



Questioning Work Engagement and Employee Engagement

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ABSTRACT

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Research related to Work Engagement (WE) and Employee Engagement (EE) has been carried out by many previous researchers, both quantitative and qualitative studies. What is interesting about these studies is that some researchers do not sufficiently differentiate the concepts between work engagement and employee engagement, while other researchers use different terms between work engagement and employee engagement. However, not many studies have questioned whether the concepts of WE and EE are the same or different concepts. These findings prompted this study to conduct an in-depth literature review regarding the concepts of WE and EE and their measurements. The study was carried out using a Systematic Literature Review approach on various studies that researched WE and EE. The results of the literature review show that WE and EE are concepts that should be treated differently. Work engagement focuses on the energy employees devote to work. Meanwhile, employee engagement focuses on the energy devoted to work that has a positive contribution to achieving the organization's vision and mission. The context of employee engagement is to promote innovative employee behavior towards their work that contributes to the organization's vision and mission.

KEYWORDS:

work engagement, employee engagement

INTRODUCTION

Research on engagement is nothing new. This can be seen from the large number of empirical studies and literature reviews about engagement. For practical researchers and academics, engagement still has great interest to research because of its influence on various organizational factors such as increasing employee performance (Aryee et al. 2012), (Inamizu & Makishima, 2018), (Ali et al., 2020), extra role

performance (Eldor & Vigoda-Gadot, 2017), innovative behavior (Bakker & Kim & Park, 2017) as well as a decrease in turnover intention (Kaur & Randhawa, 2021), employee absenteeism (Karatepe & Olugbade, 2016). Although these studies examine engagement, the terms used are different. Some studies use the term work engagement while other studies use the term employee engagement.

Table 1. Mapping Previous Research on Work Engagement and Employee Engagement

Concept Used	Year	Researcher
Work Engagement	2016	(Petrou et al., 2016)
	2017	(Karatepe & Eslamlou, 2017), (Matsuo, 2019), (Ogbuanya & Chukwuedo, 2017), (Van Wingerden & Poell, 2017)
	2019	(Aldrin & Merdiaty, 2019), (Hulshof et al., 2020)
	2020	(Baghdadi et al., 2021), (Emilisa et al., 2020) (Karatepe et al., 2020), (Kooij et al., 2020), (Oprea & Pa, 2020), (Radic et al. 2020), (Rošková & Faragová, 2020), (Ahmed et al., 2021), (Vakola, Petrou & Katsaros, 2020)
	2021	(Letona-ibañez et al., 2021), (Na-Nan & Arunyaphum, 2021), (Sánchez-Cardona et al., 2021), (Toth & Hein, 2021)
Employee Engagement	2011	(Fairlie, 2011)
	2019	(Farrukh et al., 2020), (Landells & Albrecht, 2019)

Source: Extracted from various previous studies for this literature study, 2021

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	2020	(Afsar, Al-Ghazali & Umrani, 2020), (Ali et al., 2020) (Barreiro & Treglown, 2020), (Chanana & Sangeeta, 2020), (Kaur & Randhawa, 2021), (Khodakarami & Dirani, 2020), (Men et al., 2020), Men, O'Neil & Ewing; Nienaber & Martins; Shakir (2017)
	2021	(Albrecht et al., 2021), (Nassani, 2021)

The use of the terms work engagement and employee engagement in previous studies is not clear. This raises the question of whether work engagement and employee engagement explain the same or different concepts. This literature review was conducted to answer curiosity regarding whether or not there is a difference between work engagement and employee engagement. Is it only limited to differences in the use of terms but refer to different concepts or do they have to be treated as different ideas or thoughts? In this research, a literature review was carried out to gain in-

depth insight regarding the concepts, ideas and conditions that we wanted to convey.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research is qualitative research with a systematic literature review approach. This approach was chosen to gain a deep understanding of Work Engagement and Employee Engagement, whether the concepts are the same or different. There are 73 pieces of literature reviewed in this study as presented in the following table:

Table 2. Distribution of Work Engagement and Employee Engagement Literature

<i>Work Engagement</i>		<i>Employee Engagement</i>	
Year	Amount of Literature	Year	Amount of Literature
2014	(Geldenhuis, Loba, & Venter, 2014)	2006	Saks (2006)
2015	(Siddiqi, 2015)	2011	Fairlie (2011)
2019	(Nguyen, Nguyen, Ngo, & Nguyen, 2019); (Emilisa, Yudhaputri, Dewi, & Lunarindiah, 2019); (Mekhum & Jermittiparsert, 2019); Wingerden & Poell (2019); (Aldrin & Merdiaty, 2019)	2015	Men (2015); Wingerden, Derks & Bakker (2015)
2020	Karollah et al (2020); (Oprea et al., 2020); (Hulshof et al., 2020); (Park, Lim, Kim, & Kang, 2020); (Rošková & Faragová, 2020); (Oprea, Păduraru, & Iiescu, 2020); (Kooij, Nijssen, Bal, & van der Kruijssen, 2020); Ellardus van (van Zyl, Rothmann, & Nieman, 2020); Tan, Lew & Sim (2020); Hui, Qun, Nazir, Mengyu & Khadim (2020); Lai, Tang, Lu, Lee & Lin (2020); Contreras, Espinosa & Esguerra (2020); Habib, Awan, Naveed & Akhtar (2020); Chan et al (2020); Awan et al (2020); Gupta & Singh (2020); Zhang & Li (2020); Rahmadani & Schaufeli (2020); Helmi et al (2020); Chen & Fellenz (2020); Girija & Sabarirajan (2020)	2016	Eldor & Vigoda-Gadot (2016)
2021	Baghdadi et al., 2021); Na-nan & Arunyaphum (2021); Albrecht, Green & Marty (2021); Toth,	2017	Karatepe & Eslamlou, 2017)

	Heinänen & Puumlainen (2021); Ahmed, Yong, Pahi & Dakhan (2021); Dobler et al (2021); Putri et al (2021); Tian, Wang & Rispens (2021); Teng, Cheng & Chen (2021)		
		2019	Afsar, Al-Ghazali & Umrani (2019); Farrukh et al (2019); Kwon & Kim (2019); Vermooten, Boonzaier & Kidd (2019); (Landells & Albrecht, 2019)
		2020	Ali et al (2020); Barreiro & Treglown (2020); Chanana & Sangeeta (2020); Kaur & Randhawa (2020); Khodakarami & Dirani (2020); Men, O’Neil & Ewing (2020); Nienaber & Martins (2020); (Shakir, Noorani, & Rehman, 2020); (Mittal, 2020); Vakola, Petrou & Katsaros (2020); Thevanes & Baskar (2020); Iddagoda & Opatha (2020); Saleem, Shenbei & Hanif (2020); Chaolertseree & Taephant (2020); Chathoth, Harrington, Chan, Okumus & Song (2020); Ahmed, Umrani, Zaman, Rajput & Aziz (2020); Nazir & Islam (2020); Hasan, Astuti, Wulida & Iqbal (2020); Sharma & Kumra (2020); Raza, Farrukh, Iqbal, Farhan & Wu (2020)
		2021	Naasani, Alotaibi & Alothman (2021); (Nadesan, 2021); (Albrecht, Green, & Marty, 2021); Margaretha et al (2021)
	37		36

Source: Processed for this research, 2023

Literature Review Results

Research identifying work engagement as mapped in this literature study refers to the concept of engagement presented by (W. B. Schaufeli et al., 2002). To gain a deep understanding of work engagement and employee engagement, this study focuses on examining the indicators used to measure work engagement and employee engagement.

Several previous studies examining employee engagement have been reviewed in this literature study. From the results of this study, it can be seen that there are differences in measurements made on employee engagement. Studies (Farrukh et al., 2020), (Landells & Albrecht, 2019), (Kaur & Randhawa, 2021), (Albrecht et al., 2021), and (Nassani, 2021) Naasani, Alotaibi & Alothman (2021) measure employee engagement by adopting dimensions and items from The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-9). Other studies use different dimensions and items to measure employee engagement.

Studies conducted (Kahn, 1990), (May et al., 2004), (Shuck, Adelson, & Reio, 2017), (Afsar et al., 2020), (Sharma & Kumra, 2020), measure employee engagement by uses three dimensions which include cognitive, emotional and physical. Cognitive involvement refers to the intensity of

mental energy expressed in employee work that is oriented towards achieving organizational goals. Emotional involvement refers to the intensity and willingness of employees to express their emotions in work that is oriented towards achieving organizational goals. Physical/behavioral involvement (physical/behavior) refers to the intensity of behavior to act in carrying out work that is oriented towards achieving organizational goals.

Cognitive Engagement (Cognitive Engagement)

1. I focus when working
2. I concentrate when working
3. I give work responsibilities a lot of attention
4. At work, I focus on my work

Emotional involvement (emotional engagement)

1. Working at this company contains many personal things that are meaningful to me
2. I have strong feelings about my work
3. I believe in the mission and goals of this company
4. I care about the future of this company

Behavioral engagement

1. I push myself to go above and beyond at my job
2. I am willing to work extra hours without being asked

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3. I am able to exceed my expectations to make my team successful
4. I work harder in the hope of helping the company to succeed

The results of previous research mapping examined in this literature study, work engagement measurements were carried out by adopting measurements from The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-9) which consists of three dimensions, namely vigor, dedication, and absorption.

