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Work Engagement – A Systematic Review of Polish Research

Abstract: *Over the past decade work engagement has gained both business and academia attention. With growing number of studies and meta-analyses the concept of work engagement is one of the pillars of positive work and organizational psychology. This systematic review presents the current state of research on work engagement in Poland. Results confirmed that work-engagement studies have not yet reached the threshold to conduct meta-analysis. The review of measurement methods and synthesis of findings allows to identify strengths and gaps in Polish studies. Discussion of limitations and biases in current research is accompanied with urge to overcome them and develop thriving stream of research on work engagement.*

Key words: *research, Poland, review, work engagement, the UWES*

Introduction

Recently the concept of work engagement has gained both practitioners' and researchers' attention. Work engagement has arisen as one of the most popular research topics in psychology, management, organizational behaviour, and other disciplines. The growing interest in the subject among researchers is also an answer to the demands of practice. Over the past ten years employee engagement has become "a hot topic in corporate circles and the new buzzword obsession of HR departments" (Stairs & Galpin, 2013, p. 156). At the same time, the growth of work engagement research is also an example of positive psychology shift in work and organizational psychology – a change of academics focus from negative work outcomes to "work wellness" (Bakker, Schaufeli, Leiter, & Taris, 2008). Work engagement has been praised for exploring the positive psychological resources of employees in a workplace (Mills, Fleck, & Kozikowski, 2013).

Similar trends are being observed in Poland, where the concept of work engagement has been introduced in two independent studies – one by Szabowska-Walaszczyk, Zawadzka, & Wojtaś (2011) and parallel by Chirkowska-Smolak (2012). Work engagement, however often very differently operationalized and implied, is also the topic of countless practice oriented books, web publications,

and HR journals articles. This might indicate the problem in transferring research findings into practice, as despite several theoretical publications, measurement tools adoption, and growing body of empirical evidence, still there is no systematic review or meta-analysis of Polish studies.

The aim of this paper is therefore to provide a comprehensive review of research on work engagement conducted in Poland. The rationale of this paper is twofold. The first goal is to deliver state-of-the-art review of work engagement research in Poland and their findings. Analysing and organising current empirical findings on work engagement in Poland will benefit future research and facilitate knowledge transfer to practice. Systematic reviews are considered an important contribution for evidence-based practice, which is a vital aspect of both positive as well as work and organizational psychology (Briner & Rousseau, 2011). The second goal is to advance methodology of work engagement research in Poland through identification of limitations and biases in current research.

The Concept of Work Engagement

A large body of research is defining work engagement concept around high level of personal energy invested in the work task performed on a job, in reference to an early study of Kahn (1990, see also Christian, Garza, &

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Slaughter, 2011). Thus, the early conceptualization of work engagement stemmed from the research on job satisfaction and commitment (Szabowska-Walaszczyk, Zawadzka, 2010). Despite the passage of nearly three decades (Kahn, 1990), there are still many doubts and unresolved issues related to engagement's construct and its operationalizations, authors noticed that there is no commonly existing definition of engagement, pointing out that the construct itself may be an "old wine in a new bottle" (Macey, Schneider, 2008). Researchers have also identified other constructs similar to work engagement e.g. vigor, psychological engagement, job engagement, disengagement (see also Demerouti, Bakker, Vardakou, & Kantas, 2003; May, Gilson, & Harter, 2004; Rich, LePine, & Crawford, 2010; Saks, 2006; Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Roma, & Bakker, 2002; Shirom, 2004). In Polish literature on the subject Łaguna et al. (2015) made an attempt to organise the chaos in the terminology regarding the constructs of engagement and commitment and their recommended translations.

Kahn recognized engagement as a personal state in which employees invest personal energy during job performance, and experience psychological connection with their work role on multiple levels: physical, emotional and cognitive. Such described, engagement is a motivational construct referring to psychological connection with the performance of work role related tasks, not the organization or job conditions (Christian et al., 2011).

Stairs and Galpin (2013) noted that beyond the psychological definitions of work engagement there are many conceptualizations created by other specialists e.g. economists and managerial scientists, practitioners and consultants (among others: The Gallup Q12, HayGroup, Corporate Leadership Council, Kenexa, Development Dimensions International, etc.).

In Europe the most popular concept of work engagement has evolved from formative Kahn's concept (1990), then after the appearance of Csikszentmihalyi's flow subject (1990). Schaufeli and Bakker (2004a) conceptualized work engagement as a positive, fulfilling work-related state of mind, but one "that is persistent and pervasive affective-cognitive state, that is not focused on any particular object, event, individual and behavior" (p. 295). The authors operationalized it in the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) which has enjoyed a great popularity among scholars and researchers. Results of the UWES searching in the Google Scholar database yielded 4300 records¹, while in EBSCO databases it was more than 1000 papers, similarly the results of search for work engagement phrase shows ten-fold increase since the analysis Schaufeli and Bakker (2010, p. 11).

