

**PERCEIVED OVERQUALIFICATION, EMPOWERING  
LEADERSHIP, AND ROLE CLARITY: A THREE-WAY  
INTERACTION EFFECT ON WORK ENGAGEMENT**

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## STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY

I declare that the content of this thesis is my original work. I have not submitted the work contained in this thesis for another degree or diploma at any other tertiary institution.

I have acknowledged all the assistance that I received in preparing this thesis, and have made due references.

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Dated: 10 June, 2016

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## ABSTRACT

Organizational researchers have recently shown considerable interest in the study of inadequate employment, among which the most common form is overqualification. Perceived overqualification, referring to the feelings of having more knowledge, skills, abilities, and work experience than required for a job, has been studied as an increasingly important factor affecting employee attitudes and behaviours in workplace. Previous literature has shown mixed conclusions regarding the attitudinal and behavioural outcomes of perceived overqualification. While most of empirical studies have indicated that perceived overqualification is related to negative work outcomes, another line of research suggests that the this conclusion is overly simplistic and perceived overqualification may be potentially valuable to organization.

This study presented a conceptual model from a theoretical perspective of work engagement to explore the potential contribution of perceived overqualification on employee work engagement. According to Kahn's (1990) conceptualization of work engagement, three psychological conditions, namely, psychological availability, psychological meaningfulness, and psychological safety, emerge to promote personal engagement. In present study, I assume employees who feel overqualified have greater availability, being ready and prepared to engage. With a sense of possessing surplus qualifications beyond requirements of a job, they have more physical, emotional and psychological resources and feel capable of driving these resources into job task.

Meanwhile, two critical conditions are combined to facilitate those who feel overqualified to continually maintain engagement. First, I propose that empowering leadership captures the psychological meaningfulness condition. Empowering leaders give subordinates autonomy to perform, resulting sense of ownership over the work.

Thus, subordinates tend to feel worthwhile and valued with a sense of return on investments of the self in job. Therefore, subordinates should find more meaningfulness in work and exhibit higher engagement. Secondly, the present study hypothesizes that role clarity reflect the psychological safety condition. With clearly defined role, employees experience less ambiguity and feel situations are predictable, secure, and clear in terms of behavioural consequences, and thus they are more willing to fully engage in work roles. Summarily, this present study proposes a three way interaction relationship that under the conditions of empowering leadership and role clarity, perceived overqualification is positively associated with work engagement. Theoretical and practical implications of these findings are discussed.

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# CHAPTER 1 – RESEARCH OVERVIEW

## 1.1 Introduction

Organizational researchers have recently shown considerable interest in the study of inadequate employment, among which the most common form is overqualification, known as employee's possession of surplus qualifications relative to job requirement (Hu, Erdogan, Bauer, Jiang, & Li, 2015; Zhang, Law, & Lin, 2015). The salient issue of overqualification has been addressed in both developed and developing countries such as United States, Europe, and China (Zhang, Law, & Lin, 2015). Existing literature has increasingly recognized overqualification as a considerable source of negative attitudes and behaviours in workplace (e.g., Bolino & Feldman, 2000; Erdogan & Bauer, 2009; Johnson & Johnson, 1996, 1997, 2000; Maynard, Joseph, & Maynard, 2006, Maynard & Parfyonoca, 2013). Although over past decades scholars have made great strides in identifying the negative effect of overqualification, little theory or empirical study accounts for its potential value and positive outcomes to organizations and employees. Hu and his associates (2015, p. 1228) describe that the current research on overqualification has “drawn an overly simplistic conclusion” with “a problematic omission”. Meanwhile, Luksyte and Spitzmueller (2015) call for more research to explore more positive work attitudes and behaviours experienced by employees who perceive to be overqualified.

In responding to Luksyte and Spitzmueller's (2015) call and drawing from theoretical perspective of work engagement (Kahn, 1990; Rich, Lepine, & Crawford, 2010), the present research aims to examine the effect of perceived overqualification on employee's motivation to engage in work role. Meanwhile, the present research proposes two necessary conditions (i.e., empowering leadership and role clarity) with

which perceived overqualification would facilitate Kahn's conceptualization of engagement.

## 1.2 Research Background

While the issue of person-job fit has been studied for decades, the worldwide economic hardship and downturn in 21<sup>st</sup> century has given prominence to a specific phenomenon of inadequate employment, namely overqualification (Liu, Luksyte, Zhou, Shi, & Wang, 2015; Zhang, Law, & Lin, 2015). However, there is a paradox that, on one hand, organizations require job seekers to possess increased level of education and skills to compete for jobs; on the other hand, pervasive layoffs and limited job opportunities have forced workers to accept jobs with requirements that are below their qualifications (Liu, et al., 2015; Vaisey, 2006). Thus, overqualification has become a salient issue.

There is a surge among researchers in studying overqualification because it is widely observed not only in wealthy and industrialized regions, but also in developing countries (Feldman, Leana, & Bolino, 2002; Maynard & Parfyonoca, 2013; Shen, & Kuhn, 2012). For example, Luksyte and Spitzmueller (2015) suggest that 30% of the workforce in European Union and 45% of workforce in Australia have experienced the perception of overqualification while Zhang, Law and Lin (2015) reports that 84% of Chinese workers have claimed that they were overqualified to some extents.

Adding to the prevalence of overqualification, organizational behaviour scholars have focused on two streams of research: firstly, most empirical studies have characterized overqualification as a negative phenomenon (Feldman, 1996), leading to unfavourable work attitudes or behaviours. Secondly, recent conceptual and empirical research has indicated that overqualification might be associated with positive outcomes and employees with the perception of being overqualified might potentially "make valuable contributions to their organizations" (Erdogan, Bauer, Peiró & Truxillo, 2011b, p. 223).

However, there have been few empirical studies exploring the bright side of overqualification. Therefore, there is a need to provide an integrated theoretical framework and an empirical study to examine the relationship between perceived overqualification and certain favourable outcomes in workplace. Drawing from theoretical perspective of work engagement, this research aims to respond to this call and explore effect of perceived overqualification on promoting employee's work engagement.

The current study focuses specifically on employee's work engagement as the outcome. Engagement has been defined by Kahn (1990, p. 700) as "the simultaneous employment and expression of a person's "preferred self" in task behaviours that promote connections to work and to others, personal presence (physical, cognitive, and emotional), and active, full role performances". The present study chooses to conceptualize work engagement as the outcomes of perceived overqualification because it have been identified as a key mechanism explaining how employee characteristics will influence a variety of organizational factors and job performance (Rich, Lepine, & Crawford, 2010). To be simple, work engagement serves as an agent linking personal and organizational attributes to employee job performance.

### **1.3 Theoretical Framework & Research Questions**

The theoretical model of the present study are guided by three questions regarding the overly simplistic and unclear conclusion in extant overqualification literature, trying to expand the range of outcomes associated with perceived overqualification to include increased employee work engagement. Details are addressed in Chapter 3.

The first research question addresses the significant issue related to a prevalent form of inadequate employment. *What are the consequences and outcomes of employees with*

*the perception of overqualification?* Existing literature overemphasizes the negative influences and costs of perceived overqualification with very limited empirical evidences arguing its potential value (Hu, et al., 2015; Luksyte & Spitzmueller, 2015; Zhang, Law, & Lin, 2015). Therefore, the present study focuses on work engagement as the outcome of perceived overqualification, examining why and when perceived overqualification promotes instead of thwarting employee's work engagement. So the second research question is "***How work engagement will be affected by employees who feel overqualified?***" Instead of drawing from person-job fit/misfit theory, relative deprivation theory, equity theory, and human capital theory (see McKee-Ryan & Harvey, 2011, for a review), this research adds to the current literature by building on a new theoretical foundation.

The third research question pertains to the psychological mechanisms for such overqualified perception, examining whether, when, and how employees who feel overqualified fully invest self in work roles, as opposed to being disengaged at work. That is, "***Under what conditions would perceive overqualification and employee's engagement be promoted rather than be thwarted?***" As managerial actions and organizational settings have implication to the building of engaged workforce, the present study proposes to examine empowering leadership and role clarity as critical conditions with which employees with perceived overqualification will be fully engaged into their roles. Then the findings from this study would serve as bases for practical interventions and enlighten practitioners.

## **1.4 Research Design and Scope**

The present study focuses on the phenomenon of perceived overqualification and its impact on work engagement. It will adopt the cross-sectional design to investigate the perceived overqualification in workplace. Individual level of analysis with self-

administered will be conducted to collect data. Both supervisors and subordinates will be included in the sample. Existing validated scales will be used to measure variables of present study. Linear regression will be used to analyse the data in the present study.

Table 1 in appendix summarizes the current study.

## **1.5 Thesis Outline**

This thesis comprises 6 chapters that seek to elaborate and explain on why and how the present study will be conducted. Chapter 2 provides an overview of the current literature on underemployment, overqualification, and Kahn's (1990) conceptualization of work engagement. Chapter 3 presents the theoretical arguments and hypotheses for the present study. The present study follows the theoretical perspective of work engagement model (Kahn, 1990; Rich, Lepine, & Crawford, 2010) to defence the theoretical arguments and hypotheses linking interaction among perceived overqualification, empowering leadership, and role clarity to employee work engagement. Chapter 4 provides an explanation on the methodological approach which will be undertaken for present study. It will outline how the research is designed, how samples are collected using questionnaire surveys, and how the measurement will be conducted in order to test the hypotheses in present study. Chapter 5 provides the details of data analysis and results. It will demonstrate and explain results of descriptive statistics, linear regression, simple slope test, and slope difference test. Based on a series of analyses of data I will make conclusion on results of hypothesis testing. Chapter 5 provides a discussion based on results of present study, including theoretical and practical implication, limitations of present study, and directions of future study. Moreover, appendixes and list of table and figures will be provided.

## 1.6 Conclusion

Overqualification has shown mixed effects to employee's work attitudes and behaviours. A steady stream of research has emerged to explore the outcomes of this form of inadequate employment. The present research aims to add value and solve the controversy of existing literature, further advancing research on overqualification. The study of this research adopts theoretical perspective of work engagement by Kahn (1990) as the theoretical foundation and examines effect of a three-way interaction relationship among perceived overqualification, empowering leadership, and role clarity on work engagement. Apart from theoretical contributions, the present research also suggests measures that organizations may take to reinforce positive effect as well as mitigate negative effect of the issue of perceived overqualification.



# **CHAPTER 2 – LITERATURE REVIEW**

## **2.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, I present an overview of the current literature on perceived overqualification. The theoretical perspective of work engagement underpinning the present study is also outlined. In the first section of this chapter, I will discuss a broader concept of underemployment, and review the core literature on perceived overqualification, antecedents to perceived overqualification, the mediating mechanisms between the relationship of perceived overqualification and employee attitude and behaviour/reaction, the consequences of perceived overqualification, and boundary conditions on the impact of overqualification. In the subsequent section, I will review the theoretical perspective of work engagement of Kahn (1990) and relevant literature that will be used for present study.

## **2.2 Review of Literature on Perceived Overqualification**

This section will review and identify gaps in the existing literature on perceived overqualification. Table 2 summarizes the major studies of published research on perceived overqualification till 2015. The Review of literature begins with the discussion of a broader concept of underemployment. Table 3 summarizes the various dimensions of underemployment, and table 4 summarizes the other constructs which may be related to perceived overqualification. Then I will discuss the definition and conceptualization of perceived overqualification. Subsequently, I will proceed to review the existing literature on antecedents, mediators, consequences and moderators of perceived overqualification.

## 2.2.1 Research on Underemployment

Underemployment is defined as “an inferior, lesser, or lower quality type of employment” (Feldman, 1996, p. 387). Actually underemployment is a broad concept which has been investigated and defined relative to various disciplines. While economists define underemployment in terms of wages (Zvonkovic, 1988) and employment gaps (Tipps & Gordon, 1985), sociologists and organizational behaviour researchers tend to define it based on past education and experience (Feldman & Turnley, 1995; Khan & Morrow, 1991). In their review paper of underemployment, McKee-Ryan and Harvey (2011) summarizes the various constructs of underemployment dimensions in existing literature, including underutilization (Bureau of Labour Statistics, 2010), underemployed (Creed & Moore, 2006), time-related underemployment (Wilkins, 2007), underemployment (Abrahamsen, 2010; Burke, 1997; Feldman, Leana, & Bolino, 2002; Glyde, 1977; Jensen & Slack, 2003), work status congruence (Holtom, Lee, & Tidd, 2002), underemployment as inadequate employment (Dooley, 2003; Dooley, Prause & Ham-Rowbottow, 2000), job mobility (Aiken & Ferman, 1966), perceived overqualification (Burriss, 1983; Johnson & Johnson, 1996; Maynard, Joseph, & Maynard, 2006), Felt underemployment (Borgen, Amundson, & Harter, 1988), and relative deprivation (Feldman, Leana, & Bolino, 2002).

Being conceptualized as a multi-dimensional construct, underemployment has been examined by scholars in terms of its antecedents and consequences. By combining the review papers of both Feldman (1996) and McKee-Ryan and Harvey (2011), multiple antecedents and outcomes of underemployment have been identified. The antecedents include Economic factors (e.g., Jefferson & Preston, 2010; Slack & Jensen, 2004; Tam, 2010), job characteristics/job type (e.g., Bolino & Feldman, 2000; Erdogan & Bauer, 2009; Feldman, Leana, & Bolino, 2002; Feldman & Turnley, 1995, 2004; Holtom, Lee,

& Tidd, 2002; Kraimer, Shaffer, & Bolino, 2009; Leana & Feldman, 2000; Maynard & Joseph, 2008), career history (e.g., Leana & Feldman, 1995; McKee-Ryan, Virick, Prussia, Harvey, & Lilly, 2009), job search strategies (e.g., Saks, 2006), demographic characteristics (e.g., De Jong & Madamba, 2001; Lee, 2005; Jensen & Slack, 2003; Mau & Kopischke, 2001; Ruiz-Quintanilla & Claes, 1996; Tam, 2010), employee traits (McKee-Ryan, et al., 2009; Watt & Hargis, 2010), and personal work preferences (e.g., Ellingson, Gruys, & Sackett, 1998; Feldman & Turnley, 2004; Holtom, Lee, & Tidd, 2002).

On the other hand, current literature examines a wide range of job, career and personal outcomes of underemployment, including job attitudes (e.g., Bolino & Feldman, 2000; Johnson, Morrow, & Johnson, 2002;), in-role and extra-role performance (e.g., Erdogan, et al, 2011b, Ng & Feldman, 2009), turnover, intention to quit or job search (e.g., Allen & van der Velden, 2001; Burke, 1997; Maynard, Joseph, & Maynard, 2006), career attitudes (e.g., Abrahamsen, 2010; Lee, 2005), psychological well-being (e.g., Dooley, Prause, & Ham-Rowbottom, 2000; Friedland & Price, 2003; Johnson, Morrow, & Johnson, 2002), and marital, family and social relationships (e.g., Cassidy & Wright, 2008).

### **2.2.2 Definition and Conceptualizations of Perceived Overqualification**

Overqualification has become a common phenomenon in current labour market due to the gradually increasing educational level of job seekers. At the early stage of study on overqualification, Johnson and Johnson (1996, p. 436) describe **overqualification** as one type of underemployment, denoting the situation that workers possess surplus education, experiences or skills comparing to what a job requires. Johnson and Johnson

(1996) argue that overqualification is an individual attribute which is a source of job dissatisfaction and personal frustration.

Different approaches to conceptualizing overqualification has been adopted by scholars, ranging from objective conditions under which employees actually possess qualifications that exceed job requirements (e.g., Green & McIntosh, 2007; Johnson & Johnson, 1996; Verhaest & Omeij, 2006 ), to employee perceptions of being overqualified (e.g., Erdogan & Bauer, 2009; Johnson & Johnson, 1996, 1997, 1999; Lobene & Meade, 2013; Luksyte & Spitzmueller, 2015; Luksyte, Spitzmueller, & Maynard, 2011; Maynard & Parfyonova, 2013; Yang, Guan, Lai, She, & Lockwood, 2015; Zhang, Law, & Lin, 2015). Objective overqualification can be easily measured by comparing employees' qualifications (e.g., skills, education, and work experiences) with the requirement of job description/specification (Zhang, Law, & Lin, 2015). But the problem of objective overqualification is that it experiences difficulty to measure diversification of perceived overqualification by employees when they possess the same qualification and work in comparable positions (Erdogan, et al., 2011b; Luksyte, Spitzmueller, & Maynard, 2011; Zhang, Law, & Lin, 2015). Moreover, previous studies point out that the perception of overqualification results from many factors other than objective conditions, including comparison with referent others (e.g., peers), gender and individual personality (e.g., Buunk, Zurriaga, Gonzalez-Roma, & Subirats, 2003; Liu & Wang, 2012; Luksyte & Spitzmueller, 2011; Hu, et al, 2015; McKee-Ryan, & Harvey, 2011).

As objective and perceived overqualification are treated as separated constructs (Erdogan, Bauer, Peiró & Truxillo, 2011a; Maltarich, Reilly, & Nyberg, 2011), scholars believe it is more interesting and meaningful to examine the psychological mechanisms of individuals who perceive to be overqualified, exploring why they feel to

be overqualified, and what the attitudes and behaviours they may have as result of this perception. Although Johnson and Johnson (1996) indicates two dimensions of perceived overqualification: perceived mismatch (i.e., perception of surplus education, talent and work experience) and perceived no grow (perception of lacking opportunities to learn new things, grow and change), Maynard, Joseph and Maynard (2006) argue that only the subscale of mismatch represent overqualification because perceived no grow tends to be not mentioned by hiring managers, applicants, and employees as the indication of overqualification. Therefore, Maynard, Joseph and Maynard (2006, p. 518) defined **perceived overqualification** as “the extent to which an employee feels that he or she has surplus education, experience, and/or KSAs, relative to the requirements of his or her position”. This definition has been prevalently used by a number of current literatures on perceived overqualifiacaiton.

### 2.2.3 Antecedents of Perceived Overqualification

Current literatures have indicated a number of variables predict employee perceived overqualification. According to the review on perceived overqualification by Liu and Wang (2012), five major antecedents of perceived overqualification have been identified, namely, Organizational politics, gender, personality, job search and person-supervisor fit. Besides, a study of Yang et al. (2015) proved that career adaptability serves as an antecedent of perceived overqualification.

As perceived overqualification can be viewed as an individual attribute (Johnson and Johnson, 1996), individual personality and traits tend to lead to perceived overqualification (Liu & Wang, 2012), including neuroticism (Liu, Wang, Zhan, Zhou, Liao, & Shi, 2010), narcissism (Lobene & Meade, 2010), and boredom proneness (Watt & Hargis, 2010). Apart from personality, gender can be another antecedent of perceived overqualification but there is no clear conclusion. Some literature suggests that females

are more likely to perceive themselves as being overqualified comparing with males (Luksyte & Spitzmueller, 2011; Mckee-Ryan & Harvey, 2011) because of women's higher family commitment, potential barriers to career development, and lack of initiative to improve working conditions (Liu & Wang, 2012). However, other studies have observed no relationship between gender and perceived overqualification (e.g., Johnson & Johnson, 2000; Luksyte, Spitzmueller, & Maynard, 2011), or males tend to have higher level of overqualification perception than females (e.g., Erdogan & Bauer, 2009; Maynard, Joseph, & Maynard, 2006).

Besides, research on job search indicates that job search behaviour leads to better person-organization fit and person-job fit, therefore resulting in less perceived overqualification by individuals (Guerrero & Rothstein, 2012; Saks & Ashforth, 2002). In addition, maintaining good relationship with supervisors, namely person-supervisor fit, helps improve interpersonal trust and supervisors are more likely to assign tasks that best fit subordinates' skills and experiences (Liu & Wang, 2012). Therefore, subordinates may experience less overqualification perceptions. Furthermore, in the review paper of Liu and Wang (2012), they posit that organizational politics such as unfair politics, procedures and outcomes (Ferris, Adams, Kolodinsky, Hochwarter, & Ammeter, 2002) may also have implications on employees' perception of overqualification.

#### **2.2.4 Mediating Mechanisms of Perceived Overqualification and Its Outcomes**

The review of mediating mechanisms of perceived overqualification is based on a number of previous studies. According to Liu and Wang (2012, p. 18-19), two streams of empirical studies on perceived overqualification has taken on employees' cognitive reactions (i.e., "employees' appraisal, assessment, or evaluation in responding to

overqualification”) and emotional reactions (i.e., “what the employee feels about their overqualification status, often in terms of hedonic tones”), respectively, to explain the mediating mechanisms of perceived overqualification and its consequences. The reason is that employees evaluate workplace information depending on either intuitive or rational thinking which leads to different employee behaviours (Liu & Wang, 2012). But Liu and Wang’s (2012) review is only based on justice theory. This section will include more studies under various theories.

The mediating mechanism from cognitive aspects generally includes the effect of fairness/(in)justice, self-esteem, and self-efficacy. By combining the theory of person-environment fit theory (Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005), person-job fit theory (Edwards, 2008; Kristof-Brown & Guay, 2011), and relative deprivation theory (Crosby, 1976), literature suggests that overqualified individuals tend to feel being treated with injustice, and this unfair feeling may spread out to influence self-esteem and self-efficacy (Liu & Wang, 2012). In their study, Liu et al. (2015) find the mediating effect of organization-based self-esteem (OBSE) on the relationship between perceived overqualification and counterproductive work behaviour (CWB). They argue that the perception of overqualification resulting from person-job misfit raises the issue that employees doubt their personal worthiness of being organizational members. Employees with decreased self-esteem consume self-regulatory resources and are more likely to engage into CWB. On the other hand, evidence indicates that overqualification may boost employees’ self-efficacy therefore leading to desirable outcomes. For example, Zhang, Law and Lin, (2015) believe that individuals with the overqualification perception view themselves to possess surplus KSAs and build higher level of confidences. They find that the perceived overqualification increases the role-breadth self-efficacy (RBSE) and lead to increased proactive behaviour.

Another stream of empirical studies examines individuals' emotional responses to perceived overqualification. In the study of Liu et al. (2015), they conceptualize perceived overqualification as a workplace stressor which is result from person-job mismatch. This stressful experience leads to anger and frustration and thus causes negative outcomes such as CWB and withdrawal. Similarly, Liu and Wang (2012) posit that boredom should mediate the relationship between perceived overqualification and unfavourable employee behaviour in workplace. Other studies also support for the role of emotional component in the mediating process. For example, Luksyte, Spitzmueller and Maynard (2011) report that, the cynicism which is a dimension of burnout, mediates the perceived overqualification – CWB relationship.

## **2.2.5 Consequences of Perceived Overqualification**

Overqualification tends to be treated as a construct with negative impacts on both individuals and organizations. A large number of current studies demonstrate that when employees perceive themselves as overqualification, they tend to have unfavourable reactions. However, recent studies also argue that employee perceived overqualification may lead to positive outcomes such that employees perceiving themselves to be overqualified may “make valuable contributions to their organisations” (Erdogan, et al., 2011b). I will review the consequences of perceived overqualification from three aspects: 1). employee's attitudes, 2). Employee's behaviours, and 3). Employee's well-being.

### ***2.2.5.1 Employee's Attitudes***

Previous studies prove a negative relationship between perceived overqualification and employee attitudes (e.g., Burris, 1983; Kahn & Morrow, 1991; Johnson, Morrow, & Johnson, 2002; Maynard, Joseph, & Maynard, 2006). Specifically, employees with the feeling of overqualification tend to have lower job satisfaction and higher intentions to



quit (Fine & Nevo, 2008; Johnson & Johnson, 1997, 2000; Johnson, Morrow, & Johnson, 2002; Maynard, Joseph, & Maynard, 2006; Verhaest & Omeij, 2006). In addition, perceived overqualification has been proved to be associated with lower organizational commitment. For example, Johnson, Morrow and Johnson (2002) report that mismatch (i.e., overqualification) is negatively related to affective commitment. Maynard, Joseph and Maynard (2006) also found a consistent relationship between perceived overqualification and lower affective commitment. Moreover, employees who are perceived to be overqualified are more likely to experience cynicism (i.e., disengagement from one's job) at workplace (Luksyte, Spitzmueller, & Maynard, 2011).

### *2.2.5.2 Employee's Behaviours*

Extant research suggests controversy findings between perceived overqualification and its impact on employee behaviours (Erdogan & Bauer, 2009; Hu, et al., 2015). Many empirical studies find that perceived overqualification has been associated with a range of negative employee behaviours, such as counterproductive work behaviour (CWB, Liu, et al., 2015; Luksyte, Spitzmueller, & Maynard, 2011), increased withdrawal behaviour or voluntary turnover (Erdogan & Bauer, 2009; Feldman & Turnley, 1995; Maynard, Joseph, & Maynard, 2006; Maynard & Parfyonova, 2013).

However, recent research has begun to query the overstating of unfavourable outcomes caused by perceived overqualification and its possibly positive consequences (e.g., Erdogan & Bauer, 2009; Erdgoan, et al., 2011; Maynard & Parfyonova, 2013; Wu, Liu & Wang, 2012; Luksyte, & Parker, 2014; Luksyle & Spetozmueller, 2015; Thompson, Shea, Sikora, Perrew é & Ferris, 2013). But in most of latest studies, perceived overqualification is more like an operationalization of objective overqualification. For example, according to Hu et al. (2015), overqualified employees have the potential to accomplish in-role job tasks and contribute to extra-role tasks (e.g., organizational

citizenship behaviour, OCB) as they possess greater skills, abilities and knowledge. Liu and Wang (2012) argue that overqualified employees may improve team performance by promoting team learning and knowledge transfer. In addition, there is also evidence indicating that overqualified employees may engage into innovative behaviours including job content innovation or job crafting (Agut, Peiro, & Grau, 2009). Meanwhile, Luksyle and Spetzmueller (2015) has investigated employees who feel overqualified (i.e., perceived overqualification) can engage in creative performance. In conclusion, current literature has demonstrated that overqualification is associated with both adverse and positive employee behaviours, while the evidence on positive outcomes result from perceived overqualification is still limited and worth exploring.

### ***2.2.5.3 Employee's Well-being***

Employee well-being is another major aspect in current literature of research on perceived overqualification. Various studies suggest that perceived overqualification is negatively related to many dimensions of employee well-being. Johnson and Johnson (1996, 1997, 1999) reported a negative relationship between perceived overqualification and health, which leads to greater psychological distress. Similarly, studies from other scholars also point out the negative impact of perceived overqualification on physical and psychological well-being (Anderson & Winefield, 2011; Bolino & Feldman, 2000; Chen, Smith, & Mustard, 2010). Furthermore, perceived overqualification has also been approved to have positive relations with emotional exhaustion and stress symptoms (Navarro, Mas, & Jimenez, 2010).

### **2.2.6 Boundary Conditions of Perceived Overqualification**

A valuable stream of research on perceived overqualification has emerged to explain how this phenomenon influences employee attitudes and behaviours. A wide range of individual differences factors and contextual factors (both individual and group level)

have been examined to explain the different reactions of employees who perceive themselves as being overqualified.

The major individual differences moderators include justice sensitivity, career stage and goal orientations. A recent study from Liu et al (2015) reports that justice sensitivity moderating the negative relationship of perceived overqualification – CWB through OBSE and anger. Besides, the literature on career research provide evidences that employees who are at late stage of career (e.g., older workers) tend to have less negative reactions to overqualification (Shultz, Olson, & Wang, 2011). Similarly, Yang et al. (2015) observe that organizational tenure moderates the effect of both perceived delegation and career anchor in challenge on perceived overqualification. Moreover, Zhang, law and Lin (2015) find that goal orientations (performance goal orientation and learning goal orientation) have a moderating effect on perceived overqualification – proactive behaviour relationship through RBSE.

On the other hand, various contextual moderators have also been investigated. Specifically, empowerment may serve as alleviator of the negative relationship between perceived overqualification and turnover (Erdogan & Bauer, 2009). Wu, Luksyte, & Parker (2014) report a moderating role of job autonomy in overqualification – subjective well-being relationship. Furthermore, Luksyte & Spitzmueller (2015) identifies organizational and social support, opportunities to mentor others, and idiosyncratic deals (i-deals) as moderators in the perceived overqualification – creativity link.

In addition, there is growing interest in recent years amongst research scholars examining how the influence of perceived overqualification on employees behaviours being shaped by the role of peers (Hu, et al., 2015). In their latest empirical study, Hu et al. (2015) examine the moderating role of peer overqualification. Drawing from relative

deprivation theory, they argue that peer overqualification eliminates the precondition of relative deprivation. Thus employees with the perception of overqualification tend to view their status as being legitimate and more acceptable.

## 2.3 Current Study – Kahn’s (1990) Conceptualization of Work Engagement

In the present study, I will draw from theoretical perspective of work engagement to position engagement as a key mechanism explaining the impacts of employee perceived overqualification on work related outcomes. Being an indicator of work motivation, engagement is originally described by Kahn (1990, p. 694) as “harnessing of organization members’ selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances”. Unlike emotions, engagement is more likely to be affective and stable without focusing on a specific event or behaviour (Salanova & Schaufeli, 2008). Similarly, a later study also states that engagement denotes a “positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterised by vigour, dedication, and absorption” (Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonz ález-Rom á & Bakker, 2002, p. 74). Regardless of the various argument of the conceptualization of work engagement, a generally consent is that work engagement connotes “view of the employee’s agentic self” (Rich, Lepine, & Crawford, 2010, p. 617) and represents “high levels of personal investment” when performing job tasks (Christian, Garza, & Slaughter, 2011, p. 89).

Drawing from Kahn’s and Rich, Lepine and Crawford’s conceptualization, **Work engagement** is formally defined as “the simultaneous employment and expression of a person’s “preferred self” in task behaviours that promote connections to work and to others, personal presence (physical, cognitive, and emotional), and active, full role performances” (Kahn, 1990, p. 700; Rich, Lepine, & Crawford, 2010, p. 618). Work

engagement has given rise to considerable interests of social and organizational psychologists with various studies indicating its association with increased employee effectiveness such as commitment, knowledge sharing, and in-role and extra-role performance (e.g., Bakker & Xanthopoulou, 2013; Cabrera, Collins, & Salgado, 2006; Christian, Garza, & Slaughter, 2011; Eldor & Harpaz, 2015; Gruman & Saks, 2011; Rich, Lepine, & Crawford, 2010; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004;). Moreover, engaged employees are proved to be less likely to experience absence and turnover, healthy problem, negative affect, and workplace stress and burnout (e.g., Britt, Adler, & Bartone, 2001; Halbesleben & Wheeler, 2008; Rothbard, 2001; Schaufeli, Bakker, & Van Rhenen, 2009; Sonnentag, 2003).

The core premise is that work engagement is motivational and individuals prefer to keep selves within the role under appropriate conditions (Kahn, 1990). The allocation of personal resources and to what extent these resources are used reflect the dynamics of individuals being engaged into role performances (Rich, Lepine, & Crawford, 2010). Meanwhile, Rich, Lepine and Crawford (2010, p. 619) describes work engagement as a “multidimensional motivational concept” because it represents a simultaneously connection and integrated investment of individual’s physical, cognitive, and motional energy into job tasks. That is, to engage into work roles, employees need not only perform job tasks physically, but also be concentrated with attention and vigilance, and maintain emotional connection with their work per se as well as co-workers or clients (Kahn, 1990). This process can be simply summarized as the investment of “the hands, head, & heart” (Rich, Lepine, & Crawford, 2010, p. 619).

While organizations add value through leverage of employee’s work engagement (Zhong, Wayne, & Liden, 2015), a great deal of extant studies has been conducted to identify potential antecedents of engagement such as various job characteristics,

leadership, and dispositional characteristics (e.g., Bakker, van Emmerik, & Euwema, 2006; Christian, Garza, & Slaughter, 2011; Macey & Schneider, 2008). However, being similar to Hackman and Oldham's (1980) view that inner motivations to work is influenced by critical psychological states, Kahn (1990, p.702) posits his belief that "psychological experiences of self-in-role" serve as the fundamental driving force determining if individuals are willing to engage. Three psychological conditions are suggested by Kahn (1990) to predict individuals' engagement and disengagement at work, namely, psychological meaningfulness, psychological safety, and psychological availability. Researchers have conducted empirical studies to explore the question of whether employees engage or disengage at work following these psychological conditions. Specifically, for example, Rich, Lepine and Crawford (2010) focus their attention on each of these conditions examining value congruence, perceived organizational support and core self-evaluation and their link to job performance respectively.

### **Psychological meaningfulness**

Psychological meaningfulness describes one's perception that there is a sense of return on investments of oneself when performing job related tasks (Kahn, 1990). Employees who experience psychological meaningfulness are more likely to believe "worthwhile, useful, and valuable" with the feeling of being expected or asked more and receive more from work and others regarding their work role (Kahn, 1990). The formulation of psychological meaningfulness represents a consistency of individuals' expected behaviours and their preferred self-images (Kahn, 1990, 1992; Rich, Lepine, & Crawford, 2010). According to Kahn (1990), work elements should be incentive to make employees experience sense of meaningfulness. Specifically, three important influencing factors are proposed. Firstly, job tasks should be meaningful. A project

which is challenging, creative, and complex provides its participants a sense of meaningfulness. Moreover, employees tend to find their job meaningful when they have autonomy and clear guide to work procedures and goals (Kahn, 1990). Secondly, work roles that carry attractive identities, status or influence demonstrate one's importance and value in organization, reminding them of their meaningfulness. Thirdly, favourable connections and interactions with work related others (e.g., co-workers and clients) enable employees to have the feeling of needs, appreciation, and worthwhileness.

### **Psychological safety**

The experience of psychological safety refers to the feeling of being “able to show and employ one's self without fear of negative consequences to self-image, status, or career” (Kahn, 1990, p. 708). Organizational contexts such as group and intergroup dynamics, interpersonal relationships, and management styles and process are suggested by Kahn (1990) to have partially influence on employees' psychological safety. Employees feel safer to take risks, express self, and make innovative attempts when they perceive that the organization, group and managers are open, supportive, flexible, and trustworthy. Furthermore, sense of control, e.g., feeling situations are controllable, secure, predictable and clear, promotes psychological safety (Kahn, 1990; Rich, Lepine, & Crawford, 2010). In contrast, situations such as supervisors' unwillingness to empower make employees feel untrusted and lack of control. Thus, employees fear stepping out of the boundaries resulting in reduced psychological safety (Rich, Lepine, & Crawford, 2010).

### **Psychological availability**

Psychological availability is defined by Kahn (1990, p. 714) as “the sense of having the physical, emotional, or psychological resources to personally engage at a particular

moment". Individuals who are psychologically available tend to perceive themselves to be capable and ready to drive various personal energies in role performance. However, Kahn (1990) suggests four types of individual factors, i.e., depletion of physical energy, depletion of emotional energy, individual insecurity, and outside lives, may preoccupy and distract individuals from being available to engage into role performance.

Especially, insecurity is one of the critical distractors that occupy energies by generating anxieties (Kahn, 1990). Kahn (1990) further suggests three dimensions of insecurity, namely, level of self-confidence, self-consciousness, and people's ambivalence about fit with organization. This type of self-confidence is relatively stable, and employees are more available to engage when they have higher level of self-confidence in his or her abilities, status and self-consciousness (Kahn, 1992, Rich, Lepine, & Crawford, 2010).

Otherwise, employees tend to care more about others' judgement and suffer from anxiety, feeling difficult to maintain focus on tasks (Kahn, 1990). Moreover, the insecurity caused by uncertainty of fit with organization operates in such a way that it reduces employees' commitment and desirability, depletes their energies, and leaves them less room for investments of self in role performance. Thus, it potentially takes employees psychologically away from engagement into role performances (Kahn, 1990).

## **2.4 Conclusion**

This chapter reviews and discusses the current literature on overqualification, and outlines the theoretical frameworks underlying this proposed research. Due to the prevalence of the phenomenon of perceived overqualification, existing literature focuses on various relationships ranging from exploring consequences of perceived overqualification to the boundary conditions that may promote or thwart the relationships between perceived overqualification and its outcomes. However, most studies suggest negative attitudinal and behavioural outcomes of perceived



overqualification, and few empirical studies explore the potential value of perceived overqualification to organizations. This thesis seeks to add to the gap in the existing literature on overqualification in two ways. Firstly, this paper challenges the conventional notion that the relationship between perceived overqualification and its outcome is negative by exploring its potential contribution to facilitate work engagement of employees. Secondly, adopting the theoretical perspective of work engagement as theoretical framework, this paper provides alternative theoretical perspective and examines the psychological conditions underlying the relationship between perceived overqualification and its outcomes. In the next chapter, I will develop hypotheses for the present study on behalf of the theoretical frameworks discussed here.

## **CHAPTER 3 – THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK & HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT**

### **3.1 Study Overview**

The chapter presents the conceptual model exploring the three-way interaction relationships among perceived overqualification, empowering leadership, and role clarity, and their effect on employee work engagement. Specifically, under the conditions of empowering leadership and further moderating effect of role clarity, perceived overqualification will exhibit higher work engagement. Hypotheses are developed and theoretical and empirical justifications are provided for each of the hypothesized relationships. Appendix 2 demonstrates the conceptual model of present study.

### **3.2 Perceived Overqualification and Engagement**

Most of the extant literature has examined the detrimental impact of perceived overqualification on various attitudes and behaviours in workplace (e.g., Anderson & Winefield, 2011; Bolino & Feldman, 2000; Luksyte, Spitzmueller, & Maynard, 2011; Liu, et al., 2015; Luksyte, Spitzmueller, & Maynard, 2011; Maynard, Joseph, & Maynard, 2006; Maynard & Parfyonova, 2013; McKee-Ryan & Harvey, 2011). However, recently the simplistic conclusion has evoked increasing debates among researchers. Due to the mixed results, scholars start to redefine the effect of perceived overqualification, striving to explore potential value or favourable outcomes of it. For example, there are recent studies suggesting that perceived overqualification is associated with higher performance (e.g., Erdogan & Bauer, 2009; Hu, et al., 2015), creativity (e.g., Luksyte & Spitzmueller, 2015), and proactivity (e.g., Zhang, Law, & Lin, 2015). However, very little is known about how perceived overqualification may contribute to employee's engagement in work role. Exploring these relationships is

important to provide organizations with competitive advantages and help retain talented employees (Griffin, Neal, & Parker, 2007). To solve the controversy of existing findings and to advance the knowledge of overqualification, the present study aims to make a logical justification of perceived overqualification-engagement relationship from the theoretical perspective of work engagement (Kahn, 1990).

Being characterized with high level of energy and deep dedication, engagement has been generally regarded as an optimal approach to shape an efficient employee-organization relationship (e.g., Bakker, Albrecht, & Leiter, 2011; Eldor & Harpaz, 2015; Vigoda-Gadot, Eldor, & Schohat, 2013). Extant research has demonstrated a positive relationship between work engagement and positive employee work outcomes. In particular, engaged employees are more likely to have lower absent rate and turnover intention (Schaufeli, 2012) and higher level of organizational commitment (Demerouti, Bakker, de Jonge, Janssen, & Schaufeli, 2001), and are expected to achieve better in-role performance (Christian, Garza, & Slaughter, 2011; Rich, LePine, & Crawford, 2010). Besides the engagement – employee effectiveness linkage, studies indicate employee engagement is associated with a bunch of extra-role performance behaviours such as proactive behaviour and other forms of organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB, Eldor & Harpaz, 2015; Rich, LePine, & Crawford, 2010; Salanova & Schaufeli, 2008; Sonnentag, 2003; Zhong, Wayne, & Liden, 2015). Work engagement serves as an indicator of intrinsic motivation, arousing individuals' activation, enthusiasm, and dedication towards their jobs (Salanova & Schaufeli, 2008). Employees who are high in engagement tend to be high in arousal with positive emotions (Bindl & Parker, 2012; Langelaan, Bakker, Van Doornen, & Schaufeli, 2006). The strong and long-lasting energy embedded in engagement (Eldor & Harpaz, 2015) promotes individuals' involvement in extra-role performance behaviours.

Accordingly, in present study, investigating why and how employees with perceived overqualification can maintain higher level of work engagement is meaningful as it serves as the key to justify the effect of individual characteristics and organizational factors on employee performance. According to Kahn's (1990), the perceptions of work contexts and personal characteristics by an individual shape his or her critical psychological conditions, and these conditions influence individual's intent to engage or disengage in work roles. Kahn (1990, p. 703) pointed out three direct psychological conditions of work engagement by asking: (1) How meaningful is it for me to bring myself into this performance? (Psychological meaningfulness), (2) How safe is it to do so? (Psychological safety), and (3) How available am I to do so? (Psychological availability). The present study will capture each of these three psychological conditions to justify how perceived overqualification can lead to higher engagement.

Firstly, the present research assumes that perceived overqualification represents the psychological condition of availability. Psychological availability refers to "individual's readiness to personally engage at a particular moment (Kahn, 1990, Rich, LePine, & Crawford, 2010, p. 621). Individual tends to be more ready to exhibit engagement in role performance when he or she senses the possession of necessary physical, emotional, and psychological resources and is capable of driving these resources (Kahn, 1990). Employees with perceived overqualification feel that they possess more knowledge, skills, abilities, and work experiences than required by their jobs (Maynard, Joseph, & Maynard, 2006). Greater ability and qualifications beyond job requirement represent a rich resource pool with sufficient resources (e.g., time, energies, etc.), enabling employees to overcome difficulties and achieve their targets (Gorgievski, & Hobfoll, 2008). Thus, employees who feel overqualified are more likely to invest self in the performance of work roles.

Moreover, the present study posits that employees with perceived overqualification also possess more psychological resources which can be mobilized to foster psychological availability. Rich, LePine and Crawford (2010) argue that individual's level of confidence in his or her own capabilities and status critically influences the availability to engage. Employees who feel overqualified tend to be self-confident, determined, and efficacious, evincing higher level of role-breadth self-esteem and tolerance of discrepancies (Zhang, Law, & Lin, 2015). With such feelings of being capable and competent, employees are motivated to "actualizing themselves and exploiting their talents and potentials within their jobs" (Zhang, Law, & Lin, 2015). This argument is consistent with Rich, LePine and Crawford's (2010) finding that people with high core self-evaluation engage more in work role. Therefore, perceived overqualification should increase individual's psychological availability.

*Hypothesis 1: Perceived overqualification is positively related to work engagement.*

### **3.3 The Moderating Effect of Empowering Leadership and Role Clarity**

Though employees who feel overqualified exhibit psychological availability which is more likely to promote engagement of individual in their work roles, this relationship is moderated by a variety of factors. This is because perceived overqualification is postulated to be affected by both cognitive perceptions and affective perceptions (Lobene & Meade, 2013). When employees perceive that they possess overly surplus qualifications, they may experience more psychological dissonance, stress, depression and psychological distress, arising affective perceptions that they are underutilized, bored and un-stimulated. They tend to believe that their jobs are meaningless and being wasteful of valuable time, energy and knowledge resources (Luksyte, Spitzmueller, & Maynard, 2011). Furthermore, perceived overqualification creates "tension in

interpersonal relationships” (Hu, et al., 2015, p. 1230) by causing threat to peers who are not overqualified. Peers’ perception that overqualified employees are out-group members (Sierra, 2011), in turn, threatens the status and self-image of employees who feel overqualified. As a result, perceived overqualification may lead to withdrawal behaviour (Maynard & Parfyonova, 2013) instead of work engagement. To offset these unfavourable effects, the present study contends empowering leadership and role clarity capture psychological meaningfulness and psychological safety, respectively, promoting work engagement of those who feel overqualified.

### **Empowering Leadership**

The quality of leadership and leader-member exchange has been among most important factors promoting employee’s job engagement (Christian, Garza, & Slaughter, 2011). Although there has been well documented literature examining how leadership engenders employees’ perceptions of attachment to the job (e.g, Macey & Schneider, 2008; Zhu, Avolio, & Walumbwa, 2009), lack of empirical studies explores leadership’s role in facilitating work engagement by overqualified employees. Consistent with the theoretical perspective of work engagement, the present study picks up empowering leadership which reflecting an important psychological condition underlying engagement, as a boundary condition of the proposed relationship between perceived overqualification and work engagement.

Empowering leadership is a type of leadership that involves sharing power with employees to develop their self-control and to foster greater self-directness (Vecchio, Justin, & Pearce, 2010; Zhang, & Bartol, 2010). Empowering leadership is particularly essential because it is associated with increasing autonomy to employees (Srivastava, Bartol, & Locke, 2006) and distributing responsibilities among subordinates (Carson, Tesluk, & Marrone, 2007). Srivastava, Bartol and Locke (2006) suggest that research on

empowering leadership has been conducted from two perspectives, including the focus on leader actions, and the focus on employee's responses to empowerment. Drawing upon Kahn's (1990) conceptualization of work engagement, this study centres on employee reaction by exploring how empowering leadership affects individual's psychological meaningfulness underlying work engagement.

According to Kahn (1990, p. 705), psychological meaningfulness refers a "sense of return on investments of self in role performance". When individuals experience meaningfulness, they tend to have the feelings of worthwhileness, being valued and being able to devote themselves to work role and to others (Kahn, 1990; Rich, Lepine, & Crawford, 2010). Work elements such as tasks and job positions create meaningfulness with which individuals are motivated to invest self in work roles (Kahn, 1990). That is, when employees find that their work involve challenges, variety, creativity, autonomy and attractive identities, they are more likely to perceive that their job is worthwhile, inviting, and valuable. Therefore, they exhibit more engagement in work roles. Otherwise, when they find that their work tasks are tightly linked to or highly controlled by others; they tend to perceive that the work is inappropriate for preferred self-image and meaningless, and are less likely to maintain personal engagement (Kahn, 1990).

Empowering leaders gives employees greater opportunities for self-directness and independent decision-making (Vecchio, Justin, & Pearce, 2010). With greater job autonomy, employees who feel overqualified have discretion to explore new and useful combinations of work procedures (Wang & Cheng, 2010). They can fully exert their surplus qualifications to break out routines and search for better alternative solutions to problems (Shalley & Gilson, 2004). Thus, employees with perceived overqualification are more likely to find their job interesting, rewarding, and meaningful. Besides,

leader's empowerment such as delegation assigns new responsibilities and additional authority to subordinates (Chen & Aryee, 2007), which is expected to improve employees preferred self-image and status, and thus motivate them to give themselves to their work roles. As a result, employees who feel overqualified are less likely to experience boredom, stress, and sense of underutilization. This assumption is consistent with Erdogan and Bauer's (2009) research that empowerment mitigates the negative effect of overqualification. As such, the present study expects to predict that empowering leadership boosts the psychological meaningfulness, facilitating work engagement by employees who perceived to be overqualified.

***Hypothesis 2:** The positive effect of perceived overqualification on work engagement will be moderated by empowering leadership. Perceived overqualification will lead to higher level of work engagement when there is an existence of empowering leadership.*

## **Role Clarity**

To this point, the present study has argued that perceived overqualification and empowering leadership contribute to the meeting of individual's psychological conditions of availability and meaningfulness for personal engagement. Following Kahn's (1990) theoretical perspective of engagement, to promote simultaneously presence of physical, cognitive, and emotional energies to role performance, individual are also expected to perceive that he or she is psychologically safe. The experience of psychological safety is "feeling able to show and employ one's self without fear of negative consequences to self-image, status, or career" (Kahn, 1990, p. 708).

Psychological safety is met when individuals feel the organizational contexts are trustworthy, secure, predictable, and clear in terms of behavioural consequences (kahn, 1990; Rich, Lepine, & Crawford, 2010). Based on this proposition, the present study



posits a clear role an individual carries grants him or her psychological safety, and thus promotes personal engagement.

Role clarity has been defined as “the extent to which individuals clearly understand the duties, tasks, objectives, and expectations of their work roles” (Kauppila, 2014, p. 738; Hinkin & Schriesheim, 2008; Katz & Kahn, 1978). A clear role guides employee to perform appropriate behaviours expected by their job (Lang, Thomas, Bliese, & Adler, 2007). Studies reveal that role clarity mitigates unfavourable individual psychology such as occupational stress (Bliese & Castro, 2000) and leads to stronger commitment (Panaccio & Vandenberghe, 2011).

The present study, from the perspective of work engagement, attempts to investigate the impact of role clarity on individual’s psychological safety. When employees perceive their roles are clear and unambiguous, they have more information, explicit expectations and objectives in terms of completing duties and tasks (Kauppila, 2014; Panaccio & Vandenberghe, 2011; Rizzo, House, & Lirtzman, 1970). Thus, they tend to feel secure because they can well predict the consequences of their behaviours, and select best routines and avoid potential mistakes when performing job tasks. Moreover, as role clarity renders increased control over the job (Bliese & Castro, 2000), building employee esteem, resilience, and confidence (Panaccio & Vandenberghe, 2011), employees are less likely to fear damage to self-image, statuses, or careers resulting from negative consequences. Therefore, the boosted psychological safety motivates them to invest themselves fully in work roles.

When there is an absence of role clarity, i.e., role ambiguity, employees are uncertain what is expected of them and will have a hazy direction towards goals (Kauppila, 2014). As such, they are worried about suffering for personal engagement, and “choose to guard their selves by withdrawing from their roles” (Rich, Lepine, & Crawford, 2010, p.

621). This reasoning is consistent with previous studies that role ambiguity detracts employees from task performance, leading to less satisfaction, reduced job interest, and unwanted turnover (Gilboa, Shirom, Fried, & Cooper, 2008; Kauppila, 2014; Ivancevich & Donnelly, 1974; Whitaker, Dahling, & Levy, 2007).

Based on above discussion, role clarity is expected not only alleviate the negative psychological reactions caused by perceived overqualification, but also improve individual's psychological safety to engage self in work role.

***Hypothesis 3:** The positive effect of perceived overqualification on work engagement will be moderated by role clarity. Perceived overqualification will lead to higher level of work engagement when work role is clearer.*

### **3.4 The Integrated Model of Three-Way Interaction**

So far, the present study has argued the salience of leadership style (i.e., empowering leadership) and role clarity which will have important moderating influences on whether or not employees who feel overqualified drive their physical, emotional, and cognitive energies to achieve work engagement. Kahn's (1990) theoretical perspective of work engagement suggests there are three psychological conditions (psychological meaningfulness, psychological safety, and psychological availability) emerging to shape individuals' behaviours of either engagement or disengagement. When individuals perceive that the work can provide benefits (meaningfulness) and the protective guarantees in situations (safety), and that they have enough personal resources (availability), they are more willing to engage in the "contract" of work roles.

In present study, it is interesting that employees who feel overqualified already hold exceeding physical and psychological resources and are more available to engage on behalf of the organization. To facilitate higher level of work engagement, the present

study, following Kahn's (1990) conceptualization, argues that empowering leadership captures the psychological meaningfulness conditions and facilitates employees who feel overqualified to engage in work roles. Furthermore, when work role is clear, employees tend to be psychologically safer to perform job tasks. Employees who feel overqualified tend to experience even higher level of work engagement when the degree of role clarity is high. Thus, summarily, the present study proposes a three-way interaction relationship that perceived overqualification promoting higher level of work engagement depends on the empowering leadership and the level of role clarity.

***Hypothesis 4:*** *There is a three-way interaction effect of perceived overqualification, empowering leadership, and role clarity on work engagement, such that the positive relationship is strongest when employees who feel overqualified have empowered leaders and clear work roles.*

## **CHAPTER 4 – RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **4.1 Research Design**

This chapter describes the methodological approach which was adopted in this research in order to test and confirm the hypotheses developed in Chapter 3. In the following sections, I will describe the details associated with the sampling and the procedures of data collection in present study. Subsequently, I will define and present the measurement items that were used to operationalize the different variables in present model.

### **4.2 Samples and Procedures**

#### **4.2.1 Participating Company**

Two participating companies from Northern China were identified to take part in this research. These companies have at least 2000 employees in total in their employment. Both companies are from energy industry under the same group. Initial contacts were established and relevant information such as objectives of the study, its benefits, voluntary nature of participation from their employees as well as assurance of confidentiality was provided to the company to secure their participation.

#### **4.2.2 Sample size and Composition**

Participants in this study were full-time employees in China. The respondents for present study comprised both the supervisor and subordinates. To ensure the studies to be generalizable and significant, there is a need to have sufficient participation. I worked with the HR personnel to qualify for participation in this study. Thereafter, random sampling strategy was applied to identify and invite supervisors and subordinates to participate in the research.

I sent out 400 questionnaires in total and collected 170, among which 17 was not completed. So valid questionnaires were 153, and the response rate is 38.3%. Among the participants, 66.7% were males and 33.3% were females. Tenure in the companies varied from 1 to 37 years ( $M = 14.03$ ,  $SD = 10.39$ ). 51% of participants had 10 years or less tenure. 41.2% of participants were less than 40 years old while 51.6% of them were 40 to 50 years old. Most of them (73.9%) had associate degree or above.

### **4.2.3 Data Collection Procedures**

The data collection procedures were rigorous in order to ensure that the data collection will be smoothly in process. Two introductory emails were sent to the identified participants who will take part in the survey questionnaire. The first email was sent from management that details the organizational support for this study. The second email was sent from the researcher and will contain a brief introduction to this study, scope of participation, participant's response protection and an invitation to attend the scheduled presentation conducted by researcher regarding the study.

The supervisors was invited to attend scheduled presentations and given time to complete questionnaires after the presentation. An enclosed envelope was attached for the supervisor to seal their completed responses and returned to the researcher at the end of the scheduled presentation. The supervisors were also given packages, containing questionnaires, self-explained letter to subordinates regarding the survey, and a self-enclosed envelope. Furthermore, the supervisors were also requested to hand the packages to 5 subordinates that HR had identified to participate in the survey. The subordinates were requested to complete the questionnaire within 1-2 weeks and drop their completed questionnaire in a drop-box in HR department. The researcher collected the subordinate's completed questionnaire from the HR department. Weekly reminders were sent to the supervisors to encourage them to complete the questionnaire.

## 4.2.4 Survey Questionnaire

Responses of questionnaires did not contain questions on confidentiality of the respondents. Respondents were assured that there was no right or wrong answers and to answer the questions as honestly as possible. Assurance was also be made to inform the respondents that their responses will remain anonymous. Questionnaire contained measures of perceived overqualification, work engagement, empowering leadership, and role clarity.

As the present study is conducted in China, the English language questionnaires were translated into Chinese using the conventional method of back translation (Brislin, 1980). The translation and back translation was done by 2 Chinese bilingual academics and pre-test of the Chinese version was conducted on 20 employees to ensure no major misinterpretation of the questionnaire items.

## 4.3 Measures

Every effort was made to identify published and validated measures for inclusion in this study. Care was also taken to tailor measure items to the unique cultural and organizational context. All measurement scales used the present study are listed in Appendix 1. All scales are anchored using a 5-point scale. Participants responds on the scales ranging from *1 = completely disagree* to *5 = completely agree*. Reverse scored items are rephrased to keep consistency. I will discuss the measurement as following.

***Perceived Overqualification.*** The present study uses the 9-item scale of perceived overqualification developed by Maynard, Joseph, & Maynard, (2006). This scale has been commonly used in various overqualification literatures (e.g., Liu, et al., 2015; Luksyte & Spitzmueller, 2015; Luksyte, Spitzmueller, & Maynard, 2011). A sample item includes “My job requires less education than I have”. (Reliability  $\alpha = .72$ )

**Work Engagement.** Work engagement is measured with the 18-item scale developed by Rich, Lepine and Crawford (2010). The scale contains three dimensions, namely, physical engagement, emotional engagement, and cognitive engagement. Sample items include “I work with intensity on my job”, “I am enthusiastic in my job”, and “At work, my mind is focused on my job”. (Reliability  $\alpha = .92$ )

**Empowering Leadership.** Empowering leadership is measured with the 10-item scale developed by Vecchio, Justin and Pearce (2010). The sample items include “Encourages me to find solutions to my problems without his/her direct input”, and “Urges me to assume responsibilities on my own”. (Reliability  $\alpha = .90$ )

**Role Clarity.** Role clarity is measure with the 6-item “role ambiguity/role clarity” scale developed by Rizzo, House and Lirtzman (1970). Sample items are “I know exactly what is expected of me”, and “I know that I have divided my time properly”. (Reliability  $\alpha = .85$ )

**Control Variables.** The current study measures and controls the effect of participants’ age (“21 years old or below” = “1”, “between 22 to 30 years old” = “2”, “between 31 to 40 years old” = “3”, “between 41 to 50” = “4”, “51 years old or above” = 5), gender (“male” = “1”, “female” = “2”), education (“primary school or below” = “1”, “junior middle school” = “2”, “senior middle school” = “3”, “associate degree” = “4”, “bachelor’s degree” = “5”, “master’s degree or above” = “6”), and total year of working. Age, gender, and organizational tenure are controlled to in preVIOUS proactivity research to “avoid possible confounding effect” and educational level is controlled to “have a more robust test for the specific effect of perceived overqualification” (Zhang, Law, & Lin, 2015, p. 69).

The present study also controls the cultural value of collectivism because the samples of the present study are comprised of Chinese employees and the collective culture in China is very different from that of Western countries (Hu, et al., 2015). Collectivism is measured using three items which Ilies, Wagner and Morgeson (2007) originally took from Wagner (1995; e.g., “I prefer to work with others in a group rather than working alone”). (Reliability  $\alpha = .85$ )



## **CHAPTER 5 – DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS**

This chapter reported findings of data analysis of present study. Issue of handling common method variance (CMV), descriptive statistics, results of regression, and results of hypothesis tests are presented.

### **Handling Common Method Variance (CMV)**

The premise that behaviours are functions of individuals' attitudes, perceptions or beliefs of situations in which they find themselves serves as the basis of many theories in applied psychology (Lindell & Whitney, 2001). But cross-sectional instead of longitudinal designs are often used to test those theories, which causes possible existences that observable correlations between variables are inflated by common method variance (Podsakoff & Organ, 1986; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003; Spector, 2006).

Following Podsakoff, et al.'s (2003) suggestions, two points were addressed to handle common method bias. Firstly, Podsakoff, et al. (2003) suggested that good measurement practice including all procedural remedies related to questionnaire and item design is necessary to minimize common method bias. In present study, questionnaire was designed to separate different measures by using different formats and scale endpoints, which reduced the anchoring effects. In addition, I indicated that there was no right or wrong answers when filling questionnaires and the anonymity of respondents was guaranteed. So participants should answer questions honestly.

Secondly, Podsakoff, et al. (2003) recommended that statistical remedies should be implemented to control for common method bias. Therefore, I carefully screened the data and conducted Harman's (1967) single factor test which is a popular way to

examine common method bias. The highest eigenvalue value accounted for was less than 50% of the variance (31.18% in present study), which indicated that common method bias was not of concern (Podsakoff, et al., 2003).

### **Descriptive Statistics Results**

The descriptive statistics of the study variables are present in Table 1, including means, standard deviations, and correlations among all variables. As expected, perceived overqualification was correlated with work engagement ( $r = .28, p < .01$ ). Besides, perceived overqualification is also significantly correlated with a number of demographic variables which includes gender ( $r = -.19, p < .05$ ), age ( $r = .17, p < .05$ ), and tenure ( $r = .31, p < .01$ ). Surprisingly, the correlation between perceived overqualification and education is negative and not significant.

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Insert Table 1 Here  
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### **Hypothesis Testing Results**

Hypothesis tests were conducted with linear regression analysis using SPSS 22.

Hypothesis testing consisted of three parts – main effects (Hypothesis 1), two-way interaction of moderation (Hypothesis 2 and 3), and three-way interaction of moderating effect (Hypothesis 4). Regression results for testing the interaction hypotheses are shown in Table 2. Following Aiken and West's (1991) recommendation, variables were

centred before the interaction terms were created in order to reduce one-essential multicollinearity.

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Insert Table 2 Here  
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*Hypothesis 1* predicted that employees who perceived to be overqualified would be positively related to work engagement. To test this main effect, I entered control variables (gender, age, tenure, education, and collectivism) and controlled empowering leadership and role clarity in step 1. As shown in Table 2, perceived overqualification (POQ) was positively but not significantly related to work engagement ( $\beta = .01, p = .86$ ). That is, employees with the perception of being overqualified tend to engage more in their work but the relationship is not significant. Although data analysis result indicated that Hypothesis 1 was not supported, it is consistent with the theoretical framework of work engagement. According to the theory, perceived overqualification only captures on psychological condition which is not enough for employees to fully engage in work roles.

Regarding the other two variables for which I did not predict direct effects on work engagement, I also observed similar patterns of results. Empowering leadership were significantly related to work engagement ( $\beta = .42, p < .01$ ). The result indicated consistency with previous study that the leadership quality and leader-member exchange advance the level of work engagement (e.g., Christian, Garza, & Slaughter, 2011). On the other hand, role clarity were reported to be significantly related to work engagement ( $\beta = .35, p < .01$ ).

*Hypothesis 2* predicted that empowering leadership moderates the relationship between perceived overqualification and work engagement, such that the positive relationship will be stronger when empowering leadership exists. *Hypothesis 3* stated that role clarity moderates the relationship between perceived overqualification and work engagement, such that the positive relationship will be stronger when employees perceive that their work roles are clearer. To test these hypotheses, I entered the control variables (gender, age, tenure, education, and collectivism), independent variable (i.e., perceived overqualification), two moderators (i.e., empowering leadership and role clarity), and three possible two-way interaction effects. Results pertaining to these two hypotheses are presented and reported in Step 2 of Table 2. I did not find any significant two-way interaction effects. Especially, the two-way interaction of perceived overqualification and empowering leadership ( $\beta = .03, p = .78$ ), and two-way interaction of perceived overqualification and role clarity ( $\beta = .03, p = .82$ ) are positive but not significant. That is, either empowering leadership or role clarity will strengthen the positive relationship between perceived overqualification and work engagement but with a degree of non-significance. In some sense, the results are not surprising because, according to Kahn's (1990) theory of work engagement, three psychological conditions combine to promote work engagement. Therefore, as I posited in Hypothesis 4, I expected the two-way interaction effect of perceived overqualification and empowering leadership to be moderated by role clarity.

*Hypothesis 4* predicted a three-way interaction effect of perceived overqualification, empowering leadership, and role clarity on work engagement. Results pertaining to this hypothesis are presented in Step 3 of Table 2. In this step, the findings reveal that the three-way interaction was statistically significant ( $\beta = .30, p < .01$ ). The incremental

variance explained by the three-way interaction effect was 2percent. Therefore, the hypothesis 4 was supported.

### **Interaction Plot**

Following Aiken and West's (1991), and Dawson and Richter's (2006) recommendations and instructions, I plotted the simple slopes for the three-way interactions which are depicted in Figure 1. The significant three-way interactions were plotted using unstandardized regression coefficients. Consistent with the analysis reported above, I found once again that the strongest positive slope for the effect of perceived overqualification on work engagement was observed when the level of empowering leadership and role clarity were both high. Moreover, suggested by Dawson and Richter (2006), simple slope analyses were conducted for significant three-way interactions. Results showed that for relationship of perceived overqualification with work engagement, the slope of high empowering leadership-high role clarity was significant ( $t(153) = 3.262, p = .001$ ). However, the slope of other three combinations of empowering leadership and role clarity are not significant: high-low ( $t(153) = 1.843, p = .0068$ ), low-high ( $t(153) = 1.166, p = .246$ ), and low-low ( $t(153) = .663, p = .508$ ).

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Insert Figure 1 Here  
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### **Supplemental Analysis: Slope Difference Test**

In addition, as a post hoc test, I conducted the slope difference test for significant three-way interactions following suggestions in Dawson and Richter (2006). The test results

were presented in Table 3. Especially, results revealed that the slope of high empowering leadership and high role clarity differ significantly from other three combinations of empowering leadership and role clarity, i.e., high-low ( $T = 2.402$ ,  $P = .018$ ), low-high ( $T = 2.964$ ,  $P = .004$ ), and low-low ( $T = 3.530$ ,  $P = .001$ ). The results indicated that high level of empowering leadership and high level of role clarity were shown to be important comparing with the situations that one of these two factors was low. Therefore, the slope difference test also supports the three-way interaction effect among perceived overqualification, empowering leadership, and role clarity on work engagement.

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Insert Table 3 Here  
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## **CHAPTER 6 – DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

### **6.1 Summary of Findings**

The result of data analysis supported the most critical one hypothesis (H4) out of four hypotheses. Specifically, the main effect of positive relationship between perceived overqualification and work engagement (H1) was not supported. The two-way interaction effects of perceived overqualification and empowering leadership (H2), and perceived overqualification and role clarity (H3) were also not supported. Beyond main effect and two-way interaction effects, the results revealed considerable support for the

combined moderating effect of empowering leadership and role clarity on positive perceived overqualification-work engagement relationship (H4).

Firstly, the non-significance of relationship between perceived overqualification and work engagement is consistent with the theoretical framework of Kahn's (1990) work engagement in present study. Though perceived overqualification represents more psychological availability and should prompt work engagement, it only captures one psychological condition of work engagement. One psychological condition is obviously not enough to ensure fully engagement of employees in their work roles. Therefore, the positive but non-significant main effect suggests that more psychological conditions need to be satisfied to ensure maximum work engagement by individuals.

Secondly, although empowering leadership or role clarity as the moderator alone was not supported (H2 and H3), it was not surprising. Analysis results revealed that either empowering leadership or role clarity tended to strengthen the positive perceived overqualification-work engagement relationship but not to a significant degree.

Similarly, the possible reason would be lack of sufficient psychological conditions for engagement, because, as Kahn's (1990) theory posited, three direct psychological conditions influencing the willingness to personally engage in work roles. The support of hypothesis 4 of the three-way interaction provided evidence for the above argument.

Taken together, and consistent with work engagement theory, the present empirical study found the three-way interactions among perceived overqualification, empowering leadership, and role clarity on work engagement. Consequently, the present research seeks to contribute to the growing literature on overqualification and practice in several ways. This chapter briefly outlines these contributions while details will be discussed following the present study and data analysis results.

## 6.2 Theoretical Implications

The present research aims to contribute to the overqualification literature at least in three critical ways. Firstly, this study expands the range of outcomes associated with perceived overqualification to work engagement. The majority of current literature suggests that perceived overqualification serves as a motivator causing a series of negative consequences in workplace. Limited studies have examined the potential value of perceived overqualification. Besides, there is lack of information about what factors may promote or thwart employees who feel overqualified to engage in work roles. Thus, this study presents a model to examine the impact of overqualification on employees' work engagement which differs from other motivated behaviour or reactive actions mainly because it serves a key agent linking personal and organizational attributes to employee job performance (Rich, Lepine, & Crawford, 2010). Besides, the present study also makes effort to explore the ambiguous overqualification-workplace outcomes relationship. As such, our model contributes to the exploration of constructive consequences of perceived overqualification.

Secondly, most of extant literature explored perceived overqualification and its effect from the perspective of person-environment misfit (e.g., Liu, et al., 2015; Luksyle & Spitzmueller, 2015; Luksyle, Spitzmueller, & Maynard, 2011). Integrating theoretical perspective of work engagement with perceived overqualification research, the present study provides a new theoretical lens through which to examine the consequences of perceived overqualification in workplace. Besides, literature has rarely explained the "unique psychological nature of perceived overqualification" (Liu, et al., 2015, p. 251; Liu & Wang, 2012) with integrated framework, and explored the theory-based mediators and moderators (Liu, et al., 2015). The present study, extending Kahn's (1990) theory, considers the three-way interaction effects of perceived overqualification,



empowering leadership and role clarity on work engagement. More importantly, the psychological conditions underlying work engagement are captured on examinations of perceived overqualification and outcomes.

Thirdly, the model of present study contributes to organizational management by providing insight that role clarity and empowering leadership emerge to enhance the positive effect of perceived overqualification on employees' engagement. This approach can be applied to examine other types of underemployment in the future studies. Thus, the present study provides a theoretical anchor to synergize these lines of investigations together.

### **6.3 Practical Implications**

As the phenomenon of overqualification is common in organizations of current society, the costs to organizations and related social problems, and its potential values are worth consideration. Apart from theoretical implications, this study also contributed to organizational management, offering insights and broadens the range of alternatives for business practitioners. Overall, the findings of the present study indicated that overqualification is not necessarily harmful and leads to negative attitudes, affect, or behaviours. When managed in a proper manner, overqualified employees can also be assets for the organizations (Erdogan & Bauer, 2009; Liu, et al., 2015). Therefore, based on the existing literature on overqualification and findings of the present study, I believe several strategies should be adopted by practitioners to hire employees who feel overqualified and better manage these potentially promising employees thereafter.

Firstly, the results of the present study offer guidance for human resource practitioners when making hiring decisions. This study challenges the conventional notion that the relationship between perceived overqualification is detrimental to employee's behavioural outcomes, reminding the management that perceived overqualification may

be not necessarily deleterious. Though hiring employees who feel overqualified may be related to risks such as high turnover (Luskyle & Spitzmueller, 2015), managers should be aware that these employees who feel overqualified may bring benefits by investing themselves in work roles. Given that, when making hiring decisions, human resource practitioners need to consider the importance of person-job fit, striving to maintain good match between candidates' qualifications and job positions. Moreover, recruiters may use assessment centre tools, for example, personality test, to examine the psychological conditions of job applicants in process of recruitment to better predict their potential and performance.

Secondly, based on the moderating role of empowering leadership and role clarity toward employee situation in the relationship between overqualification and its outcomes, this study implies that the outcomes of perceived overqualification may be influenced by managerial actions and organizational structures. In order to improve the work engagement of current employees who feel overqualified and further reinforce better performance, organizations should emphasize the importance of leadership style and clarity of specific work roles. Therefore, organizations may redesign the job descriptions/specifications to improve clarify of job roles. Moreover, supervisors play an essential role in maximizing role clarity (Kauppila, 2014; Panaccio & Vandenberghe, 2011). Considering the importance of empowering leadership and managerial actions, organizations should enforce training programs for both leaders and employees to provide more autonomy and psychological safety to current employees.

## **6.4 Limitations and Directions for Future Research**

Findings in present study should be considered in light of potential limitations.

Meanwhile, the limitations also suggest directions for future research. Firstly, the present study measuring overqualification was employee self-reporting method which is

the same as the method used in prior research on overqualification (e.g., Erdogan & Bauer, 2009; Luskyle, Spitzmueller, & Maynard, 2011; Maynard & Parfyonova, 2013), the issue of common method bias is still possible. The work engagement was self-reported by employees, which may be different from objective work engagement. Future research should address this issue to minimize the influence of common method bias.

Secondly, the possible reverse causality and pre-existing factors in field organizations, including culture of the company, industry, and country, may have influenced the relationship among research variables of the present study. Therefore, future research should be encouraged to replicate and extend this research. Longitudinal designs may be used in data collection to ensure the directionality of overqualification's effects on outcome variables. Data from other industries and nations should be collected and analyzed to examine the generalization of findings in this study.

Thirdly, in addition to the focus of present study on empowering leadership and role clarity, other forms of leadership, both positive and negative, and contextual factors, such as paradoxical leadership and various task characteristics may also have effect on employee's psychological mechanisms and affect reactions toward employee's perception of overqualification. Thus, it is interesting for future research to investigate effects of more leadership behaviours and contextual factors. Furthermore, the present study focused on perceived overqualification and its outcome at individual level. Few are known on how overqualification may influence workplace outcomes at a higher level (e.g., group as a whole, Hu, et al., 2015). Therefore, there is a need to explore the potential influence of overqualification at group level or organizational level.

Fourthly, being consistent with most of previous studies, the underlying assumption of this study is that the perceived overqualification is involuntary and undesirable for

employees (e.g., Hu, et al., 2015; Liu, et al, 2015; Zhang, Law, & Lin, 2015). However, it is also possible that some employees, for example, those who are underemployed because of health problems, family responsibilities, or simply for more leisure time, will perceive to be overqualified in a voluntary manner (Liu, et al, 2015). These employees tend to consider the overqualification to be acceptable with more tolerances. For example, Wang, Zhan, Liu and Shultz (2008) pointed out that some old workers accept bridge jobs requiring lower qualification than they have to maintain social connections. In addition, fresh graduates may choose to work in positions that are below their overqualification because they intend to gain work experience and acquire training opportunities. Thus, the voluntarily choice of being overqualified may be less likely to cause negative outcomes such as stress and deviant behaviours. Future research is encouraged to explore the difference between voluntary and involuntary overqualification and their effect on individual attitudes and behaviours.

## **6.5 Conclusion**

Kahn's (1990) perspective on engagement has been admitted to provide solid conceptual basis for research on work engagement (May, Gilson, & Harter, 2004; Rothbard, 2001; Rich, Lepine, & Crawford, 2010). This thesis provides a new theoretical lens by adopting the perspective of work engagement to examine three way interaction relationships. It highlights the role of perceived overqualification, empowering leadership, and role clarity as psychological conditions that interact to influence work engagement.

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# LIST OF APPENDICES

## Appendix 1: Measurement Scales

### 1.1 Independent Variable

#### *Perceived Overqualification*

1. My job requires less education than I have
2. The work experience that I have is not necessary to be successful on this job
3. I have job skills that are not required for this job
4. Someone with less education than myself could perform well on my job
5. My previous training is not being fully utilized on this job
6. I have a lot of knowledge that I do not need in order to do my job
7. My education level is above the education level required by my job
8. Someone with less work experience than myself could do my job just as well
9. I have more abilities than I need in order to do my job

### 1.2 Outcome Variable

#### *Work Engagement*

- *Physical engagement*
  1. I work with intensity on my job
  2. I exert my full effort to my job
  3. I devote a lot of energy to my job
  4. I try my hardest to perform well on my job
  5. I strive as hard as I can to complete my job
  6. I exert a lot of energy on my job
- *Emotional engagement*
  1. I am enthusiastic in my job
  2. I feel energetic at my job
  3. I am interested in my job
  4. I am proud of my job
  5. I feel positive about my job
  6. I am excited about my job
- *Cognitive engagement*

1. At work, my mind is focused on my job
2. At work, I pay a lot of attention to my job
3. At work, I focus a great deal of attention on my job
4. At work, I am absorbed by my job
5. At work, I concentrate on my job
6. At work, I devote a lot of attention to my job

### **1.3 Moderators**

#### ***Empowering Leadership***

1. Encourages me to find solutions to my problems without his/her direct input.
2. Urges me to assume responsibilities on my own.
3. Advises me to solve problems when they pop up without always getting a stamp of approval.
4. Encourages me to search for solutions without supervision.
5. Urges me to think of problems as opportunities rather than obstacles.
6. Advises me to look for the opportunities in the problems I face.
7. Encourages me to view unsuccessful performance as a chance to learn.
8. Urges me to work as a team with the other teachers who work at the school.
9. Encourages me to work together with other teachers who work at the school.
10. Advises me to coordinate my efforts with the other teachers who work at the school.

#### ***Role Clarity***

1. I know exactly what is expected of me
2. I know that I have divided my time properly
3. Explanation is clear of what has to be done
4. I know what my responsibilities are
5. Clear, planned goals and objective exist for my job
6. I feel certain about how much authority I have

## **1.5 Control Variables**

### *Collectivism*

1. I prefer to work with others in a group rather than working alone
2. Given the choice, I would rather do a job where I can work alone rather than doing a job where I have to work with others in a group (R)
3. Working with a group is better than working alone

## Appendix 2: Summary of the Present Study

	<b>Research Method and Scope</b>
Present Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Quantitative study to examine the three-way interactions among perceived overqualification, empowering leadership, and role clarity, and their effects on work engagement.</li><li>• Individual level of analysis</li><li>• Existing validated scales were used to measure variables of present study</li><li>• Survey questionnaire was used to collect data.</li></ul>

### Appendix 3: Summary of Literature on Perceived Overqualification

S/N	Article Ref	Focus	Theoretical Foundation	Independent Variable	Mediator	Moderator	Dependent Variable
1	Yang, Guan, Lai, She, & Lockwood, (2015). Career adaptability and perceived overqualification: Testing a dual-path model among Chinese human resource management professionals.	Antecedents	Career construction theory (Savickas, 1997, 2005, 2013)	Career adaptability	1). Perceived delegation 2). Career anchor in challenge	Organizational tenure	Perceived overqualification
2	Wu, Luksyte, & Parker, (2015). Overqualification and Subjective Well-Being at Work: The Moderating Role of Job Autonomy and Culture	Moderator	1).Job design perspective 2).The model of culture fit in managerial practice 3).Regulatory fit theory	Overqualification	NA	1). Job Autonomy; 2). Culture (individualistic cultures)	Subjective well-being at work

3	Luksyte, & Spitzmueller, (2015). When are overqualified employees creative? It depends on contextual factors	Outcome and moderator	Person-environment fit theory (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005)	Perceived overqualification	NA	1). Perceived organizational support (POS); 2). Mentoring others; 3). Developmental idiosyncratic deals (i-deals)	Creative performance
4	Hu, Erdogan, Bauer, Jiang, Liu, & Li, (2015). There Are Lots of Big Fish in This Pond: The Role of Peer Overqualification on Task Significance, Perceived Fit, and Performance for Overqualified Employees	Outcome and mediator	Relative deprivation theory (Crosby, 1976)	Perceived overqualification	1). task significance; 2). person-group fit	Peer over-qualification	Performance: (a) in-role Performance; (b) OCB

5	Zhang, Law, & Lin, (2015). You think you are big fish in a small pond? Perceived overqualification, goal orientations, and proactivity at work	Outcome, mediator and moderator	1). Self-regulatory perspective (Carver & Scheier, 2001; Zimmerman, 2000) 2). Social cognitive theory of self-regulation and the conceptualization of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986; Gist & Mitchell, 1992)	Perceived overqualification	Role-breadth self-efficacy (RBSE)	Goal Orientation 1). Performance goal orientation (PGO); 2). Learning goal orientation (LGO)	Proactive behaviour
6	Liu, Luksyte, Zhou, Shi, & Wang, (2015). Overqualification and counterproductive work behaviours: Examining a moderated mediation model.	Outcome, mediator and moderator	1). Person–environment fit theory (Edwards, 2008; Kristof-Brown & Guay, 2011); 2). Dual-process model (Evans, 2008); 3). Work frustration–aggression model (Fox & Spector, 1999)	Perceived overqualification	1). Organization-based self-esteem (OBSE); 2). Anger toward employment situation	Justice sensitivity	Counterproductive behaviour (self-rated and supervisor-rated)

7	Maynard & Parfyonova, (2013). Perceived overqualification and withdrawal behaviours: Examining the roles of job attitudes and work values	Outcome, mediator and moderator	The perspective of person-job (P-J) fit within person-environment (P-E) fit theory (Kristof, 1996)	Perceived overqualification	Job attitudes: 1). Job satisfaction; 2). Organizational commitment	1). Competence; 2). Growth work value	1). job search behaviour; 2). Voluntary turnover behaviour
8	Lobene, & Meade, (2013). The effects of career calling and perceived overqualification on work outcomes for primary and secondary school teachers.	Moderator	Relative deprivation theory (Feldman, Leana, & Bolino, 2002; Mirowsky & Ross, 1989)	Perceived overqualification	NA	Career calling orientation	1). Turnover intentions 2). Desire to turnover 3). Affective organizational commitment 4). Continuance organizational commitment (nonsignificant) 5). Job satisfaction 6). Performance



9	<p>Luksyte, Spitzmueller, &amp; Maynard, (2011). Why do overqualified incumbents deviate? Examining multiple mediators.</p>	Mediator	<p>1). Person-environment fit theory; 2). The stress-emotion model of counterproductive work behaviours (CWBs)</p>	Perceived overqualification	<p>1). Two types of person-job fit: (a) demands-abilities and (b) needs-supplies; 2). The three dimensions of burnout: (a) emotional exhaustion, (b) cynicism, and (c) Inefficacy; 3). Three types of psychological contract: (a) transactional, (b) relational, and (c) balanced</p>	NA	Counter-productive work behaviours (CWBs)
10	<p>Erdogan &amp; Bauer, (2009). Perceived Overqualification and Its Outcomes: The Moderating Role of Empowerment</p>	Moderator	Relative deprivation theory (Crosby, 1976)	Perceived Overqualification	NA	Empowerment	<p>1). Job satisfaction; 2). Intentions to remain; 3). Voluntary turnover; 4). Objective sales performance</p>

11	Fine, S., & Nevo, B. (2008). Too smart for their own good? A study of perceived cognitive overqualification in the workforce.	Outcomes	NA	Perceived cognitive overqualification	NA	NA	1). Job dissatisfaction 2). Job Performance
12	Fine, (2007). Overqualification and selection in leadership training.	Antecedents and Outcomes	NA	1). Perceived Overqualification 2). General mental ability (GMA) 3). Openness to experience, emotional stability, conscientiousness, and extraversion	NA	NA	1). Negative attitude (Perceived Overqualification as antecedent) 2). Leadership performance (Perceived Overqualification as antecedent) 3). Perceived Overqualification (GMA and Personalities as antecedents)

13	Johnson & Johnson, (1999). Perceived Overqualification and Health: A Longitudinal Analysis	Outcomes (A Longitudinal Analysis)	The framework of stress-illness model (Holt, 1982)	Perceived Overqualification	NA	NA	Health (not supported by data)
14	Johnson & Johnson, (1997). Perceived Overqualification, Emotional Support, and Health	Outcomes and Moderator	NA	Perceived Overqualification: 1). perceived mismatch 2). perceived no grow	NA	Emotional support	Health (significant for mismatch but not no-grow)
15	Johnson & Johnson, (1996). Perceived overqualification and psychological well-being	Outcomes	The framework of stress-illness model (Holt, 1982)	Perceived Overqualification	NA	Sex (non-significant)	Psychological well-being

## Appendix 4: Summary of Constructs Related to Perceived Overqualification

### 1). Summary of Underemployment Constructs

Underemployment Construct	Definition	Explanation	Comparison with Overqualification
Underemployment	<p>1). Employer not satisfying employee demands for working hours. (Abrahamsen, 2010)</p> <p>2). Individuals inadequately employed. (Jensen &amp; Slack, 2003)</p> <p>3). A job that is lower in quality in some way. (Feldman, Leana, &amp; Bolino, 2002)</p> <p>4). Employed in jobs requiring less education, skills, and experience than they possess. (Burke, 1997)</p> <p>5). The degree to which individuals believe they are overqualified for their positions (perceived overqualification) and whether or not their jobs provide opportunities for professional growth (perceived no growth). (Khan &amp; Morrow, 1991)</p> <p>6). An involuntary employment condition where workers are in jobs, either part-time or full-time, in which their skills, including formal and work experience training, are technically underutilized and thus undervalued relative to those of other individuals of similar ability who have made equivalent investments in skill development. (Glyde, 1977)</p>	<p>1). Including various dimensions (e.g., overeducation, job field underemployment, hours underemployment, Pay/hierarchical underemployment, and perceived overqualification)</p> <p>2). Studies examine underemployment form both management, economics and sociology field.</p>	<p>1). Overqualification is one type of underemployment.</p> <p>2). Perceived overqualification specifically focuses on the individuals' feelings of mismatch and/or lacked opportunities for growth.</p> <p>3). The mismatch is mainly about employees' perceptions that they have more education, experience, and skills/KSAs than their job require.</p>

Time-related underemployment	Employees who usually work fewer than 35 hours each week but would like to work more. (Wilkins, 2007)	<p>1). Hours underemployment (normally <math>\leq</math> 35 hours per week)</p> <p>2). Employees express a preference to work more hours than they currently work.</p>	<p>1). Both constructs are dimensions of under employment.</p> <p>2). Time-related underemployment is studied from the field of economics, while overqualification is studied from the field of management.</p>
Underemployment as inadequate employment	Economically inadequate employment. (Dooley, 2003; Dooley, Prause, & Ham-Rowbottom, 2000)	<p>1). Pay/hierarchical and hours underemployment</p> <p>2). Reasons include slack work, material shortages, equipment or plant repair, start of a new job or end of an old one, or inability to find fulltime work.</p>	<p>1). Both constructs are dimensions of under employment</p> <p>2). Underemployment as inadequate employment is studied from community psychology field with the emphasis of objective reasons, while overqualification is studied from the field of management with objective and/or subjective perceptions.</p>

Underemployed	Those who have some paid work but desire more. (Creed & Moore, 2006)	Hours underemployment	<p>1). Both constructs are dimensions of under employment</p> <p>2). The construct of underemployed the working time while overqualification assesses more aspects inducing job qualifications (education, experience, and/or knowledge, skills, and abilities) and opportunities of growth.</p>
Underutilization	Labour market underutilization; includes both unemployed and involuntary part-time workers. (Bureau of Labour Statistics, 2010)	<p>1). Hours underemployment</p> <p>2). Include unemployed individuals and those who are not currently searching for a job, or involuntarily employed in part-time positions.</p>	<p>1). Both constructs are dimensions of under employment</p> <p>2). Underutilization is studied from field of economics while overqualification is studied from the field of management.</p>

Felt underemployment	Employees who possessed 1 standard deviation more education than required for their jobs and who considered themselves underemployed. (Borgen, Amundson, & Harter, 1988)	Individuals are excited at first to have a job but soon they perceive frustration, anger, resignation, and negative feelings toward the job.	1). Both constructs are dimensions of under employment and studied from management field.  2). Felt underemployment can be seen as the perceived overqualification.
Subjective feelings of overqualification	The extent to which the worker feels overqualified or overeducated for the job. (Burris, 1983)	Perceived by workers to be overqualified or overeducated for jobs, based on educational attainment.	Similar to perceived overqualification but with relatively narrow definition.
Perceived overqualification	1). The extent to which an employed individual perceives that she or he possesses surplus job qualifications or has limited opportunities to acquire and use new job-related skills. (Johnson & Johnson, 1996)  2). The extent to which an employee feels that she or he has surplus education, experience, and/or KSAs (knowledge, skills, and abilities), relative to the requirements of his or her position. (Maynard, Joseph, & Maynard, 2006)	1). Perceived a mismatch and lacked opportunities for growth.  2). Perceived to have more education, experiences, and KSAs than their jobs require.	NA

Work-status congruence	The degree to which employers match employee preference for full-time or part-time status, schedule, shift, and number of hours. (Holtom, Lee, & Tidd, 2002)	Study examined the degree to which employers were able to meet employee scheduling preferences for full- vs. part-time and number of hours, along with schedule and shift preferences.	<p>1). Both constructs are dimensions of under employment and studied from the field management.</p> <p>2). Work-status congruence assesses schedule, hours and shift preferences, while overqualification assesses job qualifications (education, experience, and/or knowledge, skills, and abilities) and opportunities of growth.</p>
Job mobility	Job mobility conceptualized as a comparison of new jobs with the jobs held prior to a plant closing in terms of skill level, prestige, or wages. (Aiken & Ferman, 1966)	<p>1). Pay/hierarchical underemployment and skill/experience underutilization</p> <p>2). Job mobility includes upward or downward movement based on the skill level, prestige, and wages of the new position.</p>	<p>1). Both constructs are dimensions of under employment.</p> <p>2). Job mobility is studied from the field sociology in terms of skill level, prestige or wages, while overqualification is studied from the field of management in terms of job qualifications and opportunities of growth.</p>



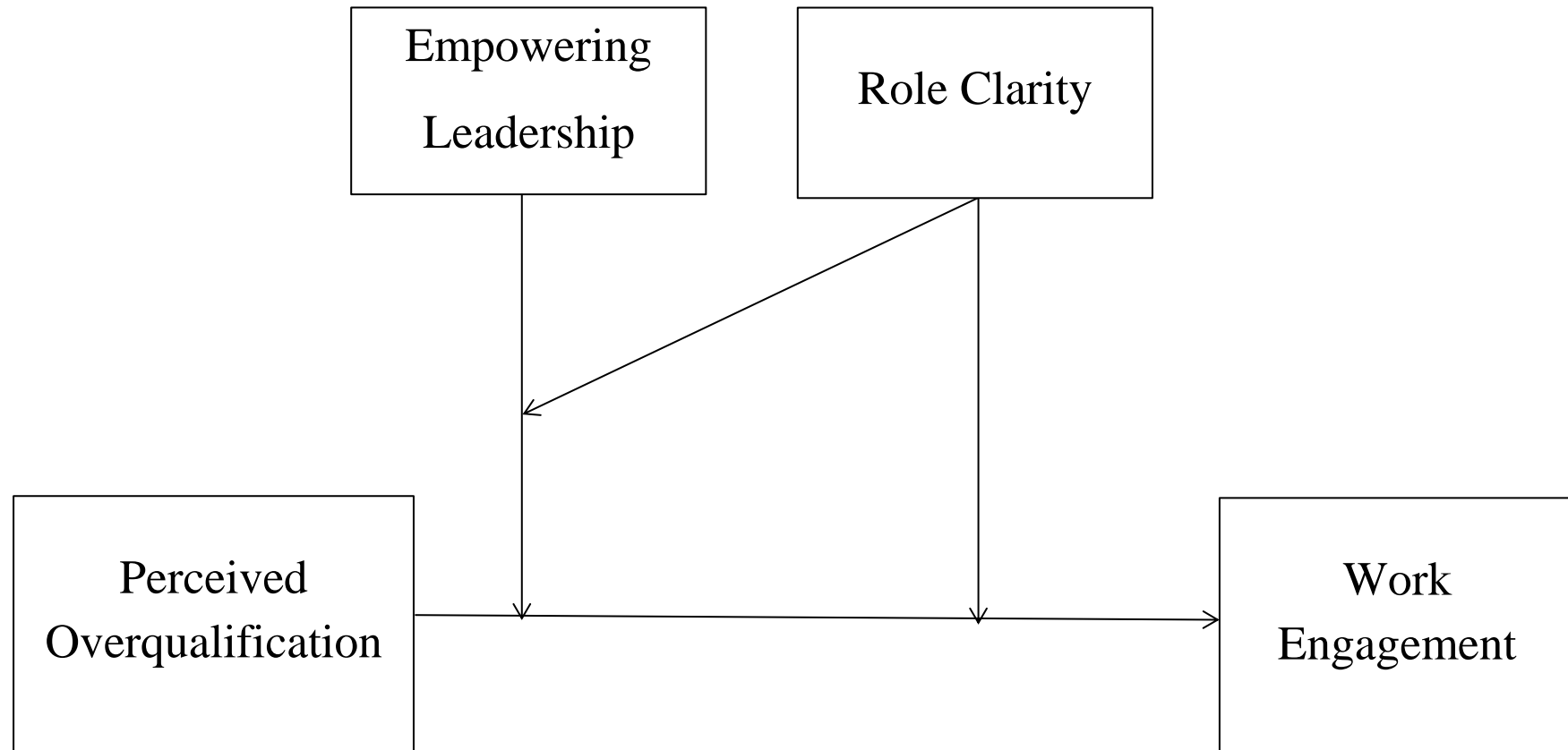
Relative deprivation	Individuals' "subjective" reactions to their employment predicaments; the discrepancy between present job conditions and desired job conditions. (Feldman, Leana, & Bolino, 2002)	Relative deprivation concentrates on employees feeling that they are entitled to or deserve a better position than their current jobs.	<p>1). Both constructs are dimensions of under employment and studied from the field management.</p> <p>2). Relative deprivation focuses on employees' subjective reactions to job conditions, while overqualification focuses on perceived surplus capabilities by employees themselves.</p>
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## 2). Other Constructs Related to Perceived Overqualification

Construct and Definition	Explanation	Relation to Overqualification
<p><b>Person-Environment Fit (e.g., Edwards, 2008; Kristof-Brown &amp; Guay, 2010; Oh, Guay, Kim, Harold, Lee, Heo, &amp; Shin, 2014)</b></p> <p>Person–environment (PE) fit is defined as the compatibility that occurs when individual and work environment characteristics are well matched (Kristof-Brown &amp; Guay, 2010; Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, &amp; Johnson, 2005; Muchinsky &amp; Monahan, 1987).</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1). A core concept in research on work attitudes (job satisfaction, organizational commitment, intent to quit), job stress, vocational choice, recruitment and selection, and organizational climate and culture.</li> <li>2). Aspects of the PE fit (Person-vocation fit; Person-job fit; Person-organization fit; Person-group fit; Person-individual fit)</li> <li>3). Foundations of PE fit               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Parsons’ Matching Model of Career Decision-making (Parsons, 1909);</li> <li>b. Murray’s Needs–Press Model (Murray, 1938, 1951)</li> <li>c. Lewin’s Field Theory (Lewin, 1935, 1951)</li> </ol> </li> <li>4). Other related theories               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Job satisfaction (Schaffer’s (1953) Theory of Job Satisfaction; Katzell’s (1964) Proportional Difference Model; Locke’s (1969, 1976) Value–Percept Model)</li> <li>b. Job Stress (McGrath’s (1970, 1976) Model of Stress and Performance; French, Caplan, and Harrison’s (1974) Person–Environment Fit Theory)</li> <li>c. Vocational congruence (Holland’s (1959) Theory of Vocational Choice; Dawis and Lofquist’s (1964) Theory of Work Adjustment )</li> <li>d. Recruitment and selection (Wanous’ (1980) Matching Model; Breugh’s (1992) Person–Job Congruence Model; Werbel and Gilliland’s (1999) Facet Model of Fit)</li> <li>e. Organizational culture and climate (Chatman’s (1989, 1991) Model of Person–Organization Fit; Schneider’s (1983, 1987; Schneider et al., 1995; Schneider et al., 2000) Attraction–Selection–Attrition Framework)</li> </ol> </li> </ol>	<p>Person–environment (PE) fit has been used by scholars to explain the effect of overqualification on employee attitudes and behaviours (e.g., Liu, Luksyte, Zhou, Shi, &amp; Wang, 2015; Luksyte, &amp; Spitzmueller, 2015; Luksyte, Spitzmueller, &amp; Maynard, 2011)</p> <p>The perceptions of surplus qualifications indicate the person-job misfit, wherein people’s abilities exceed job demands (i.e., demands – abilities misfit).</p> <p>Form the PE fit perspective, overqualification also reflects how well the needs of workers are satisfied (i.e., needs – supplies misfit).</p> <p>Literature on person-job fit suggests that mismatch usually leads to negative outcomes while fit benefits both employees and organizations regarding employees’ performance, well-being and job attitudes. In line with this theory, studies on overqualification has indicated that perceived overqualification predicts poor job attitudes, lowered psychological well-being, stronger intent to quit, more job search behaviours, and deviant behaviours.</p>

<p><b>Bridge Employment (e.g., Wang, Zhan, Liu, &amp; Shultz, 2008)</b></p> <p>Bridge employment is defined as the pattern of labour force participation exhibited by older workers as they leave their career jobs and move toward complete labour force withdrawal (Shultz, 2003).</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1). bridge employment could be a part-time job, self-employment, or temporary employment after full-time employment ends and before permanent retirement begins (Feldman, 1994).</li> <li>2). Dominant theories <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Role theory (Ashforth, 2001) Emphasize the importance of the role loss and role transition processes from work to retirement.</li> <li>b. Continuity theory (Atchley, 1989) Emphasize the adaptation to change and a consistent pattern over time.</li> <li>c. Life Course Perspective (Elder, 1995; Elder &amp; Johnson, 2003) Articulate the importance of contextual embeddedness and interdependence of life spheres</li> </ol> </li> <li>3). Antecedents of bridge employment <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Individual Attributes (Age, Education, Health, Financial Status)</li> <li>b. Job-related Psychological Variables (Work Stress, Job Satisfaction)</li> <li>c. Family-related Variables (Marital Status, Marital Quality)</li> <li>d. Retirement Planning (Thinking about Retirement)</li> </ol> </li> </ol>	<p>Overqualification can be related to bridge employment and have important implication on it. For example, skilful and experienced older workers who are engaged into bridge employees may perceive to be overqualified.</p> <p>Organizations may want to attract retirees to take career bridge employment to maintain talent pools. As overqualification may be related to various negative outcomes, it may have important implication to organizations strategies and policies to reduce the work stress of older workers and to improve their job satisfaction (e.g., redesigning or sharing jobs, providing more flexible work arrangement, and creating an older-worker-friendly work environment).</p>
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## Appendix 5 Conceptual Model of Present Study



## Appendix 6 Tables and Figures

**Table 1 Correlations, Reliabilities, Mean, and Standard Deviation**

	Gender	Age	Tenure	Education	Collectivism	Perceived Overqualification	Role Clarity	Empowering Leadership	Engagement
<b>Gender</b>									
<b>Age</b>	-.12								
<b>Tenure</b>	-.11	.65**							
<b>Education</b>	-.07	-.37**	-.40**						
<b>Collectivism</b>	-.06	.08	-.03	-.14	<b>(0.85)</b>				
<b>Perceived Overqualification</b>	-.19*	.17*	.31**	-.10	.09	<b>(0.72)</b>			
<b>Role Clarity</b>	.05	-.01	-.03	.00	.35**	.21**	<b>(0.85)</b>		
<b>Empowering Leadership</b>	-.01	.05	.09	-.04	.34**	.48**	.61**	<b>(0.90)</b>	
<b>Engagement</b>	.06	.01	.01	-.08	.43**	.28**	.66**	.69**	<b>(0.92)</b>
<b>Mean</b>	1.33	3.56	14.03	3.95	3.80	3.02	3.98	3.83	3.95
<b>S.D.</b>	.47	.77	10.39	.73	.73	.52	.47	.52	.44

(N=153)

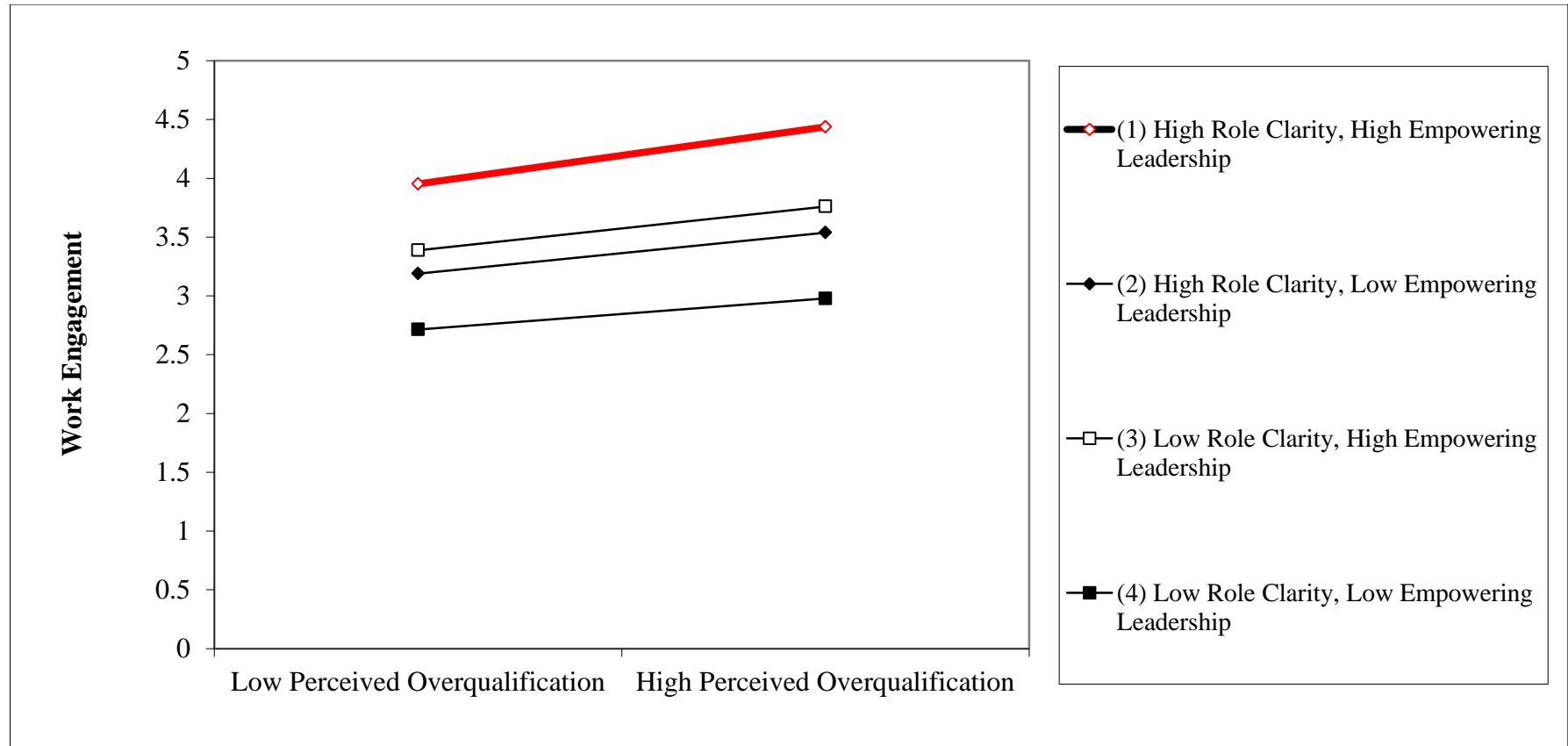
**Table 2 Regression Result** (Dependent Variable = Work Engagement)

	<u>Step 1</u>	<u>Step 2</u>	<u>Step 3</u>
<b><u>Control Variable</u></b>			
Gender	.05	.05	.06
Age	-.03	-.04	-.01
Tenure	-.02	-.01	.01
Education	-.05	-.04	-.02
Collectivism	.17**	.16**	.15*
<b><u>Main Effect</u></b>			
Perceived Overqualification (POQ)	.01	.01	-.07
Role Clarity	.35**	.33**	.24**
Empowering Leadership	.42**	.43**	.39**
<b><u>Moderating Effect</u></b>			
POQ x Role Clarity		.03	-.02
POQ x Empowering Leadership		.03	.01
Role Clarity x Empowering Leadership		-.11	.10
<b><u>Three-way Interaction</u></b>			
POQ x Role Clarity x Empowering Leadership			.30**
<b>Total R<sup>2</sup></b>	.60**	.61**	.63**
<b>ΔR<sup>2</sup></b>	.60	.01	.02
<b>Adj. R<sup>2</sup></b>	.58**	.57**	.60**
<b>F-value</b>	26.67**	19.36**	19.93**

N = 153. Regression coefficients represent standardized parameters (Betas)

\*\*p < .01; \*p < .05

**Figure 1 Graphical plot of the three-way interaction effect among perceived overqualification, role clarity, and empowering leadership on work engagement**



Note. The three-way interaction effect with the non-significant main effect leadership is consistent with the theoretical framework of work engagement

**Table 3 Slope Difference Test of Current Study**

Slope comparison		Work Engagement	
		<i>T</i>	<i>P</i>
High Role Clarity and High Empowering Leadership	High Role Clarity and Low Empowering Leadership	2.964	0.004
	Low Role Clarity and High Empowering Leadership	2.402	0.018
	Low Clarity and Low Empowering Leadership	3.530	0.001
High Role Clarity and Low Empowering Leadership	Low Role Clarity and High Empowering Leadership	-0.663	0.508
	Low Clarity and Low Empowering Leadership	2.024	0.045
Low Role Clarity and High Empowering Leadership	Low Clarity and Low Empowering Leadership	2.725	0.007



## Appendix 7 Questionnaire (in Chinese)

感谢您同意参与这次问卷调查。这项调查旨在了解您个人对目前工作的看法。调查共5页，它大致需要您10分钟来完成。请仔细阅读问卷说明和问题并根据所提出的问题来对自己进行评价。所有的答案并没有对错之分。在提交问卷前，请确信您回答了问卷中的所有问题。请注意这次问卷调查完全匿名，所搜集的数据将仅用于学术研究用途并且仅以集合的方式呈现在研究报告中，您的回答将是严格保密的。您可以选择随时退出调查，如果退出您已经填写的调查问卷将不被用于此次研究并被销毁。

请针对以下题项所描述的内容进行评价。

	非常 不同 意	不同 意	不能 确定	同 意	非常 同意
1 我的工作所要求的学历比我所具备的学历低……	1	2	3	4	5
2 我所拥有的工作经验对于成功完成这些工作不是必要的……	1	2	3	4	5
3 这份工作不需要我所拥有的工作技能……	1	2	3	4	5
4 比我学历低的人同样可以把这份工作做得很好……	1	2	3	4	5
5 我以前的培训没有完全用到这份工作上……	1	2	3	4	5
6 对于我的工作，我有大量知识派不上用场……	1	2	3	4	5
7 我的教育水平高出了工作所要求的教育水平……	1	2	3	4	5
8 比我工作经验少的人同样可以把这份工作做得很好……	1	2	3	4	5
9 和工作中用到的能力相比，我还有更多能力……	1	2	3	4	5

请针对以下题项所描述的内容进行评价。

### 第一节

1 我充满热情地去做我的工作……	1	2	3	4	5
2 我不遗余力地去做我的工作……	1	2	3	4	5
3 我在我的工作投入了大量精力……	1	2	3	4	5
4 我尽最大努力做好我的工作……	1	2	3	4	5
5 我尽我所能去完成我的工作……	1	2	3	4	5
6 我投入很多精力在我的工作上……	1	2	3	4	5

### 第二节

1 我对我的工作充满热情……	1	2	3	4	5
2 我在我的工作中感到精力充沛……	1	2	3	4	5
3 我对我的工作有兴趣……	1	2	3	4	5
4 我对我的工作感到自豪……	1	2	3	4	5
5 我对我的工作感到积极乐观……	1	2	3	4	5
6 我对我的工作感到激动兴奋……	1	2	3	4	5

### 第三节

1 在工作场所，我把心思放在我的工作……	1	2	3	4	5
2 在工作场所，我对我的工作很关注……	1	2	3	4	5
3 在工作场所，我把很多注意力放在我的工作……	1	2	3	4	5
4 在工作场所，我被我的工作所吸引……	1	2	3	4	5
5 在工作场所，我专注于我的工作……	1	2	3	4	5
6 在工作场所，我全神贯注于我的工作……	1	2	3	4	5

<b>请认真思考以下关于工作角色的陈述，按照符合自身的程度进行评价。</b>						
		<b>非常不同意</b>	<b>不同意</b>	<b>一般</b>	<b>同意</b>	<b>非常同意</b>
1	我很清楚工作对我的期望·····	1	2	3	4	5

**请思考您的领导，标明您对以下关于领导方式的陈述在多大程度上赞同。**

**您的领导·····**

		<b>非常不同意</b>	<b>不同意</b>	<b>一般</b>	<b>同意</b>	<b>非常同意</b>
1	鼓励我在没有他直接干预的情况下自己寻找问题解决方案	1	2	3	4	5
2	督促我自己承担责任·····	1	2	3	4	5
3	建议我在遇到临时问题时，不要经常去征求他的许可，而要自己解决·····	1	2	3	4	5
4	鼓励我不依靠他的指导去寻找解决方法·····	1	2	3	4	5
5	敦促我把问题看成是机会而不是阻碍·····	1	2	3	4	5
6	建议我在面对问题时寻找机会·····	1	2	3	4	5
7	鼓励我把失败的表现看作是一次学习的机会·····	1	2	3	4	5
8	敦促我和组织里的其他员工像一个团队一样工作·····	1	2	3	4	5
9	鼓励我和组织里的其他员工一起工作·····	1	2	3	4	5
10	建议我和组织里的其他员工相互协作·····	1	2	3	4	5
2	我明白适当地分配我的工作时间·····	1	2	3	4	5
3	工作中对于我要做什么的解释很清楚·····	1	2	3	4	5
4	我明白我的工作职责是什么·····	1	2	3	4	5
5	我的工作有清晰、有计划的目的和目标·····	1	2	3	4	5
6	工作中我明确知道我有多少权限·····	1	2	3	4	5

**请认真思考以下一系列关于您怎样工作的陈述，标明您对以下陈述同意与否。**

**非常不同意**      **不同意**      **一般**      **同意**      **非常同意**

1	与独自工作相比，我更喜欢于在团队中工作·····	1	2	3	4	5
2	如果可以选，我会选择一个和团队中其他人一起合作的职业，而不是可以一个人工作的职业·····	1	2	3	4	5
3	与团队一起工作比一个人工作感觉更好·····	1	2	3	4	5

性别：男      女  
 年龄： ≤21     22 - 30     31 - 40     41 - 50     ≥51

您在目前的公司服务年限：\_\_\_\_ 年

教育水平：  
 小学     初中     高中     专科     大学  
 硕士或以上     其他（请注明）：\_\_\_\_\_

调查日期：2016 年\_\_月\_\_日  
 感谢您完成这份问卷！在将问卷交回给我们的研究人员之前，请确信您完成了所有问题。如果您对此项研究有任何疑问，欢迎致电 +61 426991703，或者电邮：[chao.ma@anu.edu.au](mailto:chao.ma@anu.edu.au)