

Literature Review
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LEADER COMMUNICATION STYLE AND COACHING BEHAVIOIRS EFFECTS ON VITRUAL WORKER'S ENGAEMENT

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Research topic

Engagement has emerged in both the academic and practitioner literature as a topic generating considerable interest (Macey & Schneider, 2008). Scholars vary in their use and definition of the terms job, employee, or work engagement (Saks, 2006; Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Romá, & Bakker, 2002). For purposes of this study, work engagement has been defined as a positive and rewarding state of mind characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli, Salanova, et al., 2002). Work engagement has been linked to positive organizational outcomes such as financial returns (Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2009b), organizational citizenship behaviors (Babcock-Roberson & Strickland, 2010), and job performance (Halbesleben & Wheeler, 2008). Work engagement may be enhanced through job resources. Job resources are the physical, social, or organizational aspects of a job that (a) support the worker in attaining work related goals, (b) decrease job demands and associated physical and psychological cost of those demands, and (c) cultivate personal growth and development (Bakker, 2011; Chughtai & Buckley, 2008). Leader behaviors may affect work engagement through the promotion or cultivation of job resources (Kopperud, Martinsen, & Humborstad, 2014; Schaufeli, 2015; Tims, Bakker, & Xanthopoulou, 2011). Leader behaviors in the virtual work environment differ from leader behaviors in traditional face-to-face work environments (Avolio, Sosik, Kahai, & Baker, 2014; Kelley & Kelloway, 2012). Organizational decision-makers should select and prepare leaders for virtual work environments based on knowledge of effective communication and coaching behaviors, which may cultivate work engagement in virtual workers. This study considers the relationship between leaders' behaviors and virtual workers' engagement.

Literature review

While the theory of engagement emerged from Kahn's (1990) qualitative study, a review of the literature demonstrated that the construct has taken time to be recognized as a distinct and "useful construct meriting further attention" (Christian, Garza, & Slaughter, 2011, p. 125). Maslach et al. (2001) contended engagement was a distinct construct from other constructs such as organizational commitment, job satisfaction, or

job involvement and useful for understanding employee well-being. Macey and Schneider (2008) highlighted questions about the unique nature of the construct and pointed out the need for further development and measurements of the construct. In response to Macey and Schneider (2008), Newman and Harrison (2008) argued that work engagement is not a unique construct and instead proposed it is likely part of a higher order job attitude construct consisting also of job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and job involvement. As part of this higher order job attitude construct, Newman and Harrison (2008) suggested work engagement is a latent concept that promotes positive behavioral outcomes. While Newman and Harrison (2008) contrasted items from the Utrecht Work Engagement (UWES) scale referenced by Macey and Schneider (2008) against the Organizational Commitment Scale, the Overall Job Satisfaction scale, the Job Affect scale, Positive and Negative Affect Schedule, Job Involvement questionnaire, Job Involvement scale, and Work Involvement questionnaire, they did not actually include the UWES or any engagement measures in their 2006 meta analyses comparison on a job attitudes (Harrison, Newman, & Roth, 2006).

Hallberg and Schaufeli (2006) found empirical evidence to indicate work engagement was a related yet distinct construct from job involvement and organizational commitment. In their study using Confirmatory Factor Analyses (CFA) on a sample consisting of 186 international IT, project managers, and management consultants on employee health and motivation, Hallberg and Schaufeli (2006) distinguished the three constructs as unique and distinct. Job satisfaction measures indicate the degree to which individuals are satisfied with their work yet does not account for the active absorption aspect of engagement (Macey & Schneider, 2008). Karanika-Murray, Duncan, Pontes, and Griffiths (2015) found work engagement mediated the relationship between organizational identification and job satisfaction in their study of 177 employees from three United Kingdom organizations. However, this study did not directly compare work engagement with job satisfaction. Saks (2006) contended that while practitioners may conflate the construct with other measures, the academic literature is clear in considering engagement “a distinct and unique construct that consists of cognitive, emotional and behavioral components that are associated with individual performance” (p. 602).

Job Demand-Resources Theory

The job demands-resources theory served as the secondary theoretical framework for this study. Vogt, Hakanen, Jenny, and Bauer (2015) contended, “the motivational path to work engagement is most commonly examined in the context of the job demand-resource model” (p. 194). The job demands-resources model (Demerouti et al., 2001) was developed to understand how job demands and job resources explained various components of burnout. The model integrated stress and motivation research traditions (Demerouti & Bakker, 2011). The model has proven useful in profiling various job demands and job resources in multiple settings in research (Brauchli, Schaufeli, Jenny, Fülleman, & Bauer, 2013; ter Hoeven & van Zoonen, 2015). The job demands-resources model has been used as a research framework for work engagement for the last 15 years. Job demands are those aspects of a job that demand sustained physical or mental efforts and therefore are associated with physiological or psychological costs (Demerouti et al., 2001). Job resources are those

aspects of a job that support work goal attainment, reduce job demands, or support individual growth, learning, or development (Demerouti et al., 2001).

