

The role of gained trust: effects on intrinsic motivation, person-job fit and turnover intentions among real estate brokers

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to analyze if gained trust is intrinsically motivating and whether it is correlated to subjective person-job fit and occupational turnover intentions among Swedish real estate brokers.

Design/methodology/approach – The empirical data was gathered via a survey targeting all real estate brokers in Sweden and analyzed using structural equation modeling.

Findings – The results indicated that brokers are motivated by gained trust from their sellers and that gained trust is a vital part of person-job fit among brokers. In addition, the results show that higher levels of person-job fit reduce the occupational turnover intentions among brokers.

Research limitations/implications – Being a real estate broker in Sweden might differ from being a broker in many other otherwise comparable countries. Another limitation is the lack of measurements of job satisfaction and/or intrinsic motivation connected to other job characteristics besides customer relations and gained trust. The high mean values of person-job fit, and intrinsic motivation connected to gained trust from customers are contributing to a more nuanced description of brokerage.

Practical implications – This study gives insights about intrinsic motivation and its connection to person-job fit. Awareness of what drives brokers can be used by both workers and managers to reduce occupational turnover.

Originality/value – This study is interesting from a person-job fit theory advancement perspective since the focus is given to the connection between specific situational work characteristics and person-job fit.

Keywords Trust, Intrinsic motivation, Person-job fit, Occupational turnover, Real estate brokerage

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

In previous research, occupational turnover has been acknowledged as a perennial problem in the real estate brokerage industry (Ahlenius *et al.*, 2022; Lee *et al.*, 2014; Webb and Seiler, 2001),

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and previous studies indicate that occupational turnover could be explained by several factors, such as low income, odd working hours, high competition, lack of motivation and incorrect occupational expectations (Ahlenius and Kågström, 2023; Ingram and Yelowitz, 2019; Larsen and Coleman, 2003; Mosquera *et al.*, 2020; Snyder *et al.*, 2011). Some of these antecedents of turnover are more structural or contextual in nature, for example working odd hours and high competition. Whereas other antecedents, such as incorrect occupational expectations and motivation are more closely tied to the actions and perceptions of the individual real estate broker (broker).

Incorrect occupational expectations are problematic from the individual perspective as they could lead to less sustainable career choices. This is predominantly problematic in countries with high occupational thresholds like Sweden where becoming a real estate broker requires two, soon to be three years of university studies. Incorrect occupational expectations are based on perceptions of the occupation, which in turn are influenced by several sources, whereby media and research are two. In mainstream media, brokerage and real estate brokers are often portrayed as very successful, see for example Million-dollar Listing, Selling Sunset, and other popular TV shows (Koutroumanis, 2021; Sauter and Sauter, 2019; White, 2013). Furthermore, media and research also portray the occupation as one that you stay in for a limited period in your professional life, and as a profession with very high levels of employee turnover (Engström and Persson, 2020; Larsen and Coleman, 2003). Notice should be given that there are, besides the length of the education, national differences regarding what brokers are entitled and obligated to do. For example, Swedish brokers are personally responsible, entitled, and obligated to perform the entire real estate transaction including drafting and the signing of contracts whereas U.S. agents and brokers are not (Jingryd, 2012).

Regarding the connection between motivation and turnover, most previous studies conclude that brokers are primarily driven by extrinsic rewards (Bryson, 2017; Barrick *et al.*, 2002; Crant, 1995). However, more recent studies argue that there is a need for more motivational studies within brokerage as there are signs that intrinsic motivation could be equally or more important (Ahlenius and Kågström, 2023; Mosquera *et al.*, 2020; Pattanawit and Charoensukmongkol, 2022).

