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e-ISSN: 2289-2559

Journal of Emerging Economies & Islamic Research 8(2) 2020, 60 – 72.

Journal of Emerging Economies and Islamic Research

Job Crafting, Psychological Capital and Work Engagement: An Empirical Evidence of a Sustainable High-Performance GLC

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:
Received 7 April 2020
Accepted 18 May 2020
Published 31 May 2020

Keywords:
Work Engagement
Job Crafting
Psychological Capital
Job Demands-Resources

ABSTRACT

Malaysian government-linked companies (GLCs) are expected to not only sustain their performance but also to contribute more on the long term business and societal value. Thus, in moving towards this direction, the organisation needs employees that are energetic and have a secure positive connection to their job. This study aims to determine job and individual-related factors that influence an individual work engagement. Specifically, this study aims at determining the (1) relationship between job crafting and work engagement; (2) relationship between psychological capital and work engagement. Data were collected from 201 executives level employees of a high-performance GLC in Malaysia. The findings revealed that employees need to have self-efficacy and optimism in order to be engaged in their work. Additionally, social job resources such as feedback and support are also found to be crucial to create high work engagement workforce. This study is significant to the top management, human resource practitioners, managers and supervisors in the understanding job and individual factors that would lead to work engagement. This input is also beneficial in designing jobs and creating programs that would lead to high work engagement among employees.

1. Introduction

Government-linked companies (GLC) play a widespread and pervasive role in a nation's economy. In Malaysia, GLCs are expected to look beyond immediate short-term performance results towards building long-term business and societal value. Specifically, GLCs in Malaysia are expected to adopt its core activities in ways that contribute to the nation's environmental and development priorities and more widely to strengthen the nation's performance as a whole.

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In order to survive and in today's competitive business environment, the performance of an organisation is highly dependent on its human resources. Work engagement has become a primary concern of scholars and particularly practitioners as engaged employees are emotionally involved not only in their jobs but also with their organisations. Hence, there is decisive action from them in helping their organisations to persist and flourish (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008; Gebauer & Lownan, 2008). For decades, engagement has been a popular research area of researchers. Proper work engagement can revitalise existing employees, so that newness and strength facilitate in attaining the organisation's goals. Usually, individuals with high work engagement attain positive experiences in their jobs; they will feel more attached to the organisation (Sonnentag et al., 2016).

Many factors have influenced individuals' perception of work engagement. For example, prior research suggests that flexible work engagement (Tims et al., 2015), job autonomy (Macey & Schneider, 2008; leijten et al., 2015; Vera et al., 2016), social support (Matthews & Mills, 2014), transformational leadership (Vincent-Hoper, 2012; Ghadi, 2013), trust (Chughtai & Buckley, 2009), organisational climate (Hakanen & Lindbohm, 2008), career development (Kovarik, 2008; Hakanen & Lindbohm, 2008) were positively found to be related to work engagement. Previous research also suggests negative relationships between emotional exhaustion (Wirtz, 2017), unpleasant work circumstances (Leijten, 2015), occupational trust (Narainsamy & Westhuizen, 2013), job demands (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007) and work engagement. Since work engagement involves employees in the organisation, it is essential to look at the factors that influence work engagement from the perspective of the job and employee. Thus, the focus of this study is to: (1) determine the relationship between job crafting (structural job resources, hindering job demands, social job resources, and challenging job demands) and work engagement; (2) determine the relationship between psychological capital (self-efficacy, hope, resiliency, and optimism) and work engagement.

