

A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF WORK ENGAGEMENT OUTCOMES: A
STUDY AMONG IT PROFESSIONALS IN INDIA



A THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE FELLOW PROGRAMME IN MANAGEMENT
INDIAN INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT, INDORE

BY

ANUPAMA SHARMA [2010FPM02]

MARCH 2015

THESIS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

PROF. RANJEET NAMBU DIRI

[CHAIRPERSON]

PROF. PATTURAJA SELVARAJ.

[MEMBER]

PROF. ASHISH SADH

[MEMBER]

ABSTRACT

Work engagement has received a great deal of attention in the last decade in the popular business press and among consulting firms and the practitioner community. They claim work engagement is a new human resource practice that business organizations can use in order to achieve the various positive individual level and organizational level outcomes. However, in the academic community, the concept warrants further exploration. Given that practical interest in work engagement has outstripped the currently available research evidences, questions such as 'how engaged employees create resourceful work environment' and 'if engaged employees also experience negative repercussions' , still require answers.

Through our study we try to critically examine the work engagement outcomes. Literature suggests that engaged employees engage in active efforts and tend to maintain and mobilize their personal and work resources. We propose that such efforts will result into proactive and inventive behavior such as job crafting and innovativeness. We also postulate the existence of some dysfunctional outcomes of being highly engaged. We propose that engagement may result into conflicts as well, such as work-family conflict and job-leisure conflict because of the tendency of engaged employees to experience work overload and time constraint.

This study has empirically tested relationships among work engagement and discussed the consequences of work engagement. In particular, this study has provided theory-based empirical evidence regarding whether engaged employees get involved in outcome behavior which have not been examined earlier, also, if there is a

downside to work engagement. We base our discussion and arguments in Job-demands and Resource (JDR) theoretical model, conservation of resources (COR) theory. Field data from 377 working IT professionals were collected using the survey method. Data analysis with the help of partial least squares (PLS) technique supported most of hypotheses from the model. A possible explanation is given to the hypothesis, not being supported.

Given that work engagement is an important current issue, the findings should provide practical implications for IT industry. This thesis discussion will contribute in improving the understanding of work engagement. The findings will also help to draw a more complete picture of how work engagement is associated with its outcomes. A discussion on research limitations, and future research will help in identifying the new directions and extend the research. This study is an attempt towards a better understanding of work engagement, and also to the positive psychology literature.

Keywords: Work engagement, Job crafting, Work-family conflict, Job leisure conflict

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