

TAKING STOCK: A META-ANALYSIS OF WORK ENGAGEMENT IN THE HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM CONTEXT

HIGHLIGHTS:

- A total of 134 empirical studies were meta-analyzed to examine the antecedents and outcomes of employees' work engagement in the hospitality and tourism context.
- Work-related and personal-related resources were examined as the antecedents of work engagement, while attitudinal and behavioral constructs were investigated as its outcomes.
- Work-related resources have the greater impact on work engagement than personal-related resources, while work engagement has the greater impact on attitudinal outcomes than behavioral outcomes.

ABSTRACT

Although a number of empirical studies on work engagement have been conducted in the context of hospitality and tourism, few efforts have been made to consolidate previous findings in this area. Hence, this paper explores the current stage of work engagement studies and meta-analyses the relations of work engagement with its antecedents and outcomes in the hospitality and tourism context. Through a systematic review, 134 empirical studies (N=43,043) published from 2008 to September 2020 were identified. Given that the findings include the trends within work engagement studies and the effect sizes and variabilities of associated relationships, this study contributes to the hospitality and tourism literature by providing a useful reference for future researchers. The findings are discussed in light of their theoretical and practical implications.

KEYWORDS: work engagement, meta-analysis, hospitality and tourism (H&T)

INTRODUCTION

The concept of employee engagement has gained extensive attention since it was first conceptualized that engaged employees perform better in the workplace (Shuck et al., 2011). Engaged employees exhibit the positive, fulfilling psychological work-related state of mind that drives them to actively involve themselves emotionally, cognitively, and physically in performing their tasks (Kahn, 1990; Schaufeli et al., 2002). When employees are engaged with their work, they display engrossed effort and show more energy and enthusiasm, thereby providing customer service and performing tasks at a higher level (Karatepe & Demir, 2014; Paek et al., 2015). Having employees with a high level of engagement, thus, can be more meaningful in the hospitality and tourism (H&T) industry than in other service industries given that the nature of the industry is to be more precarious (Kusluvan et al., 2010). H&T is known to have poor working conditions such as long and anti-social working hours and emotional dissonance (Karatepe et al., 2014), and lack of recognition and low pay (Kusluvan, 2003). Such poor working conditions can lead to a lack of motivation and dissatisfaction among employees (Poulston, 2009). H&T employees are obliged to provide excellent service to their customers through constant interactions (Jung & Yoon, 2016), and as such, they are required to have a sensitive and proactive attitude toward the needs of customers (Dai et al., 2019). The industry may experience a lack of committed workforce if it fails to promote the psychological wellbeing of employees (Ariza-Montes et al., 2019). Therefore, having engaged employees is the crucial element in maintaining service excellence given that employees serve as a critical link between an organization's internal operations and external customers (Babakus et al., 2017).

Thus, it is unsurprising that a number of empirical studies have investigated what makes employees engaged at work (i.e., antecedents) and what engaged employees bring to their work (outcomes). However, previous H&T studies of work engagement have reported mixed and inconsistent findings in terms of the relationship of work engagement with its antecedents and outcomes. For example, the relationship between hotel employees' work engagement and job performance was 'strong' in the study of Buil et al. (2019), and 'weak' in a study by Karatepe (2015). And Presbitero (2016) reveals a significant correlation between training and work engagement, while this correlation was not significant in the study by Babakus et al. (2017). Mixed and inconsistent findings in the social sciences are not unusual (Sarkar et al., 2020), which makes the synthesis of previous findings essential to advancing a body of knowledge in the literature on a particular topic (Kim et al., 2018). Previous studies have failed to provide a comprehensive picture of work engagement, as their relationships focus has been limited. Considering the importance of engaged employees in the H&T industry, it is vital to have a comprehensive picture of the factors that cause and result from it. An overview of the current findings in work engagement research can provide directions for future research on the topic and implications for employee management. A systematic review method can be employed to comprehensively identify, appraise, and synthesize all the relevant studies, with the overall aim of producing a scientific summary of the evidence in this area (Petticrew & Roberts, 2006). Besides, according to Hunter and Schmidt (2004), meta-analysis offers a viable means to overcome the limitations of individual studies by pooling and quantitatively integrating the samples and results across multiple studies.

Therefore, the purpose of this research was to explore the antecedents and outcomes of work engagement in the H&T context through a comprehensive systematic review and meta-

analysis. Meta-analytic techniques were used to scrutinize the effects of work engagement and its related constructs in the H&T literature (e.g., Doan et al., 2021; Zhu et al., 2021). Such analysis produces a single (corrected) effect size for each combined correlation, which allows researchers and practitioners to determine the factors that are the most important antecedents and outcomes of work engagement. Accordingly, this research aimed to address the following questions:

RQ1: What research on work engagement been done in the H&T context?

RQ2: What are the major antecedents of work engagement and the strength and variabilities of their relationships with work engagement in the H&T context?

RQ3: What are the major outcomes of work engagement and the strength and variabilities of their relationships with work engagement in the H&T context?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Work engagement in the H&T context

The notion of employee engagement first appeared in a journal article by Kahn (1990) titled “Psychological Conditions of Personal Engagement and Disengagement at Work”. In Kahn’s article, personal engagement was defined as “the harnessing of organization members’ selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances” (p. 694). He conceptualized that understanding the domains of meaningfulness, safety, and availability is important before fully understanding why an employee may become engaged in their work (Kahn, 1990). Another primitive theoretical framework of employee engagement was provided by Maslach et al. (2001) where engagement was conceptualized as the positive antithesis of burnout. In Maslach et al.’s

(2001) research, employee engagement was characterized by energy, involvement, and efficacy, which is also the opposite of burnout.