Early research conceptualized engagement as relatively stable, individual characteristic that varies between persons (Macey & Schneider, 2008; Schaufeli et al., 2002; Schaufeli, & Salanova, 2007). However, recent studies view work engagement either as a dual state and trait concept (e.g. Bakker, Albrecht, & Leiter, 2011) or a state that differentiates over short period of time, and

have confirmed that engagement might fluctuate from day to day, or from week to week around the average level (e.g. Sonnentag, 2003; Sonnentag, Dormann, & Demerouti, 2010). Macey and Schneider (2008) emphasise that engagement is a second order factor, treating it as a state-trait phenomenon, which is convergent with Schaufeli and Bakker's (2010) integrative model. This personal state is characterized by vigor, dedication and absorption. Vigor refers to high level of energy and resilience, the willingness to invest effort in one's job, not being easily fatigued and persistent in the face of difficulties (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Dedication means a strong involvement in one's work accompanied by feeling of enthusiasm and significance, and by a sense of pride and inspiration. Absorption refers to a pleasant state of total immersion in one's work which is characterized by time passing quickly and being unable to detaching oneself from job.

In other word, it is an affective-motivational state of work-related wellbeing that can be seen either as the antipode of job burnout (Bakker & Leiter, 2010, p. 2; see also Maslach & Leiter, 1997) or a separate, different construct (Schaufeli et al. 2008). In Polish literature the matter of this particular distinctness was taken up by Malinowska and Tokarz (2014), who, instead of job burnout and workaholism, took into consideration the phenomenon of overwork. Engaged employees have high levels of energy, and are enthusiastically involved in their work, fully concentrated and engrossed in one's work, and have difficulties detaching from work (Bakker, Schaufeli, Leiter, & Taris, 2008). According to Bakker and colleagues: "although engaged employees do feel tired after a long day of hard work, they describe their tiredness as a rather pleasant state because it is associated with positive accomplishments" (Bakker et al., 2011, p. 5). Work engagement defined in this way resonates with the broaden-and-build theory of Fredrickson (2001). The broaden-and-build theory suggests that positive emotions broaden people's mode of thinking and action, which enlarges their enduring personal and social resources over time (see also Hobfoll, 1989). Thus, Fredrickson's theory gives additional substance to the concept of work engagement. It goes beyond the general notion that a positive affinity with work increases employees' attachment to the setting or its activities. Engagement as positive state of mind is related mutually with positive emotions which are not only markers of optimal well-being but produce optimal functioning not just at the pleasant moment but over the long-term as well.

Method

A systematic literature search has been conducted using databases (e.g. EBSCO, CEEOL, DOAJ, BazHum, BazEkon, PBN etc.), university repositories, search engines (Google, Google Scholar), academic social networks (ResearchGate, Academia), and personal communication with researchers. Sample inclusion criteria were: 1) empirical study, 2) study conducted in Poland,

¹ Statistics from September 2016.

3) work engagement clearly identified as a variable and measured using scale or questionnaire, 4) study had to provide information about research results (e.g. correlations between engagement and another variable).

Collected data included detailed bibliographic references, the goal of the study, list of variables and their descriptions, method of engagement measurement, sample characteristics, and results of statistical analyses.

A team of four conducted systematic literature search, which was held until no new papers were identified or identified references started to duplicate themselves in results database. Search keywords were *zaangażowanie*, *zaangażowanie w pracę*, *zaangażowanie pracowników*, words *pomiar*, *skala*, *kwestionariusz*, *próba*, and *UWES* were used for further results filtering. We excluded students' papers and unpublished master theses, and also excluded articles that studied population (e.g. students, volunteers) not current in the workforce.

Results

From an initial number of 629 publications identified using keyword search, 41 were proposed for further consideration based on title and abstract review. After removing duplicates and excluding theoretical studies or students works the final number of publications qualified to systematic review reached 23.

Measurement of Work Engagement

Analysis of Polish literature in the subject has shown that research on work engagement is becoming more and more popular. Furthermore, both psychological and economic measures are used to explore work engagement. Among psychological questionnaires the UWES is the most widely used, yet there are also other methods, created by researchers, often for commercial purposes. One of them is Barometr Zaangażowania (Szabowska-Walaszczyk, Brzozowski, & Zawadzka, 2013) used to indicate engagement and motivation, frequency of beneficial behaviors and factors determining engagement. The other method, popular within the field of economic research, is the Employee Engagement Survey created by The Gallup Organization (Juchnowicz, 2012). Including twelve questions, it enables to determine The Gallup Q12 Index, which shows the antecedents (i.e., social support, managerial support, work conditions) of employee engagement. In addition to them, several other questionnaires are present in Polish studies. Some of them include contents about manifestations and factors supporting engagement (Król, 2012). Others, besides work engagement, measure also job involvement, organizational commitment and trust (Lewicka & Rożenek, 2016). Furthermore, researchers have created questionnaires in which work engagement is put together with organizational climate (Stankiewicz-Moczulska, 2012) or organizational identification, loyalty and participation (Wojtczuk-Turek, 2010). A separate method is the one created by Juchnowicz (2012), which enables to indicate the level of employee's engagement both in organization and work. It

is distinguished by the fact that it also allows benchmarking with other organizations.