To find a job intrinsically motivating is closely connected to liking the job's key characteristics. One key characteristic of brokerage is establishing and maintaining positive long-lasting customer relations (Netemeyer *et al.*, 1997; Seiler *et al.*, 2006; Sok *et al.*, 2017; Yavas, 1994). It is notable, and somewhat counterintuitive, that a study conducted by Larsen and Coleman (2003) implies that brokers who are motivated by working with people are less likely to remain within the occupation. Nonetheless, previous studies within brokerage have concluded that customers prefer warmer relations with the service provider and that these relationships have a financial upside for the broker and the firm (Cater and Zabkar, 2009; Harris *et al.*, 2005; Love *et al.*, 2011; Salzman and Zwinkels, 2017). How brokers emotionally perceive customer relations has received far less attention and the results of the existing studies are inconclusive. On the one hand, Bryson (2017) argues that establishing and maintaining these necessary customer relations is draining. On the other hand, some scholars argue that customer relations might be intrinsically motivating (Ahlenius *et al.*, 2021; Ashford and Humphrey, 1993; Humphrey *et al.*, 2015). A vital part of relations is interpersonal trust and a recent study based on in-depth interviews with high-performing Swedish real estate brokers indicates that gaining trust from customers is an important motivational factor among brokers (Ahlenius *et al.*, 2021).

Thus, the present study draws on self-determination theory (SDT) and contributes to the extant literature on occupational expectations and sustainability of the real estate brokerage profession. More specifically, the study analyses the relationships between intrinsic motivation, person-job fit, and occupational turnover intentions, which echoes research proposals put forward by Mosquera *et al.* (2020), Ahlenius *et al.* (2021), Levine *et al.* (2019) and

[Safari and Albaum \(2019\)](#). This study contributes to the research field of brokerage with more knowledge about occupational expectations and sustainability in two main ways.

First, more knowledge about what motivates brokers can be used for a more accurate job description. This in turn leads to more correct and adequate occupational expectations, which in the long run ought to increase occupational sustainability.

Second, insights about if and how gained trust from customers in a professional service landscaped like brokerage affects person-job fit can be used by both managers and becoming brokers as a good person-job fit increases the occupational sustainability. This is of particular interest from a person-job fit theory advancement perspective since prior studies argue that there is a need to focus on the connection between specific situational work characteristics (e.g. interpersonal trust in service settings) and person-job fit ([Brkich et al., 2002](#)).

2. Theoretical framework

2.1 Intrinsic motivation

Self-determination theory (SDT) is based upon the assumption that people strive for the fulfillment of three basic psychological needs; autonomy, competence, and relatedness ([Deci and Ryan, 2000](#)). Furthermore, SDT distinguished between different types of motivation based upon which goal drives the action ([Deci and Ryan, 1985](#)). The most basic distinction is between intrinsic motivation, which refers to doing something because it is inherently interesting or enjoyable, and extrinsic motivation, which refers to doing something because it leads to a separable outcome ([Ryan and Deci, 2000](#)). Put differently, intrinsic motivation is driven by forces from within the person while extrinsic motivation is driven by outside forces ([Giancola, 2014](#)).

This study focuses on intrinsic motivation and fulfillment of the needs of competence and relatedness. Noteworthy is that intrinsic work-related motivation in quantitative studies within brokerage is often measured on a higher level of abstraction (e.g. [Mosquera et al., 2020](#)), which means that it becomes hard for scholars and practitioners alike to assess which job characteristics are connected (perceived as) to intrinsic motivation. In comparison, qualitative studies focusing on intrinsic motivation in the same setting can easier connect specific job characteristics and intrinsic motivation (e.g. [Ahlenius et al., 2021](#)), yet it comes at the expense of generalization. A way around this problem when conducting quantitative studies is to focus on the connection between a specific job characteristic and intrinsic motivation.

2.2 Interpersonal trust

An important characteristic of brokerage is customer interactions ([Seiler et al., 2006](#)). Some of these interactions intensify and grow into customer relationships between the seller/s and the broker. The starting point of these relationships based on mutual preferences and goals (e.g. to sell a home) is arguably bi-directional trust ([Guenzi and Georges, 2010](#); [Morgan and Hunt, 1994](#)), or at least perceived bi-directional trustworthiness. Bi-directional trust/perceived trustworthiness is theoretically assumed to exist in this study, as it is highly unlikely that sellers and/or brokers sign mutually obligating contracts without it ([Reiersen, 2019](#)).

However, seeing, and evaluating trust, as a bi-directional phenomenon with benefits and consequences for both parties in a setting like a brokerage is an under-researched area ([Levine et al., 2019](#); [Safari and Albaum, 2019](#)). There are studies in other occupational settings where interpersonal trust is found to be motivating. For example, a meta-study conducted by [Okello and Gilson \(2015\)](#) focusing on the relationship between trust and motivation among health workers shows that gained trust from patients was highly ranked as a source of motivation, rooted in appreciation, recognition, and respect, in several of the embedded

studies. Health work and brokerage are not the same, yet the occupations share the characteristics/need to get patients/sellers to trust the service provider.