2. Literature Review

1.1 Work Engagement

The concept of work engagement comprises of employee's relationship with their job and strength of the connection between the employee and the job. Various authors have discussed different definitions and viewpoints of the work engagement concept. Work engagement was initially described by Kahn (1990) as a motivational concept, where employees' physical, cognitive and emotional energies are directed towards work. He indicated that how an employee perceives the work encompassing employees influence the degree of the person's favourable engagement with it. Other than that, Bakker, Rodiguez-Munoz and Sans-Vergel (2016) and Schaufeli et al. (2004) revealed that engaged employees are highly energetic and self-efficacious people and these characteristics can influence events and sequentially affect their life. Usually, engaged employees describe their tiredness as pleasant as they enjoy the working environment, and this can lead to positive accomplishments. Bakker et al. supported this view., (2016) whereby, they explained that engaged employees perceived working as fun, unlike workaholics who work hard because of strong and irresistible inner drive.

Next, workers' psychological immersion, striving, absorption, focus and involvement in their work roles have been referred as work engagement (Bakker, 2011; Macey, Schneider, Barbera & Yong, 2009). Other than that, a different perspective of looking at the construct of work engagement is to consider it as something opposite of workers' burnout (Gonzales, Schaufeli, Bakker, & LIoret, 2006; Maslach, Schaufeli,

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& Leiter, 2011). Saks (2006), meanwhile defined work engagement as a unique construct and distinct comprising of cognitive, enthusiastic and behavioural components related to person role performance. Coffman and Gonzalez-Molina (2002) in their study, on the other hand, revealed that work engagement is one of the major drivers contributing to enhancing an organisation's performance and growth.

Work engagement is a multidimensional (Law et al., 1998; Rich et al., 2010) variable which consisted of three dimensions such as vigour, dedication, and absorption. Some researcher used as multidimensional and some other research used it as a unidimensional variable. The three dimensions under work engagement are namely, vigour, dedication and absorption. Specifically, vigour is referred to as a feeling that is highly energetic and willing to work even in the face of difficulties (Schaufeli, 2004). Dedication is a feeling a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge (Schaufeli, 2004). Absorption, on the other hand, is referred to as being fully focused and deeply engrossed in one's work (Schaufeli et al., 2004).

1.2 Job Crafting and Work Engagement

Job crafting was first proposed by Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) as an expansion of the concept of job design that is considered as a top-down function of managers to plan and create jobs of their subordinates formally. Peeters et al. (2012) state that the central characteristic of job crafting is that employees alter their job based on their preferences. Other than that, job crafting referred to as the process by which managers decide individual job tasks and the required authority for their subordinates (Gibson et al., 1994; Greg & Hackman, 2010). Tims and Bakker (2010) formulate job crafting in the context of the model of Job Demands Resources (JD-R model) by Bakker and Demerouti (2007). This model concludes that all job characteristics in a working environment can be sorted in job demands where physical and psychological perspectives of the work that need continued effort or abilities.

Job crafting is represented by four dimensions (Tims et al., 2012). Firstly, structural job resources. Structural job resources refer to design aspects, such as opportunities for autonomy and development (Tims et al., 2012). Secondly, hindering job demands. Hindering job demands are stressful demands that barriers personal growth, learning and reaching goals (Tims et al., 2012). Thirdly, social job resources. It refers to the social aspects of the job, such as feedback and support from colleagues (Tims et al., 2012). Finally, the last dimension is challenging job demands. Challenging job demands are demands that promote personal growth and stimulate individuals to achieve challenging goals (Crawford et al., 2010).

It was found from past studies that there was a positive relationship between job crafting and work engagement (Van Wingerden et al., 2017; Bakker et al., 2012; Petrou et al., 2012). Specifically, job crafting behaviour is linked to work engagement when employees concentrate on expanding their challenging job demands and resources (Van Wingerden et al., 2017; Tims, Bakker & Derks, 2013; Tims et al., 2012). Besides, Tims et al. (2015) found that job resources and challenging job demands are drivers of higher levels of work engagement. Moreover, Veerle Brenninkmeijer and Marleen Hekkert-Koning, (2015) revealed that structural job resources and social resources have a positive relationship with work engagement. Other research by Petrou et al. (2012) revealed that crafting hindering job demands and work engagement has a negative relationship. Therefore, it is hypothesised that;

