

# INTENTION OVER IMPACT: AN EXAMINATION OF THE CAUSES AND EFFECTS OF INVOLVEMENT AND ENGAGEMENT IN THE WORKPLACE THROUGH THE MEDIATIONAL VARIABLE OF INCLUSIVENESS

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## Abstract

*In the workplace, employees are evaluated by the amount of efficiency and productivity that their work brings. Engaged employees show high levels of energy and are enthusiastic about their work, whereas those who are not may be facing burnout (Schaufeli, Leiter, & Taris, 2008). Acts of engagement in the workplace are then linked to feelings of inclusiveness, which stem from the employer's efforts to create an inclusive environment in the workplace. In this study, the researcher examines how involvement may lead to feelings of inclusiveness in employees, affecting one's level engagement in turn. Recent literature has shown that engagement mediates the relationships between job performance, core-self evaluations, and organizational support. This study will be examined with the participation of 115 people using an online survey which will measure variables such as employee involvement, inclusiveness, engagement, organizational citizenship behavior, self-esteem and thriving. It is hypothesized that employees who feel high levels of inclusion in their workplace will be more engaged in their work.*

## Introduction

Engagement is defined as the investment of an individual's complete self into a role (Rich, Lapine, & Crawford, 2010). This motivational concept is a harness of an employee's full self in terms of physical, emotional, and cognitive abilities for work role performances. Rich et al. (2010) identified three antecedents of engagement: value congruence, perceived organizational support, and core self-evaluations. As for consequences, engagement has been linked to job involvement, intrinsic motivation, and job satisfaction.

Rich et al. (2010) hypothesized that engagement in the workplace was positively related to task performance, organizational citizenship behavior, perceived value congruence, and perceived organizational support. It was also hypothesized that job engagement mediates the relationships between value congruence, task

performance, and organizational support. The methods used to conduct Rich et al.'s study included a sample of 245 full-time firefighters and their supervisors (2010). The sample was noted to be predominantly male and Caucasian who have obtained at least an Associate's degree. Participants were rated on their own job engagement, job involvement, job satisfaction, intrinsic motivation, value congruence, perceived organizational support, and core self-evaluations using a 5-point Likert Scale ranging from "strongly disagree (1)" to "strongly agree (5)". In the results of the study, the hypotheses have supported that engagement, in fact, mediates the relationships between value congruence, perceived organizational support, core self-evaluations, and task performances (Rich, Lapine, & Crawford, 2010).

Downey et al. (2014) brings relevance concerning diversity practices and its effect on engagement by investigating the association of diversity practices that organizations implement with employee-workplace engagement. In order to continue being competitive, organizations must be attentive towards today's diverse workforce and improve on their efforts to promote policies and practices that support and include all individuals from various backgrounds (Downey et al., 2014). Implementing diversity practices can cause positive individual and organizational growth.

Downey et al. theorized three hypotheses regarding diversity practices and their relevance towards engagement in the workplace. Hypothesis one stated that employee's positive perceptions of diversity practices will be positively related to employee engagement. Hypothesis two stated that a positive trust climate will mediate the relationship between diversity practices and engagement. Finally, hypothesis three stated that perceptions of inclusion will moderate the relationship between diversity practices and trust (2014). The four major variables of measurement evaluated in this study were engagement, diversity practices, inclusion, and trust climate. The data used for the study was obtained by an anonymous online survey that concerned diversity climate, where responses from 4,597 employees of a large healthcare organization were obtained. The assessment consisted of a 5 point- Likert scale where questions concerning the measuring variables were answered ranging from 1- "Strongly disagree" to 5- "Strongly agree". All three hypotheses were supported, suggesting that positive perceptions of diversity practices, trust climate, and inclusion correlate to higher levels of engagement.

### *Statement of Purpose*

The literature on employee engagement suggests that feelings of inclusiveness are a major antecedent to engagement. However, it is not clear exactly how feelings of inclusiveness may lead to engagement. This study proposes that employee involvement is a key mediator for this relationship. Thus, this study will test the theory that feelings of inclusiveness lead to employee involvement which in turn leads to higher engagement levels among employees. The need for cultural change in organizations is so pertinent because of newfound appreciation for the importance of inclusiveness to facilitating engagement, which is subsequently, imperative to business success (Sanyal et al., 2015). It follows then that understanding the essential components of a good inclusiveness model is also imperative if one is to ensure that inclusion will lead to engagement.

