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The Role of Intentional Growth Training Intervention in The Relationship Between Personal Growth Initiative with Work Engagement at PT X

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Abstract: Work engagement is one of crucial factor in organizational effectiveness initiative, however, it not yet satisfactory at PT X, a market research company, whose usually requires employees to persistently update their knowledge and work practices. Based on 2025's internal survey data, it revealed a work engagement score of 3.86, below the threshold showing high engagement. This research was designed in two studies. Study 1 targeted to examine the relationship between personal growth initiative (PGI) and work engagement through a correlational approach which invited 80 employees of PT X to participate, using the PGIS-II and UWES-9 instruments. However, study 2 focused on to test the effectiveness of the Intentional Growth Training (IGT) program in improving PGI and work engagement among employees with low PGI scores, using a quasi-experimental design with a control group. Study 1 revealed a significant relationship between PGI and work engagement ($r = 0.807$, $p < .001$), with PGI describing 65.1% of the work engagement's variance ($R^2 = 0.651$). Results of Study 2 validated that the IGT program significantly improved PGI score (Cohen's $d = 2.05$, $p < .001$) and work engagement (Cohen's $d = 1.52$, $p = .002$) in the intervention group, with improvements significantly higher than the control group (Cohen's $d = 2.85$ for PGI; Cohen's $d = 2.08$ for work engagement). These findings provide empirical support for the relevance of PGI as a predictor of work engagement in market research company, while demonstrating the effectiveness of IGT as a short program but powerful human resource development intervention.

Keyword: Personal Growth Initiative, Work Engagement, Intentional Growth Training, Market Research.

INTRODUCTION

Work engagement has been consistently acknowledged as a crucial factor of individual and organizational effectiveness. Schaufeli et al. (2002) explained work engagement as a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind marked by vigor, dedication, and absorption. methodologies are evolving rapidly, especially in knowledge-intensive industries such as market research. Client needs shift rapidly, and the value of insights depends on employees' ability to consistently renew their knowledge and adapt their working practices, high work engagement is not just an advantage but an essential operational need (Yallop et al., 2022; Demerouti & Bakker, 2022).

PT X, a market research company, confronts a paradox issue related to these demands. Internal employee satisfaction survey data from 2025 indicated a work engagement score of 3.86, below the threshold indicating high work engagement (Alhaqqas & Sulaiman, 2024; Özpehlivan & Acar, 2016). What makes this condition unusual is that it occurs in spite of the organization providing comprehensive development facilities, including training programs, professional certifications, and also scholarships. However, of 80 active employees, only 24 used these facilities in the past year, and participation patterns also repeatedly around the same group of employees. In an industry that requires continuous knowledge renewal, employees at PT X demonstrated low initiative to actively develop themselves, a condition that appears to align with their low work engagement levels (Demerouti & Bakker, 2022).

Initial observation and exploratory assessment at PT X indicated three conditions that simultaneously explain this pattern. First, some employees had limited knowledge of how to pursue personal development in directed way. Second, employees in certain positions facing excessive workloads, that resulted insufficient energy and time to engage in developme nt activities. Third, the directive nature of supervision had limited employees' initiative, making them always waiting instruction before taking any steps including development related activities. Together, these conditions point to a consistent picture: employees who have not developed the habit of directing their own growth, even when opportunities around them.

It is important to note that factors such as workload and directive working patterns are external factors are beyond individual control and are difficult to change immediately. They are recognized here not as variables under study, but as contextual factors that highlight why an individual-level intervention is the most relevant approach. Within the framework of Self-Determination Theory (SDT), environments that do not support autonomy can impede the fulfillment of basic psychological needs; however, individuals can still be equipped with skills and awareness to actively manage their own growth (Deci et al., 2017; Van den Broeck et al., 2016). This reasoning directs the focus of this research toward personal growth initiative (PGI) as the central variable to be understood and enhanced.