Based upon the fact that brokerage demands trustworthiness and interpersonal trust reasoning, sellers are undoubtedly a valued group for brokers for several reasons. For example, seen from an SDT need-fulfillment perspective, (1) gained trust from customers is a sign and recognition of occupational competence given the competition between brokers, and (2) gained trust from customers is also a sign of appreciation and respect, which is connected to relatedness since relatedness goes beyond close personal relationships as it includes connection to other in one's social sphere, caring for others and having a sense of belonging to valued groups and/or organizations (Weinstein and De Haan, 2014). Hence, gaining trust from sellers may support the need for relatedness as well as the need for competence. This line of reasoning has some support in Okello and Gilson's, (2015) study since they argue that appreciation, recognition, and respect help fulfill the needs of competence and relatedness. One can therefore assume that being intrinsically motivated by gained trust from seller/s ought to increase person-job fit for several reasons which will be elaborated upon, below.

2.3 Person-job fit

Person-job fit incorporates both the congruence between what the job demands and workers' abilities, as well as between what a job supplies and the worker's needs (Cable and DeRue, 2002; Edwards, 1991). Furthermore, person-job fit is often seen as an antecedent of performance, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions (Caldwell and O'Reilly, 1990; Bretz and Judge, 1994; Steers and Mowday, 1981), and is used in a variety of occupational settings such as ballet dancers, high tech firm employees and office personnel (Lauver and Kristof-Brown, 2001; Lu *et al.*, 2014; Rodrigues *et al.*, 2020), yet very rarely within brokerage. The lack of studies is interesting, as brokers work independently and perform their tasks among customers without colleagues or managerial supervision (Love *et al.*, 2011; Snyder *et al.*, 2011). Thus, the person-job fit perspective is arguably more useful compared to person-group/organization fit. The need facet of person-job fit is particularly interesting as prior studies within brokerage show that fulfillment of needs is connected to intrinsic motivation, which increases job satisfaction and, in the end, reduces intentions to quit (Ahlenius and Kågström, 2023; Mosquera *et al.*, 2020).

To be sustainable within the brokerage, a broker needs to be able to gain interpersonal trust. Brokers who are better at gaining trust are therefore more suited for brokerage since the connection between job demands and workers' abilities is more aligned. However, obtaining and maintaining trust from sellers might be perceived as a negative demand or aspect of brokerage, yet it might also be perceived as something fun and rewarding that the job supplies. The difference between these perceptions is closely tied to the individual and results in either a bad or a good fit between the worker's needs and what the job supplies. To elaborate from an intrinsic motivational perspective, a broker who is good at gaining trust yet does not find it interesting or fun will display a good demand-ability fit, yet a bad supply-need fit, given the lack of intrinsic motivation. Whereas a broker who is good at gaining trust and finds it interesting and fun will display a good demand-ability and a good supply-need fit. One can therefore argue that brokers who are driven by gained trust ought to display higher overall person-job fit compared to brokers who are not driven by gained trust as intrinsic motivation increases both the congruence between demand and abilities as well as the congruence between supply and demand. Based on the preceding discussion, the following hypothesis is developed:

H1. Intrinsic motivation derived from gained trust is positively related to person-job fit.

2.4 Occupational turnover

Person-job fit has been used in various occupational settings emphasizing employee turnover, for instance: bankers, accountants, therapists, and call-center workers (Brkich *et al.*, 2002). However, the person-job fit theory has not been commonly used in prior studies among real estate brokers. Some studies have been conducted that have given focus to some of the person-job fit's four facets, i.e. demands, abilities, supplies, and needs. For instance, *demands* are explored by Dabholkar and Overby (2005) and Ferreira *et al.* (2017), *abilities* are explored by Crant (1995) and Benites-Gambirazio (2020), *needs* are explored by Mosquera *et al.* (2020) and Lee *et al.* (2014), *supplies* have been analyzed by Sok *et al.* (2017), yet supplies are primarily analyzed looking at the monetary or salary dimensions (Munneke and Yavas, 2001; Crant, 1995). However, there are no prior studies conducted within the brokerage that have used all facets of person-job fit when addressing occupational turnover. This is interesting as turnover is acknowledged as problematic and scholars argue that person-job fit is a crucial variable that needs to be investigated in the brokerage context because of the nature of the tasks, which are complex, demanding, and stressful, and can easily lead brokers to feel that they do not fit with the job (Pattanawit and Charoensukmongkol, 2022). Based on the preceding discussion, the following hypothesis is developed:

H2. Person-job fit is negatively related to intentions to leave the occupation.