The concept of employee engagement has become popular among human resource management and development consultants since Harter et al. (2002) suggested a link between employee-engagement and profit (Shuck & Wollard, 2010). Harter et al. (2002) were the first to look at employee engagement at the business level and defined employee engagement as an employee's involvement and satisfaction with, as well as enthusiasm for work. In academic research, Saks (2006) was among the first to specifically conceptualize and empirically examine the antecedents and outcomes of employee engagement. In his model, Saks (2006) proposed two types of employee engagement: job engagement; and organization engagement. Here, employee engagement was defined as a unique construct (distinguished from several related constructs such as organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behavior, and job involvement) comprised of the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral components that are associated with individual role performance.

Despite numerous definitions of engagement, the most widely used was by Schaufeli et al. (2002, p. 74) who defined engagement as “a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption” and developed the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) to measure it. Vigor is characterized by high energy levels during work, willingness to devote effort to work, and perseverance in the face of adversity; dedication is characterized by strong work involvement and senses of enthusiasm, significance, confidence, and fearlessness in the face of challenges; absorption is characterized by full concentration on work, a state in which time passes quickly and detachment from work becomes difficult, to the extent that external affairs are unlikely to influence job performance (Salanova et al., 2005).

In the H&T literature, Hughes and Rog (2008) firstly viewed employee engagement as an important outcome of talent management since it demonstrated positive relations with performance and financial outcomes. Pienaar and Willemse (2008) were the first researchers to empirically examine work engagement in the hospitality industry. Using the UWES, they investigated the associations between burnout, engagement, coping, and the general health of employees in a South African city. Now regarded as the most prominent positive organizational concept, many studies began to explore the potential antecedents and consequences of work engagement (Burke et al., 2009).

Antecedents of work engagement

The antecedents of work engagement are mostly examined using the conservation of resource theory (COR; Hobfoll, 1989) and the job demands and job resources (JD-R) model (Demerouti et al., 2001) as theoretical underpinnings (Bakker et al., 2014; Karatepe & Olugbade, 2009). According to the COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989), there are four kinds of valued resources (objects, conditions, personal, and energies) that people strive to obtain, retain, foster, and protect. The JD-R model (Demerouti et al., 2001), to a certain extent, defines job resources as those physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects of the job that reduce job demands, function to help achieve work goals, and stimulate personal growth, learning and development. By comparison, job demands are those “physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects of the job that require sustained physical and/or psychological (i.e., cognitive or emotional) effort and are therefore associated with certain physiological and/or psychological costs” (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004, p. 296). Rooted in the common ground of these

two theories, this paper disentangles the antecedents of work engagement into categories of work-related resources and personal resources.

Work-related resources

In this study, work-related resources refer to those constructs associated with job resources where organizations provide their employees with either formal support (e.g., organizational practices) or informal support (e.g., supervisor support; Kotzé & Nel, 2019). Drawing on Khan's (1990) conditions of psychological safety and employees' perceptions of benefit, Saks (2006) identified rewards and recognition, perceived organizational and supervisor support, and distributive and procedural justice as the antecedents of work engagement. Several contextual resources such as autonomy, social support, supervisory coaching, performance feedback, and opportunities for professional development have been found to be positively related to work engagement (Xanthopoulou et al., 2009). In the H&T industry, formal support – human resource management practices such as service training, service rewards, performance appraisal and information – has been found to influence employees' work engagement (Suan & Nasurdin, 2014). In terms of informal support, supervisor support has been found to affect level of work engagement among hotel employees (Chaudhary & Kumar, 2018; Suan & Nasurdin, 2016).

Personal resources

Personal resources are aspects of the self that are generally linked to psychological resilience, which pertains to individuals' sense of their ability to successfully control and impact their environment during challenging circumstances (Hobfoll et al., 2003). As such, personal resources are functional in achieving goals, mitigating job demands, and fostering personal growth and development (Xanthopoulou et al., 2009). Van Wingerden et al. (2017) argued that

personal resources can influence employees' perception of job demands and the way they deal with them, thereby influencing their level of work engagement. There are a variety of personal resources. According to Toth et al. (2019), the most commonly used personal resource measurement instruments are those of Luthans and Youssef (2004), which assess self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resilience. Many studies have demonstrated the effect of personal resources such as core self-evaluation, the big five personality traits, and trait competitiveness on the formation of employees' work engagement (Güler & Çetin, 2019; Karatepe & Olugbade, 2009; Kim et al., 2009). Among hotel employees, core self-evaluation was found to be positively related to work engagement (Karatepe & Demir, 2014; Lee & Ok, 2015). In an investigation of H&T employees in Taiwan, Tsaor et al. (2019) demonstrated that psychological capital consisting of hope, optimism, resilience, and self-efficacy had a positive effect on work engagement. Such findings were also in line with those of Karatepe and Karadas (2015) who found that Romanian hotel employees with high psychological capital were engaged in their work at elevated levels.

Outcomes of work engagement

When examining the outcomes of work engagement, the social exchange theory (SET; Homans, 1958) and the motivational process of the JD-R theory (Demerouti et al., 2001) are most commonly used. According to Blau (1964), social exchange refers to the "voluntary actions of individuals that are motivated by the returns they are expected to bring and typically do in fact bring from others" (p. 91). In an employment relationship, social exchange may be initiated by an organization's fair treatment of its employees whereby employees will reciprocate the good deeds with positive work attitudes and behaviors (Aryee et al., 2002). JD-R theory (Demerouti et

al., 2001) indicates that job resources may have either an intrinsic motivational potential or an extrinsic motivational potential leading to positive job attitudes and excellent performance. Therefore, this study categorizes the outcomes of work engagement into attitudinal outcomes and behavioral outcomes.

