

PREDICTIVE EFFECTS OF MANAGERIAL NEED SUPPORT, BASIC
PSYCHOLOGICAL NEED SATISFACTION, AND ROLE
OVERLOAD ON WORK ENGAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT

The main objective of this study is to examine whether or not the relationship between managerial need support and work engagement is mediated by basic psychological need satisfaction and moderated by role overload. Specifically, by drawing on self-determination theory, role stress theory, and substitutes for leadership theory, this study hypothesizes that (a) managerial need support is positively related to work engagement; (b) the relationship between managerial need support and work engagement is mediated partially by basic psychological need satisfaction; (c) role overload moderates the indirect and direct effects of managerial need support on work engagement; and (d) role overload is negatively related to basic psychological need satisfaction. In order to test these hypothesized relationships, statistical procedures that combine mediation and moderation were used to analyze the survey data collected from 348 full-time employees working in four organizations in Malaysia. The results of this study showed that managerial need support predicted work engagement directly and indirectly through basic psychological need satisfaction. The results also indicated that role overload moderated the (a) relationship between managerial need support and basic psychological need satisfaction (i.e., first stage moderation) and (b) direct relationship between managerial need support and work engagement (i.e., direct effect moderation). As expected, the effect of managerial need support on basic psychological need satisfaction and work engagement was weaker when role overload was high than when role overload was low. Contrary to expectations, the results showed that there was no significant negative relationship between role overload and basic psychological need satisfaction. With regard to theoretical contributions, this study addresses the existing gaps in the work engagement literature by (a) developing and testing a more complete model of work engagement that combines mediation and moderation, (b) bringing in new theoretical perspectives for research on work engagement, and (c) exploring a new predictor, mediator, and moderator in the work engagement literature. With regard to practical implications, employers interested in developing an engaged workforce may want to (a) ensure that managers are trained to be more need-supportive, (b) design jobs and provide a work environment that satisfy employees' basic psychological needs, and (c) pay close attention to early signs of role overload among their employees. Given the power of a fully engaged workforce for improving organizational performance, continued efforts to identify other potential predictors of work engagement will be worth pursuing.

ABSTRAK

Objektif utama kajian ini ialah mengkaji sama ada kepuasan keperluan psikologi asas menjadi pengantara dan beban peranan merupakan penyederhana hubungan antara sokongan keperluan pengurus dan ikatan kerja. Khususnya, berdasarkan kepada teori penentuan nasib sendiri, teori tekanan peranan, dan teori pengganti kepemimpinan, kajian ini membuat hipotesis bahawa (a) sokongan keperluan pengurus mempunyai hubungan positif dengan ikatan kerja; (b) kepuasan keperluan psikologi asas merupakan pengantara separa hubungan antara sokongan keperluan pengurus dan ikatan kerja; (c) beban peranan merupakan penyederhana kesan tidak langsung dan langsung sokongan keperluan pengurus ke atas ikatan kerja; dan (d) beban peranan mempunyai hubungan negatif dengan kepuasan keperluan psikologi asas. Untuk menguji hipotesis kajian, prosedur statistik yang menggabungkan pengantaraan dan penyederhanaan digunakan untuk menganalisis data soal selidik daripada 348 pekerja sepenuh masa di empat buah organisasi di Malaysia. Hasil kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa sokongan keperluan pengurus mempunyai kesan ke atas ikatan kerja secara langsung dan tidak langsung melalui kepuasan keperluan psikologi asas. Hasil kajian juga menunjukkan bahawa beban peranan merupakan penyederhana (a) hubungan antara sokongan keperluan pengurus dan kepuasan keperluan psikologi asas (iaitu penyederhanaan tahap pertama) dan (b) hubungan langsung antara sokongan keperluan pengurus dan ikatan kerja (iaitu penyederhanaan kesan langsung). Seperti yang dijangkakan, kesan sokongan keperluan pengurus ke atas kepuasan keperluan psikologi asas dan ikatan kerja lebih lemah apabila beban peranan tinggi berbanding dengan apabila beban peranan rendah. Sebaliknya, hasil kajian menunjukkan tiada hubungan negatif yang ketara antara beban peranan dan kepuasan keperluan psikologi asas. Dari segi teori, kajian ini dapat menyumbang kepada kepustakaan tentang ikatan kerja dengan (a) membentuk dan menguji sebuah model ikatan kerja yang lebih lengkap yang menggabungkan pengantaraan dan penyederhanaan, (b) memperluaskan perspektif teori bagi penyelidikan ikatan kerja, dan (c) mengkaji pembolehubah penelah, pengantara, dan penyederhana yang baru dalam kajian berkaitan dengan ikatan kerja. Implikasi praktik kajian ini ialah demi memupuk ikatan kerja di kalangan pekerja majikan hendaklah (a) memastikan bahawa pengurus dilatih supaya bersikap lebih menyokong keperluan pekerja, (b) mereka bentuk kerja dan menyediakan suasana kerja supaya memenuhi kepuasan psikologi asas pekerja, dan (c) perihatin terhadap tanda-tanda awal beban peranan di kalangan pekerja. Memandangkan peranan penting yang dimainkan oleh ikatan kerja untuk meningkatkan prestasi organisasi, usaha berterusan untuk mengenal pasti penelah ikatan kerja yang lain adalah berfaedah.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This chapter serves as an introduction for the remainder of this dissertation. The study background provides a general discussion on the importance of work engagement whereas the research statement identifies three gaps in the work engagement research. Following a discussion on the rationale for proposing a mediation-moderation framework of work engagement, the research question and study objectives are presented. The scope of study provides a general discussion on what this study covers and does not cover. Next, the theoretical, research, and practical contributions of the study are discussed. Finally, the chapter ends with an outline of the remaining chapters of this dissertation.

