

The Role of Job Resources on Work Engagement: A Study on Telecommunication Sector

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Abstract- The aim of this study was to examine the relationship between job resources, namely skill variety, task significance and task identity and work engagement. Data were gathered through questionnaire from a telecommunication organisation (N = 95). Results indicated that skill variety, task significance and task identity were a significant factor in influencing employees work engagement. These findings generally supported past findings, which suggested that employees are more likely to engage with their work if they are given useful job resources such as skill variety, task significance and task identity.

Index Terms- Job Resources, Skill Variety, Task Significance, Task Identity, Work Engagement and Telecommunication Companies.

I. INTRODUCTION

The characteristics of work environments can be classified in two general categories, which are job demands and job resources (Demerouti et al., 2001). These two job characteristics incorporate different specific demands and resources, depending on the context under study (Demerouti et al., 2001). According to the Job Demands-Resources model (Demerouti et al., 2001); job resources are defined as those physical, social, or organizational aspects of the job that (a) are functional in achieving work-related goals, (b) reduce job demands and the associated physiological and psychological costs, and (c) stimulate personal growth and development, while job demands are those physical, social, or organizational aspects of the job that require sustained physical and/or psychological effort and are, therefore, associated with physiological and/or psychological costs.

According to the J D-R model these two categories of work characteristics evoke two relatively independent psychological processes. First category is health impairment process and based on job demands. High job demands, which require sustained effort, may exhaust employees' resources and lead to energy depletion and health problems (Jyoti & Rajib, 2016). For example, specific job demands (e.g., workload or emotional demands) have been repeatedly found to predict exhaustion (i.e., severe fatigue) among various occupational groups (Jyoti & Rajib, 2016, Bakker, Demerouti, & Euwema, 2005). The second category is motivational process and based on job resources. Job resources, due to their (intrinsic and extrinsic) motivational potential, foster employees to meet their goals. In turn, employees may become more engaged to their job, because they derive fulfillment from it (Hackman & Oldham, 1980). Previous studies (Hakanen et al., 2006) have shown that several job resources (e.g., support or coaching) lead to work engagement, defined as ". . . the positive, fulfilling, and work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication and absorption" (Alisha et al., 2016).

The aim of this study are to investigate the work engagement of employees in a telecommunication, as well as to investigate the relationship between job resources and work engagement. Therefore, this paper focuses the second category of work characteristics of the J D-R model, which is motivational process. The concept of work engagement is relevant for organisations for various reasons. Firstly, work engagement is related to job satisfaction, affective commitment and low turnover intention (Romina et al., 2016). Secondly, work engagement is related to personal initiative and learning (Hakanen et al., 2006). Research regarding the psychological foundations of work engagement will enable researchers and practitioners to understand and predict why some employees psychologically identify with their jobs.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. *Work Engagement*

The concept of work engagement was first coined by Kahn in 1990, who defined it as "the harnessing of organizational members' selves to their work roles". It is the extent to which an individual is attentive and absorbed in the performance of his or her work. Kahn (1990) argued that when people are engaged, they are not only physically involved in their work, but they also are cognitively alert and emotionally connected to others at the moment of engagement. However, the level of work engagement varies across individuals as the amount of energy and dedication they contribute to their job is different.

This concept has evolved through the years and has been regarded as a worthwhile concept by many researchers in studying burnout, health, job satisfaction, job performance and turnover intention of employees. Maslach et al., (2001) for example, have referred work engagement as the opposite of job burnout by defining burnout as an erosion of engagement. They argued that while burnout is defined by exhaustion, cynicism, and inefficacy, engagement is the direct opposite where energy replaces emotional exhaustion, involvement replaces cynicism, and a sense of efficacy replaces lack of professional accomplishment. Upasna, (2014) definition of work engagement was quite similar as what has been previously defined by Kahn (1990). They believed that work engagement consists of three components: physical – the energy used to perform a job, emotional – putting one's heart in one's job, and cognitive – being engrossed in a job. On the other hand, Carolyn & Paula, (2013) defined work engagement as a "positive, fulfilling, workrelated state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication and absorption." They refer vigor as high levels of energy and mental resilience that related to work experience, and one's eagerness to invest effort in work and to persist even when faced with problems. Individual will feel motivated, eager and excited about his or her work even when they faced with setbacks, limitations or challenges. Dedication is more of being deeply involved in one's work and experiencing feelings of importance, passion, motivation and challenge. In other words, dedicated individuals would be happily involved in their work and felt that their work is important, meaningful and challenging. Finally, absorption is described as being content and having a total concentration on one's work.

