Relationship Between Social Support, Affective Commitment, and Employee Engagement

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the predictive effect of social support and affective commitment on employee engagement. It is hypothesized that social support will be positively related to employee engagement, and this relationship will be transmitted through affective commitment. Survey data were collected from 115 employees who are registered as active students at Universitas 45 Surabaya. The results of multiple regression analysis show a positive relationship between social support and employee engagement mediated by affective commitment. This finding can explain to companies that employee engagement can be effective by ensuring that employees perceive their organization as providing social support by increasing employees' affective commitment.

Keywords: social support, affective commitment, employee engagement, University 45 Surabaya.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of employee engagement has attracted the interest of academia, the Human Resources (HR) consulting community, as well as many studies on this topic in the last decade, including research by Zigarmi, Nimon (2009), and research by Shuck & Wollard (2010). In addition, because most employee engagement research has been conducted in the United States and Europe, it is necessary to research employee engagement in Indonesia to expand this research path.

Employee engagement indicates eudaimonic well-being, i.e., psychological functioning that goes beyond happiness to include outcomes such as a sense of meaning, vitality, and health (Meyer & Maltin, 2010). It is believed to be an important determinant of individual and organizational performance outcomes, and this belief is supported by several recent studies (Rich, LePine, & Crawford, 2010). Given its role in the performance equation, it's important to understand why some people get involved in their work while others fail to do so. The model often used to guide research seeking this understanding is the employee engagement model between job demands and resources (JD-R) (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). According to this model, job resources such as social support

encourage employee engagement. However, this proposition has proven empirical support. Previous research examining the effects of the support variable on employee engagement has focused on organizational support, supervisor support, and co-worker support (see Crawford, LePine, & Rich, 2010 and Nahrgang, Morgeson, & Hofmann, 2011 for meta-analytic reviews). To address this gap in the literature, this study focused on social support as a predictor of employee engagement. Therefore, the first objective of this study was to examine the relationship between social support and employee engagement.

Until recently, little was known about how engagement is formed in a person (Zigarmi, Nimon, Houson, Witt, & Diehl, 2011). For example, what are the intervention mechanisms (e.g., psychological processes) related to employee engagement through job resources? In this study, the researcher attempted to address the problem of why social support as a job resource would predict employee engagement by proposing effective commitment as a potential intervention variable. Affective commitment is believed to mediate between supportive working conditions and employees' eudaimonic well-being (Meyer & Maltin, 2010). In addition, it has been found in previous research to mediate the relationship between organizational support and motivation (e.g., Maertz, Griffeth, Campbell, & Allen, 2007).

METHOD

Sample and Procedure

The sample of this study was 115 employees (N=115) who were registered as active students at the University of 45 Surabaya. Subjects were informed that this research was conducted solely for academic purposes and guaranteed confidentiality. The data collection technique used snowball sampling technique, and the measuring instrument used was a questionnaire. The questionnaire in a google form was distributed to the subject to be filled in according to the actual condition of the subject. The subjects' demographic data were as follows: the mean age of the study subjects was 37.65 years

(SD 7.42), the average tenure was 11.55 years (SD 6.48), and 54% of the subjects were women, 84 % married.

Measurement

The questionnaire uses a Likert scale consisting of a 5-point scale, with a scale of 1 for strongly disagree and 5 for conditions strongly agree. Subjects must choose a scale point that corresponds to the actual condition of the subject. The overall score for each scale was obtained from the average of the item ratings for each scale. A higher score indicates a higher level of the variable being measured.

Social support is a multidimensional construct, including the size of social networks, emotional support, instrumental support, quality of social support, and mutual assistance from others (Sarason et al., 1983) (Ng et al., 2010). The Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) is a measuring tool designed to measure social support. The MSPSS is designed to measure perceptions of the adequacy of social support from three sources: family, friends, and other important things (Ng et al., 2010). The MSPSS contains 12 items; thus, this tool is easy to use and fast in scoring and administering (Zimet et al., 1988) (Ng et al., 2010). This study uses MSPSS in a modified version into the Indonesian version with the owner of the original MSPSS tool, Zimet.

Affective commitment is an employee's emotional engagement commitment to his organization. An employee with high affective commitment shows job satisfaction, employee engagement, and intention to remain in the organization (Meyer J, Allen N., 1991), increasing performance motivation (Chordiya et al., 2017; Aamodt, 2009). and affects organizational success (Rainey H., 2014) (Kaur & Mittal, 2020). In this study, the Multitarget Affective Commitment Scale (MACS) instrument from Schoemmel was used. To measure emotional attachment and involvement, MACS is part of the literature on the theory of Meyer and Allen (1991) in (Schoemmel et al., 2015) on affective commitment. In addition, this component is integrated into the theory of Buchanan (1974) and Mowday et al. (1979) in

(Schoemmel et al., 2015). Therefore, MACS can measure employees' affective commitment to multiple targets in the workplace. MACS consists of 7 items to measure affective commitment to work, profession, department (organizational subunit), and organization (Schoemmel et al., 2015). This study uses MACS, which has been modified into Indonesian with the owner of the tool, Kristina Schemmel.