1.2 BACKGROUND OF STUDY

A lot more is expected of employees these days than in the past as organizations face intense competition and customers demand greater quality of products and services. In recent years, academic scholars and management practitioners have introduced the topic of work engagement to capture the kind of work motivation required in today's challenging workplace. As a relatively new research area, empirical research examining the predictors of work engagement is still limited and warrants more attention (Bakker & Leiter 2010).

In theory, work engagement represents a positive, fulfilling work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli, Bakker

& Salanova 2006; Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Romá & Bakker 2002). Hypothetically, engaged employees are said to be proactive, be committed to high-quality performance, be willing to go the extra mile, show initiative, work well with others, and take responsibility for their own professional development (Bakker & Schaufeli 2008). According to Bakker and Demerouti (2008), at least four reasons could be given to explain why engaged employees perform better than non-engaged employees. Engaged employees often (a) experience positive emotions, including happiness, joy, and enthusiasm; (b) experience better health; (c) create their own job and personal resources; and (d) transfer their engagement to others (Bakker & Demerouti 2008). Indeed, past studies have found engagement at work to be related to organizational outcomes, for example, business-unit performance, service climate, customer loyalty, and profitability (e.g., Harter, Schmidt & Hayes 2002; Salanova, Agut & Pieró 2005) as well as individual outcomes, for example, in-role and extra-role performance, job satisfaction, intention to leave, work commitment, and personal initiative (e.g., Hakanen, Perhoniemi & Toppinen-Tanner 2008; Saks 2006; Schaufeli & Bakker 2004). Given that work engagement has important consequences for both individuals and organizations, more efforts are needed to examine the processes and conditions that contribute to its occurrence.

1.3 RESEARCH STATEMENT

An engaged workforce is undeniably an important source of competitive advantage that can potentially add value to an organization (Macey, Schneider, Barbera & Young 2009). People's energy, enthusiasm, and full involvement at work not only help organizations succeed in good times, but also bring resiliency and optimism to the workplace in tough times. Despite its benefits, however, many organizations have yet to harness the full power of work engagement and achieve the significant performance that a fully engaged workforce can deliver (Gebauer, Lowman & Gordon 2008). According to a recent study by Towers Perrin, four out of every five workers worldwide are not delivering their full potential to help their organizations succeed although the majority of them say they want to give more to their organizations (Gebauer et al. 2008). The findings indicate the need for management to have a better

understanding of why some employees are motivated to be fully engaged at work, whereas others lack the motivation to do so.

