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Purpose-Driven: Employee Engagement from a Human Flourishing Perspective

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PURPOSE-DRIVEN: EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT FROM A
HUMAN FLOURISHING PERSPECTIVE

A Dissertation
Presented to
the Graduate School of
Clemson University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy
Industrial–Organizational Psychology

by
Crystal Susan Wiedemann
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ABSTRACT

Employee engagement continues to be one of the most popular topics in the organizational sciences over the past few decades. Despite this popularity, however, the antecedents of employee engagement and its underlying motivational framework are still unclear and unavailable to guide organizational interventions (Macey & Schneider, 2008). Using data from a sample of 518 employees in a southeastern university, this study investigated the work environment antecedents of job demands-abilities fit, transformational leadership, and corporate social responsibility and found positive significant relationships with employee engagement. Additionally, in a time where an increasing number of workers are searching for more meaning and purpose from their jobs (Avolio & Sosik, 1999; Gallup, 2016), this study operationalizes a sense of purpose and demonstrates how fulfilling a sense of purpose at work relates to employee engagement and self-determination theory's psychological need satisfaction (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Using a structural equation modeling approach, the results of this study found both a sense of purpose at work and psychological need satisfaction to be significant predictors of employee engagement. Additionally, adding an indirect effect between need satisfaction and engagement, through a sense of purpose, was found to be the best fitting model. This overall theoretical model provides initial support for a self-determination theory framework for the study of employee engagement with the addition of a sense of purpose at work.

Keywords: self-determination theory, employee engagement, meaningful work, purpose, eudaimonia, transformational leadership, corporate social responsibility

DEDICATION

To my amazing husband, Josh, who inspires me by his example, to continue to reach for my highest potential, and to my precious children, Tyler, Austin, and Brooke who help to remind me every day of the beauty contained within us all.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Employee engagement, a work motivation construct, continues to be a hot topic in both the business and academic communities (Vance, 2006; Macey & Schneider, 2008). Increasing employee engagement has become a popular management focus among business leaders as research has linked it with several positive organizational outcomes to include not only employee loyalty and production, but also customer satisfaction and profit (Harter et al., 2002; Hewitt Associates LLC, 2005; Harter, Schmidt, Kilham, & Asplund, 2006). The appeal of employee engagement lies not only with the potential benefits for business outcomes, but also the potential to increase employee well-being (Shuck & Reio, 2014). Organizational success and employee wellness, once considered to be opposing forces, now appear to be complementary and synergistic according to Harter, Schmidt, and Keyes (2002). Healthy workplaces that have engaged employees do a better job of keeping employees, satisfying customers, being innovative, and garnering financial success.

While engagement improvement initiatives continue worldwide, actual numbers of engaged employees remain lackluster at around 13% globally (Gallup, 2016). Additionally, the newest members of the workforce, the Millennial Generation, are the least engaged group, according to a recent study by Gallup (2016). The Millennials, who are expected to make up 75% of the workforce by 2025, want to be engaged in their jobs, but 71% of them are not engaged or actively disengaged. Millennials are purpose-driven and they are seeking workplaces that offer opportunities to contribute to the greater good

of society. According to the 2014 Millennial Impact Report (Achieve Consulting Group, 2014), 94% of millennials want to use their skills to benefit a cause. According to Gallup (2016) millennials are seeking much more than a paycheck from their jobs. They want their job to be an avenue for self-expression, personal fulfillment, growth, and purpose – all the while integrating seamlessly with the rest of their life (Hurst, 2014; Gallup, 2016).

These sentiments do not appear to be just localized to the millennials, as organizational researchers are taking note of changing trends in the workforce of today which is seeking more from their work than in decades past. With increased connectivity, employees are spending more time in the work role and the lines between work and life are blurring. No longer do employees seem content with a job simply for its financial benefits, but are increasingly seeking work opportunities that help fulfill a desire for personal growth and a sense of purpose (Harter et al., 2002; Hurst, 2014, Pink, 2009).

Research Purpose

While there has been a recent surge of academic interest in employee engagement, there remains much to be learned about its antecedents and underlying motivational framework (Macey & Schneider, 2008). This study helps address these gaps in the research by investigating how fulfilling a sense of purpose at work relates to employee engagement, leveraging insights from eudaimonic philosophy. Additionally, this study examines an overall theoretical model of employee engagement using structural equation modeling with psychological need satisfaction as the underlying

mechanism. The work environment antecedents of demands-abilities fit, transformational leadership, and corporate social responsibility are also explored.

CHAPTER TWO

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

So what is employee engagement? Despite being a very popular business concept, the employee engagement construct has lacked a clear definition (Macey & Schneider, 2008). There are currently three leading approaches to the study of employee engagement among scholars, each with their own definition and measure. This paper will discuss Kahn's (1990) authentic self-expression approach, Schaufeli et al's (2002) engagement as optimal growth, and Gallup's satisfaction approach. This study will then explore the consideration of a new framework of engagement, integrating these models into one characterized by autonomous motivation resulting from psychological need satisfaction, personal growth, and a sense of purpose.

Kahn's Self-Expression Approach

Kahn (1990), who is credited with the original conceptualization of the construct, defines employee engagement as "the harnessing of organizational member's selves to their work roles..." (p.694). He views employee engagement as a motivation variable that spans a continuum of self-expression from personal engagement to personal disengagement in one's work role. In his groundbreaking qualitative research of camp counselors and architects, he observed that people bring in and leave out various depths of their selves at work. He described engaged employees as psychologically present and

fully expressive of their authentic selves, while disengaged employees were defensive and withdrew themselves from their work roles. According to Kahn, 'personal engagement is the simultaneous employment and expression of a person's "preferred self" in task behaviors that promote connection to work and to others, personal presence (physical, cognitive, and emotional), and active, full role performances' (p.700).

Drawing from Maslow (1968) and Alderfer (1972), he emphasized that people need to be able to display their personal selves (self-expression) and drive their personal energies (self-employment) into their work. He relates self-expression as being similar to concepts like authenticity and creativity, and self-employment as being similar to concepts like flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988) and intrinsic motivation (Deci, 1975).

In his field study, Kahn examined the relationship between various aspects of the work environment and the workers' level of personal involvement in their work tasks. He observed three conditions of the work environment to be necessary for engagement, to include meaningfulness, safety, and availability. Meaningfulness was the extent to which employees felt that their engagement in their work tasks mattered, or were valuable, useful, and worthwhile. Safety was reflective of the trust in the work environment and if employees felt that it was safe to display their authentic selves without fear of negative consequences. Availability referred to the personal resources that one had to give to the work role given the other demands in their life. When conditions were met, engagement "brought alive" the self to the role and enabled the depth of workers' personal selves to come forth in service to their own growth and that of their organizations (Kahn, 1992).

Kahn's conceptualization of employee engagement as authentic self-expression and self-employment echoes the sentiment of today's workforce searching for an avenue of self-expression and a sense of purpose through their work. His conceptualization of employee engagement, however, has had significant measurement challenges due to the comprehensive nature of what Kahn described as employing the member's "whole self" into the work role (Kahn, 1990, p. 692). Although difficult to operationalize, Kahn's conceptualization of employee engagement has remained the most frequently cited definition in academic research (Rich et al, 2010). Resurgent academic interest in employee engagement has started to lead scholars back to the empirical study of Kahn's conceptualization of employee engagement as a motivational concept (e.g. May et al., 2004; Rich et al., 2010; Shuck, 2010).

Opposite of Burnout

Probably the most widely used measure of engagement by scholars, the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES), comes from the work by Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzales-Roma, and Bakker (2002) who define engagement as "a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption" (p.74). This definition arose from the burnout literature, as engagement was conceptualized as being the opposite of burnout, which was defined by exhaustion, cynicism, and ineffectiveness (Maslach, 2001). To better understand the antecedents of burnout, the Job-Demands & Resources (JD-R) Model was developed by Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, Schaufeli (2001). Then engagement was added to the JD-R model

(Bakker, Demerouti, Verbeke, 2004), where burnout and work engagement were depicted as opposite outcomes of the interaction between job demands and resources.

Although it continues to be a popular framework in which to investigate engagement, recent criticisms of the JD-R model have questioned the model's accuracy in representing the motivational process (Schaufeli & Taris, 2014). Most of the studies using the JD-R model have failed to find a significant relationship between job demands and engagement. "It is an empirical fact that the relation between job demands and engagement is usually not statistically significant, but occasionally it may also be positive or negative" (Schaufeli & Taris, 2014, p.56). One explanation for this finding comes from the distinction made by Cavanaugh, Boswell, Roehling, and Boudreau (2000) between "challenge" and "hindrance" demands. Challenge demands, such as high workload, time pressure, responsibility, and job scope are stressors within the work environment that may actually be motivational because they can encourage personal growth. Whereas hindrance demands, such as organizational politics, "red tape," job insecurity, and role ambiguity are stressors within the work environment that are demotivational because they are typically viewed as unnecessary obstacles to growth and goal attainment. After accounting for type of demand, whether challenge or hindrance, research conducted by Rich et al. (2010) found the relationship between demands and engagement to be statistically significant. Their study demonstrated that a hindrance demand negatively impacts engagement, whereas, a challenge demand has a motivational effect and thus increases engagement.

Thus, using the JD-R model to investigate employee engagement may be problematic for several reasons. First, it is necessary to categorize demands appropriately into challenges and hindrances, as mentioned earlier. Second, not only could some demands be motivational, but some resources could be viewed as threats (e.g. too much job control). Third, how much of a resource is too much, or which demands are challenging or hindering, is often a matter of personal opinion (i.e. a function of appraisal). So when using the JD-R model to investigate engagement, researchers may need to consider individual appraisals of specific demands and resources. This will help with the ability of the JDR model to accurately depict the motivational process, but may reduce its generalizability in applied settings (Schaufeli & Taris, 2014).

Although the JD-R model has proven to be less effective for the study of employee engagement, the Schaufeli et al. (2002) definition and measure of engagement aligns well with Kahn's (1990) conceptualization. The UWES dimensions of vigor, dedication, and absorption reflect Kahn's description of engaged employees employing their physical, cognitive, and emotional energies. Additionally, the Schaufeli et al.(2002) definition of engagement as being a "state of fulfillment" from one's work is consistent with Kahn's conceptualization of engagement resulting from authenticity, meaning, and purpose.

Satisfaction-Engagement

The Gallup Workplace Audit, or "Q-12" survey, perhaps the most widely used assessment in applied settings, measures 12 facets of job satisfaction which are suggested to be indicators of employee engagement, or antecedents, but the assessment does not

measure employee engagement directly. The Gallup organization defines employee engagement as “the individual’s involvement and satisfaction with as well as enthusiasm for work” (Harter et. al, 2002, p. 269). One of the main distinctions between job satisfaction and employee engagement, however, is that higher levels of job satisfaction usually indicate satiation or contentment, whereas higher levels of employee engagement are thought to indicate activation and high levels of energy. This helps to explain why research has shown employee engagement to not only be related to in-role performance, but extra-role performance as well (Rich et al., 2010; Inceoglu & Fleck, 2010).

Although the Gallup Workplace Audit is considered a measure of job satisfaction by some scholars, it may have unfairly been given this association because of its general measure of job satisfaction included with the 12 questions. After closer investigation, the Gallup measure appears to measure a blend of job satisfaction elements as well as psychological need satisfaction dimensions, which collectively, are claimed to be antecedents of employee engagement. The main issue with using the GWA for academic research is the fact that it is highly proprietary. However, it is interesting to note that the GWA measure reflects both the dimensions of a sense of purpose at work and psychological need satisfaction, which will be discussed later in this paper as predictors of employee engagement.

Employee Engagement Versus Other Job Attitudes

When first introduced, many researchers argued that employee engagement was nothing more than a new term for older already established constructs, like job satisfaction, job involvement, or organizational commitment (Newman & Harrison,

2008). But research by Rich, LePine, and Crawford (2010) found employee engagement to explain variations in job performance above and beyond these other job attitudes.

Substantial research efforts are now helping to alleviate the ambiguity surrounding the construct (e.g. Macey & Schneider, 2008; Rich et al., 2010, Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Roma, & Bakker, 2002).

Job involvement has been compared to employee engagement as having a similar conceptualization (Schohat & Vigoda-Gadot, 2010). Job involvement is described as the degree to which a person's sense of esteem is affected by their job performance and how much their self-image is tied to their job (Lawyer & Hall, 1970; Kanungo, 1982).

Employee engagement, on the other hand, speaks of investing one's whole self, or all of their capabilities and capacities, into the job role and is not a measure of self-image or the amount of importance one places on work that constitutes self-identity. Some have argued that job involvement would be more accurately characterized as an independent variable or considered an individual difference, more so than an interaction with the work environment as is the case with employee engagement (Hallberg & Schaufeli, 2006).

Some researchers believe the concept of employee engagement to be similar to organizational commitment (Wellins & Concellman, 2005). Measures of organizational commitment from Meyer and Allen (1997) and Mowday, Porter, and Steers (1982) describe feelings of belongingness, personal meaning, effort, and pride, which seem to be similar to elements of employee engagement (Macey & Schneider, 2008). Hallberg and Schaufeli (2006) distinguish organizational commitment from employee engagement by noting how an individual's level of organizational commitment appears to be more

dependent on extrinsic factors in the organization and less dependent on the individual or their intrinsic motivation, which is not the case with employee engagement.

Trait, State, or Behavior?

Some confusion exists as to whether employee engagement is a trait, state, or behavior (Macey & Schneider, 2008). The most widely accepted version of employee engagement among researchers is of a psychological state, or the feelings and attitudes toward work that are influenced by the job and the work environment. In practice, however, the appeal of employee engagement has been in terms of the behavioral outcomes, or behavioral engagement, which is thought to be connected to organizational effectiveness. Behavioral engagement is often thought of as discretionary effort (Towers-Perrin, 2003) or organizational citizenship behavior (Organ, 1997). There is also some evidence for the notion that certain individual differences could be attributed to an inclination toward employee engagement, such as proactive personality (Crant, 2000), positive affect, and conscientiousness. These differences are what have been referred to as trait employee engagement (Macey & Schneider, 2008). This study focuses on employee engagement as a psychological state, as this is the most widely accepted view of the construct. This is also congruent with Kahn's (1990) early conceptualization of employee engagement as a motivational variable. Although, this perspective of employee engagement as a motivational construct has been somewhat neglected in the academic literature until recently (Rich et al., 2010).

Kahn's early conceptualization of employee engagement was that of a motivational construct centered around authentic self-expression and self-employment in

the work environment. His conceptualization is very similar to what will be described later as fulfilling a sense of purpose at work. Schaufeli and colleagues conceptualization of engagement has similarities with Csikszentmihalyi (1988) state of flow, or peak intrinsic motivation, resulting from tasks of optimal challenge and feedback, creating a state of optimal growth. The Gallup approach to employee engagement is focused on employee need satisfaction, especially the needs that can be addressed by managers with adjustments to the work environment. This study will attempt to show how all three of these approaches to the study of engagement can be brought together into an integrated model of employee engagement resulting from need satisfaction, personal growth, and a sense of purpose at work using a self-determination theory framework. Engagement as purpose fulfillment, engagement as psychological need satisfaction, and engagement as autonomous motivation will be examined in further detail below.

CHAPTER THREE

ENGAGEMENT AS PURPOSE FULFILLMENT

Thanks to the advent of positive psychology (Seligman, 1998) and the study of human flourishing, the turn of the century has given rise to more humanistic employment practices and the valuing of employee well-being. Employee engagement could be argued to be the fullest embodiment of human flourishing at work. For decades, organizational scientists have been fascinated with the “Happy-Productive Worker Hypothesis” (Cropanzano & Wright, 2001). Studies exploring this relationship have found mixed results. Some believe this to be due to the inconsistent operationalization of employee happiness (e.g. Cropanzano & Wright, 2001). Debates have ensued as to what

constitutes employee well-being and the nature of happiness, generally centering on a discussion of hedonic well-being versus eudaimonic well-being. Scholars are interested in discovering whether happiness is best defined by pleasure and positive emotions or is there a deeper level of fulfillment that constitutes well-being? What makes life meaningful? One of the research questions that this study is attempting to address is whether or not employee engagement results from this deeper level of personal fulfillment and purpose.

