

Talent Management in Project-Based Organizations

Under Remote and Hybrid Work Models

An Integrated Framework Linking Workforce

Adaptability, Engagement, and Retention

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Abstract: Project-based organizations deliver work through temporary teams that assemble around an assignment and disband at its close, and a growing share of that work is now performed remotely or in hybrid form. Talent management theory rests on a permanency assumption that neither condition satisfies, and no existing model explains how project talent stays capable, engaged and attached when assignments and work locations change at the same time. This paper develops and specifies an integrated conceptual framework that closes that gap. The method is a two-track integrative review. A structured search of Scopus and the Web of Science Core Collection using three Boolean strings returned 519 records; after deduplication, title screening and eligibility assessment against pre-specified criteria, 86 studies were retained. A purposive track added 38 foundational theory statements, meta-analyses and landmark field studies identified through citation chasing, giving a synthesis corpus of 123 sources. Each source was coded for setting, design, constructs and the relationship it reports, and the coded relationships were mapped onto a path matrix from which the framework and five propositions were derived. The synthesis produced three outcomes. First, the evidence supports a capability-state-outcome sequence in which workforce adaptability (proactivity, adaptability, resilience and competence) supports employee engagement, and engagement supports retention in a continuous form and a boundaryless form in which talent stays attached to the organization's project ecosystem. Second, four conditions specific to distributed project work moderate the sequence: human resource quadriad clarity, e-leadership quality, swift trust formation and psychological contract fulfillment around flexibility. Third, the evidence is uneven: leadership-engagement associations in hybrid and remote work are moderate ($r = .39$), psychological contract breach predicts turnover intentions strongly

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(corrected $r = .42$) but not actual turnover, and only eleven of the 86 retained studies examine project-based and distributed work together. The framework differs from strategic talent management, the human resource quadriad and workforce agility models by treating assignment and location discontinuity jointly and by adding a boundaryless retention outcome. The paper states plainly a directional ambiguity inherited from the workforce agility literature and specifies the designs capable of resolving it.

Keywords: Employee engagement, project-based organizations, remote and hybrid work, talent retention, workforce adaptability.

Introduction

Organizations increasingly deliver work through projects rather than stable, function-based roles. This shift toward project-based organizing spans engineering, construction, information technology, and consulting ([Huemann et al., 2007](#)), and it rests on temporary teams that assemble around a task and disband once it closes ([Samimi & Sydow., 2021](#)). This organizing logic breaks an assumption underlying most human resource practice: that an employee holds one job, reports to one manager, and stays in one role for an extended period. A second shift compounds the first. Remote and hybrid work models have moved from an exception to a routine operating mode. Geographic flexibility raised output by 4.4 percent among patent examiners once they could work from anywhere ([Choudhury et al., 2021](#)). A six-month randomized controlled trial of 1,612 employees found that two days of home working each week cut quit rates by roughly one third and improved job satisfaction while leaving performance grades, promotions and code output statistically indistinguishable from the office-based control ([Bloom et al., 2024](#)). A meta-analysis of 110 samples ($N = 45,288$) found that the intensity of remote work has small but beneficial effects on satisfaction, commitment and turnover intentions, carried by perceived autonomy and partly offset by isolation ([Gajendran et al., 2024](#)). Project-based organizations have adopted these arrangements alongside their reliance on temporary teams, so project talent now moves between assignments and between work locations at the same time. Talent management theory has not caught up with this combination. The field's core models were built around identifying, developing and retaining talent inside a comparatively stable employment relationship ([Lewis & Heckman., 2006](#); [Collings & Mellahi., 2009](#)). Project-based organizations already stretch that model by distributing human resource responsibility across four actors: the project manager, the resource or line manager, the human resource function, and the individual employee, a configuration termed the human resource quadriad ([Bredin & Söderlund., 2011](#)).

Remote and hybrid work adds a further layer: several members of that quadriad now interact with the employee only through digital channels, and the employee's attachment may run more to the current project team than to the employing organization ([DeFillippi & Arthur., 1994](#)). Project-based organizing prizes the free movement of talent toward the highest-value assignment; classical talent management prizes continuity and a durable employment relationship. Remote and hybrid work sharpens this tension by removing the physical proximity that once substituted informally for organizational attachment, and human resource management research otherwise retains the permanency assumption that project-based organizing violates ([Samimi & Sydow., 2021](#)). The research gap can be stated as three limitations of prior work. First, talent management research assumes permanency. The strategic talent management model identifies pivotal positions and builds a differentiated talent pool to fill them ([Collings & Mellahi., 2009](#)), and a systematic review of 120 empirical studies found that talent engagement is the least studied talent management practice and that organizational performance, not retention, is the most studied outcome ([Aljbou et al., 2021](#)). Neither the model nor the evidence base addresses a workforce whose positions are rebuilt at each assignment. Second, human resource management research in project-based organizations was developed from co-located settings. The human resource quadriad ([Bredin & Söderlund., 2011](#)), the review of human resource management in project-oriented companies ([Huemann et al., 2007](#)) and the studies of turnover intentions in temporary organizations ([Nuhn & Wald., 2015](#); [Nuhn et al., 2016](#); [Nuhn., 2017](#)) do not model where work is performed. Third, the remote and hybrid work literature studies comparatively stable teams. Its meta-analyzes ([Gajendran & Harrison., 2007](#); [Martin & MacDonnell., 2012](#); [Onken-Menke et al., 2017](#); [Gajendran et al., 2024](#)) and its field experiments ([Choudhury et al., 2021](#); [Bloom et al., 2024](#)) treat team membership as fixed, so they cannot say how location flexibility interacts with reassignment. The structured search reported in the method section confirms the gap in quantifiable terms: of 86 eligible studies retrieved from Scopus and the Web of Science Core Collection, only eleven examine project-based and distributed work together, and only three of those measure a framework construct across work regimes in project teams ([Pirzadeh & Lingard., 2021](#); [Lundahl et al., 2023](#); [da Mota et al., 2026](#)). A fourth limitation compounds the others. The workforce agility literature, which supplies the capability construct used here, has not studied the team level at all and has positioned agility variously as independent, mediating, moderating and dependent variable ([Alviani et al., 2024](#)). The framework proposed here rests on a theoretical argument that the introduction states in outline and the results section develops. The argument runs in two steps. In the first step, workforce adaptability influences employee engagement because its four dimensions operate as personal resources in the job demands-resources model. Personal resources partly mediate

the effect of job resources on engagement and shape how employees perceive the resources available to them ([Xanthopoulou et al., 2007](#)). Reassignment and relocation are demands that consume energy at each boundary crossing ([Ashforth et al., 2000](#)); an employee who is proactive, adaptable, resilient and competent resolves those demands at lower cost and so preserves the psychological availability that engagement requires ([Kahn., 1990](#)). In the second step, engagement influences talent retention through the motivational process of the job demands-resources model, in which engagement mediates the effect of resources on turnover intention ([Schaufeli & Bakker., 2004](#)), a mediation already observed in co-located project-based organizations through commitment, satisfaction and motivation ([Mahjoub et al., 2018](#)). In temporary organizations, turnover intention has two levels, intention to leave the project and intention to leave the employer, and the first predicts the second ([Nuhn et al., 2016.](#) ; [Nuhn., 2017](#)), which is why the framework specifies retention in both a continuous and a boundaryless form. This paper develops an integrated conceptual framework linking workforce adaptability, employee engagement and talent retention in project-based organizations operating under remote and hybrid work models. It contributes by joining two literatures that have developed apart into a single testable framework, by reconceptualizing retention for a labor market in which valued talent moves between projects rather than remaining in one role, and by specifying four conditioning mechanisms particular to project-based work performed at a distance. The novelty relative to existing models is set out in Table 6 in the theoretical implications: strategic talent management ([Collings & Mellahi., 2009](#)) supplies the architecture but assumes fixed pivotal positions; the human resource quadriad ([Bredin & Söderlund., 2011](#)) distributes responsibility but assumes co-location; workforce agility models ([Sherehiy et al., 2007](#); [Tessarini Junior & Saltorato., 2021](#); [Petermann & Zacher., 2022](#)) specify the capability but not its downstream path to retention; the boundaryless career ([DeFillippi & Arthur., 1994](#)) explains mobility but offers the organization no retention target. The present framework integrates the four and adds the joint condition of assignment and location discontinuity. Four terms anchor the paper. A project-based organization is one in which the project, rather than the function or department, is the primary unit through which work is planned, staffed and delivered ([Huemann et al., 2007](#)). Remote work describes an arrangement in which an employee performs most duties away from a shared organizational site; hybrid work divides scheduled time between a shared site and another location, a distinction that matters empirically because hybrid arrangements produced materially different outcomes than fully remote ones ([Bloom et al., 2024](#)). Workforce adaptability, used as an umbrella term, refers to the behavioral capability specified as proactivity, adaptability, resilience and competence ([Tessarini Junior & Saltorato., 2021](#)).

Table 1 sets out how classical talent management assumptions diverge from the conditions this paper addresses, with the sources that support each side of the comparison.

Table 1 Talent management assumptions under classical and project-based, remote or hybrid conditions

Dimension	Classical assumption	Project-based, remote or hybrid reality
Employment relationship	Continuous, open-ended (Lewis & Heckman, 2006 ; Collings & Mellahi, 2009)	Recurrent, project-bounded (Samimi & Sydow, 2021 ; Nuhn et al., 2016)
Managerial authority	Single line manager (Huemann et al., 2007)	Distributed across a quadriad of actors (Bredin & Söderlund, 2011 ; Agarwal et al., 2021)
Physical presence	Co-located by default (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007)	Remote or hybrid, varying by assignment (Bloom et al., 2024 ; Gajendran et al., 2024)
Basis of trust	Accumulated through repeated interaction (Meyerson et al., 1996)	Compressed and rebuilt each time a team forms (Meyerson et al., 1996 ; Jarvenpaa et al., 1998 ; Crisp & Jarvenpaa, 2013)
Conditions for engagement	Built up within a stable set of colleagues (Kahn, 1990 ; Bakker & Demerouti, 2007)	Rebuilt at each assignment and sustained through digital channels (Matthews et al., 2018 ; Lundahl et al., 2023)
Capability required	Role-specific competence for a fixed pivotal position (Collings & Mellahi, 2009)	Adaptability across assignments and locations (Sherehiy et al., 2007 ; Pulakos et al., 2000 ; Ren et al., 2024)
Retention target	Continued tenure in a role (Mobley, 1977 ; Allen et al., 2010)	Continued tenure or continued ecosystem attachment (DeFillippi & Arthur, 1994 ; Welch & Welch, 2015 ; Nuhn et al., 2017)

The study pursues three objectives. The first is to synthesize, through a documented integrative review, what six bodies of literature establish about talent management, adaptability, engagement and retention under project-based and distributed conditions. The second is to specify an integrated framework whose relationships are stated as testable propositions, each tied to a theoretical basis and to the evidence that supports or qualifies it. The third is to set out the research designs capable of testing the framework. Three research questions follow. RQ1: How are workforce adaptability, employee engagement and talent retention related among project talent working remotely or in hybrid form? RQ2: Which conditions specific to project-based work performed at a distance moderate those relationships? RQ3: What does retention mean, and how should it be measured, when valued talent moves between assignments rather than remaining in one role? The paper makes three contributions in answer. It integrates the project-based organizing and remote work literatures into one path model (RQ1); it specifies four moderators drawn from evidence on

distributed and temporary teams (RQ2); and it defines boundaryless retention as a second retention outcome and identifies the measurement work it requires (RQ3). The remainder of the paper describes the review method, reports the synthesis, develops the framework and five propositions, and sets out implications, limitations and a research agenda.

Research Method

Research Design

This paper is conceptual. It builds theory through an integrative review, a form of review that critiques and synthesizes representative literature on a topic so that new frameworks and perspectives are generated ([Torraco., 2005](#); [Whittemore & Knafl., 2005](#)). The choice follows from the nature of the obstacle. Progress here is blocked not by a missing measurement but by a missing connection between literatures that have developed separately: the project-based organizing literature theorizes discontinuity across assignments, and the remote and hybrid work literature theorizes discontinuity across locations. Neither addresses the condition in which both operate on the same employee. An integrative review is the appropriate design when the aim is to integrate perspectives and build a model rather than to estimate a pooled effect ([Snyder., 2019](#)), and the framework-building approach adopted here corresponds to the model type of conceptual article, which uses existing theory and evidence to specify constructs and the relationships among them ([Jaakkola., 2020](#)). The review followed two tracks, because the two purposes of the corpus require different search logics. Track A was a structured search of two citation databases, Scopus and the Web of Science Core Collection, designed to identify reproducibly the empirical and theoretical work located at or near the intersection of project-based organizing, distributed work and the talent constructs of the framework. Track B was a purposive search for the foundational theory statements, quantitative syntheses and landmark field studies that define the constructs and supply the effects the framework extends, together with studies that the Boolean strings could not retrieve because they describe temporary or distributed teams without the project vocabulary. Foundational statements such as those on engagement ([Kahn., 1990](#)), swift trust ([Meyerson et al., 1996](#)) or the psychological contract ([Rousseau., 1989](#)) do not contain the intersection vocabulary and cannot be retrieved by a keyword search on it, which is why a semi-systematic review combines a structured search with citation chasing ([Snyder., 2019](#)). Figure 1 presents the stages of both tracks and the number of records at each stage, following the reporting logic of the PRISMA 2020 flow diagram ([Page et al., 2021](#)).

