



Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development

**EXPLORING MOTIVATORS AND CHALLENGES OF WORK
ENGAGEMENT: A STUDY IN ONE EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT**

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**Bachelor Of Science with Honours
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2021

Grade: A

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Final Year Project Report

Masters

PhD

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**EXPLORING MOTIVATORS AND CHALLENGES OF WORK ENGAGEMENT: A
STUDY IN ONE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT**

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This project is submitted
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a
Bachelor of Science with Honours
(Human Resource Development)

Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SARAWAK
(2021)

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT

To begin, I want to express my gratitude to God, the Almighty, for continuously showering me with blessings during my journey to successfully complete the study. I thank Him for providing me with the strength to finish this study, the fortitude to persevere, and the information required to accomplish this study successfully.

To my supervisor, Dr. Victoria Jonathan, thank you for your unwavering support and invaluable advice throughout this study. I appreciate your faith in me and your constant encouragement to achieve better, which brings out the best in me. It is really appreciated that you provide unending assistance and direction.

Furthermore, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my informants for their constant cooperation, time, and dedication during the interview. We appreciate the time and effort out of your hectic schedules to respond to the interview questions. I am able to do this study with the assistance provided.

Moreover, I am very thankful to my great friends for the continuous motivation and help that we provided to each other in order to keep one another going till the very end.

On the top of that, I'd want to show my thankfulness for my family's continuous encouragement and affection. My parents and siblings deserve a huge thank you for their patience, love, care, prayers, and sacrifices in helping me finish this research. I might not be able to accomplish my research effectively if it weren't for their unconditional love, care, and financial and emotional support.

Last but not least, I wanna thank me, for believing in me, for doing all the hard work, for having no days off, for never quitting and for just being me at all times.

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ABSTRACT

EXPLORING MOTIVATORS AND CHALLENGES OF WORK ENGAGEMENT: A STUDY IN ONE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

YVETTE ORDELLEA DEWIN

Work engagement is vital in every organization since engaged people perform better than other employees and contribute to higher organizational performance. The purpose of this study is to investigate the significance of work engagement in one education department at the District Education Office at Sibuh. The Job-Demands Resources (JD-R) model was adopted in this study. This study was completely designed utilizing the qualitative method, and a case study was adapted. Despite the fact that a limited sample size was used to provide the information required by the researcher, the two specific objectives of the study were also achieved by collecting intriguing data. In order to obtain data, a semi-structured interview was performed with the eighth informant. Purposive sampling was used to acquire all informants. This study addressed some of the factors that drive work engagement, such as their opportunity to acquire new experience, their passion for work, recognition, co-worker support, promotion, on-going learning and a supportive working environment, as well as some of the challenges that SISC+ encounter in the workplace. The study identified several challenges to work engagement, including a lack of facilities, teachers with a bad attitude who are unwilling to adapt, and a lack of coordination owing to a lack of leadership abilities. Besides that, implication and recommendations with all associated parties involved in the study. Finally, the researcher believes that this study will provide a thorough understanding of the study of work engagement.

Keywords: work engagement, motivation factors, challenge, public sector employees

ABSTRAK

MENEROKA MOTIVATOR DAN CABARAN KETERIKATAN KERJA: KAJIAN DI SATU JABATAN PENDIDIKAN

Keterikatan kerja sangat penting di setiap organisasi kerana orang yang terlibat berprestasi lebih baik daripada pekerja lain dan menyumbang kepada prestasi organisasi yang lebih tinggi. Tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk mengkaji kepentingan keterikatan kerja di satu jabatan pendidikan di Pejabat Pendidikan Daerah SibU. Model Job-Demands Resources (JD-R) diadopsi dalam kajian ini. Kajian ini dirancang sepenuhnya dengan menggunakan kaedah kualitatif, dan satu kajian kes disesuaikan. Walaupun ukuran sampel yang terhad digunakan untuk memberikan maklumat yang diperlukan oleh penyelidik, dua objektif kajian ini juga dapat dicapai dengan mengumpulkan data yang menarik. Untuk mendapatkan data, wawancara separa berstruktur dilakukan dengan lapan informan. Persampelan bertujuan digunakan untuk memperoleh semua informan. Kajian ini menangani beberapa faktor yang mendorong keterikatan kerja, seperti peluang mereka memperoleh pengalaman baru, semangat mereka untuk bekerja, pengiktirafan, sokongan rakan sekerja, kenaikan pangkat, pembelajaran berterusan dan persekitaran kerja yang menyokong, serta beberapa cabaran yang dihadapi oleh SISC + di tempat kerja. Kajian ini mengenal pasti beberapa cabaran untuk melakukan pekerjaan, termasuk kekurangan kemudahan, guru yang mempunyai sikap tidak baik yang tidak ingin menyesuaikan diri, dan kurangnya koordinasi kerana kurangnya kemampuan kepimpinan. Selain itu, implikasi dan cadangan dengan semua pihak berkaitan yang terlibat dalam kajian ini. Akhirnya, penyelidik percaya bahawa kajian ini akan memberikan pemahaman yang mendalam mengenai kajian keterikatan kerja.