PGI is defined as the active and intentional involvement of individuals in their personal growth process (Robitschek, 1998), comprising four dimensions: readiness for change, planfulness, using resources, and intentional behavior (Robitschek et al., 2012). The relevance of PGI to work engagement can be understood through SDT: individuals with high PGI tend to have a more autonomous motivational orientation, naturally activating their basic psychological needs, autonomy, competence, and relatedness, whose fulfillment drives high-quality motivation and optimal work engagement (Deci et al., 2017; Van den Broeck et al., 2016; Slemp et al., 2018). This positive relationship has been confirmed empirically across organizational contexts (Gong et al., 2022; Srivastava & Bajpai, 2021).

Based on these conditions, this research was designed in two studies. Study 1 examined the correlational relationship between PGI and work engagement across all employees of PT

X. Study 2 tested the effectiveness of Intentional Growth Training (IGT) a structured program specifically designed to build PGI through conceptual understanding, personal reflection, and structured action planning (Thoen & Robitschek, 2013) in improving PGI and work engagement among employees with low PGI scores.

METHOD

Study 1: Correlational Design

Study 1 used a quantitative correlational design to examine the relationship between PGI and work engagement among all 80 active employees of PT X using total sampling. PGI was measured using the Indonesian-adapted PGIS-II (Robitschek et al., 2012; $\alpha = 0.932$), a 16-item scale with a 6-point Likert format. Work engagement was measured using the Indonesian-adapted UWES-9 (Schaufeli et al., 2006; Kristiana et al., 2018; $\alpha = 0.837$), a 9-item scale with a 7-point Likert format. Data were collected via Google Form and analyzed using Spearman correlation and simple linear regression.

Study 2: Quasi-Experimental Design

Study 2 used a quasi-experimental design with a non-equivalent control group. Participants were employees of PT X with PGI scores below the 25th percentile (P25) based on Study 1 pretest results. Of 23 employees meeting this criterion, 9 who consented to participate formed the intervention group, while 9 employees formed the control group. Group assignment was based on voluntary consent rather than randomization; accordingly, this design is classified as quasi-experimental with a non-equivalent control group (Schweizer et al., 2016). The intervention group participated in a 7-day hybrid IGT program, while the control group continued regular work activities without receiving IGT. Effectiveness was evaluated using paired samples t-test within each group and independent samples t-test on change scores between groups. Program evaluation followed Kirkpatrick's model through Level 3 (Behavior).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Study 1: Relationship Between PGI and Work Engagement

This section presents the findings of Study 1, which aimed to examine the relationship between personal growth initiative and work engagement among employees of PT X. Prior to hypothesis testing, a descriptive analysis was conducted to provide an overview of participant characteristics and data distribution. The demographic profile of Study 1 participants is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Study 1 Participants (N = 80)

Characteristics	Category	Frequency	%
Gender	Male	34	43
	Female	46	57
Last education	Master (S2)	5	6
	Bachelor degree)	62	77
	Diploma (D3)	2	3
	Senior High School	11	14
Years of service	< 3 Months	7	9
	3 – 6 Months	19	24
	6 – 12 Months	13	16
	1 – 3 Years	25	31
	> 3 Years	16	20

Source: Research Data (2026)

As shown in Table 1, the majority of participants were female (57%) and held a Bachelor's degree (77%). The largest tenure group was 1–3 years (31%), followed by 3–6 months (24%). This distribution reflects the actual workforce composition of PT X as a market research company, where the majority of operational roles are filled by relatively recent graduates. The diversity of tenure groups is noteworthy, as it suggests that low personal growth initiative is not confined to new employees but appears to be a pattern across varying levels of work experience, a finding that strengthens the case for an organization-wide approach to PGI development (Chaudhary & Rangnekar, 2017).

Following the descriptive analysis, hypothesis testing was conducted using Pearson correlation and simple linear regression to examine the direction, strength, and predictive contribution of PGI toward work engagement. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Correlation and Regression Results: PGI and Work Engagement

Model	R	R^2	F	df1	df2	P
1	0.80	0.65	145	1	78	< .001
Intercept		7.42	3.15	2.35		0.02
Personal Growth Initiative (PGI)		0.49	0.04	12.05		< .001

Source: Processed by the authors (2026)

Results of Study 1 revealed a strong and significant positive relationship between PGI and work engagement ($r = 0.807$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.713; 0.872]), with PGI explaining 65.1% of the variance in work engagement ($R^2 = 0.651$). H1 is therefore accepted. This finding is consistent with previous empirical studies conducted in organizational contexts (Gong et al., 2022; Srivastava & Bajpai, 2021).