There are three important issues to be considered with respect to research on the predictors of work engagement. First, research on the predictors of work engagement has relied heavily on the job demands-resources model. An important proposition in the original job demands-resources model (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner & Schaufeli 2001) is that job resources (e.g., career opportunities, autonomy, supervisor and co-worker support) are the most important predictors of work engagement, whereas job demands (e.g., time and work pressure, emotional demands of work, physical work environment) are the main predictors of burnout. The results from several past studies showed clear evidence for this hypothesis. For example, in a multi-sample study, Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) found job resources (i.e., performance feedback, social support from colleagues, and supervisory coaching) to be positively related to work engagement and job demands (i.e., quantitative workload and emotional demands) to be positively related to burnout. To extend research in this area, recent works (e.g., Bakker & Demerouti 2007, 2008; Hakanen & Roodt 2010) have proposed a more complete and focused job demands-resources model to predict work engagement. Two new propositions in the revised job demands-resources model are the predictive effect of personal resources (e.g., efficacy beliefs, optimism, hope) and the moderating effect of job demands. To date, empirical evidences on the revised job demands-resources model are still limited and warrant more attention (Bakker & Demerouti 2007, 2008; Hakanen & Roodt 2010).

Second, research on work engagement has been largely grounded using the conservation of resources theory (Hobfoll 1989) because of the influence of the principles of resource maintenance, resource gain, and resource loss in the job demands-resources and job demand and control models. In brief, the theory predicts that people who have more resources (e.g., job control, supervisory support, and performance feedback) are less susceptible to resource loss and therefore will be more likely to be work engaged. On the other hand, individuals who do not have access to resources are more likely to experience increased loss (i.e., loss spiral) and therefore will be less likely to be work engaged. For example, Hakanen, Perhoniemi et al.

(2008) provided evidence for this line of theorizing and found task-level job resources (i.e., direct and long-term results, pride in the profession, and craftsmanship) to be positively related to work engagement in a cross-lagged study among 2,555 dentists. Researchers in recent works (e.g., Macey & Schneider 2008a, 2008b; Meyer & Gagné 2008), however, have started searching for other theories besides resource-based theories to guide research on work engagement. For example, Meyer and Gagné (2008) believe that self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan 1985; Deci & Ryan 2008a; Gagné & Deci 2005) might provide a strong basis for research on work engagement, whereas Macey and Schneider (2008b) suggest looking into leadership theories. To date, the use of self-determination theory and leadership theories to guide research on work engagement is still limited and warrants more attention (Macey & Schneider 2008b; Meyer & Gagné 2008).

Finally, turning to an examination of work engagement models, existing work engagement models were found to utilize simple models that examined only the main effects of potential antecedents of work engagement (for reviews see Bakker 2008a; Halbesleben 2010) and failed to capture the complexity of real working life. Although increasingly more research has begun to focus on areas that are still under-researched, in particular, the theoretical underpinnings for mediating and moderating hypotheses, many of these studies tested mediating and moderating relationships using separate theoretical frameworks (e.g., Bakker & Demerouti 2009; Bakker, Hakanen, Demerouti & Xanthopoulou 2007; Hakanen, Bakker & Demerouti 2005; May et al. 2004; Van den Broeck, Vansteenkiste, De Witte & Lens 2008). An interesting avenue for future research is to look into models that examine more complex relationships using frameworks that combine mediation and moderation (Edwards & Lambert 2007).

Building on the revised job demands-resources model and drawing on self-determination theory, role stress theory, and substitutes for leadership theory, this study examines to what extent the role of self-determination motivation in predicting work engagement is bounded by role stress. Three variables—managerial need support, basic psychological need satisfaction, and role overload—are given attention over other variables because of their relevance in the revised job demands-resources model, self-determination theory, role stress theory, and substitutes for leadership

theory. Specifically, managerial need support—a variable associated with self-determination theory—is a form of job resource. Basic psychological need satisfaction—another variable associated with self-determination theory—can be considered as a form of personal resource. Role overload—a variable associated with role stress theory—is a form of job demand and a potential leadership neutralizer.

