

Work Engagement among Employees and Its Relationship with Work Units' Performance of a Higher Education Institution

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Abstract

Higher level of work engagement brings people to become more productive, vigorous, dedicated and enthusiastic to perform duties and responsibilities as part of the dynamic educational institution. This study aimed to determine the profile of the respondents in terms of age, gender and length of service in the university; to determine the level of work engagement in terms of vigor, dedication and absorption; to test the differences on the level of respondents' work engagement when they are grouped according to profile; to determine the overall employee performance of Colleges and support services and to analyze the relationship between work engagement and work unit's performance. Descriptive type of research method was utilized in the study. The standardized instrument of Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) was used to measure work engagement. Results showed that the school employees have high work engagement in terms of vigor, dedication and absorption with highly satisfied performance evaluation rating. Married employees are more dedicated to work due to their matured role and responsibilities over their families. Employees belong to age bracket with more than 40 years have higher engagement towards work due to the level of their expertise in carrying out various tasks everyday compared to those young and middle age employees. There are also employees with high level of dedication towards work which is not being translated or rated to high performance.

Keywords: vigor, dedication, absorption, engagement, employees

1. Introduction

Higher level of work engagement brings people to become more productive, vigorous, dedicated and enthusiastic to perform duties and responsibilities as part of the dynamic academic institution. A clear view of the behaviours demonstrated by the engaged employee emerged such as belief in the organisation, desire to work to make things better, understanding of business context and the 'bigger picture', respectful of, and helpful to, colleagues, willingness to 'go the extra mile', and keeping up to date with developments in the field (Robinson et al, 2004). Work engagement is considered to have great significance for both employees and organizations (Steger et al. 2013).

Leaders and managers must discover new strategies in the very challenging world of business that will make their companies achieve growth and success (Javier, 2011). One way of doing that is through examining the attitude of the workforce. Engagement in the workplace generally is viewed as a positive, fulfilling, affective-motivational state of work-related well-being (Kim et al., 2013). Accomplishment of duties and responsibilities within the boundaries of physical strengths and limitation of time would be more effective if priorities had been set through appropriate planning (Laguador&Agena, 2013).

More frequent and meaningful interactions with service recipients may have intrinsically motivating properties, especially in contexts where pro-social values are espoused in the workplace and supported by professional socialization (Freeney&Fellenz, 2013). The notion of work engagement has led to the genesis of

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a whole new world of research, discussions and logics that not only enhance the well-being of employees at workplace, but also tout a great practical utility since its inception in organisational sciences (Kataria, Garg &Rastogi, 2013).

Business organizations look into the benefit of continuously developing and improving passion and commitment of their people to get the best of their potential. Affective disposition, on its own, may not be sufficient for employee engagement. It may be that having a positive affective disposition allows people with other positive attributes to engage with work (Steger et al. 2013). The growing body of research supporting the link between higher work engagement and increased productivity, higher customer satisfaction, and decreased turnover attends to several issues receiving increased attention by both public and private health care stakeholders (Simpson, 2009).

While there has been an emphasis on identifying and nurturing the positive effects of work engagement, it may be equally important to develop programs aimed at those not fully engaged (or actively disengaged). Specifically, non-engaged individuals reported an inability to effectively cope with political environments due, in large part, to a lack of personal and job resources (Kane-Frieder et al. 2014).

Work engagement will be determined in terms of vigor, dedication and absorption. If every part of human resources is not addressed in appropriate manner, employees fail to fully engage themselves in their job in the response to such kind of mismanagement (Markos&Sridevi, 2010).

In every organization, employees with high sense of responsibility and engagement become assets of the company. They ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of their outputs and contribute to the achievement of the vision and mission of the organization.

As an educational institution it has to deliver the products and services necessary to achieve the outcomes it intends to produce (Javier, 2012) wherein development of human resources is always necessary to maintain qualified teaching and non-teaching staff to provide quality education for its clients. Therefore, assessing the level of work engagement of the employees would provide better picture of the university personnel to strengthen its people and create an atmosphere of fully engaged workforce.