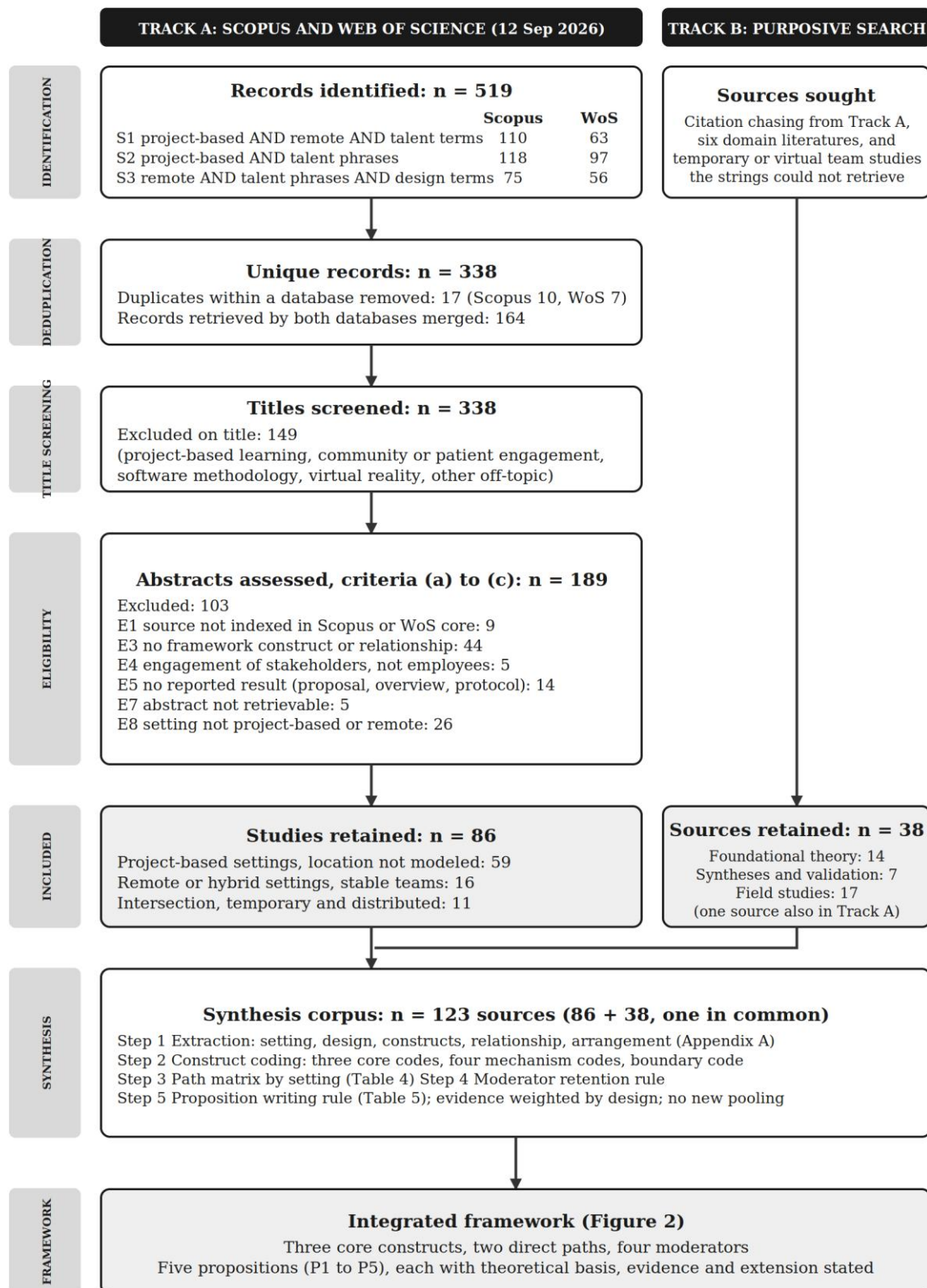


Figure 1 Flow of the two-track integrative review: identification, deduplication, title screening, eligibility assessment, inclusion, synthesis and framework development, with the number of records at each stage. The exclusion codes are those fixed before screening began; only the six that were applied appear in the figure.

Search Strategy

Track A was run on 12 September 2026 in Scopus and in the Web of Science Core Collection, the two citation databases used for coverage of management and engineering-management research. Three Boolean strings were applied to the title, abstract and keyword fields in Scopus (TITLE-ABS-KEY) and to the topic field in Web of Science (TS), so that the two searches interrogate equivalent fields (Table 2). String S1 combined the three blocks of the framework: project-based organizing, remote or distributed work, and talent constructs stated as single terms. String S2 combined project-based organizing with talent constructs stated as exact phrases, without the work-arrangement block, to capture talent, engagement, turnover and agility research conducted in temporary organizations. String S3 combined remote or distributed work with the talent phrases and with design terms (meta-analysis, systematic review, randomized, field experiment, natural experiment) to capture synthesis-level and experimental evidence on distributed work. All strings excluded project-based learning and educational terms and were limited to journal articles, reviews, books and book chapters in English. No date limit was applied, because foundational statements predate the distributed-work literature. Scopus returned 110, 118 and 75 records and Web of Science 63, 97 and 56, giving 519 records in total. Full records with abstracts were exported from both databases on the search date and are supplied in Supplementary File S1.

Track B assembled 38 sources by backward and forward citation chasing from the Track A set, from an exploratory scan of an open citation index, and from the six domain literatures named in the introduction: talent management and strategic talent management; human resource management in project-based and project-oriented organizations; remote, hybrid and virtual work; workforce agility and adaptive performance; work engagement; and turnover, retention and the boundaryless career. Three categories were sought within each: the foundational theory statement that defines the construct; quantitative synthesis or validation work, because a proposition is testable only if its constructs are measurable; and recent field evidence on distributed work, because the conditions the framework addresses have changed since the foundational statements were written. Six studies of temporary or virtual project teams that the Boolean strings did not retrieve, because their titles and abstracts describe virtual or hybrid teams without the project-based vocabulary, were also placed in this track ([Jarvenpaa & Keating., 2012](#); [Srivastava & Jain., 2017](#); [Ritter et al., 2021](#); [Ürü et al., 2022](#); [Birman et al., 2024](#); [Lundahl et al., 2023](#)).

Table 2 Search strings applied in Scopus and the Web of Science Core Collection (12 September 2026) and records returned

String	Search blocks	Filters	Scopus	Web of Science
S1	Project-based block AND remote block AND talent-terms block. Project-based block: "project-based" OR "project based" OR "project-oriented" OR "temporary organization" OR "temporary organisation" OR "temporary team" OR "project team" OR "project workers" OR "project personnel" OR "project professionals". Remote block: remote OR hybrid OR virtual OR telework OR telecommuting OR "work from home" OR "working from home" OR "distributed team". Talent-terms block: talent OR retention OR turnover OR engagement OR agility OR adaptability OR "adaptive performance" OR "psychological contract" OR "swift trust"	Document type: article, review, book, book chapter; language: English; NOT ("project-based learning" OR "project based learning" OR students OR classroom OR curriculum). Fields: TITLE-ABS-KEY in Scopus, TS in Web of Science	110	63
S2	Project-based block (as S1) AND talent-phrases block: "talent management" OR "talent retention" OR "employee retention" OR "staff retention" OR "turnover intention" OR "intention to leave" OR "intention to quit" OR "work engagement" OR "employee engagement" OR "workforce agility" OR "workforce adaptability" OR "adaptive performance" OR "psychological contract" OR "swift trust"	As S1	118	97
S3	Remote block (as S1) AND talent-phrases block (as S2) AND design block: "meta-analysis" OR "meta-analytic" OR "systematic review" OR randomized OR randomised OR "field experiment" OR "natural experiment"	As S1	75	56
Total			303	216

Screening and Eligibility Criteria

Records were screened in three stages against criteria fixed before screening began. At the deduplication stage, 17 records returned by more than one string within the same database were removed (10 in Scopus, 7 in Web of Science), and a further 164 records retrieved by both databases were merged, leaving 338 unique records. At the title stage, 149 records were excluded because the title lay outside the scope of the review, most commonly project-based learning, community or patient engagement, software methodology, or virtual reality. At the eligibility stage, the abstracts of the remaining 189 records were assessed against three inclusion criteria: (a) publication in a source indexed in Scopus or the Web of Science Core Collection as a journal, review, book or book chapter; (b) a setting that is project-based or temporary, remote or hybrid, or both; and (c) a reported theoretical or empirical result involving at least one framework construct (talent management, retention or turnover, engagement, adaptability or agility) or one proposed mechanism (human resource roles,

leadership at a distance, swift trust, psychological contract). One hundred and three records were excluded at this stage, for the coded reasons listed in Figure 1; the coding scheme was fixed before screening began and two of its eight codes, E2 (duplicate identified at the eligibility stage) and E6 (not in English), were never applied, so only six appear. Eighty-six studies were retained. Screening was performed by the author, and every decision and its reason were logged record by record (Supplementary File S1) so that the process can be audited and repeated; the single-screener design is returned to in the limitations. The 86 Track A studies and the 38 Track B sources, with one study common to both ([Jarvenpaa et al., 1998](#)), form a synthesis corpus of 123 sources. Table 3 describes its composition.

Table 3 Composition of the synthesis corpus (n = 123)

Domain	Track A: Scopus and Web of Science	Track B: purposive	Total
Talent management and strategic talent management	4	3	7
Human resource management in project-based and project-oriented organizations	6	3	9
Remote, hybrid and virtual work	19	11	30
Workforce agility and adaptive performance	7	6	13
Work engagement and its mechanisms (swift trust, psychological contract)	18	11	28
Turnover, retention and the boundaryless career	32	4	36
Total	86	38	123
By setting (Track A)	Project-based, location not modeled: 59; remote or hybrid, stable teams: 16; intersection: 11	Foundational theory: 14; syntheses and validation: 7; field studies: 17	One source (Jarvenpaa et al., 1998) is counted in both tracks and once in the total

Coding and Synthesis Procedure

Synthesis proceeded in five steps, each with an explicit rule. In step one, each source was extracted into a template recording setting (project-based, remote or hybrid, or both), design and sample, constructs measured or theorized, the relationship reported and its direction, and the work arrangement studied; the completed template for Track A appears in Appendix A.

For the Track A studies, extraction was performed from the title, abstract and keywords as exported from Scopus and Web of Science, so each finding is recorded at the level of detail the abstract supports; the five records whose abstracts could not be retrieved were excluded for that reason (E7). In step two, each construct was coded to one of three core codes (workforce adaptability, employee engagement, talent retention), one of four mechanism codes (quadriad clarity, e-leadership, swift trust, psychological contract), or a boundary code for context evidence. Construct definitions were fixed before coding so that each appears in the framework with a single meaning: engagement follows [Kahn \(1990\)](#), swift trust follows [Meyerson et al. \(1996\)](#), and workforce adaptability follows the four-dimension specification of [Tessarini Junior and Saltorato \(2021\)](#). In step three, the coded relationships were mapped onto a path matrix whose rows are the framework paths and whose columns are the three settings; Table 4 reports the matrix with the studies that populate each cell. In step four, a candidate mechanism was retained as a moderator only when at least one empirical or theoretical result in the corpus linked it to the path it was proposed to condition, and the path matrix records where that result came from. In step five, each path was written as a proposition stating the expected relationship, its theoretical basis, the strongest evidence for it, and the extension made when that evidence came from stable rather than temporary teams or from co-located rather than distributed ones; Table 5 summarizes the result. Evidence was weighted qualitatively by design, in the order meta-analysis, experimental or longitudinal study, cross-sectional survey, qualitative study, conceptual argument. Where a source reports meta-analytic effect sizes, those sizes are reported as published; no new pooling was performed, because the constructs, settings and designs across the corpus are too heterogeneous, and the number of studies per path at the intersection too small, for a meta-analysis to be defensible ([Snyder., 2019](#)). The product is a specification of relationships for testing, not a validated model; the designs capable of testing it are set out in the research agenda.

Result and Discussion

Overview of the Corpus

The synthesis corpus contains 123 sources: 86 retained from the structured search of Scopus and the Web of Science Core Collection and 38 assembled purposively, with one source common to both (Table 3). The structured-search corpus is dominated by studies conducted in project-based settings without regard to work location (59 of 86), followed by studies of remote or hybrid work in stable teams (16) and studies at the intersection of the two (11). By construct family, turnover and retention account for 36 sources, remote and hybrid work for 30, work engagement and its mechanisms for 28, workforce agility and adaptive performance

for 13, human resource management in project-based organizations for 9, and talent management for 7. Three features of this distribution shape the synthesis. First, the intersection literature is thin relative to the two parent literatures: five of the eleven intersection studies are concerned principally with trust in temporary or globally distributed teams ([Jarvenpaa et al., 1998](#); [Mumbi & McGill., 2007](#); [Henderson et al., 2016](#); [Badrinarayanan., 2024](#); [Barrett., 2026](#)), and only three measure a framework construct across work regimes in project teams ([Pirzadeh & Lingard., 2021](#); [Samardžić et al., 2026](#); [da Mota et al., 2026](#)). Second, retention research in project-based settings is comparatively mature, with a two-level turnover construct already validated ([Nuhn et al., 2016](#); [Nuhn., 2017](#)) and with commitment, role overload and newcomer adaptation studied directly in temporary organizations ([Chen., 2005](#); [Spanuth & Wald., 2017](#); [Zaman et al., 2025](#)). Third, the adaptability-to-engagement path is the least directly tested: no retained study measures the four-dimension adaptability construct against engagement in project teams, so Proposition 1 rests on theory and on adjacent evidence. The subsections that follow synthesize each literature in turn, and Table 4 then maps the evidence onto the framework paths.