Aware of the existence of a number of approaches to work engagement, in this study we decided to focus on work engagement measured by the UWES. The rationale for such decision is the following: 1) the UWES is based on established work and organizational psychology theories like Job Characteristic Model (Hackman & Oldham, 1976; Humphrey, Nahrgang, & Morgeson, 2007), Job Demands – Resources Model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007), and Conservations of Resources Theory (Hobfoll, 1989), 2) the UWES studies are situated in the main trend of contemporary research of both work and organizational psychology and positive psychology (e.g. Broaden-and-build Theory, Fredrickson, 2001) – they are associated with exploring the positive psychological resources of employees and creating a healthy and fulfilling workplace, and 3) narrowing the review to studies using the UWES allows for situating this review within the existing body of evidence of work engagement studies.

Two parallel versions of the UWES-17 (adapted by Szabowska-Walaszczyk et al. (2011) and Chirkowska-Smolak (2012)), and the UWES-9 (Szabowska-Walaszczyk et al., 2011; Chirkowska-Smolak, 2012) are most frequently used in Polish studies. Among analyzed publications, several authors refer also to the use of the questionnaire taken from Schaufeli's website – Polish translations of "Praca i samopoczucie (Kwestionariusz UWES) ©" in 17- and 9-items version. Unfortunately, the existing manual (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004b) does not include the psychometric properties for this specific Polish version of the UWES, nor it does it indicate the authorship of translation. Therefore original authorship of the method in six cases is reported. However, the ratio between using the UWES versions with known authors and unknown authors seems somehow troubling. Apart from above versions, other UWES questionnaires can also be found. In his own studies, Kulikowski (2015) shortened, validated and morphed the already existing scale, using both the 9-item (Kulikowski & Madej, 2014) and 6-item (Kulikowski, 2016) versions.

A problematic matter concerns also the factor structure of the UWES measurement. Work engagement has been treated in Polish studies both as unidimensional and three-factor construct. Although the results of factor analysis in several Polish studies are more favourable for unidimensional structure of the UWES-17 (Szabowska-Walaszczyk et al., 2011) and the UWES-9 (Chirkowska-Smolak, 2012), there are different studies in which authors decided to use a three-factor model. The list of analyzed studies along with information about versions of the UWES and factor structure of work engagement construct is presented in Table 1.

Variables in Work Engagement Studies

Most of the studies in our sample represented a cross-sectional analyses. There were no longitudinal studies in the sample and only one study was based on two measurements of engagement (Smoktunowicz, Cieślak, & Żukowska, 2013).

Table 1. Versions of the UWES used in the studies

UWES version	Author(s) /author(s) of adaptation	Factor structure of UWES /work engagement dimensions	Number of studies	References
UWES-17	Schaufeli et al., 2002	Unidimensional	4	Derbis, Baka (2011) Baka (2012) Dyląg, Łącała (2014) Kulikowski, Madej (2014)
UWES-17	Schaufeli et al., 2002	Three-dimensional – vigor, dedication, absorption	2	Derbis (2013) Wołpiuk-Ochocińska (2015)
UWES-17	Szabowska-Walaszczyk, Zawadzka, Wojtaś, 2011	Unidimensional	4	Szabowska-Walaszczyk, Zawadzka, Wojtaś (2011) Baka, Derbis (2013) Piotrowski, Szabowska-Walaszczyk (2013) Czerw, Grabowski (2015)
UWES-17	Szabowska-Walaszczyk, Zawadzka, Wojtaś, 2011	Three-dimensional	1	Dobrowolska (2015)
UWES-9	Szabowska-Walaszczyk, Zawadzka, Wojtaś, 2011	Three-dimensional	4	Kulikowski, Madej (2014) Zawadzka, Szabowska-Walaszczyk (2014) Grabowski, Rachwaniec-Szczecińska (2016) Szabowska-Walaszczyk, Zawadzka (2016)
UWES-17	Chirkowska-Smolak, 2012	Three-dimensional	4	Oleksi (2013) Finogonow, Wróbel, Mróz (2015) Mróz (2015) Baka, Babińska (2016)
UWES-9	Chirkowska-Smolak, 2012	Three-dimensional	1	Chirkowska-Smolak (2016)
UWES-16	Kulikowski, 2015	Unidimensional	1	Kulikowski (2015)
UWES-6	Kulikowski, 2015	Two-dimensional – vigor and dedication	1	Kulikowski (2016)
UWES-9	Kulikowski, 2015	Unidimensional	1	Kulikowski, Madej (2014)

Unfortunately, Polish research on work engagement demonstrated being fragmented and we were not able to indicate studies with a similar system of variables (except correlation of engagement with demographic variables – age, seniority). Therefore our initial plan to perform meta-analysis has been reduced to provide systematic review of the studies.

The proof of the fragmentation of different research approaches to work engagement is the fact that nineteen distinctive variables were identified in sampled studies. Those variables could be divided into three separate groups of 1) job characteristics and employee's traits, 2) organizational factors and leadership, 3) socio-demographic factors. Table 2 presents variables in analyzed studies of work engagement.