Attitudinal outcomes

In this study, attitudinal outcomes are those constructs related to either employees' attitudes or their work-related or life-related perception constructs. Extant studies have demonstrated that employees with a high level of work engagement have positive attitudinal outcomes such as high levels of affection and emotional attachment toward their job. For example, work engagement has been found to be positively linked to job satisfaction (Ro & Lee, 2017) and organizational commitment (Jung & Yoon, 2016), and negatively associated with turnover intentions (Rigg et al., 2013; Ro & Lee, 2017) among both hotel and restaurant samples. In addition, Radic et al. (2020) demonstrated that work engagement could exert a positive effect on well-being among cruise ship workers who lived on-board for an extended period of time and were often exposed to noise pollution, ship movements, fatigue, sleep deprivation, and very tight living quarters.

Behavioral outcomes

Behavioral outcomes include both forms of behavior and performance such as task performance and the individually- and organizationally-oriented dimensions of citizenship behavior (Aryee et al., 2002). Work engagement has been found to lead to high quality performance in the workplace (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008). In the H&T context, Talebzadeh and Karatepe (2020) demonstrated that work engagement was positively related to three valued performance outcomes such as in-role performance, extra-role performance, and creative

performance among the cabin attendants. Similarly, Karatepe (2012) and Olugbade and Karatepe (2018) found that work engagement had a positive effect on service recovery performance, task performance, and innovative performance among hotel workers. Mostafa (2019) detected that work engagement was positively related to customer-oriented behaviors among restaurant employees in the UK. Ilkhanizadeh and Karatepe (2017) identified that work engagement had a positive influence on flight attendants' voice behavior.

METHOD

Search and inclusion of literature

The quality and quantity of included studies play an important role in a review paper (Kim et al., 2018). Thus, we rigorously defined inclusion criteria and paper selection procedures for our review. The first inclusion criterion was that studies must be quantitative empirical research that examined the relationship between work engagement and other variables in H&T employees. Employees in the context of H&T were defined as those who worked in the following sectors: travel, leisure, hotel, restaurant, café, and club (Baum et al., 2016). The second criterion was that studies must be published in English in an academic source, including academic journals, peer reviewed conference proceedings, and theses. These first two inclusion criteria were used for selecting the papers for the systematic review. For the meta-analytical review, we added one more criterion: included papers must report the Pearson's correlation coefficient of work engagement with its antecedents or outcomes (Hunter & Schmidt, 2004).

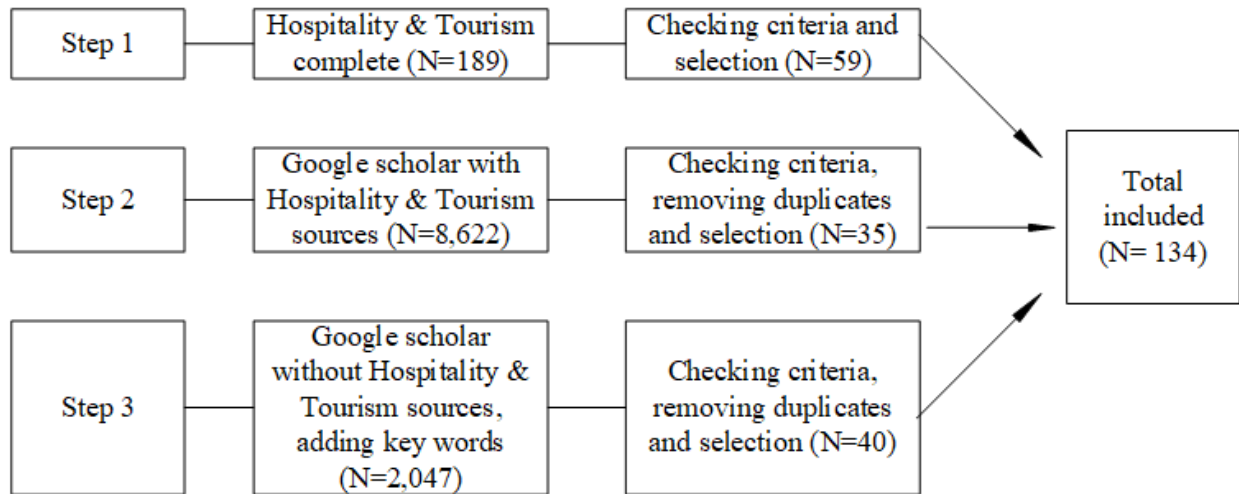
All four members of the research team participated in the process of searching and selecting papers for inclusion. Researchers were divided into two groups. Each group used the search engine in the online databases to find and select potential samples based on inclusion

criteria independently. Then these two groups of researchers worked together and compared the results for a second consideration. This strategy assisted the research team to minimize any possible mistakes and bias during the searching and selection process.

The paper selection procedure is illustrated in Figure 1. Firstly, we searched for studies on the Hospitality & Tourism Complete Database with two keywords: “work engagement” and “employee engagement.” In this first step, we found 189 studies, which were then reduced to 59 that matched all our inclusion criteria. In the next step, we used the search engine on Google Scholar with an adjustment on the source setting so that only hospitality and tourism journals were searched. The second step yielded 8,622 results. After manually checking each result and removing any duplicates, we obtained 35 more articles for our review. In step three, we extended our searching scope by setting Google Scholar to open source and adding the keywords “hotel,” “restaurant,” “tourism,” “travel,” “airline,” and “cruise” into the search engine. This search provided 2,047 results from non-hospitality sources. After manually checking each result and removing duplicates, we identified 40 studies that had not been found in previous steps. Finally, a total of 134 studies were included in our review.

It should be noted that during this process, 10 studies were excluded as they only reported beta coefficient rather than Pearson’s correlation coefficient. However, we converted the effect sizes into the approximations of a correlation coefficient, but the results didn't have a material impact on the results of the study. Hence, based upon guidelines from Hunter and Schmidt (2004) and McGrath and Meyer (2006), we reported results without these studies.