Talent Management in Project-Based Organizations

Talent management refers variously to a bundle of human resource practices, to the management of talent pools and succession pipelines, or to the identification and development of high performers ([Lewis & Heckman., 2006](#)). Strategic talent management sharpened the concept: identify pivotal positions, build a differentiated talent pool to fill them, and construct a human resource architecture supporting their development ([Collings & Mellahi., 2009](#)). Both formulations assume one employing organization managing a workforce that stays long enough for these architectures to operate. A systematic review of 120 empirical studies confirms where the evidence has concentrated: talent development is the most studied practice, talent engagement the least, and organizational performance the most studied outcome ([Aljbour et al., 2021](#)). Project-based organizations complicate that assumption in three ways. First, authority divides. Human resource practice in project-oriented companies must span both project and line structures, because employees answer to a project manager for task performance and to a line manager for career progression ([Huemann et al., 2007](#)). The human resource quadriad formalizes this division: the project manager handles task-level performance, the resource manager handles career progression, the human resource function sets policy, and the individual manages a career running across single assignments ([Bredin & Söderlund., 2011](#)). Recent evidence shows that this division is not self-executing. In a grounded theory study of 13 Canadian project managers, talent management expectations set at the top of the organization did not simply trickle down; project leaders enacted, adapted or

only symbolically complied with them depending on the configuration of context and mechanisms they faced ([Foroutan et al., 2026](#)). Among 541 project managers in 135 firms, perceived organizational support reduced the intention to quit the project manager position, and support rose where a career path was accompanied by qualification opportunities and where top management and the project management office were involved ([Ekrot et al., 2016](#)). Practitioners interviewed on talent management in digitalizing projects placed more weight on developing and retaining talent than on identifying and recruiting it ([Papadonikolaki et al., 2025](#)), and in building construction the acknowledgment of team members' talent was related to their effectiveness ([Sweis et al., 2017](#)). What such development depends on is itself project-specific: the factors governing tacit knowledge sharing within integrated project teams have been identified and ranked ([Zhang & He., 2016](#)), and they are largely factors of proximity and repeated contact, which distributed work removes. Second, the pivotal position moves. In a function-based organization, pivotal positions are relatively fixed; in a project-based organization, which position is pivotal changes with the project, so the differentiated architecture of [Collings and Mellahi \(2009\)](#) must be rebuilt at each assignment. Third, the outcome logic differs. A structural equation study of strategic talent management in Iranian oil and gas project-based organizations found a positive relationship with project success mediated by organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and motivation ([Mahjoub et al., 2018](#)), establishing that psychological states carry the effect, which is the mediation logic this paper extends. That study was conducted among co-located teams, and the work arrangement was not modeled. How the quadriad operates when its members interact primarily through digital channels remains unexamined, since it was developed from co-located settings ([Bredin & Söderlund., 2011](#)), and none of the 86 structured-search studies tests it under distributed conditions.

Remote and Hybrid Work as the Organizing Context

An early meta-analysis established that telecommuting raises perceived autonomy and reduces work-family conflict while leaving supervisor-employee relationship quality largely unaffected ([Gajendran & Harrison., 2007](#)). A meta-analysis at the organizational level found small positive correlations between telework and retention ($r = .10$, $k = 6$, $n = 1,652$), organizational commitment ($r = .11$) and performance ($r = .16$) ([Martin & MacDonnell., 2012](#)). A meta-analysis of 68 studies covering 52,738 employees found that all flexible work practices reduce turnover intention, partly through perceived autonomy, although telecommuting did not raise organizational commitment ([Onken-Menke et al., 2017](#)). The most recent synthesis, of 110 samples, found that greater remote work intensity has small but beneficial effects on satisfaction, commitment, perceived support, supervisor-rated performance and turnover

intentions, carried by autonomy and partly offset by isolation ([Gajendran et al., 2024](#)). Two further reviews caution that the organizational conditions, not the arrangement itself, determine the direction of effect: a systematic review of work-from-home arrangements found performance and productivity outcomes contingent on those conditions ([Hackney et al., 2022](#)), and a review of 43 telework studies found self-reported performance higher among teleworkers but evidence on turnover rates and intentions mixed ([Mutiganda et al., 2022](#)). Recent field evidence has sharpened the picture: geographic flexibility, not remote work as such, drives the productivity gains of distributed arrangements ([Choudhury et al., 2021](#)), and hybrid, rather than fully remote, arrangements protect performance while delivering the retention benefit of flexibility ([Bloom et al., 2024](#)). A quasi-field experiment adds a within-person qualification: employees allowed to telework two days a week reported higher engagement and performance on telework days than on office days, yet showed no between-person change in engagement over the pilot period ([Delanoeije & Verbruggen., 2020](#)). Two mechanisms connect these findings to individual experience. Boundary theory holds that people manage transitions between roles by crossing boundaries varying in flexibility and permeability, and that a weaker boundary raises the cognitive and emotional work each transition requires ([Ashforth et al., 2000](#)). Remote and hybrid work weakens the spatial and temporal boundary that once separated work from other roles, so employees must manage that boundary themselves. E-leadership, meaning leadership exercised substantially through electronic channels, changes how influence, structure and social exchange operate between leader and team ([Avolio et al., 2000](#)), a shift with direct relevance for project managers leading temporary distributed teams. The e-leadership mechanism now has synthesis-level support. A meta-analysis of 24 samples ($N = 8,166$) found a moderate association between leadership and work engagement in hybrid and remote work ($r = .39$, 95% CI [.33, .45]), strongest for relations-oriented behaviors ($r = .50$) ([Clark et al., 2026](#)). A systematic review of 36 articles found that transformational and exchange-based leadership remain effective when work is dispersed and that e-leadership, trust-building and digital competence gain relevance ([Kim et al., 2025](#)). A review of 37 empirical studies found that leader competencies which reduce operational and social distance, above all digital communication, relate to teleworker performance, with trust and autonomy as intervening mechanisms ([Bravo-Duarte et al., 2025](#)). Empirical work has begun to specify these mechanisms. A systematic review through the job demands-resources model found that virtual and hybrid team performance depends on the balance between demands specific to distributed work, such as coordination cost and isolation, and resources specific to it, such as autonomy and digital tool quality ([Coulston et al., 2025](#)). A systematic review of 25 studies of remote workers reached the same conclusion for engagement: individual resources, job resources and job demands remain its main

antecedents, with technological antecedents gaining prominence ([Choudhary & Jain., 2024](#)). Among 420 information and communication technology professionals in virtual teams, supervisor support reduced intention to leave, with work engagement carrying part of that effect ([Mosquera & Branco., 2024](#)). Among 371 information technology professionals, the workplace setting moderated the relationship between engagement and turnover intention, with engagement techniques producing better results in hybrid than in fully remote settings ([Singh & Sant, 2023](#)). Among 200 insurance employees, the relationship between absorption in work and organizational identification was weakest onsite, stronger in hybrid work and strongest in remote work ([Ürü et al., 2022](#)), which indicates that the arrangement conditions how engagement converts into attachment rather than whether it does. Distributed work also changes what teams must do to convert individual capability into output. In geographically distributed information technology project teams, transactive memory systems addressed the double-edged effects of expertise and geographic dispersion on individual creativity and its implementation ([He et al., 2022](#)), and affect management training raised eudaimonic well-being in virtual teams, moderated by team-level configurations of openness to experience ([González-Anta et al., 2021](#)). One contrary result is worth recording: across 159 members of multicultural information technology project teams, the differences between virtual and co-located working in the chain running from individual to team to organizational effectiveness were statistically insignificant ([Cizmas et al., 2024](#)). These findings establish, in stable teams, the paths this paper proposes to test in temporary ones. Three intersection studies show what changes when the team is also temporary. In project teams compared across on-site, hybrid and remote regimes, intrinsic motivation raised engagement in every regime, but the relationship between engagement and individual performance was moderate on-site and in hybrid work and weak in fully remote work ([da Mota et al., 2026](#)). Project managers in Denmark and the United States described similar strategies for sustaining engagement in hybrid project teams despite differing enthusiasm for hybrid work ([Lundahl et al., 2023](#)). Among construction project workers required to work from home on alternate weeks, mental well-being declined gradually over successive survey waves, and the effect of work engagement on well-being ran through satisfaction with work-life balance ([Pirzadeh & Lingard., 2021](#)). The demands do not distribute evenly: a member joining a fourth consecutive assignment in eighteen months carries a heavier coordination burden into each new virtual team than a colleague working with the same group for years, because coordination routines must be relearned each time the team changes as well as each time its location changes.

Workforce Adaptability in Distributed Project Teams

Workforce agility derives from the enterprise agility literature, with proactivity, adaptability and resilience as its core behavioral attributes ([Sherehiy et al., 2007](#)), and competence added as a fourth interdependent dimension enabled by learning, work organization, human resource practices and culture ([Tessarini Junior & Saltorato., 2021](#)). The taxonomy of adaptive performance supplies a complementary account, including handling emergencies, handling work stress, solving problems creatively, learning new tasks and technologies, and interpersonal and cultural adaptability ([Pulakos et al., 2000](#)), dimensions that map onto what a project worker must do each time an assignment changes. That taxonomy has been applied directly in project teams: the adaptive performance of architects in Ghanaian project delivery teams was assessed across its eight dimensions ([Kwofie et al., 2024](#)), and among renewable energy projects the adaptive performance of the workforce was related to project success, with pandemic conditions moderating the relationship ([Haris et al., 2023](#)). Measurement has matured. A validated multidimensional workforce agility measure confirmed a ten-factor structure and found agility positively related to task performance, innovative performance, organizational citizenship behavior, job satisfaction and well-being ([Petermann & Zacher., 2022](#)). A survey of 524 employees found workforce agility produced by identifiable organizational practices, with teamwork environments exerting the strongest influence, and psychological empowerment contributing independently ([Muduli., 2017](#)). This establishes agility as an organizationally enabled capability a talent management system can build, rather than a fixed trait. Evidence from project settings supports the same conclusion for particular dimensions. In a multilevel study of 59 project managers and 529 team members, the psychological resilience of project managers raised the adaptive performance of their teams through positive emotions, with stakeholder support as a boundary condition ([Ren et al., 2024](#)). Interviews in projectified organizations found that an agile mindset supplies psychological resources such as self-efficacy, openness and a learning orientation, while practices such as team autonomy and iterative delivery support resilience at individual and team levels ([Širovnik & Vrečko., 2025](#)). Work readiness and career resilience have been proposed as the capabilities project talent needs to adapt to volatile project labor markets ([Borg et al., 2020](#)). A parallel line theorizes the same problem as a matter of fit rather than capability: a person-environment fit model for temporary organizations relates personal attributes to organizational, group and job factors across five dimensions of temporariness ([Goetz et al., 2021](#)), and across 341 members of temporary organizations and 20 supervisors that fit raised both task and innovative performance, with temporariness moderating the relationship ([Goetz & Wald, 2021](#)). The demand side constrains it: in 38 Dutch project teams,

quantitative role overload impeded team learning and, through it, both team and individual performance ([Savelsbergh et al., 2012](#)). Two gaps constrain the literature. A synthesis of 74 workforce agility studies found most examine agility at the individual level, only about ten at the organizational level, and none at the team level ([Alviani et al., 2024](#)), which is consequential because the project team is precisely the level at which project-based organizations operate. The same synthesis found agility positioned variously as independent, mediating, moderating and dependent variable, leaving its causal position unsettled; the limitations below return to this, because the present framework inherits it. The one study that measures workforce agility in a project-based organization under distributed conditions adds a caution. Among 198 employees of a consulting firm working in smart-working environments, proactivity and resilience raised project success, but adaptability lowered success directly and raised it only through information system success ([Samardžić et al., 2026](#)). The dimensions of the capability therefore do not behave uniformly, and the framework treats adaptability as a composite whose dimensions may need separate estimation. A further difficulty attaches to competence specifically: skill development in project-based work has relied on working alongside experienced colleagues on site, and remote arrangements remove much of that incidental transmission, so competence-building may need to become a deliberate, scheduled practice.

Engagement Under Discontinuous, Distributed Work

Engagement is the simultaneous employment and expression of a person's preferred self in role behaviors, requiring psychological meaningfulness, safety and availability ([Kahn., 1990](#)). The job demands-resources model shows engagement flowing from job resources such as autonomy, support and feedback that buffer a role's demands ([Bakker & Demerouti., 2007](#)), and personal resources such as self-efficacy and optimism partly mediate that flow and shape how resources are perceived ([Xanthopoulou et al., 2007](#)). Both accounts assume the conditions supporting engagement accumulate through repeated interaction with a stable set of colleagues, an accumulation that project reassignment and remote interaction interrupt in different ways. Evidence from project-based organizations shows the interruption at work. Engagement in a global project-based organization depended on project challenges, the problem-solving nature of the work and delivery within time allocations ([Matthews et al., 2018](#)), and constant role reconfiguration was identified as the reason engagement is hard to sustain in such organizations ([Cheng et al., 2024](#)). Leadership carries much of the available engagement evidence in project settings: transformational leadership raised the engagement of 162 infrastructure project employees and lowered their intention to leave the project, with project identification mediating ([Ding et al., 2017](#)); ethical, authentic, inclusive and exchange-

based leadership were each related to engagement in project-based organizations ([Mubarak & Noor., 2018](#); [Mustafa et al., 2022](#); [Shahid., 2023](#); [Cheng et al., 2024](#)); and engagement mediated the effect of a project manager's transformational leadership on extra-role performance across 39 construction teams ([Shokory & Suradi., 2018](#)) and of project communication on project success ([Saeed et al., 2026](#)). One dyadic study qualifies the pattern: servant leadership improved project success mainly by reducing withdrawal from project work rather than by raising engagement, and high project identification weakened the leadership-engagement link ([Nauman et al., 2022](#)). Job crafting, a proactive behavior, raised engagement through work meaningfulness among project members and managers ([Haffer et al., 2020](#)). Evidence from remote work shows that engagement is not self-sustaining under discontinuity: it declined over the first three months of an abrupt transition to remote work, and employees who responded by seeking more challenging demands declined faster ([Birman et al., 2024](#)); the factors that sustain it vary with the extent of remote work and the way teams are integrated ([Tarnowska et al., 2024](#)), and a randomized controlled trial of an online job crafting self-training among 87 remote workers raised the seeking of social resources but did not reduce hindrance demands ([Thomas et al., 2026](#)). Three studies locate engagement's antecedents in the project team itself rather than in its leader. Among 470 newcomers to project teams, assimilation into the team's emotional culture raised work engagement through organizational identification and person-organization fit ([Hu & Sinniah., 2024](#)). Across 118 project teams observed over three waves, collective engagement mediated the relationship between cohesion and creative performance, and performance fed back into later cohesion ([Rodríguez-Sánchez et al., 2017](#)). Across 39 project teams in multiple countries, individual and collective psychological ownership raised individual engagement and creativity, although at team level the mean of individual ownership lowered team engagement while collective ownership raised it ([Martinaityte et al., 2020](#)). The organizing structure cuts both ways: shared leadership was experienced by project team members as a resource and as a demand simultaneously ([Karppi et al., 2025](#)), and the presence of a horizontal leader related to burnout through perceived career opportunity, with status conflict reversing the direction ([Liu et al., 2021](#)). A validated instrument for sense of place in project work environments now offers a way to measure the setting-level conditions that bear on wellbeing in such teams ([Lingard & Turner., 2023](#)). Swift trust addresses this compression directly: temporary groups, lacking time to build trust through repeated interaction, substitute category-based and role-based trust for the interpersonal kind, acting as if trust exists in order to begin work ([Meyerson et al., 1996](#)). In 75 global virtual teams studied over eight weeks, early trust was predicted most strongly by perceptions of integrity, and the effect of perceived ability declined over time ([Jarvenpaa et al., 1998](#)). A longitudinal quasi-experimental study of 68 temporary virtual teams found swift