### **Methods**

#### *Participants and Procedures*

Response from 115 anonymous participants were collected using Amazon Mechanical Turk, a well-validated and established online survey-for-pay system. To ensure confidentiality and anonymity, participants were given only worker ID's. Each participant was paid \$0.35 once they completed and passed the survey's screening question, designed to show the participant's attentiveness.

#### *Measures*

The reliability indexes (alphas) are reported on the diagonal of the correlation matrix in Table 1.

#### *Inclusion*

An Inclusion measure was created by the researchers. The questions asked the degree to which respondents endorsed statements such as "Empowered to participate in

important decisions”, and “Treated as an insider rather than an outsider” on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

#### *Organizational Identity*

Organizational identification was measured using Harvey, Blue, & Tennial’s (2012) piping measure of organizational identification. Respondents first listed five attributes to describe their organization. Secondly, they rated each attribute on the degree to which it is self-descriptive on a 0 (does not describe me) to 100 (describes me completely) scale. The five attribute ratings are aggregated into an overall organizational identification score.

#### *Motivation*

Motivation was measured using the Schaufeli & Bakker (2003) UWES Utrecht Work Engagement Scale. This measure consisted of a 0 to 6 frequency scale. Sample items include: “When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work” and “My job inspires me”.

#### *Organizational Citizenship Behavior*

Organizational Citizenship Behavior was measured using nine items taken from Smith, Organ, and Near (1983) Organizational Citizenship Behaviors scale. This scale consisted of 1 “Never” to 5 “Very Often” frequency scale. Sample questions include: “How often do you attend meetings that are not mandatory, but are considered important?” and “How often do you help others who have been absent?”

#### *Counterproductive Work Behavior*

To measure counterproductive work behavior, the shortened version of the CWB-C by Spector, P. E., Bauer, J. A., & Fox, S. (2010) was used. Sample items included “Came to work late without permission” and

“Stayed home from work and said you were sick when you weren’t”.

#### *Turnover Intentions*

Two questions were included to measure turnover intentions. Those items were “I intend to leave my organization within the next 6 months” and “If I had another job offer paying the same amount, I would take it”.

#### *Life Satisfaction*

Life Satisfaction was measured using the Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener, et al., 1985). Participants selected the image that described their level of satisfaction with their job, with a frequency scale of 1 “Not satisfied” to 11 “Very Satisfied.”

### **Results**

In this study, 228 (N=228) responses were recorded. However, some participant’s data were excluded from analysis in order to maintain validity in the study. Participants that were excluded were mainly those who failed the “Checking for attention” question in the survey, while others consistently answered with repeated responses. After screening recorded responses for their validity, 115 (N=115) responses were used for data analysis. The means and standard deviations, as well as correlations between the measures used in this study are presented in Table 1.

Regarding Hypothesis 1, it was found that inclusion was significantly correlated with measures of engagement, which included the variables of job involvement, organizational identification, job satisfaction, motivation, and organizational citizenship behavior (see Table 1). Inclusion was significantly correlated with life satisfaction; however, inclusion was not significantly correlated with counterproductive work behavior and turnover intentions.

Consistent with the Hypothesis 2, job involvement mediated the relationship between inclusion and indicators of both cognitive/emotional engagement and physical engagement:

- *Motivation*: Job involvement mediated the relationship between inclusion and motivation, Indirect Effect= .43; 95% C.I (.21, .66)
- *Organizational Identification*: job involvement mediated the relationship between inclusion and organizational identification, Indirect Effect: 8.41; 95% C.I: (2.93, 14.85)
- *Job Satisfaction*: job involvement mediated the relationship between inclusion and job satisfaction, Indirect Effect: .88; 95% C.I: (.30, 1.60)
- *Organizational Citizenship Behavior*: job involvement mediated the relationship between inclusion and organizational citizenship behavior, Indirect Effect= .23; 95% C.I: (.10, .37).
- *Counterproductive Work Behavior*: Counterproductive work behavior was not significantly related to either inclusion or job involvement (see Table 1). Thus, a mediational effect was not tested.
- *Subjective Well-Being*: Job involvement did not mediate the relationship between inclusion and life satisfaction. Indirect Effect= .08, 95% C.I. (-.23, .39). However, inclusion did predict life satisfaction  $B=.76$ ,  $t(115)=8.87$ ,  $p<.001$ .
- *Turnover Intention*: Whereas turnover intentions were significantly associated with both inclusion and job involvement (see Table 1), there was no mediational effect.