Objectives of the Study

This study aimed to determine profile of the respondents in terms of age, gender and length of service in the university; to determine the level of work engagement in terms of vigor, dedication and absorption; to test the differences on the level of respondents' work engagement when they are grouped according to profile; to determine the overall employee performance of Colleges and support services and to analyze the relationship between work engagement and work unit's performance.

2. Methods

Descriptive type of research method was utilized in the study. The standardized instrument of Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) was used to measure work engagement. The 17-item scale is composed of three subscales namely *vigour*(six items) with Cronbach alphas ranging from 0.75 to 0.82, *dedication* (five items) with Cronbach alphas ranging from 0.88 to 0.90 and *absorption* (six items) with Cronbach alphas ranging from 0.70 to 0.75 (Schaufeli& Bakker, 2003).

Documentary analysis was used to gather the data of the overall performance evaluation of faculty members and administrative personnel from the Human Resource Management and Development Office of the university while the survey instruments were sent to respective offices and retrieved after one week with 75 percent retrieval rating.

Frequency count and percentage were used to describe the profile of the respondents. Weighted mean and rank were employed to analyze the level of work engagement. T-test and Analysis of Variance were used to test the differences in the variables when the respondents were grouped according to their profile.

The given scale was used to analyze the result of data gathered in the work engagement survey: 0 - 0.49: Never; 0.50 - 1.49: Rarely (few times a year); 1.50 - 2.49: Sometimes (Few times a month); 2.50 - 3.49: Often (Once a week); 3.50 - 4.49: Very often (Few times a week); 4.50 - 5.00: Always (Everyday).

3. Results and Discussion

Table 1 shows the profile of the respondents. More than half of the respondents were non-teaching personnel which is composed of 110 or 54.4 percent while teaching personnel-respondents is composed of 92 or 45.5 percent.

Table 1: Profile of the Respondents

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Nature of Work	f	%				
Teaching	92	45.5				
Non – Teaching	110	54.5				
Sex						
Male	57	28.2				
Female	145	71.8				
Civil Status						
Single	69	34.2				
Married	133	65.8				
Age						
21-30	56	27.7				
31-40	77	38.1				
41-above	69	34.2				
Length of Service						
Below 1–5	66	32.7				
6 - 10	60	29.7				
11 and above	76	37.6				

There were 145 or 71.8 percent of the respondents were female against the 57 or 28.2 percent of males. Most of them were already married with 133 or 65.8 percent against 69 or 34.2 percent of single respondents. There were 77 or 38.1 percent belonged to 31 - 40 years followed by the group of respondents with 41 years old and above while the least group of respondents have 21 - 30 years old which is composed of 56 or 27.7 percent. In terms of length of service, most of them have 11 years and above in the university with 76 or 37.6 percent against 66 or 32.7 percent of having below 1 year to 5 years of service and 60 or 29.7 percent of those with 6 to 10 years of service.

Table 2: Level of Work Engagement of the Respondents in Terms of Vigour

	Vigor	WM	VI	Rank
1.	At my work, I feel bursting with energy	3.99	VO	6
2.	At my job, I feel strong and vigorous	4.26	VO	2
3.	When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work	4.14	VO	4
4.	I can continue working for very long periods at a time	4.15	VO	3
5.	At my job, I am very resilient, mentally	4.01	VO	5
6.	At my work I always persevere, even when things do not go well	4.30	VO	1
	Composite Mean	4.14	VO	

Employees very often considered at their work that they always persevere even when things do not go well and they very often feel strong and vigorous as manifested by the weighted mean scores of 4.30 and 4.26, respectively. They very often continue working for very long periods at a time and when they get up in

the morning, they feel like going to work as denoted by the weighted mean scores of 4.15 and 4.14, respectively. They were very often resilient mentally and they feel bursting with energy at their work which obtained the least weighted mean scores of 4.01 and 3.99 on rank numbers 5 and 6, respectively.

The composite mean score of 4.14 implies that the LPU-B employees have high work engagement in terms of vigor. Getting things done as priority with quality through working it out with sincerity leads to an ideal output that could inspire others to do the same of setting their own priorities and sticking to it until completion (Laguador, 2013).