trust cognitively fragile, requiring reinforcement through normative action, specifically the setting and monitoring of performance norms, which then raise later trusting beliefs and performance ([Crisp & Jarvenpaa., 2013](#)). Two further findings qualify the mechanism, and the framework must respect them. In a survey of Project Management Institute members, trust within virtual project teams predicted project success, but swift trust and prior conventional experience did not predict that trust ([Mumbi & McGill., 2007](#)). In an experiment with 40 temporary teams, low swift trust increased elaborate information processing and improved performance on non-routine tasks, with no effect on routine tasks ([Thommes & Uitdewilligen., 2019](#)). Swift trust therefore matters as a starting condition that must be converted, not as a resource that is uniformly beneficial. Trust asymmetries across onshore and offshore engineering sites require active management ([Jarvenpaa & Keating., 2012](#)), and project team leaders in a nonprofit organization described concrete trust-building strategies for virtual project teams ([Ritter et al., 2021](#)). Among project team members, assertive, clear and supportive leader communication raised trust, which in turn raised engagement and lowered turnover intention ([Yang et al., 2020](#)). Field evidence from a multinational disaster project management team in Fiji supports the formation mechanism as swift trust theory states it, with reputation, role and interdependence carrying the formation and qualifications specific to the disaster setting ([McLaren & Loosemore., 2019](#)). Across 218 global project workers in 33 teams, role clarity and trust predicted project satisfaction and role clarity predicted performance, with effects varying by member location and by co-location with the project manager ([Henderson et al., 2016](#)), which is the closest existing test of the clarity mechanism specified below. Among 185 virtual leaders, establishing trust ranked as the single most significant challenge of leading virtual project teams ([Badrinarayanan., 2024](#)). A systematic review concludes that swift trust carries context-specific meanings across types of temporary system, so evidence cannot be pooled across them without attention to setting ([Barrett., 2026](#)). Project-based teams already depend on swift trust each time they form; remote arrangements remove the physical cues it draws on, and without reinforcement it decays ([Crisp & Jarvenpaa., 2013](#)). This may explain why engagement is harder to sustain when project and location discontinuity occur together. A further mechanism is the psychological contract: employees form beliefs about reciprocal obligations binding them to an employer, which need not be written to affect behavior ([Rousseau., 1989](#)). In remote and hybrid project-based organizations, flexibility itself becomes an implicit contract term. Meta-analytic evidence shows perceived breach raises turnover intentions, with affective reactions of violation and mistrust mediating the effect ([Zhao et al., 2007](#)), giving the fulfillment mechanism proposed here an evidentiary anchor. The corrected correlations in that meta-analysis were .42 with turnover intentions ($k = 22$, $N = 6,268$), .52 with violation, .65 with mistrust and -.54 with job

satisfaction, but only .06 with actual turnover ($k = 5$, $N = 730$), a distinction the limitations return to. In project-based organizations, the state of the psychological contract depends on how leadership is distributed: across eight organizations in India and Australia, a collaborative culture that supported knowledge sharing and agile methods enabled distributed leadership and led to contract fulfillment ([Agarwal et al., 2021](#)). Highly skilled freelancers built transactional contracts with client organizations, to which they felt outsiders, and open-ended relational contracts with the project teams in which they felt insiders ([Gigant et al., 2026](#)). Digital management practices reach the contract too: among 312 construction and engineering professionals, electronic performance monitoring shaped promotion-focused job crafting through relational contracts and prevention-focused crafting through transactional ones ([Ma & Qin., 2026](#)). In project-based knowledge work the contract is not dyadic at all: the client functions as a third party to it, and mutual expectations of entrepreneurial behavior and loyalty are interdependent ([Ruiner et al., 2013](#)), which complicates any account that treats the employer alone as the counterparty. Whether the flexibility term is available in the first place is itself predicted by demands and resources: a meta-analysis of 104 studies ($N = 1,034,603$) found job resources and job demands to predict the utilization of flexible work arrangements ([Jia et al., 2024](#)).

Retention and the Boundaryless Career

Classical turnover theory models a process running from dissatisfaction through thoughts of quitting, job search and comparison of alternatives to a final decision ([Mobley., 1977](#)), and evidence-based retention practice still treats continuity in the current role as the outcome to protect ([Allen et al., 2010](#)). Retention research in temporary organizations has moved beyond that single outcome. Turnover intention in temporary organizations has two levels: the intention to leave the project team and the intention to leave the permanent employer. Among 253 project team members, inter-role conflict was the strongest antecedent of the intention to leave the project, members tolerated reductions in autonomy and meaningfulness without developing it, and the intention to leave the project directly predicted the intention to leave the employer ([Nuhn et al., 2016](#)). Dyadic data from the same population showed that the project-level intention raises the employer-level intention, which lowers performance at individual, team and organizational levels, and that transparency and participation in staffing decisions weaken the chain ([Nuhn et al., 2017](#)). Two studies of employees holding a permanent team alongside several temporary project teams found that the number of temporary teams raised turnover intentions through identity strain and cognitive depletion in one sample, and the opposite in another, with permanent team identification weakening the harmful path in both ([Mistry et al., 2022](#)). Turnover intentions rose over the course of four- to six-month

project assignments abroad, and work-family conflict predicted them ([Andres et al., 2012](#)). In construction, satisfaction with supervision and job security reduced turnover intention through lower job stress ([Dodanwala & Santoso., 2021](#)), project-based production was identified as a structural source of vulnerability to voluntary turnover ([Uğural et al., 2020](#)), and relations with horizontal leaders affected turnover intention through perceived justice ([Li et al., 2021](#)). Leadership behavior at project level matters for retention in both directions: knowledge hiding by project managers raised turnover intentions through stress ([Zhang & Min., 2021](#)), narcissistic leadership raised project turnover intention through lower psychological safety and negative emotions ([Abbasi & Nauman., 2026](#)), and supervisor support moderated the effect of automation awareness on turnover intention in project organizations ([Moin & Zhang., 2024](#)). Career sustainability, especially resourcefulness and renewability, predicted lower organizational and career turnover intentions among 224 project managers ([Jacob & Mosquera., 2026](#)). Three studies place the antecedents earlier in the assignment. In a longitudinal multilevel study of 65 project teams, newcomers' initial performance related to their later empowerment and to their intentions to quit, with team expectations and team performance predicting adaptation ([Chen., 2005](#)). Across more than 600 professionals, the antecedents of organizational commitment differed between temporary and permanent organizations, with work-life conflict mediating ([Spanuth & Wald., 2017](#)). Among 240 members of project-based organizations, role overload showed a curvilinear relationship with project commitment and citizenship behavior, mediated by positive affect ([Zaman et al., 2025](#)), so the demand is not monotonically harmful. Interviews across three sectors in Western Europe attribute high turnover in project-based organizations to wellbeing policies designed without the project manager's perspective ([Kapsali et al., 2025](#)), which locates part of the retention problem in the division of human resource responsibility rather than in the individual. The boundaryless career offers a different starting point: a competency-based perspective in which careers unfold across organizational boundaries ([DeFillippi & Arthur., 1994](#)), with its labor-market counterpart in itinerant experts and contractors who move between employers carrying accumulated expertise ([Barley & Kunda., 2004](#)), a pattern common in the mixed permanent and contract staffing of project-based organizations. Two qualitative studies show the attachment such talent forms. International project workers described loyalty that ran to themselves, the project and the profession more than to the organization, sustained by career networks and expressed as project citizenship behavior ([Welch & Welch., 2015](#)). Freelancers felt insiders to their project teams while remaining outsiders to the client organization ([Gigant et al., 2026](#)). Job embeddedness, which a meta-analysis of 272 effect sizes ($N = 111,592$) shows affects most work and non-work outcomes through satisfaction and stress ([Li et al., 2025](#)), offers a candidate mechanism for the

attachment that persists across assignments. Retention in a project-based organization may therefore need to mean something other than continuous employment. Organizations in project-based industries already track alumni who return for later assignments or refer other talent into the pipeline, an informal practice a boundaryless retention construct would make explicit and measurable, and one that matters more once remote arrangements widen the geographic pool of returning talent ([Choudhury et al., 2021](#)). No existing retention model incorporates this form, so organizations lack a way to judge whether talent management is working when conventional turnover is not the right yardstick. The two-level turnover construct of [Nuhn et al. \(2016\)](#) is the closest existing measure: it separates leaving the project from leaving the employer, but it does not capture return, referral or continued attachment after formal exit, which is what boundaryless retention adds.

Evidence Map for the Framework Paths

Table 4 maps the coded relationships onto the framework paths and records, for each path, the evidence available in project-based settings, in remote or hybrid settings with stable teams, and at the intersection. Three patterns emerge. The engagement-to-retention path and the e-leadership mechanism are the best evidenced: each has synthesis-level support in distributed work and at least one same-model test in temporary organizations. The adaptability-to-engagement path and the quadriad mechanism are the least evidenced: the former rests on theory and adjacent constructs, the latter on theory and on studies of organizational support and staffing transparency. Swift trust is supported at the intersection but with two contrary results, so the framework specifies it as a condition that must be reinforced rather than as a uniformly positive resource. No path has been tested with the temporary and distributed conditions modeled together, which is the empirical gap the propositions are written to close.

Table 4 Evidence map: coded relationships by framework path and setting

Path or mechanism	Project-based settings (location not modeled)	Remote or hybrid settings (stable teams)	Intersection (temporary and distributed)	Assessment
P1: Workforce adaptability to engagement	Job crafting raised engagement through meaningfulness (Haffer et al., 2020); resilience raised adaptive performance (Ren et al., 2024); agile practices supplied psychological resources (Širovnik & Vrečko, 2025); psychological states mediate talent management effects (Mahjoub et al., 2018); adaptive performance related to project success (Haris et al., 2023); newcomer assimilation into a project team's emotional culture raised work engagement (Hu & Sinniah, 2024); collective engagement mediated cohesion to creative performance across three waves in 118 project teams (Rodríguez-Sánchez et al., 2017); individual and collective psychological ownership raised engagement and creativity (Martinaityte et al., 2020)	Individual resources are a main antecedent of remote engagement (Choudhary & Jain, 2024); agility related to satisfaction and well-being in general samples (Petermann & Zacher, 2022); approach crafting accelerated engagement decline after abrupt transition (Birman et al., 2024); an online job crafting intervention raised resource-seeking among remote workers but did not reduce hindrance demands (Thomas et al., 2026)	Adaptability lowered project success directly but raised it through information systems (Samardžić et al., 2026); no study measures the four-dimension construct against engagement	Theory-anchored (Xanthopoulou et al., 2007); adjacent evidence only; weak to moderate
P4: Engagement to continuous retention	Transformational leadership raised engagement and lowered project turnover intention (Ding et al., 2017); trust raised engagement and lowered turnover intention (Yang et al., 2020); withdrawal rather than engagement carried servant leadership effects (Nauman et al., 2022); intention to leave the project predicts intention to leave the employer (Nuhn et al., 2016, 2017); newcomer performance related to later empowerment and to intentions to quit across 65 project teams (Chen, 2005); the antecedents of commitment differ in temporary organizations, with work-life conflict mediating (Spanuth & Wald, 2017); role overload related curvilinearly to project commitment and citizenship behavior (Zaman et al., 2025)	Engagement mediates resources to turnover intention (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004); engagement carried supervisor support to intention to leave in virtual teams (Mosquera & Branco, 2024); setting moderates engagement to turnover intention (Singh & Sant, 2023); remote intensity lowers turnover intentions (Gajendran et al., 2024); telework to retention $r = .10$ (Martin & MacDonnell, 2012); teleworker self-reported performance was higher, but evidence on turnover rates and intentions was mixed across 43 studies (Mutiganda et al., 2022)	None	Moderate in each literature separately; untested at the intersection