Theoretical Roots

What constitutes the most vital, fullest expressions of human nature and a life well-lived? In the hedonic approach to the study of well-being, happiness is characterized by the subjective feelings of pleasure. From the eudaimonic perspective, the most deeply fulfilling life is one that involves the development and expression of one's highest potential. This argument dates back several thousand years with the philosophical musings on what constitutes "eudaimonia."

Eudaimonia. Eudaimonia is an ancient Greek term dating back to the time of Aristotle, as a way to describe the ultimate goal in life, or the highest aim accomplishable by man. Aristotle put forth in *The Nichomachean Ethics* over 2,000 years ago (translated in 1925), that the highest human good was "activity of the soul in accord with virtue." The term, *eudaimonia*, is often translated to mean happiness, flourishing, or self-realization. The word can be broken down into *eu*, which means "good," and *daimon*, which means "true self." Within eudaimonist philosophy, the concept of an essential human nature is called the daimon (Norton, 1976). The daimon refers to those

potentialities of each person that, when realized, represent the greatest fulfillment in living of which the person is capable. Norton (1976) describes the ethics of eudaimonism as follows: “[Each individual] is obliged to know and live in truth to his daimon, thereby progressively actualizing a potential that is his innately and potentially” (p. ix). This sentiment also underlies two famous Ancient Greek dictums to “Know thyself” and “Become what you are” (Waterman & Schwartz, 2013). Eudaimonia, therefore, can be thought of as a state of personal fulfillment from living out one’s purpose and highest potential.

Self-actualization. If the concept of eudaimonia sounds familiar, it’s because it shares many sentiments with Abraham Maslow’s concept of self-actualization. According to Maslow (1943, p. 383) self-actualization “refers to the desire for self-fulfillment, namely, to the tendency for him to become actualized in what he is potentially.” The need for self-actualization is to do what one is meant for... “a musician must make music, an artist must paint, a poet must write, if he is to be ultimately happy. What a man *can* be, he *must* be.”

A key observation of self-actualizers by Maslow (1968) was that they were creative and purpose-driven individuals, “devoted to some task, call, vocation, beloved work (outside themselves)” (p.29). Listening to a self-actualizer talk about their work, notes Maslow, one gets the feeling of “something for which the person is a “natural,” something that he is suited for, something that is right for him, even something that he was born for.” Maslow (1968) defines self-actualization as the “ongoing actualization of potentials, capacities, and talents, as fulfillment of mission (or call, fate, destiny, or

vocation) as a fuller knowledge of, and acceptance of, the person's own intrinsic nature, as an unceasing trend toward unity, integration, or synergy within the person" (p.29).

Carl Rogers further developed the concept of self-actualization in his psychotherapy work and his description of the "fully functioning person." Rogers believed that all individuals had the ability to heal themselves and resume healthy growth if provided with a safe relationship which allowed them to do so. Rogers believed such a relationship needed to be characterized by genuineness, warm acceptance, and empathic understanding. In such a relationship, the patient's psychological defenses would dissolve and their innate actualizing tendency would resume (Rogers, 1961).

Of particular importance to the study of purpose fulfillment, and often neglected in academic scholarship, is that Maslow (1971) later expanded his hierarchy of needs to include a level beyond self-actualization labeled "self-transcendence." Here he clarified that he viewed self-actualization as only attainable through the giving of oneself to a higher purpose, or through self-transcendence. Maslow's description of transcendence shares some similarities with Csikszentmihalyi's state of flow. He describes transcendence as peak experiences characterized by a loss of self-consciousness, transcendence of the body, of time, of ego, and of one's basic needs through either fulfillment or overcoming them. He compared transcendence to mystical experience or the perception of being one with all that is. "Transcendence refers to the very highest and most inclusive or holistic levels of human consciousness, behaving and relating, as ends rather than means, to oneself, to significant others, to human beings in general, to other species, to nature, and to the cosmos" (p.269).

Psychological Well-being. Similar to these earlier works on self-actualization is Carol Ryff's (1989) theory of psychological well-being, which is one of the most influential theories in psychology over the past few decades. Ryff integrated the ideas of many important works in psychology and philosophy on the study of well-being, to include perspectives from Aristotle, Allport, Frankl, Maslow, Rogers, Erikson, Jahoda, Jung, and John Stuart Mill. She identified common themes from each of these historic works and integrated them into six key dimensions of psychological well-being. The six dimensions of psychological well-being (PWB) include positive relations with others, personal growth, purpose in life, environmental mastery, self-acceptance, and autonomy. There is considerable overlap between PWB and Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985), which will be discussed in more detail later. One of the main differences between the two theories is Ryff's emphasis on a sense of purpose as being integral to psychological well-being.

The study of psychological well-being is highly relevant at this time considering some scientists purport the United States to be facing an "epidemic" of depression (Cropanzano & Wright, 2001) citing that there are over 17 million Americans on Prozac and millions more taking other anti-depressant medications (Wright, 1999). At the same time, numerous empirical studies are emerging that report a strong connection between mind and body health (e.g. Ryff & Singer, 2000). This has led to a serious inquiry into what constitutes psychological health, as scientists are increasingly revealing its widespread effects on the body.

With research showing a strong job satisfaction and overall life satisfaction (e.g. Rice, Near, & Hunt; 1980) the experiences one has in their work role undoubtedly has a large impact on their overall health. It has been reported that many aspects of the modern nature of work, such as the routinization of tasks, lack of autonomy, and controlling supervision have been found to contribute to depression (Kohn & Schooler, 1982). Additionally, deficits of a sense of purpose have been associated with psychopathologies, such as depression and suicide (see e.g. Heisel & Flett, 2004). Considering the current state of depression in America, the continued scientific exploration of PWB and the insertion of its findings into work applications is highly relevant and needed. This study incorporates elements of PWB into an overall theoretical model of employee engagement from a human flourishing perspective (see Figure 2 later in this paper).

Purpose and Human Flourishing

It is the urge which is evident in all organic and human life – to expand, extend, become autonomous, develop, mature – the tendency to express and activate all the capacities of the organism... it may be hidden behind elaborate facades which deny its existence; but it is my belief that it exists in every individual, and awaits only the proper conditions to be released and expressed. (Rogers, 1961, p.35)

A core part of human flourishing is realizing one's purpose in life. In eudaimonist philosophy, it is living in accord with one's daimon or true self, and striving to reach one's highest potential. In Maslow's theory of motivation, an individual's purpose is to do what he is meant for. According to Ryff (1989), purpose is an essential element of psychological well-being. She refers to purpose as giving a person a sense of direction in life. Thus, according to scholars of human flourishing, people have an inner drive to expand their capacities and connections; they want to learn, grow, and make an

impact. It is only when something gets in the way of this natural tendency that humans become stagnant and well-being declines. If stuck for too long, according to Maslow (1971), neurosis will develop. It seems paramount for engagement scholars to figure out what conditions are necessary for employees to be able to tap into this innate drive for personal growth and purpose, not only for their own health and well-being, but for the health and well-being of their organizations. As a first step in this process, the following sections will attempt to clarify what constitutes a sense of purpose at work.

Purpose vs. Meaning

“While life can be understood backwards, it is lived forwards.”

– Søren Kierkegaard

People want to be involved in work that helps to give life meaning. Many scholars consider purpose to be an integral part of meaning. Steger (2012) explains meaning as the cognitive process of making sense of our lives, giving us the sense that our life matters. He differentiates purpose as the motivational component of meaning. Purpose comprises the aspirations and pursuits that provide life with a sense of mission. In a similar vein, Baumeister and Vohs (2002) describe meaning as making mental connections of one’s past and present experiences. It involves the uniquely human ability to cognitively process and connect things that are physically unrelated. Meaning is cognitively oriented and past/present focused. It provides one with the feeling that life makes sense. Purpose, on the other hand, is more action-oriented and focused on future outcomes. It is motivational, spurring action, rather than comprehension (Rainey, 2014). Baumeister and Vohs (2002) explain that individuals find or make meaning by revising

or reappraising memories of past events and by connecting past memories to present experiences. Frankl (1959) merges purpose and meaning together, claiming that man's most essential need is a need for meaning that helps a person to make sense of their circumstances, both past and present, and provide them with some future goal to live for. Purpose and meaning are often used interchangeably, but one can distinguish the two as meaning being a sense-making, reflective cognitive process, and purpose being a motivational future-oriented pursuit.

Purpose Operationalized

In the words of Frederick Buechner (1973), purpose is “where your deep gladness and the world's hunger meet.” After a conducting a thorough review of the literature, three facets emerged as essential ingredients necessary to give a person's life a sense of purpose: it needs to incorporate a person's unique gifts, it needs to provide direction and an avenue for growth, and it needs to be in service to something larger than the self. According to Keyes (2011) authentic purpose provides the “why for living” through the recognition that one has personally important and socially useful work to perform. He believes the absence of purpose leads to suffering and breeds misery. Keyes goes on to characterize purpose as involving a sense of direction and social contribution. He equates living out one's authentic purpose with the realization of one's vocation: “a purpose for one's life that employs one's gifts, brings a deep sense of worth or value, and provides a significant contribution to the common good” (p. 286). Damon, Menon, and Bronk (2003) define purpose similar to Keyes, stating that purpose is “a stable and generalized

intention to accomplish something that is at once meaningful to the self and of consequence to the world beyond the self” (p. 121).

Components of a Sense of Purpose at Work

Leveraging insights from eudaimonic philosophy (Aristotle, 1925; Waterman, 1990), humanistic psychology (Maslow, 1968, 1971; Rogers, 1961), existential psychology (e.g. Frankl), psychological well-being (Ryff, 1989), and meaning research (Steger, 2012; Keyes, 2011, Dik & Diffy, 2009) a sense of purpose in this study will be operationalized as a combination of three facets, which include self-expression, personal growth, and social contribution.

Self-expression. According to Rogers (1961, p. 108) “... it appears that the goal that the individual most wishes to achieve, the end which he knowingly and unknowingly pursues, is to become himself.” Using Waterman’s (1990, 1993) concept of personal expressiveness, self-expression in this context will be considered the full utilization of skills and unique talents, such that it provides a sense of alignment with one’s authentic self. The authentic self, as defined by Horney (1950) is “the central inner force, common to all human beings and yet unique to each, which is the deep source for growth... free, healthy, development in accordance with the potentials of one’s generic and individual nature” (p.17). Maslow (1968) described self-actualizers doing their beloved work as something that they were “meant for,” which overlaps considerably with Waterman’s (1993) description of personal expressiveness. Waterman points to four characterizations reflective of personal expressiveness: a) intense involvement, b) special fit or “meshing”

with the activity, c) feeling of fulfillment and completeness, d) an impression that this is what the person was meant to do.

Personal Growth. According to Organismic Theory (Goldstein, 1934), people have an inherent tendency toward psychological growth and integration. This innate drive pushes people to improve their capacities, integrate themselves with the world around them, and actualize their unique potential (Deci & Ryan, 2017). “Whether one calls it a growth tendency, a drive toward self-actualization, or a forward-moving directional tendency, it is the mainspring of life...” (Rogers, 1961, p. 35). Rogers (1961) proposed that individuals are naturally oriented toward realizing their full potential and that this tendency toward becoming a fully functioning person is the only true human motive. Personal growth will be operationalized in this study as opportunities for challenge, learning, creativity, and development at work (Hackman & Oldham, 1975).

Social Contribution. Social contribution, according to Keyes (1998, 2011) reflects whether, and to what degree, an individual considers their work (and themselves) to have social value and contribute to society. The motivation to “make a difference” is cited as an important aspect in calling and meaningful work research (Steger, Dik & Duffy, 2012; Grant, 2007). Ryff and Keyes (1995) found social contribution to be closely aligned with purpose in life in their empirical study of psychological well-being across the lifespan. Social contribution in this study will reflect the extent to which one perceives their job as making a difference and affecting the greater good of society.

Related Constructs to Purpose

The constructs of workplace spirituality, calling, and meaningfulness have some overlap with how this study defines a sense of purpose at work, but there are notable differences. Although both workplace spirituality and calling have some scholars which may emphasize their secular definitions, both terms originated with a religious perspective and are often still defined that way in research. Meaningfulness, with its broad and ambiguous conceptualization, although significant in the relationship to engagement, is beyond the scope of this study. Investigating the more narrowly defined sense of purpose and its relationship to engagement is expected to make a contribution to the larger meaningful work literature.

Workplace Spirituality. Workplace spirituality shares some commonalities with a sense of purpose, although typically the term denotes a non-secular definition as this is historically what it has meant. According to Ashmos and Duchon (2000) workplace spirituality is defined as “the recognition that employees have an inner life that nourishes and is nourished by meaningful work that takes place in the context of community” (p.137). Workplace spirituality has taken on many different forms, from religious-based organizations, to those embracing spiritual freedom, to others encouraging more time for worker’s “inner life.” It seems that one of the main detractors of the study of workplace spirituality in academic research is its religious connotation, but the construct’s definition appears to be undergoing a shift away from historically religious definitions. The secular definitions of workplace spirituality emphasize the importance of work that provides for personal fulfillment, growth, and meaning. Ashforth and Pratt (2010) consider workplace

spirituality to consist of three dimensions, including transcendence of self, holism and harmony, and growth. Transcendence of self refers to a connection to something greater than oneself. Holism and harmony refers to psychological integration. Growth refers to self-development and self-actualization of one's potential. Sense of purpose at work, as defined in this study, shares much of its conceptualization with the dimensions put forth by Ashforth and Pratt (2010), but not as much alignment with the construct of workplace spirituality as a whole.

Calling. A calling is defined as “a transcendent summons, experienced as originating beyond the self, to approach a particular life role in a manner oriented toward demonstrating or deriving a sense of purpose or meaningfulness and that holds other-oriented values and goals as primary sources of motivation” (Dik & Duffy, 2009, p.427). When using the secular definition of calling, or vocation, which is characterized by one performing meaningful work to benefit the greater good, minus the transcendent summons part, it more closely resembles a sense of purpose as defined here. One important difference between the secular calling and a sense of purpose, is that calling implies “having found” a particular line of work that one is suited for that gives the individual a sense of purpose. Learning from calling research, a sense of purpose draws on aspects of the work environment that would provide someone with a sense of purpose, without having to have found that “one true calling.” Therefore, a sense of purpose at work, as described in this study, would most closely align with meaningful work research.

Meaningfulness. The connection between meaningfulness and employee engagement has a long history. The earliest investigations into what made work more meaningful, and therefore motivational, for people began with Herzberg (1959) and his classification of elements of the work environment that were satisfiers and dissatisfiers, or hygiene factors. According to Herzberg (1959), in order for the satisfiers, or those aspects of the job that would lead to greater meaningfulness (e.g. challenging work, recognition, involvement in decision-making), to have much of an impact on an employee's overall job satisfaction, the "dissatisfiers" (e.g. poor working conditions, low pay, job insecurity) first had to be removed. Later, Hackman & Oldham's (1976) Job Characteristics Theory expanded on elements of the job that made the work more meaningful, thus motivating. According to Hackman and Oldham, job tasks that provided for skill variety, task identity, and task significance created more experienced meaningfulness, which was "the degree to which one experiences the work as generally meaningful, valuable, and worthwhile." Later, Kahn (1990) leveraged the concept of experienced meaningfulness to help clarify his conceptualization of engagement. He proposed that workers would not engage in work that they deemed futile or not worth their time. According to Kahn, people experienced meaningfulness when they felt that their contributions were valuable, worthwhile, and appreciated. In an empirical study of Kahn's (1990) conceptualization of engagement, May et al. (2004) found meaningfulness to be strongly related to engagement.

