



Dispositional motivation and work engagement

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> Author's note



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Introduction

> Engagement and motivation

- Engagement popular and a motivated workforce is clearly viewed as desirable in any organisation
- Evidence that specific attitudinal measures related to engagement are linked to business unit level performance (e.g. Harter, Schmidt & Hayes, 2002)
- Direct measures of engagement related to organisational performance, turnover and absence (e.g. Towers Perrin-ISR, 2006), and individual well-being (Schaufeli et al., Rich & LePine, 2006)
- Benefits not disputed but what does engagement mean?

> Work engagement (1)

- Meaning of engagement often unclear (Macey & Schneider, 2008), ranging from dispositional motives to the actual effort employees put into their work
- Evolved in a “bottom-up” manner (Macey & Schneider, 2008) being widely used by survey companies and HR consultants and is now, only recently, taken up by the academic community
- Sometimes used for re-labelling other constructs such as job-involvement, job satisfaction, perceptions of the work environment
- Taken to stand for involvement, commitment, passion, enthusiasm, focused effort, and energy (Macey & Schneider, 2008)

> Work engagement (2)

- This unclarity in meaning can potentially erode benefits of specific applications of the construct and undermine its credibility in the longer term
- Little research focusing on the nomological net of the construct

> Motivation and engagement

- Engagement can be viewed as an aspect of motivation
- The construct of motivation itself often ambiguous
- Both can be conceptually placed on a motivational continuum ranging from the dispositional to the situational

> Engagement as a psychological state (1)

- Engagement defined as a psychological state that employees can be in when they are performing their work roles (Kahn, 1990; Schaufeli, Bakker and Salanova, 2006)
- A “positive, fulfilling work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption” (Schaufeli, Bakker & Salavona, 2006, p. 702)

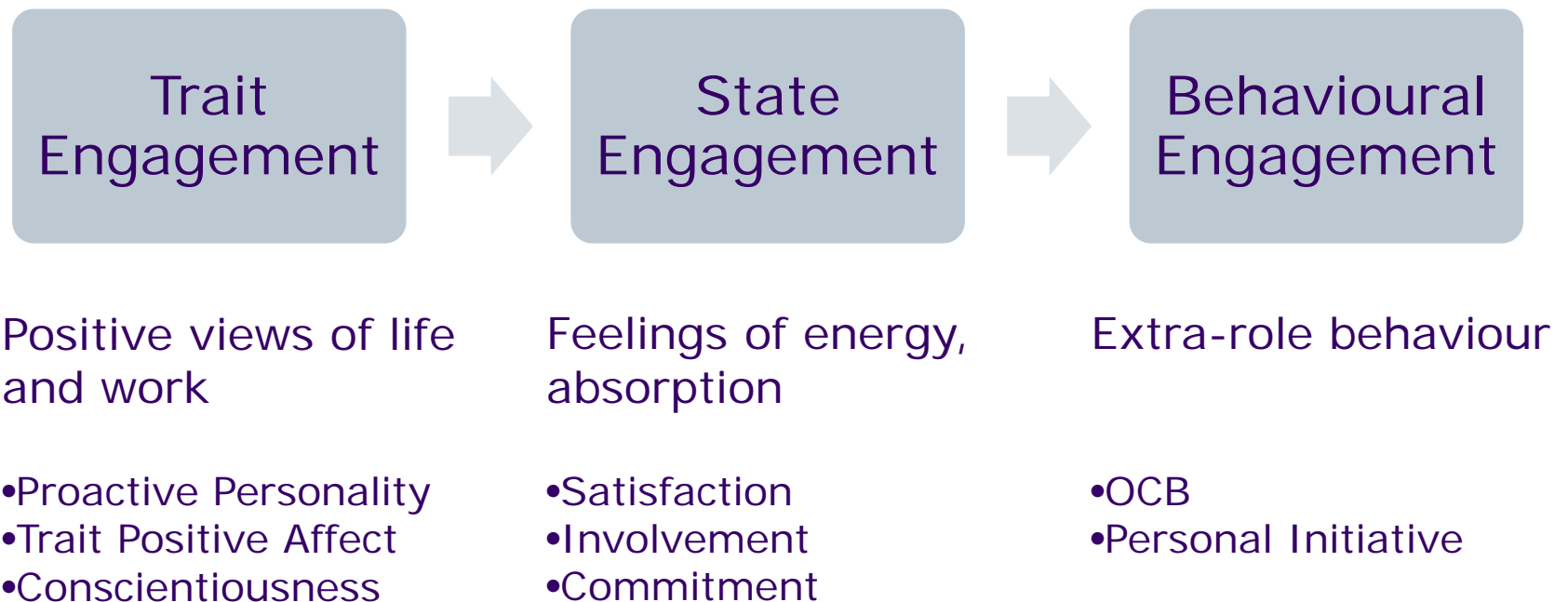
> Engagement as a psychological state (2)