Path or mechanism	Project-based settings (location not modeled)	Remote or hybrid settings (stable teams)	Intersection (temporary and distributed)	Assessment
P4: Engagement to boundaryless retention	Loyalty runs to self, project and profession (Welch & Welch, 2015); freelancers are insiders to project teams (Gigant et al., 2026); more temporary teams raised turnover intentions in one sample and lowered them in another (Mistry et al., 2022); itinerant experts move between employers (Barley & Kunda, 2004)	Absorption to identification strongest in remote work (Ürü et al., 2022); geographic flexibility widens the talent pool (Choudhury et al., 2021); embeddedness affects most outcomes (Li et al., 2025)	None	Construct supported conceptually and qualitatively; no validated measure; weak
P2: Quadriad clarity (moderator)	Quadriad concept (Bredin & Söderlund, 2011); organizational support and career paths reduced intention to quit (Ekrot et al., 2016); staffing transparency weakened the turnover chain (Nuhn et al., 2017); talent management expectations do not trickle down to project leaders (Foroutan et al., 2026); distributed leadership shapes contract state (Agarwal et al., 2021); high turnover in project-based organizations was attributed to wellbeing policies that omit the project manager's perspective (Kapsali et al., 2025)	None (quadriad not studied in distributed work)	Role clarity predicted project satisfaction and performance in 33 global project teams, and its effect varied with member location and with co-location with the project manager (Henderson et al., 2016)	Theoretical; one adjacent test of role clarity, not of quadriad clarity; weakest
P3: E-leadership quality (moderator)	Leadership to engagement for transformational, ethical, authentic, inclusive and exchange-based styles (Ding et al., 2017 ; Mubarak & Noor, 2018 ; Shokory & Suradi, 2018 ; Mustafa et al., 2022 ; Shahid, 2023 ; Cheng et al., 2024); negative leadership raises project turnover intention (Zhang & Min, 2021 ; Abbasi & Nauman, 2026); supervisor support moderates (Moin & Zhang, 2024); inclusive and humble leadership raised project success through psychological empowerment (Khan et al., 2020 ; Ali et al., 2021); despotic leadership lowered it through emotional exhaustion (Shahzad et al., 2023); leader workplace anxiety lowered member citizenship behavior (Wang et al., 2021); shared leadership was experienced as both resource and demand (Karppi et al., 2025)	Leadership to engagement $r = .39$ (Clark et al., 2026); e-leadership and trust-building relevant (Kim et al., 2025); digital communication foremost competency (Bravo-Duarte et al., 2025); supervisor support in virtual teams (Mosquera & Branco, 2024); e-leadership theory (Avolio et al., 2000)	Project manager strategies for engagement in hybrid project teams (Lundahl et al., 2023); leadership in distributed scrum teams (Srivastava & Jain, 2017); global virtual team leadership (Yousef, 2026); establishing trust ranked the foremost challenge of leading virtual project teams across 185 leaders (Badrinarayanan, 2024)	Best-evidenced mechanism; moderate

Path or mechanism	Project-based settings (location not modeled)	Remote or hybrid settings (stable teams)	Intersection (temporary and distributed)	Assessment
P3: Swift trust formation (moderator)	Swift trust theory (Meyerson et al., 1996); low swift trust improved non-routine performance (Thommes & Uitdewilligen, 2019); trust mediates leader communication to engagement (Yang et al., 2020); reputation, role and interdependence supported swift trust formation in a multinational disaster project team (McLaren & Loosemore, 2019)	Not applicable (mechanism defined for temporary teams)	Integrity predicts early trust (Jarvenpaa et al., 1998); norms reinforce swift trust (Crisp & Jarvenpaa, 2013); swift trust did not predict virtual team trust (Mumbi & McGill, 2007); trust asymmetries across sites (Jarvenpaa & Keating, 2012); trust strategies (Ritter et al., 2021); role clarity and trust predicted satisfaction in global project teams (Henderson et al., 2016); swift trust carries context-specific meanings across temporary system types (Barrett, 2026)	Supported at the intersection with two contrary results; specified as conversion, not level; moderate but mixed
P5: Psychological contract fulfillment around flexibility (moderator)	Distributed leadership and contract fulfillment (Agarwal et al., 2021); relational contracts with project teams (Gigant et al., 2026); monitoring shapes crafting through contract type (Ma & Qin, 2026); contracts intervene in motivation (Ozma et al., 2021); the client acts as a third party to the psychological contract in project-based knowledge work (Ruiner et al., 2013)	Breach to turnover intentions corrected $r = .42$, to actual turnover .06 (Zhao et al., 2007); flexible practices reduce turnover intention via autonomy (Onken-Menke et al., 2017); hybrid schedule cut quits by one third (Bloom et al., 2024); flexibility linked to retention for frontline workers (Choudhary & Brookes, 2025); job resources and demands predicted utilization of flexible arrangements across 104 studies (Jia et al., 2024)	None	Moderate for intentions; weak for behavior

Theoretical Basis of the Core Sequence

The capability-state-outcome sequence at the center of the framework rests on three theoretical arguments. The first concerns why workforce adaptability should raise engagement. In the job demands-resources model, personal resources partly mediate the relationship between job resources and engagement and influence how employees perceive the resources available to them ([Xanthopoulou et al., 2007](#)). Proactivity, adaptability, resilience and competence are personal resources of this kind. Each assignment change and each location change is a boundary crossing that consumes cognitive and emotional energy ([Ashforth et al., 2000](#)). An employee high in the four dimensions resolves the crossing at lower cost and retains the psychological availability that [Kahn \(1990\)](#) identifies as a condition of engagement; an employee low in them arrives at each new team depleted. The evidence for

this argument is indirect but consistent: proactive job crafting raised engagement through meaningfulness in project teams ([Haffer et al., 2020](#)); resilience raised adaptive performance in project teams ([Ren et al., 2024](#)); agile practices supplied the psychological resources that sustain resilience in projectified organizations ([Širovnik & Vrečko., 2025](#)); and individual resources remained a main antecedent of engagement among remote workers ([Choudhary & Jain., 2024](#)). One result cautions against assuming the relationship is unconditional: under an abrupt transition to remote work, employees who crafted their jobs by adding challenging demands lost engagement faster ([Birman et al., 2024](#)), which is why the framework attaches moderators to this path rather than treating it as fixed. The second argument concerns why engagement should raise retention. The motivational process of the job demands-resources model holds that engagement mediates the effect of resources on turnover intention ([Schaufeli & Bakker., 2004](#)). In co-located project-based organizations, psychological states carry the effect of talent management on project success ([Mahjoub et al., 2018](#)); in temporary organizations, transformational leadership raised engagement and lowered project turnover intention in the same model ([Ding et al., 2017](#)), and trust raised engagement and lowered turnover intention through the same mediator ([Yang et al., 2020](#)). In virtual teams, engagement carried part of the effect of supervisor support on intention to leave ([Mosquera & Branco., 2024](#)). The two-level structure of turnover intention in temporary organizations, in which intention to leave the project predicts intention to leave the employer ([Nuhn et al., 2016](#) ; [Nuhn., 2017](#)), supplies the reason for specifying two retention outcomes: engagement may protect attachment to the employer's project ecosystem even when it does not prevent exit from a given project. The third argument concerns direction. The workforce agility literature has positioned agility as independent, mediating, moderating and dependent variable ([Alviani et al., 2024](#)), and a reverse ordering, in which engaged employees invest the discretionary effort that builds adaptability, is theoretically coherent under the gain spirals the job demands-resources model allows ([Xanthopoulou et al., 2007](#)). The framework therefore proposes the capability-state-outcome order as the primary specification on the grounds that adaptability is a capability the organization can build before an assignment begins ([Muduli., 2017](#)), while engagement is a state formed within the assignment; but it presents the ordering as a specification to be tested, and the research agenda gives the two-wave design capable of testing it.

The Integrated Framework

Core Sequence

The framework links three constructs in sequence. Workforce adaptability is the individual capability comprising proactivity, adaptability, resilience and competence ([Tessarini Junior &](#)

[Saltorato., 2021](#)), measurable through validated instruments (Petermann & Zacher, 2022) and buildable through organizational practices ([Muduli., 2017](#)). Employee engagement is the psychological state through which that capability converts into sustained behavior ([Kahn., 1990](#)). Talent retention spans two forms: continuous retention in a current role, and boundaryless retention, meaning continued attachment to the organization's project ecosystem across assignments ([DeFillippi & Arthur., 1994](#)), the second distinguished from the project-level and employer-level turnover intentions of [Nuhn et al. \(2016\)](#) by its inclusion of return, referral and attachment after exit. Four mechanisms specific to project-based work performed remotely or in hybrid form condition how strongly this spine holds.

Conditioning Mechanisms

Human resource quadriad clarity ([Bredin & Söderlund., 2011](#)) is the extent to which the four actors sharing talent responsibility are identifiable and reachable by an employee entering a new assignment. Where roles are clearly defined and digitally accessible, an adaptable employee's adjustments register with at least one identifiable actor; where they are ambiguous or distant, adaptive effort has nowhere to land and its link to engagement weakens. The mechanism draws on three results: perceived organizational support, raised by visible career paths and project management office involvement, reduced project managers' intention to quit ([Ekrot et al., 2016](#)); transparency and participation in staffing decisions weakened the chain from project-level to employer-level turnover intention ([Nuhn et al., 2017](#)); and talent management expectations reached project leaders only through specific configurations of context and mechanism ([Foroutan et al., 2026](#)). E-leadership quality ([Avolio et al., 2000](#)), supported empirically in stable virtual teams ([Mosquera & Branco., 2024](#)) and meta-analytically across hybrid and remote work ([Clark et al., 2026](#)), is the project manager's effectiveness through electronic channels. It substitutes partially for face-to-face presence, and the substitution matters most for the most adaptable employees, who move between teams most often. In temporary organizations, the leadership-to-engagement relationship has been observed for transformational, ethical, authentic, inclusive and exchange-based leadership ([Ding et al., 2017](#); [Mubarak & Noor., 2018](#); [Mustafa et al., 2022](#); [Shahid., 2023](#); [Cheng et al., 2024](#)), and negative leadership behavior raises project turnover intention ([Zhang & Min., 2021](#); [Abbasi & Nauman., 2026](#)). Swift trust formation ([Meyerson et al., 1996](#); [Crisp & Jarvenpaa., 2013](#)) is the speed and durability with which a reconstituted virtual project team establishes provisional trust. Because swift trust requires reinforcement through explicit performance norms rather than holding on its own ([Crisp & Jarvenpaa., 2013](#)), this mechanism is actionable: teams that set and monitor norms early convert initial trust into sustained trust. The framework specifies the mechanism as conversion rather than level,

because swift trust did not predict virtual team trust in one survey of project practitioners ([Mumbi & McGill., 2007](#)) and low swift trust improved non-routine performance in one experiment ([Thommes & Uitdewilligen., 2019](#)). Psychological contract fulfillment around flexibility ([Rousseau., 1989](#); [Zhao et al., 2007](#)) is the extent to which the organization honors its promise of remote or hybrid autonomy. Where it does, engaged employees convert engagement into retention in either form; where it breaches that term, for example through a mandated return to a fixed location, engagement no longer protects against exit. The mechanism is anchored in the meta-analytic association between breach and turnover intentions (corrected $r = .42$; [Zhao et al., 2007](#)), in the reduction of turnover intention by flexible work practices through perceived autonomy ([Onken-Menke et al., 2017](#)), in the one-third reduction in quit rates produced by a hybrid schedule ([Bloom et al., 2024](#)), and in the finding that distributed leadership in project-based organizations shapes whether the contract is fulfilled or breached ([Agarwal et al., 2021](#)).

Framework Structure

Figure 2 represents the framework as a path model. Workforce adaptability leads to employee engagement, which leads to talent retention in both forms. Quadriad clarity, e-leadership quality and swift trust formation moderate the adaptability-to-engagement path; psychological contract fulfillment moderates the engagement-to-retention path. The project-based, remote or hybrid context is not a control variable but the condition that gives the moderators their force.

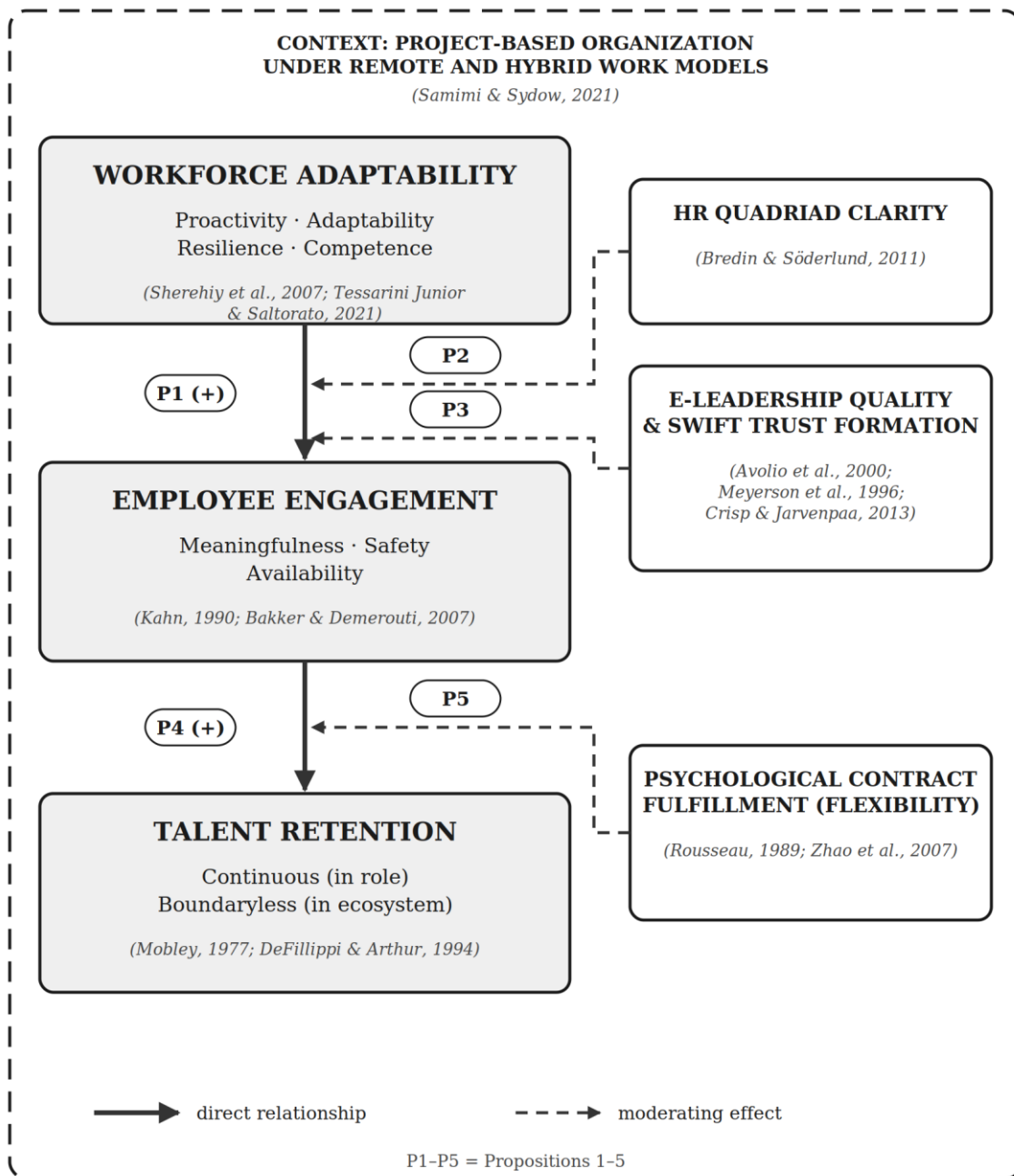


Figure 2 Integrated framework linking workforce adaptability, employee engagement and talent retention in project-based organizations under remote and hybrid work models. Solid arrows denote proposed direct relationships; dashed arrows denote proposed moderating effects; P1–P5 refer to Propositions 1–5.