1.4 RATIONALE FOR STUDYING WORK ENGAGEMENT USING A MEDIATION-MODERATION FRAMEWORK

Using the revised job demands-resources model of work engagement as a guiding framework, this study develops a mediation and moderation framework of work engagement by drawing on self-determination theory, role stress theory, and substitutes for leadership theory. Although self-determination theory has been applied extensively in the educational, health care, and sports domains, it is only recently that this theory has been more widely recognized in the work setting (Gagné & Deci 2005; Meyer & Gagné 2008). A current proposition of self-determination theory is that autonomy support from authority figures facilitate internalization of extrinsic motivation, resulting in more self-determined or autonomous motivation that, in turn, predict various work outcomes such as performance, psychological well-being, organizational trust and commitment, and job satisfaction (Gagné & Deci 2005). Extending this proposition, it is possible that managerial autonomy support might predict work engagement. Thus far, except for one study by Deci, Ryan, Gagné, Leone, Usunov and Kornazheva (2001) that found managerial autonomy support to predict task engagement, no other studies have tested this relationship within a work setting.

For better clarity and consistency with earlier and later research (e.g., Baard, Deci & Ryan 2004; Deci et al. 2001; Parfyonova 2009; Wellman 2008) implying that autonomy support is a broad construct that might predict satisfaction of all three basic psychological needs (i.e., competence, autonomy, and relatedness), this study uses a broader term known as managerial need support instead of managerial autonomy support. Managerial need support—considered a leadership and social context variable—is defined in this study as the extent to which a manager provides employees with useful performance information, gives employees freedom and choice

in carrying out their work activities, and shows consideration and interest in employees views. This definition builds on definitions of autonomy support used in past research (e.g., Deci, Connell & Ryan 1989; Richer & Vallerand 1995). A manager who is need-supportive will be more sensitive to employees needs for competence, autonomy, and relatedness and, consequently, employees can be expected to have more internalized extrinsic motivation (i.e., identify with work and integrate work into their sense of self) and be more internally motivated to engage themselves fully in their work. Therefore, the first objective of the present study is to examine the relationship between managerial need support and work engagement.

The proposed theoretical link between managerial need support and work engagement is further developed by investigating how and under what circumstances managerial need support would be predictive of work engagement. In a recent construct validity study, Parfyonova (2009) provided evidence that the relationships of managerial competence, autonomy, and relatedness supports with work engagement were mediated by satisfaction of basic psychological needs for competence, autonomy, and relatedness, respectively. Van den Broeck, Vansteenkiste, De Witte and Lens (2008) showed that basic psychological need satisfaction partially mediated the relationship between job resource and vigor, a dimension of work engagement. Within a work setting, the concept of basic psychological need satisfaction refers to the extent to which an employee's basic psychological needs for competence (e.g., feeling capable), autonomy (e.g., feeling uncoerced in one's actions), and relatedness (e.g., feeling connected to and accepted by others) at work are fulfilled (Deci & Ryan 2000). Additionally, according to self-determination theory, social contexts (e.g., managerial need support) that facilitate satisfaction of the basic psychological need—defined as the innate essential psychological nutriment—will enhance the psychological energetic resource available for successful internalization of extrinsic motivation and yield the most positive psychological, developmental, and behavioral outcomes (Deci & Ryan 2000, 2008a; Ryan & Deci 2008). Consistent with the empirical and theoretical support presented, I propose that basic psychological need satisfaction may be one of the more proximal variables predicting work engagement because it is through satisfaction of their basic psychological needs that employees develop more internalized and autonomous work motivation. Therefore, the second

objective of this study is to examine the role of basic psychological need satisfaction as a partial mediator of the relationship between managerial need support and work engagement.

Next, consistent with the job demands-resources model that proposes a moderating effect of job demands (e.g., work pressure and mental demands) on the relationship between job resources (e.g., autonomy and supervisory coaching) and work engagement (Bakker & Demerouti 2008), the third objective of this study is to examine the moderating effect of role overload on the relationship between managerial need support and work engagement. Based on the job demands-resources theorizing, role overload may evoke strain on the motivational process link between managerial need support and work engagement. However, it is also possible to argue for the moderating effect of role overload based on substitutes for leadership theory. According to this theory, there are certain characteristics of subordinates, tasks, and organizations that serve to reduce, block, or cancel leadership-outcome relationships or make leadership impossible and unnecessary (Kerr & Jermier 1978; Schriesheim 1997). Past studies on this theory found that leadership substitutes such as self-managed work teams and shared organizational values and leadership neutralizers such as employee cynicism can reduce the need for leadership (cf. Podsakoff & MacKenzie 1997). Thus, consistent with the substitutes for leadership theorizing, this study posits that role overload may undermine the motivational actions of need-supportive managers.

