

Predicting Faculty Member's Work Engagement in Indonesia: Testing the Role of Optimism, Perceived Organizational Support and Self-efficacy

Aditya Nanda Priyatama, Muhamad Zainudin and Seger Handoyo
Faculty of Psychology, Airlangga University, Surabaya, Indonesia

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Abstract: One of the influential human resources on the quality development of higher education in Indonesia is the faculty member. A faculty member's role, is to achieve the objective of the national education—to educate the nation and improve the quality of cultured and civilized Indonesians. A faculty member's contribution for the higher education in Indonesia becomes important if it is done effectively with the appropriate behavior. Not only in the quantity, but also on the direction of the effort, the characteristics within the faculty member, the effort or willingness to complete a task, and many other things supported by the higher education institution becomes significantly meaningful for the success of a faculty member's performance. Therefore, each faculty member has to identify each of their responsibility, performance, and be able to measure their own success indicators. One of the factors that may improve the performance of an organization is through looking at how far the faculty members' engagement is. A number of studies related to engagement are the perceived organizational support and optimism. This study aimed at seeing some psychological constructs related to the perception of organizational supports and optimism has an influence on faculty member's engagement by using self-efficacy mediator variable on a state university's faculty members in Surakarta. The sample used in this research are 393 faculty members of *Universitas Sebelas Maret Surakarta*. Data analysis used Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) with Lisrel 8.70 program. The results of the analysis showed a fit model and there was a significant influence on the perceived organizational support and optimism on faculty members' engagement by the mediation of self-efficacy. This indicated that self-efficacy was significant mediator to the perception of organizational support and optimism with faculty members' engagement. Thus, self-efficacy became essential in improving faculty members' engagement. This study affirmed self-efficacy as significant mediator in improving faculty members' engagement to organization

1 INTRODUCTION

One of the human resources that has an influence on the quality development process of higher education institutions in Indonesia is the faculty member. The faculty member is one of the essential components that has the role to achieve the objectives of the national education—to educate the nation and able to improve the quality of civilized Indonesians. Following the Law No. 14 of 2005 on school teachers and faculty members, it is explained that faculty members are a professional lecturer and scholar with the main task to transform, develop, and disseminate knowledge, technology, and arts through education, research, and community development or what are usually called as the three pillars of higher education.

To achieve organizational success, an appropriate effort is needed, to maintain the human resources within the organization. One of the possible efforts is engagement. Engagement is an individual's obedience toward the organization, in relation to the vision, mission, and the organization's objectives on the work process. Work engagement in a faculty member is built through process; it takes a long time and high commitment from the leaders and the individuals. To achieve that, a leader's consistency in mentoring the employees and faculty members is required. In creating work engagement, an organization's leader is expected to have certain competences. Some of the competences are communication technique, feedback giving technique on anything that has been done, and performance appraisal technique (McBain, 2007).

A number of researches have studied the characteristics of work context—discussing work engagement. However, some personal characteristics may also influence engagement. For instance, when an individual is optimistic about the future, engagement is more likely to occur (Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2007). Their study discussed the roles of three personal resources (self-efficacy, self-efficacy-based organization, and optimism) in predicting employee engagement. Their research results concluded that when employees are effectively participating, they believe they can fulfill given expectations in a series of contexts. Moreover, participating employees believe that they generally receive better results in their lives (optimist) and meet their needs by participating in the organizational roles. Furthermore, the three personal resources also uniquely contribute to explaining the variants within employee engagement from time to time, beyond the impact of the work's source and the previous engagement level (Bakker, Schaufeli, Leiter, & Taris, 2008).

The studies above show various relationships with employee engagement. Current research makes effort to look at several theoretical constructs that can be related to work engagement; one of them is psychological capital. Psychological capital is a positive state of a person's psychological condition, which consists of the characteristics of self-efficacy in all tasks given, optimism, hope, and resilience (Luthans et al., 2007).