Much of early work concerning engagement focused on examining its relationships with burnout. Within the stream of studies exploring work related stress and its relationship with burnout the role of engagement as a mediator was tested several times (Hakanen, Bakker, & Schaufeli, 2006; Hakanen, Schaufeli, & Ahola, 2008; Salanova & Schaufeli, 2008). In fact, the construct of engagement was presented as “the positive antithesis to burnout, building on the emerging trend toward the study of positive psychology” (Halbesleben, 2010, p. 103; see also Leiter & Maslach, 2010; Schaufeli & Salanova, 2007). In our sample two studies (Derbis & Baka, 2011; Baka & Basińska, 2016) examined the relationship between engagement and burnout. In the study designed by Derbis

Table 2. Variables in Work Engagement Studies

Variables	Number of studies	N	Sample Characteristics	References
Burnout	2	446	61% women; age: M = 40.65; SD = 9.75; Seniority: M = 13.54; SD = .83; teachers, policemen, journalists, managers	Derbis, Baka (2011)
		366	79% women; M = 40.86; SD = 8.65; Seniority: M = 17.22; SD = 9.16; teachers, medical staff	Baka, Basińska (2016)
Factors connected with stress: work-family conflict, social support	3	267	64% women; age: M = 38.54; SD = 8.43; Seniority: M = 14.79; SD = 9.19; teachers, prison officers	Baka (2013)
		282	85% women; M = 41.1; SD = 7.96; Seniority: M = 19.1; SD = 8.77; healthcare professionals	Baka, Derbis (2013)
		173	81% women, M = 35.09; SD = 8.12; Seniority: M = 12.75; SD = 9.10; aid service	Smoktunowicz, Cieślak, Żukowska (2013)
Counter-productive behavior	1	232	80% women; M = 28.76; SD = 4.21; Seniority: M = 4.42; SD = 3.52; supermarket sellers	Baka (2012)
Well-being	2	51	5% women; Age M = 37.42; SD = 10.39; cash handling guards	Piotrowski, Szabowska-Walaszczyk (2013)
		267	64% women; age: M = 38.54; SD = 8.43; Seniority: M = 14.79; SD = 9.19; teachers, prison officers	Baka (2013)
Job satisfaction	3	521	60% women; M = 36.11; SD = 11.69; Seniority: M = 8.41; SD = 9.15; teachers, economists, administrative support workers; production workers	Chirkowska-Smolak (2012)
		56	100% women; age M = 33.12; SD = 5.71; Office and administrative support workers	Derbis (2013)
		221	60% women; age M = 34.69; SD = 10.59; Services sector workers	Mróz (2015)
Emotion labor	1	332	80% women; age 18–57 years; service profession	Filogenow, Wróbel, Mróz (2015)
Work motivation	1	609	60.9% women; Seniority: M = 22.62; SD = 3.42 (less than 2 years), age M = 44.04; SD = 8.07 (more than 10 years)	Wołpiuk-Ochocińska (2015)
Work ethic and the values realized through job performance	1	262	55% women, Age 19–61 years, Seniority M = 10 years	Grabowski, Rachwaniec-Szczecińska (2016)
Type A personality	1	282	85% women; age M = 41.1; SD = 7.96; Seniority: M = 19.1; SD = 8.77; healthcare professionals	Derbis, Baka (2013)

Table 2. continued

Variables	Number of studies	N	Sample Characteristics	References
Core self evaluations (CSE)	1	627	59% women; age 19–65 years; seniority M = 37 years, SD = 9.3; social and technical profession, 26% managers	Chirkowska-Smolak (2012)
Readiness for self – improvement	1	102	64% women; Age M = 35.4; SD = 8.5; specialist, line workers, managers, freelance workers	Zawadzka, Szabowska-Walaszczyk (2014)
Person-job and person-organization fit	2	351	62% women; Age: M = 36.5; SD = 11.5; Seniority lower limit one year of work M = 10 SD = 9.9; social and technical profession, financial analysts, programmers; 23% managers	Chirkowska-Smolak (2016)
		1. stage – 79, 2. Stage – 110	50% women, Age M = 23.75; SD = 0.90; students with work experience; 61% women, Age M = 5; SD = 8.38; 98% full-part job, specialist, line workers, managers, freelance workers	Szabowska-Walaszczyk, Zawadzka (2016)
Leadership	1	757	54% women; Age M = 35.26; SD = 6.16; Seniority: lower limit one year of work, M = 8.01; SD = 8.80; sales assistants, teachers, healthcare professionals, financial analysts, administrative support workers, programmers, production staff, 21% managers	Chirkowska-Smolak (2012)
E-mail communication	1	58	Age M = 30, SD = 6.4; Seniority M = 7.5 SD = 6.7	Kulikowski (2015)
Flexible forms of employment	1	2070	age: 18–65; workers from three different sectors	Dobrowolska (2015)
Type of ownership	1	1065 and 203	49% women and 39% women; Seniority: M = 14.9; SD = 10.05;	Kulikowski (2016)
Innovation	1	474	education, production and bank workers and medical staff	Dyląg, Łącała (2014)
		446	61% women; age: M = 40.65; SD = 9.75; Seniority: M = 13.54; SD = 8.83; teachers, policemen, journalists, managers	Derbis, Baka (2011)
		2070	18–65 years; workers from three different sectors	Dobrowolska (2015)
Gender	3	737	57% women; Age M = 35; SD = 10.94; Seniority M = 9.34; SD = 9.9; sales assistants, teachers, healthcare professionals, financial analysts, administrative support workers, programmers, production workers	Chirkowska-Smolak (2012)