Figure 1. Process of studies selection



Coding and analytical methods

All included studies were coded using Microsoft Excel 2019 in three steps. The first step was to code included studies for specific characteristics, including year of publication, type of publication (journal article, thesis, conference paper), source of publication (H&T, business), analysis methods, contextual information (e.g., the sector/country in which the study was conducted). Next, we coded the correlations between work engagement and its antecedents or outcomes based on the aforementioned theories. Then, following the instructions of Hunter and Schmidt (2004), the third step was to code the statistical information for meta-analysis, including sample size, scale reliability (Cronbach alpha), and the correlation coefficients between work engagement and other variables.

This study adopted the meta-analytical approach introduced by Hunter and Schmidt (2004). The Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) was thus employed as the index when integrating data across independent works. A combined correlation was deemed to be significant when the 95% confidence interval correlation (95% CI) of its corrected effect size did

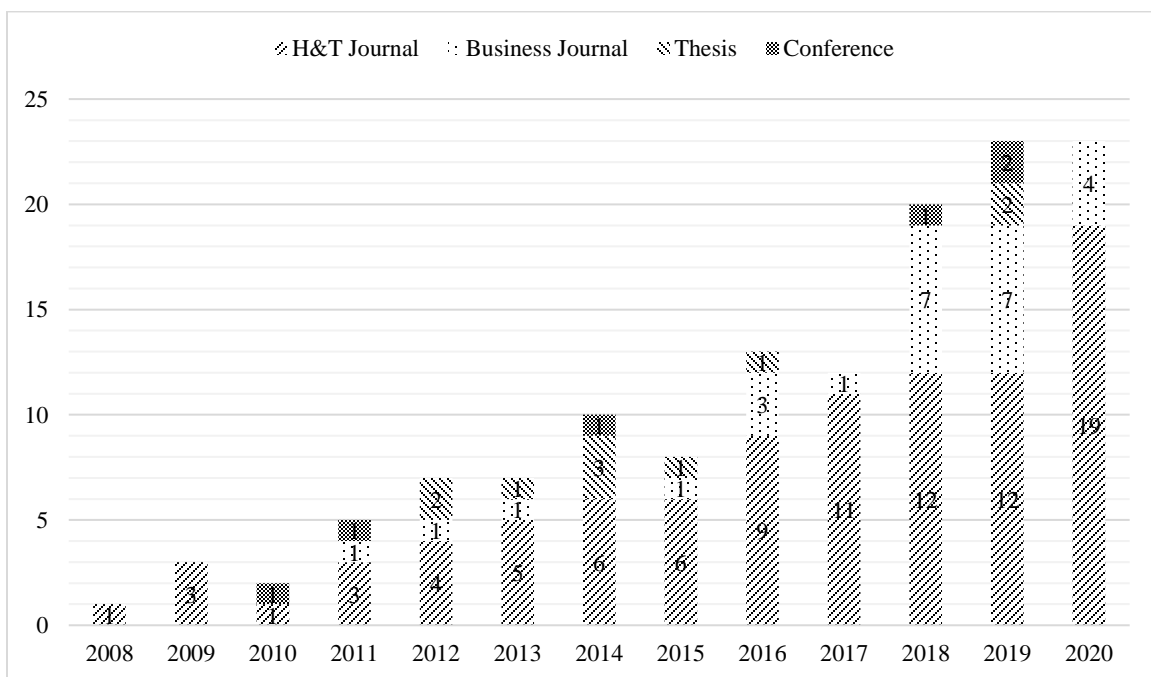
not include zero. The magnitude of each integrated correlation was interpreted by Cohen's (1992) criteria of effect size where $\rho \geq 0.1$ is regarded as a weak magnitude, $\rho \geq 0.3$ as moderate, and $\rho \geq 0.5$ as strong. The score of an 80% credibility interval and Q-statistics were used to define the heterogeneity of each corrected effect size. According to Hunter and Schmidt (2004), when a Q score is statistically significant or an 80% credibility interval is large or includes zero, it is highly possible that latent moderators are operating in the correlation.

RESULTS

Overview of work engagement studies in the H&T context

This section presents an overview of previous research on work engagement conducted in the H&T context. The results of this systematic review address the first research question in our study.

Figure 2. Studies by year and by types of publication sources



It is interesting that the first paper on work engagement in the H&T context was published in a tourism journal (*Tourism Management*) in 2008. The results also showed that the number of studies on work engagement published in hospitality sources steadily increased from 2008 to 2020 (Figure 2); for example, only one was published in 2008 (Pienaar & Willemse, 2008), whereas 23 such papers were published in 2020. Among the popular hospitality journals, the *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management* had the largest number with 17 articles, followed by the *International Journal of Hospitality Management* at 15 articles, and the *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management* at 13 articles. Among the 134 studies in this review, journal articles accounted for 88%. The studies published as theses and conference papers were less at 7.46% (10 studies) and 4.48% (6 studies).

Table 1. Studies by research design, measurements and analysis methods

		N	%
Study design K = 134	Cross-sectional	126	94.03
	Multilevel	5	3.73
	Longitudinal	3	2.24
Work engagement measurement K =134	UWES	105	78.36
	Rich, Lepine, and Crawford (2010)	10	7.46
	Saks (2006)	5	3.73
	Others	14	10.45
Types of analysis K =134	SEM/PLS/Path analysis	70	52.24
	Regression analysis	53	39.55
	HLM	7	5.22
	Others (correlation/One-Way ANOVA/t-test)	4	2.99
Study location K = 134 (137 samples)	USA	25	18.30
	China	13	9.50
	Taiwan	13	9.50
	Turkey	10	7.30
	India	8	5.80
	Korea	8	5.80
	Malaysia	6	4.40
	Others	54	39.40

Table 1 presents the research approaches of previous studies on the work engagement of workers in the H&T context. In terms of study design, a large majority of studies used a cross-sectional approach (N=126, 94.03%). Very few studies took a multilevel (N=5, 3.73%) and longitudinal (N=3, 2.24%) approach. Regarding conceptualisations of work engagement, most studies (78.36%) employed the UWES to measure the focal construct. Some authors also employed the measurement scales introduced by Rich et al. (2010; N=10, 7.46%) and Saks (2006; N=5,3.73%). The country with most samples was the U.S. (N=25, 18.30%). There were also 13 (9.50%) samples with Chinese and Taiwanese workers as their research respondents.