Schaufeli and Bakker (2003) explained that work engagement is basically influenced by two factors, job demand-resources (JD-R) model and psychological capital. JD-R Model includes several aspects, such as physical condition, social, and organization, salary, career opportunity, supervisor and colleague support, and performance feedback. Meanwhile, psychological capital consists of self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience. This research does not only seek for looking at the influence of optimism and perceived organizational support on work engagement, but also to look at how far the factors related to self-efficacy can mediate for the relationships between the two. Self-efficacy is suspected to become mediator for a maximum achievement for psychological capital in acquiring employee engagement. Efficacy is widely known to come from 4 proposed main sources relevant to employee engagement. An individual having high efficacy is identified from their persistence in surviving, motivated by the belief on their future success. Low efficacy arises to predict burnout, the opposite of engagement. Therefore, it is

believed that the higher self-efficacy, the higher employee engagement in an individual.

Eisenberger et al.'s (1986) study suggested that perceived organizational support (POS) improved the employee's emotional bond with the organization. In their research, Eisenberger et al. (1986) defined POS as a form of employees' certainty on the organization, that organization appreciates the employees' efforts and contributions, and cares about their prosperity. The employees with fulfilled socioemotional needs would be more committed to the organization than those who did not.

2 METHOD

2.1 Participants

Subjects of this research are 393 faculty members from 10 faculties in *Universitas Sebelas Maret* Surakarta, with the criteria of having minimum 2-year experience working as faculty members at *Universitas Sebelas Maret*. Samples in this research are state university's faculty member in Surakarta with following characteristics: (1) faculty member with the academic rank of minimum *Asisten Ahli*, (2) work experience of minimum 2 years, (3) Age 30-65 years old.

2.2 Procedures

Tryout in this research by disseminating 400 booklets of research scales to 400 faculty members working at *Universitas Sebelas Maret* Surakarta. After approximately 3 months of the scale dissemination, the researchers collected 375 exemplars of the scale, 20 of them were broken scales due to incomplete filling, so the scales available to be processed for discriminatory power and reliability testing were 355 scales. After reliability and validity tests, researchers acquired the scale to be given to the 400 faculty members as research subjects. Among 400 scales disseminated to the faculty member, 7 were incompletely filled, leaving 393 scales available to be analyzed. In other words, the samples used in current research as subjects were 393 faculty members.

2.3 Measures

Current research used 4 research scales, which are perceived organizational support scale, work engagement scale, self-efficacy scale, and optimism

scale. Perceived organizational support scale is a psychology scale based on aspects referring to the survey of perceived organizational support from Eisenberger et al. (1986) with 29 items. Those aspects are caring for prosperity, response to difficulties, caring for work performance, and response to ideas and opinions. One of the POS scale items is "the University assists me to optimally improve my achievement according to my ability". Work engagement scale used was adaptation of UWES (Utrecht Work Engagement Scale) with 17 items based on the aspects formulated by Schaufeli et al. (2002), consisting vigor, dedication, and absorption. One of the items for work engagement scale is "I feel so ardent during my work".

Self-efficacy scale was composed by using the aspects formulated by Bandura (1977), such as: magnitude, generality, and strength, which consisted of 9 favorable items and 9 unfavorable items. One of the items in self-efficacy scale is "I am certain of my ability in completing my work, despite being under work pressure. Optimism scale used in this research, was arranged based on the optimism specifications formulated by Seligman (1990) with 17 items using the permanent, pervasiveness, and personalization aspects. One of the items in optimism scale is "I believe that the problem I faced can be well-solved in time".

All four scales mentioned were Likert-model scales, each having the characteristics of four alternative responses separated into favorable and unfavorable statements moving from very inappropriate to very appropriate. On the POS scale index, the discriminatory power of the items ranged from 0.468 to 0.799 with the Cronbach alpha of 0.965. In work engagement scale index, the items' discriminatory power ranged from 0.250 to 0.491 with the Cronbach alpha of 0.768. In self-efficacy scale index, the items' discriminatory power ranged from 0.404 to 0.655 with the Cronbach alpha of 0.899. In optimism scale, the index of the discriminatory power ranged from 0.348 to 0.625 with the Cronbach alpha of 0.874. By using the confirmatory factor analysis, the scales' items were found to be valid and reliable as shown in the table below

Table 1: Confirmatory Factor Analysis of Work Engagement Scale.

