

WORK ENGAGEMENT AND OCCUPATIONAL BURNOUT: ITS RELATION TO ORGANIZATIONAL SOCIALIZATION AND PSYCHOLOGICAL RESILIENCE

ENGAGEMENT Y SÍNDROME DE DESGASTE OCUPACIONAL: SU RELACIÓN CON LA SOCIALIZACIÓN ORGANIZACIONAL Y RESILIENCIA PSICOLÓGICA

Erika Villavicencio-Ayub

Samuel Jurado-Cárdenas

Alejandra Valencia-Cruz

Facultad de Psicología, Universidad Nacional
Autónoma de México, D.F., México.

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to assess the levels of work engagement in organizations located in Mexico City using standardized tests, and to determine its relationship with the occurrence of occupational burnout (OB), organizational socialization (OS), and psychological resilience. To a sample of 1110 employees, the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale, the Organizational Socialization Inventory, the Occupational Burnout Scale, and the Mexican Resilience Scale were applied. A path analysis with structural equation modeling was carried out to determine the causal relationship between the different variables, specifically, we were interested to see if OS and resilience influence the levels of work engagement. Indeed, our model showed a good fit to the data and suggested that OS and resilience positively affected work engagement. On the contrary, all these measurements were diminished in OB cases, suggesting that work engagement casually decreased the probability of developing OB. These findings can be used to design effective interventions to prevent OB and promote positive behaviors such as work engagement.

Keywords: Positive psychology, engagement, occupational burnout, resilience, organizational socialization.

Resumen

El objetivo de este estudio fue evaluar los niveles de engagement en el trabajo en las organizaciones ubicadas en la Ciudad de México, usando pruebas estandarizadas, para determinar su relación con la ocurrencia del síndrome de desgaste ocupacional (SDO), la socialización organizacional (SO), y la resiliencia psicológica. A una muestra de 1110 empleados se le aplicaron: el Utrecht Work Engagement Scale, el Inventario de Socialización Organizacional, la Escala de Desgaste Ocupacional, y la Escala de Resiliencia Mexicana. El análisis de trayectorias mediante ecuaciones estructurales tuvo buen ajuste al modelo y arrojó relaciones causales entre las diferentes variables, específicamente, estábamos interesados en ver si la SO y la Resiliencia influyen en la ocurrencia del engagement. El modelo mostró un buen ajuste a los datos y sugirió que la SO y la resiliencia afectan positivamente al engagement en el trabajo. Por el contrario, todas estas mediciones fueron disminuidas en los casos de SDO, confirmando también que el engagement se comporta en forma positiva y opuesta al SDO. Estos hallazgos pueden ser utilizados para diseñar intervenciones efectivas para prevenir el SDO y promover comportamientos positivos como el engagement.

Palabras clave: Psicología positiva, engagement, síndrome de desgaste ocupacional (burnout), resiliencia y socialización organizacional.

Introduction

During long time, clinical psychology to a great extent focused on studying people with behavioral dysfunctions (Caballo, Buela-Casal, & Carrobes, 1995). Similarly, organizational psychology and, specifically, the human resources sector have centered their attention on the “sick employees” in an effort to reduce costs associated to absenteeism and staff turnover. Hence, research in occupational health has focused mainly on employee’s illness (Peiró & Tetrick, 2011). Unfortunately, this contributed to a partial overlook of the phenomena because areas of study related to the employee’s quality of life and well-being were often neglected.

For instance, Salanova (2008) made a literature review of papers published on work relatedness illnesses between 1907 and 2007. They found that around seventy-eight thousand articles were related to stress, about forty-five thousand related to depression, twenty-five thousand related to anxiety, and only fewer than three thousand dealt with occupational burnout (OB). In contrast, they found only fourteen thousand articles related to job satisfaction, seven thousand related to well-being, a thousand related to happiness, and one thousand five hundred related to engagement.

The advent of research studies on Positive

Occupational Health Psychology (POHP) has sparked interest on positive organizational approaches which center on fostering favorable working conditions (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2008; Baker, Rodriguez-Muñoz, & Derks, 2012). Nevertheless, publications in the area of organizational psychology continue to address questions related more to illness and dysfunction and less related to health and well-being.

From a positive stance, our globalized context endowed with constant and accelerated change has forced organizations to rethink more and more their needs. It becomes evident that if organizations want psychologically healthy collaborators, they are required to provide the working conditions that facilitate world class competence. There are five essential characteristics for the positive management of employees: self-efficacy, hope, optimism, resilience, and engagement (Salanova, 2008). For this study, we only measured the variables of engagement and resilience because the standardized instruments for the Mexican population already existed, while for the other three variables the standardization for the Mexican population is still lacking.

Work engagement has been defined as a positive psychological state within the labor environment

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