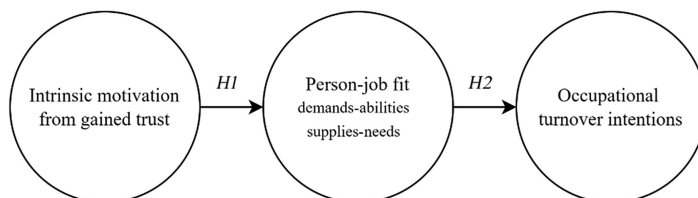
Figure 1 presents the conceptual model of this study, which incorporates our research hypotheses. Our model is based on the self-determination theory and person-job fit theory. According to these theories, intrinsic motivation connected to a specific job demand increases the alignment between what the job demands and the worker's abilities.

Furthermore, higher needs fulfillment of competence and relatedness consequential to being intrinsically motivated by gained trust increases the congruence between what the work supplies and the worker's needs. Thus, increased levels of person-job fit will reduce the worker's intention to leave the occupation.

3. Method

3.1 Measurements

The data in this study was collected as part of a large omnibus survey targeting Swedish real estate brokers. For this paper, not all gathered information was used. The first section of the questionnaire focuses on different background characteristics including gender. The fourth section consists of 7 questions about being intrinsically motivated by gaining trust from sellers. These questions are based upon self-determination theory, more precisely the 7 questions that make up the *interest, enjoyment subscale*, which is part of the Intrinsic Motivation Inventory (McAuley *et al.*, 1989). These questions were altered to fit the brokerage setting and the purpose of the study. For example, the first statement was: "I enjoy doing this activity very much", was altered to: "I enjoy receiving trust from my seller/s very much". The fifth section consists of 9 questions about person-job fit that originate from Brkich *et al.* (2002).



Source(s): Figure by authors

Figure 1.
Conceptual model of
the study

Occupational turnover intention is measured with one question (I am often considering changing occupation) with a 5-point Likert scale, whereas gained trust and person-job fit was measured with a 0–100 scale. All questions were transcribed to Swedish and then transcribed back to English to ensure validity. The relevant part of the questionnaire can be found in [Appendix](#).

Most prior studies conducted in the research field of brokerage are quantitative ([Ahlenius, 2022](#)). Given the prior mentioned indication that Swedish brokers might be driven by gained trust and the common use of quantitative methods in the research field provides the underpinning for choosing a quantitative method. Hence, this study uses a quantitative method and analyses a conceptual framework, and tests the hypothesis by using the statistical software programs JASP and PLS-SEM. SmartPLS (PLS-SEM) was used, rigorously selected for its ability to test complex relationships between trust, person-job fit, and occupational turnover, while ensuring robustness against multicollinearity. More precise, [Hair et al. \(2019a, b\)](#) argues that researchers should select PLS-SEM when (1) the analysis is concerned with testing and extending a theoretical framework from a prediction perspective, (2) when the path model includes one or more formatively measured constructs, (3) when distribution issues are a concern, such as lack of normality, and (4) PLS-SEM offers solutions with small sample sizes. All these scenarios exist in this study. To elaborate, to be driven by gained trust is assumed to predict person-job fit and occupational turnover, gained trust and person-job fit are formatively measured constructs, prior studies conducted among Swedish brokers have shown that data is not normally distributed (e.g. [Ahlenius and Kågström, 2023](#)), and the sample size is small. The enabling of a prediction perspective is extra interesting for this study as [Hair et al. \(2019b\)](#) argue that the technique overcomes the apparent dichotomy between explanation – as typically emphasized in academic research – and prediction, which is the basis for developing managerial implications.

