

ERRATA

- p iii para 1, last sentence: "one's job role" for "ones job role"
- p 11 para 1, 2nd sentence: "motivation state of engagement is experienced" for "motivational state of engagement state"
- p 12 para 2, 2nd sentence: "PP, positive organizational" for "positive psychology, positive organizational scholarship (POS)"
- p 42 para 2: "vigor, dedication and absorption largely correspond with physical, affective, and cognitive engagement" for "vigor, dedication and absorption largely correspond with affective, cognitive, and physical engagement".
- p 43 para 1: "the already recognized vigor/behavioral, dedication/affective and absorption/cognitive dimensions of engagement" for "the already recognized vigor/affective, dedication/cognitive and absorption/behavioral dimensions of engagement".
- p 50 last para, last sentence: "acting to challenge" for "acted to challenge"
- p 62 para 3: "which has been considered the cognitive component of engagement" for "which has been considered the behavioral or physical component of engagement".
- p 63 last para: "Beyond the discussion of engagement energy and focus, additional questions regarding the dimensionality of engagement need to be addressed." For "Beyond the issue of how engagement focus might reflect a cognitive, as opposed to a behavioral dimension, additional issues need to be addressed."

ADDENDUM

- p 76 Insert the following reference:

Schaufeli, W.B., Taris, T., Le Blanc, P., Peeters, M., Bakker, A., & De Jonge, J. (2001). Maakt arbeid gezond? Op zoek naar de bevlogen werknemer [Can work produce health? The quest for the engaged worker]. *De Psycholoog*, 36, 422-428.

- p 94, last para, 2nd sentence, insert "From a theoretical perspective, it is common to investigate the structure and effect of unobservables like engagement or motivation through analyses by statistically relating covariation between measured variables to latent variables (Borsboom, Mellenbergh, & van Heerden, 2003). As previously outlined, general work engagement comprised of measured items drawn from the UWES-9 (Schaufeli et al., 2006) and the measured variables for the three salesperson specific engagement dimensions were each comprised of items developed following the qualitative study reported in paper 2. Consistent with standard approaches to latent factor modeling (e.g. Borsboom, et al., 2003), CFA was used to model the latent variables."

- p 165 para 1, after the last sentence insert the following as the final sentence: "Finally, although job resources were the primary focus of the current research program, JD-R theory suggests job resources particularly influence engagement when job demands are high. Future research on the highly demanding role of sales which aims to use the current modelling ought to also include job demands and take consideration of the JD-R health impairment process (e.g. Bakker & Demerouti, 2007)."

- p 169 insert the following reference:

Borsboom, D., Mellenbergh, G.J., & van Heerden, J. (2003). The Theoretical Status of Latent Variables. *Psychological Review*, 110, 203-219.

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Notice 1

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Salesperson Work Engagement: How Employee Involvement Climate,
Psychological Capital, and Engagement Influence Attitudinal and
Performance Outcomes

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BSocSci; PGradDipPsych

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Psychology (Organizational)

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Abstract

The overall focus of this thesis was to explore the concept of work engagement for sales professionals. More specifically, the research program sought to examine the motivational state of work engagement and then determine the degree to which organizational resources and personal resources influenced salesperson work engagement. Furthermore, the research aimed to determine the degree to which salesperson work engagement influenced salesperson performance, overall work attitude and intention to turnover (ITO). Paper 1, a theoretical paper, focused on establishing links between antecedent organizational resources in the form of employee involvement climate (EIC), and personal resources in the form of psychological capital (PsyCap), with work engagement conceptualized as a motivational mechanism mediating the EIC and PsyCap relationships with salesperson performance. Paper 2, a qualitative paper, examined the lived experience of salesperson work engagement and the links this has with the experience of work-related flow. More specifically, fourteen sales professionals working across a range of companies in one large Australian-based consumer goods enterprise were interviewed about their experiences of engagement and flow at work. The data, analyzed using interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA), provided insight into salespersons' experiences of work engagement and led to the interpretation of salesperson engagement as a positive psychological state reflected by a sense of energy, focus, and striving that is consciously self-regulated in order to meet the situational and task relevant demands encountered within one's job role. Salespersons' experiences of work-related flow were characterized by eudaimonia and vitality, complete absorption, and intuitive striving. Paper 3 reported on a quantitative study focused on empirically testing an elaborated version of the model of salesperson