H_1: *There is a significant positive relationship between job crafting (structural job resources, hindering job demands, social job resources, challenging job demands) and work engagement.*

H_{1a}: *There is a significant positive relationship between structural job resources and work engagement.*

H_{1b}: *There is a significant negative relationship between hindering job demands and work engagement.*

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H_{1c}: *There is a significant positive relationship between social job resources and work engagement.*

H_{1d}: *There is a significant positive relationship between challenging job demands and work engagement.*

1.3 Psychological Capital and Work Engagement

Psychological capital is a higher-order "core construct" which is unique and measurable, a more useful indicator of both performance and work satisfaction than the individual variables constitute it (Luthans, Avolio, Avey, & Norman, 2007). Also, Avolio and Luthans (2006); Luthans and Youssef (2004) in their study revealed that psychological capital is about "who you are" and, in the developmental sense, "whom you are becoming". Specifically, psychological capital emphasised on the formative nature of self in which from the actual to possible (Avolio & Luthans, 2006). Luthans et al., (2007) mentioned that in order to determine the human assets in organisations, psychological capital provides a more general structure by constantly integrating human and social capital.

Psychological capital (PsyCap) is a higher-order positive state comprising the four sub facets: self-efficacy, hope, resilience, and optimism (Luthans, Youssef, & Avolio, 2007). Self-efficacy is having confidence to take on and put in the necessary effort to succeed in managing challenging tasks (Luthans et al., 2007). Hope, on the other hand, refers to persevering towards goals and, when necessary, redirecting paths to goals in order to succeed (Luthans et al., 2007). Meanwhile, resilience refers to when beset by problems and adversity, sustaining and bouncing back and even beyond to attain success (Luthans et al., 2007). Last but not least, optimism. It refers to the mental attitude to interpreting situations and events positively. It is about making a positive attribution about succeeding now and in the future (Luthans et al., 2007).

Karatepe and Karadas (2015) analysed that engaged employees are equipped with the characteristics of self-efficacy, hope, resilience, and optimism. In other words, individuals with higher levels of positive emotions frequently experience higher levels of engagement and more social integration—conversely, those with profound psychological capital experience lower levels of work engagement (Avey, 2009). Employees who have high psychological capital will feel energetic and committed and willingly involve in their work (Karatepe & Karadas, 2015). Accordingly, it was hypothesised that psychological capital positively related to employees' work engagement. Sweetman and Luthans (2010) also indicated that psychological capital and work engagement was positively related. In light of this, the study from Karatepe and Karadas, (2015) proposed that employees who have a sense of self-efficacy are propitious which can thrive against service encounters, and have optimistic view display higher work engagement. Therefore, it was proposed that psychological capital was positively related to employees' work engagement. This was related to the previous study that employees who have a sense of self-efficacy are propitious which can flourish in service encounters, and have optimistic view displayed through higher work engagement (Karatepe & Karadas, 2015). Similarly, Xanthopoulou et al. (2007) indicated that self-efficacy and optimism have a positive relationship with work engagement. Therefore, it is hypothesised that:

H_2: *There is a significant positive relationship between psychological capital (self-efficacy, hope, resilience, optimism) and work engagement.*

H_{2a}: *There is a significant positive relationship between self-efficacy and work engagement.*

H_{2b}: *There is a significant positive relationship between hope and work engagement.*

H_{2c}: *There is a significant positive relationship between resilience and work engagement.*

H_{2d}: *There is a significant positive relationship between optimism and work engagement.*

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The proposed research framework is as displayed in Figure 1.