Although the study of meaningfulness, and likewise, meaningful work has had a strong empirical connection to employee engagement, the meaningful work literature is

currently very comprehensive and plagued with ambiguity. Therefore, the study of a sense of purpose, or the motivational component of meaning, and its effect on employee engagement, is offered as a way to bring more clarity and parsimony to the meaningfulness connection.

CHAPTER FOUR

ENGAGEMENT AS PSYCHOLOGICAL NEED SATISFACTION

All the evidence that we have indicates... it is reasonable to assume in practically every human being, and certainly in almost every newborn baby, that there is an active will toward health, an impulse toward growth, or toward the actualization of human potentials. But at once we are confronted with the very saddening realization that so few people make it. Only a small proportion of the human population gets to the point of identity, or of selfhood, full humanness, self-actualization, etc., even in a society like ours which is one of the most fortunate on the face of the earth. (Maslow, 1971, pp.25-26)

Self-Determination Theory

Self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000), a macro theory of human motivation, both concurs with Maslow's (1971) sentiment above and offers a potential explanation as to why so few people "make it" to self-actualization. Self-determination theory (SDT) posits that inside all human beings is an innate desire to grow, develop, improve the environment, and go about life with a passion. Optimal human functioning reflects people that are vibrant, full of energy, inquisitive, creative, take initiative, and are enthusiastic about life and its possibilities. At the other end of the spectrum, are people who are apathetic, indifferent, isolated, and disengaged; gone is their energy and passion for life. According to self-determination theory, these people have unmet needs for competence, autonomy, and relatedness.

Intrinsic Motivation and SDT

Deci and Ryan's early work focused on intrinsic motivation, which they consider to be a lifelong psychological growth function (Deci & Ryan, 1980), and internalization, which they consider to be critical for both psychological integrity and social structure (Ryan, Connell, & Deci, 1985). The discovery of intrinsic motivation originated with the study of animal behavior that could not be explained by drive theory (Hull, 1943). Researchers found that rats were quick to explore novel places and objects, even if they had to cross an electrified barrier to do so (Berlyne, 1950), and that monkeys solved puzzles for no other apparent reward than for the enjoyment of the activity itself (Harlow, Harlow, & Meyer, 1950). Not only did the monkeys choose to solve the puzzles of their own accord, but they performed better when they were intrinsically motivated than when there was an extrinsic reward for solving the puzzle (Harlow, 1953a). In response to the findings of the animal studies, researchers concluded that if the behavior was not driven by drive-reduction or external rewards, the behavior must be satisfying innate needs (Deci & Ryan, 2017). Thus, the turn toward the study of psychological needs to explain behavior (e.g. Maslow, 1954; Aldefer, 1971, Deci & Ryan, 1985).

Cognitive Evaluation Theory (Ryan & Deci, 1980), the original mini theory of SDT, became well known in the organizational sciences as it explained how intrinsic and extrinsic motivation were not necessarily additive, which was the prevailing view at the time (Deci, Olafsen, and Ryan, 2017). It presented experimental research findings of the undermining effect of extrinsic rewards on intrinsic motivation (e.g. Deci et al., 1999).

The research demonstrated how introducing extrinsic rewards would shift a person's perceived locus of causality and thus undermining their autonomy and sense of competence. This early research on intrinsic and extrinsic rewards led Deci and Ryan (1985) to the discovery of three innate psychological needs, the satisfaction of which are necessary to allow for intrinsic motivation. Needs in SDT are defined as essential nutrients for optimal human functioning, which if not satisfied, can have detrimental effects on personal well-being. Thus, SDT was created to explain how the basic psychological needs of competence, autonomy, and relatedness are essential for intrinsic motivation, psychological growth, and well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

Competence. Deci and Ryan (1985) describe the need for competence as a desire to feel effective in interacting with the environment. This drive for effectance is unrelenting and is what pushes people to continually grow and develop and to take on even more challenging tasks. According to White (1959), there is inherent satisfaction in exercising and extending one's capacities. Pleasurable feelings of competence result only when there is continual stretching of one's abilities (Deci & Ryan, 1985). The need for competence is supported by Csikszentmihalyi's (1988) concept of "flow", where a person becomes completely absorbed or lost in a task due to the pure enjoyment experienced while engaging in it. According to Csikszentmihalyi, optimal challenge is necessary for flow to occur. This helps explain those rare flow experiences by some who temporarily ignore their drives for hunger, thirst, warmth, etc. while experiencing the pleasurable feelings the satisfaction of the need for competence provides (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

Notably, the need for competence is highly related to the construct of self-efficacy. The main distinction between the two is that self-efficacy can be viewed as an individual difference among people and competence, according to SDT, is a basic need shared across people. Self-efficacy is a belief that a person holds about their own abilities to accomplish tasks and achieve expected outcomes (Bandura, 1986). These personal beliefs about self-efficacy may or may not be accurate and are focused on a potential task, whereas feelings of competence are experienced after demonstrations of actual mastery.

Autonomy. The need for autonomy takes the need for competence one step further, in that it is an individual's desire to feel like the source of causation, or source of effectance, when interacting with their environment (deCharms, 1968). According to Deci and Ryan (1985), the need for autonomy is a wish to feel a sense of volition and to experience choice and psychological freedom when carrying out an activity. Angyal (1941) proposed that human development can be characterized by the continual movement toward greater autonomy which relies on the acquisition of various competencies. Deci and Ryan (1985) assert that in order to feel self-determined, or autonomous, an individual must experience a sense of choice when engaging in activities. The construct of autonomy, although similar, is distinct from the construct of control, in that the need for autonomy is not necessarily the need for control, but the need to have a choice and freedom from control (Deci & Ryan, 1985). A person's need for autonomy can still be satisfied in instances where they choose not to be in control. Autonomy is also distinct from independence (Ryan & Lynch, 1999) which means to act alone and not

rely on others. For example, an individual could be acting autonomously *while* engaging in activities with others (Deci & Ryan, 2008).

Relatedness. Besides autonomy and competence, Deci and Ryan attest that a third need, the need for relatedness, is essential for intrinsic motivation to occur. The need for relatedness is a yearning to feel connected to others and have close and intimate relationships (Deci & Ryan, 2000). It was derived from Baumeister and Leary's (1995) need for belongingness and work by Reis (1994) investigating the importance of experiencing deep interpersonal relationships.

Attachment theorists (e.g. Bowlby, 1979) have shown how an infant that is more securely attached to its caregiver, more readily explores its environment. This helps demonstrate the need for relatedness to be a necessary component of intrinsic motivation. SDT proposes that this phenomenon is not simply limited to early childhood, however, but is evident throughout the lifespan. At all ages, intrinsic motivation is more likely to flourish in contexts characterized by a sense of security and relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Research conducted by Ryan and Grolnick (1986) found lower levels of intrinsic motivation in the students who experienced their teachers as cold and uncaring.

Admittedly, this need for relatedness seems to conflict with the image of intrinsically motivated behaviors being performed in isolation. Ryan and Deci (2000) explain that “proximal relational supports may not be necessary for intrinsic motivation, but a *secure relational base* [emphasis added] does seem to be important for the expression of intrinsic motivation” (p. 71).

Self-determination theory suggests that these three needs are essential for motivation and optimal human functioning. Unlike other motivational need theories, like McClelland's Need Theory (Murray, 1938; McClelland, 1961; McClelland, 1971) for instance, SDT needs are proposed to not diminish when behaviors or activities satisfy the particular need. Instead, SDT suggests that people are fueled to engage in more need-fulfilling activities (Ryan & Deci, 2000). This sentiment was echoed by Maslow (1968) in his distinction between growth and safety motivations. The lower needs of his hierarchy, which he termed deficit needs, or "D-cognitions," were considered to be satisfied through homeostasis, but the higher growth motivations of esteem and self-actualization were proposed to be continuous. He termed these the being needs, or "B-cognitions." Maslow (1968) considered safety motivation to aim toward preservation, protection, defensiveness, comfort, and tradition. Growth motivation, on the other hand, aims toward progress, exploration, seeking challenges, learning, and the increasing actualization of one's potentials (Bauer, 2015).

Unlike McClelland's needs for achievement, power, and affiliation, the focus in self-determination theory is not on differences in need strength across people, but on the core belief that these three needs are innate to everyone and are essential for optimal human functioning. Individual differences in SDT needs are attributed to learned social orientation differences, termed "causality orientations," that either help or hinder an individual from gaining further need satisfaction. However, SDT focuses on the level of need satisfaction, not individual differences, as the critical component in predicting outcomes (Ryan & Deci, 2000). SDT defines needs as "universal necessities...the

nutriments that are essential for optimal human development and integrity” (Ryan, Sheldon, Kasser, & Deci, 1996, p.11). According to this definition, something is a need only to the extent that its satisfaction promotes psychological health and its thwarting undermines psychological health.

SDT Framework and Employee Engagement

One of the reasons that employee engagement has not been well integrated into the study of motivation, may be that researchers have not yet found an adequate fit within motivational theory. Recently, Meyer and Gagne (2008) have advocated for self-determination theory to be used as the theoretical framework for investigating employee engagement as it seems to intuitively fit within SDT.

CHAPTER FIVE

ENGAGEMENT AND AUTONOMOUS MOTIVATION

Self-determination theory makes clear distinctions between levels of motivation conceptualized on a continuum from intrinsic motivation being the highest level, to the various forms of extrinsic motivation, down to amotivation, or the lack of motivation at the lowest level (see Figure 1 below). Intrinsic motivation is achieved when an individual’s needs are met, their sense of self is congruent with their action, and they are participating in activities that they find interesting. Therefore, intrinsic motivation is fully autonomous effort based on personal interest. It is this type of motivation that compels a person “to get lost in their work,” to be completely absorbed, because they are motivated by their own personal interest and it drives them to explore, to learn, and to grow.

According to SDT, the necessary fuel for this unlimited quest for growth found with intrinsic motivation is the satisfaction of the three needs for competence, autonomy, and relatedness.

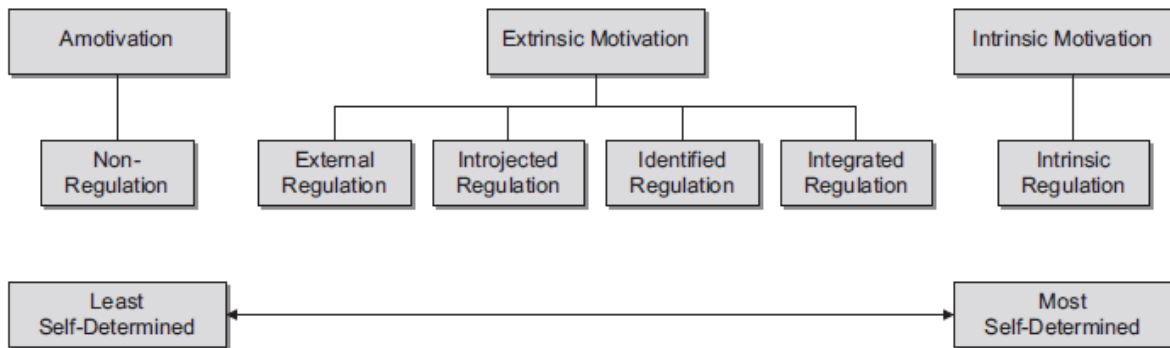


Figure 1: Continuum of Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000, p. 237)

Extrinsic motivation, on the other hand, is driven by a motivating force that is external to the individual. Deci and Ryan (2000) break extrinsic motivation down into several different levels from the most internal to the most external. The most internal forms of extrinsic motivation are referred to as “internalization,” which is critical for social cohesion. With internalization, the motivator may be external, but the individual is able to internalize the values to such a deep level that they become consistent with their sense of self. Thus, the choice to act in accordance with the external rule feels like an autonomous choice. This type of motivation is imperative to social structure and agreed upon rules of conduct. It is also this internalization that allows an employee to completely “buy-in” to the mission of an organization and adopt it as their own. Internalization is defined as “people taking in values, attitudes, or regulatory structures,

such that the external regulation of a behavior is transformed into an internal regulation and thus no longer requires the presence of an external contingency” (Gagne & Deci, 2005, p. 334).

Internalization is behavior that is driven by a sense of purpose, meaning, and belief. The types of regulation deemed internalization are “introjected,” “identified,” and “integrated” self-regulation. Introjected regulation occurs when a guiding principle has been taken in by the person, but has not been completely accepted. Introjected regulation makes a person feel as if they have to behave in a certain way to protect their ego or self-esteem (e.g. “I work because it makes me feel like a worthy person”). In this situation the internalized regulation is controlling the person. This is like the parent’s voice in the child’s head on how good girls or boys are supposed to act. With identified regulation, people feel more autonomous in their behavior. They have internalized the value and accepted it as important. Identified regulation would motivate a person to do a job even if it wasn’t enjoyable because that person sees the value in the job getting done. For example this might look like the following, “I bathe patients because it is essential for their health and well-being. I do my job because it is important.” Identified regulation occurs when the individual has deemed the behavior to be important and it is consistent with their personal goals. The most internalized extrinsic regulation is called “integrated regulation,” which allows a person to feel completely autonomous in their behavior. With integrated regulation, the behavior is fundamental to the individual’s sense of self. “I work because the job I do is a central part of who I am as a person.” According to SDT, the satisfaction of the needs for competence and relatedness are necessary for the

internalization of external regulations to occur. The degree of internalization, however, whether introjected, identified, or integrated, is dependent upon the level of satisfaction for the individual's need for autonomy (Deci & Ryan, 2000). According to SDT, fully volitional motivation, or autonomous motivation, includes intrinsic motivation, which inspires a person out of interest and enjoyment, and identified and integrated regulation, which drives a person out of a sense of meaning and purpose (Gagne & Deci, 2005).

Given that some aspects of work are not always inherently enjoyable, autonomous motivation has more utility in applied work environments than focusing on intrinsic motivation alone. "Research has shown that autonomous motivation predicts persistence and adherence and is advantageous for effective performance, especially on complex or heuristic tasks that involve deep information processing or creativity" (Deci & Ryan, 2008, p.14). Autonomous motivation is especially relevant when researching the construct of employee engagement because it inherently has aspects of internalizing organizational values and going beyond just in-role performance due to interest, meaning, and purpose.

SDT Need Satisfaction Mediator

Scholars of self-determination theory have found the pursuit of intrinsic aspirations versus extrinsic aspirations to have substantial effects on individual well-being (e.g. Sheldon & Ryan, 1995). Extrinsic aspirations include such things as the pursuit of wealth, fame, and an appealing image, while intrinsic aspirations include the pursuit of personal growth, close relationships, community involvement, and physical health (Kasser & Ryan, 1996). Many empirical studies have found that people pursuing

extrinsic aspirations, relative to those pursuing intrinsic aspirations, have less self-actualization and vitality, poorer relationship quality, and greater anxiety and depression (e.g. Kasser & Ryan, 1993, 1996, 2001; Sheldon & Ryan, 1995; Vansteenkiste, Simons, Lens, Sheldon, & Deci, 2004). It has been found that intrinsic aspirations allow for greater basic psychological need satisfaction (Ryan, Sheldon, Kasser & Deci, 1996). Intrinsic aspirations, although not synonymous with a sense of purpose, do have some overlap. Generally, goals and aspirations are not as integrated into the self-concept as deeply as an individual's sense of purpose. Some scholars have proposed that the need for meaning and purpose is essential to well-being and may even be the most important psychological need (e.g. Frankl, 1959; Anderson et al., 2000; Baumeister, 1991). Weinstein, Ryan, and Deci (2012) counter the argument for meaning and purpose to be an essential need and propose instead that a sense of purpose leads to greater psychological need satisfaction and an increased sense of meaning as the result. Thus, a large contribution of this study will be the investigation of whether or not SDT need satisfaction fully mediates the relationship between a sense of purpose and employee engagement.