Propositions

Table 5 presents the five propositions systematically. For each, it states the relationship, the theoretical basis, the strongest supporting evidence with its design and setting, the extension made when that evidence comes from stable or co-located teams, and an assessment of

evidence strength derived from the path matrix in Table 4. The propositions are then stated in full.

Table 5 Summary of the propositions, their theoretical basis, supporting evidence and extensions

Proposition	Relationship	Theoretical basis	Strongest supporting evidence (design; setting)	Extension made	Evidence strength
P1	Workforce adaptability is positively associated with employee engagement	Boundary theory (Ashforth et al., 2000); personal resources in the job demands-resources model (Xanthopoulou et al., 2007); psychological availability (Kahn, 1990)	Job crafting to engagement (survey; project teams; Haffer et al., 2020); resilience to adaptive performance (multilevel; project teams; Ren et al., 2024); individual resources to engagement (systematic review; remote workers; Choudhary & Jain, 2024)	From single dimensions and adjacent constructs to the four-dimension construct measured jointly, in distributed project teams	Weak to moderate; theory-led
P2	Quadriad clarity strengthens the adaptability-engagement relationship	Human resource quadriad (Bredin & Söderlund, 2011); organizational support theory as applied to project managers (Ekrot et al., 2016)	Support and career paths to lower quit intention (multilevel; 541 project managers; Ekrot et al., 2016); staffing transparency weakens turnover chain (dyadic; Nuhn et al., 2017); enactment of talent management by project leaders (grounded theory; Foroutan et al., 2026)	From co-located quadriad to digitally mediated quadriad; from support to clarity as the operative variable	Weak; moderator unmeasured
P3	E-leadership quality and swift trust formation jointly strengthen the adaptability-engagement relationship	E-leadership (Avolio et al., 2000); swift trust and normative reinforcement (Meyerson et al., 1996 ; Crisp & Jarvenpaa, 2013)	Leadership to engagement $r = .39$ (meta-analysis; hybrid and remote; Clark et al., 2026); transformational leadership to engagement and lower project turnover intention (survey; temporary organizations; Ding et al., 2017); norms reinforce swift trust (longitudinal quasi-experiment; 68 temporary virtual teams; Crisp & Jarvenpaa, 2013)	From stable virtual teams to temporary ones; from swift trust level to swift trust conversion, given contrary results (Mumbi & McGill, 2007 ; Thommes & Uitdewilligen, 2019)	Moderate; mixed for swift trust
P4	Engagement mediates the relationship between adaptability and retention in continuous and boundaryless forms	Motivational process of the job demands-resources model (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004); boundaryless career (DeFillippi & Arthur, 1994); two-level turnover intention in temporary organizations (Nuhn et al., 2016)	Psychological states mediate talent management to project success (SEM; co-located project-based organizations; Mahjoub et al., 2018); engagement and project turnover intention in one model (survey; Ding et al., 2017); engagement carries support to intention to leave (survey; virtual teams; Mosquera & Branco, 2024); loyalty to project and profession (interviews; Welch & Welch, 2015)	From continuous retention to a second, boundaryless outcome; from co-located to distributed project teams	Moderate for continuous; weak for boundaryless (no validated measure)

Proposition	Relationship	Theoretical basis	Strongest supporting evidence (design; setting)	Extension made	Evidence strength
P5	Psychological contract fulfillment around flexibility strengthens the engagement-retention relationship, most for the most adaptable employees	Psychological contract (Rousseau, 1989); breach-outcome meta-analysis (Zhao et al., 2007); autonomy pathway of flexible work (Onken-Menke et al., 2017 ; Gajendran et al., 2024)	Breach to turnover intentions corrected $r = .42$ (meta-analysis; $k = 22$; Zhao et al., 2007); hybrid schedule cut quit rates by one third (randomized trial; 1,612 employees; Bloom et al., 2024); setting moderates engagement to turnover intention (survey; Singh & Sant, 2023); arrangement moderates absorption to identification (survey; Ürü et al., 2022)	From stable teams to project-based ones; from breach in general to breach of the flexibility term; stated for intentions, pending behavioral tests	Moderate for intentions; weak for behavior

Proposition 1. Workforce adaptability is positively associated with employee engagement among project talent working remotely or in hybrid form, because adaptable employees resolve boundary-crossing demands ([Ashforth et al., 2000](#)) at lower psychological cost, preserving the conditions for engagement ([Kahn., 1990](#)), and because the four dimensions operate as personal resources within the job demands-resources model ([Xanthopoulou et al., 2007](#)). Supporting evidence is adjacent rather than direct: proactive job crafting raised engagement in project teams ([Haffer et al., 2020](#)), resilience raised adaptive performance in project teams ([Ren et al., 2024](#)), and individual resources predicted engagement among remote workers ([Choudhary & Jain., 2024](#)). The proposition extends these results to the four-dimension construct measured jointly.

Proposition 2. Human resource quadriad clarity moderates the adaptability-engagement relationship, strengthening it when the roles of project manager, resource manager, human resource function and individual are clearly defined and digitally accessible, extending the quadriad concept ([Bredin & Söderlund., 2011](#)) to distributed conditions. The evidence base is organizational support and staffing transparency in co-located project-based organizations ([Ekrot et al., 2016](#); [Nuhn et al., 2017](#); [Foroutan et al., 2026](#)); no study has measured the clarity of the quadriad itself, so this proposition carries the weakest empirical support in the framework.

Proposition 3. E-leadership quality and swift trust formation jointly moderate the adaptability-engagement relationship: project managers who lead effectively through electronic channels ([Avolio et al., 2000](#)) and establish explicit performance norms early ([Crisp & Jarvenpaa., 2013](#)) sustain engagement among adaptable employees who move between teams most often, extending findings from stable virtual teams ([Mosquera & Branco., 2024](#)) to temporary ones. The leadership component is supported meta-analytically in hybrid and

remote work ($r = .39$; [Clark et al., 2026](#)) and in temporary organizations ([Ding et al., 2017](#); [Cheng et al., 2024](#)). The swift trust component is specified as conversion of initial trust through norms, because swift trust as a level did not predict team trust in one study ([Mumbi & McGill., 2007](#)) and low swift trust helped non-routine performance in another ([Thommes & Uitdewilligen., 2019](#)).

Proposition 4. Employee engagement mediates the relationship between workforce adaptability and talent retention, where retention includes both continuous and boundaryless forms ([DeFillippi & Arthur., 1994](#)). An analogous mediation through commitment and satisfaction links strategic talent management to project success in co-located project-based organizations ([Mahjoub et al., 2018](#)), engagement and project turnover intention have been modeled together in temporary organizations ([Ding et al., 2017](#); [Yang et al., 2020](#)), and engagement mediates the effect of resources on turnover intention in the job demands-resources model ([Schaufeli & Bakker., 2004](#)). The boundaryless form rests on the two-level turnover structure ([Nuhn et al., 2016](#) ; [Nuhn., 2017](#)) and on qualitative evidence of project and profession loyalty ([Welch & Welch., 2015](#); [Gigant et al., 2026](#)), and it lacks a validated measure.

Proposition 5. Psychological contract fulfillment around flexibility moderates the engagement-retention relationship: breach of the flexibility term accelerates exit intentions most sharply among the most adaptable employees, because breach affects most strongly the party valuing the breached term ([Rousseau., 1989](#); [Zhao et al., 2007](#)), and adaptable employees hold the external options making exit feasible. The workplace setting moderates the engagement-turnover relationship in stable teams ([Singh & Sant., 2023](#)); the arrangement also conditioned how absorption converted into organizational identification ([Ürü et al., 2022](#)) and how engagement converted into performance in project teams ([da Mota et al., 2026](#)), which this proposition extends to project-based ones. The breach-to-intention association is strong (corrected $r = .42$) but the breach-to-actual-turnover association is not ($.06$; [Zhao et al., 2007](#)), so the proposition is stated in terms of exit intentions and requires designs with objective turnover records to test the behavioral outcome.

Theoretical Implications

The framework's central move is treating two sources of discontinuity together. The project-based organizing literature ([Huemann et al., 2007](#); [Bredin & Söderlund., 2011](#); [Samimi & Sydow., 2021](#)) has theorized discontinuity across assignments without addressing work locations; the remote and hybrid work literature ([Gajendran & Harrison., 2007](#); [Choudhury et al., 2021](#); [Bloom et al., 2024](#); [Gajendran et al., 2024](#)) has theorized discontinuity across

locations while studying comparatively stable teams. Joining them is the principal contribution. The framework also extends the quadriad to a condition its originators did not test, extends the boundaryless career from creative and contract labor markets into a general account of retention for project-based organizations, and responds to the team-level gap in the workforce agility literature ([Alviani et al., 2024](#)). Table 6 states the comparison with existing models explicitly. Relative to strategic talent management ([Collings & Mellahi., 2009](#)), the framework replaces fixed pivotal positions with a capability that travels between assignments. Relative to the human resource quadriad ([Bredin & Söderlund., 2011](#)), it adds the condition that quadriad members interact at a distance and specifies clarity of the quadriad as a moderator. Relative to the turnover model for temporary organizations ([Nuhn & Wald., 2015](#); [Nuhn et al., 2016](#)), it adds engagement as the mediating state, adds work location as a condition, and adds boundaryless retention as an outcome beyond the two turnover intentions. Relative to workforce agility models ([Sherehiy et al., 2007](#); [Tessarini Junior & Saltorato., 2021](#); [Petermann & Zacher., 2022](#)), it specifies a downstream path from the capability to retention and a level of analysis, the temporary team, that the agility literature has not studied. Relative to the job demands-resources account of engagement ([Bakker & Demerouti., 2007](#); [Schaufeli & Bakker., 2004](#)), it names the demands and resources that are specific to reassignment and relocation and the actors who control them. Relative to the dual pathway model of remote work intensity ([Gajendran et al., 2024](#)), it introduces team membership as a second source of variation in autonomy and isolation. Relative to the boundaryless career ([DeFillippi & Arthur., 1994](#)), it gives the organization a retention target and a measurement task.

Table 6 Comparison of the proposed framework with existing models

Model	Employment and unit assumption	Work-location assumption	Retention conceptualization	What the present framework adds
Strategic talent management (Collings & Mellahi, 2009)	Permanent employment; fixed pivotal positions in one organization	Not modeled; co-location implicit	Continuity of identified talent in pivotal positions	A capability (adaptability) that travels between assignments; pivotal positions rebuilt at each project
Human resource quadriad (Bredin & Söderlund, 2011)	Project-based; four actors share responsibility for the individual	Co-located; developed from on-site settings	Career progression managed by the resource manager	Quadriad members interact at a distance; quadriad clarity specified as a moderator
Turnover intentions in temporary organizations (Nuhn & Wald, 2015 ; Nuhn et al., 2016, 2017)	Temporary organization nested in a permanent one; two-level turnover intention	Not modeled	Intention to leave the project and intention to leave the employer	Engagement as mediating state; work location as condition; boundaryless retention beyond the two intentions

Model	Employment and unit assumption	Work-location assumption	Retention conceptualization	What the present framework adds
Workforce agility models (Sherehiy et al., 2007 ; Tessarini Junior & Saltrato, 2021 ; Petermann & Zacher, 2022)	Individual or organizational level; no team level (Alviani et al., 2024)	Not modeled	Not an outcome; agility related to performance, satisfaction, well-being	Downstream path from capability through engagement to retention; the temporary team as level of analysis
Job demands-resources model of engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007 ; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004 ; Xanthopoulou et al., 2007)	Generic job; resources and demands accumulate in a stable role	Applied to remote work in later reviews (Coulston et al., 2025 ; Choudhary & Jain, 2024)	Engagement mediates resources to turnover intention	Names the demands and resources specific to reassignment and relocation and the actors who control them
Dual pathway model of remote work intensity (Gajendran et al., 2024)	Stable employment; team membership fixed	Central: intensity of remote work	Turnover intention as one outcome of autonomy and isolation	Team membership as a second source of variation in autonomy and isolation
Boundaryless career (DeFillippi & Arthur, 1994 ; Barley & Kunda, 2004)	Careers unfold across organizations; individual perspective	Not modeled	Not an organizational target; mobility is the norm	A retention target and measurement task for the organization: boundaryless retention
Present framework	Project-based organization; individual in temporary teams; two retention forms	Central: remote or hybrid arrangement jointly with temporary membership	Continuous retention and boundaryless retention (return, referral, ecosystem attachment)	Joint treatment of assignment and location discontinuity; four moderators; five testable propositions

Managerial Implications

Five implications follow. First, measure workforce adaptability directly with validated instruments ([Petermann & Zacher., 2022](#)) rather than assuming reassignment survivors possess it, and build it through the organizational practices identified by [Muduli \(2017\)](#), teamwork environments first; treat the dimensions separately, because adaptability and proactivity did not behave alike in the one distributed project-based test available ([Samardžić et al., 2026](#)). Second, make the quadriad explicit and digitally visible, so an employee entering a new project can identify which actor to approach for task guidance, career development or policy questions, and make staffing decisions transparent and participative, which weakens the chain from project-level to employer-level turnover intention ([Nuhn et al., 2017](#)). Third, treat early norm-setting in reconstituted virtual teams as a leadership task, since swift trust decays without it ([Crisp & Jarvenpaa., 2013](#)), and invest in relations-oriented leader behavior through digital channels, which shows the strongest association with engagement in dispersed work ([Clark et al., 2026](#)). Fourth, treat flexibility as a psychological contract term requiring consistent management rather than a perk withdrawable without cost; where flexibility must be reduced, expect the sharpest reaction from the most adaptable talent. Fifth, build alumni

and returner pathways so boundaryless retention becomes a captured source of value rather than an unmeasured loss.