engagement proposed in Paper 1. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to establish the dimensionality of all of the constructs included in the model and to verify the appropriateness of specifying EIC, PsyCap, salesperson work engagement, overall work attitude and salesperson performance as second-order latent factors. The proposed theoretical model was tested using structural equations modeling (SEM) and moderated structural equations modeling (MSEM). The study sample comprised participants recruited from three large Australian-based organizations and a sample of sales professionals (N = 226) recruited via the researcher's personal and professional networks. Salesperson work engagement, EIC, PsyCap, salesperson performance, overall work attitude, and intention to turnover were assessed via an online self-report questionnaire. The results showed a good-fitting structural model which verified the majority of the proposed paths (seven out of 10) and which explained sizable amounts of variance in the outcomes investigated (50% to 72%). The discussion focused on the contributions to the literature which emerged from the findings and the theoretical and practical implications for the measurement and modeling of salesperson work engagement. The key study limitations, including the use of self-reported data and a cross-sectional design, were acknowledged. Future research opportunities were also outlined. Overall, given the significant relationships with salesperson performance, work attitudes, and intentions to turnover, this thesis supported the importance of EIC and PsyCap resources to the study of salesperson work engagement and outcomes using the JD-R model motivational process.

General Declaration

In accordance with Monash University Doctorate Regulation 17/ Doctor of Philosophy, Master of Philosophy (MPhil) and Doctor of Psychology regulations the following declarations are made:

I hereby declare that this thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at any university or equivalent institution and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

This thesis includes one original paper published in a peer reviewed journal, and two unpublished publications. The core theme of the thesis is salesperson work engagement. The ideas, development and writing up of all the papers in the thesis were the principal responsibility of myself, the candidate, working within the School of Psychology and Psychiatry under the supervision of Dr Simon Albrecht.

The inclusion of co-authors reflects the fact that the work came from active collaboration between researchers and acknowledges input into team-based research.

In the case of chapters 2, 3 and 4, my contribution to the work involved the following:

Thesis chapter	Publication title	Publication status	Nature and extent of candidate's contribution
2	Salesperson engagement and performance: A theoretical model.	Published	Conceptual development, literature review, theoretical analyses and primary author.
3	Finding flow beyond salesperson work engagement: A qualitative exploration.	Submitted	Conceptual development, design, administration, data analyses and primary author
4	Salesperson work engagement: The test of a higher-order structural model.	Submitted	Conceptual development, design, administration, data analyses and primary author.

I have not renumbered sections of submitted or published papers in order to generate a consistent presentation within the thesis.

Signed:

Date:

List of Publications Included in Thesis

(In order of appearance)

Medhurst, A., & Albrecht, S.L. (2011). Salesperson engagement and performance: A theoretical model. *Journal of Management and Organization*, 17, 398-411.

Medhurst, A., & Albrecht, S.L. (under review). Finding flow beyond salesperson work engagement: A qualitative exploration. *Journal of Positive Psychology*.

Medhurst, A., & Albrecht, S.L. (under review). Salesperson work engagement: The test of a higher-order structural model. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*.

List of Other Publications and Presentations Completed During Candidature
(Not included in thesis)

- Medhurst, A., & Albrecht, S.L. (2007). The effect of engagement on the relationship between high-involvement work systems (HIWS) and sales employees' attitudes and performance: A mediation model for future research. *Proceedings of the Australia and New Zealand Academy of Management (ANZAM) Annual Conference*, Sydney, Australia, December 4-7
- Medhurst, A., & Albrecht, S.L. (2009). Being engaged: A salespersons perspective. Poster presented at the *International Positive Psychology Association (IPPA) First World Congress on Positive Psychology*, Philadelphia, PA, USA, June 18-21.

Awards Received During Candidature

Awarded a student scholarship to attend the International Positive Psychology Association (IPPA) First World Congress on Positive Psychology in Philadelphia. The award was received for the research poster "Being engaged: A salespersons perspective" (cited above). Recipients were selected competitively on the basis of the quality of research.