Kata-kata kunci: keterikatan kerja, faktor motivasi, cabaran, pekerja sektor awam

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 BACKGROUND OF STUDY

Work engagement has become one of the most critical priorities for human resource managers and professionals in organizations in the current business situation due to the lockdown during the COVID-19 pandemic (Chanana, 2020). According to Schaufeli (2013), there has been a sharp annual increase in the number of publications in the last few years between 2000 and 2010 of around 1,600 papers published under the heading "work engagement" or "employee engagement." Work engagement that has been existed for many years has been used by numerous authors in quite different ways, often without a clear meaning (Thomas, 2009).

According to study conducted by Aon Hewitt (2017), Malaysia's employee engagement levels have dropped dramatically by 3 percent to 59 percent, marking the first time in four years that the country has experienced such a drop. As a result, Malaysian employees are the least engaged among the major Asian markets. As the economy increases, the rate of work engagement is steadily rising, but research has shown that many organizations are still struggling to find adequate facilities to provide employees with growth opportunities and other key drivers of engagement (Tran, 2018).

There is little current literature on the issues, because the definition of employee engagement is unclear and has not been extensively studied until recently (Tran, 2018). It appears that there is a lack of research about the predictors of engagement (Vannan & Sanchita, 2020). In this paper, the purpose of this research is aimed to explore the factors affecting public sector employee work engagement, the barriers to job engagement, and the

organization's causes of obstacles and disengagement. While research must increasingly develop the understanding of the nature, causes and implications of involvement, it is necessary for accumulated information on participation to be converted into practical applications to promote the health, well-being and success of individuals, teams and organizations (Guest, 2014; Schaufeli & Salanova, 2010).

1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Recently, according to "The Impact of COVID-19 on Employee Engagement A Quantum Workplace Benchmark Report and Analysis" (2020) by Quantum Workplace found out that leadership, communication, and wellbeing are increasing dramatically during the pandemic. There is only little-known study about how these factors influence the work engagement that have been conducted in Malaysia context. According to Tauhed, Rasdi, Samah, & Ibrahim (2018) suggested that future qualitative study is recommended for a deeper understanding of work engagement. As according to Shokunbi (2016), many of the previous studies from hypothesis testing were focused on studies (e.g. Harter et al., 2002; May et al., 2004; Saks, 2006).

As mentioned by Creswell (2013) due to the emphasis on hypothesis testing instead of on theory building, the researcher can miss phenomena occurring. The original interpretations of study participants may not be expressed in quantitative studies (Choy, 2014; Creswell, 2013). Hence, this research paper seeks to identify in more specific issues on factor that contribute them to motivate in work engagement. According to Bakker and Albrecht (2018), continuous research is required to refine and improve current knowledge in conjunction with "big picture" future research on work engagement.

There has been limited academic research being done on drivers of work engagement (Collins, 2013). Nevertheless, there is still insufficient studies focusing the barriers to work engagement. The purpose of this study is to examine the barriers to employee engagement from the employee's viewpoint. Most of the previous studies that have been conducted in western countries such as Europe, North America, and a few from Australia (Mun, Suhaimi, Abdullah, Abdul Rahman & Nik Mat, 2012).

Thus, studies are limited focusing on public sector organization because majority in Malaysia studies were focused within the private organisation, for e.g Johari, Adnan, Yean, Yahya and Isa (2013) and Mun et. al (2013). According to Jin & McDonald (2016), It is essential to differentiate between public and private sector organisations because the circumstances in which government managers work may make inspiring their staff more challenging. This is due to the fact that, in contrast to private sector organisations, the public sector has frequent and sudden changes in leadership, making it even more difficult to motivate employees.

Although studies have been performed in Malaysia, they have mostly focused on West Malaysia rather than East Malaysia (Idrirs, Dollard, & Tuckey 2015, Mansor, Jaharudin, & Nata, 2018). According to Ahmad and Bakar (2003), they indicated that in the sense of Malaysia, research is needed because Malaysia has an unpredictable market climate. It can be used to systematically understand what affects participation by looking at particular demographic groups from various generations (people with disabilities; millennials; older workers) through specific segments of the market, such as corporate, public or non-profit sectors and in different professions, indicating that further research is useful (Bakker & Albrecht, 2018).