CHAPTER SIX

WORK ENVIRONMENT ANTECEDENTS

The success of employee engagement initiatives in applied settings have suffered from a lack of clarity surrounding the work environment antecedents of employee engagement. Despite a recent surge in academic activity into the employee engagement

construct the work environment antecedents are still unclear (Macey & Schneider, 2008) This study hopes to address this gap in the research through an investigation of the work environment antecedents of Demands-Abilities Fit, Transformational Leadership, and Corporate Social Responsibility. These work environment antecedents span from fairly proximal (demand-abilities fit) to fairly distal (corporate social responsibility). Transformational leadership, although often assumed to have a strong relationship with employee engagement, has received sparse attention in empirical studies. These three antecedents are each expected to have a direct relationship with both the Sense of Purpose and SDT Need Satisfaction predictors of Employee Engagement.

Demands-Abilities Fit

Positive job attitudes and organizational outcomes have long been attributed to a match between individual characteristics and the work environment. There are many different types of person-environment fit, to include person-organization fit, person-team fit, work-role fit, demands-abilities fit, needs-supplies fit, etc. (see Kristof, 1996). In prior research, May et al. (2004) showed work role fit to be related to employee engagement. Work-role fit is the relative match between a person's self-concept or identity and one's work role and not a reflection of one's skill utilization in their work role, so demands-abilities fit was chosen for this study as it is hypothesized to be a better predictor of self-expression. Demands-abilities Fit is the match between the job demands and a person's skills and abilities (Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005). Demands-abilities fit has been found to be related to increased competence satisfaction (Greguras & Diefendorff, 2009) and engagement (Chen et al., 2014). It is hypothesized that the

stronger the demands-abilities fit, the greater the sense of purpose one will feel through authentic self-expression and the greater SDT need satisfaction will be found in the work role.

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leaders “transform” organizations by motivating followers to high levels of performance by helping them reach their potential through the dedication to an influential vision and higher purpose. Transformational leadership conceptualized by Bass (1985) includes four dimensions, which are idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration. There is surprisingly little research that has investigated the impact of transformational leadership on employee engagement. Even so, there are a few empirical studies that have found a significant relationship (Kovjanic et al., 2013; Ghadi & Fernando, 2011).

Shamir, House, and Arthur (1993) suggested that transformational leadership involves increasing subordinate’s self-efficacy (competence), increasing feelings of belongingness to a group (relatedness), and increasing personal meaning attached to a collective goal (purpose and autonomy). One of the most prominent factors that distinguishes transformational leadership from that of transactional leadership, is the focus on the psychological needs of the followers by the leader (Bono & Judge, 2003). Recent research on transformational leadership has shown the satisfaction of SDT needs to have a mediating effect between transformational leadership and many positive employee outcomes (Kovjanic, Schuh, Jonas, Quaquebeke, Van Dick, 2012).

Kovjanic et al.'s (2012) study showed transformational leadership to foster the satisfaction of subordinate's needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Unlike transactional leaders that are highly concerned with maintaining close control over followers with rewards and punishments, transformational leaders try to inspire followers to adopt the group goal as their own so that they are more autonomously motivated to achieve that goal (Bass, 1985). They also foster a sense of autonomy through intellectual stimulation by encouraging followers to come up with new, more efficient, ways to complete their work (Bass, 1985). Transformational leaders go beyond the task or goal at-hand and challenge their followers to keep improving and striving for even higher goals. These leaders believe in their followers' abilities and help them to achieve their full potential. This fosters a sense of competence in their followers by setting very high expectations and expressing confidence in their ability to achieve them (Shamir et al., 1993). Such continual growth and development increases an individual's sense of competence (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Increasing follower's sense of relatedness comes easily to transformational leaders because of their natural individual consideration. Transformational leaders build a trusting relationship with their followers by responding to the unique needs of each individual (Bass, 1985). In addition to forming close individual relationships, transformational leaderships stress group cohesion, foster a sense of group identity, and focus on maintaining high unit morale by lauding the group's achievements (Burns, 1978).

Transformational leaders inspire high levels of motivation in their followers not only by satisfying the psychological needs of their followers but inspiring them to

transcend them for the greater good. By communicating a strong vision, transformational leaders inspire their followers by igniting a sense of meaning and purpose (Bass, 1985). According to Bass (1990, p. 53) transformational leaders implore their followers to “transcend their own interests for the good of the group, organization, or society,” resulting in followers “doing more than they intended and often more than they even thought possible.” Leadership scholars propose that the transformation of followers occurs when they begin associating work with a higher purpose that extends beyond simply earning money (e.g. Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978; Podsakoff et 1996; Shamir et al., 1993) A study by Sparks and Shenk (2001) found transformational leaders to have a significant effect on followers cohesion, effort, satisfaction, and performance through the mediating mechanism of a belief in the higher purpose of one’s work. It is hypothesized that transformational leadership is related to employee engagement through the leader’s ability to increase a follower’s sense of purpose at work as well as satisfy underlying psychological needs.

Corporate Social Responsibility

Corporate Social responsibility (CSR) is defined as the “context-specific organizational actions and policies that take into account stakeholders’ expectations and the triple bottom line of economic, social, and environmental performance” (Aguinis, 2011, p.855). Although Corporate Social Responsibility programs were initiated, in large part, as a public relations move in response to the corporate corruption scandals of the late 1990’s, it appears that one of the positive unintended consequences of these programs has been an increase in the engagement level of their employees. There have

been emerging empirical studies finding a positive and significant relationship between CSR and engagement (e.g. Glavas & Piderit, 2009; Caligiuri et al., 2013).

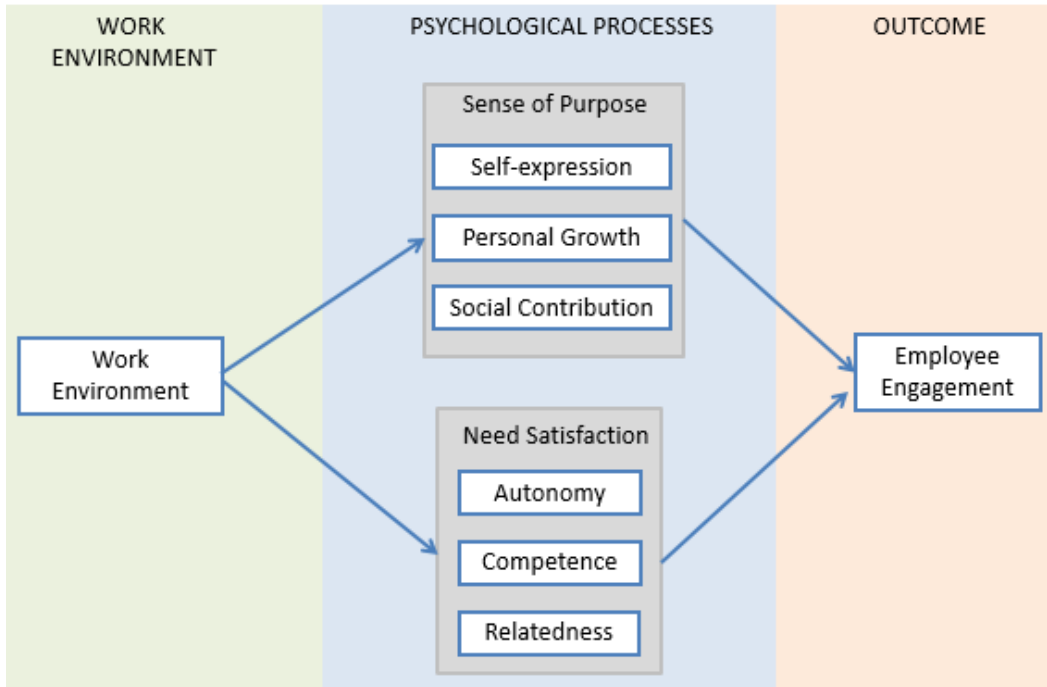
Glavas & Kelley (2014) propose that Corporate Social Responsibility contributes to employee's sense of purpose at work. They admit that although there has not been empirical research into CSR and meaningfulness, many authors have found anecdotal evidence to suggest that employees find a deeper sense of purpose when they perceive they are working for socially responsible companies (Gardner, Csikszentmihályi, & Damon, 2001; Novak, 1996; Paine, 2003; Sisodia, Wolfe, & Sheth, 2007; Willard, 2002). Recent research conducted by Glavas (2016) found authenticity to mediate the relationship between CSR and employee engagement. This lends support to the operationalization of purpose in this study as authentic self-expression, personal growth, and social contribution.

CHAPTER SEVEN

UNIFYING THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

What follows is a theoretical framework for a model of the psychological processes underlying employee engagement using a human flourishing approach. The framework, shown in Figure 2, incorporates aspects of humanistic psychology, eudaimonic philosophy, psychological well-being, and self-determination theory. The theoretical framework presented for consideration by this study proposes both SDT psychological need satisfaction and a sense of purpose at work to be predictors of

employee engagement and mediators of the effects of the work environment antecedents on engagement.



CHAPTER EIGHT

HYPOTHESES

Hypothesis 1: Demands-abilities Fit will be positively related to Sense of Purpose.

Hypothesis 2: Demands-abilities Fit will be positively related to SDT Need Satisfaction.

Hypothesis 3: Transformational Leadership will be positively related to Sense of Purpose.

Hypothesis 4: Transformational Leadership will be positively related to SDT Need Satisfaction.

Hypothesis 5: CSR will be positively related to Purpose.

Hypothesis 6: CSR will be positively related to SDT Need Satisfaction.

Hypothesis 7: Purpose will be positively related to Employee Engagement.

Hypothesis 8: SDT Need Satisfaction will be positively related to Employee Engagement.

Hypothesis 9: The relationship between Purpose and Employee Engagement will be partially mediated by SDT Need Satisfaction.

CHAPTER NINE

METHOD

Sample and Procedures

Data for this study was collected from a staff survey administered to employees of a midsize southeastern public university. Participants were contacted via email to participate in a voluntary climate survey and assured that their responses would be kept completely anonymous if they chose to participate. Out of a total of 3,786 staff members, 518 complete responses were collected. Participants were staff members from various support areas including financial, administrative, personnel, athletics, student affairs, facilities, etc. The sample was 35% male and 65% female. The average age of the participants was 35 years old with 5% under 25 years, 25% between 25-34 years, 22% between 35-44 years, 25% between 45-54 years, and 23% were 55 years or older. The education level of the participants varied from a high school diploma (2%) to a doctoral degree (6%) with the majority having obtained a master's degree (39%) or bachelor's degree (29%).

Research Model

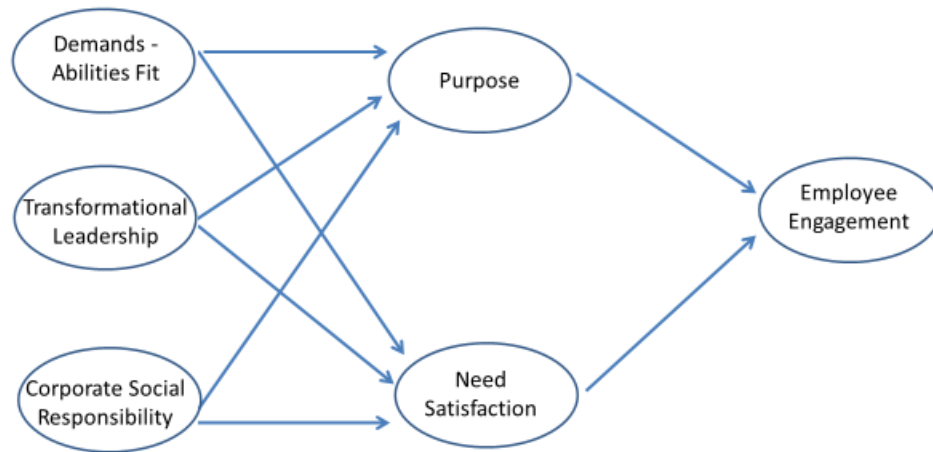


Figure 3: Overall Research Model

Measures

Employee engagement. Employee engagement was measured using the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale – 9 (Schaufeli et al., 2006). The scale consists of nine items measuring three dimensions of work engagement of vigor, dedication, and absorption. The scale uses a five point Likert scale from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” An example item is, “I am enthusiastic about my job.”

Sense of Purpose. A sense of purpose at work was measured with 11 items. All items use a five point Likert scale from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” Four items were adapted from Waterman (2003) to measure authentic self-expression. An example item is, “In this job, I can be who I really am.” Five items were adapted from Hackman and Oldham’s (1975) Job Diagnostics Survey on growth need strength. An example item is, “My work is stimulating and challenging.” Three items were taken from

the greater good motivation of the Work and Meaning Inventory (Steger et al., 2012). An example item is, “I know my work makes a positive difference in the world.”

SDT Need Satisfaction. SDT need satisfaction was measured with 21 items from the Basic Need Satisfaction at Work Scale (Deci et al., 2001). The scale uses a 5 point Likert scale from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” The scale measures the three needs of competence, autonomy, and relatedness. An example item for competence is, “People at work tell me I am good at what I do.” An example item for autonomy is, “I feel like I have a lot of leeway in deciding how my work gets done.” An example item for relatedness is, “I consider the people I work with to be my friends.”

Demands-Abilities Fit. Demands-abilities fit was measured with three items from Cable and Judge (1996). The scale was measured using a five point Likert scale from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” A sample item is, “The match is very good between the demands of my job and my personal skills.”

Transformational Leadership. Transformational leadership was measured with seven items taken from Podsakoff et al. (1991) Transformational Leadership Inventory. Items were measured with a five point Likert scale from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” A sample item is, “My supervisor challenges me to think about old problems in new ways.”

Corporate Social Responsibility. Perceived corporate social responsibility was measured with four items adapted from Ashmos & Duchon (2000) measure of Workplace Spirituality. Items were measured using a five point Likert scale from “strongly

disagree” to “strongly agree.” A sample item is “My organization is concerned about society.”

Data Analysis

The analyses for this study were conducted using EQS 6.4 structural equation modeling software. Per Hayduk & Glaser (2000), a four-step approach was followed which included an exploratory factor analysis, a confirmatory factor analysis or specification of the measurement model, a test of the structural model, and finally an evaluation of the modified model, if necessary. Additionally, a piecewise process was used in the analysis to more fully investigate each of the components of the overall model, to include the work environment antecedents (demands-abilities fit, transformational leadership, corporate social responsibility), the mediators (sense of purpose, SDT need satisfaction), and the outcome variable (employee engagement). Per the recommendation by Kline (2016) the following goodness-of-fit indices were included for model evaluation: model chi-square with degrees of freedom and p value, Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR).

CHAPTER TEN

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

The means, standard deviations, and bivariate correlations are shown in Table 1. Overall, the employees reported moderate levels on all the variables included in this

study, except slightly negative levels of relatedness and demands-abilities.

Transformational leadership, self-expression, and personal growth had the most variability. The data showed strong correlations between self-expression and employee engagement, personal growth and employee engagement, demands-abilities fit and self-expression, and transformational leadership and autonomy.

Table 1

Means, Standard Deviations, and Bivariate Correlations

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Engagement	2.514	.900									
2. Self-expression	2.575	1.04	.713								
3. Growth	2.318	.941	.657	.686							
4. Contribution	2.239	.898	.553	.530	.597						
5. Autonomy	2.286	.829	.553	.509	.594	.412					
6. Competence	2.335	.831	.514	.557	.502	.440	.541				
7. Relatedness	1.988	.724	.525	.452	.449	.362	.575	.492			
8. DA Fit	1.952	.860	.539	.678	.583	.443	.375	.428	.323		
9. Tfl Leadshp	2.253	.990	.519	.438	.496	.346	.602	.513	.504	.277	
10. CSR	2.387	.792	.479	.322	.420	.398	.486	.307	.351	.301	.404

Note. $p < .01$ for all values

Data Assumptions for SEM

Structural equation modeling relies on several data assumptions for proper results, therefore, the data set was examined for linearity, normality, and multicollinearity using SPSS version 25. Using curve estimation, all of the variable relationships were found to

be sufficiently linear. Normality was determined by investigating the skewness and kurtosis of the data. The skewness of the study variables ranged from 0.26-1.3 indicating some positive skew, but would not be considered severe (absolute value greater than 3.0) according to Kline (2016). The kurtosis for the study variables ranged from -0.83-2.5, which is within normal limits. Multicollinearity diagnostics were important for this data as many of the variables showed high correlations. The variance inflation factors were analyzed for all of the independent variables and none were found to be greater than 3.0. Thus, it was concluded that multicollinearity was negligible.