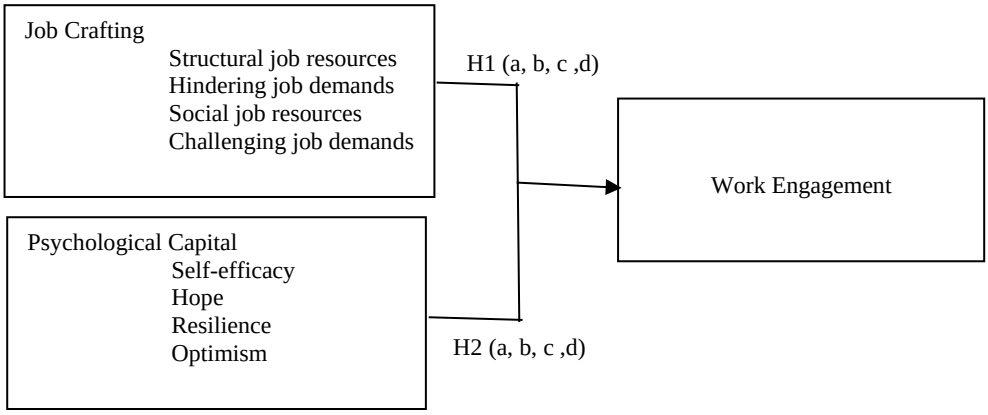

Fig. 1. Research Framework

2. **Methodology**

This study utilised a quantitative research design. Correctly, the correlational study approach was used for this study. Data were collected using a self-administered survey using a purposive sampling method. Executive-level employees from one of the GLCs in Malaysia were selected as the respondents of the study. This particular GLC company was selected due to its critical role in the nation's economy and its long term mission to sustain a high-performance organisation. Executive-level employees were chosen in this study due to their critical competencies and role in the organisation.

To measure work engagement, the study adopted a short version of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-9) originated and validated by Schaufeli et al. (2006). UWES-9 used to assess work engagement consisted of nine items. Twenty-one items were developed by Tims et al. (2012) was used to measure job crafting, where three-dimension consist of five items respectively, while the remaining dimension consisted of six items. Psychological capital, on the other hand, was measured using instruments developed by Luthans et al., (2007), which was made up of twenty-four items where each of the dimensions consisted of six items. For work engagement and job crafting scales, this study used a 5-point Likert Scale ranging from 1 = "never" to 5 = "often".

Meanwhile, the measures of 5-point Likert Scale for psychological well-being ranged from 1 = "strongly disagree" to 5 = "strongly agree". Statistical analyses such as descriptive analysis, reliability analysis, correlational analysis and multiple regression analysis were used in the study. All data were analysed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences Software (SPSS) version 21.

3. **Findings**

3.1 Demographic profile

Data were collected from 201 respondents yielding a response rate of 80 per cent, where the respondents consist of 59.2 per cent of female and 40.8 per cent of male respondents. The majority of the respondents (74.1 per cent) were in the range of 31 to 40 years old. All respondents involved in this study were Muslim, and 78 per cent of them are married. Almost all of the respondents graduated with a bachelor degree (93.5 %). Most respondents involved in the study were working at an executive-level position (62.2 per cent), and remaining of the respondents were managers and above. 30.3 per cent of the respondents have a tenure

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less than five years working in the organisation. Out of the 201 respondents, 10.9 per cent of respondents have a part-time job.

3.2 Reliability and Descriptive Analysis

Table 1 shows the reliability values and detailed analysis results of all variables used in the study. All variables were found to be acceptable and reliable based on their Cronbach alpha values which ranged 0.71 to 0.85. These values exceeded.70 and considered acceptable, as suggested by Nunnaly (1994). The highest mean score among the variables were social job resources, and it was also found that work engagement scored the lowest mean among all variables. Specifically, the mean scores for all variables used in the study ranged from 3.61 to 3.96. Meanwhile, the standard deviation of the variables ranges from .55 to .77.