## Discussion

### Major Findings

H1: Inclusion was significantly correlated with measures of engagement: Job involvement, organizational identification, job satisfaction, motivation, and organizational citizenship behavior.

H1.1: Inclusion was significantly correlated with the measure of subjective well-being: life satisfaction.

H1.2: Inclusion was not significantly correlated with counterproductive work behavior and turnover intentions.

Organizational Inclusion is an important correlate of engagement and subjective well-being for organizational employees. The common saying, “what you give is what you get”, can be applied to organizations and their working relationship with their employees. As the landscape of the American workforce continues to shift, the demand for inclusive work environments continues to increase as well. Those who feel included in their work environment are shown to maximize productivity, thus contributing to the company’s success. To remain competitive, it is imperative that organizations enforce practices which include individuals from diverse backgrounds. Not only is this important for the employees working for a company, but also for the company’s consumers. Potentially, having a broadly inclusive work environment could benefit a company by gaining more perspective on what a variety of consumers are seeking within their specific industry (Sutphin, 2016).

H2: Job Involvement mediated the relationship between inclusion and some indicators of both cognitive/emotional engagement and physical engagement.

When an employee feels high levels of inclusion in their workplace, they are more likely to be involved and committed to their work, thus making positive contributions to their company's success. When an employee feels that their position at their company is valued (whether it be from their physical presence, or the work that they contribute), they then can experience high levels of engagement. This engagement can be shown through the frequency of actions with a positive impact on their role as an employee and overall success of a company.

Organizational Citizenship Behavior (an example of physical engagement) is shown through acts of employees arriving early to their job to get a head start on their work, staying late to finish a task, and covering someone's shift/work if they are sick. Although these actions are not required of employees, they voluntarily commit these actions because of higher levels of commitment to their company and its success. In order to engage with their company through physical actions, the employee must be engaged mentally. Therefore, job satisfaction and motivation are important factors of cognitive/emotional engagement. Those with low levels of job satisfaction and motivation to contribute to their company's success are less likely to then go above and beyond, outside of their required job description. The employees who are not mentally engaged with their company are less likely to come in on their day off, devote more time to their work than required, and less likely to have the motivation to continue working for the company.

### *Limitations*

The small sample size (N=115) impacts the survey's ability to detect a reliable effect and generate generalizable result. Though the hypotheses were supported, the small

sample size calls into question whether these results would stand with more responses. The self-report methodology of this study also created some limitations. Participants could potentially give false information in their responses or complete the survey without thoughtful effort. Since the study did compensate with a monetary reward, some participants' answers were not appropriate to the study's theme or focus. Thus, many participants' answers were excluded from the study, creating its smaller sample size.

### *Future Direction*

Moving forward with the study, the next step would be analyzing marginalized groups' responses toward feelings of inclusiveness in the workplace. The groups of interest are people of color, and those who identify with the LGBTQ+ community. The only demographics analyzed were sex (62%), level of job professionalism (professional: 89%, non-professional: 11%), education level (mean: two years of college), and income (mean: \$30,000-40,000). From data analysis, most participants were men with professional jobs and an average of two years of college education. Even though race and ethnicity were not included in this study, it would have been insightful to analyze the racial demographics.

This study did not focus on identity, so including demographic questions would add a dimension to analysis and clarify the researcher's understanding of the effects of inclusiveness in the workforce. Gathering more responses will also be a future direction. As a result, data collection will be a longer process. With the collection of more data and participants, it is taken into consideration that the overall cost that is spent compensating participants would increase.

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**Appendix**

Figure 1

	M	S	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Inclusion	5.47	1.06	1								
2. Involvement	5.39	.98	.874**	1							
3. Organizational Identity	75.55	19.06	.569**	.621**	1						
4. Job Satisfaction	3.82	2.37	.572**	.621**	.543**	1					
5. Motivation	5.11	1.24	.739**	.742**	.561**	.685**	1				
6. OCB	3.70	.61	.670**	.690**	.549**	.485**	.724**	1			
7. CWB	2.48	1.23	.066	.095	.054	.006	.155*	.053	1		
8. Turnover intentions	3.38	1.22	.402	.447*	.335**	.458**	.394*	.368*	.166*	1	
9. Life Satisfaction	5.18	1.24	.647**	.579**	.491**	.547**	.749**	.552**	.276**	.286	1

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)