1.2 OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

1.2.1 GENERAL OBJECTIVE

To explore the motivators and barriers of work engagement among public sector employees.

1.2.2 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

1. To identify the driving factors of work engagement among public sector employee.
2. To outline the challenges of work engagement public sector employee.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTION

1. What are the motivators of work engagement among public sector employees in the workplace?
2. What are the challenges that may face by the public sector employees from work engagement?

1.4 RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

The framework for this study will be described in three main sections, namely the context of the research, the issues to be addressed and the method to be used to collect and analyze the data (refer to Figure 1.1).

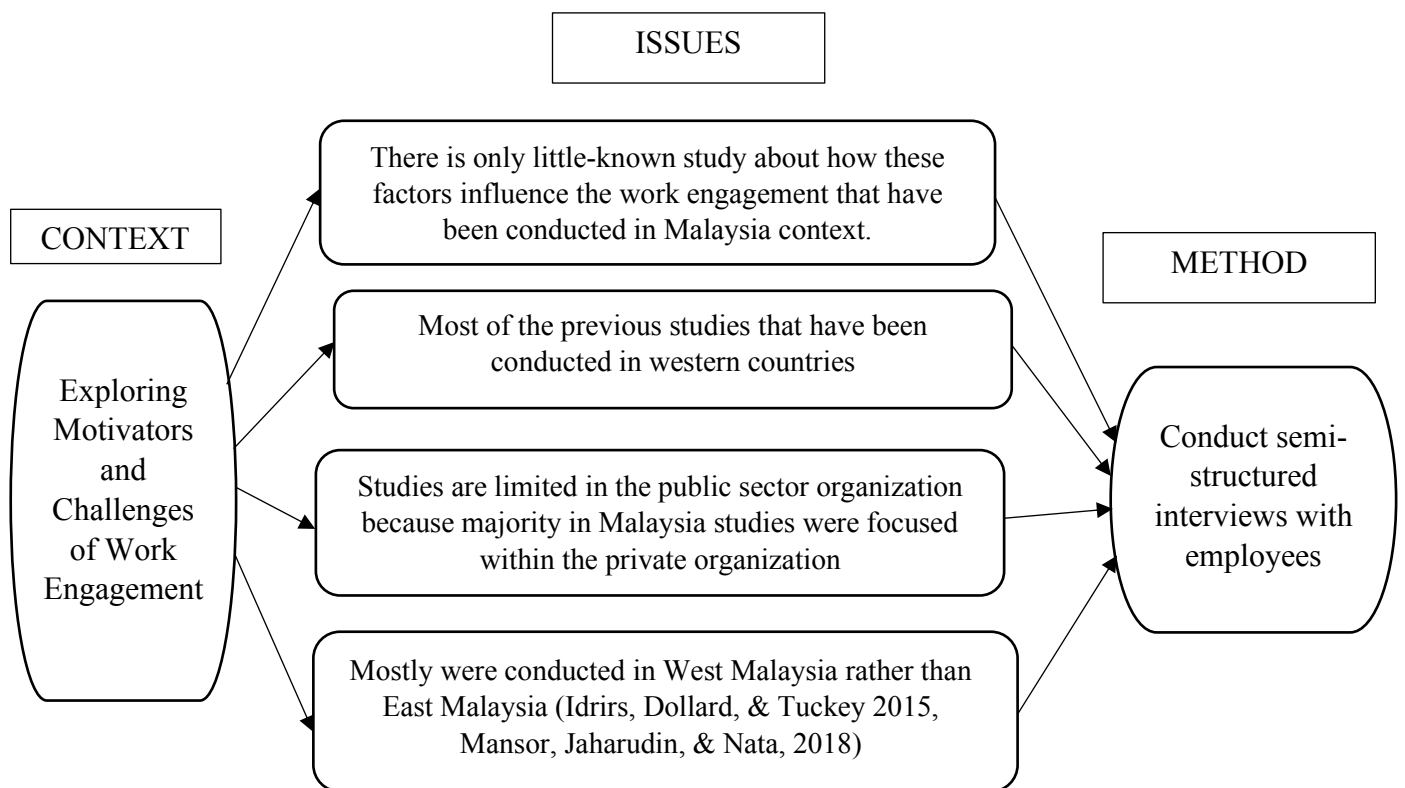


Figure 1.1 Conceptual framework of this study

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

1.5.1 KNOWLEDGE

The findings of this study benefit numerous parties by adding to the body of knowledge about work engagement. This study can be referred to by researchers and human resource practitioners in order to gain a better insight of the motivators that can encourage employees to be engaged, as well as the barriers that prohibit employees from being engaged in the workplace. It is critical to adopt employee engagement practises in the public departments to ensure satisfied and productive employees. This is because failing to do so may result in the firm incurring substantial losses due to the cost or deficit associated with employee disengagement. Additionally, this study helps students gain a better grasp of work engagement. Furthermore, this study may serve as a new source of reference for future researchers interested in conducting similar research. Therefore, with the awareness of what motivates the employee, this study will allow the organization to enhance work engagement in line with the current needs of the employee. The findings of this study can assist in the conduct of future research by providing information about the motivators and barriers to work engagement.

