

THE LEVEL OF JOB ENGAGEMENT AMONG ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS AT ROYAL MALAYSIA POLICE

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Abstract: *Job engagement is a wide issue that focuses on the symbiotic relationship that exists between employees and organizations. This research addressed issues about the impact of job characteristics on the job engagement of enforcement officers. The research objectives were to investigate the level of job engagement among enforcement officers and to examine if job characteristics (skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, feedback) predict job engagement (physical, cognitive, emotional). A snowball sampling technique was used where enforcement officers from the Royal Malaysian Police were invited to take part in this research. 138 enforcement officers responded to the questionnaire. The findings revealed that the majority of the respondents were male (73.9%), age (31-40 years old, 56.5%), married (84.8%), and fairly inexperienced with 6-10 years of working experience (27%). It was also found that the level of job engagement was high with physical engagement ($M=5.05$, $SD=0.62$), cognitive engagement ($M=5.00$, $SD=0.75$), and emotional engagement ($M=4.99$, $SD=0.80$). In assessing the level of job engagement among enforcement officers, the majority of the respondents reported that they were highly embarking on job engagement ($M=5.01$, $SD=0.62$).*

Keywords: *Job Engagement, Physical Engagement, Cognitive Engagement, Emotional Engagement*

Introduction

Engagement may be a lengthy process for an organization (Sridevi, 2010). Work or job engagement is described as a positive, fulfilling state of mind associated with work that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli, et. al., 2002a). However, Smythe (2007) stated that employee engagement is first and foremost a management philosophy founded on the concept of putting the right people in the right locations at the right time and in the right way. Then, Hackman & Oldham (1975) stated job engagement as the degree to which an employee feels genuinely accountable and liable for the consequences of the work. Researchers have focused on job engagement as a critical mediating construct capable of transferring the effect of HRM-related antecedents on positive employee and organizational outcomes (Memon et al., 2020). The active participation of an individual in a certain position is related to engagement. According to Schaufelli (2013), "employee engagement" and "job engagement" are often used interchangeably because both refer to the employee's relationship with his or her job and the organization. Employees' job engagement and performance are improved when proactive behaviors are used to initiate changes to their work (Tims & Derk, 2013). Karanika-Murray et al., (2015) stated that job engagement leads to positive outcomes for employees, including job satisfaction and performance. Therefore, Positive experiences and mindset can improve work outcomes, including attitude and intention.

Problem Statement

Job engagement is characterized as the level to which individuals experience an intense connection to their organization (Anwar and Qadir (2017). Business owners have become skeptical in recent years about the worldwide recession and the reduction in employee engagement caused by the incursion of young people (Park, 2019). As a consequence of these scenarios, businesses are now dealing with challenges never before encountered (Juergensen, Guimón & Narula, 2020). Simpson (2009) stated in his literature analysis, that 63 percent of the papers reviewed demonstrated that the causes and effects of job engagement are not static. Rather than the overall structure of personality, environmental variables appear to impact the range and style of manifestation of particular qualities (Schroeder, Wormworth & Livesley, 2002). Bakker, Demerouti & Lieke (2012) reported that the meta-analysis of 114 samples confirmed that personality traits explained 48.10% of the variance in employee engagement, 19.60% of the variance in conscientiousness, and 14.10% of the variance in extraversion, with other dimensions (neuroticism, agreeableness, and openness to experience. According to The Star (2020), based on a recent Qualtrics survey, Malaysians have an average employee engagement rate of 54 percent and become the seventh most engaged country in the world. Despite the score being somewhat higher than the global average of 53%, Qualtrics discovered that 30% of Malaysians wanted to leave their jobs over the next two years. Despite job engagement having received considerable research attention, the potential to frustrate a chosen career, job characteristics, and employee personality traits for the functioning and effectiveness of working groups deserve to be examined and treated seriously.

Research Questions

To investigate the level of job engagement among enforcement officers.