3.2 Sample

All Swedish brokers are registered by the governmental agency the Swedish Real Estate Broker Inspectorate (Inspectorate). The population of brokers in Sweden, at the time of questionnaire distribution was 3,440 women and 4,053 men, a total of 7,493 brokers ([Inspectorate, 2021](#)). The sample is to be seen as a convenience sample since the four brokerage organizations that are approached with this survey are the same organizations that have participated in previous surveys [1] sent out by the University of Gävle. The questionnaire reached 1,688 brokers which resulted in a usable sample of 397 respondents, out of which 208 were women and 191 were men. The representativity of the collected data is inferred from the descriptive data matching overall demographics, and the usable sample also exceeds the minimum level (370) stipulated for the population in [Krejcie and Morgan \(1970\)](#).

4. Results and discussion

4.1 Descriptive statistics

The average participant in the survey was 40 years of age, with a range from 21 to 72 years of age. Furthermore, the average respondent had been working as a realtor is 9 years, and the average number of sold units is 2,7 per month. We can also infer that the average work week is 44,3 h among the respondents of the survey (see [Appendix](#) for further information).

Since this study explores and analyzes previously partially untested connections, correlations, and mean values are of interest. There are significant correlations between person-job fit (PJ-Fit) and being intrinsically motivated by trust (Trust) ($0.297^{***} p < 0.001$) besides between person-job fit and occupational turnover intentions (OTI)

($-0.677^{***}p < 0.001$). The high mean values in combination with low deviations, regardless of gender, as presented in Table 1, point to brokers as a group being rather homogenous as previously mentioned. It is noteworthy that there are gender differences; however, the differences are not statistically significant.

Regarding motivation, the high mean values of being intrinsically motivated by gained trust is also an indication that Swedish brokers in general are driven by gained trust, see Table 1. On the one hand, the above corroborates a prior study within Swedish brokerage and therefore strengthens the indication (Ahlenius *et al.*, 2021). On the other hand, the high mean values of being intrinsically motivated by trust are not in line with the argumentation and results in prior studies conducted in other national settings (Barrick *et al.*, 2002; Bryson, 2017).

Furthermore, there are similarities between brokers and health workers since this study is in line with the results of Okello and Gilson (2015). This is interesting since it shows that brokers are not only driven by money as argued in several prior studies and media (Barrick *et al.*, 2002; Koutroumanis, 2021; Sauter and Sauter, 2019), but brokers are also driven by gained trust which is similar to health workers.

Regarding the PJ-Fit, the high mean values are interesting and allow for an interesting analysis. The high mean values might be seen as contra-intuitive since occupational turnover is seen as problematic (Ahlenius *et al.*, 2022). However, it might also be a sign of low self-awareness, which has been mentioned in prior studies (Ingram and Yelowitz, 2019). Furthermore, it is plausible that the high threshold for becoming a broker in Sweden increases the PJ-Fit by increasing the students' abilities and making the occupational expectations more realistic, as both low abilities and unrealistic occupational expectations have been described as problematic in prior studies conducted in other national settings (Ingram and Yelowitz, 2019; Larsen and Coleman, 2003).

Regarding occupational turnover intentions, the low mean values are to be expected given the high mean values of PJ-Fit. Still, it allows for some analysis, the high levels of PJ-Fit could be inflated as a prior study on the same population showed that 30% of all brokers leave the profession within three years (Ahlenius *et al.*, 2022). This would be likely to leave only the most highly motivated brokers, with the highest PJ-Fit scores in the occupation.

	Trust		PJ-Fit		OTI	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Valid	144	150	133	140	144	148
Missing	15	14	26	24	15	16
Mean	84.916	86.728	80.263	77.308	1.993	2.236
Std. deviation	12.786	13.045	17.765	19.335	1.054	1.192
Skewness	-0.819	-0.919	-0.805	-0.774	0.776	0.509
Std. Error of Skewness	0.202	0.198	0.210	0.205	0.202	0.199
Kurtosis	-0.019	0.016	-0.429	-0.280	-0.194	-0.854
Std. error of Kurtosis	0.401	0.394	0.417	0.407	0.401	0.396
Shapiro-Wilk	0.921	0.886	0.897	0.916	0.824	0.853
<i>p</i> -value of Shapiro-Wilk	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001
Minimum	46.129	48.457	32.322	23.033	1.000	1.000
Maximum	100.000	100.000	100.000	100.000	5.000	5.000

Note(s): Excluded 74 rows from the analysis that corresponds to the missing values of the split-by-variable gender

Source(s): Table by authors

Table 1.
Descriptive statistics

4.2 Construct reliability and validity

From the quantitative analysis, it can be concluded that both constructs surpassed the recommended threshold of 0.7 for loadings and CR (see Table 2), indicating robust measurement properties (Hair et al., 2017, 2019a).

The heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) matrix suggested strong discriminant validity between the constructs, see Table 3. The HTMT value between PJ-Fit and Trust was 0.168, well below the commonly accepted threshold of 0.85, confirming their distinctness (Hair et al., 2017, 2019a).

As previous research has indicated that multicollinearity can be a problem, Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values were assessed to check for multicollinearity among predictors (Hair et al., 2017, 2019a). All VIF values were below the critical threshold of 5, indicating that multicollinearity was not a concern in this analysis. For further information see Appendix.

4.3 Model fit

A SmartPLS SEM analysis was conducted to examine the relationships among intrinsic motivation derived from the gained trust, person-job fit, and occupational turnover intentions (Hair et al., 2017, 2019a). This model evaluates if Trust significantly affects PJ-Fit, and whether PJ-Fit in turn significantly affects OTI among respondents. Four variables (PJ-Fit 1 = 0.685, PJ-Fit 8 = 0.637, Trust 5 = 0.0539, and Trust 7 = 0.672) were removed before the final analysis due to unsatisfactory outer loadings, see Appendix for further information.

Regarding the model selection criteria. The Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC) values for the constructs were, PJ-Fit: -43.575 respectively Exit: -213.874. Since SmartPLS SEM only calculates BIC values for construct “downstream” Trust is not displayed since it is the first construct in the model. These BIC values suggest that the model provides a suitable fit to the data for both the “PJ-Fit” and “OTI” constructs (Hair et al., 2017, 2019a).

The results show that Trust does indeed significantly and positively affect Person-Job fit ($B = 0.360$ $t = 6.987$, $p < 0.001$) and that Person-Job fit in turn significantly and negatively affects turnover intentions ($B = -0.661$ $t = 19.779$, $p < 0.001$), see Table 4. Thus, hypotheses H1 and H2 were supported. Furthermore, the f^2 effect sizes were, PJ-Fit: 0.774 (large effect), respectively Trust: 0.149 (small to medium effect). These sizes align with the recommendations of Hair et al. (2017, 2019a).

Regarding the effect size Trust has on PJ-Fit (H1), to be driven by gained trust from sellers is a vital part of PJ-Fit within the brokerage. To elaborate, positive and long-lasting customer

Table 2.
Construct reliability
and validity

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composity reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
PJ-Fit	0.9	0.908	0.921	0.626
Trust	0.839	0.847	0.885	0.607

Source(s): Table by authors

Table 3.
Discriminant validity –
heterotrait-monotrait
ration HTMT matrix

	OTI	PJ-Fit	Trust
OTI			
PJ-Fit	0.693		
Trust	0.168	0.401	

Source(s): Table by authors

relationships are a demand for occupational persistence (Seiler *et al.*, 2006). Hence, brokers who like to work with people and who thrive from gained trust are more likely to enjoy brokerage and display a higher PJ-Fit since prior studies argue that customer prefers warmer, more emphatic brokers (cf. Salzman and Zwinkels, 2017). Put differently, the occupational demands align with the worker's abilities. The result of this study is therefore not in line with Larsen and Coleman's (2003) study as that study indicates that brokers who are driven by working with people are more likely to quit. The divergence between these studies is interesting as it seems highly unlikely that brokers who are driven by gained trust and therefore display a higher person-job fit and lower occupational turnover are not motivated by working with people.

Noteworthy is that satisfaction of employees' needs is measured as part of PJ-Fit in this study. This means that the positive connection between Trust and PJ-Fit strengthens the prior argumentation that gaining trust from sellers might help to fulfill the basic psychological needs of competence and relatedness. This is in line with prior studies conducted among health workers (Okello and Gilson, 2015). Put differently, what the occupation supplies, aligns with the worker's needs.