Figure 3. Studies by sectors of sample



The Figure 3 shows that hotel employees were the most frequently used research respondents in previous studies (73.72%) on the topic of work engagement with H&T workers. Over the years, the number of studies with hotel employees has greatly increased, even though the first study was with restaurant workers. Adding to this, some studies involved restaurant workers or different types of hospitality service workers in their research, accounting for 16.09% of our samples.

Meta-analysis results

The results of the meta-analysis are reported in Table 2. The strength of correlations (the average corrected correlation, ρ) between work engagement and its correlated variables were evaluated to identify the major antecedents (research question 2) and major outcomes (research question 3) of the work engagement of H&T workers. In addition, for each meta-analytic

relation, the total number of studies (K), the cumulative sample size (N), the mean correlation (r), the 95% CI, the 80% CR, and the Q-statistics were reported.

Table 2: Effect size of work engagement and major related constructs

Factors	K	N	r	ρ	SD ρ	95%CI	80% CR	Q
Personal characteristics								
Age	28	8456	0.06	0.06	0.14	[0.04, 0.08]	[-0.11, 0.23]	159***
Gender	37	9882	0.02	0.02	0.10	[0.00, 0.04]	[-0.03, 0.06]	48
Education	22	6068	0.01	0.01	0.13	[-0.02, 0.03]	[-0.14, 0.15]	91***
Tenure	26	6815	0.04	0.04	0.10	[0.02, 0.07]	[-0.06, 0.15]	67***
Work-related resources								
Perceived Organizational Support	7	1799	0.60	0.70	0.10	[0.66, 0.73]	[0.51, 0.88]	72***
Job resources	3	1,068	0.62	0.73	0.07	[0.69, 0.78]	[0.64, 0.84]	16***
Job embeddedness	3	954	0.56	0.64	0.12	[0.60, 0.70]	[0.43, 0.87]	47***
Service Climate	3	1,008	0.57	0.62	0.07	[0.57, 0.66]	[0.54, 0.70]	10**
Supervisor support	9	2526	0.51	0.57	0.18	[0.53, 0.60]	[0.32, 0.81]	148***
LMX	4	1396	0.40	0.49	0.20	[0.43, 0.54]	[0.30, 0.67]	33***
Servant leadership	4	890	0.50	0.55	0.14	[0.49, 0.60]	[0.33, 0.76]	40***
Performance Appraisal	3	1276	0.36	0.41	0.02	[0.36, 0.47]	[0.42, 0.42]	0.8
Rewards	8	2486	0.36	0.43	0.24	[0.38, 0.47]	[0.12, 0.73]	139***
Training	6	1886	0.31	0.37	0.10	[0.32, 0.41]	[0.26, 0.47]	17**
Personal-related resources								
Psychological empowerment	4	1,176	0.58	0.68	0.10	[0.63, 0.72]	[0.55, 0.79]	20***
Psychological capital	4	1,578	0.58	0.65	0.10	[0.61, 0.69]	[0.53, 0.77]	30***
Self-efficacy	4	1,076	0.55	0.6	0.08	[0.55, 0.64]	[0.45, 0.75]	29***
Resilience	4	1,076	0.53	0.6	0.13	[0.54, 0.64]	[0.39, 0.80]	44***
Hope	4	1,076	0.47	0.51	0.14	[0.46, 0.56]	[0.33, 0.69]	34***
Optimism	4	1,076	0.59	0.66	-	[0.62, 0.71]	[0.64, 0.69]	4
Organizational identification	5	2,448	0.56	0.62	0.12	[0.60, 0.66]	[0.48, 0.78]	64***
Core Self-Evaluations	3	981	0.42	0.49	0.04	[0.43, 0.55]	[0.49, 0.49]	3
Intrinsic motivation	3	1,137	0.22	0.26	0.21	[0.20, 0.32]	[0.00, 0.53]	43***
Polychronicity	3	943	0.16	0.18	0.02	[0.11, 0.26]	[0.12, 0.25]	5
Attitudinal outcomes								
Job satisfaction	17	5,124	0.63	0.74	0.18	[0.71, 0.75]	[0.47, 0.98]	420***
Career satisfaction	4	1,019	0.51	0.6	0.07	[0.55, 0.66]	[0.60, 0.60]	3
Organizational Commitment	12	3097	0.63	0.72	0.21	[0.70, 0.75]	[0.41, 1.00]	384***
Well-being	3	1,050	0.43	0.47	0.21	[0.42, 0.53]	[0.20, 0.75]	63***
Turnover intention	19	5,579	-0.38	-0.42	0.18	[-0.45, -0.40]	[-0.61, -0.19]	203***
Behavioural outcomes								
Voice Behaviour	3	933	0.43	0.48	0.02	[0.42, 0.54]	[0.48, 0.48]	0.8
Job performance	17	3608	0.38	0.43	0.20	[0.40, 0.46]	[0.20, 0.67]	137***
Innovative behaviour	4	1,490	0.37	0.43	0.13	[0.38, 0.49]	[0.28, 0.60]	26***
Creative performance	5	1268	0.29	0.33	0.19	[0.27, 0.39]	[0.11, 0.56]	41***
Service recovery performance	5	1,096	0.32	0.36	0.11	[0.30, 0.42]	[0.25, 0.47]	13*
OCB – organisation	11	3018	0.49	0.55	0.27	[0.52, 0.58]	[0.16, 0.93]	369**
OCB – service	11	2718	0.40	0.48	0.15	[0.44, 0.51]	[0.30, 0.65]	65***