- Engagement can change over time, particularly in response to situational changes at work and outside work (Kahn, 1990)
- An individual's level of engagement may also be affected by stable characteristics of the person (for example, generally being very energetic) as well as the physical, emotional and psychological resources available at a particular moment (Kahn, 1990)
- ->Engagement can fluctuate but is not viewed as a momentary and very short-lived state here, but as

"a more persistent and pervasive affective-cognitive state that is not focused on any particular object, event, individual, or behaviour" (Schaufeli et al., 2006, p. 702)

> Macey and Schneider (2008)

Simplified version of the Macey and Schneider (2008) framework



> Two facets of work-role engagement

- *Absorption*: extent to which employees lose themselves in their work, and have a sense of being engrossed (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975; Mainemelis, 2001)
- *Energy*: sense of energy that the employees draw from their work
- Employees who experience a strong sense of energy at work are more likely to directing their motivational resources towards their work performance, (Baker et al, 2003; Quinn & Dutton, 2005)

> Motivation as a trait

- Trait-like, dispositional motivation is expected to be enduring and to remain relatively stable across different situations
- Examples: “Desire to learn and desire for personal mastery” (Kanfer and Ackerman, 2000), “Ambitiousness” (Byrne et al., 2004)
- Trait-like stable motivation is measured here through multiple motives in the job domain which have been shown to be related to performance (SHL, 2002): e.g.
 - > Achievement (being motivated by having challenges to overcome)
 - > Affiliation (being motivation by meeting many people through work)
 - > Power (being motivated by directing other people’s work)

> Research objectives

1. To examine the conceptual and empirical overlap between dispositional motivation and work role engagement; moderately high correlations are predicted between scales that overlap in content
2. To explore how dispositional motivation and engagement are related to self-rated performance



Method

> Participants

- Data collected online with 371 participants (all employed)
- 45% women
- Ages ranged from under 18 to over 65 with 56% being between 25 and 39 years old
- Most people indicated to have 6-10 years of work experience (22.37%), followed by 2-10 years (15.90%) and 11-15 years (15.90%)
- 43.6% indicated to have managerial responsibility
- International sample, 41.8% living in the UK, 20.8% in Australia

- Dispositional motivation:
 - > SHL Motivation Questionnaire (MQ; SHL, 1992)
 - > 18 scales that measure the extent to which individuals describe themselves to be motivated by certain features in a work setting (e.g. Achievement, Affiliation)
- Work-role engagement:
 - > Absorption (3 items, $\alpha=0.84$), e.g. "I get absorbed in my job"
 - > Energy (3 items, $\alpha=0.89$), e.g. "I feel energised when I am working"
- Self-rated work performance:
 - > Effort (3 items, e.g. working hard, putting effort into one's job; $\alpha=0.92$),
 - > Extra-role behaviour (3 items, e.g. helping co-workers, identifying new ways of improving work methods; $\alpha: 0.66$)

> Procedure

- Conceptual overlap between 18 scale pairs of MQ and two engagement scales established by two subject matter experts (-> concordance matrix of 36 cells)
- Ratings of conceptual overlap based on item content using a five-point continuum (see Warr, 1999)

| Rating | Concordance |
|--------|------------------------------------|
| -2 | High level of negative concordance |
| -1 | Some limited negative concordance |
| 0 | No concordance |
| 1 | Some limited positive concordance |
| 2 | High level of positive concordance |

> Procedure

- Conceptual overlap between 18 scale pairs of MQ and two engagement scales established by two subject matter experts (-> concordance matrix of 36 cells)
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Example mappings

| Motivation | Engagement | |
|-------------------|---------------|-------------------|
| MQ | Energy | Absorption |
| Level of Activity | 2 | 1 |
| Personal Growth | 0 | 1 |
| Material Reward | 0 | 0 |