Coaching

Research on coaching has expanded considerably in recent years. Evidence-based coaching was a term coined to differentiate between coaching based upon an empirical and theoretical knowledge base and coaching that evolved from self-help, pseudo-psychology genre (Grant, 2016). Evidence-based coaching literature on leadership and executive coaching are prolific. A recent search of the Capella Library of the terms evidence based coaching and leadership or executive coaching resulted in over 13,000 scholarly and peer reviewed journal articles. Research on managerial coaching, while not as voluminous, is expanding.

Employee well-being and organizational outcomes are affected by leader behaviors (Kim, Egan, Kim, & Kim, 2013; Schaufeli, 2015). Managerial coaching behaviors are of interest to researchers and practitioners in that these behaviors have the potential to improve performance at the individual, team, and organizational level (Hagen, 2010; Liu & Batt, 2010). While many organizations view coaching as a necessary skill for leaders (Ladyshevsky, 2010) not all leaders may view coaching as a primary job responsibility (Beattie et al., 2014). Some leaders may see it as the responsibility of human resources (Beattie et al., 2014) while others may lack the competency or skills needed to effectively act as a managerial coach (Ellinger, Hamlin, & Beattie, 2008).

No common definition of or approaches to managerial coaching currently exists (Ellinger & Kim, 2014; Hagen & Peterson, 2015). Ellinger, Ellinger, and Keller (2003) suggest managerial coaching should be focused upon facilitation of learning and empowering. Heslin, Vandewalle and Latham (2006) contend that managerial coaching incorporates guidance, facilitations, and inspiration. Gregory and Levy (2010) hold that the quality of the coaching relationship is of particular importance and define coaching as the one on one work between the employee and manager resulting in improved job performance or enhanced capabilities of the employee.

With no common definition, the coaching literature appears to be split on how best to measure managerial coaching. Hagen (2015) contends that given the impact of coaching upon performance, a means of measuring managerial coaching expertise needed. The Coaching Behaviors Inventory (Ellinger et al., 2003) focused upon the behaviors exhibited by the manager. This scale was later renamed the Ellinger Behavioral Scales and measures manager's actions and experiences that exhibit coaching. The Measurement Model of Coaching Skills (McLean, Baiyin, Min-Hsun, Tolbert, & Larkin, 2005) focused on the knowledge and skills of the manager that are assumed to result in coaching. This scale was revised and validated by Park, McLean, and Yang and now referred to as the Park Skill-based Scale (Hagen, 2015).

Synthesis of the research findings

Worker engagement is known to be affected by leadership and to enhance job performance and organizational outcomes in traditional work settings (Babcock-Roberson & Strickland, 2010; Demerouti & Cropanzano, 2010; Schaufeli, 2015). Work

engagement has been studied at the individual and group level. Yet little research has demonstrated how engagement is affected by leadership in the virtual work environment.

Avolio, Kahai, and Dodge (2000) described e-leadership as “a social influence process mediated by AIT to produce a change in attitudes, feelings, thinking, behavior, and performance with individuals, groups, and/or organizations” (p. 617). Bonet Fernandez and Jawadi (2015) argue e-leaders should attend to accessibility and effective use of technology to support work goals in that these “are the exclusive means of communication in the absence of face to face interaction” (p. 1696). Further, e-leaders should reduce challenges associated with time and space issues among virtual workers, which requires both technical and social considerations (Bonet et al., 2015; Sarker & Sahay, 2004).

While research on managerial coaching is evolving, a gap in the existing literature relates to ‘virtual’ or ‘e-coaching’ (Beattie et al., 2014; Filsinger, 2014). Coaching in the virtual workplace may be synchronous or asynchronous. Synchronous coaching may be dependent upon the availability of technical resources (Filsinger, 2014). Technically mature organizations may provide more advanced information technology to support coaching efforts. Organizations with fewer technological resources or leaders who do not utilize available resources must rely upon asynchronous virtual coaching.

According to Cameron and Webster (2005), “rich media are those that provide instant feedback, allow for verbal and non-verbal cues, use natural language, and convey emotion,” (p.91). Hambley, O’Neil, and Kline (2007) found that using media rich AIT among virtual teams resulted in improved team efficiency over text-based media. Epley and Kruger (2005) found that text-based media is more likely to be misinterpreted due to the receiver’s expectancies and stereotypes. Text-based communication, such as email, is more ambiguous than voice communication. Voice communication allows for paralinguistic cues such as inflection, pronunciation, vocal expression, fluency, and tone all of which provide added meaning to the receiver (Epley & Kruger, 2005). Cameron and Webster (2005) suggest rich media usage is best when conveying ambiguous ideas or concepts. Maynard, Mathieu, Rapp, and Gilson (2012) suggest that as more individuals who have grown up with rich media technology enter the workforce, incorporating these into the work place will become the norm. What the research literature does not address is if e-leader style of communication or coaching behaviors affects work engagement for individual virtual workers.

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