Literature Review

Job Characteristics

Job characteristics influence three critical psychological states, which then impact personal and work outcomes such as work effectiveness, absenteeism, work motivation, growth satisfaction,

and overall satisfaction (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). The term "job characteristics" was coined in 1975 by Oldham and Hackman. They developed the first version of the Job Characteristics Theory (JCT), which was based on the work of Turner and Lawrence (1965) and Hackman and Lawler (1971). Turner and Lawrence (1965) laid the groundwork for objective job characteristics in work design. According to Stajkovic (2006), to be effective, personnel must have both the talent (characteristics) and the drive to finish a task. Employees are highly required to discover all three critical psychological states from Job Characteristics to achieve the proposed outcomes based on the theory. Employees who experienced these states, in particular, felt good about themselves and their work and were thus reinforced by positive feelings to perform consistently well.

Skill Variety

The degree to which a job requires the performance of a wide range of operations and/or the degree to which employees must use a variety of equipment and procedures in their work is referred to as skill variety. Chopra (2014) defines skill variety as a group of both knowledge and technical skills required for a job and the basis on which candidates are chosen. Skill variety is also known as task variety and job or task complexity (Griffin, Hogan & Lambert, 2012). This means that individuals in jobs with high skill variety will need to use multiple skills and talents to carry out their tasks. This can make the job more interesting and engaging, as well as provide opportunities for learning and development. On the other hand, jobs with low skill variety may involve a more limited range of tasks and require a narrower set of skills.

Task Identity

Task identity refers to completing a whole and identifiable piece of work whereas an employee believes they have primarily contributed to a significant production or achievement. Task identity and task significance are work scope factors that define how significant a job is and how it affects the lives of others (Hackman & Oldham, 1980). On the other hand, jobs with low task identity may involve working on a smaller part of a larger project or process, and may not provide as clear a sense of accomplishment or connection to the final product or outcome. Individuals prefer to see a task from start to finish and the entire completed work because it provides a sense of meaningfulness (Ryan, Ghazali & Mohsin, 2011).

Task Significance

Task significance contributes to meaningfulness because employees may also see tasks and job requirements like engagement with others as an important part of making a difference in the lives of others. According to Schnell, Hoge, and Pollet (2013), task significance is the view that one's work benefits others and has perpetually formed as one of the strongest predictors of meaningful work, implying that task significance could be an essential component for improving meaningful work. According to constrained experimental research in the field, task significance manipulations increase meaningful work (Allan, 2017). Task significance, as a precursor to experienced meaningfulness, assists employees in perceiving their work as worthwhile and valuable.

Autonomy

Autonomy is a key workplace feature that impacts the second essential psychological state, feelings of responsibility for work results. Autonomy refers to the freedom, independence, and judgment in carrying out one's responsibilities. According to Jackson, Wall, Martin, and Davids (1993), autonomy entails flexibility in three aspects of work: the order and scheduling of work activities, the criteria used to evaluate job performance, and the techniques utilized to execute

the work. According to Muecke, Linderman-Hill & Greenwald (2020), employees who have greater job autonomy are predicted to encounter more challenging commands at work, such as task difficulties or authority. Employees seek more challenges as their autonomy and meaning in their jobs grow, which increases their energy levels (Zuniga, 2023).

Feedback

Feedback is the final fundamental job feature that influences the ultimate key psychological state, knowledge of job results. Feedback is the outcome of a work that provides immediate and unambiguous information on the efficacy of an individual's performance. Hans and Gupta (2018) defined feedback as clear indicators of employees' performance and the quality of their outcomes. Job-based feedback is based on results literature, in which feedback efficiency has been linked to performance indicators. According to Coelho and Augusto (2010), job feedback has been demonstrated to boost employees' knowledge acquisition, personal development, and satisfaction with job tasks, resulting in individual innovation. Positive and negative feedback are both thought to be beneficial (Elder et. al., 2007). People who see failures in life, have poor self-confidence, and are less optimistic, on the other hand, would not desire more feedback to avoid psychologically uncomfortable and dangerous information.

