediate the relationship between intrinsic rewards

and work engagement, since Paths A (Hypothesis 2) and B (Hypothesis 6) are also practically significant.

## Discussion

Hypothesis 1 was rejected as a result of the SEM findings. This result indicates that experiencing intrinsic rewards will not lead to work engagement, which is in contrast with the results of other empirical studies. For example, Buys and Rothmann (2010: 6) discovered that work engagement amongst ministers was predicted by job significance, a component of the IWRS factor of *meaningful work*, and by growth opportunities, a part of the IWRS factor of *challenging work*. In an attempt to shed light on why the results of the present study might not confirm previous results, Smith et al. (2006) note that such results are not necessarily replicable even within the same country of study, due to the fact that there are numerous ways by which samples with different compositions may vary from study to study.

It should, however, be considered that intrinsic motivation partially mediates the relationship between intrinsic rewards and work engagement, according to Model 2, implying that an indirect relationship between these two constructs does exist. Additionally, despite the fact that a causal relationship between intrinsic rewards and work engagement was not found by means of SEM testing, a positive non-causal correlation was nonetheless discovered between these two constructs according to the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation results, which confirm the findings of Jacobs et al. (2014: 7), who discovered a positive and practically significant relationship. Thus, further research should be conducted to confirm whether intrinsic rewards do predict work engagement within the NPO sector.

This study provides evidence of respondents experiencing a higher level of intrinsic motivation as a result of receiving intrinsic rewards at work (Hypothesis 2). On their own, SEM correlations are not, however, sufficient evidence of causality, since they must be accompanied by a strong theoretical argument explaining why variable A (in this case, intrinsic rewards) causes variable B (in this case, intrinsic motivation). Similar results have been empirically proven by De Cooman, De Gieter, Pepermans and Jegers (2011: 304, 310), who found that employees were motivated by fun and interesting work; i.e., work that is enjoyable in nature; by Nujjoo and Meyer (2012: 6–7), who revealed that intrinsic motivation is predicted by satisfaction with one's intrinsic non-monetary rewards; and by Janssen et al. (1999: 1366), who discovered that intrinsic work motivation is determined by work content variables, including elements of one's job that make the work itself worthwhile and challenging, such as autonomy, opportunities to learn and skill variety. Additionally, French (2010:

214) predicted that "enriched work will come to be seen as a motivator in developing societies in the future if and when they move into post-industrial mode with an associated critical mass of knowledge workers and associated jobs".

Hypothesis 3 was accepted, indicating a negative practically significant link between intrinsic rewards and intention to quit. This result has also been shown empirically in previous studies, with Muteswa and Ortlepp (2011: 19–24) finding that the absence of intrinsic rewards (i.e. a lack of challenging work and not enough freedom to act on the job) influenced managers' intentions to quit their organisations, and Preenen et al. (2011: 320–327) revealing that the provision of challenging assignments led to diminished turnover intentions. Theoretically, this finding is confirmed by Greenberg and Baron (2003), who propose that providing employees with interesting work as well as responsibility and control over their work will cause them to remain with their organisations. Thus, the provision of intrinsic rewards leads to NPO employees being less likely to psychologically detach in preparation of exiting their organisations.

Unusually, it was found via SEM that work engagement *increased* respondents' levels of intention to quit (Hypothesis 4). A similar finding was reported in Opie, Dollard, Lenthall, Wakerman, Dunn, Knight and MacLeod (2010: 239), who discovered that nurses experienced high levels of work engagement yet demonstrated high levels of turnover. This may occur because employees who feel vigorous and energetic may desire to put their energies to use in a different environment in an attempt to contribute elsewhere. That is, their experienced feelings of absorption, dedication and energy might encourage them to make a move in an alternative direction and put their energies to use in a new, challenging environment in a different organisation. However, since work engagement stems from specific job-related resources such as performance feedback, autonomy and supervisory support (Bakker & Demerouti 2008: 211–214), it is more likely that work engagement is a direct result of the nature of an individual's work itself as well as the work environment that she or he experiences, which should discourage them from wanting to leave such an engaging environment. Moreover, since work engagement entails employees focusing wholeheartedly on their tasks in an intense and concentrated manner, this assumes that they would be enjoying their work and would be psychologically attached to their daily activities, implying that they would not strongly desire to leave their positions. This was indeed discovered by Schaufeli and Bakker (2004: 307), Du Plooy and Roodt (2010: 9), Park and Gursoy (2012: 1199), Robyn and Du Preez (2013: 10) as well as Shacklock, Brunetto, Teo and Farr-Wharton (2014: 817–818), who all found that work engagement negatively predicted turnover intentions, indicating that employees who are engaged in their work experienced reduced intentions to quit.