This finding can be understood through the SDT framework. Individuals with high PGI tend to have a more autonomous motivational orientation, they act based on personal interests and values rather than external pressures (Gong et al., 2022; Srivastava & Bajpai, 2021). This autonomous orientation supports the fulfillment of the three basic psychological needs in SDT: autonomy (self-directed growth), competence (mastery from development activities), and relatedness (connecting growth to work context). The fulfillment of these needs, as demonstrated in a meta-analysis of 72 studies involving 32,870 participants (Slemp et al., 2018), consistently predicts positive outcomes including work engagement. Van den Broeck et al. (2016), in their review of 99 studies, further confirmed that basic psychological needs satisfaction uniquely and consistently predicts psychological growth, motivation internalization, and individual well-being. In the PT X context, where the nature of market research work demands continuous knowledge renewal, PGI emerges as a strategically critical internal resource that directly supports employee engagement.

Study 2: Effectiveness of Intentional Growth Training

This section presents the findings of Study 2, which aimed to test the effectiveness of the IGT program in improving PGI and work engagement among employees with low PGI scores. Prior to presenting the intervention outcomes, a brief overview of the program procedure and participant characteristics is provided to establish the context for interpreting the results.

The IGT program was conducted over 7 days in a hybrid format. Day 1 (May 22, 2026) consisted of an offline orientation session covering PGI concepts aligned with the IGT manual (Thoen & Robitschek, 2013), personal reflection activities, and action plan development. Days 2–6 (May 23–27, 2026) involved independent practice through daily challenge execution and worksheet completion. Day 7 (May 28, 2026) consisted of a final reflection session, behavioral

evidence collection, and posttest administration. Of 23 employees with PGI scores below P25, 9 consented to participate in the IGT program and formed the intervention group, while 9 employees formed the control group who continued regular work activities without receiving IGT. Table 3 presents the pretest score comparison between groups prior to the intervention.

Table 3. Descriptive Data and Normality Test: Intervention Group

Variable	Mean Pre-Test	Mean Post-Test	p-value Shapiro-Wilk
Personal Growth Initiative	41.8	82.7	>.05
Work Engagement	24.8	50.1	>.05

Source: Research Data (2026)

As shown in Table 3, both PGI and work engagement scores showed substantial descriptive increases from pretest to posttest in the intervention group. The Shapiro-Wilk normality test indicated that the difference scores for both variables were normally distributed ($p > .05$), confirming that parametric analysis using paired samples t-test was appropriate for both variables. Additionally, a baseline difference existed between the two groups prior to intervention, with the control group showing higher pretest scores on both PGI ($M = 60.9$) and work engagement ($M = 41.2$). This difference is an expected consequence of the quasi-experimental design where assignment was based on voluntary consent rather than randomization (Schweizer et al., 2016). To account for this, the primary effectiveness analysis used change scores (posttest minus pretest) to enable a more valid comparison of intervention impact between groups. The within-group changes for the intervention group are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Paired Samples T-Test Results: Intervention Group (N = 9)

Variable	Stat	df	p		Effect Size
Personal Growth Initiative	Student's t = -6.16	8	<.05	Cohen's d	-2.05
Work Engagement	Student's t = -4.57	8	<.05	Cohen's d	-1.52

Source: Research Data (2026)

PGI scores in the intervention group increased significantly from 41.8 to 82.7 ($t(8) = -6.16$, $p < .001$, Cohen's $d = -2.05$), and work engagement scores increased significantly from 24.8 to 50.1 ($t(8) = -4.57$, $p = .002$, Cohen's $d = -1.52$). Both Cohen's d values indicate very large effects, confirming that changes were not only statistically significant but also practically meaningful. To determine whether these improvements occurred naturally without intervention, the control group's scores were also examined, as presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Paired Samples T-Test Results: Control Group (N = 9)

