

Process to performance

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Inaugural lecture
prof.dr. Evangelia
Demerouti
13 May 2011



/ Department of Industrial Engineering & Innovation Sciences

TU **e** Technische Universiteit
Eindhoven
University of Technology

Process to performance

Where innovation starts

Inaugural lecture prof.dr. Evangelia Demerouti

Process to performance

Presented on 13 May 2011
at the Eindhoven University of Technology

Introduction

Employees can make the difference between success and failure in organizations. Simply designing jobs as efficiently as possible will not ensure an organization's success as once thought by Taylor (1911). One of the first studies to improve employee performance in organizations was conducted by Harvard University in Cambridge and Western Electric of Chicago in 1927. Western Electric conducted the Hawthorne studies that involved varying working conditions (like rest break durations, length of workdays and weeks, reward system, supervision styles, employee participation levels) to see their impact on performance (Sonnenfeld, 1985). The term Hawthorne effect has come to refer mistakenly to an increase in worker performance resulting merely from the presence of the experimenter or managerial attention to a work group. For instance, the experimenters found that the production increased even when lighting conditions were impaired!

The remarkable improvements in worker productivity in the Hawthorne experiment probably occurred because workers (a) began to receive rewards contingent to their productivity, (b) set personal goals of increasing their assembly rate, and (c) received information about their productivity. While the Hawthorne researchers intended to study the influence on productivity of fatigue-reducing arrangements, the study showed that human resource management approaches and provision of social and job resources led to improved performance. This experiment indicates how puzzling and fascinating the process leading to performance is.

In this inaugural speech for the position of Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes in the Department of Industrial Engineering and Innovation Sciences, I will focus on factors that influence the process of performance at work. Starting from the Job Demands – Resources model (JD-R; Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2000; 2001) which I developed with my colleagues Arnold Bakker, Friedhelm Nachreiner and Wilmar Schaufeli, I will outline the two processes that the model suggests are involved in performance: the motivational process and the health impairment process. After presenting evidence for the prediction of performance, I will continue with the factors that promote rather than hinder performance. These factors include job, home and personal resources as well as job crafting and decision making. Next, I will highlight the relevance of

such psychological research for the management of operations and innovations. The presentation will conclude with my current and future research activities. First, however, I need to explain what I mean by performance.

What is performance?

A moment's thought about the different jobs one has experienced is sufficient to illustrate how difficult it is to find an overall definition of performance that is applicable across jobs and even across situations. People work on innumerable tasks, and some of these do not even appear in formal job descriptions. When reviewing the literature, the problem is magnified since different research traditions define 'performance' in different ways. Some scholars have generally contented themselves with a single dimension of 'overall' performance, whereas others explore distinct performance factors (Roe, 1999). These different approaches refer to the *process* of performance, the *outcome* of performance, or both. The *process* approach focuses on the particular decision making, actions or behaviors that people undertake to achieve performance or what individuals do in their work situation (Roe, 1999). In our job as scientific researchers, for example, a process definition would include such things as reading scientific literature, writing research proposals, conducting studies, and analyzing data. The *outcome* approach defines performance with respect to the products or services that are produced and whether these are consistent with the goals of the organization (Roe, 1999). For example, an outcome important to researchers is the generation of scientific articles. In the present review, I will refer to the outcome of performance, usually in the form of performance ratings. The main reason for this choice is practical. This is the way performance is defined in the literature examined here.

Performance is divided further into its task and contextual performance. *Task* performance is defined as those officially required outcomes and behaviors that directly serve the goals of the organization (Motowidlo & Van Scotter, 1994). Among other things, task performance includes meeting company objectives, such as effective sales presentations. While task performance is certainly very important, it does not describe the whole range of human performance at work. Every employee also displays (or should also display!) behaviors not directly required by the job function. *Contextual* performance is defined as discretionary behaviors on the part of an employee that are believed to directly promote the effective functioning of an organization without necessarily directly influencing an employee's productivity (MacKenzie, Podsakoff & Fetter, 1991). Contextual

performance includes behaviors, like helping new colleagues to find their way, or helping colleagues with a high workload.