Role overload is the perception that available resources such as time and energy are inadequate to meet the role demands and expectations of role senders (Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek & Rosenthal 1964; as cited in Brown, Jones & Leigh 2005). This construct is given attention over other role stressors and job demands (e.g., role ambiguity, role conflict, emotional demands, and physical demands) based on two reasons. First, although role overload has been cited as a major strain on employees' physical and mental health and on organizations' overall profitability, there has been little published research isolating the effect of role overload (Jones, Chonko, Rangarajan & Roberts 2007). Instead, it has been observed that the impact of role overload tends to be subsumed under job demands and role stressors. Second,

because organizations today foster the “balanced careerists” and are more sensitive to issues such as work-life balance (Cummings 2001), job burnout (Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter 2001), workaholism (Schaufeli, Taris & Bakker 2006), and boundary-spanning (Marrone, Tesluk & Carson 2007) among employees, an awareness of the pervasive negative effects of role overload becomes more crucial for managers.

Following Edwards and Lambert’s (2007) general analytical framework for combining moderation and mediation, I propose role overload to moderate the indirect (i.e., first stage only) and direct relationships between managerial need support and work engagement. Extending the line of thinking within self-determination theory that holds satisfaction of basic psychological needs as the basic principle underlying individuals’ optimal functioning or malfunctioning (Ryan & Deci 2000c), it is possible that basic psychological need satisfaction is the underlying mechanism by which the moderating effect of role overload is transmitted. Therefore, role overload may moderate the relationship between managerial need support and basic psychological need satisfaction (i.e., first stage moderation). Based on findings within role stress theory (e.g., Gilboa, Shirom, Fried & Cooper 2008) and substitutes for leadership theory (Kerr & Jermier 1978), it is also possible that role overload may moderate the direct relationship between managerial need support and work engagement (i.e., direct effect moderation) because excessive role demands may neutralize or restrict the effectiveness with which managers can exert their influence.

Finally, in addition to examining the mediating effect of basic psychological need satisfaction and the moderating effect of role overload on the relationship between managerial need support and work engagement, this study also examines the relationship between role overload and basic psychological need satisfaction. Following the lead of researchers (e.g., Greguras & Diefendorff 2009; Van den Broeck, Vansteenkiste, De Witte & Lens 2008) who examined the predictors of basic psychological need satisfaction beyond social context and personal factors, I propose that role overload, regarded as a threatening stressor with an adverse effect on performance (Gilboa et al. 2008), will be predictive of basic psychological need satisfaction. Because role overload is likely to lead to low morale in the workplace (Cummings 2001) and subsequently a reduced sense of effectance (competence

satisfaction), volition (autonomy satisfaction), and involvement (relatedness satisfaction), the fifth objective of this study, therefore, is to examine the relationship between role overload and basic psychological need satisfaction.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTION AND STUDY OBJECTIVES

In light of the rationales presented, the purpose of this study is to examine the predictive effects of managerial need support, basic psychological need satisfaction, and role overload on work engagement using a mediation-moderation framework that is grounded in self-determination theory, role stress theory, and substitutes for leadership theory. Specifically, this study attempts to address the question of whether or not the relationship between managerial need support and work engagement is mediated by basic psychological need satisfaction and moderated by role overload. In summary, the objectives of this study are to examine the following:

1. The relationship between managerial need support and work engagement.
2. The mediating effect of basic psychological need satisfaction on the relationship between managerial need support and work engagement.
3. The moderating effect of role overload on the (a) relationship between managerial need support and basic psychological need satisfaction (i.e., the first stage of the indirect relationship between managerial need support and work engagement through basic psychological need satisfaction; first stage moderation) and (b) direct relationship between managerial need support and work engagement (i.e., direct effect moderation).
4. The relationship between role overload and basic psychological need satisfaction.