Exploratory Factor Analysis

Both exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) were used to refine the items which were included in this study. Exploratory factor analysis was conducted to inform the CFA using SPSS version 25 statistical software. Following the approach taken by May et al. (2004) to determine if measures were distinct from each other, all nine independent and mediating variables were examined for common factors. Principal axis factoring extraction was used with a direct oblimin rotation because of the relatively high correlation (above 0.5) between some of the factors. Initial results found strong factor loadings for the constructs of DA fit, TFL, CSR, Social contribution, and Relatedness. Self-expression, Personal Growth, and Autonomy had a couple cross-loading items, but the most problematic latent construct was Competence. Two reverse-coded items did not perform well (low communality) and two items loaded onto other constructs (self-expression and personal growth). After removing a few problematic items, the factor analysis identified six factors with

eigenvalues greater than 1.0 (explaining 70% of the variance), but when expanded to include eight factors (75% of the variance), a clean factor structure emerged. This factor structure would be further examined with confirmatory factor analysis. Please see Appendix B for a summary of the exploratory factor analysis.

Lastly, the outcome variable, Employee Engagement, was evaluated for its factor structure. The data showed a two factor structure (eigenvalues 5.2 and 1.2 explaining 70% of the item variance) with vigor and dedication loading onto one factor and absorption on the other. This relationship was also explored further in CFA.

Measurement Model and Confirmatory Factor Analysis

A measurement model of each of the latent constructs was specified in line with theory and the results of the exploratory factor analysis. To thoroughly examine the measurement model, it was broken down into three parts (work environment antecedents, mediators, and outcome) and then combined to form an overall measurement model for this study. Confirmatory factor analysis employing maximum likelihood estimation was conducted on the measurement models using EQS statistical software version 6.4. The overall measurement model consisting of 11 first-order factors and three second-order factors fit the data well. The goodness of fit indices for the measurement model recommended by Kline (2016) showed good fit ($\chi^2 = 1242$; $df = 506$; $CFI = 0.94$, $SRMR = 0.05$; and $RMSEA = 0.05$) according to guidelines established by Hu & Bentler (1999) which considers acceptable fit to be $CFI \geq 0.9$, $SRMR \leq 0.1$, $RMSEA \leq 0.08$ and good fit to be CFI close to 0.95, $SRMR$ close to 0.08, and $RMSEA$ close to 0.06. The chi-square of the measurement model is large and significant, failing the null hypothesis,

but this may be due to the large sample size. The chi-square ratio to degrees of freedom, however, implies good fit ($\chi^2/df=2.45$) as it is less than 3.0. Additionally, plausible alternative measurement models were tested to include first-order factor models with one, three, and six factors as well as an alternate second-order factor model with six first-order factors and three second-order factors. This alternate second-order factor model was investigated due to the results of the exploratory factor analysis that indicated the possible combination of three sets of factors, which included autonomy and competence, self-expression and personal growth, and vigor and dedication. However, all of these alternative models did not fit the data as well as the original, nor within acceptable model fit limits.

The factor loadings, path estimates of the indicators and Cronbach alphas of each factor scale showed good convergent validity and reliability. All of the standardized factor loadings from the confirmatory factor analysis were greater than 0.48, which can be found summarized in Appendix C. Additionally, all of the latent variables had good fitting indicators and strong Cronbach alphas to include demands-abilities fit ($\beta=0.84-0.89$; $\alpha=0.90$), transformational leadership ($\beta=0.75-0.92$; $\alpha=0.94$), CSR ($\beta=0.77-0.87$; $\alpha=0.86$), self-expression ($\beta=0.83-0.87$; $\alpha=0.84$), personal growth ($\beta=0.82-0.87$; $\alpha=0.87$), social contribution ($\beta=0.68-0.91$; $\alpha=0.87$), relatedness ($\beta=0.72-0.87$; $\alpha=0.81$), vigor ($\beta=0.76-0.92$; $\alpha=0.89$), dedication ($\beta=0.9-0.9$; $\alpha=0.89$), and autonomy ($\beta=0.56-0.83$; $\alpha=0.76$). The indicators for competence and absorption did not load well onto their respective factors, however. The absorption factor was deleted as it was not contributing positively to the overall measure of engagement, leaving the two factors of vigor and

dedication, that did look robustly reliable. Some of the indicators for competence were deleted for poor performance, leaving two items that were summed into the overall SDT Need Satisfaction factor. After accounting for some small changes, it was determined that convergent validity was achieved for the model since all measures were reliable and all standardized path estimates between factors and their respective items were above 0.5. The overall measurement model including all standardized path estimates can be found in Appendix C. The complete list of scale indicators used in the data analysis can be found in Appendix D.

Structural Model Evaluation

The proposed structural equation model shown in Figure 4 was created to test the relationship between the work environment antecedents (DA Fit, TFL, CSR), the proposed mediators (Purpose, Need Satisfaction), and the outcome (Engagement). Using EQS software and maximum likelihood estimation to estimate model fit, the proposed model shows good fit to the data, given its complexity (CFI=0.94, SRMR=0.05, RMSEA=0.06), and after allowing for the work environment antecedents to

covary.

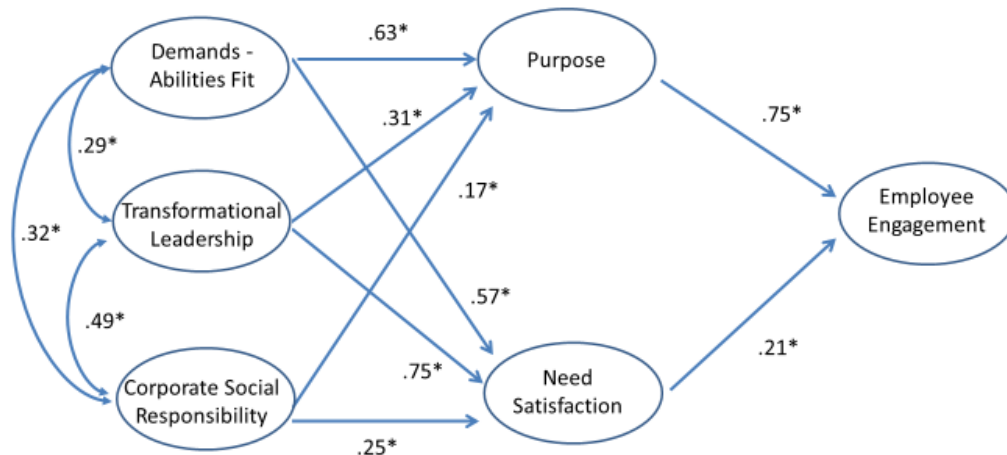


Figure 4: Original Direct Effects Model

Hypothesis Testing

The structural model shows positive relationships between the work environment antecedents of DA Fit, TFL, and CSR and the proposed mediators of a Sense of Purpose and SDT Need Satisfaction. Thus, Hypotheses 1 through 6 were supported. In addition, when controlling for both mediators, there is a strong significant relationship between each of the work environment antecedents and employee engagement, accounting for a total of 60% of the variance in engagement ($R^2=0.595$). The standardized path coefficients for the direct effects on engagement are 0.47, 0.33, and 0.22 respectively. The most proximal antecedent, job demands-abilities fit, shows the strongest direct relationship, followed by transformational leadership, followed by the most distal antecedent, corporate social responsibility. When the two mediators of purpose and need

satisfaction are added to the model, the standardized path coefficients drop to -0.27, -0.15, and 0.01 respectively, indicative of near full mediation of the relationships between the work environment antecedents and engagement by the two mediators. This model also estimates the two mediators of purpose and need satisfaction to account for 82% of the variance in employee engagement ($R^2=0.817$), purpose being the strongest predictor of engagement ($\beta=.754$) and then need satisfaction ($\beta=0.21$).

Next, in order to test indirect effects between the mediators and engagement, a parameter was added between purpose and need satisfaction. The proposed mediation model, found in Figure 5, still has good fit to the data (CFI=0.94, SRMR= 0.05, RMSEA=0.06). After adding the indirect effect, the direct effect between purpose and engagement was unchanged, while the direct effect between need satisfaction and engagement was reduced from 0.21 to 0.17. Thus Hypothesis 7 and Hypothesis 8 were supported as there were positive relationships between SDT need satisfaction and engagement as well as between a sense of purpose and engagement. Hypothesis 9, however, of a partial mediation of the relationship between purpose and engagement by SDT need satisfaction, was not supported. This was an unexpected finding as SDT scholars had proposed that purpose would be explained by underlying psychological need satisfaction (Weinstein et al., 2012), which was not the case. The results of this study show that the effect of SDT need satisfaction on engagement was actually partially explained by a sense of purpose.

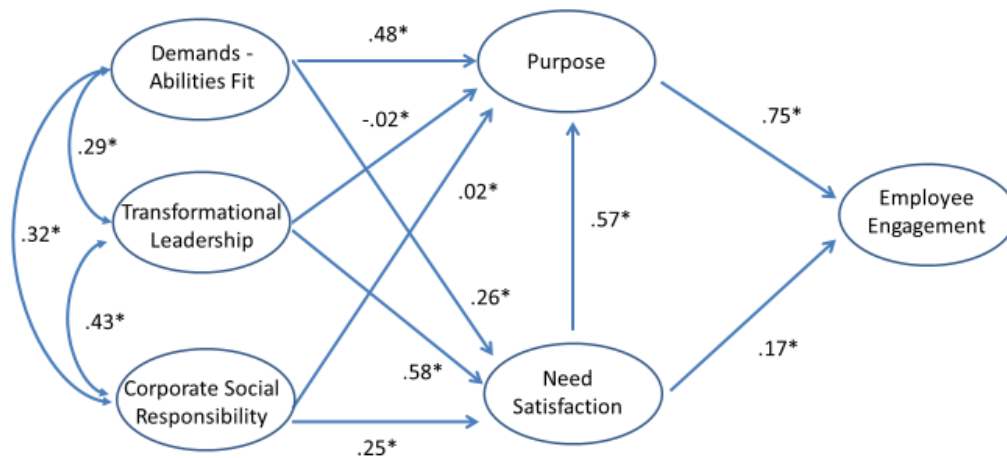


Figure 5: Mediation Model

Alternative Models

While the proposed structural models had good fit to the data, alternative structural models were developed in an attempt to increase model parsimony and better understand the relationships between the latent variables in this study. First, the possibility of combining purpose and SDT need satisfaction into one third-order factor arose from the measurement model confirmatory factor analysis, where purpose and need satisfaction showed a high correlation of 0.82, close to the recommended cutoff of 0.85 for combining factors (Hayduk & Glazer, 2000). The third-order factor model showed acceptable fit to the data (CFI=0.93, SRMR=0.06, RMSEA=0.06), yet slightly poorer fit than the mediation model. This model shows that the combination of need satisfaction and purpose is a very strong predictor of engagement ($\beta=0.913$). The combination of the two mediators into one higher order factor suggest that they could be reflections of a

broader construct underlying both of them. This theoretical concept of purpose and SDT need satisfaction being representative of a more complete set of human needs, similar to Maslow's hierarchy, will be elaborated on in the discussion to follow.

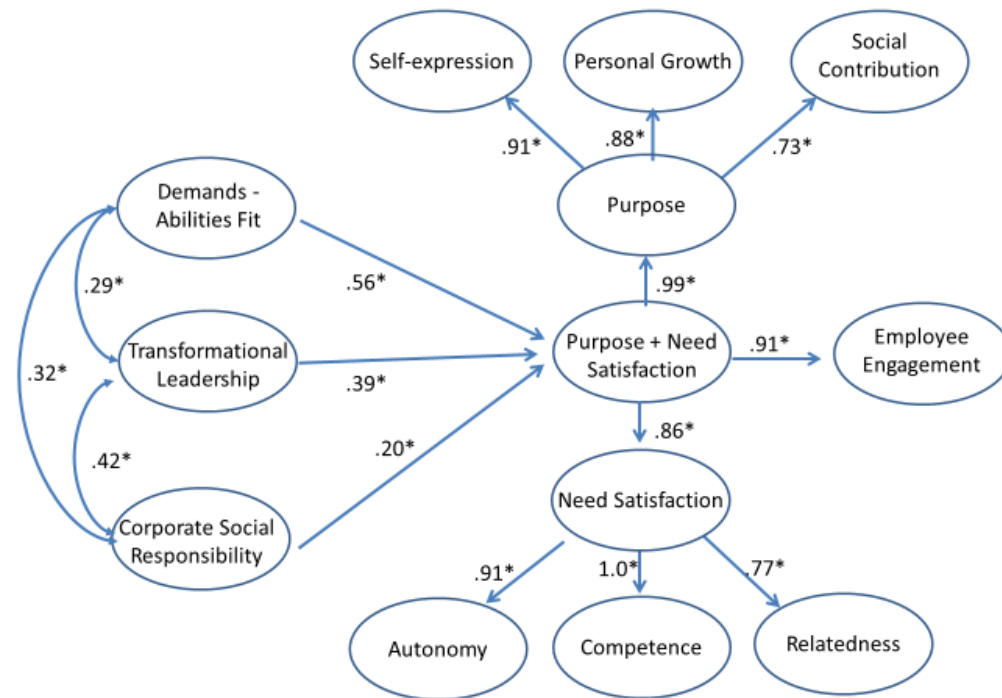


Figure 6: Third-Order Factor Model

The semi-sequential model was proposed because there appeared to be several mediating relationships present in the mediation model. The relationship between transformational leadership and engagement was fully mediated by SDT need satisfaction and the relationship between SDT need satisfaction and engagement was at least partially mediated by purpose. Thus, a more sequential relationship was tested. The model fit

indices for the semi-sequential model showed good fit to the data (CFI=0.94, SRMR=0.05, and RMSEA=0.06).

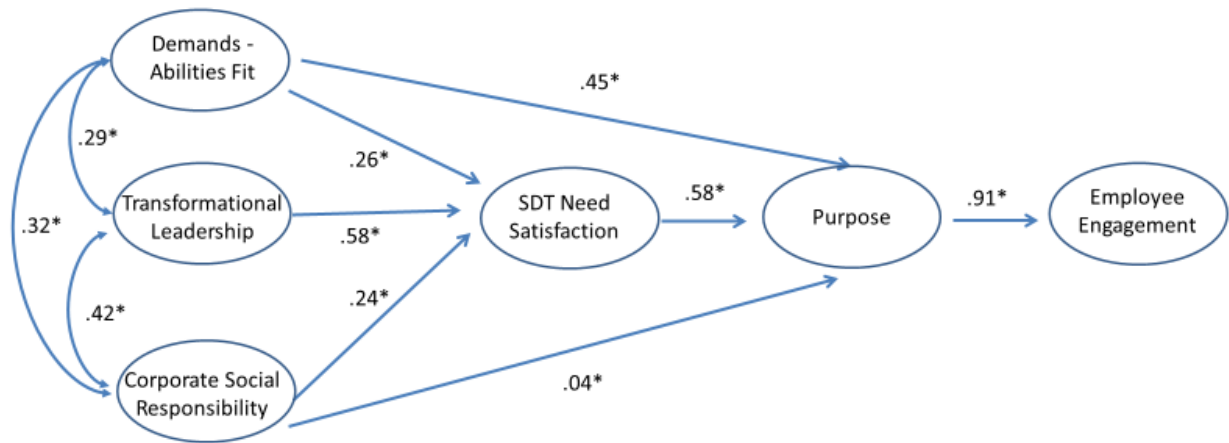


Figure 7: Semi-Sequential Model

Structural Model Comparison

Several structural models were created in order to better understand the relationships between the work environment antecedents of demands-abilities fit, transformational leadership, and corporate social responsibility, the mediators of purpose and need satisfaction, and the outcome of employee engagement. The four models evaluated in this study included the Direct Effects Model, the Mediation Model, the Third-Order Factor Model, and the Semi-Sequential Model. Out of the four models, the Mediation Model showed the best fit to the data, but was the least parsimonious. Even though the other three models had slightly poorer fit, they were more insightful concerning the possible construct relationships. Please see Table 4 for a summary of the

structural model fit indices and Appendix E for the full structural models analyzed in this study.