* K = number of studies, N = cumulative sample size, r = mean correlation, ρ = average corrected correlation, SD ρ = standard deviation of ρ , CI = confidence interval, CR = credibility interval, Q = Q-statistic

Demographic background

The relationships between demographic factors and work engagement were examined in a total of 31,221 respondents. Four demographic characteristics of research respondents were analysed. The results showed that the statistical correlation coefficients of age, gender, and tenure ($\rho < 0.10$) to work engagement were positive, but the magnitudes were very weak. The correlation coefficient between education and work engagement was not significant, as the 95% CI included zero. Among other demographic factors, gender had received the most attention with $K=37$. The Q-statistics related to age and tenure were statistically significant, and the credibility intervals were wide and/or contained zero, revealing heterogeneity among effect sizes for the relationships of work engagement with these two demographic factors.

Work-related resources

The relationships of work-related factors with work engagement were investigated based on 15,289 respondents. The meta-analytical results showed that all work-related resources had moderate to strong positive correlations with work engagement; effect sizes ranged from 0.37 to 0.73. Job resources and perceived organizational support had the strongest effects with $\rho=0.73$ and $\rho=0.70$. The results also showed other factors had strong effect sizes, including job embeddedness ($\rho=0.64$), service climate ($\rho=0.62$), supervisor support and LMX ($\rho=0.57$), and servant leadership ($\rho=0.55$). Supervisors' support was the most studied work-related resource with $K=9$ and $N=2,526$ respondents. Performance appraisal, rewards, and training had meaningful correlations with work engagement, but their effect sizes were moderate. Apart from performance appraisal, the Q-statistics of all other work-related resources were significant (Table 2), revealing the significant heterogeneity among effect sizes for their relations with work engagement.

Personal-related resources

The associations between personal-related resources and work engagement were investigated with 12,567 respondents. While most personal-related resources had strong relationships with work engagement, polychronicity and intrinsic motivation had weak relations. The relationships between psychological empowerment ($\rho=0.68$), optimism ($\rho=0.66$), psychological capital ($\rho=0.65$), and work engagement demonstrated relatively stronger effect sizes. There were some other personal factors, including self-efficacy, resilience, hope, organizational identification, and career satisfaction that also exhibited strong effect sizes ($\rho>0.50$). Organizational identification was the most frequently studied personal-related resource (K=5, N=2,448). Except for optimism, core self-evaluations, and polychronicity, significant Q-statistics were found in all relationships between other personal-related resources and work engagement, reflecting the significant heterogeneity among their effect sizes.

Attitudinal outcomes

The relationship between work engagement and attitudinal outcomes were examined based on 12,567 respondents. The meta-analytical results revealed that all five attitudinal outcomes had either moderate or strong association with work engagement. Among the five attitudinal outcomes, job satisfaction and organizational commitment were found to have the strongest effect sizes with $\rho=0.74$ and $\rho=0.73$. Well-being also had a moderate effect on work engagement ($\rho=0.47$). Apart from career satisfaction, significant heterogeneity among effect sizes for all relationships between work engagement and attitudinal outcomes were detected because of statistically significant Q-statistics.

Behavioral outcomes

Regarding the behavioural outcomes of work engagement of workers in the H&T industry, the results showed that work engagement had lower effects on behavioral outcomes than on attitudinal outcomes. The examination of the links between work engagement and behavioral outcomes was based on 11,113 respondents. The meta-analytical results in Table 2 show that all behavioral outcomes had moderate to strong positive correlation coefficients with work engagement, ranging from $\rho=0.33$ to $\rho=0.55$. Work engagement had the strongest influences on OCB–organization ($\rho=0.55$), OCB–service and voice behaviour ($\rho=0.48$). Job performance ($K=17$) was the most widely researched behavioural outcome of work engagement in the H&T context. Apart from voice behaviour and service recovery performance, the Q-statistics were significant for all behavioural outcomes, revealing the significant heterogeneity among effect sizes for the relationships between work engagement and these behavioural outcomes.

Because the Q-statistics were significant for most correlations, we further conducted a moderation analysis via Z-test as suggested by (Hunter & Schmidt, 2004). Following previous meta-analysis (e.g., Park & Min, 2020), culture differences, such as individualistic and collectivism, and work context, such as hospitality and tourism, were examined as potential moderators, however, no significant differences were found between the subgroups.

DISCUSSION

While tourism employees' work engagement has been explored for over a decade, the present research is the very first review of this concept in the H&T context. By looking at past papers, our review systematically summarizes how work engagement research has been empirically conducted in the H&T context. This discussion section first highlights the research

contributions of our study. We then provide detailed directions for future empirical studies based on our review findings. Finally, the practical implications of this work are discussed, followed by an acknowledgment of limitations.

Research implications

This review, encompassing 134 primary works and recognizing 62 antecedents and 26 outcomes (Supplementary Table 1), offers the H&T literature a comprehensive and inclusive overview of the predictors and consequences of work engagement. The findings of our meta-analysis are more generalizable than each individual work in the review sample. Thus, our study provides a valuable reference for future researchers attempting to construct a consolidated theoretical framework for H&T employees' work engagement.

