

Work Engagement and Work Meaning among Accountancy, Business, and Management (ABM) Faculty

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Abstract – Finding meaning in what employees do has long been one of life's great existential dilemmas. In fact, some people have spent their entire lives attempting to determine what their work's purpose is. Due to the different, and in some cases growing, needs of employees, to maintain their interest in and enjoyment of working, employers must consider approaches to improve productivity and performance at work. Employers must continue to preserve the interest among employees, to increase productivity and performance at work. Meaningful work has long been acknowledged as a crucial motivator for employee engagement. While engagement has been defined in a variety of ways, no single definition of work meaning has been accepted by researchers. The question of meaning cannot be reduced to simply a new objective for companies that will benefit employees. This study aimed to investigate the relationships between the psychological meaningfulness of work and work engagement. A descriptive approach utilizing a cross-sectional survey design of the population of 115 ABM faculty in the first district of Batangas was employed. No significant differences were shown when work engagement was compared in terms of sex, civil status and educational attainment. In terms of age, a significant difference was observed for vigor and dedication while for years employed, a significant difference was revealed for all 3 domains. The results confirmed a moderate and positive relationship between psychological meaningfulness and work engagement.

Keywords – ABM, Work Engagement, Work Meaning

INTRODUCTION

Work engagement has become a global issue that many countries consider it a top human capital concern worldwide. It is capable of hampering company operations as a result of workers' negative work experience. It has been pointed out by research that only about one out of every eight employees is completely engaged and enthusiastic about his job. This is among the many reasons why work engagement requires the primary attention of business leaders around the world. Work engagement is considered to be an important requirement in achieving long-term growth for companies, communities, countries, and consequently the economy. Employees who cannot find meaning in what they are doing are the same employees who are not engaged, needing extra push to perform their functions. When workers find meaning in their jobs, they become more committed to them. Work engagement and work meaning, which differ among employees at different workplaces, decide how well employees perform their

functions. Their experiences of emotional meaningfulness, safety, and feelings of importance from their employment determine to a certain extent how much of themselves they will give to their employment. Van Wingerden and Poell [1], stated that every employee tries to find meaning in their lives, including the experience of working in a meaningful workplace. More than money, employees value work meaning from other employment attributes such as job security, promotions, and working hours. Based on literature reviews, Martela and Pessi [2] defined main themes and recurrent elements of work meaning: first, the three distinct dimensions to which different researchers usually refer when talking about meaningful work; these are importance, broader intent, and self-realization. In addition to this, the authors hope to advance a theory by proposing a relationship between them. Important work, according to them, consists of three elements: the subjective impression of work as fundamentally meaningful and worthwhile,

the sense of being able to understand oneself via work and work serving a greater purpose.

Teachers today are expected to be super humans capable of meeting a multitude of demands from students, parents, principals, and the community, making their work environment hostile and toxic. With so much attention focused on them, there is a need for a leader capable of supporting them to make them fully engaged teachers in this type of climate. MacTavish and Kolb [3] stated that the pressure on teachers has become intense with increasing scrutiny and public dissatisfaction with the quality of education. In their research, Rajendran, Watt, and Richardson [4] found that high correlations between teacher turnover intent and job demands exist. Those job demands (workload and managing student misbehavior) and the personal demand of work-family conflict were positively correlated with emotional exhaustion and burnout. It would take highly engaged teachers to be able to deal with these problems.

There are varying weaknesses and strengths in the specific areas of work engagement and work meaning across jobs. According to Sahito and Vaisanen [5], teachers seem to suffer from high dissatisfaction levels, high turnover, and low work engagement levels compared to all other employees from other industries. The current pandemic brought by COVID19 has more than doubled the various requirements teachers have to finish and submit on time. To meet all of these requirements, they must fulfill multiple duties and responsibilities and their primary responsibility of providing classroom instruction. On this basis, this research was conducted to validate work engagement and work meaning among Accountancy, Business, and Management (ABM) teachers in the first district of Batangas.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of the research was to explore work engagement, and work meaning by Accountancy, Business, and Management (ABM) teachers in the first district of Batangas and come up with an action plan to heighten their engagement.

Specifically, it described the respondents' profile in terms of age, sex, civil status, highest educational attainment, years employed, and tenure. Workplace engagement was also defined in terms of energy, devotion, and absorption, as well as job meaning in the economic, social, and psychological domains. Responses were compared when they are grouped by profile variables to determine if there

are significant differences and the correlation between employee engagement and work meaning. Lastly, it proposed an action plan to enhance work engagement and work meaning of Accountancy, Business and Management (ABM) teachers in the first district of Batangas.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study utilized the descriptive method of research. The descriptive design is concerned with the description of data and characteristics about the population. The goal is factual, accurate, and systematic data that can be used in averages, frequencies, and similar statistical calculations. Descriptive research is an appropriate choice in this study since the researcher aims to identify characteristics of the respondents. Also, not much has been written about the topics of work engagement, work meaning and the relationship between the two in local literature and descriptive research helped the researcher understand the why's, the how's the when's and where's about work engagement and work meaning.

Participants

Respondents in this study were the ABM teachers in the first district of Batangas. Purposive sampling was used since the number of ABM teachers are relatively small. Total enumeration was used where a total of 115 respondents participated.