1.6 SCOPE OF STUDY

This section highlights three aspects that fall under the scope of the present study. First, it is important to note that the concept of work engagement that is given attention in this study is different from the perspective of engagement used in Towers Perrin's 2007–2008 Global Workforce Study (Gebauer et al. 2008). For example, the work engagement scale (i.e., Utrecht Work Engagement Scale–9, developed by Schaufeli et al. 2006) that is used in this study focuses on measuring employees'

vigor, dedication, and absorption at work. This study does not measure the extent to which the workforce is engaged, enrolled, disenchanted, or disengaged as in the case of Towers Perrin's engagement survey.

Second, for the purpose of practicality, only two variables that are pivotal within self-determination theory (i.e., managerial need support and basic psychological need satisfaction) are given empirical attention. It is beyond the scope of this study to empirically examine other variables of self-determination theory such as autonomous or self-determined motivation, intrinsic motivation, external motivation, introjected motivation, identified motivation, and integrated motivation. Furthermore, measures for these other variables are still undergoing further development and refinement. However, because these other variables are relevant for a complete theoretical understanding of the concepts of self-determined motivation and internalization of extrinsic motivation, they are discussed under the literature review section.

Finally, for the purpose of parsimony, I limit the scope of statistical analysis for this study to include one main predictor variable (i.e., managerial need support), one mediator variable (i.e., basic psychological need satisfaction), and one moderator variable (i.e., role overload). That is, the data provided in this study examines the extent to which a manager is seen as need-supportive by the employees and how does this provision of need support relate to work engagement among employees with high and low role overload. It is beyond the scope of this study to examine factors that either make need-supportive managers more relevant or irrelevant such as the demographic characteristics, ability, or personality of employees. Finally, an assumption of this study is that there are opportunities for managerial need support to manifest itself in various superior-subordinate interaction situations in the work setting. Thus, any employee that has a superior qualify to participate in this study.

1.7 CONTRIBUTION OF STUDY

This is the first study that brings together research on managerial need support, basic psychological need satisfaction, and role overload as predictors of work engagement

using a mediation-moderation framework that is underpinned by self-determination theory, role stress theory, and substitutes for leadership theory. The contributions of this study with regard to theory, research, and practice are discussed in the following two subsections.

1.7.1 Theory and Research

First, this study provides an understanding of work engagement using self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan 2000, 2008a; Deci & Vansteenkiste 2004; Gagné & Deci 2005), role stress theory (e.g., Gilboa et al. 2008), and substitutes for leadership theory (Kerr & Jermier 1978), and in doing so, extends the theoretical perspectives for research on work engagement. Traditionally, past studies that examined the predictors of work engagement were grounded using the conservation of resources theory (Hobfoll 1989) and broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions (Fredrickson 2001).

Second, whereas past research had focused on examining simple models of work engagement, this study focuses on examining a more complex mediation-moderation model of work engagement. That is, the present study extends this body of work by showing that basic psychological need satisfaction mediates and role overload moderates the relationship between managerial need support and work engagement. Specifically, this study identifies basic psychological need satisfaction as a means by which the moderating effect of role overload operates. Empirical support for these propositions would reveal an important exception to the robustness of the effect of managerial need support; that is, among employees who experience role overload, managerial need support would have little effect on basic psychological need satisfaction and work engagement.

Third, this study extends the existing list of predictors, mediators, and moderators in the work engagement literature to include a leadership and social context variable (i.e., managerial need support), a psychological variable (i.e., basic psychological need satisfaction), and a role stress variable (i.e., role overload). In the past, many of the studies on the predictors of work engagement followed the job

demands-resources (Bakker & Demerouti 2008) and job demand and control models (Karasek & Theorell 1990), and as such, job-related variables were given more emphasis than other types of variables.

1.7.2 Practice

With regard to managerial contribution, this study may be helpful for employers interested in developing an engaged workforce. Before employers are able to intervene to promote work engagement among their employees, they need to know what its determinants are. It is hoped that the findings of this study would shed some light on this issue. For example, when designing workplace interventions aimed at promoting work engagement, employers may look into ways to train managers to be more need-supportive. Besides having managers invest time and energy so as to be perceived as need-supportive by their subordinates, employers may also explore ways to ensure the work and social characteristics of a job satisfy employees' basic psychological needs for competence, autonomy, and relatedness.

In addition, this study provides evidence to understand when managerial need support predicts basic psychological need satisfaction and work engagement. As role overload may compromise the effect of managerial need support on work engagement and lower basic psychological need satisfaction, it is important too for employers to heed signs of role overload among their employees. For example, time and stress management trainings might help employees to manage the demands of their job more effectively. Managers should also pay attention to employees' responsibilities periodically to ensure that employees are coping well with deadlines and role demands.

1.8 STRUCTURE OF DISSERTATION

This dissertation will proceed with five other chapters. Chapter II reviews the literature on work engagement, managerial need support, basic psychological need satisfaction, and role overload, specifically highlighting the need to examine these study variables within a mediation-moderation framework of work engagement.

Chapter III discusses the research hypotheses to be tested based on the proposed conceptual framework. Chapter IV describes the research method, including information on the research design, pilot study, sample, data collection procedure, survey questionnaire, measures, and data analysis. Chapter V presents the results of the hypotheses tests. Finally, Chapter VI discusses the findings, implications, and limitations and provides suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This chapter contains literature reviews on work engagement, managerial need support, basic psychological need satisfaction, and role overload. First, in a general review of work engagement I discuss the various definitions of work engagement and specify the definition used in this study. I also discuss the relationship between work engagement and other similar constructs and present a summary review of the outcomes of work engagement. Second, in a review of antecedents of work engagement, I examine past predictor variables and frameworks of work engagement as well as theories that underpin research on work engagement. Third, in a review of self-determination theory, I present some comments on self-determination theory by critics and proponents. Within the review of this theory, I also discuss the concepts of internalization of motivation, basic psychological need satisfaction, and managerial need support and explain how these concepts are applied in the present study. Fourth, in a review of role overload, I discuss the past and present state of theory and research on role overload. Finally, under the section on proposed mediation-moderation framework of work engagement, I discuss how the present study aims to extend the work engagement literature.

2.2 GENERAL REVIEW OF WORK ENGAGEMENT

In general, the literature on work engagement takes various perspectives. Many of these focus on definitional and measurement issues as well as the antecedents and

outcomes of work engagement. The following subsections provide (a) an overview of the various definitions of work engagement found in the literature and the definition that will be used in this study; (b) a discussion of work engagement and related concepts, highlighting how work engagement is distinct from other similar constructs; and (c) a summary review of the outcomes of work engagement.

2.2.1 Definition of Work Engagement

The meaning of engagement at work differs among academic researchers and practitioners (Macey & Schneider 2008b; Simpson 2009). For human resource practitioners, employee engagement often sounds like other better known and established constructs like organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behavior (Saks 2006: 601). For example, Mercer (www.mercerhr.com), a major consultancy firm defined employee engagement as “a state of mind in which employees feel a vested interest in the company’s success and are both willing and motivated to perform to levels that exceed the stated job requirements.” Towers Perrin (www.towersperrin.com), another consultancy firm, defined employee engagement as “personal satisfaction and a sense of inspiration and affirmation employees get from work and being a part of the organization.” Clearly, this way of defining employee engagement seems like putting old commitment wine in new engagement bottles (Bakker & Schaufeli 2008: 151).

In the academic literature, engagement at work has been labeled and conceptualized in a number of ways. First, Kahn (1990: 694) uses the term personal engagement to mean “the harnessing of organization members’ selves to their work roles: in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, emotionally, and mentally during role performances.” When engaged, an employee becomes physically involved, cognitively vigilant, and emotionally connected (Kahn 1990). Kahn (1992) further differentiates the concept of engagement from psychological presence. Psychological presence (i.e., a particular mental state of “being fully there”) happens when people feel and are attentive, connected, integrated, and focused in their role performance (Kahn 1992: 322). On the other hand, engagement (i.e., the behavior of driving energy in one’s work role) is considered as