Kahn (1990) (Tauetsile & Joy, 2019) describes three psychological conditions of individual work engagement. First, individuals must feel meaningfulness in their work roles (psychological meaningfulness). Second, individuals must feel safe to express themselves without fear (psychological safety). Third, they must feel they have the personal resources (personnel resources) needed to be bound (psychological availability). Building on the definition of Kahn (1990) in (Tauetsile & Joy, 2019) and previous research on employee engagement by Macey and Schneider, 2008; May, Gilson, Harter, 2004); Rich, Lepine, and Crawford, 2010, Soane at al., 2012 in (Tauetsile & Joy, 2019), developed a model of measuring employee engagement that has three requirements; work role focus, activation, and positive affect. They developed the ISA measuring instrument, which consists of three aspects, Intellectual, Social, and Affective components. According to the ISA measuring instrument model, intellectual attachment is the extent to which intellectual aspects are absorbed in work; social attachment is how a person is connected socially with his work environment and co-workers. In contrast, affective attachment is the extent to which a person experiences positive feelings related to his work (Soane et al., 2012) (Tauetsile & Joy, 2019).

By paying attention to the components of social engagement, the ISA measuring instrument model recognizes one of the features of Kahn (1990) in (Tauetsile & Joy, 2019), namely the conceptualization of work engagement as an expression of behavior connected to work and other people, and a person becomes attached to work. Physically in the task either individually or with other people. This study uses a scale (Intellectual engagement, Social engagement, Affective engagement Scale (ISA scale), an instrument developed by Soane et al., 2012. The ISA scale consists of 9 items that have been modified into Indonesian with the owner's permission, Emma Soane.

Data analysis

Examination of the data on deviations from normality, linearity, and heteroscedasticity assumptions showed no deviations. Hypothesis testing using multiple regression analysis. The magnitude of the indirect (i.e., mediated) effect was estimated to establish mediation, and its statistical significance was tested using a bootstrap procedure (MacKinnon, Coxe, & Baraldi, 2012; Rucker, Preacher, Tormala, & Petty, 2011).

RESULT and DISCUSSION

Means, standard deviation, intercorrelation, and alpha reliability for research variables are shown in Table 1, and the results of multiple regression analysis are shown in Table 2. As shown in Table 2, social support affects employee engagement (b = 0.47, p = 0.001); thus Hypothesis 1 is proven. Social support is also positively related to affective commitment (b=0.60, p=0.001); thus, Hypothesis 2a is proven. Affective commitment is positively related to employee engagement (b=0.57, p=0.001), and affective commitment mediates social support to employee engagement (b=0.13, p=0.001); thus, Hypothesis 2b is proven.

Table 1
Descriptive statistics and correlations for research variables

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3
1. Social Support	3.34	0.78	(0.88)		

2. Affective Commitment	3.92	0.66	0.60*	(0.83)	
3. Employee Engagement	3.71	0.54	0.47*	0.65*	(0.72)

*N=115. Cronbach's alpha is shown in brackets on the diagonal. *p , .001 (two-tailed).*

Table 2
Multiple regression analysis results

predictor	b	SE	t	95%	CI
Social Support->Affective commitment	0.60	0.06	7.90*	0.38	0.63
Social Support->Employee engagement	0.47	0.06	5.69*	0.21	0.44
Affective Commitment->Employee Engagement	0.57	0.07	6.44*	0.32	0.60
Social Support->Affective Commitment-> Employee engagement	0.13	0.06	1.48	2.03	0.21

*N=115. CI=Confidence interval. *p , .001 (two-tailed)*

The mediated effect results from the regression coefficient relating to social support with affective commitment and the regression coefficient relating to affective commitment to employee engagement. The statistical significance of this effect was tested by generating a bootstrap confidence interval based on a 5000 bootstrap sample (Preacher & Hayes, 2008) using the bootstrap macro for indirect effects (SPSS version) provided by Andrew Hayes on his website (www.afhayes.com/spss - sas-and-plus-macros-and-code.html). The results show that the indirect effect of social support on employee engagement through affective commitment (bootstrap point estimate=0.23) is statistically significant because the confidence interval is 95%, with a correction bias between 0.14 to 0.36 that does not contain zero.

CONCLUSION

There are several research limitations experienced. First, because this study was based on a relatively small sample of participants, and thus the generalizability of the findings is limited, replication studies using a larger and more diverse sample are needed. Second, definite conclusions about cause-and-effect relationships cannot be made because the data are cross-sectional. Finally, future research can build on the findings of this study to determine other mediators and moderators of the relationship between job resources and employee engagement.

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