Job Engagement

The term "job engagement" can be traced back to Kahn (1990) who defined personal engagement as well as personal disengagement. Personal engagement was defined as the harnessing of organizational members' selves to their work roles; during role performances, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally. Engagement is linked to a variety of positive outcomes, including better health (Seppälä et. al., 2012); motivational outcomes (Albrecht, 2013); positive emotions (Rodriguez-Munoz et. al., 2014), creativity (Bakker & Xanthopoulou, 2013), personal initiative (Hakanen Perhoniemi & Toppinen-Tanner, 2008), work performance (Halbesleben & Wheeler, 2008), daily financial returns (Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti & Schaufeli, 2009), higher profitability and reduced negative health outcomes (Harter, Schmidt & Keyes, 2003).

Physical Engagement

The physical component of engagement refers to the amount of effort expended in one's position, such as when doing a job. When people play a part, they physically express themselves (Kahn, 1990). This endeavor can range from mild to great, corresponding to low to high involvement. According to Rich, LePine & Crawford (2010), Kahn proposed that physical energy may be directed to a variety of different tasks, including on-task, off-task, and self-regulation activities. Previous studies have found a significant positive connection between effort and performance (Hackman and Oldham, 1976). According to the researchers, time spent on a task demonstrates role presence rather than role engagement. As a result, effort assessed as intensity is strongly connected to performance (Brown and Leigh, 1996).

Cognitive Engagement

Cognitive engagement refers to the degree to which employees are invested in learning, challenging themselves, and dedicating themselves to understanding their work. Locke and Latham (1990) stated cognitive engagement as the length of time spent thinking and the intensity degree of an individual's focus on the job, often known as attention. Kahn also defined absorption as a sustained concentration and attention state (as explored by Locke and Latham, 1990). Theoretically, both absorption and attention can be connected to involvement via self-regulation (Lee, Idris & Delfabbro, 2016).

Emotional Engagement

Emotional engagement is founded as a positive relationship is required by the organization to learn how to create a sense of belonging at work, encouraging employees to trust and buy into the company's values and mission (Kahn, 1990). Individuals are completely present in their work, according to Rich, LePine & Crawford (2010) because of an emotional link between themselves and their tasks. In agreement with Kahn (1990), Rich, LePine & Crawford (2010) found that individuals demonstrate engagement in their work responsibilities when they are emotionally involved in their employment. Emotionally engaged employees may feel a strong sense of attachment to their work, enjoy positive relationships with their colleagues and managers, and feel aligned with their organization's values and mission.

Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 below displays the conceptual framework for the relationship between Job Characteristics and Job Engagement.