Predicting performance

The Job Demands-Resources model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Demerouti et al., 2000; 2001; Demerouti & Bakker, 2011) is a comprehensive framework for understanding the antecedents of health and motivation as well as their consequences – including job performance. It integrates stress and motivation models but at the same time is flexible and can be applied virtually to every job. A unique feature of the JD-R model is that it poses two parallel processes. The first is a health impairment process (what workers are able to do) and the second is a motivational process (what workers want to do).

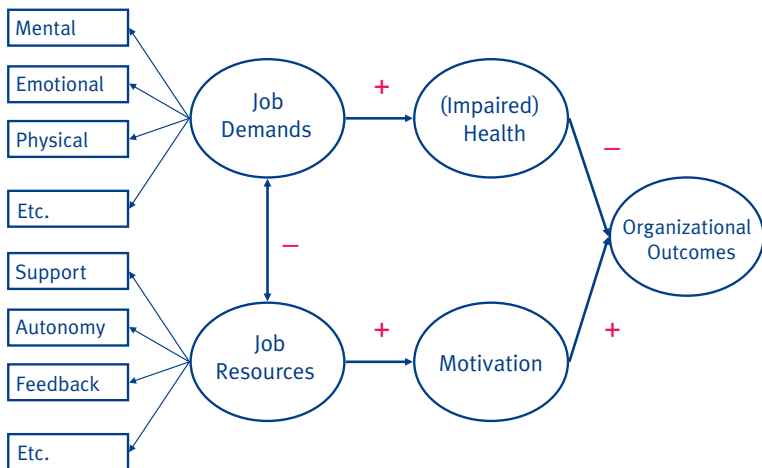


Figure 1

The Job Demands – Resources Model

To understand these two processes, it is helpful to distinguish between two sets of antecedents: job demands and job resources. *Job demands* are those aspects of the work that require effort on the part of the employee and are thus associated with psychophysiological costs, including impaired health. Examples of job demands are interruptions during work, demanding customers, or dealing with many customer requests simultaneously. *Job resources* are those aspects of work that are functional to achieving goals and minimize the effects of job demands, or stimulate personal growth. These benefits make job resources the key

antecedents of motivation. Examples of job resources are supportive colleagues or supervisors, the freedom to decide yourself on how you do your job, and receiving information about how well you do your job.

The JD-R model employs a two-dimensional conceptualization of burnout that is reflected in the Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (OLBI; Demerouti & Bakker, 2008; Demerouti, Mosterd, & Bakker, 2010; Demerouti & Nachreiner, 1998). The first dimension ranges from exhaustion at the negative pole to vigor at the positive pole. The second dimension ranges from disengagement at the negative pole to engagement at the positive pole. This instrument was originally developed to assess burnout, but as it includes both positively and negatively phrased items, it can be used to assess work engagement as well. Job demands *increase* the risk of exhaustion. This can produce subsequent decline in task performance. Job resources *increase* engagement (or motivation). As a consequence, job resources, by way of higher levels of engagement, boost contextual performance (Bakker, Demerouti & Verbeke, 2004).

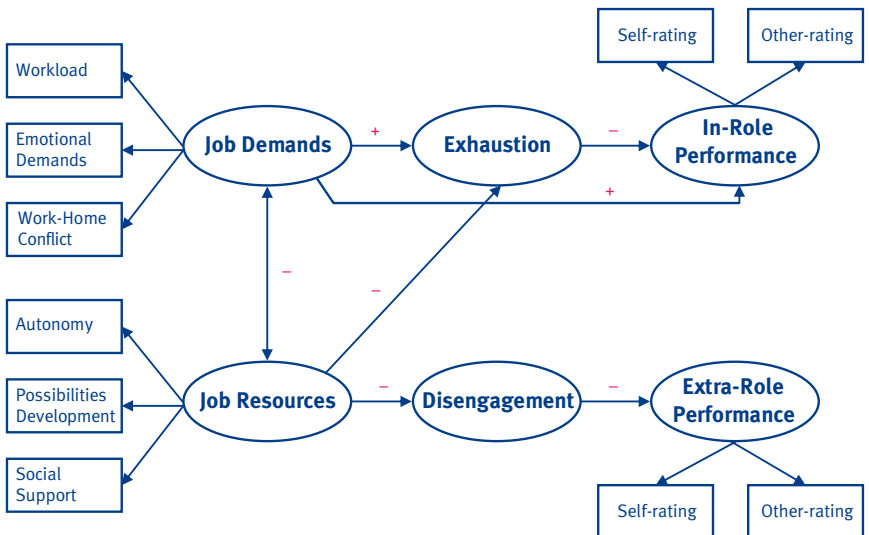


Figure 2

Predicting performance on the basis of the Job Demands-Resources Model

The assumptions of the JD-R model regarding these two processes have been supported empirically using cross-sectional studies and other ratings of performance, indicating that task and contextual performance are outcomes of two distinct psychological mechanisms. For example, Bakker and his colleagues

(2004) found that job demands (e.g. work pressure and emotional demands) were the most important antecedents of exhaustion. In turn, exhaustion predicted task performance. In contrast, job resources, such as autonomy and social support, were the most crucial predictors of disengagement. Disengagement, in turn, was the most important predictor of contextual performance. In another study, I found that job resources improved both task and contextual performance as rated by colleagues but not for all employees (Demerouti, 2006). Specifically, it was found that the more job resources, the more flow or total immersion individuals experienced in the tasks. The more immersed they were, the better they performed so long as they were hard-working individuals.

The relationship between job resources → work engagement → performance has also been found on a daily basis. By letting people fill in short questionnaires every day we found that individual performance varies from day to day. Gauging employees on a daily basis (by means of daily diaries) is an excellent research design to uncover the daily dynamics of the process to performance. In a diary study among employees working in a fast-food restaurant, we found that day-level job resources made employees more engaged in their work (Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti & Schaufeli, 2009). Consequently, the more engaged the employees were on a specific day, the higher the objective financial returns of the team on that day. In another diary study by Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Heuven, Demerouti and Schaufeli (2008) we asked forty-four flight attendants to fill in a diary booklet before and after consecutive flights to three intercontinental destinations. Results revealed that the more supportive the colleagues were, the higher the self-efficacy and consequently the work engagement of the flight attendants. In addition, work engagement mediated the relationship between self-efficacy and both task and contextual performance.

To conclude, differentiating between task and contextual performance as two specific performance dimensions increases the predictive value of burnout/work engagement experiences. The strength of the JD-R model is that it is a comprehensive model, as it also explains how specific aspects of the work environment influence various parameters of job performance through their impact on well-being. However, the link between work characteristics, individual well-being and performance is not so simple and straightforward. Various intervening mechanisms might be involved in explaining this relationship. The process to performance seems to be highly dependent on the operator/individual who performs, as performance does not seem to be a simple reaction to a requirement. Our research has shown that employee work engagement is

an important predictor of performance (Demerouti & Cropanzano, 2010). The explanation for this beneficial role of work engagement can probably be found in the three-dimensional configuration of work engagement, which includes energy (cf. vigor), motivation (dedication) and resource allocation (absorption) components.

Facilitators of performance

Although my research initiated with examining the causes of burnout, I started very early to focus on factors that facilitate well-being and performance. In particular, I have been focused on three facilitators: resources, job crafting and decision making.

Resources

My research focuses on three types of resource: job, home and personal. Let us first consider *job* resources. Job resources are not only necessary to deal with (high) job demands, but they are also important in their own right as they stimulate the development of individuals, a basic (human) right of employees! Job resources are assumed to play either an intrinsic motivational role because they foster employees' growth, learning and development, or an extrinsic motivational role because they are instrumental in achieving work goals. In the former case, job resources fulfill basic human needs, such as the need for autonomy, relatedness, and competence (Deci & Ryan, 2000). In the latter case, job resources foster the willingness to dedicate one's efforts and abilities to the work task (Meijman & Mulder, 1998). For instance, supportive colleagues and feedback about performance increase the likelihood of success in achieving one's work goals.

However, performance at work is not only the outcome of job resources. In a study among 190 couples we examined whether demands and resources at *home* were also predictive of performance at work (Demerouti, Bakker & Voydanoff, 2010). We found that the greater the resources at home (autonomy, social support and developmental possibilities) the higher the task and contextual performance as rated by both the individuals themselves and their peers. Home demands had neither a beneficial nor a detrimental impact on performance. Taken together, the positive influence of home life on job performance was stronger than the negative one. Thus, a resourceful family context makes individuals happier in their free time and helps them directly to perform better at work.

Personal resources are defined as aspects of the self that make individuals more resilient when dealing with stressful events and enable them to control their environment successfully (Hobfoll, 2001). Examples of personal resources are self-efficacy, optimism, self-esteem, psychological and flexibility. How do personal

resources enhance well-being and performance? Personal resources make individuals more successful in adapting to their environment. When employees are given resources by their organization, it is likely that they will feel valued. In turn, they will be more engaged in pursuing their work goals. Consequently, this may bring more resources in the long run. Xanthopoulou et al. (2009) found that job resources, personal resources and work engagement influence each other over time. It may be concluded that personal resources are crucial factors in comprehending the relationships between work characteristics, on the one hand, and employee well-being and performance, on the other hand. What is important to keep in mind is that personal resources are not as stable as personality characteristics but they are 'trainable'. Personal resources can be developed over time, influenced by specific personal development interventions or coaching (Demerouti, van Eeuwijk, Snelder, & Wild, 2011).

Job crafting

It is clear that the availability of resources facilitates performance, but what if resources are not available? Recent research suggests that employees may actively change the design of their jobs by choosing tasks, negotiating different job content, and assigning meaning to their tasks or jobs (Parker & Ohly, 2008). This process has been referred to as job crafting (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001), the physical and cognitive changes individuals make in their task or relational boundaries. Physical changes refer to changes in the number of job tasks or the ways that tasks are executed, whereas cognitive changes refer to changing attitudes to the job. For instance, a maintenance technician reported in an interview that he crafted his job in the form of taking on additional tasks (Berg, Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2010). After being for some time in the organization, he started to proactively help newcomers to learn the job. Because he turned out to be good at this, he became formally responsible for the training of new employees. As another example, consider a customer service representative who reframed the perception of the job as a meaningful whole that positively impacts others rather than a collection of separate tasks (i.e. cognitive job crafting): "Technically, [my job is] putting in orders, entering orders, but really I see it as providing our customers with an enjoyable and positive experience, which is a lot more meaningful to me than entering numbers." (Berg et al., 2010; p. 167). In our research, we integrated job crafting in the context of the JD-R model. In doing so, job crafting is considered to occur on a daily basis and to be directed towards the work environment which surrounds the individual. Thus, job crafting refers to voluntary or spontaneous changes in the specific job demands and job resources. In our view, even in very stable environments with detailed job

descriptions and clear work procedures, individuals can and do adjust the tasks that they perform, and the resources that they need to perform their tasks successfully. In this way, individuals remain healthy and motivated.

We have discriminated between three distinct job crafting behaviors, namely seeking resources, seeking challenges, and reducing demands. Decreasing job resources does not seem to be purposeful human behavior. Seeking job resources includes behaviors like asking for feedback, advice from colleagues or manager, maximizing job autonomy. Seeking challenges may include behaviors, such as seeking new tasks at work, or requesting more responsibilities following the completion of assigned tasks. Reducing demands can include behaviors such as making tasks less emotionally, mentally or physically demanding, and reducing one's workload.

In our research, we found that with about 30% of job crafting behaviors varying daily, job crafting occurs routinely (Petrou, Demerouti, Peeters & Schaufeli, 2011). However, job crafting has also long-lasting effects (Petrou & Demerouti, 2011). Employees in jobs with a high level of job autonomy and work pressure were engaged in two specific crafting behaviors: they were more inclined to seek more resources and less inclined to reduce their demands. Employees who tend to craft their jobs by increasing their resources and challenges but are less occupied decreasing their demands are also more engaged (Petrou & Demerouti, 2011). Over time engaged employees craft their jobs in a more positive way, by increasing their resources and challenges and by reducing demands less. Thus, job crafting represents work strategies that employees use to enhance their performance on a daily basis as well as in the longer term. These strategies are voluntary and not instructed by the supervisor.

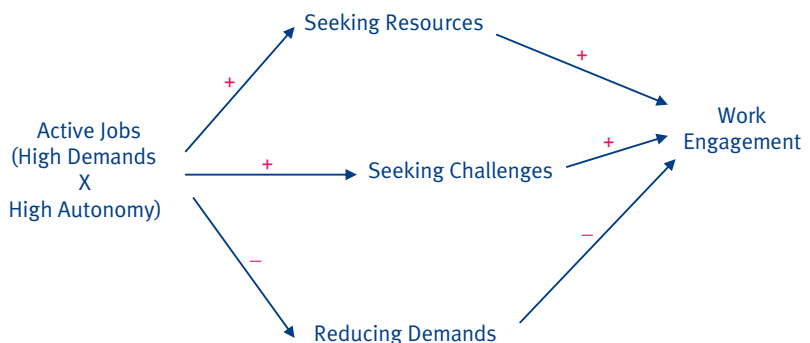


Figure 3

Predictors and outcomes of daily job crafting

Decision making

Up to now, we have focused on situational (i.e. environmental and interpersonal) aspects of operational systems and on individual work adjustments (i.e. job crafting). However, complete process to performance also requires individuals to make decisions on how to perform each task. During these so-called human decision processes, the operator analyzes the problem/task, specifies an effective procedure, and identifies the resources needed to execute the task (Marr, 1982). In the context of organizational behavior, these human decision processes represent task strategies that may be analytical or intuitive. According to the heuristic-systematic, information-processing model, individuals use either systematic or heuristic decision making or a combination of both to assess situations and evaluate information to arrive at a judgment (Trumbo, 1999). Systematic or analytical processing occurs when individuals make extra effort and scrutinize information while comparing information about their options. Heuristic or intuitive processing occurs when individuals can easily arrive at a judgment based on cues from past experiences – these processes are more automatic in nature. Past research has found that employees are more likely to engage in systematic processing when they are motivated (Trumbo, 1999). Intuitive decision making is fast and effortless while analytical decision making is slow and laborious (Chaib-draa, 1996).

Employees can use both analytical and intuitive decision making either alone or synergistically (Trumbo, 1999). Situational (i.e. environmental and interpersonal) factors as well as an individual's psychological state (e.g. work engagement) can affect which type of decision making people may engage in. Our diary study among nurses (Gordon, Demerouti & Bipp, 2011) showed that the more demands (i.e. work pressure and unpredictable situations) the nurses experienced on a specific day, the more analytical decisions they made, which consequently led to better task performance. Intuitive decision making was inhibited by unpredictable situations, but it was beneficial for both task and contextual performance. Interestingly, work engagement was found to stimulate analytical decision making, in other words, more effort. Thus, while both analytical and intuitive decision making are beneficial for daily performance, demanding conditions on a working day as well as employee engagement seem to prompt more analytical decision making and greater effort.

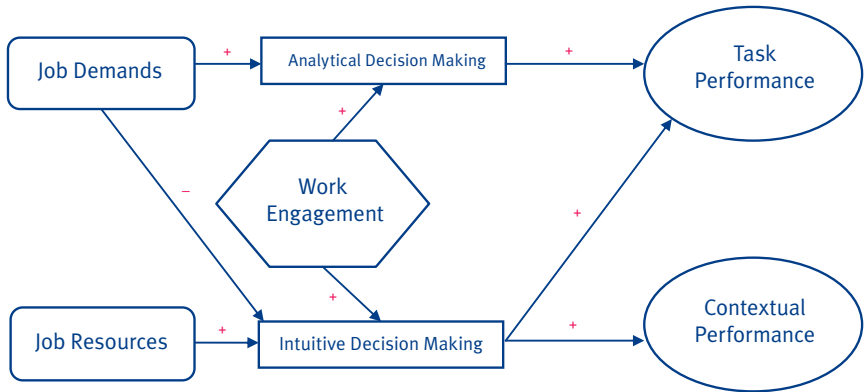


Figure 4

The relationship between work engagement, decision making and performance

In my view, decision making that is involved in processes during performance is closely linked to the available resources. Baltes and Baltes (1990) suggest that as one's personal resources (mental, physical and social) are limited, individuals use strategies to overcome resource deficits. Such strategies include selection, optimization and compensation. *Selection* refers to restricting one's activities to fewer, more important tasks. *Optimization* is aimed at increasing the means used to achieve one's goals, such as investing extra effort or enhancing current skills. *Compensation* implies that one uses alternative means to maintain a certain level of functioning, such as hiring an assistant, or working in the evening. Such strategies have been found to increase well-being, satisfaction with career and partnership (Wiese, Freund & Baltes, 2000) as well as objective performance (Bajor & Baltes, 2002). Task strategies like these or more specific ones for a particular job function seem useful in understanding the decision making processes, while dealing with diminished resources due to external (e.g. time pressure, interruptions) or internal (e.g. fatigue) reasons (Demerouti, Verbeke & Bakker, 2005).