1.5.2 ORGANIZATION

Since this research showed that increased work engagement has been linked to increased performance, less turnover, and increased job satisfaction, management should concentrate on enhancing and sustaining work engagement as a goal. By understanding the issues that employees encounter on the work, organizations can obtain new insights on how to enhance the working environment, making it more suitable and attractive to employees, which encourages them to stay engaged. The results from this research have provided the public departments with knowledge to identify challenges in order to lower the number of disengaged employees and to truly

comprehend current work engagement. In addition, the results of this study can provide ideas to the public departments to conducting new training to improve the motivation of employees by introducing them to the values of their job and organization.

1.5.3 HRD PRACTICE

In terms of HR practices, it can provide ideas and guidance to existing potential HR to understand better about work engagement. Besides that, with the awareness of what motivates the employee, this study will allow the HR practice to enhance work engagement in line with the current needs of the employee. By identifying the challenges that the employers face with disengagement employees, the HRD practices in terms of work design can be adjusted better with their working environment. Additionally, the outcomes of this research may aid the human resources department in developing and implementing policies that will result in a motivated staff that works together to accomplish the organization's shared goals.

1.6 LIMITATION OF STUDY

There are some limitations of this study. In accordance with COVID-19, the researcher is struggle with time limits because participants are unable to be interviewed in a group setting. Furthermore, it causes an issue due to a weak WiFi connection during the online interview. Apart from that, the region of research is another limitation in this study as this research covered specific geographic area such as Sibuluhur only.

As some of the interviews are performed in the respondents' workplace, they may be influenced by their surroundings in terms of loyalty and bias. As a result, the respondents' ability to answer the questions honestly may be compromised.

1.7 DEFINITION OF TERMS

Table 1.1

Definition of terms

Term	Conceptual Definition	Operational Definition
1. Work Engagement	According to Saks (2006), Work engagement is about the way a person is truly fascinated by the success of his / her own role in the job.	For this study, job engagement refers to someone who is very committed to the success of his work.
2. Motivators	According to Mohanan et al (2012), Motivation is associated with factors that affect people's actions in some ways.	In this study, A factor that gives a person an outcome or purpose to be engaged in the workplace.
3. Challenges	As mentioned by Swarnalatha & Prasanna (2013), In the workplace, depressed workers are likely to be less involved and less productive.	In this study, A factor that gives a person an outcome or purpose to be engaged in the workplace.
4. Public Sector	The public sector may be defined as governments and other organizations, companies, and institutions that offer public programs, goods, or services. <i>(Supplemental Guidance: Public Sector Definition, 2011)</i>	In the context of this study, the public sector consists of organizations that are owned and managed by the government with the purpose of providing services to its people.

1.8 SUMMARY

This chapter address about background of study that related with the work engagement, problem of statement, research objectives, research questions, significant and limitation of the study and the last is ended with definition of terms that have been used in this study. The next chapter will address about literature review that associated with this research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the researcher will be discussed in the first section on the concept of work engagement. It will then be followed by the theory that will be used in this study, which is the job demands-resources (JD-R) model. The next section will address the motivators and challenges of work engagement whereas the last section is the summary of this chapter.

2.1 CONCEPT OF WORK ENGAGEMENT

The concept of employee engagement was first described by Kahn (1990) as “...harnessing of organization member’s selves to their work roles: in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, emotionally and mentally during role performances” (p. 694). There are three influential elements of work engagement: physical, cognitive, and emotional. According to Kim et al. (2019), since then scholars have started to use various terms of engagement, such as employee engagement, work engagement, and job engagement.

Employee engagement is focused with how employees perform about the company for which they work, whereas work engagement is concerned with the job that they perform for the organization and the fulfilment that they receive as a result of the work that they do for the organization (Lee et al., 2019). This study will use work engagement definition by Schaufeli (2013) that refers to work engagement as the employee's relationship with his or her work, while the relationship with the company can also involve employee engagement.