Second, the results of our meta-analysis provide some insights into the nature of work engagement. For example, the findings support our propositions that both work-related and personal-related resources are significantly correlated with work engagement, and that work engagement has unneglectable influences on attitudinal and behavioral work-related outcomes. Additionally, since the research field of work commitment already has a number of concepts reflecting divergent facets of emotional connection and affect toward the organization and the job, there is a dispute around whether work engagement can be discriminated from other work commitment concepts such as job involvement, motivation, and organizational commitment (Hallberg & Schaufeli, 2006). Our findings demonstrate that work engagement was significantly correlated with job embeddedness, motivation, and organizational commitment, but the corrected effect sizes indicate that the correlation was not perfect. Such findings offer further support for the previous studies that confirmed the discriminant validity of work engagement (Ivey et al.,

2015). Conceptually, it may also imply that work engagement as a unique work commitment construct is worth being studied further.

Moreover, although several studies (e.g., Chaudhary & Rangnekar, 2017) supposed that there may be an association between demographic factors and work engagement, very few of them clearly elucidated the theoretical basis of their assumptions. In the present review, very weak effect sizes were found for demographic factors, corroborating mainstream thought that demographics factors are uncorrelated with work engagement (Burke et al., 2009). On the other hand, this result may suggest that the influence of demographic variables on work engagement may be indirect (mediated or moderated by other factors). In contrast, drawing from the JD–R model (Bakker et al., 2014) and COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989), we anticipated that job resources and personal-related resources should be related to employees' work engagement. We captured strong relationships between work engagement and organizational support, supervisory support, psychological empowerment, optimism and so forth. Such findings largely correspond to the results of the existing meta-study by Knight et al. (2017) who confirmed the effectiveness of personal-resource building interventions and job-resource building interventions on work engagement. From this view, this study contributes to multiple theories related to work engagement by providing additional empirical proof.

Furthermore, we observed that the influence of work engagement on contextual performance (OCB-service, $\rho=0.48$) demonstrated larger effect sizes than those documented in previous non-H&T meta-analytic reviews (e.g., Christian and Slaughter, 2007; $\rho = 0.26$). Due to the service-oriented nature of H&T jobs, employees' extra-role service performance (e.g., taking care of and delighting guests) significantly relies upon their interaction with customers. It is, therefore, not surprising that H&T employees' contextual performance is more influenced by

individual enthusiasm and initiative, when compared with employees in other occupational sectors. Additionally, the relation between work engagement and turnover intentions was found to be stronger in the present review ($\rho = - 0.42$) compared to that reported in prior meta-analytic studies ($\rho = - 0.26$; Halbesleben, 2010). Considering that work engagement is commonly understood as a conceptual opposite of burnout, this finding may imply that when tourism employees are lacking in passion or feel detached from their current work, they may exhibit higher levels of turnover tendency, perhaps due to the greater availability of job alternatives in the tourism field. These interpretations are expected to be further empirically verified and elucidated by future studies. Additional future research directions are provided in the next section.

Recommendations for future studies

First, it is worth highlighting that while the concept of work engagement was established in the 1990s, there was no publication concentrating on H&T employees' work engagement until 2008. Specifically, only in the previous 10 years has work engagement research obtained momentum in the H&T field. However, our statistics about publication trends in H&T employees' work engagement (Figure 1) show that this topic has been gradually gaining attention from researchers. It was also observed that around 80% of the included studies employed Schaufeli's et al. (2002) UWES measurement of work engagement. Future works endeavoring to examine H&T employees' work engagement may refer to this finding when choosing their measurements. Furthermore, most of our sample studies (74%) were conducted in the hotel sector, and with respect to the geographic context, about 50% were conducted in Asian countries. Hence, future research on work engagement is required in other tourism sectors (e.g.,

travel) and on other continents (e.g., Africa) in order to broaden the contexts within which information on this topic is available.

Second, in relation to H&T workers' work engagement, the strongest impacts were observed in such antecedents as job resources, perceived organizational support, psychological empowerment, optimism, and job embeddedness. These findings can be referred to by future researchers who would like to utilize relatively stronger antecedents in their theoretical models for predicting H&T employees' work engagement. Work outcome variables such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, career satisfaction, and organization-oriented OCB, which were prominent consequences of work engagement, are also key topics for future studies.

Third, our findings reveal the distribution of the frequently studied antecedents and outcomes of H&T employees' work engagement. Regarding recommendations for future research, we call for more research focused on investigating variables that were not mentioned in the present study due to an insufficient number of studies ($K < 3$) reporting their correlation with work engagement. For example, the extant H&T literature suffers from a paucity of studies on the influence of social factors on work engagement. Specifically, the current review was unable to test the relationship of work engagement with factors outside the workplace. Considering that such elements – for example, family support (Siu et al., 2010) and social support (Othman & Nasurdin, 2013) – have been identified as significant predictors of work engagement, more research is necessary to clarify such findings in the H&T discipline.

Adding to this, we also noticed that, although H&T employees' work engagement had a strong or moderate impact on some outcome variables (e.g., career satisfaction, $\beta = 0.6$; wellbeing, $\beta = 0.47$), these outcomes received less attention from researchers than others that were less affected. Such outcomes (e.g., career-related constructs) warrant greater consideration

in future research. Further, because work engagement is widely believed to be a positive construct, it is not surprising that most of our sample studies focused on its positive outcomes. However, Mowday (1982) highlighted that strong emotional attachment to work might also be a potential cause of work-family conflict and personal career stagnation. Thus, to portray a comprehensive picture of the outcomes of work engagement, future studies should pay more attention to outcomes that were not detected in the present study, especially negative outcomes.

Fourth, a considerable amount of variance in effect sizes remain unexplored for most assessed relations to work engagement. It would, therefore, be interesting to investigate boundary conditions that heighten or weaken work engagement. For example, drawing upon the JD-R Model (Bakker et al., 2014), Wendsche and Lohmann-Haislah (2017) pointed out that there is a possibility that job resources may moderate the relationship between job demands and psychological detachment from work (a conceptual opposite of work engagement) in such a way that the negative influences of job demands on detachment will reduce when job resources surge. Since the JD-R model is also commonly used as the theoretical basis for studying work engagement, it makes sense to examine the interactive impact of job demands and job resources on work engagement.