Table 2. continued

Variables	Number of studies	N	Sample Characteristics	References
Age	2	737	57% women; Age M = 35; SD = 10.94; Seniority M = 9.34; SD = 9.9; sales assistants, teachers, healthcare professionals, financial analysts, administrative support workers, programmers, production workers	Chirkowska-Smolak (2012)
		2070	18–65 years; workers from three different sectors	Dobrowolska (2015)
Seniority	4	737	57% women; Age M = 35; SD = 10.94; Seniority M = 9.34; SD = 9.9; sales assistants, teachers, healthcare professionals, financial analysts, administrative support workers, programmers, production workers	Chirkowska-Smolak (2012)
		267	64% women; Age: M = 38.54; SD = 8.43; Seniority: M = 14.79; SD = 9.19; teachers, prison officers	Baka (2013)
		2070	Age: 18–65; workers from three different sectors	Dobrowolska (2015)
Education	1	609	60.9% women; Seniority: M = 22.62; SD = 3.42 (less than 2 years), age M = 44.04; SD = 8.07 (more than 10 years)	Wołpiuk-Ochocińska (2015)
		2070	Age: 18–65; workers from three different sectors	Dobrowolska (2015)
Profession	2	737	57% women; Age M = 35; SD = 10.94; Seniority M = 9.34; SD = 9.9; sales assistants, teachers, medical staff, financial analysts, administrative support workers, programmers, production workers	Chirkowska-Smolak (2012)
		474	education, production and bank workers and medical staff	Dyląg, Łącała (2014)
Type of industry	1	2070	Age: 18–65; workers from three different sectors	Dobrowolska (2015)

and Baka (2011) it was confirmed that engagement plays a mediating role in the association between stressors at work and burnout. However, particular stress factors (level of interpersonal conflict, organizational constraints and workload) have a different impact on work engagement (Derbis & Baka, 2011, p. 13). The first two of them correlate negatively with engagement, the latter, however, has a positive association with it. What it means, is that the effect of stressors on engagement can be twofold – either by increasing or decreasing it. It entails in the fact that both the lack of and the excess of engagement can be stressful. Baka and Basińska's (2016) research shows that the components of burnout – exhaustion and disengagement from work

– strongly and negatively correlate with overall work engagement and its three sub-dimensions, which confirms the thesis that burnout and work engagement are separate constructs (Baka & Basińska, 2016).

The mediating role of work engagement was also tested in the research on stress and its intensifying factors. As proved in Baka and Derbis's (2013) and Baka's (2013) studies, work engagement diminishes the work-family conflict. Moreover, the role of social support was investigated in the context of organizational stress and work engagement. Results indicate that the mediating role of social support depends on the level of stress. Work engagement increases in a situation, in which low

social support is followed by low organizational stress (Smoktunowicz, Cieślak, & Żukowska, 2013).

An example of research concentrated on negative aspects of functioning at work is the study done by Baka (2012). The author examined moderating role of work engagement in the relationship between stress and counterproductive behavior. Results show that predictors for this type of behavior are: high engagement and high level of two work stressors: interpersonal conflict and organizational constraints.

The increase of research on well-being, in particular on the correlates of well-being and engagement, is the manifestation of the interest in positive aspects of employee's functioning at work. In our sample there are two examples of research carried out in this field. In the first study wellbeing was expressed as a combination of stress, burnout and job satisfaction (Baka, 2013). Results showed that work engagement is a predictor for low stress and burnout as well as high level of job satisfaction. In Piotrowski and Szabowska-Walaszczyk's research (2013), the association between engagement and well-being and general self-assessment of one's health was confirmed. On the other hand, the authors did not confirm the relationship of engagement with cognitive assessment of general quality of life. The analysis of relationships between particular questions from Cantril's Ladder of Life Scale and engagement revealed that engagement is positively correlated with the assessment of one's current life and one's quality of life in the next five years. However, it is not correlated with the assessment of the worst and best moment of one's past year and the assessment of one's life in the last five years. The research also investigated which elements in work environment are positively related with work engagement. It was shown that greater engagement is correlated with the possibility of self-realization, autonomy, and development opportunities. An important correlate of work engagement was the degree of one's sense of importance, which resulted from their position at work. The highest correlation concerned the quality of relations between employees. In contrast, there was no significant relationship between engagement and salary.

The association between work engagement and job satisfaction has been tested in many international studies. In our research we found three studies describing these relationships (Chirkowska-Smolak, 2012; Derbis, 2013; Mróz, 2015). Results indicate that job satisfaction has a moderate positive relationships with engagement, while correlations of stress and components of work engagement are stronger (Chirkowska-Smolak, 2012, p. 96). Similarly, there is a positive association between quality of life of working mothers and their work engagement (Derbis, 2013, p. 91). The correlation was the strongest in case of quality of life and dimensions of dedication and vigor. Mróz (2015), however, identified job satisfaction in her studies in line with current trends, including independent sources generating affect (emotional and cognitive aspect of making judgements). She described it as a subjective satisfaction with work as a whole, formulated in the form of thoughts based on made comparisons. Research results prove that

job satisfaction is positively correlated with both overall engagement and its three dimensions.