Hypothesis 5 was accepted based on the SEM results, with intrinsic motivation leading to a decrease in respondents' intentions to quit their organisations. This is supported theoretically by Balta (2014), who noted that motivation can be used by organisations to retain employees. Importantly, intrinsic motivation is understood in the present study as employees engaging in activities because they want to, since such activities will lead to positive feelings and internal satisfaction. As a result, it is reasonable to expect that NPO employees who are emotionally bonded to their work and demonstrate a personal desire to perform and make a positive impact through their work, would not show a preference for leaving their NPOs in search of better opportunities in a new organisation, whether in the non-profit, private or public sector. Leaving an organisation in which they are already personally making a contribution would be risky, since there is no guarantee that they would experience a similarly strong connection to the work they perform in a new organisation. This might especially be the case if such employees feel they are called by a higher power to work within the non-profit sector or their specific NPO. If that is the case, it is possible that employees working within religious NPOs would be hesitant to go against the call of God by moving to a different organisation.

Hypothesis 6 was accepted by means of SEM, with intrinsic motivation predicting an increase in respondents' levels of work engagement. Theoretically, Armstrong and Brown (2009) mention that engagement occurs when employees are intrinsically motivated to perform, and Woods and West (2010) note that engagement is derived from intrinsic motivation to work. This result makes practical sense, because when NPO employees desire to contribute in a meaningful and impactful way through the work they perform, and when they experience an emotional and oftentimes deeply personal connection to the work they do, they will likely be led to be dedicated to and engrossed in such work, finding themselves focusing wholeheartedly on performing to the best of their abilities. Moreover, they are likely to gain pleasure and energy from working, which causes a positive cycle of emotions whereby their desire to perform leads to them feeling vitalised by the very work they are putting energy into. Exerting such vigour in their daily work lives might serve to further connect them to their work and motivate them to continue performing to the best of their abilities.

## Conclusion

The research question for this study was, *Do intrinsic rewards play a significant role in increasing the intrinsic motivation and work engagement levels, and reducing the intention to quit levels, of employees working within NPOs?* Based on the results provided in this article, it can be deduced that intrinsic rewards, while holding

a positive and practically significant correlation with intrinsic motivation and work engagement, do not play a direct role in increasing work engagement levels according to the SEM that was empirically tested. Intrinsic rewards, however, caused an increase in intrinsic motivation for this non-profit sample, which led to an increase in work engagement and a reduction in intention to quit (partial mediation). Intrinsic rewards also directly caused a reduction in non-profit employees' intentions to quit their organisations. As noted by Renard and Snelgar (2016b), intrinsic rewards should be part of an organisation's culture in an attempt to promote above-average work conditions for employees through the effective design of work itself, thus emphasising to employees that they are valued, respected and appreciated for offering their talents for the success of the organisation and society at large.

This study's SEM results provide evidence that the IWRS and IWMS adequately predict intrinsic motivation and intrinsic rewards respectively, and the instruments also predict work engagement (IWMS) and intention to quit (both IWRS and IWMS). This provides support for the criterion validity of the instruments, specifically concurrent validity that focuses on measuring variables at the same time, thus strengthening the practical use of these instruments.

It is recommended that future research uncover the reasons behind non-profit employees demonstrating an intention to leave their organisations as a result of being engaged with their work, since the relationship between work engagement and intention to quit was discovered in this study to be positive in nature, despite being negatively hypothesised. Studies comparing the private and public sectors, or corporate organisations and NPOs, could shed light on this interesting finding.

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