Table 1. Reliability and Descriptive Analysis

Variables	No. of Items	Cronbach Alpha	Items Dropped	Mean	Standard Deviation
Job Crafting					
Structural job resources	5	0.78	-	3.83	0.77
Hindering job demands	6	0.77	-	3.72	0.67
Social job resources	5	0.71	-	3.96	0.58
Challenging job demands	5	0.78	-	3.65	0.64
Psychological Capital					
Self-efficacy	6	0.72	-	3.62	0.64
Hope	6	0.81	-	3.81	0.58
Resilience	6	0.77	-	3.81	0.55
Optimism	6	0.79	-	3.61	0.75
Work engagement	9	0.85	-	3.60	0.66

3.3 Pearson Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the associations between variables in the study. Based on the result in Table 2, the variables measured in the study are inter-related. All job crafting dimensions were found to be correlated to work engagement. Specifically, it was found that there was a significant positive correlation between structural job resources and work engagement with ($r=.50$, $p<0.01$), Furthermore, there was a medium positive relationship between hindering job demand and work engagement with ($r=.39$, $p<0.01$). Next, there is a small positive correlation between social job resources and work engagement with ($r=.21$, $p<0.01$), with a high level of work engagement is associated with a high level of social job resource. Furthermore, there was a small positive correlation between challenging job demand and work engagement with ($r=.13$, $p<0.01$), with a high level of work engagement is associated with a high level of challenging job demand.

Besides, it was found that only three psychological capital dimensions were found to be related to work engagement. Specifically, it was found that there was a sizeable positive correlation between self-efficacy and work engagement with ($r=.65$, $p<0.01$), with a high level of work engagement is associated with a high level of self-efficacy. Furthermore, there was a small positive correlation between hope and work engagement with ($r=.13$, $p<0.01$) and there was a medium correlation between optimism and work engagement with ($r=.31$, $p<0.01$). However, no correlation was found between resilience and work engagement.

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Table 2. Pearson Correlation Analysis

	WE	StrJR	HJD	SocJR	CJD	SE	Hope	Res.	Opt.
Work Engagement	1								
Structural Job Resources	.507**	1							
Hindering Job Demands	.397**	.457**	1						
Social Job Resources	.214**	.199**	.145*	1					
Challenging Job Demands	.135*	.133**	.104	.184**	1				
Self-Efficacy	.653**	.764**	.495**	.142*	.228**	1			
Hope	.132*	.160*	.158*	.175**	.360**	.132*	1		
Resilience	.027	.061	.251**	.066	.105	-.010	.204**	1	
Optimism	.319**	.393**	.394**	.073	-.123*	.275**	.060	.149*	1

Note:
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

3.4 Multiple Regression Analysis

Table 3 below summarises the result of multiple regression analysis. Based on the result, R^2 for the research model is .46. Thus, all the independent variables explained 46 per cent of variance on work engagement. Other factors explain the remaining 54 per cent. Based on the F value, the model is significant ($p<.05$) with an F value of 20.90. Out of the four job crafting dimensions, only social job resources have a significant positive relationship with work engagement. In other words, social job resources contribute to work engagement ($\beta= .12$, $p<.05$). Thus, H_{1c} is supported. However, the findings of the study also show that there is no relationship between structural job resources, hindering job demands and challenging job demands with work engagement. Thus, no support was found in H_{1a}, H_{1b}, H_{1d},

Table 3. Multiple Regression Analysis

Independent Variables	β
Job Crafting	
Structural job resources	-.08
Hindering job demands	.04
Social job resources	. 12*
Challenging job demands	-.01
Psychological Capital	
Self-efficacy	.63**
Hope	.03
Resilience	-.00
Optimism	.14*
F Value	20.9
R^2	.46
Adjusted R^2	.44

Dependent variable: Work engagement

Other than that, only two out of four dimensions under psychological capital, namely self-efficacy and optimism, has a significant positive relationship with work engagement. Primarily, self-efficacy was

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found to be highly influenced by work engagement (β= .63, p<.01). In other words, the higher self-efficacy of an individual, the more likely they are engaging with their work. This is followed by optimism that was also found to influence work engagement (β= .14, p<.05). Thus, H_{2a}, H_{2d}, is supported. The result shows no relationship between hope, resilience and work engagement. No support was found in H_{2b}, H_{2c}.