Variable	Stat	df	p		Effect Size
Personal Growth Initiative	Student's t = -1.14	8	.273	Cohen's d	-.306
Work Engagement	Student's t = -2.75	8	.017	Cohen's d	-.734

Source: Research Data (2026)

In the control group, PGI showed no significant change ($p = .273$), indicating that personal growth initiative remained stable without intervention over the 7-day period. Work engagement showed a small but statistically significant increase ($p = .017$, Cohen's $d = -0.734$), likely attributable to a placebo effect: employees who knew they were part of a study may have

developed positive expectations that produced a modest measurable change independent of any active treatment (Zhou et al., 2019; Schwarz et al., 2016). This interpretation is consistent with field observations during posttest administration, where most control group members expressed awareness of being monitored. To directly compare the magnitude of change between the two groups, an independent samples t-test on change scores was conducted, as presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Independent Samples T-Test: Change Score Comparison Between Groups

Variable	Mean Intervention	Mean Control	t	p	Cohen's d
Personal Growth Initiative	40.9	.571	6.05	< .001	2.85
Work Engagement	25.3	.857	4.41	.002	2.08

Source: Research Data (2026)

The change in PGI scores in the intervention group was significantly greater than in the control group ($t = 6.05$, $p < .001$, Cohen's $d = 2.85$). Similarly, the change in work engagement was significantly greater in the intervention group ($t = 4.41$, $p = .002$, Cohen's $d = 2.08$). Cohen's d values exceeding 2.00 on both variables indicate an extraordinarily large effect, far surpassing the large effect threshold of 0.80 (Cohen, 1988). H2 is therefore accepted.

Program evaluation following Kirkpatrick's model confirmed these findings across three levels. At Level 1 (Reaction), all intervention participants rated the material as relevant and the hybrid format as comfortable and compatible with their work demands. At Level 2 (Learning), significant improvements in both PGI and work engagement were confirmed statistically, as reported above. At Level 3 (Behavior), evidence collected on Day 7 showed all nine participants consistently executed their self-designed growth challenges throughout Days 2–6, demonstrating clear alignment with the intentional behavior and using resources dimensions of IGT. This indicates that conceptual learning from Day 1 was successfully translated into concrete action during the independent practice period. These findings extend Thoen and Robitschek (2013) by replicating IGT's effectiveness in a professional organizational context rather than among university students, an important contribution given that the majority of PGI-related intervention research has been conducted with student samples (Weigold et al., 2020).

CONCLUSION

This study provides empirical support for the relationship between personal growth initiative and work engagement in a market research organizational context, and confirms the effectiveness of Intentional Growth Training as a brief but highly impactful intervention for improving both variables.

Study 1 demonstrated a strong and significant positive relationship between PGI and work engagement ($r = 0.807$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = 0.651$), confirming PGI as a powerful predictor accounting for 65.1% of work engagement variance. This finding aligns with SDT's explanation that individuals who actively manage their own growth satisfy their basic psychological needs, autonomy, competence, and relatedness, which in turn drives high-quality motivation and optimal work engagement (Deci et al., 2017; Slemp et al., 2018).

Study 2 demonstrated that IGT significantly improved PGI (Cohen's $d = 2.05$) and work engagement (Cohen's $d = 1.52$) in the intervention group, with between-group effect sizes exceeding 2.00 on both variables. Kirkpatrick evaluation through Level 3 further confirmed

that participants translated conceptual learning into consistent behavioral evidence during t he independent practice period.

Theoretically, this study enriches empirical literature on PGI in professional organizational contexts, addressing a gap previously dominated by student samples. Practically, these findings suggest that organizations facing low work engagement should examine whether the root cause lies in individuals' capacity to self-direct their growth. When organizational culture and workload present barriers, targeted individual-level interventions such as IGT represent a realistic and impactful first step.

Future research is encouraged to use longitudinal designs to examine causal directionality between PGI and work engagement, to replicate findings across diverse industries and organizational sizes, and to incorporate follow-up measurements at multiple time points after IGT completion to assess the sustainability of effects

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