Indicator	λ	t_{λ}	$1-\epsilon$	$t_{1-\epsilon}$	Note
E1	0.98	0.46	0,04	0.01	Valid, reliable
E2	0.62	0.28	0.61	0.12	Valid, reliable
E3	0.66	0.35	0.56	0.15	Valid, reliable

Table 2: Confirmatory Factor Analysis Perceived Organizational Support Scale.

Indicator	λ	t_{λ}	$1-\epsilon$	$t_{1-\epsilon}$	Note
POS1	0.79	18.61	0.37	12.49	Valid, reliable
POS2	0.87	21.53	0.24	11.10	Valid, reliable
POS3	0.93	24.20	0.13	7.62	Valid, reliable
POS4	0.91	22.92	0.18	9.67	Valid, reliable

Table 3: Confirmatory Factor Analysis Self-Efficacy Scale.

Indicator	λ	t_{λ}	$1-\epsilon$	$t_{1-\epsilon}$	Note
EFI1	0.83	19.07	0.32	9.70	Valid, reliable
EFI2	0.87	20.29	0.25	8.02	Valid, reliable
EFI3	0.85	19.78	0.28	8.76	Valid, reliable

Table 4: Confirmatory Factor Analysis Optimism Scale.

Indicator	λ	t_{λ}	$1-\epsilon$	$t_{1-\epsilon}$	Note
OPT1	0.79	17.08	0.38	9.47	Valid, reliable
OPT2	0.88	19.70	0.22	5.45	Valid, reliable
OPT3	0.74	19.58	0.45	10.77	Valid, reliable

From all four Confirmatory Factor Analysis, data were found that to score manifest variable (observed) that forms latent variable, it can be done by testing structural coefficient that results from t-test. Other than through the t-test, a standardized solution was also used. The overall result of the t-test and standardized solution shows that the items were valid and reliable.

3 RESULT

Based on the performed model test, it shows that the occurred model was declared fit. Some characteristics for goodness of fit show that fit can be seen on the fit test model table below:

Tabel 5: Goodness of fit model.

Statistics	Value	Fit Criteria	Note
Chi Square	0.000	$p > 0.05$	Not fit
RMSEA	0.008	≤ 0.1	Fit
GFI	0.92	> 0.9	Fit
SRMR	0.045	< 0.05	Fit
AGFI	0.88	> 0.9	Not fit
PGFI	0.62	> 0.9	Not fit
NFI	0.98	> 0.9	Fit
NNFI	0.98	> 0.9	Fit
PNFI	0.76	> 0.9	Not fit
CFI	0.98	> 0.9	Fit
IFI	0.98	> 0.9	Fit
RFI	0.97	> 0.9	Fit

From the result of fit model above, it can be seen that some criteria of fit model have been achieved, which are on the criteria of RMSEA, GFI, SRMR, NFI, NNFI, CFI, IFI, and RFI are indicated as fit. T-test model can be seen from the figure below:

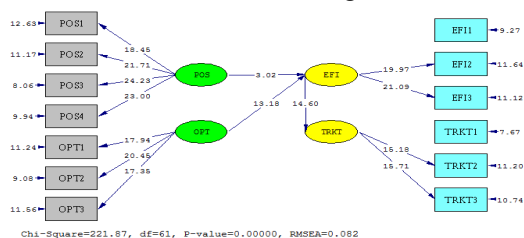


Figure 1: T-test Model.

Meanwhile, the standardized solution can be seen from the figure below:

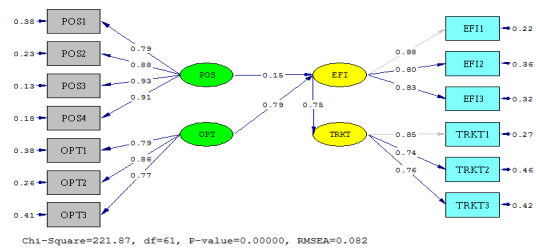


Figure 2: Standardized Solution Model.

4 DISCUSSION

The research we conducted looked at a number of theoretical constructs that can be related to work engagement, one of them is psychological capital. Psychological capital is a positive psychological condition of a person that consists the characteristics of self-efficacy in all tasks, optimism, hope, and resilience (Luthans et al., 2007).