4. Discussions and Conclusions

Based on the results, out of the four dimensions of job crafting, only social job resources have a significant positive relationship with work engagement. Tims et al. (2012) refer to social job resources as social aspects of the job, which involves support and feedback from their colleagues. With tremendous support and feedback, an individual is expected to be more motivated and highly energetic towards their job. This finding is similar to a study conducted by Tims et al. (2013). However, no relationship was found between structural job resources, hindering job demands and challenging job demands and work engagement. Two reasons can explain this. Firstly the usage of job crafting may involve reversed causation or reversed relationship (Sonnentag, 2008) since job crafting was theorised to be a behaviour that occurs regularly (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001) and daily (Petrou et al., 2012; Tims et al., 2014). Thus, there are days that an employee feel recovered and they showed more engagement and subsequently showed more proactive work behaviour and the existence of reciprocal relationship might happen (Hakanen, Perhoniemi, & ToppinenTanner, 2008). Secondly, it is suggested that the optimal time frame is needed to study the effect of each dimension of job crafting over time. Thus, the use of cross-sectional design may also found to be the reason for the non-significant relationship between job crafting and work engagement (Sakuraya et al., 2017).

The findings also revealed that only two dimensions under psychological capital, namely self-efficacy and optimism, have a significant positive relationship with work engagement. This is consistent with the previous study conducted by Xanthopoulou et al. (2007). The fact that self-efficacy has the most substantial influence on work engagement can be explained by those with self-efficacy are propitious in which they can thrive in a high-performance context (Karatepe & Karadas, 2015). Individuals with high self-efficacy would usually have an optimistic view which would subsequently lead to higher work engagement (Karatepe & Karadas, 2015). Hope and resilience, on the other hand, do not have any relationship with work engagement. Hope may not be significant because employees may need more than just perseverance in working towards organisational goals. These findings are similar to the previous study conducted by Fields, Wilder, Bunch and Newbold (2008) that younger generation employees tend to work for material values in order to be engaged to work. Resilience, on the other hand, is not determined by rare and unique qualities, it refers to the capacity to face adverse events successfully (Mastern, 2001) and it changes with time (Stewart, Reid, & Mangham, 1997). Thus, employees might not be able to bounce back from high job demands which lead to mentally stressful and less engaged in their work for several period time.

This study, in particular, looks at two different factors, namely job and individual-related factors that influence work engagement. Therefore, the study provides practical implication to the top management of GLCs, human resource practitioners, managers and supervisors on the job and individual-related factors that lead to work engagement. The study reveals that only one dimension of job crafting namely social job resources was found to have a significant positive relationship with work engagement. Endless support and feedback should be given to the employees as it will lead them to be more focused and enthusiastic in doing their work in which it will lead to a high level of work engagement among employees. Moreover, employees

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should be encouraged to be involved in decision making, as it will increase their sense of belonging in doing their work. As for the individual-related factor, self-efficacy and optimism were found to have a significant positive relationship with work engagement. Thus, in order to increase the self-efficacy of employees, the management needs to ensure that job demands given are appropriate.

Additionally, goals and expectations for employees are being set reasonably. Meanwhile, the management can help to increase the level of optimism among employees by offering development opportunities and share the employees' success as well as the success of others. This would help to boost the motivation of employees and increase their willingness to be more proactive in achieving goals.

Future study should be expanded to a few GLCs from various sectors in Malaysia in order to improve its generalizability. This may represent a more diverse demographic in the study. Future study should also utilise a longitudinal research design in order to obtain a better perspective of job crafting and counteract the disadvantages of the cross-sectional design. Finally, as this study only limited to direct relationships of the variables, future researchers could seek to enlarge the pool of potential explanatory variables and additional moderating or mediating variable to enable the researcher to understand better the dynamic framework between job crafting, psychological capital and work engagement.

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