Another example of carrying out a research within current trends is the study by Finogenow, Wróbel, and Mróz (2015) concerning emotions regulation at work. Working on psychometric properties of the measurement tool of emotional labor, the authors discovered that labor at a surface level is negatively associated with work engagement. No relationship between deep level emotional labor and engagement was found.

The analysis of relationships between work motivation and the level of work engagement revealed that people with less work experience differ from those with more experience (Wołpiuk-Ochocińska, 2015, p. 73). Among people with lesser seniority there was a significant association between engagement and the wish to have money, the need to continue family tradition and desire to fulfill one's ambitions. Those dimensions explain 28% of variance of overall engagement. On the other hand, in the group of people with more work experience (over ten years) the possibility of professional fulfillment and development of their passion has the strongest relationship with work engagement. Variance explained by these two factors was 32%.

In the research done by Grabowski and Rachwaniec-Szczecińska (2016) four groups of employees were distinguished, based on the acceptance of ethics rules and the realization of values at work (i.e. self-realization and prosociality) The highest intensity of work engagement was manifested by those who "profess good work ethic", for whom work is the central element of life and a mean to achieve success. Slightly weaker results were obtained by people belonging to the group "evaluating work as obligation" (those who treat work as a duty and don't assess it as a possibility of self-realization) and "self-realizing and less valuing work" (those who are not convinced that hard work can ensure success, but in the current situation they experience self-realization at work). The weakest intensity of work engagement was manifested by employees "poorly valuing work", who are characterised by low work ethic and don't believe that hard work leads to success. In the conclusions, authors indicate that high work ethic (precisely the tendency to value work) is probably not a prerequisite for engagement. According to them, engagement may stem from the fact that work is instrumental, and a person doing it fulfills one's important values.

In a situation when work engagement is still tried to be explained by personality traits (Salanova, Peiró, & Schaufeli, 2002; Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2007), some studies in Poland were carried out to investigate the significance of Type A personality (Derbis, 2013), core self evaluations (CSE) (Chirkowska-Smolak, 2012) and readiness for self-improvement (Zawadzka & Szabowska-Walaszczyk, 2014).

The construct of CSE is associated with work motivation and coping with stress. It includes neuroticism, locus of control, self-esteem and self-efficacy (Judge, Bono, Erez, & Locke, 2005). Studies show that people engaged in their work are characterized by a higher level of core self evaluation (Chirkowska-Smolak, 2012, p. 198). In other

word, people emotionally stable, having a sense of control over events, with higher self-esteem and self-efficacy are more engaged in their work.

Type A personality has also been examined in the context of work engagement (Friedman & Rosenman, 1974, as cited in Wrześniewski, 2000). People with this type of personality are more achievement-driven, sensitive to social acceptance, anxious and impatient. Baka and Derbis (2013) analysed the relationships of two components of type A personality – competitiveness and time urgency. Results they obtained indicate no significant correlation between overall engagement and competitiveness and low negative correlation between engagement and time urgency. The researchers also tested the moderating role of type A personality in the association of work engagement and low and high job demands. Hierarchical regression analysis showed that in a situation of low job demands persons with personality type A present lesser work engagement.

High job demands entail the decrease of engagement among people with average and low level of type A personality traits, whereas they do not change it in the case of people with high level of type A personality. It means that people with high level of type A personality traits react to high job demands with higher work engagement.

The study of readiness for self-improvement (which was described as a personal ability to see one's life as better and not worse) was done to examine its relationship with wellbeing. Work engagement was the indicator of subjective well-being in this study. The results confirmed a positive relationship between engagement and its three components, it was strong in the case of all the factors (Zawadzka & Szabowska-Walaszczyk, 2014, p. 138).

The research taking into consideration both personal traits and organizational factors is the one concerning person-job and person-organization fit. Chirkowska-Smolak's (2016) study relates to person-job fit. The author refers to it as the degree of confluence between employee's needs and preferences and the resources available in work environment as well as the confluence of one's values and the values of an organization (complementary and supplementary fit). To the six areas of mismatch between person and organization (workload, control, reward, fairness, community, values) Chirkowska-Smolak added meaning (assigned to work) and leadership (understood as engaging others in achieving goals). Results indicate that person-job fit is a good predictor of work engagement (both in case of vigor and dedication). The meaning assigned to work plays a mediating role in the relationship between the subjective set of fit and work engagement.

Szabowska-Walaszczyk and Zawadzka (2016) designed a two-part study with the aim to investigate the meaning of person-organization fit for work engagement. It was assumed that person-organization fit (in the dimension of self-realization need) would be positively associated with work engagement, while the dimension of safety need may not have a significant relationship with it. In both studies obtained results suggest the importance of person-organization fit (in case of self-realization) for the dedication dimension of engagement. Results indicate that when

employees are promotion-oriented and the situation is also promotional, their dedication increases. Similar conclusions came from the second study. When employees' needs are related to challenges and they feel that their needs are met by the organization, then their work engagement increases.

Organizational factors that focused researchers' attention in engagement studies are: leadership, using e-mail communication, flexible forms of employment, type of ownership (public or private) and innovation.

The only research that examined the matter of relationship between work engagement and leadership is the one conducted by Chirkowska-Smolak (2012). The author explained leadership as a relation between the superior and subordinate and described it with following factors: care for employees (supporting and defending them), inspiration and efficient communication. Results obtained in the study indicate a low but positive correlation both in case of overall engagement and three sub-scales with leadership.