Limitations

Six limitations bound the framework, the first most serious. First, the framework asserts a causal direction the literature does not settle. Workforce agility has been positioned as independent, mediating, moderating and dependent variable across studies ([Alviani et al., 2024](#)); the reverse ordering, in which engaged employees invest the discretionary effort that builds adaptability, is equally arguable under the gain spirals the job demands-resources model permits ([Xanthopoulou et al., 2007](#)); and the one distributed project-based study of workforce agility found that its dimensions do not act uniformly, with adaptability lowering project success directly ([Samardžić et al., 2026](#)). Cross-sectional data cannot separate these accounts. Until longitudinal or experimental designs are run, the framework should be read as a specification of relationships to be tested rather than a claim about causal order, and Propositions 1 and 4 in particular may need to be respecified as reciprocal. Second, the propositions are untested and rest unevenly on evidence: Table 4 shows that no path has been examined with temporary membership and distributed location modeled together, that Proposition 2 has no direct test of its moderator, and that only eleven of the 86 structured-search studies sit at the intersection the framework addresses. Third, boundaryless retention has no validated measure. The closest existing instruments capture intention to leave the project and the employer ([Nuhn et al., 2016](#)), project citizenship behavior ([Welch & Welch., 2015](#)), team-level insider status ([Gigant et al., 2026](#)) and job embeddedness ([Li et al., 2025](#)), but none captures return, referral and attachment after exit. Scale development is therefore a prerequisite for testing Propositions 4 and 5 quantitatively, and until then the construct is a definition rather than a variable. Fourth, generalizability across project-based industries is limited. The empirical base is skewed toward knowledge-intensive and construction settings: a Chinese technology company ([Bloom et al., 2024](#)), information technology professionals in Mumbai ([Singh & Sant., 2023](#)), Portugal ([Mosquera & Branco., 2024](#)) and Pakistan ([Mustafa et al., 2022](#); [Abbasi & Nauman., 2026](#)), a United States government agency ([Choudhury et al., 2021](#)), an Italian consulting firm ([Samardžić et al., 2026](#)), Brazilian project teams ([da Mota et al., 2026](#)), and construction professionals in Sri Lanka, Turkey, China, Ghana, Jordan and Australia ([Uğural et al., 2020](#); [Dodanwala & Santoso., 2021](#); [Li et al., 2021](#); [Pirzadeh & Lingard., 2021](#); [Kwofie et al., 2024](#)). Asset-heavy and safety-critical project industries, in which hybrid arrangements reach only part of the workforce, are represented by a single renewable energy study ([Haris et al., 2023](#)), so transfer to those industries is an assumption requiring direct test. Fifth, the outcome most often measured is intention rather than

behavior: psychological contract breach predicts turnover intentions (corrected $r = .42$) far more reliably than actual quitting (.06) ([Zhao et al., 2007](#)), and most retained retention studies measure intention, so designs with objective turnover and return records are needed. Sixth, the review itself has limits. Track A searched two databases, Scopus and the Web of Science Core Collection, restricted to English, with screening performed by one author and extraction performed from abstracts rather than full texts, so findings are recorded at abstract-level detail and no formal quality appraisal of the retained studies was performed; the structured search was conducted in September 2026 to verify and extend a corpus first assembled purposively, so the flow reported in Figure 1 documents the final corpus rather than the order in which the framework was first conceived; and the search strings could not retrieve intersection studies that describe temporary virtual teams without the project vocabulary, which is why Track B was necessary and why the count of intersection studies should be read as a lower bound.

Research Agenda

Five lines of work follow in priority order: a longitudinal or two-wave survey testing Propositions 1 to 3 across organizations varying in quadriad clarity and e-leadership quality, with the wave structure addressing the directional ambiguity above and with the four adaptability dimensions estimated separately; development and validation of a boundaryless retention scale capturing return rates, referral behavior and ecosystem attachment, built on the two-level turnover construct ([Nuhn et al., 2016](#)), project citizenship behavior ([Welch & Welch., 2015](#)) and team-level insider status ([Gigant et al., 2026](#)); qualitative research on how the quadriad functions when its members interact primarily through digital channels, for which the context-mechanism-outcome approach of [Foroutan et al. \(2026\)](#) offers a template; a design with objective turnover and return records to test Proposition 5 on behavior rather than intention; and replication in asset-heavy and safety-critical project industries, where transferability is weakest and practical stakes are highest.

Conclusions

Project-based organizations now ask talent to absorb two sources of discontinuity at once, movement between assignments and movement between work locations, without a talent management theory built to explain how that talent stays capable, engaged and attached. This paper answered that gap through a documented two-track integrative review of 123 sources, from which it derived an integrated framework in which workforce adaptability supports engagement, engagement supports retention in continuous and boundaryless forms, and four mechanisms particular to distributed project work condition how strongly each link holds. Its theoretical contribution is threefold and stays within the conceptual scope of the study: it joins

the project-based organizing and remote work literatures, which had theorized assignment and location discontinuity separately, into one testable path model; it specifies where existing models fall short, in the permanency assumption of strategic talent management, the co-location assumption of the human resource quadriad and the absence of a downstream path in workforce agility models; and it defines boundaryless retention as a retention outcome that project-based organizations can pursue when conventional turnover is the wrong yardstick.

The framework is a specification for testing, not a validated model, and its limits are specific. Its central relationship carries a directional ambiguity inherited from a literature that has not resolved it; its boundaryless retention construct has no validated measure; only eleven of the 86 structured-search studies examine project-based and distributed work together; and the evidence base is concentrated in knowledge-intensive and construction settings and in intentions rather than behavior. The research agenda gives the designs that address each limit: a two-wave study estimating the adaptability dimensions separately, a scale development study for boundaryless retention, qualitative work on the quadriad at a distance, a design with objective turnover and return records, and replication in asset-heavy and safety-critical industries. The field's next task is to run them.

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Appendix A

Appendix A. Extraction table for the structured-search corpus (Track A, n = 86). Path codes: A = workforce adaptability; E = employee engagement; R = retention; A-E and E-R = core paths; M1 = quadriad clarity; M2 = e-leadership; M3 = swift trust; M4 = psychological contract; TM = talent management practice; B = boundary condition.

Study	Setting	Design and sample	Constructs	Finding used in the synthesis	Path
Abbasi & Nauman (2026)	Project-based: information technology project teams	Time-lagged survey; n = 308	Narcissistic leadership; psychological safety; negative emotions; project turnover intention; job control	Narcissistic leadership raised project turnover intention through lower safety and negative emotions; job control reduced the effect	M2, R
Agarwal et al. (2021)	Project-based: eight organizations in India and Australia	Exploratory multi-organization analysis	Vertical and distributed leadership; psychological contract fulfillment and breach	Distributed leadership prevalent; culture, knowledge sharing and project management practices shape leadership style, which in turn shapes the state of the psychological contract	M1, M4
Ali et al. (2021)	Project-based: information technology, project-based organizations	Time-lagged survey; n = 337	Humble leadership; psychological empowerment; top management support; project success	Humble leadership related to project success through psychological empowerment, with top management support moderating	M2
Aljbour et al. (2021)	Talent management (general)	Systematic review; 120 empirical studies	Talent management determinants, practices and outcomes	Talent engagement was the least studied practice; organizational performance the most studied outcome	TM
Andres et al. (2012)	Project-based: military project assignments abroad	Two-wave study before and after four- to six-month assignments	Work-family conflict; turnover intentions	Turnover intentions increased over the assignment; higher work-family conflict was associated with higher turnover intentions	R, B

Study	Setting	Design and sample	Constructs	Finding used in the synthesis	Path
Badrinarayanan (2024)	Intersection: virtual project teams across sectors	Convergent mixed methods; 185 virtual leaders; 13 interviews	Trust-building leadership strategies	Establishing trust ranked the most significant challenge of leading virtual project teams; specific leader strategies identified	M2, M3
Barrett (2026)	Intersection: temporary systems including virtual teams	Systematic review	Swift trust conceptualizations across contexts	Swift trust has context-specific meanings across team types; a research agenda on communication competence, emotion regulation and artificial intelligence is proposed	M3
Borg et al. (2020)	Project-based workplaces	Conceptual	Work readiness; career resilience	Work readiness and career resilience linked as capabilities for adaptation in volatile project labor markets	A
Bravo-Duarte et al. (2025)	Remote: telework	Systematic review; 37 empirical studies	Leadership competencies; teleworker performance	Competencies that reduce operational and social distance related to performance; digital communication was the foremost competency; trust and autonomy intervened	M2
Chen (2005)	Project-based: 65 project teams	Longitudinal multisource multilevel study	Newcomer adaptation; empowerment; performance; intentions to quit	Newcomer initial performance related to later empowerment and to intentions to quit; team expectations and performance predicted adaptation	R, B
Cheng et al. (2024)	Project-based organizations	PLS-SEM; n = 194	Ethical leadership; work engagement; sensemaking	Ethical leadership positively related to engagement; constant role reconfiguration makes engagement difficult to sustain	M2, E
Choudhary & Brookes (2025)	Flexible working for frontline workforces	Systematic review; 71 studies	Flexible work arrangements; retention; engagement	Flexibility associated with retention and engagement benefits alongside operational obstacles	M4, R
Choudhary & Jain (2024)	Remote workers, OECD countries	Systematic review; 25 studies	Antecedents of engagement	Individual resources, job resources and job demands remained the main antecedents; technological antecedents gained prominence	E
Cizmas et al. (2024)	Intersection: multicultural IT project teams, Romania and Czechia	SEM; n = 159	Virtual versus co-located working; individual, team and organizational effectiveness	Differences between virtual and co-located multicultural project teams in the chain of effectiveness were statistically insignificant (contrary finding)	B
Clark et al. (2026)	Hybrid and remote work	Meta-analysis; 24 samples, N = 8,166	Leadership; work engagement	Leadership-engagement $r = .39$ (95% CI .33 to .45); relations-oriented behaviors $r = .50$	M2
da Mota et al. (2026)	Intersection: project teams under on-site, hybrid and remote regimes	PLS-SEM multigroup analysis	Motivation; engagement; individual performance	Intrinsic motivation raised engagement in all regimes; the engagement-performance relationship was moderate on-site and hybrid but weak in the remote regime	E, B

Study	Setting	Design and sample	Constructs	Finding used in the synthesis	Path
Delanoëje & Verbruggen (2020)	Remote: pilot telework program, Belgium	Quasi-field experiment; 39 versus 39; 13-day diary	Stress; work-to-home conflict; work engagement; performance	No between-person change in engagement over the pilot; within-person, engagement and performance were higher on telework days	E, B
Ding et al. (2017)	Project-based: infrastructure projects, China	Survey; n = 162	Transformational leadership; work engagement; project turnover intention; project identification	Transformational leadership positively related to engagement and negatively to project turnover intention; project identification mediates	M2, E-R
Dodanwala & Santoso (2021)	Project-based: construction professionals, Sri Lanka	Cross-sectional survey; n = 274	Job satisfaction facets; job stress; turnover intention	Satisfaction with supervision and job security reduced stress, which reduced turnover intention	R
Ekrot et al. (2016)	Project-based: 541 project managers in 135 firms	Multilevel survey	Perceived organizational support; job satisfaction; turnover intention; career path	Organizational support related negatively to intention to quit; a career path with qualification opportunities raised perceived support	R, M1
Foroutan et al. (2026)	Project-based organizations, Canada	Grounded theory; 13 interviews	Project leaders' talent management responses	Talent management expectations did not trickle down; project leaders enacted, adapted or symbolically complied depending on context and mechanisms	M1, TM
Gajendran et al. (2024)	Remote: remote work intensity	Meta-analysis; k = 110, N = 45,288	Remote work intensity; autonomy; isolation; satisfaction; commitment; turnover intentions	Remote work intensity had small beneficial effects on satisfaction, commitment, support, performance and turnover intentions through autonomy, offset partly by isolation	R, B
Gigant et al. (2026)	Project-based: highly skilled freelancers	Two-wave qualitative interviews	Psychological contract; insider status	Freelancers felt outsiders to client organizations (transactional contracts) but insiders to project teams (relational contracts)	M4, R
Goetz et al. (2021)	Project-based: temporary organizations	Conceptual model with propositions	Person-environment fit; five dimensions of temporariness	A person-environment fit model for temporary organizations relating personal attributes to organizational, group and job factors	B
Goetz & Wald (2021)	Project-based: 341 temporary organization members and 20 supervisors	Cross-industry survey	Person-environment fit; temporariness; task and innovative performance	Person-environment fit raised task and innovative performance in temporary organizations, with temporariness moderating	B
Gonzalez-Anta et al. (2021)	Remote: virtual teams	Randomized controlled pre-post online experiment	Affect management training; openness configurations; eudaimonic well-being	Affect management training raised well-being in virtual teams, moderated by team-level and diversity configurations of openness to experience	B