Instrument

A 3-part survey questionnaire was used in the study. Part I required the respondents to indicate their demographic profile such as: age, gender, civil status, highest educational attainment, years employed, and tenure. Part II assessed work engagement of the respondents using the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale-9 [UWES-9]. Work engagement have three (3) domains namely: Vigor (VI), Dedication (DE) and Absorption (AB). Part III which included items about work meaning was sourced from The Workplace PERMA Profiler authored by Margaret L. Kern, University of Pennsylvania. Work engagement have three (3) domains namely: Economic domain, social domain and Psychological Domain.

Procedures

Construction of the questionnaire and other matters including the industry of focus were personally done with the adviser. As soon as the questionnaire is

approved, a test survey was done on selected respondents for internal validation (Cronbach alpha). The Cronbach alpha coefficient for work engagement was 0.86; and 0.82 for work meaning scale. These indicate acceptable internal consistency reliability. Ethical standards on conducting research with human as respondents will be duly followed in the conduct of the study. Retrieval of the questionnaires follows, after which data analyses follow.

Data Analysis

The researcher used frequency count, weighted mean, linear correlation analysis Pearson-r), independent t-test and ANOVA in analyzing the data using SPSS, Ver 21.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1.
Summary Table on Work Engagement

Domain	CM	VI
Vigor	3.05	Agree
Dedication	3.05	Agree
Absorption	2.95	Agree

Table 1 shows the summary of the respondents’ perception of the three domains of work engagement. The composite mean values indicate their agreement to their work engagement. Vigor and dedication have the same rating of 3.05 and were verbally interpreted as agree. This is an indication of how engaged teachers are inside their classrooms. Vigor as a driver of work engagement is reflected in the teachers’ dispositions (energy) leading to dedication. The researcher believes that physical, and emotional energy are manifestations of teachers’ involvement at work which are important in enhancing students’ development. According to Okeke and Mtyuda [7] teacher enthusiasm is generally recognized as one of the most essential and desirable qualities and characteristics of effective teachers which connotes that the teacher is motivating, energetic, passionate, and dynamic. Kaplan [7] stated in his article entitled “Every Great Teacher Has These 7 Qualities in Common,” that dedication is perhaps the most obvious characteristics a good teacher should have.

Table 2
Summary Table on Work Meaning

Domain	CM	VI
Social	3.06	Very Often
Psychological	3.17	Very Often
Economic	2.87	Very Often

Table 2 shows the summary of the respondents’ assessment of work meaning. The results show that the psychological domain ranked 1st, with a rating of 3.17. This was followed by the social and economic domains, having a weighted mean of 3.06 and 2.87, respectively. The three fields had a verbal interpretation of very often. Psychological and social domains ranked 1st and 2nd since both are highly concerned with teaching to society. Social domain, is concerned with teaching having a great potential to transform the society while psychological domain, makes the teachers happy because of what they are contributing to the society. Economic domain was ranked least in the summary table, indicating that although teachers consider teaching a source of income, their obligation to their society comes first. This makes teachers different from other employees. While other employees make engagement to get salary increases and promotions, teachers including those in underdeveloped countries although, poorly remunerated continue to make invaluable contributions to their communities, and to society at large, engaging in services with selfless love and dedication that are priceless.

Nenty, et al, [8] stated that teachers consider teaching an essential service to every society and civilization. The service provided by teaching seems to be more indispensable to any community than services provided by any other profession. To those that teach, the way they perceive themselves and the value of their services tend to make a lot of difference.

Table 3.
Correlation Analyses Between Work Engagement and Work Meaning

Variables	r-Coeff	I	Sig	I
W.Eng. Meaning	0.540	Moderate, Positive	0.0	S

Table 3 presents the correlation analyses between work engagement and work meaning. Results show that there is positive, moderate relationship between the 2 variables. The positive coefficient indicates that when the value of work engagement increases, the value of work meaning also tends to increase. Positive relationships produce an upward slope on a scatterplot. Work engagement and work meaning go hand in hand. Engaged teachers find more meaning in their work, finding it more satisfying and fulfilling. Bailey [9] stated that within the human resource development (HRD) field, meaningfulness has

come to the fore through its association with high levels of engagement. He further noted that meaningfulness is salient in discussion centering on job design, whereby job design elements that foster a sense of meaningfulness which may lead to higher levels of engagement shown through job satisfaction, motivation, and performance and reduced levels of absenteeism and turnover.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings of the study, the respondents agreed that they are engaged in their work and very often find meaning in their work. When the respondents were compared in terms of sex, civil status, and educational attainment, no significant differences were shown in work engagement. In terms of age, significant difference was observed for vigor and dedication, while for years employed, significant difference was revealed for all 3 domains. A positive, but moderate relationship was indicated between work engagement and work meaning.

The researcher recommends that, for future studies, teachers from other strands and other grade levels be included to create a more heterogeneous set of respondents. They may also consider the positive effect of work engagement alongside its detrimental impact on life outside work. In the current study, work engagement was compared in terms of sex, civil status, and educational attainment. No other factors were used to measure the impact on teacher engagement and work meaning. Traditionally, teachers' characteristics have been measured based on subject knowledge and experience. Past research has also acknowledged the importance of teachers' attitudes and beliefs about their teaching to student progress and achievement. The researcher finds these as important considerations. It is thus recommended to investigate factors, such as social context and job satisfaction, that contribute to shaping work engagement and work meaning.

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