Table 3. Concept, Context and Measurement of Work Engagement in Previous Research

Researchers	Measurement
(Landells & Albrecht, 2019); (Aldrin & Merdiaty, 2019); (Farrukh et al., 2020); (Hulshof et al., 2020); (Emilisa et al., 2020); (Karatepe et al., 2020); (Kooij et al., 2020); (Oprea & Pa, 2020); (Radic et al., 2020); (Rošková & Faragová, 2020); (Ahmed, Yong, Pahi & Dakhan, 2020); (Vakola, Petrou & Katsaros, 2020); (Kaur & Randhawa, 2021); (Albrecht et al., 2021); (Nassani, 2021); (Baghdadi et al., 2021); (Letona-Ibanez et al., 2021); (Na-Nan & Arunyaphum, 2021); Sánchez-Cardona et al., 2021); (Toth & Hein, 2021)	The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-9) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vigor - Dedication - Absorption
(Afsar et al., 2020)	Khan (1990) May, Gilson, and Harter (2004) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cognitive - Emotional - Physical
(Ali et al., 2020)	Soane et al (2012); <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Intellectual - Social - Affective
(Barreiro & Treglown, 2020)	Workplace Engagement Questionnaire (WEQ28): Voice, Togetherness, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Challenge - Clarity - Freedom - Recognition - Growth - Work role - Work relationship - Personal reward
(Men et al., 2020)	12 items from 2 dimensions, namely job engagement and organization engagement (Saks 2006 & Kang 2010)
(Nienaber & Martins, 2020)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Team orientation - Organizational satisfaction - Effectiveness of managerial - Team commitment - Organizational commitment - Organizational strategy

Source: Extracted from various previous studies for this literature study, 2023

The dimensions and items used to measure work engagement refer to the dimensions and items from The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) which was later revised to become The UWES-9 which was developed by Schaufeli, Bakker, & Salanova (2006).

Vigor

1. *When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work* (The UWES-9)
2. *At my work, I feel bursting with energy* (The UWES-9)

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3. At my work I always persevere, even when things do not go well.
4. I can continue working for very long periods at a time.
5. At my job, I am very resilient, mentally.
6. *At my job I feel strong and vigorous* (The UWES-9)

Dedication

1. To me, my job is challenging.
2. *My job inspires me* (The UWES-9)
3. *I am enthusiastic about my job* (The UWES-9)
4. *I am proud on the work that I do* (The UWES-9)
5. I find the work that I do full of meaning and purpose.

Absorption

1. When I am working, I forget everything else around me.
2. Time flies when I am working.
3. *I get carried away when I am working* (The UWES-9)
4. It is difficult to detach myself from my job.
5. *I am immersed in my work* (The UWES-9)
6. *I feel happy when I am working intensely* (The UWES-9)

DISCUSSION

Based on the mapping results of previous studies that used the concepts of work engagement and employee engagement, most researchers implicitly assume that work engagement and employee engagement explain the same concept or thing. Each study does not provide an adequate explanation that shows the difference between work engagement and employee engagement. Even though the context used in each is different (not the same). This can be seen from the use of dimensions and items measuring work engagement and employee engagement, most of which refer to The UWES-9 developed by (Schaufeli, Bakker, & Salanova, 2006).

Compared to work engagement, the understanding of employee engagement is more varied among several researchers (Nienaber & Martins, 2020), (Men et al., 2020), (Barreiro & Treglown, 2020), (Ali et al., 2020), (Afsar et al., 2020). In the workplace, work engagement is considered to have a more established measurement, such as the measurement on The UWES scale. Therefore, Shuck, Adelson, and Reio (2017) think that work engagement and employee engagement are engagement concepts that must be separated.

However, if we refer to (Shuck et al, 2017), work engagement and employee engagement are two concepts with different focuses and understandings. (W. Schaufeli et al., 2002) and Schaufeli et al (2006) define work engagement as individual or employee feelings about work while Shuck et al (2017) define employee engagement as individual or

employee feelings towards work and also the organization. Furthermore, researchers need to consider in what context research on engagement is carried out. If the purpose of engagement is to promote innovative employee behavior, then the concept of employee engagement is more effective to research. This is because employee engagement encourages individuals or employees to devote their efforts not only to work but also to make positive contributions to achieving the organization's vision and mission.

CONCLUSION

The differences between work engagement and employee engagement in previous research have not been explained adequately. This triggers the use of the same measurement approach between work engagement and employee engagement. However, from the results of literature studies that have been carried out, work engagement and employee engagement are two concepts that have different focuses and contexts. Employee engagement focuses on the outpouring of energy given by individuals or employees to their work or organization. Employee engagement is researched in the context of promoting innovative employee behavior towards their work which has a positive contribution to achieving the organization's vision and mission.

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