Study	Setting	Design and sample	Constructs	Finding used in the synthesis	Path
Hackney et al. (2022)	Remote: work from home	Systematic review	Work from home; personal and organizational performance and productivity	Work-from-home arrangements related to performance and productivity outcomes, with organizational conditions determining the direction	B
Haffer et al. (2020)	Project-based: project participants of different ranks	Survey	Job crafting; meaningfulness; work engagement	Meaningfulness partially (members) or fully (managers) mediated the effect of job crafting on engagement	A-E
Haris et al. (2023)	Project-based: renewable energy projects	Survey	Adaptive performance; project success; pandemic moderation	Workforce adaptive performance related to project success; pandemic conditions moderated the relationship	A
He et al. (2022)	Intersection: geographically distributed IT project teams	Field study	Expertise and geographic dispersion; transactive memory systems; idea generation and implementation	Transactive memory systems address the double-edged effects of expertise and geographic dispersion on individual creativity and implementation	B
Henderson et al. (2016)	Intersection: global project teams	Survey of 218 global project workers in 33 teams; 18 interviews	Communication norm alignment; role clarity; trust; satisfaction and performance	Role clarity and trust predicted project satisfaction, and role clarity predicted performance; effects varied with member location and co-location with the project manager	M1, M3
Hu & Sinniah (2024)	Project-based: project teams, China	Survey; 470 newcomers	Emotional culture assimilation; work engagement; organizational identification; person-organization fit	Assimilation into a project team's emotional culture raised newcomer work engagement, mediated by identification and fit	E
Jacob & Mosquera (2026)	Project-based: 224 project managers	PLS-SEM	Career sustainability; career satisfaction; organizational and career turnover intentions	Resourcefulness and renewability were the strongest predictors of lower turnover intentions	R
Jarvenpaa et al. (1998)	Intersection: temporary global virtual teams	Longitudinal field study; 75 teams over eight weeks	Swift trust; perceived integrity, ability, benevolence	Early trust predicted most strongly by perceived integrity; effect of perceived ability declined over time	M3
Jia et al. (2024)	Remote and flexible work arrangements	Meta-analysis; 104 studies, 108 samples, N = 1,034,603	Flexible work arrangement utilization; job demands and resources	Job resources and demands predicted utilization of flexible work arrangements, supporting a job demands-resources account	M4, B
Kapsali et al. (2025)	Project-based organizations, Western Europe	Exploratory qualitative; 19 interviews across three sectors	Wellbeing practices; labor turnover	High turnover in project-based organizations was attributed to wellbeing policies that omit project managers' perspectives; enabling and restricting factors identified	R, M1

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Karppi et al. (2025)	Project-based: 15 project teams, private and public sector	Qualitative study; 31 participants	Shared leadership; job demands and job resources	Shared leadership was experienced as both a resource and a demand by project team members, analyzed through the job demands-resources model	M2, B
Khan et al. (2020)	Project-based: information technology, project-based organizations	Time-lagged survey; n = 328	Inclusive leadership; psychological empowerment; psychological safety; project success	Inclusive leadership raised project success directly and through empowerment and psychological safety	M2
Kim et al. (2025)	Remote and hybrid workplaces	Systematic review; 36 articles	Leadership strategies; employee engagement	Transformational and exchange-based leadership remained effective; e-leadership and trust-building gained relevance	M2
Kwofie et al. (2024)	Project-based: architects in project teams, Ghana	Fuzzy evaluation survey	Adaptive performance (eight dimensions)	Adaptive performance of architects assessed across the eight dimensions of the Pulakos taxonomy	A
Li et al. (2021)	Project-based: construction project teams, China	Survey; 203 employees in 22 teams	Horizontal-leader relations; justice; turnover intention	Relationship with the horizontal leader influenced turnover intention indirectly through distributive justice	R
Li et al. (2025)	Digital era with gig and remote work	Meta-analysis; 272 effect sizes, N = 111,592	Job embeddedness; work and non-work outcomes	Embeddedness affected most outcomes; satisfaction and stress mediated	R
Lingard & Turner (2023)	Project-based: project work environments	Instrument development and two survey studies	Sense of place; mental wellbeing	A validated instrument for sense of place in project work environments, linked to wellbeing	B
Liu et al. (2021)	Project-based: architecture, engineering and construction project teams	Moderated mediation survey	Horizontal leadership; perceived career opportunity; job burnout	The presence of a horizontal leader related to burnout through perceived career opportunity, with status conflict reversing the direction	M2
Ma & Qin (2026)	Project-based: construction and engineering professionals, China	Three-wave survey; n = 312	Electronic performance monitoring; transactional and relational psychological contracts; job crafting	Monitoring shaped promotion-focused crafting through relational contracts and prevention-focused crafting through transactional contracts	M4
Martinaityte et al. (2020)	Project-based: 39 project teams, multiple countries	Three-wave multilevel study; 186 members	Individual and collective psychological ownership; engagement; creativity	Individual and collective ownership raised individual engagement and creativity; at team level, mean individual ownership lowered team engagement while collective ownership raised it	E
Martin & MacDonnell (2012)	Remote: telework	Meta-analysis; 22 studies	Telework; retention; commitment; performance	Telework-retention $r = .10$ ($k = 6$, $n = 1,652$); telework-commitment $r = .11$; telework-performance $r = .16$	R

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Matthews et al. (2018)	Project-based: global project-based organization	Qualitative interviews and observation	Employee engagement; project challenges; human factors	Engagement shaped by project challenges, the problem-solving nature of work and delivery within time allocations	E
McLaren & Loosemore (2019)	Project-based: multinational disaster project management team, Fiji	Exploratory qualitative; interviews, observation, documents	Swift trust formation	Reputation, role and interdependence supported swift trust formation, as swift trust theory predicts, with qualifications specific to disaster projects	M3
Mistry et al. (2022)	Project-based: employees on a permanent team plus temporary project teams	Field study and online panel study	Number of temporary teams; identity strain; cognitive depletion; turnover	Study 2: more temporary teams raised turnover intentions through identity strain and depletion; permanent team identification weakened the effect; Study 1 showed the opposite sign	R, B
Moin & Zhang (2024)	Project-based organizations, China	Time-lagged survey	Artificial intelligence awareness; turnover intention; supervisor support	Awareness of automation predicted turnover intention; supervisor support moderated the effect	R, M2
Mubarak & Noor (2018)	Project-based: nongovernmental organizations, Pakistan	Survey; n = 246	Authentic leadership; work engagement; empowerment; creativity	Work engagement and psychological empowerment mediate the effect of authentic leadership on creativity	M2, E
Mumbi & McGill (2007)	Intersection: virtual project teams	Survey of Project Management Institute members	Virtual team trust; swift trust; project success	Virtual team trust predicted project success; swift trust and prior conventional experience did not influence virtual team trust (contrary finding)	M3
Mustafa et al. (2022)	Project-based: information technology projects, Pakistan	Survey; n = 230	Leader-member exchange; employee engagement; self-efficacy; innovative work behavior	Engagement mediated the effect of leader-member exchange on innovative work behavior	M2, E
Mutiganda et al. (2022)	Remote: telework	Systematic review; 43 studies; MMAT appraisal	Telework; self-reported performance; turnover rates and intentions	Self-reported performance was higher among teleworking employees; evidence on turnover rates and intentions was mixed across studies	R
Nauman et al. (2022)	Project-based: 453 leader-member dyads in one organization	Dyadic survey	Servant leadership; work engagement; project work withdrawal; project identification	Servant leadership improved project success mainly by reducing withdrawal rather than by raising engagement; high project identification weakened the leadership-engagement link	M2, E
Nuhn et al. (2016)	Project-based: temporary project teams	Survey; n = 253	Turnover intention from the temporary organization (TITO) and from the permanent organization (TIPO)	Inter-role conflict was the strongest antecedent of TITO; members tolerated lower autonomy and meaningfulness; TITO directly predicted TIPO	R

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Nuhn et al. (2017)	Project-based: temporary organizations	Dyadic data; 253 members and supervisors	TITO; TIPO; performance at three levels	TITO increased TIPO, which reduced performance at individual, team and organizational levels; transparency and participation in staffing weakened the effect	R
Nuhn & Wald (2015)	Project-based: temporary organizations	Conceptual model	Turnover intentions in temporary organizations	Antecedents specific to temporary organizations organized into personal, job-related and organization-related factors	R
Onken-Menke et al. (2017)	Remote and flexible work practices	Meta-analysis; 68 studies, 52,738 employees	Flexible work practices; organizational attachment; turnover intention; autonomy	All flexible work practices reduced turnover intention; telecommuting did not raise commitment; effects partly mediated by perceived autonomy	M4, R
Ozma et al. (2021)	Project-based organizations, Iran	Grounded theory with survey	Compensation model; psychological contracts	Psychological contracts identified as an intervening condition in the motivation of project-based employees	M4
Papadonikolaki et al. (2025)	Project-based: project management professionals	24 semi-structured interviews	Talent management; digital expertise	Practitioners emphasized developing and retaining talent over identification and recruitment; buy-lease-make model proposed	TM
Pirzadeh & Lingard (2021)	Intersection: construction project workers on alternate-week home working	Multiwave survey; three projects; Australia	Work engagement; work-life satisfaction; well-being	Well-being declined gradually; the effect of work engagement on well-being ran through work-life satisfaction	B
Ren et al. (2024)	Project-based: 59 project managers and 529 team members	Multilevel model	Psychological resilience; positive emotions; adaptive performance; stakeholder support	Project managers' resilience raised adaptive performance through positive emotions; stakeholder support was a boundary condition	A
Rodriguez-Sanchez et al. (2017)	Project-based: 118 project teams (605 individuals)	Three-wave longitudinal simulation study	Team cohesion; collective engagement; creative performance	Collective engagement mediated the relationship between cohesion and creative performance, and performance fed back into later cohesion	E
Ruiner et al. (2013)	Project-based: knowledge-intensive project work	Qualitative empirical study	Psychological contract; customer as third actor	The customer functions as a third party to the psychological contract, and mutual expectations of entrepreneurial behavior and loyalty are interdependent	M4
Saeed et al. (2026)	Project-based: immunization projects, Pakistan	SEM; n = 219	Project communication; work engagement; organizational support; project success	Work engagement mediated the effect of project communication on project success	E

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Samardžić et al. (2026)	Intersection: smart working in a project-based consulting firm, Italy	SEM; n = 198	Smart working; workforce agility (proactivity, adaptability, resilience); information system success; project success	Proactivity and resilience raised project success; adaptability lowered success directly but raised it through information system success	A, B
Savelsbergh et al. (2012)	Project-based: 38 Dutch project teams (N = 283)	Multilevel mediation model	Team and individual role stress; team learning; performance	Team quantitative role overload impeded team learning and, through it, team and individual performance	B
Shahid (2023)	Project-based organizations, Pakistan	Survey; n = 334	Inclusive leadership; work engagement; person-job fit; project success	Work engagement mediated the effect of inclusive leadership on project success	M2, E
Shahzad et al. (2023)	Project-based: telecommunications, Pakistan	Three-wave time-lagged survey; n = 250	Despotic leadership; emotional exhaustion; emotional intelligence; project success	Despotic leadership reduced project success, partly through emotional exhaustion; emotional intelligence moderated the path	M2
Shokory & Suradi (2018)	Project-based: construction contractors, Malaysia	Hierarchical linear modeling; 195 members in 39 teams	Transformational leadership; work engagement; extra-role performance	Work engagement mediated the effect of the project manager's transformational leadership on extra-role performance	M2, E
Širovnik & Vrečko (2025)	Project-based: projectified organizations	11 semi-structured interviews; thematic coding	Agile mindset and practices; individual and team resilience	Agile mindset supplies psychological resources (self-efficacy, openness, learning orientation); team autonomy and iterative delivery support resilience	A
Spanuth & Wald (2017)	Project-based: temporary organizations; 600+ professionals	Survey	Antecedents of organizational commitment; work-life conflict	Antecedents of commitment differ between temporary and permanent organizations, with work-life conflict mediating	R
Sweis et al. (2017)	Project-based: building construction, Jordan	Survey; multiple regression	Acknowledgment of talent (ability, aspiration, engagement); effectiveness	Acknowledgment of team members' talent was significantly related to their effectiveness	TM
Tarnowska et al. (2024)	Remote and hybrid work models	Survey; n = 181	Engagement factors	Work-life balance, access to knowledge and a personalized environment mattered universally; other factors varied with the extent of remote work and team integration	E
Thomas et al. (2026)	Remote workers	Randomized controlled study; N = 87	Online job crafting self-training; work engagement; job boredom; remote performance	The intervention raised seeking of social resources and buffered seeking of challenge demands; no effect on reducing hindrance demands	A-E, E

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Thommes & Uitdewilligen (2019)	Project-based: temporary teams (laboratory)	Repeated-measures experiment; 40 teams	Swift trust; information processing; performance	Low swift trust increased elaborate information processing and performance on non-routine tasks; no effect on routine tasks (contrary finding)	M3
Uğural et al. (2020)	Project-based: construction professionals, Turkey	Survey with mediation analysis	Determinants of turnover intention	Project-based production increases vulnerability to voluntary turnover; key determinants identified	R
Wang et al. (2021)	Project-based: 269 leader-member dyads	Multisource time-lagged survey	Project leader workplace anxiety; job frustration; career adaptability; citizenship behavior	Leader anxiety lowered member citizenship behavior through job frustration and career adaptability	M2, A
Welch & Welch (2015)	Project-based: international project work	Two-phase interview study	Boundaryless career; career capital; project citizenship behavior	Loyalty ran to self, project and profession more than to the organization; career networks were critical	R
Yang et al. (2020)	Project-based: project team members	Survey; n = 200	Leader communication style; trust; work engagement; turnover intention	Assertive, clear and supportive communication raised trust; trust mediated effects on engagement and turnover intention	M2, M3, E-R
Yousef (2026)	Intersection: global virtual teams	Systematic review; 113 sources	Talent mobility; technology; culture; leadership	Global virtual teams positioned as a mechanism of virtual global mobility shaped by cultural diversity, technology and team structure	B, M2
Zaman et al. (2025)	Project-based organizations, Pakistan	Survey; n = 240	Role overload; positive affect; project commitment; project citizenship behavior	Role overload had a curvilinear relationship with project commitment and citizenship behavior, mediated by positive affect	R, B
Zhang & He (2016)	Project-based: integrated project teams, construction	Questionnaire survey with factor analysis; 31 candidate factors	Tacit knowledge sharing in integrated project teams	Critical factors affecting tacit knowledge sharing within integrated project teams identified and ranked	B
Zhang & Min (2021)	Project-based: new product development projects, China	Multi-source survey	Project manager knowledge hiding; stress; turnover intentions	Project manager knowledge hiding raised turnover intentions through challenge and hindrance stress	M2, R