The research result supports Schaufeli & Bakker (2003) who mentioned that work engagement is basically influenced by two factors, job demand-resources model (JD-R) and psychological capital. JD-R Model consists of a number of aspects, such as physical condition, social, organization, salary, career opportunity, supervisor and colleagues' supports, and also performance feedback. Meanwhile, for psychological capital, it consists of self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience.

Sweetman and Luthans (cited in Bakker and Leiter, 2010) discuss that there is a positive influence between efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience with work engagement. Efficacy is widely known to come from 4 main sources that can be proposed according to employee engagement. An individual who has high efficacy is usually marked with their persistence to survive, driven by their belief in their future's success. Low *efficacy* appears to predict burnout, the opposite of engagement. Therefore, the higher the self-efficacy within an individual's self, then it is believed that employee engagement on an organization is also higher. According to Bandura (1977), self-efficacy is a belief that someone can fulfill the required behaviors to produce a successful result. Furthermore, Saks and Gruman's (2011) study mention that self-

efficacy is an important factor to bind an individual. They found that there is a positive relationship between job fit perceptions, positive emotions and self-efficacy with employee engagement on new employees. A newly joining individuals with high self-efficacy in an organization tend to feel more secure and psychologically willing to bind themselves with their new roles (Saks and Gruman, 2011).

On the optimism side, our research is also in line with Seligman's (Seligman & Schulman, 1986) opinion that figures optimism as an attribute measured based on explanatory style. An optimistic individual who believe they can achieve their success will have a more general (I can be successful from one scope to another), consistent (I can always succeed), and internal (I created this success) attitudes. When they face failure, the individual will have a specific, inconsistent, and external attitude. Another explanation on optimism was discussed by Carver and Scheier (2003) that an optimistic individual expects for good thing to happen to themselves, they have significant attitude and cognitive. It is important to notice that psychological capital sets for a realistic value of optimism, since an unrealistic optimism may lead to a negative result (Seligman, 1998). An optimistic individual is responsible on what has been done and hopes for a positive result. A good psychological availability will improve engagement (Kahn, 1990). Overall, the optimism component of psychological capital is directly related to service and absorption component of work engagement.

In its relationship with education institution, the result of this research shows that optimism is needed to improve and develop education institutions. Current human resources in education institution is also expected to have optimism attitude.

The studies of Christian and Slaughter (2007); Halbesleben (2010) (cited in Albrecht et al. (2010) mention some predictors of engagement, such as social supports, self-efficacy, optimism, and organization climate. Self-efficacy and optimism have the roles to improve employee engagement with the support of conducive organization climate. A conducive climate is acquired if the employees perceived their organization to provide supports on the work performed by the employees. The studies above show strong influence between self-efficacy and optimism that support our research.

Wiley et al. (2010, cited in Albrecht, 2010) also found some facts that work engagement can be well-formed when the individuals within the organization are highly motivated and have the opportunity to

develop. An organization has the participation in providing opportunity for an individual to improve, and without it there is no way an individual has an engagement their organization. The study's result also has a relationship with our research results. One of the efforts made by the organization to maximize the potentials within the organization is by providing the opportunity for the individuals to develop well, so the individuals will maximize their all potential abilities to develop their organization.

Sweetman and Luthans (2010, cited in Baker and Leiter, 2010) mention that their preliminary research indicated that between self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience in their relationships with work engagement, there was a mediator variable, which is positive emotion. Specifically, a high positive emotion will improve the influence of self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resilience on work employee engagement. Sweetman and Luthans (2010) mention that this positive emotion is related to employees' behavior within the organization. Halbesleben (2010), Baker and Leiter (2010) contend that their hypotheses related to social support, autonomy, feedback, positive climate of an organization, and self-efficacy have been proven. From their research results, there is a relationship between autonomy and self-efficacy that has a high relationship with work engagement. Xanthopoulou et al. (2009a, cited in Baker and Leiter, 2010) argue that personal resources, which consists of self-efficacy, optimism, and work resources such as work autonomy, supervisory coaching, performance feedback, and employee development opportunity has a high relationship with work engagement. Both personal resources and work resources complete each other in providing positive contributions for the development of work engagement. In another research, Xanthopoulou et al. (2009b) investigate that self-efficacy and optimism are two of a number of criteria to make meaning out of work engagement.

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