Regarding the effect size PJ-Fit has on OTI (H2), person-job fit is a vital part of what affects turnover intentions. This is in line with prior studies in other occupational settings (Brkich *et al.*, 2002; Steers and Mowday, 1981). One reason why the effect size between PJ-Fit and OTI is large in the brokerage setting is some of the characteristics of brokerage, namely independent work and low managerial supervision when interacting with customers (Love *et al.*, 2011; Snyder *et al.*, 2011).

While factors such as market dynamics and demographic variations among brokers could influence our findings, their impact is mitigated by the robustness of our SEM model and the broad representativeness of our sample.

The model fit metrics revealed a close alignment between the saturated and estimated models, supporting the model's adequacy. Specifically, the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) was 0.081 for the estimated model compared to 0.080 for the saturated model (see Table 5). To further corroborate the model fit a boot-strap test for the exact overall model fit was done (see Table 5), resulting in an unweighted least squares discrepancy (d_{ULS}) of 0.599 for the estimated versus 0.578 for the saturated model (Hair *et al.*, 2019a).

In addition, a permutation multigroup analysis was conducted to further determine if there were any significant differences between men and women in the sample. None of the

Hypothesis	Beta	Standard deviation	T statistics	p values
Trust → PJ-Fit	0.360	0.052	6.987	<0.001
PJ-Fit → OTI	-0.661	0.033	19.779	<0.001

Source(s): Table by authors

Table 4.
Results from the hypothesis testing

	Saturated model	Estimated model
SRMR	0.080	0.081
d_{ULS}	0.578	0.599
d_G	0.264	0.268
Chi-square	596.428	603.25
NFI	0.796	0.793

Source(s): Table by authors

Table 5.
Model fit

differences in path coefficients are significant. Thus, the differences between the sexes in this respect and sample are not significant.

5. Conclusions

The purpose of this study is to explore if gaining trust from customers is intrinsically motivating and if it is associated with person-job fit and occupational turnover intentions among Swedish real estate brokers. This study clearly shows that brokers are intrinsically motivated by gaining trust. To be intrinsically motivated by the gained trust is a vital part of person-job fit, which in turn strongly reduces the intentions to leave the occupation. This study contributes to, the research field of trust, the advancement of person-job fit theory, and the research and practical field of real estate brokerage, which will be elaborated on below.

This study provides insights into the perception and effect of interpersonal trust from the under-researched perspective of the service provider. The results can be used in future comparative studies emphasizing interpersonal trust within brokerage, or other professional service settings. This study also contributes to the advancement of the person-job fit theory by extending the validity of previous findings from other occupations and settings. This is done by showing that the specific work characteristics of interpersonal trust are a vital part of person-job fit in a professional service setting. This highlights the need to focus on the connection between specific situational work characteristics and person-job fit, as put forth by [Brkich et al. \(2002\)](#). Furthermore, it is plausible that other types of professional service providers such as lawyers and private bankers are also driven by gained trust from customers. This leads to the conclusion that it is also plausible that being driven by gained trust affects person-job fit and so forth in other occupational settings.

This study has also contributed to the research field of real estate brokerage in two main ways.

First, by echoing the research proposals of [Mosquera et al. \(2020\)](#) as well as [Pattanawit and Charoensukmongkol \(2022\)](#), this study contributes to the field through further insight about the consistence and effect of intrinsic motivation. This is also important from a management perspective.

Second, this study also contributes to the research field of brokerage by introducing all facets of person-job fit besides how person-job fit affects occupational turnover intentions. The large effect size between person-job fit and occupational turnover intentions in this study indicates that future studies emphasizing occupational turnover would benefit from giving person-job fit notice. The large effect size is likewise noteworthy for managers.

The result of this study provides insights that can be used by managers when screening new brokers as well as when managing existing brokers, regardless of the national setting. For example, given that the occupation demands the ability to gain sellers' trust then brokers who are better and foremost driven by gaining trust are more likely to perform well and less likely to leave the profession. This has a bearing on potential brokers as well when persons are trying to evaluate whether brokerage is a suitable occupation for them. One can arguably learn how to gain trust. However, it is far harder, and it can reasonably be debated if it is even possible, to "learn" how to be intrinsically motivated by gained trust. This is noteworthy as intrinsic motivation connected to interpersonal trust might help fulfill the psychological need for competence and relatedness and vice versa. It is a simplification, yet in business settings depending on interpersonal trust one might wonder if it is not easier from a managerial perspective to learn a "people person" to sell, compared to learning a salesperson to like people.