The employees of this university have great compassion and concern about the integrity and reputation of the institution; therefore they give their best effort and energies through working long hours in the office just to finish certain tasks as requirements for certain level of accreditation. They feel stronger and enthusiastic to work because of the dynamic leadership and support of the management in every academic exercise and quality assurance visit.

Table 3: Level of Work Engagement of the Respondents in Terms of Dedication

	Dedication	WM	VI	Rank
1.	I find the work that I do full of meaning and purpose	4.46	VO	2
2.	I am enthusiastic about my job	4.34	VO	3
3.	My job inspires me	4.31	VO	4
4.	I am proud on the work that I do	4.61	A	1
5.	To me, my job is challenging	4.28	VO	5
	Composite Mean	4.40	VO	

Table 3 shows the level of work engagement of the respondents in terms of Dedication. They always proud on the work they do and they very often find the work they do full of meaning and purpose as indicated by the weighted mean scores of 4.61 and 4.46, respectively. They very often enthusiastic about their job and these inspire them very often. For them, their job is very often challenging with the least weighted mean score of 4.28 on rank number 5. The composite mean score of 4.40 implies that the LPU-B employees have high work engagement in terms of dedication.

Teachers need a lot of dedication towards work due to the Outcomes-based Education implementation wherein they were the foremost affected in terms of instruction. Faculty members with high level of knowledge and understanding on the implementation of OBE have also higher possibility to contribute in the realization of the objectives of OBE through practice (Laguador&Dotong, 2014). The meaning and purpose of what they really need to accomplish in most accreditation and certification requirements must be cleared and justified to them in order to fully dedicate themselves to achieve the main objectives of the university in providing enormous quality to its clients.

Table 4: Level of Work Engagement of the Respondents in Terms of Absorption

	Absorption	WM	VI	Rank
1.	Time flies when I'm working	4.29	VO	2.5
2.	When I am working, I forget everything else around me	3.64	VO	6
3.	I feel happy when I am working intensely	4.29	VO	2.5
4.	I am immersed in my work	4.33	VO	1
5.	I get carried away when I'm working	3.82	VO	5
6.	It is difficult to detach myself from my job	3.89	VO	4
	Composite Mean	4.04	VO	

Table 4 presents the level of work engagement of the respondents in terms of absorption. Employees were very often immersed in their work and they feel that time flies when they are working and they also very often feel happy when they are working intensely. It is very often difficult to detach them from the job and they very often get carried away when they are working as indicated by the weighted mean scores of

3.89 and 3.82, respectively. When they are working, they very often forget everything else around them with the least weighted mean score of 3.64 on rank number 6. The composite mean score of 4.04 implies that the LPU-B employees have high work engagement in terms of absorption.

Since most of the employees of the university are also graduates from this institution, they are already familiar with the culture of its people in the organization. Because of their commitment to serve the university, almost 67 percent of them stayed here for more than 5 years. They already have certain level of expertise and experience on how they are going to deal with the people in the middle and top management. The immersion of employees on their work is a manifestation that they truly devoted their time and space for the welfare of its clients. They tried to manage their time effectively and efficiently through being proactive members of the organization who are ready to make things happen.

Table 5: Overall Employee Performance of Colleges and Support Services

Overall Performance	Mean	Interpretation
Colleges	4.28	Very Satisfactory
Support Services	4.44	Very Satisfactory

Table 5 shows the overall employee performance of colleges and support services. The faculty members from different Colleges obtained very satisfactory performance evaluation rating from the Deans while the support services which are included in the study also obtained very satisfactory performance as denoted by the mean scores of 4.28 and 4.44, respectively. This implies the employees have carried out their duties with high level of execution.