Table 2

Structural Model Fit Indices

Model	χ^2	df	p-value	CFI	SRMR	RMSEA
Direct Effects Model	1307	496	<.001	0.938	0.053	0.057
Mediation Model	1249	495	<.001	0.942	0.046	0.055
3 rd Order Factor Model	1364	495	<.001	0.933	0.06	0.059
Semi-sequential Model	1256	497	<.001	0.942	0.048	0.055

CHAPTER TWELVE

DISCUSSION

Employee engagement has emerged as a powerful contributor to organizational success as research has associated it with higher profit, customer satisfaction, and employee retention (Harter et al., 2002). As such, companies are looking to organizational researchers for a better understanding of the construct in order to assist them in increasing the engagement level of their workforce (Shuck, 2012). Research on the topic has steadily gained momentum, but the antecedents to engagement and its underlying motivational framework remain unclear (Macey & Schneider, 2008). This study makes several contributions to the organizational science literature by addressing these gaps.

Theoretical Contributions

The present research makes a significant contribution to the employee engagement literature through the investigation of a broad set of work environment antecedents, including proximal to distal elements of the work environment. Job demands-abilities fit, transformational leadership, and corporate social responsibility were examined in this study and found to contribute to 60% of the variance in engagement, when the mediators of purpose and need satisfaction were not present in the model.

As a major contribution to the meaningful work literature, this study operationalizes a sense of purpose at work as self-expression, personal growth, and social contribution. Considering the increasing demand by the talent market for more meaning and purpose in their work, especially from the millennials (Hurst, 2014), this study helps to illuminate what it means to have more purposeful work and then demonstrates its impact on employee engagement. The structural equation models presented in this study showed a sense of purpose to be the most significant predictor of employee engagement in every model.

This study also contributes to the self-determination theory literature by showing a good fit to the study of employee engagement within an SDT framework. The research model demonstrated strong mediating effects of the work environment antecedents through psychological need satisfaction. In line with SDT research, this model could be viewed as depicting autonomous motivation at work, which includes intrinsic motivation from psychological need satisfaction, coupled with an extrinsic (yet deeply internalized)

sense of purpose. This combination gives rise to integrated regulation, arguably the highest, most sustainable level of effort attainable at work.

A major aim of this study was the attempt to create a unifying framework in which to study employee engagement, staying true to Kahn's original conceptualization. Leaning on eudaimonic philosophy, this research model is perhaps the first of its kind to operationalize what was meant by Kahn's early definition of engagement as being the full authentic self-expression of employees at work. The overall theoretical framework for this study shows how underlying psychological need satisfaction may give rise to personal growth and self-expression, which in turn effects employee engagement through a sense of purpose.

Limitations

This study presents some pretty impressive findings that could further the research on employee engagement, meaningful work, and self-determination theory. The conclusions drawn from this study, however, have to be done so with caution for several reasons. First, the data for this study came from all self-report measures lending itself to the possibility of common-method bias. However, the poor performance of the one factor model during the confirmatory factor analysis of this study reduces this likelihood. Additionally, a cross-sectional approach was used to analyze the data meaning causal inferences cannot be drawn, only implied. All references to mediation in this study are more accurately described as indirect effects (Kline, 2016), where actual mediation conclusions would necessitate a longitudinal design. Furthermore, the sample for this

study did incorporate many different job types, but was taken from one single organization, reducing the generalizability of the findings.

Future Research

The results of this study brought forth many things to be considered for future research. As previously mentioned, a longitudinal study to test the causal relationships between the variables in this study would aid in the overall contribution of this theoretical model to organizational research.

The strength of a sense of purpose as a predictor of employee engagement, and the fact that it could not be explained by SDT need satisfaction, gives rise to the research question of whether or not purpose should be considered a basic human need. In fact, many scholars have already posited a basic human need for purpose (e.g. Frankl, 1946l; Baumeister & Vohs, 2002; Keyes, 2011; Ryff, 1989), but purpose is currently not included in the prominent motivational theory of SDT. The results of this study show some initial theoretical support for exploring the consideration of purpose as a basic human need, given its large effect on human flourishing at work, (i.e. engagement).

In addition, the third-order factor model proposed in this study suggests that purpose and SDT need satisfaction have such a strong relationship that they both could be considered reflections of a broader underlying construct, such as human fulfillment. This idea seems reminiscent of Maslow's (1943) hierarchy, which is a more extensive depiction of human needs than SDT, spanning physiological, psychological, and arguably spiritual needs. Some parallels can be drawn from the research model proposed in this study and Maslow's hierarchy. The middle needs of Maslow's hierarchy (belonging, and

external/internal esteem) could be equated to the SDT needs for relatedness, competence, and autonomy, while the higher needs of the pyramid (self-actualization and self-transcendence) could be equated to a sense of purpose as defined in this study as self-expression, personal growth, and social contribution.

The concept of a need for purpose certainly warrants further research. If there is such a need for purpose, one's work is arguably the most suitable way for someone to get their need for purpose met. Work can be a vehicle for the full expression of one's gifts and abilities, personal growth and the realization of one's potential, in contribution to something that serves the greater good of society. As such, future research on the theoretical need for purpose and the ways in which it is satisfied may contribute to a more thorough understanding of human flourishing at work, and likewise, human flourishing in general.

Practical implications

The findings of this study have important implications for organizational leaders wishing to increase the level of engagement of their employees. From the findings of this study, we can see that psychological need satisfaction and a sense of purpose are strong predictors of employee engagement. This means that organizational efforts to increase employee's feelings of relatedness, competence, autonomy, self-expression, personal growth, and social contribution will have a positive impact on employee's levels of engagement. Luckily, this study also illuminates three easy ways to do that at each level of the work environment, (job level, unit level, and organization level).

At the job level, job demands-abilities fit had a strong effect on employee engagement, through the likely mediating mechanisms of a need for competence and self-expression. Thus, organizations should give careful consideration to the fit between an employee's abilities and their job demands. Additionally, in a study by Tims, Derks, and Bakker (2016) job crafting was found to be associated with increased levels of person-job fit and meaningfulness. Tims et al. (2016) explain job crafting as the continual changes employees make to their job of their own initiative (e.g. taking on additional tasks, altering procedures, adjustments to scope, etc.). Additionally, they found demands-abilities fit to be associated with meaningfulness over time, but needs-supplies fit was not. Their finding of an association between demands-abilities fit and meaningfulness, an established predictor of engagement (e.g. May et al., 2004) is consistent with the findings of this study and the relationship between demands-abilities fit and engagement. This means that higher levels of engagement can be achieved by increasing demands-abilities fit through job crafting. Allowing employees the flexibility to make adjustments to their jobs to better showcase their abilities will likely contribute positively to their self-expression, and their need satisfaction.

At the unit level, transformational leadership was shown to have a strong significant relationship with employee's psychological need satisfaction, and thus engagement. This finding is consistent with prior research on transformational leadership, need satisfaction, and engagement (Kovjanic et al., 2013). Efforts by organizations to improve the leadership quality of their supervisors, specifically the transformational leadership qualities of supporting the needs of their followers, will be

rewarded with increased levels of employee engagement. Prior organizational research has found support for the trainability of transformational leadership and would likely be a high ROI for organizational investment.

At the organizational level, Corporate Social Responsibility has been found to have a significant relationship with employee engagement, albeit a smaller relationship than TFL and DA fit with an individual's level of employee engagement. Still, organizational wide messaging and programs to increase the understanding of organizational purpose can have a far-reaching positive impact on engagement company-wide. The findings of this study show that employee perceptions of Corporate Social Responsibility have a significant effect on both their need satisfaction and their sense of purpose at work.

In conclusion, this study provides evidence for the positive relationship between job demands-abilities fit, transformational leadership and CSR with employee engagement. Organizations looking to increase the level of engagement of their workforce would be wise to implement programs aimed at improving job crafting opportunities, supervisor's transformational leadership skills, and corporate messaging regarding the organization's purpose and its impact on the greater good of society.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

MEASURES

Need Satisfaction at Work

1. I have a lot of leeway in deciding how my job gets done. (Autonomy)
2. I really like the people I work with. (Relatedness)
3. I do not feel very competent when I am at work. (Competence)
4. People at work tell me I am good at what I do. (Competence)
5. I feel pressured at work. (Autonomy)
6. I get along with people at work. (Relatedness)
7. I pretty much keep to myself when I am at work. (Relatedness)
8. I am free to express my ideas and opinions on the job. (Autonomy)
9. I consider the people I work with to be my friends. (Relatedness)
10. I have been able to learn interesting new skills on my job. (Competence)
11. When I am at work, I have to do what I am told. (Autonomy)
12. Most days I feel a sense of accomplishment from working. (Competence)
13. My feelings are taken into consideration at work. (Relatedness)
14. On my job I do not get much of a chance to show how capable I am. (Competence)
15. People at work care about me. (Relatedness)
16. There are not many people at work that I am close to. (Relatedness)
17. I feel like I can pretty much be myself at work. (Autonomy)
18. The people I work with do not seem to like me much. (Relatedness)
19. When I am working I often do not feel very capable. (Competence)
20. There is not much opportunity for me to decide for myself how to go about my work. (Autonomy)
21. People at work are pretty friendly towards me. (Relatedness)

Sense of Purpose at Work

22. At work, I can be who I really am.
23. My work allows me to use my greatest strengths and abilities
24. My work gives me the feeling that this is what I was meant to do.
25. At work, I feel really alive
26. My work is stimulating and challenging
27. My work provides opportunities to exercise independent thought and action
28. My work provides opportunities to learn new things
29. My work gives me opportunities to be creative and imaginative
30. My work contributes to my personal growth and development.

31. I know my work makes a positive difference in the world.
32. The work I do serves a greater purpose.
33. My work really makes no difference to the world. (R)

Employee Engagement

34. At my work, I feel energized. (V1)
35. At my job, I feel strong and vigorous. (V2)
36. I am enthusiastic about my job. (D1)
37. My job inspires me. (D2)
38. When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work. (V3)
39. I feel happy when I am working intensely. (A1)
40. I am proud of the work that I do. (D3)
41. I am immersed in my work. (A2)
42. I get carried away when I am working. (A3)

Demands-Abilities Fit

43. The match is very good between the demands of my job and my personal skills
44. My abilities and training are a good fit with the requirements of my job
45. My personal abilities and education provide a good match with the demands that my job places on me

Transformational Leadership

46. My supervisor Inspires others with plans for the future
47. My supervisor leads by example
48. My supervisor gets the group to work together toward the same goal
49. My supervisor insists on only our best performance
50. My supervisor behaves in a matter thoughtful of my personal needs
51. My supervisor challenges me to think about old problems in new ways

Organizational Purpose/Corporate Social Responsibility

52. My organization cares about all its employees
53. My organization is concerned about society
54. My organization has a noble purpose
55. My organization renders important service to society

APPENDIX B

EXPLORATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS

Total Variance Explained

Factor	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings ^a
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total
1	12.621	40.713	40.713	12.311	39.714	39.714	8.253
2	3.049	9.835	50.548	2.798	9.026	48.739	6.089
3	2.101	6.777	57.325	1.779	5.739	54.479	5.528
4	1.562	5.039	62.364	1.218	3.928	58.407	6.694
5	1.385	4.468	66.832	1.096	3.535	61.943	6.188
6	1.081	3.487	70.319	.703	2.267	64.210	5.769
7	.823	2.656	72.975	.524	1.690	65.900	6.550
8	.745	2.404	75.379	.377	1.215	67.114	5.022
9	.703	2.268	77.647				
10	.609	1.966	79.613				
11	.573	1.849	81.462				
12	.524	1.692	83.153				
13	.467	1.508	84.661				
14	.465	1.501	86.162				
15	.440	1.420	87.582				
16	.367	1.183	88.765				
17	.319	1.027	89.793				
18	.314	1.013	90.806				
19	.305	.984	91.790				
20	.293	.944	92.734				
21	.277	.894	93.627				
22	.264	.850	94.478				
23	.254	.819	95.297				
24	.226	.728	96.025				
25	.209	.675	96.699				
26	.202	.652	97.351				

27	.196	.633	97.984				
28	.189	.608	98.592				
29	.164	.531	99.123				
30	.146	.469	99.592				
31	.126	.408	100.000				

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring.

a. When factors are correlated, sums of squared loadings cannot be added to obtain a total variance.

Pattern Matrix^a

	Factor							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Relate_1				.785				
Relate_2				.688				
Relate_4				.746				
Relate_5				.522				
Autonomy_1								.381
Autonomy_3								.493
Autonomy_5								.524
Purpose_SE_2							-.531	
Purpose_SE_3							-.706	
Purpose_SE_4							-.731	
Purpose_PG_3						-.699		
Purpose_PG_4						-.587		
Purpose_PG_5						-.498		
Purpose_SC_1					-.853			
Purpose_SC_2					-.808			
Purpose_SC_3R					-.664			
Fit_1		.733						
Fit_2		.881						
Fit_3		.860						
TFL_1	.947							
TFL_2	.903							
TFL_3	.870							
TFL_4	.695							
TFL_5	.693							

TFL_6	.806						
CSR_1			.711				
CSR_2			.788				
CSR_3			.878				
CSR_4			.696				
Comp_2							
Comp_5R							

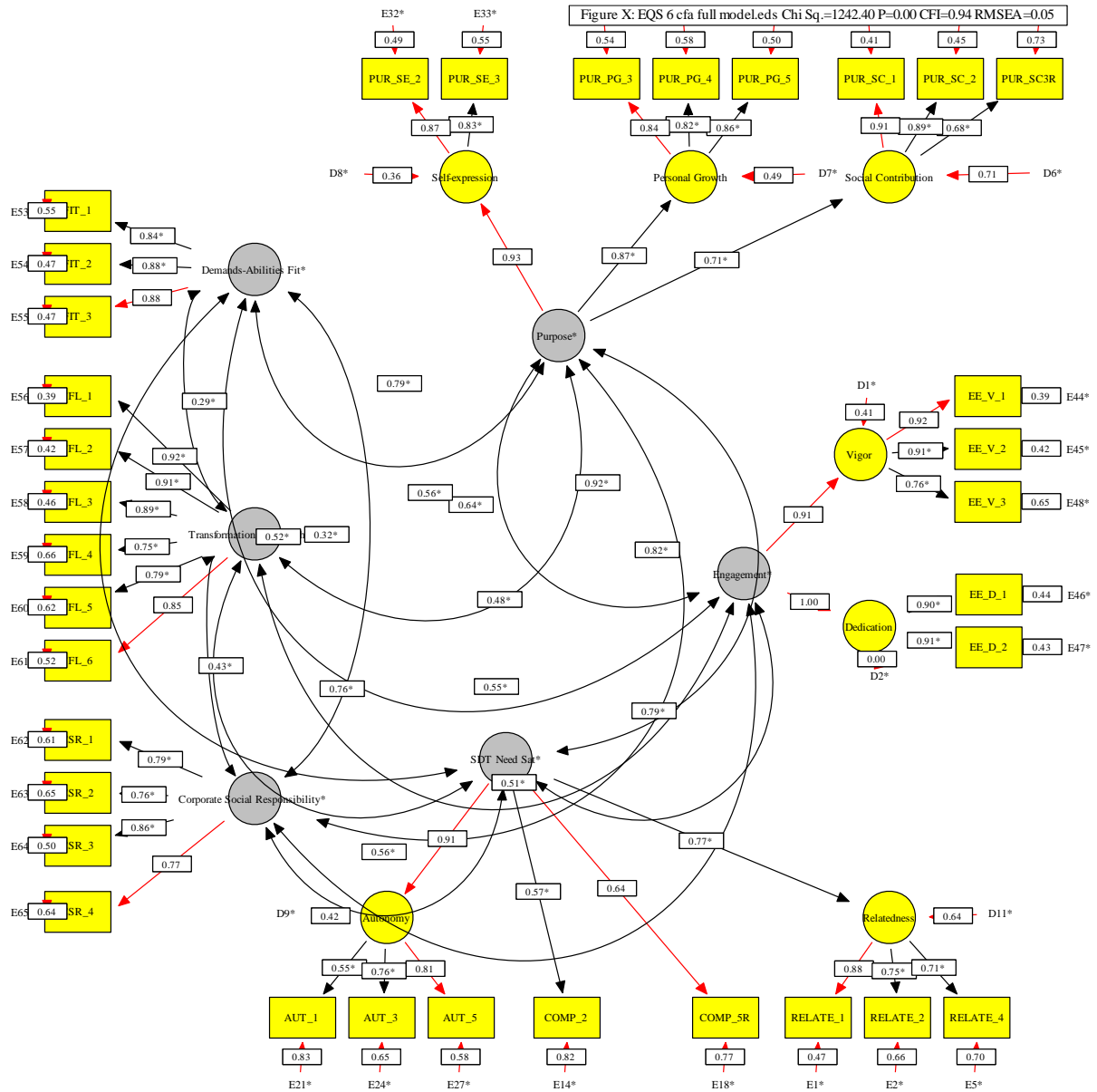
Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring.

Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 18 iterations.

APPENDIX C

CONFIRMATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS (MEASUREMENT MODEL)



STANDARDIZED FACTOR LOADINGS FOR THE FACTOR THAT GENERATES
MAXIMAL RELIABILITY FOR THE UNIT-WEIGHT COMPOSITE

BASED ON THE MODEL (RHO) :

RELATE_1	RELATE_2	RELATE_4	COMP_2	COMP_5R	AUT_1	AUT_3
0.6564	0.5579	0.5313	0.5293	0.5874	0.4710	0.6489

AUT_5	PUR_SE_2	PUR_SE_3	PUR_PG_3	PUR_PG_4	PUR_PG_5	PUR_SC_1
0.6909	0.7611	0.7282	0.6993	0.6805	0.7183	0.6464
PUR_SC_2	PUR_SC3R	EE_V_1	EE_V_2	EE_D_1	EE_D_2	EE_V_3
0.6329	0.4834	0.7677	0.7580	0.8030	0.8085	0.6311
FIT_1	FIT_2	FIT_3	TFL_1	TFL_2	TFL_3	TFL_4
0.5651	0.5959	0.5968	0.7132	0.7044	0.6879	0.5796
TFL_5	TFL_6	CSR_1	CSR_2	CSR_3	CSR_4	
0.6106	0.6597	0.4986	0.4793	0.5460	0.4869	

APPENDIX D

REVISED MEASURES

Need Satisfaction at Work

Relatedness

1. I really like the people I work with.
2. I get along with people at work.
3. I consider the people I work with to be my friends.

Competence

1. People at work tell me I am good at what I do.
2. On my job I do not get much of a chance to show how capable I am.

Autonomy

1. I have a lot of leeway in deciding how my job gets done
2. I am free to express my ideas and opinions on the job.
3. My feelings are taken into consideration at work.

Sense of Purpose at Work

Self-expression

1. My work allows me to use my greatest strengths and abilities
2. My work gives me the feeling that this is what I was meant to do.

Personal Growth

1. My work provides opportunities to learn new things
2. My work gives me opportunities to be creative and imaginative
3. My work contributes to my personal growth and development.

Social Contribution

1. I know my work makes a positive difference in the world.
2. The work I do serves a greater purpose.
3. My work really makes no difference to the world. (R)

Employee Engagement

Vigor

1. At my work, I feel energized.
2. At my job, I feel strong and vigorous.
3. When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work.

Dedication

1. I am enthusiastic about my job.
2. My job inspires me.

Demands-Abilities Fit

1. The match is very good between the demands of my job and my personal skills
2. My abilities and training are a good fit with the requirements of my job
3. My personal abilities and education provide a good match with the demands that my job places on me

Transformational Leadership

1. My supervisor Inspires others with plans for the future
2. My supervisor leads by example
3. My supervisor gets the group to work together toward the same goal
4. My supervisor insists on only our best performance
5. My supervisor behaves in a matter thoughtful of my personal needs
6. My supervisor challenges me to think about old problems in new ways

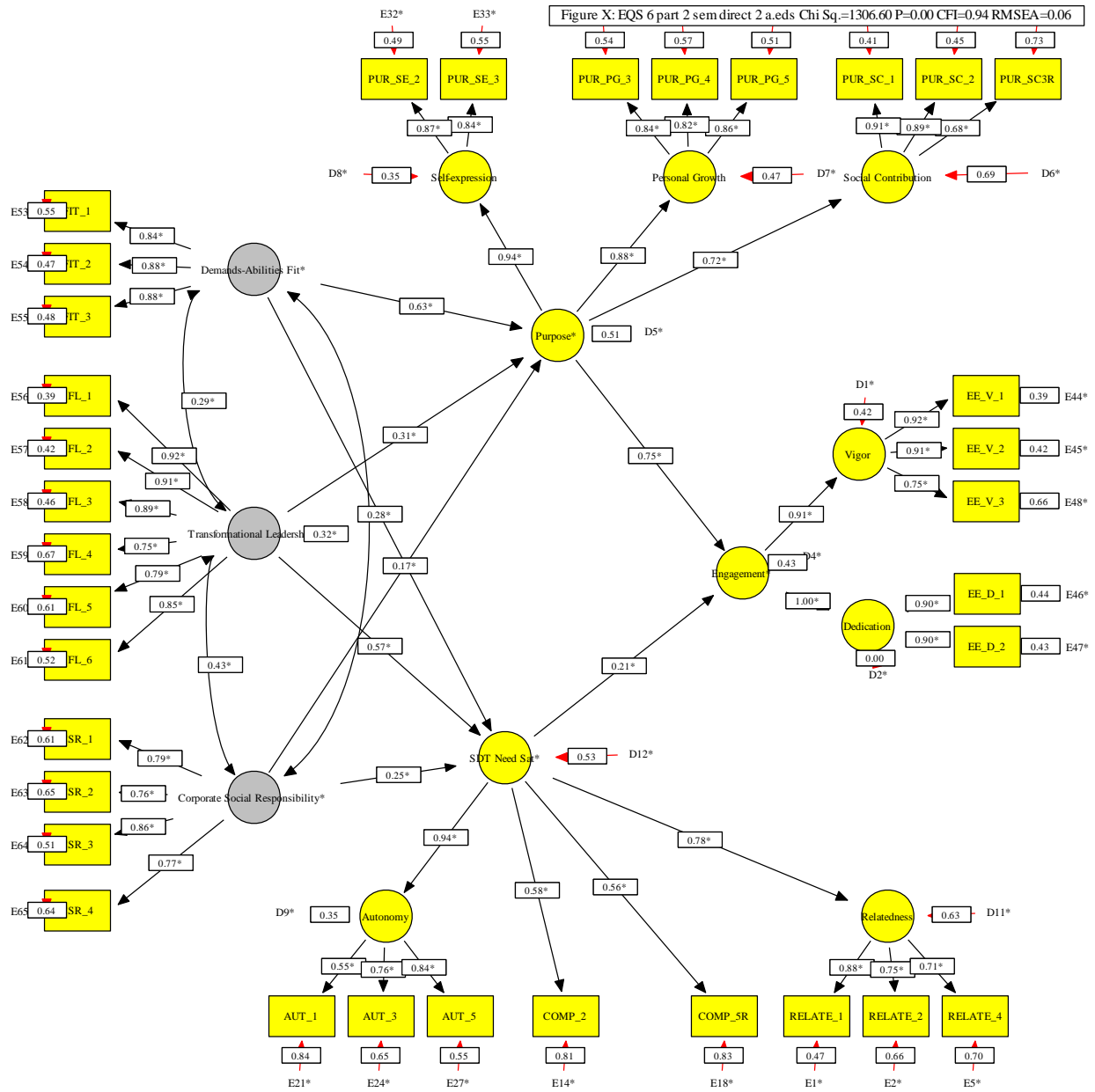
Organizational Purpose/Corporate Social Responsibility

1. My organization cares about all its employees
2. My organization is concerned about society
3. My organization has a noble purpose
4. My organization renders important service to society