Abbreviations Used in Thesis

CFA	Confirmatory factor analysis
EIC	Employee involvement climate
HIWS	High involvement work system
IPA	Interpretative phenomenological analysis
ITO	Intention to turnover
JD-R	Job demands-resources
MSEM	Moderated structural equation modeling
POB	Positive organizational behavior
POS	Positive organizational scholarship
PP	Positive psychology
PsyCap	Psychological capital
SEM	Structural equation modeling
WWB	Workplace Well-being

Acknowledgments

This work could not have been completed without the support of my partner, family, friends and colleagues. An enormous thank you to my supervisor and co-author, Simon Albrecht, who provided endless support and guidance. I am truly grateful for our strong partnership and such an enjoyable research experience.

A special thank you to Kat, Mum, and Dad. Kat, you are my partner in life but have also been a loving, encouraging, and supportive companion throughout this thesis adventure. Through the challenging times, your unfailing and unbounded belief in me provided the strong foundation I needed to soldier on...and on. Mum and Dad, you went above and beyond to support me with my studies. Not only did you provide me with an encouraging environment, but you also lent your attentive and caring ears over numerous coffees - even if things were going over your heads.

Thanks go to my amazing friends, colleagues and bosses. Jeff for our philosophical chats and your support; Jaci for your kind words of encouragement and generous, detail-focused assistance; Jo for your poignant guidance and backing; Karen, Marcus, and Ardy for your proofreading powers; Simon M for being open to discussing anything - from stats to states to society. Amantha, Dylan and Chris – your support, flexibility and understanding have been truly appreciated.

To the rest of the family: Damian, Nathan, Little Nana, Grandpa, Audrey, Reg, Emily the ‘texpert’, Matt, Janelle and Lizzie – thanks for always being there for me. High fives of thanks to Ash, Fiona, Kate M, Kate R, Mariana, Tammy and Dave, Pat and the rock-climbing crew, Adam, Erin, Tim, and Jacinta. Finally, I am greatly appreciative to the organizations that participated in this research.

For Betty Medhurst, a proud Nana

Chapter 1: General Introduction

Most people never run far enough on their first wind to find out they've got a second. Give your dreams all you've got and you'll be amazed at the energy that comes out of you.

William James

Background

I have been curious for many years as to how people cultivate and experience motivation at work. I was first interested in motivation and the importance of positive mental states during my years as a track and field athlete. I often reflected on how I could motivate myself to be at my best and deliver a top performance on race day. After retiring from competition, I moved into the world of work where, as a retail sales manager in my early 20's, I was responsible for motivating a team of salespeople, developing their skills, and building a positive working environment in which everyone was able to be their best and perform effectively. My observations in this role, and my ongoing interest and university studies in psychology, led me to enroll in the doctoral organizational psychology program at Monash University.

When I commenced my studies in 2007 I was immediately drawn to the emerging area of positive psychology (PP; Seligman, 1999), and in particular, the thriving literature on work engagement (e.g., Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Roma, & Bakker, 2002). I became keen to explore and understand what was being experienced by employees during the motivational state of work engagement. I was also interested in exploring how the state of engagement could be influenced by positive factors in the work environment, and how an individual's own psychological skills could facilitate engagement and improve experiences at work. Given my familiarity with sales, and its important role for organizational effectiveness, I made a decision to focus on the sales

function as the central context for the research program. I hoped that exploring salesperson experiences of work engagement could provide new insights into how the motivational state of engagement is experienced and cultivated, which might in future generalize to other related functions (e.g., professional services and marketing) or the general work population in ongoing research.

General Context

The concept of work engagement has captured a wide audience in both academic and practitioner settings over the past five to 10 years (Albrecht, 2010). Consistent with the extant literature, the premise of this thesis is that work engagement is an important motivational state that contributes to positive employee experiences, attitudes, and performances at work across multiple organizational contexts (e.g., Bakker & Leiter, 2010; Macey, Schneider, Barbera, & Young, 2009). It is generally agreed that work engagement is a positive motivational state underpinned by psychological processes including affect and our emotional states (i.e., feeling *vigorous* during work), cognition and the nature of our mental state (i.e. being *dedicated* and inspired at work), and behavioral or physical manifestations of the engaged state (i.e., being *absorbed* and involved during work) (e.g., Bakker & Demerouti, 2008; Kahn, 1990, 1992, Macey et al., 2009; