

The Role of Employee Engagement in Individual Work Performance: A Systematic Review

Wang Jinzhan, Azra Ayue Binti Abdul Rahman

Universiti Teknologi Malaysia

Email: wangjinzhan@graduate.utm.my, azraayue@utm.my

To Link this Article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARPED/v13-i4/23818> DOI:10.6007/IJARPED/v13-i4/23818

Published Online: 26 November 2024

Abstract

This study aims to analyze the direct effect of employee engagement on individual work performance. This study mainly used descriptive analysis to comprehensively analyze the direct impact between the two, following the guidelines of the systematic evaluation process and objectively summarizing these literature. This study selected 13 articles related to the two based on a comprehensive literature review method from 112 articles. The results showed that employee engagement has a direct impact on individual work performance during the work process. This study will provide positive references for the application of both in future work fields, and help promote the healthy and sustainable development of enterprises.

Keywords: Employee Engagement, Individual Work Performance, Development of Enterprises.

Introduction

Employee engagement is considered one of the fundamental factors affecting work performance in any era, and individual work performance is the foundation of enterprise performance. Both are important parts of the healthy and sustainable development of enterprises. Therefore, employee engagement is beneficial for enterprises to tap into employee potential and create greater performance. In this digital age, employee mobility is strong, and human resource integration is also highly valued by enterprises (Mithani et al., 2020). In order to maximize profits, enterprises strive to optimize various management methods, especially focusing on individual work performance (Sanchez Gomez, 2020). Therefore, this study will conduct a comprehensive literature analysis and research on employee engagement and individual work performance. By using the method of literature review, the relationship between the two will be further elaborated, providing valuable references for the new generation of companies and enterprises. It will also conduct in-depth analysis and understanding of the theoretical research results on the two.

Employee Engagement

Employee engagement is a positive, work related emotional state that refers to a more enduring work ethic and spontaneous commitment and sense of responsibility (Schaufeli, 2004, Giurge, 2020). Engaged employee can be retained, this is the core competitiveness of a

company, given that employee engagement plays a crucial role in human resource practice (Alfes et al., 2020; Guest et al., 2020). According to the research of Rich et al. (2010), it has been proposed that employee engagement is a positive psychological state with a sense of three dimensionality. Kahn (1990) defined engagement as a positive experience manifested as the energy, risk, and investment that employees put into their work. In Schaufeli's (2015) study, employee engagement has three dimensions, among which vigor can reflect employees' abilities and psychological resilience in work, followed by dedication, a strong subjective awareness of investing energy in work, and persevering to achieve goals without considering one's own interests even in the face of obstacles. Lastly, absorption involves individuals' sense of meaning in their work, as well as their passion, challenge, and motivation towards tasks (Maslach et al., 2001). Petrović et al. (2017) found that the three dimensions of employee engagement are the main components that can accurately reflect the meaning of employee engagement.

Individual Work Performance

Individual work performance is the foundation for forming comprehensive measurement standards for organizational daily management. The basic meaning of it is aimed at reflecting organizational achievements and individual abilities. It is a behavior of developing employees' individual potential through the guidance of work goals (Campbell et al., 1990). This will also be reflected in the personal requirements and expectations that leaders have for their employees (Fuertes et al., 2020). But it is more of an indicator of ability, for example, Jiang et al. (2020) believe that employee performance mainly refers to the emotional attitude and work ability of each employee in the organization. In this situation, most employees with a positive attitude can demonstrate high work ability and professional knowledge.

Koopsmans et al. (2012), show that the individual work performance three dimensions: task performance (Williams and Anderson, 1991), its definition focuses most on the proficiency level of employees in their job skills or business. Contextual performance (Podsak and MacKenzie, 1990) defined as "the behavior of the organizational, social, and psychological environment that supports the functioning of the work core". Counterproductive work behavior (Bennett and Robinson, 2000) are intentional, passive, and harmful to the organization, which can affect organizational fairness, disrupt the work environment, and other adverse effects. From the perspective of organizational strategic development, improving employee performance is an important factor in maintaining the core competitiveness of an organization.

Employee Engagement and Individual Work Performance

With the changing times, enterprises are constantly evolving, and management methods are constantly emerging. However, it is worth mentioning that one of the strategies is to actively attract employees to achieve optimal performance. Nowadays, employee engagement is an important factor in improving employee productivity, and employee performance is also a practical reference for managing performance quality (Macey et al., 2009; Saleh et al., 2021). According to the research of Rana (2019), proposed that employee engagement can play a role in improving employee performance in daily work management. Therefore, the research objective of this article is to identify the direct effect of employee engagement on individual work performance among employees.

Method

This study follows the guidelines of the systematic evaluation process and objectively summarizes these literature. Han (2022) believes that quantitative research is a statistical analysis based on numerical or actual data, which mainly includes the intuitive acquisition, encoding, and frequency of things, and does not accept the influence of subjective consciousness. Therefore, it can be said that a systematic literature review is an objective and comprehensive summary of research literature. This study adopted the six steps proposed by Cooper (2010), cited by Bernard et al., 2014 and H.G. Gurbuz, 2018) for conducting systematic reviews or meta-analyses:

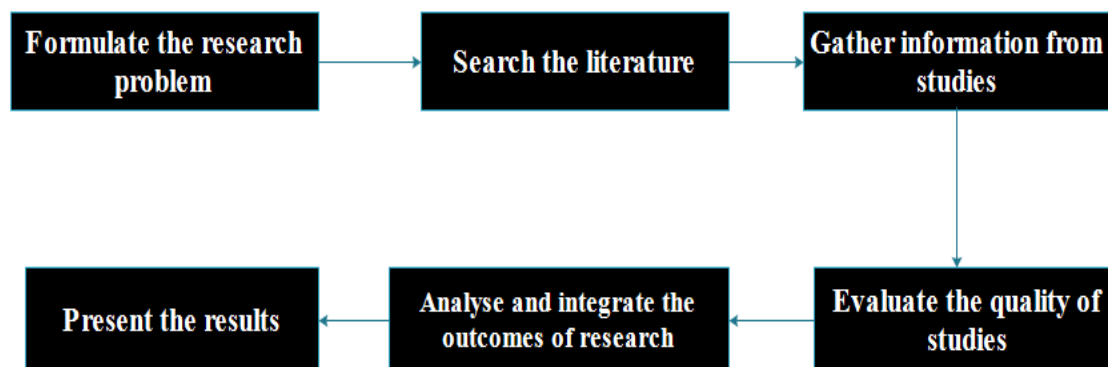


Figure 2.1 Steps of Literature Evaluation (Bernard et al., 2014; H.G. Gurbuz, 2018)

The above figure illustrates the review process, where these six steps are closely interconnected and critical in the process (Bernard et al., 2014; H.G. Gurbuz, 2018). The first step in the figure has been explained in detail in the previous section, and this review process can ensure the objectivity and effectiveness of literature evaluation. The result of the final step will be presented in the third section.

Research Analysis and Synthesis

In the screening stage, the titles, keywords, abstracts, and methods of the 112 collected papers were screened to exclude studies that did not meet these inclusion criteria. The inclusion criteria are as follows: firstly, the research subjects of these papers must be employees and enterprises; Secondly, these studies must include both research on employee engagement and individual work performance. That is to explain that in addition to the scope of keywords, it is also necessary to filter out literature before 2010. Employee engagement and individual work performance are concepts that existed before 2000 and require a process of change over the past decade. Therefore, 112 papers were ultimately excluded. A total of 77 papers meet the requirements. In order to ensure quality and sufficient objectivity, the screening criteria are listed in the Table 2.2 below. These 77 papers will be further screened.

Table 2.2
Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Criteria	Decision
The paper published in a scientific peer-reviewed journal	Inclusion
The paper should be written in the English language	Inclusion
The paper clearly describes the research objectives	Inclusion
The paper includes a literature review, background, and research background	Inclusion
The paper presents the relevant work of previous research to demonstrate the main contribution of this study	Inclusion
The paper describes the proposed model architecture or the methods used	Inclusion
The paper has research results	Inclusion
The paper presents conclusions related to the research objectives/questions	Inclusion
The paper provides suggestions for future work or improvement	Inclusion
Papers that are duplicated within the search documents	Exclusion
Papers that are not accessible, review papers and meta-data	Exclusion
Papers that are not primary/original research	Exclusion
Papers that got published before year?	Exclusion

Table 2.2 show the nine criteria to be included and the four exclusion criteria for the review. These criteria serve as quality testing to further examining the integrity of the selected papaers. These criteria facilitate the screening of suitable literature for this study. Out of 77 papers, 13 met the selection criteria and were included in the analysis.

Data Analysis and Synthesis

After studying the details of each paper, a brief descriptive analysis was conducted on these 13 papers. These studies are coded into the following categories: researchers and publication year, objectives, samples, methods, research background, concepts, and findings. Focusing on the research objective, this paper provides a detailed analysis of the research methods, data, and findings of these papers, and summarizes the innovative points and findings. Following Bozkurt et al. (2015), the review process includes the following stages: 1) Coding (organizing research data into tables); 2) Filter information on factors such as employee engagement, individual work performance, and the size of their intersection, etc; 3) Calculate the frequency of matching codes and compare them within the code, 4) Describe the results.

Result

The research results indicate that most of the studies conducted from 2011 to 2023 used quantitative methods. Based on relevant literature from the past three years, the relationship between the two is known. This study mainly investigates how employee engagement affects the core of individual work performance. To further prove this point, these literature were summarized in stages. For example, Tables 2.3 a mainly summarize the years, types of data sources, research approach and design as well as the origin country of the paper literature.

Table 2.3

General Info about the studies

Criteria	Categories	n	%
Years of publication	2011 – 2015	6	46.2
	2016 – 2020	3	23
	> 2020	4	30.8
Types of data sources (primary vs secondary)	Primary data	10	43.4
	Secondary data	3	56.6
Research Approaches	Quantitative	11	84.6
	Mixed-method	2	15.4
Research Design	Experimental	2	15.4
	Case Study	2	15.4
	Survey-based	9	69.2
Country	China		
	Indonesia		
	Indian		
	Australia		
	Brazilian		
	Malaysia		

From Table 2.3, it can be seen that the overall quality of these papers and the proportion of quantity in terms of publication year, data collection, research methods, and country/region. The selected papers are all from Southeast Asia and Australia, which is consistent with the geographical location of this study. The highest proportion of publications was between 2011 and 2015, accounting for 46.2%. This is because employee engagement and personal work performance were studied earlier and have a solid research foundation. From the perspective of data acquisition, first-hand data accounts for 43.4%, and its role is to ensure the objectivity of research results. From the perspective of research methods, quantitative research accounts for 84.6%. It can be seen that quantitative research methods are generally used to investigate the relationship between the two, and investigations and experiments are the main methods to obtain evidence of the effectiveness of the effect between the two. However, the timeliness of general literature is very important. The 13 papers selected in this study from 2011 to 2015 accounted for the largest proportion, so the quality of the literature in this stage also needs to be considered. Therefore, relevant research method can be obtained from Table 2.4.

Table 2.4

Crosstab

	Quantitative	Qualitative	Mixed-method	Primary	Secondary
2011 – 2015	5	-	1	5	1
2016 – 2020	3	-	-	3	-
> 2020	3	-	1	3	1

This Table 2.4 mainly summarizes the research methods and data methods of these 13 papers based on the timeline as the main standard. This interdisciplinary approach can provide researchers with the degree of application of the main research methods and data collection in literature from different years. Therefore, different research models have emerged in different eras, and it can be seen that there is a connection between the two, which provides strong support for the questions raised in this study. This also indicates that the effect between the two will change with the times, and research needs to be conducted according to the situation at that time to ensure its timeliness and accuracy.

Conclusion

Through the analysis above, it is not difficult to see that other authors who hold the same view are Riyanto (2021), who believe that many scholars have discussed the effect of employee engagement on individual work performance. The main reason is to understand why they actively put in more effort for their work. As Jufrizen (2022), through quantitative research methods, it has been revealed that the two can influence each other, while also emphasizing that employee engagement has always been an important concept in corporate strategy. This is a development of the researcher's viewpoint mentioned above, where Bedarkar analyzes the effect of communication, work life calmness, and leadership on the relationship between employee engagement and individual work performance. This is a popular line of defense in employee engagement research in recent years. However, this study also has certain limitations, such as a slight lack of practical research. Nevertheless, it will provide a latest summary for future research in related fields and promote the development of research in this field.