Table 6: Differences on the Work Engagement in terms of Nature of Work

Nature of Work	Teaching	Non teaching	t-value	r-value	VI	Decision
Vigor	4.1070	4.1740	705	.481	NS	Accept
Dedication	4.3696	4.4236	573	.567	NS	Accept
Absorption	4.0292	4.0531	226	.822	NS	Accept

HS-Highly Significant; NS – Not Significant

Table 6 reveals the differences on the work engagement of teaching and non-teaching employees. There is no significant difference between teaching and non-teaching employees in terms of work engagement as denoted by the computed p-values which are greater than the 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted. This implies that both groups have possibility to demonstrate both high and low level of work engagement in performing their respective duties and responsibilities in the university.

Table 7: Differences on the Work Engagement in terms of Sex

Sex	Male	Female	t-value	r-value	VI	Decision
Vigor	4.0356	4.1859	-1.434	.153	NS	Accept
Dedication	4.3158	4.4317	-1.113	.267	NS	Accept
Absorption	3.9651	4.0726	921	.358	NS	Accept

HS-Highly Significant; NS – Not Significant

Table 7 reveals the differences on the work engagement of male and female employees. There is no significant difference on the work engagement between male and female as denoted by the computed p-values which are greater than the 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted. This implies that both groups have possibility to demonstrate both high and low level of work engagement in performing their respective duties and responsibilities in the university.

Table 8: Differences on the Work Engagement in terms of Civil Status

	Single	Married	t-value	r-value	VI	Decision
Vigor	4.02	4.20	-1.746	.082	NS	Accept
Dedication	4.26	4.47	-2.049	.042	S	Reject
Absorption	3.91	4.10	-1.727	.086	NS	Accept

S – Significant; HS-Highly Significant; NS – Not Significant

Table 8 reveals the differences on the work engagement of single and married employees. There is no significant difference between single and married employees in terms of vigor and absorption as denoted by the computed p-values of .082 and .086, respectively which are greater than the 0.05 level of significance, therefore, the null hypothesis on these variables is accepted. Both groups can demonstrate either strong or weak level of energies as well various level of interest towards work.

However, there is a significant difference in terms of dedication as indicated by the computed p-value of .042 which is less than the 0.05 level of significance, therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. This signifies that married employees have significantly higher dedication to work compared to those unmarried due to their more matured role and responsibilities over their families.

Table 9: Differences on the Work Engagement in Terms of Age

	21-30	31-40	41 and above	f-value	p-value	VI	Decision
Vigor	3.94	4.13	4.32	5.33	.006	HS	Reject
Dedication	4.25	4.37	4.56	3.65	.028	S	Reject
Absorption	3.80	4.07	4.22	5.09	.007	HS	Reject

S – Significant; HS-Highly Significant; NS – Not Significant

Table 9 reveals the differences on the work engagement in terms of age. There is highly significant difference among the three groups of employees in terms of vigor and absorption as denoted by the computed p-values of .006 and .007, respectively which are less than the 0.01 level of significance and significant difference in terms of dedication as indicated by the computed p-value of .028 which is less than the 0.05 level of significance, therefore the null hypothesis is rejected.

Employees belong to 41 years old and above age bracket have significantly higher work engagement in terms of vigor and dedication compared to employees belong to less than 31 years old while those employees belong to 21 to 30 years old age bracket have significantly lower work engagement in terms of absorption compared to employees who are more than 30 years old.

Employees belong to more than 40 years old age bracket have higher feeling of engagement towards work due to the level of their expertise in carrying out various tasks everyday is really different to those young and middle age employees. They already reached certain level of maturity and ownership of the tasks assigned to them routinely. The dedication and commitment of seasoned employees is indeed considered asset of the organization to continue working with passion and loyalty. They have already given enough educational opportunities and recognition by their superiors and they are well adjusted with their work environment compared to new employees who are just starting to build their own career in the university (Laguador, De Castro & Portugal, 2014).