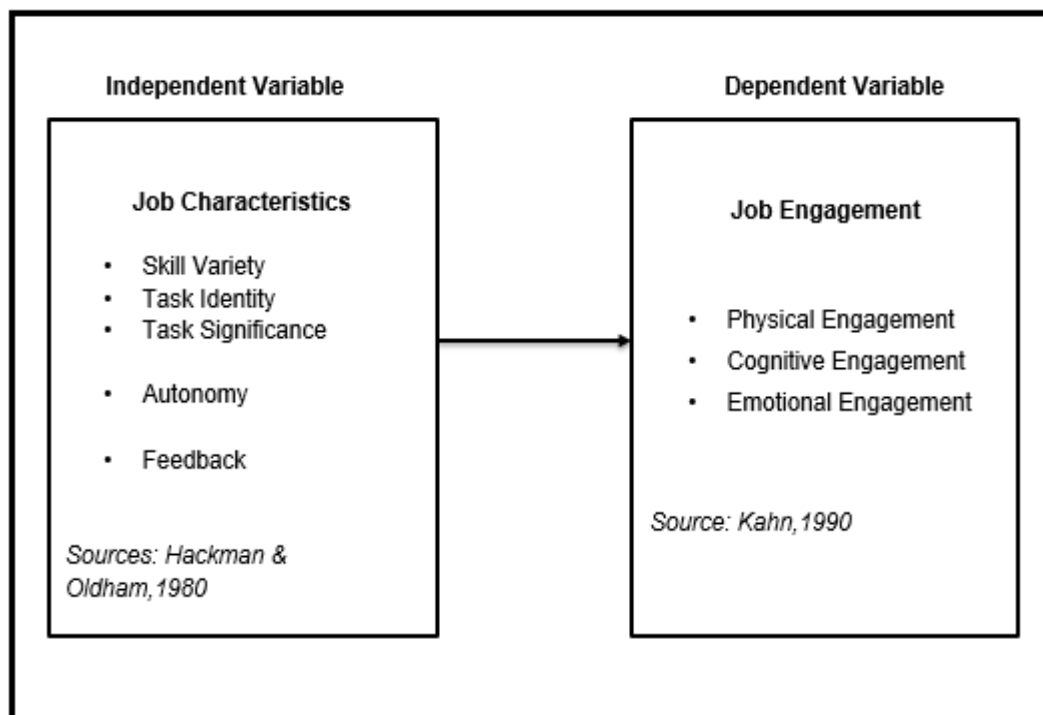


Figure1. Conceptual Framework

Methodology

The data was collected from enforcement officers of the Royal Malaysia Police. The study managed to get 138 respondents using snowball sampling to answer the questionnaires which were distributed online via Google Forms. The link to access the questionnaire was distributed by electing one representative from the Royal Malaysia Police to disseminate the link to the questionnaire. A correlational research method was employed to investigate the relationship as well as the predictors of the antecedents of job characteristics towards the job engagement of the enforcement officers. The data were analyzed using SPSS 29 where descriptive statistics, correlation, and regression analyses were applied to find answers to the research questions

Results and Discussions

Table 1: Demographic Profiles of Respondents

Respondents' Profile	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	102	73.9
Female	36	26.1
Total	138	100
Age		
20 – 30 years old	16	11.6
31 – 40 years old	78	56.5
41 – 50 years old	40	29
51-60 years old	4	2.9
Total	138	100
Marital Status		
Single	17	12.3
Married	117	84.8
Others	4	2.9
Total	138	100
Working Experience		
Less than 5 years	15	10.9
6 -10 years	38	27.5
11-15 years	29	21
16-20 years	30	21.7
More than 20 years	26	18.8
Total	138	100

Table 1 describes the demographic profiles of the respondents. The majority of the respondents were male (n=102, 73.9%), age (31-40 years old, n=78, 56.5%), married (n=117, 84.8%) and fairly inexperienced with 6-10 years of working experience (n=38, 27%). The organization must recognize the middle young workforce who will shaping the organization future direction. In consequence, comprehensive training is required to prepare the young impertinent talent to guide the organization future direction.

Descriptive Statistics

The interpretation of the level of job engagement scores is based on the Best Principle (Thaoprom, 2004). Scores are divided into three categories such as high, average and low and reported in means and standard deviations. Thus, the interpretation is categorized and interpreted as follows:

- Mean scores less than 2.33= Low scores
- Mean scores between 2.34 to 3.67= Average scores
- Mean scores more than 3.68= High scores

Table 2: Mean Scores for Job Engagement

Independent Variable(s)	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
Overall Job Engagement	138	5.0161	.62851	High Score
1. Physical Engagement	138	5.0580	.63923	High Score
2. Cognitive Engagement	138	5.0000	.75910	High Score
3. Emotional Engagement	138	4.9903	.80367	High Score

In assessing the level of job engagement among enforcement officers, the majority of the respondents reported that they were highly embarking on job engagement (M=5.01, SD=0.62) as displayed in Table 6.2. All other sub-variables (physical, cognitive, emotional) also revealed high scores as perceived by the respondents. This finding corresponds with Sidharta & Meily (2012) that employees who have a high level of engagement will exert more effort in achieving company goals.

Conclusion and Recommendation

As long as an employee is engaged with their job in an organization, they will not seek exit because they are constantly seeking a better work-life balance. These findings imply that all organisations should be more prepared for the consequences of repeated exposure to employees who are not engaged with their jobs. This study identified some key factors associated with positive outcomes. Future research should replicate this study with a focus group to determine whether the findings apply to the entire population in that segment.

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