Relevance of physiological research

Insight from my past and future research may be very useful for the research and education within the Department of Industrial Engineering and Innovation Sciences. For example, my research is highly relevant for the management of operations, which usually includes modeling service or manufacturing processes, including elements like production schedules, process sequences, operation timing and customer requirements (Boudreau, Hopp, McClain & Thomas, 2003). Operation management models usually focus on the specification of added resources (like machines, speed or people) to a bottleneck area and the calculation of the related cost effectiveness. The implicit assumption of operation management is that individuals/operators will perform at the same pace and with the same quality in all situations also when a bottleneck exists. However, our diary research shows not only that individuals differ from each other in the motivation and capacity they have to perform but also that there are days on which the same individual performs better than on other days. We plan (together with Jose Martinelli, Vincent Wiers and Jan Fransoo) to use the diary methodology to study the strategies that planners use to develop the order schedule while subject to disturbance caused by different calls/requests. Also in terms of technology acceptance, job resources like user participation, involvement and perceived control, as well as the possibility to craft the design and implementation of the system by the user, are considered critical factors (Riedel, Wiers and Fransoo, 2011).

Moreover, my research is relevant for design research. There is evidence that people who develop and implement the most innovative solutions have support from colleagues and the latitude to try new things, and reschedule activities to spend longer time on problems (Daniels et al, 2009). These represent job resources and opportunities for job crafting. Daniels et al. (2009) developed a checklist of strategies and conditions that are beneficial for solving more complex design problems. Among other things, this list includes job resources like talking to others to refine and to generate ideas, involving clients and/or suppliers in problem-solving; work strategies like generating understanding of the problem, generating multiple solutions and challenging ideas and task strategies like searching for information (e.g. web, books), use of structured problem-solving techniques (e.g. brainstorming, mind mapping, process mapping) and systemic

thinking. Any lack of these elements can lead to difficulty in making decisions and a diminished performance by designers in designing effective solutions. Finally, organizational design aimed at creating satisfying and sustainable organizations for humans has also recognized the importance of resources, job crafting and decision making. The human factor is prevalent in the suggested model of circular design (Romme & Endenburg, 2006) since observing, analyzing and interpreting the processes and outcomes generated by the design are important elements in such design cycles. In a similar vein, Romme (1999) suggests that in designing innovative organizations an optimum balance must be found between hierarchical control (such as direct supervision, performance control) and employee-led control (such as autonomous work groups, and self-organizing professionals).

To conclude, my research as well as the research of my group is important for successful operational processes for at least two reasons: (a) humans have knowledge of the operational processes and (b) humans are usually the performers of the processes. As humans have such a crucial role in operational processes, they can also be responsible for process failures due to incorrect use of the system, counterproductive behavior, fatigue, etc. Therefore, they can influence the processes in either a positive or a negative way. My research highlights the role of resources, job crafting and decision making in optimizing the performance in operational and design processes.

Current and future research

The insights of this past research have been integrated in projects aimed at predicting specific issues of performance: adaptive performance during organizational change, decision making and performance among health care professionals, and academic performance in the context of technology universities. These projects embrace my current and future research.

Adaptive performance during organizational change

As we live in a rapidly changing world, where policymakers, organizations and individuals are constantly on the move, a special form of performance that we are urged to achieve is adaptive performance. This indicates whether we respond to innovation and change in the way that we are expected to do (Armenakis, 1999). Together with René Torenlvied, I am working on a high potential project financed by Utrecht University called 'Successful implementation of innovations in organizations'. The central aim of this project is to unravel why innovations so often fail, and why employees are so often not able to perform well when innovations are implemented.

The project builds on regulatory focus theory (Brockner & Higgins, 2001), which distinguishes two regulatory foci: promotion and prevention. When *promotion* focused, employees, organizations or innovations emphasize growth and development but when *prevention* focused, they emphasize security and obligations. The implementation of innovation is expected to be most successful, and adaptive performance at its maximum, when the regulatory focus of innovation, organization and individual fit. Based on the JD-R model, we suggest that individuals will adapt to change when they can continue to work in a resourceful work environment with sufficient demands/challenges after the implementation of change. Two factors are considered important for adaptation to change. First, the role of personal resources in the 'adaptation-to-change' processes as examined together with my PhD student, Machteld van den Heuvel. Second, the role of job crafting in adapting innovations as well as the role of regulatory fit in the adaptation process, as examined together with PhD student Paraskevas Petrou. Similar ideas we investigate together with my PhD student Sjana Holloway to change in organizational values within a specific organizational context.

Decision making and performance among health care professionals

In line with the focus of TU/e on the strategic area Health, the PhD project on job crafting and decision making, which I am conducting with Heather Gordon, focuses on health care professionals and tries to uncover the work and task strategies that have favorable effects on their task and contextual performance. It is based on the fact that every operational system consists of work demands or situational constraints (like predictability of the work, degree of task difficulty and irregularity, degree of scheduling, task interdependency, etc.) and work resources or opportunities (like decision latitude, social support, flexibility, supervisor coaching, trust, etc.) (Demerouti et al., 2001). These two external aspects of an operation system are perceived, interpreted and redefined by the operator/employee. This is what was called job crafting, which can take the form of increasing demands/challenges and decreasing demands (Petrou et al., 2011). Preliminary findings suggest that job crafting and analytical and intuitive decision are beneficial for a nurse's daily performance. Moreover, we find that work engagement also contributes to better performance as engaged operators will be more effective in their situational job crafting and human decision processing than their counterparts with low work engagement. Engaged employees have more resources available to invest in information processing, or are more stimulated and active in planning and undertaking action or develop more situational awareness because they have more personal resources such as self-efficacy (Van den Heuvel, Demerouti, Schreurs, Bakker & Schaufeli, 2009). An issue for future research is whether decision making is an individual characteristic or a reaction triggered by situational factors.

Academic performance

The rector of Eindhoven University of Technology, professor Hans van Duijn, and the employee representatives of the university have arranged funding for the project 'Top Women to the Top of Technology Universities: is it a matter of resources?' Together with my PhD student Felieke Volman we examine the factors influencing women's success in higher academic and administrative positions within and outside the context of a technology university. These factors concern *macro-level* factors, i.e. employment practices followed by technology vs. non-technology universities, *job-level* factors, i.e. job demands and job resources of women versus men, *family-level* factors, i.e. family demands and family resources of women versus men, as well as *individual* factors, i.e. leadership styles, goal-directed behavior and personal resources of women versus men. The main hypothesis that we are testing is that there will be more women in top positions within the context of a (technology) university if (1) women have sufficient

personal resources, a promotion-focused regulatory style, and a transformational leadership style; (2) women function within work and family environments that provide them with sufficient resources and affordable demands; and (3) universities create contexts/conditions that attract female employees and provide resources to facilitate women's participation in the workforce. In contrast to many past studies where the focus was on identifying the barriers female academics face in their careers, this project will try to uncover the conditions that *facilitate* optimal academic performance (cf. positive rather than negative view). This project builds on my research on the JD-R model and work-life balance.

With regard to the issue of work-life balance, my research has concentrated on uncovering the underlying mechanisms that lead to work-life balance and that explain its consequences. Specifically, job demands are mainly responsible for the experience of inter-role conflict, whereas job resources lead to the experience of inter-role facilitation (Demerouti, Geurts & Kompier, 2004). The absence of inter-role conflict or the segmentation of work and family domains are not sufficient conditions for experiencing well-being and better performance. It seems more important for individuals to experience the transfer of positive characteristics from one life domain to the other (Demerouti & Geurts, 2004). Work characteristics, work-family conflict and health were found to influence each other over time (Demerouti, Bakker & Bulters, 2004), while work was found to influence not only one's own well-being but also that of the partner at home both in a positive and a negative way (Bakker, Demerouti, Burke, 2009; Demerouti, Bakker & Schaufeli, 2005). Contrary to general stereotypes, family life and, in particular, family resources were found to have a favorable impact on objective job performance (Demerouti et al., 2010). Recently, I expanded the literature on inter-role relationships by examining the impact of work and family on the individual self as well as the impact of individual characteristics on work and family (Demerouti, 2011). This is because individuals are challenged to balance the work and life domain with their own personal interests, needs or characteristics. This expansion of the experience of work-life balance has proven to provide useful insights in the process through which work, family and the individual influence each other as well as the resulting performance in the different domains. These insights will be used for the project on 'top women' to explain how the academic performance of women is higher when they experience facilitation between life domains and their personal characteristics.

