**Article II:** Unraveling the Effects of Leadership and Motivation Factors on Employee Engagement: Evidence from the U.S.Federal Agencies

1. **Give a brief summary of the research: purpose, issues/problems, procedures, conclusions (1.5 to 2 pages).**

The rising complexities of public human resource management in the public sector, particularly in the U.S., demonstrates that the government must be serious to effectively fulfill its mission. Amid rising austere fiscal circumstances, the government is at the forefront of the retirement waves of baby boomers. At the same time, it was challenged to provide its people with quality service and stand for the importance of its workers and their work is yet to be confirmed. The government is also not isolated from the pressures of its workers, who not only claim good and lucrative employment, but also a meaningful job that meets personal needs. There are unavoidable challenges that require public managers to rethink many of the old managerial practices that in the current organizational and individual working conditions are no longer reliable, functional, or relevant.

This article aims to discuss Employee Engagement as an increasingly distinct construct in the area of human resource management and growth to boost employee efficiency and well-being in the public sector. According to Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2000; Vigoda-Gadot, Eldor, & Schohat, 2013, the New Public Management (NPM) paradigm highlighted the importance of enhancing results, growing programs, and features of service orientation to sustain and enhance government service quality and effectiveness. Employee engagement is vital to preserving desirable talent and is an integral part of the puzzle of employee satisfaction, as disengaged employees are more likely to leave their jobs. Employees who are involved in their jobs are more likely to be inspired and stay loyal to their employer. This leads to more strategic goals being accomplished and helping to move the company forward.

A study was conducted and the research used the 2010 Merit Principles Survey (MPS) of the MSPB, which is a government-wide survey that demanded the views and perceptions of federal employees related to their jobs and human resources practices. In particular, they were asked about their understanding of their principles of the merit system, employee engagement, job motivation, fairness, leadership, standards for integrity, and whistleblowing.

The US federal government has seen the value of involving its employees in an attempt to boost government effectiveness and efficiency. Studies have shown that the government has not engaged workers who have received higher education (Ander & Swift, 2014). In terms of productivity, low participation has caused the loss of billions of public income. Therefore, less than $30 million has been allocated by the federal government to consider the condition of workers and direct attempts to increase employee engagement (Ander & Swift, 2014). However, the role of Senior Executive Service (SES) political and career executives and motivation factors are not well explored, despite the importance of understanding and assessing the critical factors that may affect employee engagement. This research, therefore, provides one of the first longitudinal studies that assessed the effect of SES, intrinsic motivation, and empowerment on employee engagement in the public sector.

1. **Explain briefly two or three significant/interesting aspects (approaches, theories, methods, findings, implications) of the research (1.5 to 2 pages).**

**Concept of Employee Engagement:**The seminal scholarly works of Saks (2006), Czarnowsky (2008), Macey and Schneider (2008), and Shuck & Wollard can be traced back to the contemporary concept of employee involvement (2010). Via a multidimensional approach, Sak's (2006) article conceptualized and assessed the context and implications of employee engagement. He described employee engagement as "a distinct and distinctive construct consisting of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral components linked to individual role performance" (Saks, 2006, p. 602). This is an inclusive term since it encompasses early ideas and engagement conceptualization that requires growth from a cognitive, emotional, and behavioral perspective (see, for example, Kahn, 1990; Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001; Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002).