Table 10: Differences on the Work Engagement in Terms of Length of Service to LPU

	Below 1- 5	6 – 10	11 & above	f-value	p-value	VI	Decision
Vigor	4.03	4.10	4.27	2.433	.090	NS	Accept
Dedication	4.32	4.42	4.45	.806	.448	NS	Accept
Absorption	3.90	4.01	4.19	2.887	.058	NS	Accept

HS- Highly Significant; NS – Not Significant

Table 10 reveals the differences on the work engagement in terms of length of service to the university. There is no significant difference in terms of work engagement as denoted by the computed p-values which are greater than the 0.05 level of significance, therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted. This signifies that no matter how many years that the employees are working in the university, they have the tendency to gain various levels of work engagement where it is considered very subjective in nature based on the different factors that can influence the level of their interest, commitment and drive. Kalaw (2014) emphasized that successful organizations know that to excel in today's competitive business they must develop, shape and retain talented and productive human resources.

Table 11: Relationship between Work Units' Performance Evaluation and Work Engagement

	r-value	p-value	VI	Decision
Vigor	254	.279	Not Significant	Accept
Dedication	433	.048	Significant	Reject
Absorption	094	.694	Not Significant	Accept

Table 11 presents the relationship between work units' performance evaluation and work engagement. There is no significant relationship between work units' performance based on the employees' performance evaluation and their work engagement in terms of vigor and absorption as denoted by the computed p-values which are greater than the 0.05 level of significance, therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted. Based on the computed r-value of -.433 and p-value of 0.048 of work engagement in terms dedication, there is a moderate negative correlation between the two variables, which signifies that the higher the work engagement in terms of dedication of a certain work unit, there is a tendency to obtain lower performance.

It means that there are employees with high level of engagement but their dedication towards work is not being translated to high performance. This can also be associated with the different manner on how the department heads evaluated the performance of their people. Since the performance evaluation is based on observation and perception of the department heads, therefore the evaluation is subjective. There are department heads who give very high performance evaluations to their people even though the actual performance has little less difference from the grade given to them. There are advantages and disadvantages in giving excellent grades in the performance evaluation, for example, people would have high self-esteem and confidence that their immediate head really recognized their efforts and hard works in the office through giving them excellent performance evaluation, even though, the performance does not really meet all criteria of being excellent. Sometimes they thought that their performance has nothing to improve because they already achieve the highest grade in the evaluation. Therefore, they tend to maintain this performance as is.

There are employees with low dedication towards work but being evaluated high by their superiors. This situation is not being practiced by all department heads but true to only few. Orence and Laguador (2013) stated that a person who really values the love for truth could always keep doing things in the most appropriate manner which geared towards the attainment of professional integrity.

4. Conclusion

More than half of the respondents were married female non-teaching personnel who belong to 31-40 years with 11 years and above in the university as employees. They have high level of work engagement through working for very long periods of time with perseverance to achieve the mission and vision of the institution. Dedication is also very often characteristics of LPU-Batangas employees as they work full of meaning and purpose in fulfilling their respective duties and responsibilities as committed, devoted and hardworking Faculty members and administrative personnel.

They were very often immersed in their work and they feel that time flies when they are working and they also very often feel happy when they are working intensely. It is very often difficult to detach them from the job and they very often get carried away when they are working. The overall employee performance

rating of the university is very satisfactory which demonstrates the capacity of the workforce to become really effective and efficient part of the organization.

Male and female employees have possibility to demonstrate both high and low level of work engagement in performing their respective duties and responsibilities in the university. Married employees have significantly higher dedication to work compared to those unmarried due to their more matured role and responsibilities over their families. Employees belong to more than 40 years old age bracket have higher feeling of engagement towards work due to the level of their expertise in carrying out various tasks everyday is really different to those young and middle age employees. They have the tendency to gain various levels of work engagement where it is considered very subjective in nature based on the different factors that can influence the level of their interest, commitment and drive. There are employees with high level of engagement but their dedication towards work is not being translated to high performance.

The school administrators may always disseminate information regarding the primary objectives of every program and activity of the university in order to solicit the full support of the academic community. Human Resource Management and Development Office may strengthen the rewards and recognition system to encourage the employees to perform their duties and responsibilities in a more effectively and efficiently manner. Department heads may have to practice objectivity in evaluating their subordinates. Employees must always be truthful to their work and they always have to demonstrate competence, credibility, commitment and collaboration in all their undertakings might it be personal or professional endeavours.

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