Exploring the boundary conditions of the relationships between LMX and work engagement

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Lorem Ipsum Verbanum

# Introduction

Over the last decade, engagement has been extensively studied and that it is associated with beneficial organizational and personal outcomes is well understood (Bakker, Albrecht, & Leiter, 2011). Practitioners have also often claimed that it impacts financial performance and that a large number of workers report active disengagement (e.g. Bates, 2004, Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes (2002)), Saks (2006) references a representative list of practitioner literature. To effectively compete in the dynamic environment, organizations must have employees that apply their full capabilities to work (Bakker & Leiter, 2010).

Has cognitive, emotional and behavioral components (Bakker et al., 2011; Rich, Lepine, & Crawford, 2010; Saks, 2006)

Rich et al. (2010) have conceptualized engagement as a broader aspect of an employee's self as regards other attitudinal constructs such as job involvement, job satisfaction and intrinsic motivation. The unique and wider contribution of engagement in predicting job performance has also been demonstrated (Christian, Garza, & Slaughter, 2011; Dalal, Baysinger, Brummel, & LeBreton, 2012; Halbesleben & Wheeler, 2008; Rich et al., 2010).

Engagement has positive relationships with both task performance and extra-role behaviors (Rich et al., 2010).

Ashforth & Humphrey (1995) make a case for including emotion in motivational frameworks and specifically mention Kahn (1990) "personal engagement". Making it a strong candidate for being the object of study of organizational scholars.

Shuck (2011) (pg. 317) "In such uncertain and challenging environments coupled with an evolving 21st-century workforce, engaging employees, no matter the industry, has become a strategic imperative ..."

Engagement as a bellwether for quality of product and services (Bakker et al., 2011). Dalal et al. (2012) also recommends that if only one measure of employee attachment is to be measured it should be engagement.

Relationship to financial returns (Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2009)

Managers may not be always available and thus personal initiative important (Bakker, Tims, & Derks, 2012)

Rules of exchange (Cropanzano, 2005), which might be translated into the boundary conditions at which the exchange process is fruitful.

Saks (2006) has called for considering individual difference variables that might impact engagement such as self-esteem, locus-of-control.

".. a one size fits all approach to employee engagement might not be the most effective." (Saks, 2006: 614)

Engagement may lead to positive affect which then leads to engagement in another role (Rothbard, 2001) *check*, along the same lines May, Gilson, & Harter (2004) also suggest that engagement can be taken to be an antecedent to job involvement

# Theory and Hypothesis

## Leader-member exchange

Role on leader in enhancing work engagement is under researched (Bakker et al., 2011)

Kahn (1990) theorized that an employee's perception of his work context and his own individual makeup would contribute to the psychological conditions of meaningfulness, safety and availability, which would in turn result in engagement with work. The leader is the prime way of an employee to experience his work context (**???**)

Social Exchange theory used to explain engagement (Saks, 2006) and LMX (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). Highly engaged employees might take on additional work and supervisors might prefer to assign tasks to them rather than disengaged employees (Sonnentag, 2011)

Supportive management promotes psychological safety (Kahn, 1990). Social support presence is important for engagement (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004), and lack of social support could lead to burnout (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001). Supportive supervison considered as a job resource (Bakker et al., 2011)

## Core self-evaluations

Core self-evaluations have been previously linked to engagement (Rich et al., 2010) as an antecedent by virtue of their being able to influence psychological availability.

High job demands are necessary for the motivational salience of job resources (Bakker et al., 2011). CSE could lead to lower perception of job demands and thus lack of salience for LMX which is conceived of as a job resource

Components of CSE, self-efficacy, self-esteem make unique contributions to work engagement in longitudinal studies (Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2007)

## P-O Fit

May et al. (2004) have also found that role fit is a predictor to engagement.

In a review of research on motivation Latham & Pinder (2005) suggests that the relationship between individual differences and outcomes is contingent upon organizational characteristics as well. Value congruence with the organization if one such fit model that has been conceptualized and used in research on fit (Kristof, 1996).

If an employee has values that are generally congruent with the organization we can expect him to derive greater meaningfulness from his work which would imply by Kahn's (1990) model that P-O Fit should be an antecedent to engagement (Rich et al., 2010).

# Method

## Procedure and Participants

## Measures

### Work Engagement

Though Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES; Schaufeli, Bakker, & Salanova, 2006) has been criticized for including respondent perceptions of meaningfulness and challenge, we do not see this as a concern in our research as the predictors we use are all fairly distant.

Broad consensus on energy and identification as components of engagement (Bakker et al., 2011), both of which are reflected in the UWES.

### Leader-member exchange

### Core self-evaluations

### P-O Fit

### Control Variables

Conceivable that people with higher education would be more likely to engage in job crafting and thus be more engaged (Bakker et al., 2012)

# Results

***TODO: Need to include discussion of directions and strengths of correlations***

# Discussion

## Theoretical Contributions

***TODO: Possibility of variations due to sample characteristics***

High CSE individuals maybe immune to the situational strength (Meyer, Hecht, Gill, & Toplonytsky, 2010) of LMX.

High LMX would provide greater clarity on expectancies and appraisals.

Enactment of high CSE may lead to high engagement even in the absence of high LMX

Job crafting does not necessarily imply that the goals of the crafting would be inline with the organizational goals (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). LMX would generally permit only those iDEALs (Rousseau, 2005) that supported organizational goals, thus people with low P-O Fit would have less job crafting opportunities and would thus not be engaged?

## Practical Implications

Might be difficult for knowledge workers to distinguish between physical and cognitive energies (Rich et al., 2010)

Some discussion on state engagement (Sonnentag, 2011; Tims, Bakker, & Xanthopoulou, 2011). Could be the reason why it makes sense to measure all the constructs together, episodic engagement (Sonnentag, 2011)

## Limitations and Future work

Multi-item and high reliability scales might not have problems with common method bias (Spector, 1987)

Reason not to use job performance directly: Could be more difficult for employees to vary there levels of objective job performance as these are often evaluated and used for compensation or other administrative reasons (Saks, 2006)

Reciprocal relationship between LMX and work engagement using a job crafting approach (Bakker et al., 2012)

Call for how engagement fits into other motivational theories (Rich et al., 2010). Can fit into VEI as follows:

* Valence -> P-O Fit
* Expectancy -> LMX, + CSE
* Instrumentality -> CSE

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