Another example, this study provides further insights about what (gained trust) is intrinsically motivating for brokers. More knowledge about what motivates existing brokers can be used to improve the description of what the occupation supplies. Put differently, it can

improve the job description which in turn ought to make the occupational expectations more in line with reality.

The results of this study are generalizable to Swedish brokers. However, given that all brokers need to gain trust and the positive effect of intrinsic motivation and person-job, the result of this study is important for all becoming brokers, managers, and educators regardless of national setting.

This study has some limitations. The first one concerns the setting. Being a real estate broker in Sweden differs from being a broker in many other otherwise comparable countries as previously touched upon. This might explain the large effect size between person-job fit and occupational turnover intentions, as well as why the results of this study contradict prior studies.

Another limitation is the lack of measurements of job satisfaction and/or intrinsic motivation connected to other job characteristics besides customer relations and gained trust. The usage of other motivational measures is beneficial for several reasons, (1) it improves the overall understanding of what motivates brokers and, (2) it can be used to explore the hierarchy between different motivational aspects. The usage of job satisfaction in future studies is valuable as it provides a possible mediating link between job characteristics and person-job fit.

Notes

- ¹ The brokerage life, which is a larger/omnibus survey conducted yearly among Swedish broker since 2019.

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Further reading

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Appendix

A five-point Likert scale was used, where (1) corresponds to "totally disagree" and (5) to "totally agree" when measuring occupational turnover intention, whereas gained trust and person-job fit was measured with a 0–100 scale.

Part 1. I define myself as a woman, man, other/neither, do not want to state.

Part 4. Intrinsic motivation is derived from the gained trust. (1) While working, I was thinking about how much I enjoy receiving customers' trust, (2) I would describe receiving customers' trust as very nice,

(3) Receiving customers trust is fun, (4) It is enjoyable to receive customers' trust, (5) I think receiving customers trust is a boring activity, (6) To receive customers trust is not interesting, (7) I think receiving customers trust is very interesting.

Part 5. Person-job fit. (1) My current job is not really me, (2) This job is not really what I would like to be doing, (3) All things considered, this job suits me, (4) I feel like this is not the right type of work for me, (5) I feel that my goals and needs are met in this job, (6) I find my current job motivating, (7) My abilities, skills, and talents are the right type for this job, (8) I'm sure there must be another job for which I am better suited, (9) I am able to use my talents, skills, and competencies in my current job. Occupational turnover intention. (1) I am often considering changing occupation.

	Age	Time as a broker	Sold objects	Workweek
Valid	320	317	316	318
Missing	77	80	81	79
Median	39.00	3.000	2.000	3.000
Mean	40.116	2.896	25.28	27.74
Std. deviation	11.877	1.899	1.890	1.538
Skewness	0.331	-0.210	0.335	0.254
Std. error of skewness	0.136	0.137	0.137	0.137
Kurtosis	-0.898	-1.527	-0.859	-0.535
Std. error of Kurtosis	0.272	0.273	0.273	0.273
Shapiro-Wilk	0.957	0.842	0.918	0.947
<i>p</i> -value of Shapiro-Wilk	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001
Minimum	21	0.000	0.000	0.000
Maximum	72.00	5.000	6.000	6.000

Source(s): Table by authors

Table A1.
Descriptive statistics

(VIF)

Exit-AlwaysNev	1.000
PJ2-DntWantREV	2.069
PJ3-Suitsme	2.306
PJ4-NtRightTypeREV	2.067
PJ5-GoalsNeedMeet	2.778
PJ6-Motivating	3.424
PJ7-AsTareRight	2.685
PJ9-UseTCS	2.746
T1-TrustFindNice	1.732
T2-TrustInteresting	2.498
T3-TrustFun	1.742
T4-TrustNice	1.846
T6-TrustExpNice	2.397

Source(s): Table by authors

Table A2.
Collinearity
statistics (VIF)

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