From the 'burnout' literature, another model of engagement appears, defining work engagement as the opposite of burnout, while burnout is seen by the erosion of engagement with one's job (Maslach et al 2001). Engagement is defined by energy, involvement, and efficacy however according to Maslach et al. (2001), the exact opposite of the three burnout aspects of exhaustion, cynicism, and inefficacy. According to them, there are six work-life areas that contribute to either burnout or engagement: workload, power, incentives and appreciation, community and social support, perceived fairness, and values.

But engagement is described by Schaufeli et al. (2002) as "a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind characterized by vigor, dedication and absorption" (p. 74). Vigor was described as "a high level of energy and mental resilience while working, a willingness to invest effort in one's work" (p. 74). Dedication has been described as "a sense of meaning, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride and challenge" (p. 74). And Absorption was described as "being fully concentrated and deeply engrossed in one's work, in whereby time passes quickly and one has difficulties detaching oneself from work" (p. 75).

As outlined by Rich, LePine and Crawford (2010) work engagement is a critical factor influencing both individual and organizational success. While engagement is concerned with the work itself, organisational commitment is concerned with the employee's devotion to the organisation (Masvaure et al., 2014). In a study conducted by Rothmann and Rothmann (2010), engaged employees had a strong connection to their job activities, were enthusiastic, felt to be in charge of their work, and put in more effort. Fredrickson (2001) also implied that employees who are engaged work on their own resources as a result of the pleasant feelings they encounter at work.

2.2 JOB DEMAND RESOURCE MODEL

The Job Demand Resources Theory (JD-R) is one of the most frequently used theories to explain work engagement that can be divided into two sections, job demands and job resources, which are linked differently to real workplace outcomes (Demerouti & Bakker, 2001). Job demands include work overloads and work uncertainty, the position complexity, time and role burden or conflict that involve the sustainability of physical, mental and physiological effort from the employee that can result in their physical, mental and physiological costs (Saks, & Gruman, 2014). It is a kind of stressor that is negatively affecting employees (Kim, & Wang 2018). Besides that,

In the meantime, “Job resources refer to those physical, psychological, social, or organisational aspects of the job that are either/or: 1) functional in achieving work goals; 2) reduce job demands and the associated physiological and psycho-logical costs; and 3) stimulate personal growth, learning, and development” (Demerouti & Bakker, 2011, p. 2). According to Demerouti et al (2003), resources may be located at different levels: organization, interpersonal relations, composition of work, and at the level of employment. As eloquently stated by Kim and Wang (2018), if workers lack of resources, they will not be able to cope with the negative effect of the demands, and they will eventually struggle to achieve the goal. Orgambidez et al. (2014) indicated that JDR model predicts job resources are linked to engagement, while work demands related to burnout.

In their study, numerous previous researchers have applied the JD-R model to describe engagement (Albrecht et al., 2015; Bakker & Demerouti, 2007, 2008; Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001; Rana, 2015; Rana, Ardichvili, & Tkachenko, 2014; Schaufeli, 2013; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Schaufeli, Bakker, & Van Rhenen, 2009).

Orgambidez et al. (2014) suggested that a framework for identifying engaged employees and motivating workplaces is provided by the JDR model. Coetzer and

Rothmann (2007) mentioned that job resources can motivate individuals intrinsically by fostering growth, learning, and development, or extrinsically by assisting individuals in achieving work goals.

For this research, the JD-R model is most fitting because this study is about work engagement and has been commonly used in most work engagement theoretical models

2.3 MOTIVATORS OF WORK ENGAGEMENT

Work motivation is often classified as intrinsic or extrinsic, indicating that various incentives have a unique effect on employee motivation (Kuranchie-Mensah et al., 2016). Extrinsic incentives are tangible benefits that employees earn, while intrinsic rewards provide employees with a sense of personal fulfilment. According to Mariza (2016), several authors have attempted to describe factors that contribute to work engagement and have tried to identify the drivers that increase work engagement.

2.3.1 INTRINSIC REWARD

Passion toward work

The role of passion for work is a major factor in work engagement, as studied by Shokunbi et al., (2019). Shokunbi et al., (2019) stated that positive reinforcement, values and identity, and intrinsic reward were discovered to be the primary themes determining how passion for work precedes job engagement in terms of motivation.

Shokunbi (2016) indicated that when an individual is passionate about their profession, it is easier to create interest and passion for being involved in that work. Besides, Shokunbi (2016) discovered that passion for work was a contributor to job engagement. According to a previous research conducted by Ho, Wong, and Lee (2011), work passion is definitely linked with engagement. In addition, this emphasised Gilbert and Foley (2012)'s finding that work engagement is related with work passion.