In the past, various predictors of work engagement have been studied and these include organizational commitment distributive, procedural justice, rewards and recognition; person-job fit and person-organization fit; leadership style (Maslach et al., 2001; Hamid & Yahya, 2011; Carolyn & Paula, 2013; Kahn 1990). However, work engagement has been mostly analyzed by the job demands-resources model. The model offers two assumptions regarding the predictors and outcomes of engagement at work. First, job resources such as peers and supervisors support, autonomy as well feedback, is assumed to commence a activation manner that guide to engagement at workplace, thus, lead to advanced performing. The following notion is that in a high demands situation (e.g. workload, emotional demands, and mental demands) job resources will become more prominent and gain their motivational potential (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). This model has also been used to predict the influence of job characteristic, in terms of job demands and job resources on individual's well-being (Bakker, Demerouti, Taris, Schaufeli, & Schreurs, 2003). First is the process of exhaustion where job demands gradually reduce the mental and physical energy reserves that will finally lead to tiredness, burnout and other related health problems like a healthy grievance and functional disorder (authorized leave). Second is the activation manner where resources rise the preparedness to expend strength or to work hard. This at the end of the day will lead to engagement, to be committed and more activation consequences, as organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). Equally, collapse and enthusiasm manner have earned experimental support from numerous researches (e.g., Bakker, Demerouti, Taris, Schaufeli, & Schreurs, 2003; Bakker, Demerouti, & Verbeke, 2004).

B. *Job Resources and Work Engagement*

Job resources are known to influence employee well-being intrinsically or extrinsically. As intrinsic motivators, job resources will satisfy the needs for autonomy, competence and individuals' growth and development (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). For example, supervisory coaching can improve job competence, while involvement in decision-making and colleague or supervisory support might fulfil the necessity for autonomy. Job resources might as well act as outer motivators. According to Schaufeli and Bakker (2004), and Bakker and Demerouti (2007) in a resourceful environments which includes supportive peers and performance feedback, the likelihood of being successful in completing one's task and achieving one's work goal may increase. It is expected that an appropriate supply of job resources might supplement employees' work engagement while their deficiency can hinder goal accomplishment, and this may lead employees to develop a negative and cynical attitude towards their work.

Providing employees with optimal challenges, skill variety and task significance in their work creates intrinsic motivation and increases their work engagement (Ryan & Deci 2000). Task identity and positive feedback seems to enhance work engagement levels, whereas negative feedback diminishes it. Employees will be more engaged in their work if they regard their work as challenging and have the freedom to be independent in their work tasks. Roberts & Davenport (2002) found that career development, identification with the organisation and a rewarding work environment also increase the work engagement levels of employees. Employees will be

more engaged in their work if the organisation provides them with opportunities to enhance their skills and abilities, and to manage their careers. When individuals identify with the organisation, they share in its success and are proud to deliver quality work.

According to the self-determination theory of Deci & Ryan (1985), work contexts that support psychological autonomy, competence and relatedness enhance wellbeing and increase intrinsic motivation (Ryan & Frederick 1997). This intrinsic motivational potential is also supported by the Job Characteristics Theory (JCT) of Hackman & Oldham (1980). According to the JCT, every job has a specific motivational role that depends on the presence of five core job characteristics: skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback. The JCT further hypothesises that these core job characteristics are linked to positive results such as high-quality work performance, job satisfaction, and low absenteeism and turnover.

According to the Effort-Recovery Model of Meijman & Mulder (1998), job resources may also play an extrinsic motivational role through work environments that offer many resources and foster the willingness to dedicate one's efforts and abilities to the work task. It is therefore likely that the work task will be completed successfully and that the work goal will be achieved. Support from colleagues and proper feedback from supervisors will thus increase the individual's likelihood of achieving work goals, and employees will thus be successful in their daily tasks. This will create an energy backflow to the individual. In either case, whether the satisfaction of basic human needs or the achieving of work-related outcomes, the results are positive and the chances for an individual to be engaged will increase. The tendency for employees to leave the organisation will also decrease if organisations provide their employees with valued job resources that enhance learning, growth and development (Alisha et al., 2016). Schaufeli & Bakker (2004) found that work engagement is strongly predicted by job resources. It can therefore be expected that job resources have a positive relation to work engagement. If the employee is provided with variety in his/her job, learning opportunities and autonomy, he/she will be more likely to engage in his/her work. This will make the employee's work more meaningful. Based on the discussions presented above, the following hypotheses are therefore proposed:

- H1: Skill Variety (SV) is positively related to work engagement.
- H2: Task Significance (TS) is positively related to work engagement.
- H3: Task Identity (TI) is positively related to work engagement.

C. Research Theoretical Framework

A theoretical framework refers to the theory that a researcher chooses to guide him/her in his/her research. Thus, a theoretical framework is the application of a theory, or a set of concepts drawn from one and the same theory, to offer an explanation of an event, or shed some light on a particular phenomenon or research problem. Figure 1 presents research theoretical framework, which explains the relationship between job resources and work engagement.

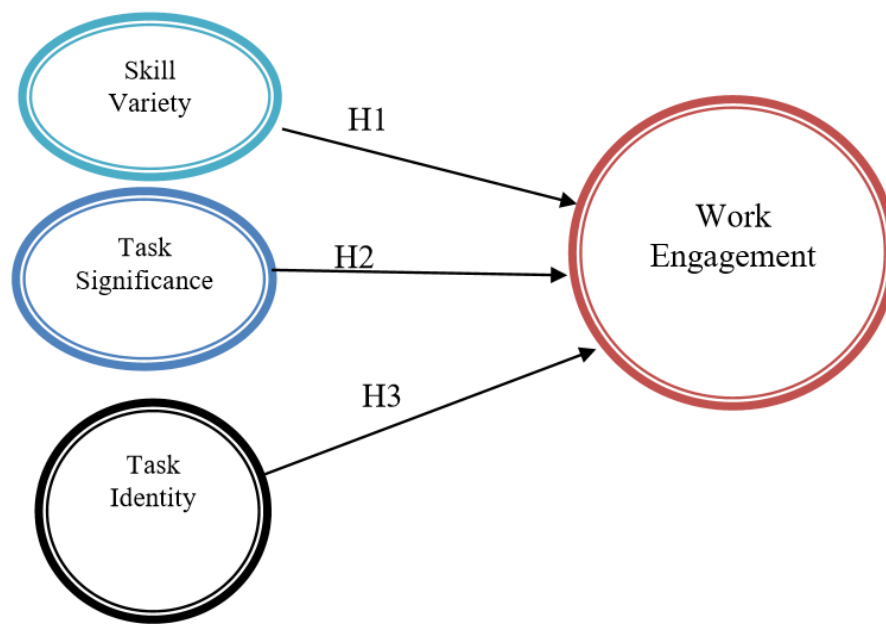


Figure 1: Research Framework

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design

Research design spells out how the research is carried out toward the accomplishment of research objectives and answering of questions. In other word, research design constitutes the outline for the collection, measurement and analysis data (Cooper and Schindler, 2013). Zikmund et al. (2012) defined research design as a master plan that outlines the methods and procedures for collecting and analyzing data. Moreover, research design helps the researcher in the allocation of inadequate resources by posing vital choices in methodology (Cooper and Schindler, 2013). The main research design employed in the present research was survey. Survey is defined as a measurement process that utilises a measurement tool called a questionnaire, measurement instrument, or interview schedule (Cooper and Schindler, 2013). Surveys attempt to describe what is happening or to study the reasons for an exacting business activity (Zikmund et al., 2012). The questionnaire is the most common information collection tool in business research (Cooper and Schindler, 2013). The questionnaire is the most extensively used information collection technique in a survey study (De Vaus, 2013). Questionnaire is an organized set of questions or measures used by respondents or interviewers to record answers data (Hair et al., 2010).

B. Sample Size

According to Cooper and Schindler (2013), sampling is the process whereby some elements from the population are selected to represent the whole population. Sample size is the number of units that is required to get accurate findings (Fink, 2003). For the purpose of this paper, the sample size was 95.

C. Data Collection

According to Sekaran (2003), there are many methods that can be possibly used to collect data from respondents such as interviews and questionnaires. Interviews involve unstructured and structured approach. Interviews can differ from being highly unstructured to highly structured. Unstructured interviews are usually conducted by an extremely flexible approach. A questionnaire, on the other hand, is a pre-written set of questions that respondents are required to answer, which is generally within close defined alternatives (Sekaran, 2003). A questionnaire is an efficient data collection mechanism but only when the researcher is aware of what is required and the measures of the variables involved (Sekaran, 2003). In the present paper, questionnaires were used because the researcher was interested in getting specific responses on the issues at hand i.e., job resources, and work engagement via specific measurements.