References

- Alfes, K., Veld, M., & Furstenberg, N. (2020). The relationship between perceived high-performance work systems, combinations of human resource well-being and human resource performance attributions and engagement. *Human Resource Management Journal*.
- Anitha, J. (2014). Determinants of employee engagement and their impact on employee performance. *International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management*, 63(3), 308-323. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJPPM-01-2013-0008>.
- Bedarkar, M., & Pandita, D. (2014). A study on the drivers of employee engagement impacting employee performance. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 133, 106-115.
- Bennett, R. J. and Robinson, S. L. (2000), "Development of a measure of workplace deviance", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 85 No. 3, pp. 349-60.
- Bernard, R. M., Borokhovski, E., & Tamim, R. M. (2014). Detecting bias in meta-analyses of distance education research: big pictures we can rely on. *Distance Education*, 35(3), 271–293.
- Bozkurt, A., Akgun-Ozbek, E., Yilmazel, S., Erdogdu, E., Ucar, H., Guler, E., ... Hakan Aydin, C. (2015). Trends in distance education research: A content analysis of journals 2009-2013. *The International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning*, 16(1), 330–363.
- Campbell, J. P. (1990), "Modeling the performance prediction problem in industrial and organizational psychology", in Dunnette, M.D. and Hough, L.M. (Eds), *Handbook of Industrial and Organizational Psychology*, Consulting Psychologists Press, Palo Alto, CA, pp. 687-732.
- Fuertes, G., Alfaro, M., Vargas, M., Gutierrez, S., Ternerero, R., & Sabattin, J. (2020). Conceptual Framework for the Strategic Management: A Literature Review—Descriptive. *Journal of Engineering*, 2020.
- Giurge, L. M., Bohns, V. K. (2020). Tips to Avoid WFH Burnout, *Harvard Business Review*. 2020. Available online: <https://hbr.org/2020/04/3-tips-to-avoid-wfh-burnout> (accessed on 1 February 2021).
- Guest, D. E., Sanders, K., Rodrigues, R., & Oliveira, T. (2020). Signalling theory as a framework for analyzing human resource management processes and integrating human resource attribution theories: A conceptual analysis and empirical exploration. *Human Resource Management Journal*.
- Han, S., Song, D., Xu, L., Ye, Y., Yan, S., Shi, F., ... & Du, H. (2022). Behaviour in public open spaces: A systematic review of studies with quantitative research methods. *Building and Environment*, 223, 109444.
- Jiang, X., Du, J., Zhou, J., & Cui, Y. (2020). The Impact of Negative Informal Information Before a Change on Performance: A Within Person Approach. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 17(2), 670.
- Jufrizen, J., Rizki, B. O., & Arif, M. (2022). Mediation Role of Work Motivation: Organizational Commitment and Work Engagement on Employee Performance. *International Journal of Business Economics (IJBE)*, 4(1), 18-33.
- Kahn, W. A. (1990). Psychological Conditions of Personal Engagement and Disengagement of Work. *Academy of Management Journal*, 33(4), 692-724. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/256287>

- Koopmans, L., Bernaards, C., Hildebrandt, V., Buuren, S., Beek, A. J., & Vet, H. C. (2012). Development of an individual work performance questionnaire. *International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management*, 62(1), 6–28.
- Macey, W. H., Schneider, B., Barbera, K. M., & Young, S. A. (2009). *Employee engagement: Tools for analysis, practice, and competitive advantage*, Wiley-Blackwell, Malden, WA.
- Maslach, C., Schaufeli, W. B., & Leiter, M. P. (2001). Job burnout. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 52(4), 397–422.
- Mithani, M. A., Gopalakrishnan, S., and Santoro, M. D. (2020), “Does exposure to a traumatic event make organizations resilient”, *Long Range Planning*, Vol. 54 No. 3, doi: 10.1016/j.lrp.2020.102031.
- Mone, E. M., and London, M. (2010). *Employee engagement through effective performance management: A practical guide for managers*, Routledge, New York, NY.
- Petrović, I., B., Vukelić, M., & Čizmić, S. (2017). Work engagement in Serbia: Psychometric properties of the Serbian version of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES). *Frontiers in Psychology*, 8, 1799. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2017.01799>.
- Podsakoff, P. M., MacKenzie, S. B., Moorman, H., & Fetter, R. (1990). Leader behaviors and their effects on followers’ trust in leader, satisfaction, and citizenship behaviors. *Leadership Quarterly*, 1(2), 107–142.
- Rana, S., Pant, D., & Chopra, P. (2019). Work engagement and individual work performance: Research findings and an agenda for employee relationships. *Journal of Emerging Technologies and Innovative Research*, 6(5), 17-32.
- Rich, B. L., Lepine, J. A., & Crawford, E. R. (2010). Job Engagement: Antecedents and Effects on Job Performance. *Academy of Management Journal*, 53(3), 617-635. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5465/AMJ.2010.51468988>
- Riyanto, S., Endri, E., & Herlisha, N. (2021). Effect of work motivation and job satisfaction on employee performance: Mediating role of employee engagement. *Problems and Perspectives in Management*, 19(3), 162.
- Sanchez-Gomez, M., & Bresó, E. (2020). In pursuit of work performance: Testing the contribution of emotional intelligence and burnout. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 17(15), 5373.
- Schaufeli, W. B. and Bakker, A. B. (2004), “Job demands, job resources, and their relationship with burnout and engagement: a multi-sample study”, *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, Vol. 25, pp. 293-315.
- Schaufeli, W. B. (2015). Employee engagement. In *Wiley Encyclopedia of Management* 1-3, <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118785317.weom050021>.
- Williams, L. J., & Anderson, S. E. (1991). Job satisfaction and organizational commitment as predictors of organizational citizenship and in-role behaviors. *Journal of Management*, 17(3), 601–617.