The desire to clarify the mechanisms regulating work in contemporary organizations leads to studies on the relationship of work engagement and the characteristics of e-mail communication. Preliminary investigations revealed associations between engagement and perception of email as a resource that supports work, but there were no correlations with a sense of overload or a belief in the importance of messages sent via the Internet (Kulikowski, 2015).

Considering flexible forms of employment in Dobrowolska's (2015) research, the highest scores in both overall engagement and three sub-dimensions were obtained by the self-employed. The lowest score in overall work engagement was a characteristic of people employed under specific task contract, working under substitute work contracts and teleworkers. Moreover, workers employed under specific task contract had the lowest score of absorption.

The desire to focus on workers from public sector induced Kulikowski (2016) to carry out a research on vigor and dedication among people working either in public or private companies. Results show a weak but significant difference in vigor (in favor of private sector workers) and no difference in case of dedication dimension.

Research on work engagement included also investigating workers from innovative economy branches (e.g. IT). As it occurred, they are characterized by lower work engagement in comparison with education, production and service employees (Dyląg, Łącała, 2014).

Gender, age and seniority are seen by researchers as socio-demographic variables of crucial importance for engagement, thus they are often analyzed in studies. Other variables included in analyses are education level and type of industry. Our review of research indicates a lack of clear agreement in terms of association between gender and engagement (Chirkowska-Smolak, 2012; Dobrowolska, 2015). Research results obtained by Dobrowolska (2015, pp. 12–13) show that gender differentiates the level of engagement and its dimensions (vigor, dedication and absorption). However, in the samples studied by Chirkowska-Smolak (2012, p. 50) and Derbis & Baka (2011) no significant differences in engagement between genders occurred.

With regard to age, it can be noted that researchers specify it in different ways. Sometimes it is expressed in years (Chirkowska-Smolak, 2012, p. 44) and another times assignment to a particular age group results from the author's own criterion (Dobrowolska, 2015, p. 12). Chirkowska-Smolak's results indicate a low but positive association between age and engagement, both in overall engagement and its dimensions. In other word, engagement increases with age (Chirkowska-Smolak, 2012, p. 49). Dobrowolska obtained convergent results, as in her research the highest level of overall engagement and its dimensions characterized people within the age range 41–65 (Dobrowolska, 2015, p. 13).

Research on the relationship between job seniority and engagement brings information about the differences between younger and older employees and their level of engagement. In Wołpiuk-Ochocińska's (2015) study, younger employees were characterized by a lower level of overall engagement, as well as lower level of vigor, absorption and dedication. Results shown in Dobrowolska's (2015) and Baka's (2013) studies have also confirmed that the level of engagement varies, depending on seniority. The highest level of overall engagement was observed among people who have worked the longest, and the lowest was presented by workers who have worked less than five years (Dobrowolska, 2015, p. 12).

Likewise, groups with different job seniority were compared in terms of particular sub-scales of work engagement. The difference could only be seen in the level of absorption, the highest level was obtained by people with seniority of eleven years or more. There were no differences in vigor and dedication (Dobrowolska, 2015, p. 13). Research by Chirkowska-Smolak revealed no significant relations between job seniority and engagement (Chirkowska-Smolak, 2012, p. 50), however, an interesting relationship was identified. The author indicated a positive correlation between the time spent in a job position and one's engagement. The association was significant for overall engagement, dedication and absorption. No significant correlation was found in case of vigor dimension.

Research has shown that engagement is significantly related to education level. Average results in overall engagement and vigor dimensions were higher among people with higher education level (Dobrowolska, 2015, p. 12).

In other research the level of engagement in different groups of professionals was also considered (see also Schaufeli, Bakker, 2004b). Results of Polish studies (Chirkowska-Smolak, 2012, p. 50; Dyląg, Łącała, 2014) show no difference in terms of work engagement among people who work with others and those who work with things or analyse data. Author, in extensive analysis, indicated that managers obtained higher scores of engagement in comparison with other staff members. Alike, medical professionals, compared to restaurant personnel and sales assistants, are characterised by higher level of engagement. On the other hand, Dyląg & Łącała's (2014) research proved that programmers have lower level of

engagement in contrast to teachers, bankers and production workers. Dobrowolska (2015) also attempted to confirm the hypothesis of association between the type of industry and the level of engagement. Comparative analysis of the groups shows differences between them. The highest average score in overall engagement is presented by employees who work in heavy industry, the lowest by trade and service employees (Dobrowolska, 2015, p. 12).

Discussion

Work Engagement and Positive Psychology Research

Work engagement studies have been praised for overcoming the work-related problems perspective in research. Coined as the "antithesis of burnout" (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007) work engagement phenomenon is an example of the impact of positive psychology on modern work and organizational psychology. However, Polish studies are still within more traditional paradigm of burnout-engagement continuum. Our research confirms a dominance of negative variables (burnout, stress, work-family conflict) over the positive ones. Perhaps new works of Basińska and Gruszczyńska (2016, 2014) on the role of emotions at workplace and their regulatory effect on work engagement will start a new, more positive trend in Polish research.