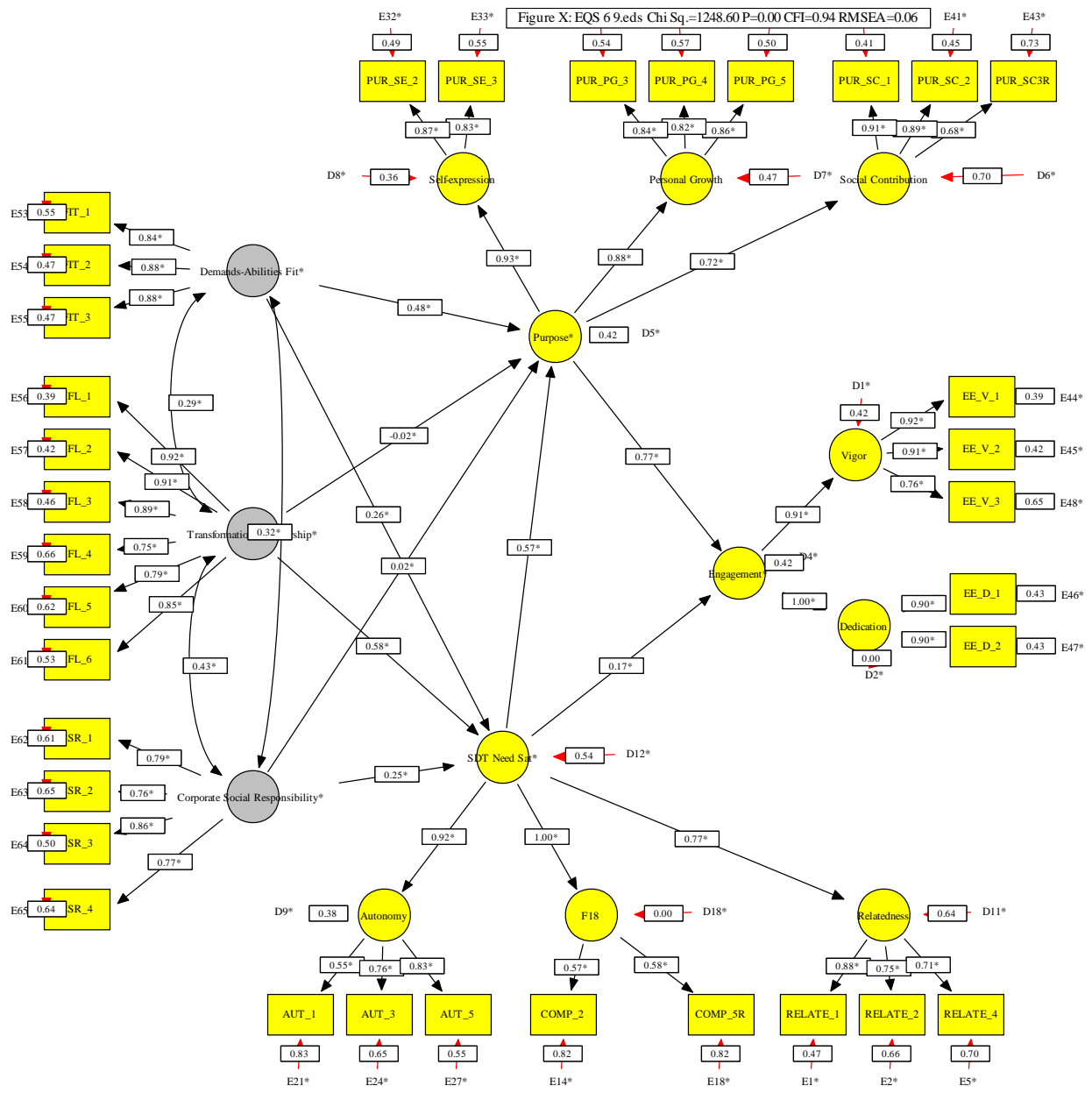
APPENDIX E

STRUCTURAL MODELS

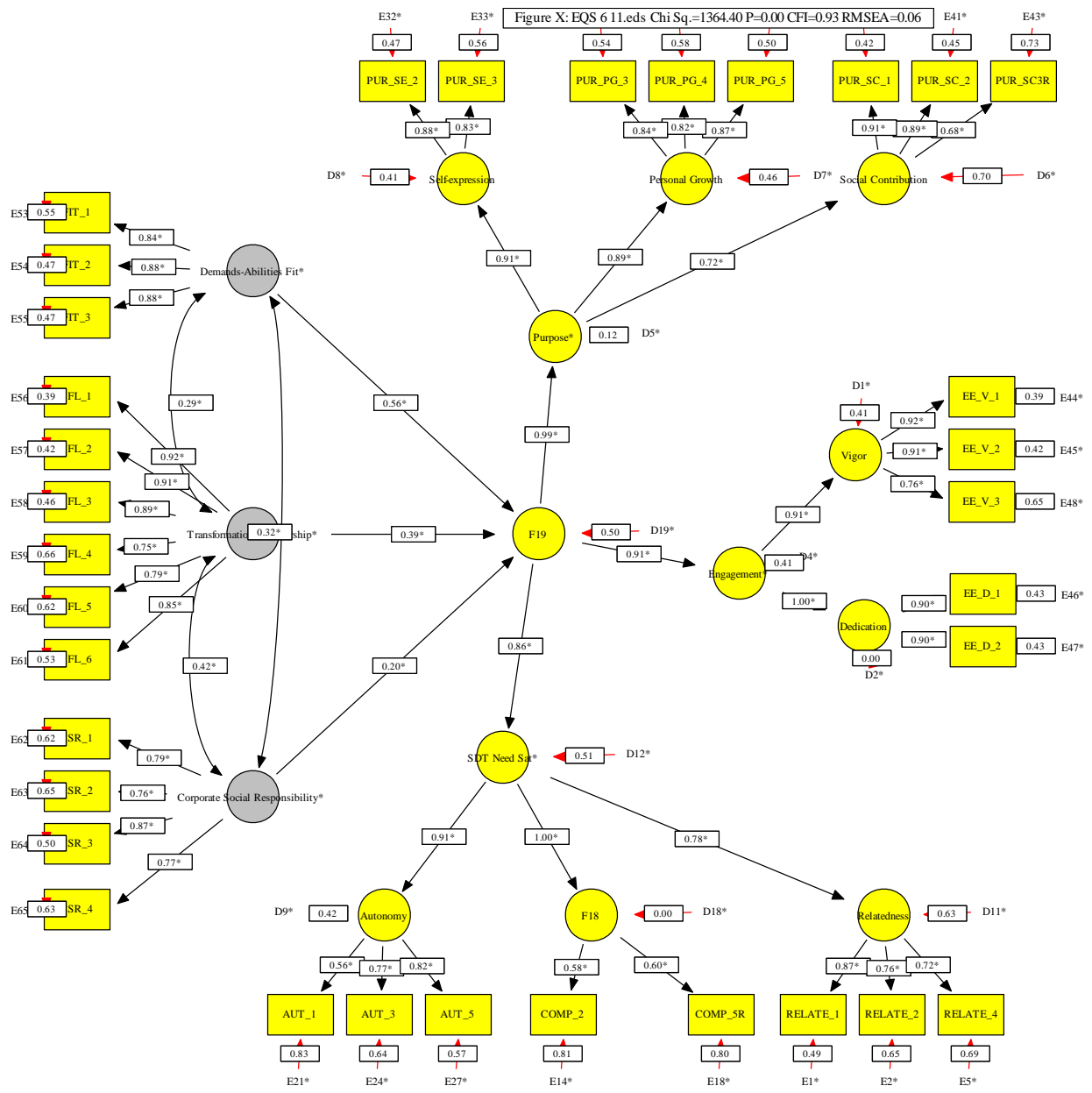
Direct Effects Model



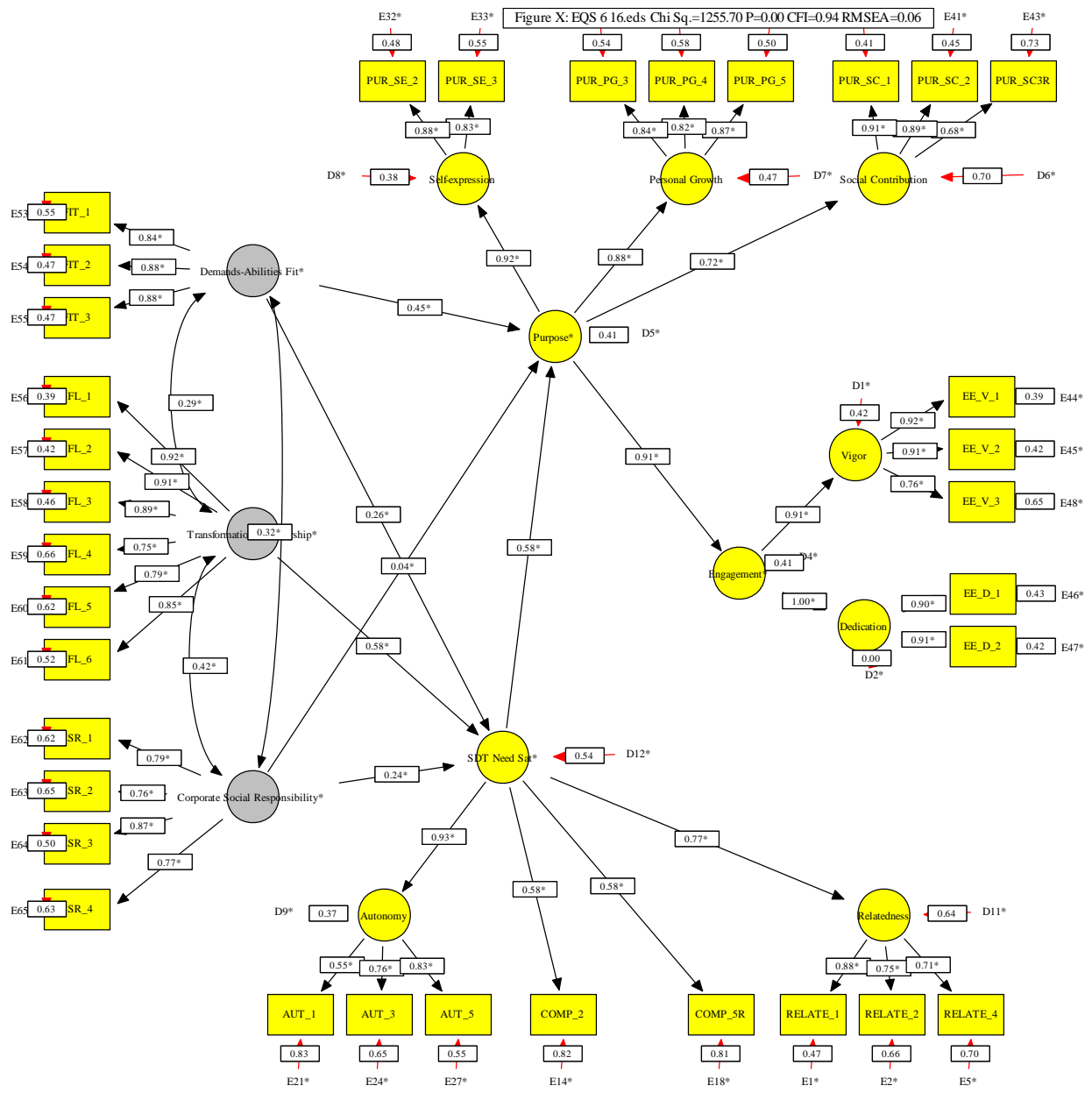
Mediation Model



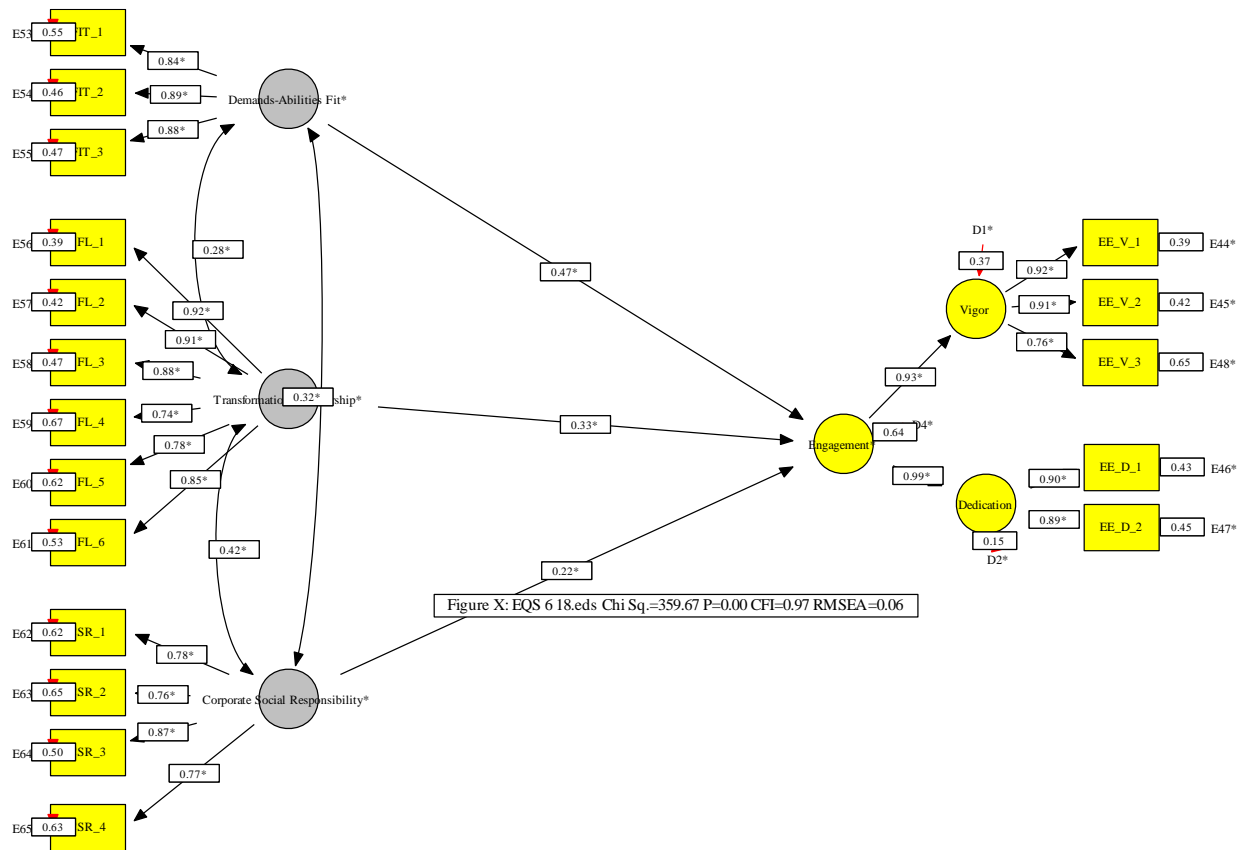
3rd Order Factor Model



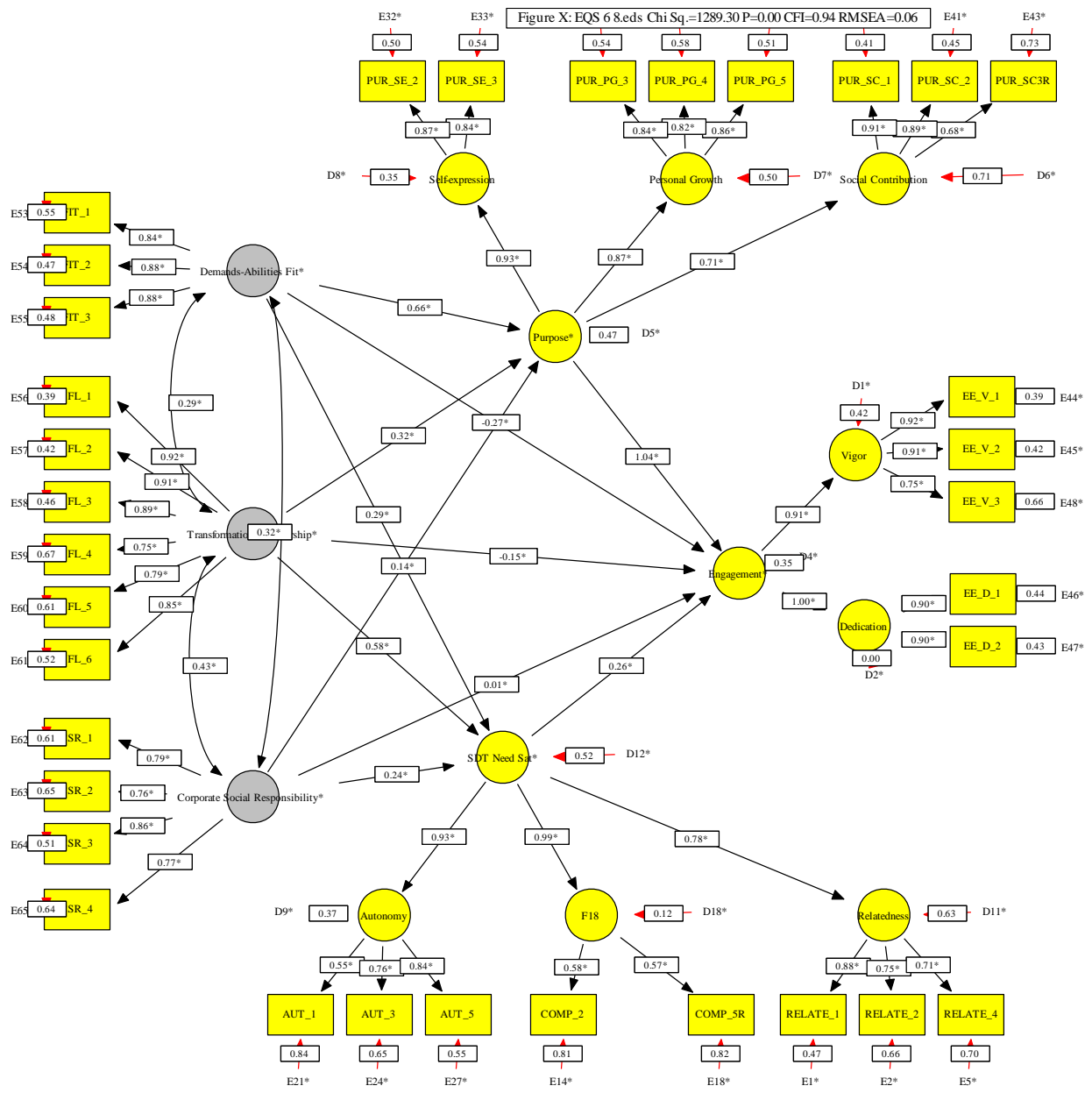
Semi-Sequential Model



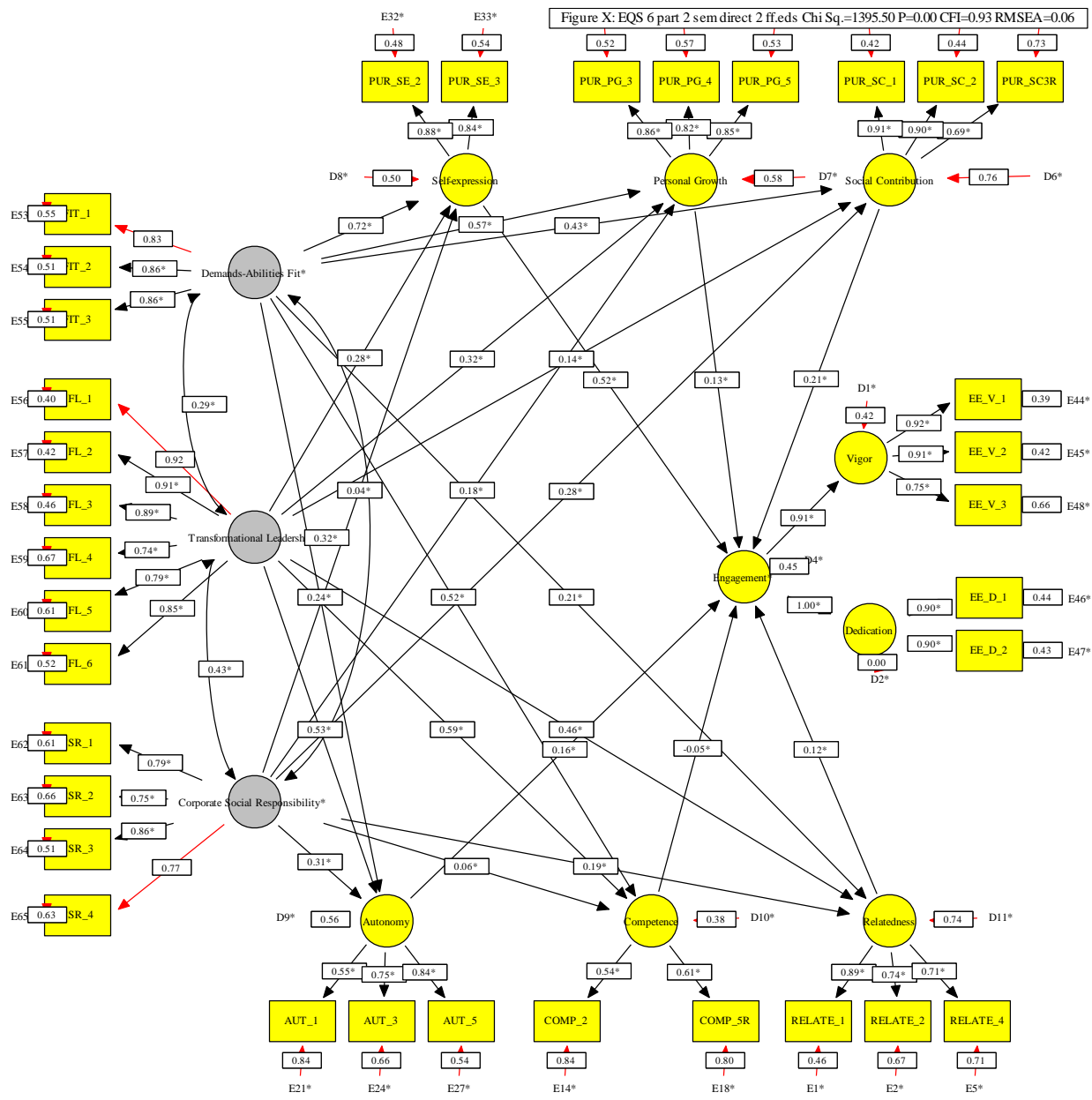
Direct Effects of Work Environment Antecedents



Mediation of Work Environment Direct Effects by Purpose and Need Satisfaction



Six Factor Mediation



Note: Competence factor is not sufficiently reliable