Results

> Concordance matrix

- Average and median correlation values between pairs of engagement and MQ scales for different concordance levels
- Correlation between conceptual and empirical matrices: 0.62

| Concordance | Mean r | Median r |
|---------------------------|----------|------------|
| -2 | n/a | n/a |
| -1 | n/a | n/a |
| 0 | 0.06 | 0.05 |
| 0 abs | 0.09 | 0.07 |
| +1 | 0.22 | 0.25 |
| +2 | 0.26 | 0.33 |
| Overall predicted | 0.23 | 0.25 |
| Overall unpredicted (abs) | 0.09 | 0.07 |

> Regression analyses

- Step 1: Conceptually concordant MQ scales (+1 or +2)
- Step 2: Matching engagement scale (*Energy* or *Absorption*)
- Dependent variables: *Effort* and *OCB*
- This procedure resulted in four regression analyses
- Both *Absorption* and *Energy* incrementally accounted for variance well above the MQ scales ($p < .001$)
- Multiple r 's ranged from .51 to .68, indicating that dispositional motivation and state engagement explained a significant amount of the variance in self-rated performance

> Regression analyses predicting *Effort*

- Incremental validity explained by *Energy* when controlling for concordant MQ scales

| Dependent variable: Self-rated <i>Effort</i> | | | | | |
|--|------------|----------------|-------------------------|--------------------|---------------|
| | Multiple R | R ² | Adjusted R ² | R ² cha | Sig. F-change |
| STEP 1 | | | | | |
| Concordant MQ scales | .42 | .18 | .16 | .18 | .000 |
| STEP 2 | | | | | |
| Energy | .63 | .40 | .39 | .22 | .000 |

> Regression analyses predicting *Effort*

- Incremental validity explained by *Absorption* when controlling for concordant MQ scales

| Dependent variable: Self-rated <i>Effort</i> | | | | | |
|--|------------|----------------|-------------------------|--------------------|---------------|
| | Multiple R | R ² | Adjusted R ² | R ² cha | Sig. F-change |
| STEP 1 | | | | | |
| Concordant MQ scales | .38 | .14 | .13 | .14 | .000 |
| STEP 2 | | | | | |
| Absorption | .51 | .26 | .25 | .12 | .000 |

> Regression analyses predicting *OCB*

- Incremental validity explained by *Energy* when controlling for concordant MQ scales

| Dependent variable: Self-rated <i>OCB</i> | | | | | |
|---|---------------|----------------|----------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| | Multiple R | R ² | Adjusted R ² | R ² cha | Sig. F- change |
| STEP 1 | | | | | |
| Concordant MQ scales | .48 | .23 | .22 | .23 | .000 |
| Energy | .68 | .46 | .45 | .23 | .000 |

> Regression analyses predicting *OCB*

- Incremental validity explained by *Absorption* when controlling for concordant MQ scales

| Dependent variable: Self-rated <i>OCB</i> | | | | | |
|---|------------|----------------|-------------------------|--------------------|---------------|
| | Multiple R | R ² | Adjusted R ² | R ² cha | Sig. F-change |
| STEP 1 | | | | | |
| Concordant MQ scales | 0.43 | .18 | .17 | .18 | .000 |
| Absorption | 0.57 | .32 | .31 | .14 | .000 |



Discussion

> Dispositional motivation and engagement

- Dispositional motivation and two facets of engagement (*Absorption* and *Energy*) were moderately highly related as hypothesised
- Higher relationships found for scale pairs that overlap in content
- Both can be viewed on a motivational continuum ranging from dispositional trait-like to situation-specific motivation; correlations between scale pairs supported the conceptual relationships.
- Moreover, engagement incrementally predicted self-rated performance over and above conceptually concordant motivation scales
-> both measure different aspects of motivation accounting for unique variance

> Limitations

- Potential common source and common method bias as all measures relied on self-ratings; external ratings of performance would be desirable
- Results are based on only one sample

> Practical relevance

- In combination dispositional and state measures of motivation are likely to help explain more variation in self-rated performance than one measure alone
- This supports approaches that emphasise person-situation interaction (e.g. Mischel & Shoda, 1995)
- In certain settings only the application of one measure might be feasible such as deploying a dispositional motivation instrument for selection and assessment
- To help understand employee performance in the life cycle better however, state-specific measures of motivation can support employee development



Thank you.