Shuck and Wollard's (2010) seminal work retains a pervasive influence among the early and contemporary concept given for employee engagement. Their scientific and thorough analysis of the diverse, and in some ways disjointed, contradictory, and opposing conception of employee engagement leads to an inclusive description. This evolving concept of employee engagement was proposed by Shuck and Wollard (2010) as "as the cognitive, emotional and behavioral state of an individual employee directed towards desired organizational results" (Shuck & Wollard, 2010, p. 103). This description was capable of proposing a convincing conception that could cover the historical environment and philosophical foundations of employee engagement. Thus, HRM and HRD professionals, managers, supervisors, leaders, either in public or private organizations, have a simple and unambiguous conception that is obviously understandable. The conceptual perspective set out in Kahn's seminal work (1990) that describes three essential criteria for behavioral interaction growth (e.g. meaningfulness, protection, and availability) provides a closer partnership within the framework of HRD (Shuck and Herd, 2012). The three broad conceptualizations of commitment are conceived by Macey and Schneider (2008) (i.e., state, trait, and behavioral engagement). This characterization can be traced from the works carried out by Kahn (1990). Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Roma, & Bakker (2002) argued that there were three distinctive dimensions of employee commitment, namely, vigor, devotion, and absorption.

**Senior Executive Service (SES):** The U.S. civil service reforms commenced by the Carter administration in 1978 culminated in the abolition of the Civil Service Commission (CSC) and the subsequent formation of the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and the Merit Systems Security Board (MSPB) (Colby & Ingraham, 1981) (Colby & Ingraham, 1981). The key aspect of this attempt to reform personnel was the concept of the SES, which was designed as the elite corps of civil servants (Dolan, 2000) and was "intended to function as a mobile framework of top government executives, drawn from both career and non-career sources, who were to be rewarded (or punished) according to performance" (Campbell, 1978; as cited in Colby & Ingraham, 1981, p. 76). In general, SES members are leaders who are only below the top Presidential appointees and have served as the key link between political appointees and the rest of the federal labor force's career (U.S. Office Personnel Management [US OPM], 2008).

In the executive branch of the federal government, the senior executive service consists mainly of administrative, supervisory, and policy roles (OPM). As Wilson (1999) puts it, SES members are highly experienced executives who do not comply with autocracy or suppressive leadership because they believe it will "kill subordinate morale, initiative, and creativity." An empowering and democratic leader is capable of growing employee morale and dedication (Wilson, 1999, p. 132). This assumption is in line with Yukl's (1981) claim in which he pointed out that "a leader with extensive reward and coercive power is tempted to rely excessively on them, rather than using reference and expert power; this path leads to resentment and rebellion" (Yukl, 1981, p. 232). We may therefore presume along this line that SES shows an inspiring leadership that can influence intrinsic motivation and empowerment. Empowering leadership, for example, helps to improve the value of work by encouraging workers to distinguish the relevance of their work contributes to the organization; enhancing the self-efficacy of employees by identifying high-performance abilities and opportunities (Zhang & Bartol, 2010; Ahearne, Mathieu, & Rapp., 2005); fostering the autonomy of work and/or self-determination of employees in the workplace. and encourages employee participation in the decision-making process (Zhang & Bartol, 2010; Manz & Sims, 1987).

**Intrinsic Motivation, Empowerment, and Employee Engagement:** We found existing evidence that shows their logical ties when considering the role of intrinsic motivation and empowerment in employee engagement. According to Conger and Kanungo (1988), empowerment refers to "a process of improving feelings of self-efficacy among organizational members by identifying circumstances that promote impotence and by removing them through both formal and organizational practices and informal techniques by providing information on effectiveness" (p. 474). Intrinsic motivation, on the other hand, refers to the degree to which a person is "inner-directed, interested or fascinated with a task, and engages in it for the sake of the task itself" (Utman, 1997, p. 170). In its own way, Thomas and Velthouse (1990) equate empowerment with intrinsic motivation because such feelings of empowerment are satisfying and at the same time argued that empowerment is assumed to be a proximate cause of intrinsic motivation and satisfaction (Thomas & Tymon, 1994; Gagne, Senegal, & Koestner, 1997). Deci and Ryan (1991) have pointed out in their theory of self-determination that the sensations of competence and autonomy must first be met to experience intrinsic motivation (Gagne, Senegal, & Koestner, 1997).