Our review showed the lack of longitudinal studies, which would allow for better understanding of the variability of engagement over time and its individual and organizational predictors (e.g. vigor's predictors with reference to the B&B and COR theories).

New directions and future research might also include studies on the regulatory emotional mechanisms and work engagement, i.e. the relationship with positive emotions, leadership style (e.g. transformational leadership, authentic leadership, ethical leadership) and other factors and processes building psychological resilience and influencing employees' physical, intellectual and social resources.

Methodological Issues in Polish Studies

Despite growing number of publications on work engagement, the resources we analysed are fragmented. Studies replications and longitudinal research are underrepresented. It confirms that the area of work engagement research in Poland is in its early phase, and has not yet matured. Longitudinal studies in organizational context are a difficult undertaking and demand close academia-business cooperation, but in contrast to cross-sectional studies might provide more robust and valid results.

Another issue is the lack of samples representative for population, which is connected with the problem of studies replication. Samples are often composed of specific groups (i.e. flexible contract workers, skilled professionals, women), which makes generalization of results difficult (Baka & Derbis, 2011; Chirkowska-Smolak, 2012; Dobrowolska, 2015; Smoktunowicz, Cieślak, Żukowska, 2013).

Together those qualities of Polish studies deny the possibility of conducting meta-analysis as there is

not enough data to proceed with just yet. Also it poses difficulties in identification of trends of engagement in Polish population. It might be also an explanation of poor transfer of knowledge from academia to practice. In current phase Polish studies in work engagement field are detached from practice, being rather examples of basic research focuses mostly on construct refinement.

UWES Variety and Its Consequences

In our review we identify several versions of the UWES circulating among researchers. Apart from Polish adaptations of the UWES-17 (Chirkowska-Smolak, 2012; Szabowska-Walaszczyk et al., 2011) and the UWES-9 (Szabowska-Walaszczyk et al., 2011) thoroughly translated and validated, there are also a copyrighted Polish translations of the UWES titled “Praca i samopoczucie” in 17- and 9-items version available on Schaufeli’s website. The latter scales, however do not include enough information about its psychometric properties. Nevertheless, used in several studies, they have been recently validated and subsequently morphed into yet another the UWES9# version (Kulikowski & Madej, 2014). Thus differences embrace both longer and shortened versions of original UWES (17 or 9 item), but also include use in some studies of customized versions of the UWES consisting of different items included in shortened versions (Kulikowski & Madej, 2014). That leads to questioning of the psychometric properties of Polish version(s) of work engagement measurement scales and the precision and comparability of the results.

Another question arises in regard to factor structure of work engagement construct in the UWES measurement. The UWES is a worldwide recognized tool and there are many studies on its psychometric properties and factorial structure, despite their results being inconclusive. Apart for contradictory results for longer (17-items) and shorter (9-items) versions, there are also differences in factorial structure of work engagement construct in regard to language version (see review in De Bruin, Hill, Henn, & Muller, 2013). In Polish studies work engagement has been treated as both unidimensional and three-factor construct, see Table 1. However the results of factor analysis in several Polish studies are more favourable for unidimensional structure, as it has been confirmed for Szabowska-Walaszczyk’s UWES-17 version (Szabowska-Walaszczyk, et al., 2011) and Chirkowska’s UWES-9 version (2012), and Kulikowski and Madej study (2014).

While the abundance of UWES versions facilitates its popularity in research and is not uncommon in psychology, it causes serious problems when comparing results of different studies. Likewise, it makes difficult to conduct further refinement of the measurement tool and providing norms for Polish population. Even with feasible samples sizes it is not possible to calculate norms unless the same tools are used in several studies. Going back to the topic of dissemination of research results into practice it is worth to remember that providing norms might make the UWES more attractive for practitioners. The UWES is prone to cultural differences, which was confirmed when factorial structure have been discussed above, therefore using Dutch

norms for Polish population (see Dyla & Łącała, 2014) although being not recommended practice, is the only possible way of dealing with this issue at the moment.

Future Directions in Work Engagement Research

We hope that our systematic review will be a step in developing and maturing work engagement research in Poland. Several issues we identify (e.g. measurement limitations, non-representative populations, low maturity of the field, and limited applicability of results) need to be overcome in order to enter the next level of work engagement research. The need of replication of current studies on other samples is one of the issues. Then, the longitudinal studies are necessary to check the stability vs. the variance of work engagement and their relationships. Coordination of research activities on country level would allow for better access to varied samples and open a chance to conduct longitudinal research. The initial step in this direction is circulation of research during conferences, but those personal contacts are yet to develop into research projects.

Limitations of the Review

In recent years publication bias and its influence on quality of systematic reviews and meta-analysis has been widely discussed in literature (Rothstein, Sutton, & Borenstein, 2005). This applies to our study as well, which is based on peer-reviewed published sources, prone to positive significance, population availability, and other biases. We indicated those problems earlier, pointing how it limits the possibility of conducting meta-analysis. To overcome those limitations in future studies we need to better coordinate research efforts. It is possible through bigger research projects, preferably on country level and engaging academia and business consortia. Also the current technological development in spirit of open science allows for easier sharing of datasets and collaboration in cross-organizational teams.

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