Future plans

My past and current research shows that three general factors are recognized as facilitators of optimal performance: (1) job, home and personal resources, (2) work strategies in terms of job crafting behaviors and (3) task strategies including analytical and intuitive decision making or strategies like selection and compensation. My intention is to build on these factors and expand them such that the conditions and decision making underlying the process of successful performance can be uncovered in different work contexts and types of performance. A successful process to performance is triggered by job demands, facilitated by the presence of sufficient resources, and initiates the contingent/suitable work and task strategies that ultimately lead to performance. These human decision processes in terms of work strategies (task redefinition and employee adjustment of their own working conditions) as well as the application of specific task strategies (like intuitive and analytic processing, selection, optimization and compensation etc.) represent key factors in the process to performance. This process will be the focus of my position as professor of Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes at the Human Performance Management group.

My focus is and will remain positive, namely how to enhance well-being and performance. In my position within TU/e, I am planning to apply this focus to operation and innovation management. I will be very involved in questions like what factors help employees, managers and organizations to achieve optimum performance or design successful products or to be innovative and how the underlying processes of optimal performance appear. What are the specific resources that managers can build on in order to improve operation processes and organizational innovation? How can job crafting be used to improve such processes and how can managers stimulate the 'good' crafting of their operators? Which are successful task strategies and how can managers profit by the fast and effortless decision making or how can they stimulate decision making that demands effort during operation processes when necessary?

Epilogue

I would like to thank all of you for being here today to share this day with me. In particular, I thank the friends and colleagues who have come over from other countries to attend this lecture.

Next I would like to thank the members of the Executive Board of Eindhoven University of Technology, in particular the rector, Professor Hans van Duijn, as well as the Dean of the Department of Industrial Engineering and Innovation Sciences, Professor Sjoerd Romme for trusting me. I will do my best to fulfill your expectations and to contribute to the success of the department and the university in general.

Arnold Bakker, Will Bertrand, Jan de Jonge, and Sjoerd Romme deserve my thanks for commenting on earlier drafts of this presentation. Similarly, Anniek van Bemmelen deserves my thanks for helping me with the organization and the preparations necessary for this day.

Former colleagues from the Carl von Ossietzky Universität Oldenburg, Erasmus University Rotterdam, Radboud University Nijmegen and Utrecht University as well as current colleagues from the Human Performance Management group and the Department of Industrial Engineering and Innovation Sciences, I would like to thank for supporting me and for making me feel welcome although I am a foreigner and in several respects different from them.

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Curriculum vitae

On 1 September 2009 Evangelia Demerouti was appointed full-time professor of Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes in the Department of Industrial Engineering & Innovation Sciences at Eindhoven University of Technology (TU/e). She will deliver her inaugural lecture on Friday, May 13, 2011.

Evangelia Demerouti (1970) studied psychology at the University of Crete (Greece). After graduating (cum laude), she received a scholarship from the German Academic Exchange Office to work on her PhD. She obtained her PhD in Work and Organizational Psychology (cum laude, 1999) after finishing her dissertation on the Job Demands-Resources burnout model from the Carl von Ossietzky Universität Oldenburg (Germany). Having worked as a post-doc researcher at Erasmus University Rotterdam and Radboud University Nijmegen, Demerouti was assistant professor and associate professor at Utrecht University between 2002 and 2009. In September 2009 she was appointed as full-time professor at Eindhoven University of Technology. Her chair focuses on the processes enabling performance, including the effects of work characteristics, decision making, occupational well-being, and work-life balance. She has published over 85 national and international papers and book chapters on these topics, and is associate editor of the Journal of Personnel Psychology. Her articles have been published in journals including Journal of Applied Psychology, Journal of Occupational Health Psychology, and Journal of Vocational Behavior.

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