1. **Present your personal opinions, comments or any criticisms of the article, including any flaws that you found in the research (e.g., omissions of important information, ambiguous text, illogical procedures, inappropriate methods/overstated conclusions and implications, etc.) (1.5 to 2 pages)**

I have been always a believer that a good study should be rigorous, controlled, accurate, replicable, clear, concise, valid, verifiable, and sequential. Hence, without a doubt, I can say that the study conducted about Unraveling the Effects of Leadership and Motivation Factors on Employee Engagement: Evidence from the U.S. Federal Agencies is closely the perfect epitome of it. The lifeblood of a thesis is an analysis methodology. Once it gets incorrect or turns out to be unacceptable, other parts may have to be carried out again, such as Review, Findings, and Discussion. For this research, they were able to utilize various ways of obtaining materials, scientific instruments, and training in techniques applicable to the chosen problem. The details introduced by the researcher in the study paper are verifiable and confirmed. The researcher was able to show the purpose of the research paper and its details do not have any gaps. Furthermore, the study paper is free of complexities and has great clarity. Clarity is one of the study's key essences, and the research paper is worthless without clarity. I can also conclude that it was systematic: it implies that the study was organized under a well-defined set of rules with specified steps to be taken in a specified sequence. The study's systematic function does not rule out (discard, avoid) imaginative thought, but it refuses the use of guessing and intuition to draw conclusions.

On the other hand, if I am going to make a few adjustments, I would omit some redundant information about a specific topic. You may not need to add anything to the research paper as a researcher to make it unique or interesting, but you can only add appropriate and original materials. The readers would be able to comprehend a succinct analysis more easily, the report does not include excessive information. Furthermore, it would have been better if we cited some references up to date or recent. It makes the study highly relevant to the present status-quo and the target scope will be bigger. Overall, it is a good research paper showing novel results. It has a full story as well. It is therefore critical that only scattered or incomplete findings are not published in the paper. It needs to be written in good scientific English as well.

1. **Discuss the relevance and importance of the article to current management issues, challenges, and practices in the public sector, including your own ideas on the contribution that the article makes to the field and any practical applications & research implications of the study (1.5 to 2 pages).**

Employee participation draws a lot of attention from employers through various industries. It is a very old aspiration in some respects: the urge of managers to find ways to improve employee morale and obtain more dedication to the job and the company. It is 'modern' in several ways, in that the sense in which interaction is sought is different. The higher penalty to be charged if staff are less engaged than competitors' employees, considering the state of international competition and the raising of the bar on productivity standards, is one aspect of this disparity. A second factor is that the very essence of the sense of work and the ground rules for employment relations have changed and there is an open space that can be filled with more nuanced approaches regarding the character of the relationship to work and organization that workers experience. But there is reason to concern about the lack of rigor that has sometimes characterized a great deal of work in staff involvement to date. If we continue to refer to 'engagement' without knowing the potential negative implications, the key conditions of performance, and the processes by which it must be applied, and if we cannot agree even to a reasonable description of what individuals are supposed to be engaged in doing differently at work (the 'what' problem 'engaged), then engagement could just be one more' HR thing 'that is. On a positive note, a broader variety of assessment tools are now available to determine interaction patterns and an associated number of methods to affect any improvement. Aspiration may therefore be converted into motion more feasibly.

Leadership in the public sector is peculiar when governmental and regulatory bodies meet and senior political and career executives have to oversee government affairs (Rainey, 2003; Van Wart, 2005). A political agenda, principles, and interest are viewed by political leaders, while administrative leaders are called skilled administrators, the key government machinery executing programs and activities, policy executors, have strong technical and administrative skills and are not operating based on biased, personal or partisan orientation (Wilson, 1999).

**REFERENCES**

Pollitt, C., & Bouckaert, G. (2000). Public management reform: A comparative analysis.

Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Vigoda-Gadot, E, Eldor, L, & Schohat, L.M. (2013). Engage them to public service:

Conceptualization and empirical examination of employee engagement in public

administration. The American Review of Public Administration, 43(5) 518-538.

Ander, S., & Swift, A. (2014). U.S. Federal employees less engaged than the rest. Gallup.