Fifth, regarding research design, among our samples, only three studies adopted cross-level analytical techniques, suggesting that work engagement, in general, is only understood at the within-person level. However, both social comparison theory (Festinger, 1954) and social information processing theory (Walther, 1992) emphasize that individuals' perceptions are not only determined by their own attributes, but also by their co-workers as well as by organizational climate. Future research thus may also want to use multi-level modelling to test whether individual attributes (e.g., personal-related capital) interact with

supervisory/group/organizational characteristics to impact work engagement, which would also help to explain why most antecedents in the present study were linked with significant Q-statistics. Our samples also demonstrated a bias towards cross-sectional research design. Nevertheless, in the existing literature, there is some debate around the causal relationship of work engagement with its antecedents (e.g., self-efficacy; Simbula et al., 2011) and outcomes (e.g., job satisfaction; Simbula & Guglielmi, 2013). It is therefore necessary for future primary research to more systematically elucidate the causal mechanisms linking work engagement to its antecedents and outcomes and whether the magnitude of these relations changes over time (e.g., at different career stages).

Practical implications

This review provides some recommendations for practitioners. Choosing the right individuals as organizational members could be the initial step towards maintaining employees' work engagement. In the present work, we found that physiological capital was strongly and positively related to employees' work engagement. This particularly holds true in the H&T industry, which is notorious for its poor work conditions (e.g., poor pay, intense emotional demands). Given that employees with higher levels of psychological capital (hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism) generally treat everything more positively and strive for positive outcomes, it is expected that these H&T employees have more confidence in their potential, even when encountering high job demands and unsatisfactory employment conditions. Such attributes provide them with more persistence in the face of depression, drive them to recognize more meaningfulness in their H&T jobs, which, in turn, keeps them vigorous. With this realization, management should take the beneficial effect of psychological capital on employees' work

engagement into consideration in the recruitment process. Cognitive ability tests, leaderless group discussion, and the Psychological Capital Questionnaire developed by Luthans et al. (2007) are common techniques used to detect whether candidates are high in psychological capital.

Our results also suggest that organizations can effectively stimulate H&T employees' work engagement. We particularly want to stress the strong positive association between supervisor support and work engagement. In their daily work, H&T employees must handle different types of customers holding differing expectations. In addition, for labor-intensive industries, there are relatively more interactions occurring in the workplace between supervisors and their subordinates. Supervisor support (e.g., listening, encouragement, decision-making autonomy) therefore, is a crucial job resource enabling H&T employees to cope with job demands such as pressure and complaints from difficult service encounters. When feeling understood and valued, employees are more likely to devote more time and energy to their jobs. Thus, H&T leaders should be trained in how to support the followers who report to them. For example, supervisors should be encouraged to reveal and record their subordinates' needs by building a two-way communication channel. Apart from traditional techniques (e.g., regular on-the-job team meetings), more contemporary social activities (e.g., informal socializing outside of work) are recommended.

Among work-related resources, this study identified the moderate relationship between rewards and work engagement, suggesting that the presence of reward practices would enable H&T managers to engage employees in their work. But in practice, because of budget restrictions, formal reward systems are not prevalent in small and medium-sized H&T businesses (Kusluvan et al., 2010). However, considering rewards are normally a manifestation of employee

recognition, several H&T scholars (e.g., Dermody et al., 2004) have suggested that acknowledging employee contributions can be achieved in a variety of ways, such as by offering more job autonomy (e.g., flexible work schedules), providing more career advancement opportunities (e.g., cross-training, detailed feedback), and building high-quality workplace friendships (e.g., using workplace fun activities).

With respect to the consequences of work engagement, it is recommended that future human resources management practices should integrate employee engagement as a priority since this will influence both attitudinal and behavioral outcomes. In particular, the examination of the outcomes of H&T employees' work engagement indicates that work engagement appears to have a significant influence on some variables that are closely related to organizational effectiveness (e.g., performance, OCB). Such findings can help H&T managers to understand why they need to devote time and effort to maintaining employees' work enthusiasm. The considerable negative relationship between work engagement and turnover intention is a warning to practitioners of the risks of low employee work engagement. H&T employees could also be told that their engagement not only contributes to organizational operations, but also enhances their own job satisfaction, career satisfaction and overall well-being.

Limitations

First, our samples were only derived from popular databases (Google Scholar and EBSCO Hospitality & Tourism Complete). For this reason, some potential samples not included in these databases will not have been obtained. Future research may want to interrogate a broader range of databases. In addition, only works written in English were included, so future reviews

may involve empirical studies in other languages and apply national cultures as a moderator to see whether the effect sizes and their heterogeneity differ.

As is the case with any quantitative review, the value of our review is based on the quality of included studies, meaning that the limitations of the samples may apply to our findings. Specifically, our findings are mainly based on studies with self-reported, cross-sectional, and single-level research design. The generalizability of our results may be to some extent limited by common method bias. For example, the reversed causality from the outcomes (e.g., organizational commitment) to work engagement or from work engagement to its antecedents (e.g., self-efficacy) is feasible. However, longitudinal data is rare, restricting the possibility of determining convincing causal relationships between variables. Additionally, because over 70% of our samples were from research conducted with hotel employees, the generalizability of our meta-analytic findings to other H&T sectors is a further concern that needs to be assessed by future research.

According to Hunter and Schmidt (2004), second-order sampling error may influence the accuracy of the variance across individual studies. For example, if the number of works employed to calculate the estimate is small, there may be an increased tendency for heterogeneity (Zhu et al., 2020); this might explain why many variables in this review had significant Q-statistics. Despite these restrictions, this study presents a systematic evaluation and statistical integration of empirical studies on work engagement in the H&T field and provides direction for future studies.

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