D. Measures

Two measuring instruments were used in this study, namely the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (Schaufeli et al. 2002), the Job Resources Scale (Rothmann, Strydom & Mostert 2006) and a demographic questionnaire.

IV. FINDINGS

The descriptive and inferential statistical methods were used to conduct the analysis. For hypotheses testing, the Pearson correlation coefficients were used. The first part of the analysis focused on the descriptive analysis of the respondents. At the end of gathering data, the reliability of the scales was analyzed.

The descriptive analysis focused on the variables such as gender, age, marital status and job status as shown in Table I. Male responders represented 61% while female responders were 39%. Most of the respondents (45.9%) were aged between 35 and 39 years old, 8.2% of the respondents were between 25 and 29 years old, 10.8% of the respondents were between 30 and 34 years old, 18.9% of the respondents were above 50 years old and 16.2% of the respondents were between 40 and 49 years old. Majority of the respondents were having job permanent and were married in a percentage of 72% and 65.8% respectively. While employees; who have contract jobs represented 28% and single staff were 34.2% of the total respondents.

Table I: Demographic Information

Variable	Percentage (%)
Gender	
Male	61
Female	39
Age (in years)	
25-29	8.2
30-34	10.8
35-39	45.9
40-49	16.2
Above 50	18.9
Marital status	
Married	65.8
Single	34.2
Job status	
Permanent	72
Contract	28

An exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis was performed in the study to ascertain the reliability of the measures by using Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient; .60 being the acceptable reliability coefficient level in terms of research standards as shown in Table II.

Table II: Reliability Statistics

Main Variable	Sub variables	Cronbach's alphas
JOB RESOURCES	Skill Variety (SV)	.901
	Task Significance (TS)	.881
	Task Identity (TI)	.845
WORK ENGAGEMENT	Vigor (VG)	.925
	Dedication (DED)	.866
	Absorption (AB)	.878

As it can be seen in Table I, the measures of the study are reliable because all the variables have an acceptable reliability coefficient which ranged from .845 to .925.

The correlation data shows the relationship between the independent and dependent variables of study as shown in Table III. The table displays correlation coefficients between these variables. The correlation coefficients are a measure of the strength of the association between any two metric variables (Hair et al., 2003). The results of the Pearson correlation show that all of the dimensions of the independent variables and dependent variable were positively correlated to each other. The results of Table III demonstrated that there is positive significant Pearson correlation between the three types of job resources work engagement ($r=.556$; $p=.019$). Hence the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

Table III: Pearson Correlations between Variables

Pearson Correlation	Pearson Coefficient (r)	Correlation	Hypothesis Support
JR → WE	.556*		Yes

*. Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed)

JR: Job Resources and WE: Work Engagement

V. DISCUSSION

The aims of this study were to investigate the work engagement of employees, and its relationship with job resources. Work engagement was best predicted by job resources and the results of this study confirmed that job resources, namely skill variety, task

significance and task identity, are positively related to work engagement. The results of this study further showed that job resources were significantly related to the work engagement of participants. Therefore, the first hypothesis of the study is accepted as skill variety play a significant role in terms of the work engagement of the employees of Telecommunication Company. It seems that employees will be more engaged in their organization if the necessary job resources, such as skill variety, task significance and task identity, are provided, regardless of the level of job demands. Hakanen, Bakker & Demerouti (2005) showed that if job resources increases, it will have a positive effect on the work engagement levels of employees. Fifty-five per cent of the variance in work engagement of employees in this study was predicted by job resources opportunities. These results also support the hypothesis of this study, namely that job resources predict the work engagement of employees. Therefore, job resources appear to play a significant role in terms of the work engagement of employees. Growth opportunities in a job, such as variety, learning opportunities and autonomy, play an intrinsic motivational role by fostering the employees' growth, learning and development. Task identity plays an extrinsic motivational role by being instrumental in achieving work goals (Schaufeli & Bakker 2004). An increase in job resources will increase the overall work engagement level of employees. A work environment that offers resources will foster the willingness of the employee to dedicate his or her efforts and abilities to the work task.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

The aim of the study was to analyse the relationship between job resources and work engagement. The adopted measures of this study have shown remarkable level of reliability as shown in Table I. Three hypotheses were developed; all of them were supported. Based on the findings of the study, the job resources have a significant relationship with work engagement. In addition the proposed hypothesis of types of job resources and work engagement was supported, which means there was a significant relationship between job resources and work engagement. Finally, job resources and work engagement have shown very significant relationship between them.

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