Retrieved from <http://www.gallup.com/poll/180206/federal-employees-lessengaged-rest.aspx> 2014

Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2000). The” what” and” why” of goal pursuits: Human needs

Saks, A.M. (2006). Antecedents and consequences of employee engagement. Journal of

Managerial Psychology, 21(7), 600-619.

Shuck, B., & Wollard, K. (2010). Employee engagement and HRD: A seminal review of

the foundations. Human Resource Development Review, 9(1), 89-110.

Shuck, B., & Herd, A.M. (2012). Employee engagement and leadership: exploring the

convergence of two frameworks and implications for leadership development in

HRD. Human Resource Development Review, 11(2), 156-181.

Macey, W. H., & Schneider, B. (2008). The meaning of employee engagement. Industrial

and Organizational Psychology, 1(1), 3-30.

Kahn, W.A. (1990). Psychological conditions of personal engagement and disengagement

at work. Academy of Management Journal, 33(4), 692-724.

Schaufeli, W.B., Salanova, M., Gonzalez-Roma, V., & Bakker, A.B. (2002). The

measurement of engagement and burnout: a two sample confirmatory factor

analytic approach. Journal of Happiness Studies, 3, 71-92.

Colby, P. W., & Ingraham, P. W. (1981). Civil Service Reform: the Views of the Senior

Executive Service. Review of Public Personnel Administration, 1(3), 75-89.

Dolan, J. (2000). Influencing policy at the top of the federal bureaucracy: A comparison of

career and political senior executives. Public Administration Review, 60(6), 573-581.

United States Office of Personnel Management. (2008). Senior Executive Service Survey

Results. Retrieved from <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/seniorexecutive->ervice/reference-materials/ses\_survey\_results\_complete\_2008.pdf

Wilson, P. A. (1999). A theory of power and politics and their effects on organizational

commitment of senior executive service members. Administration and Society,

31, 120-141.

Yukl, G. (1981). Leadership in organization (7th edition). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Zhang, X. & Bartol, K. M. (2010). Linking empowering leadership and employee

creativity: The influence of psychological empowerment, intrinsic motivation,

and creative process engagement. Academy of Management Journal, 53(1), 107-

128.

Pearce, C. L., Sims, H. P., Cox, J. F., Ball, G., Schnell, E., Smith, K. A., & Trevino, L.

(2003). Transactors, transformers and beyond: A multi-method development of a

theoretical typology of leadership. Journal of Management Development, 22(4),

273-307

Conger, J. A., & Kanungo, R. N. (1988). The empowerment process: Integrating theory

and practice. Academy of Management Review, 13(3), 471-482.

Utman, C. H. (1997). Performance effects of motivational state: A meta-analysis.

Personality and Social Psychology Review, 1(2), 170–182.

Thomas, K. W., & Velthouse, B. A. (1990). Cognitive elements of empowerment: An

“interpretive” model of intrinsic task motivation. Academy of Management

Review, 15(4), 666-668

Thomas, K. W., & Tymon, W. G. (1994). Does empowerment always work:

Understanding the role of intrinsic motivation and personal interpretation.

Journal of Management Systems, 6(2), 1-13.

Gagne, M., Senegal, C.B., & Koestner, R. (1997). Proximal job characteristics, feelings of

empowerment, and intrinsic motivation: a multidimensional model. Journal of

Applied Social Psychology, 27(14), 1222-1240.

Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000). Intrinsic and extrinsic motivations: Classic definitions

and new directions. Contemporary educational psychology, 25(1), 54-67.

Rainey, H.G. (2003). Understanding & managing public organizations (3rd ed.). San Francisco:

Jossey-Bass.

Wilson, P. A. (1999). A theory of power and politics and their effects on organizational

commitment of senior executive service members. Administration and Society, 31, 120-141.

Van Wart, M. (2003). Public Sector leadership theory: An assessment. Public Administration

Review, 63(2), 214-228.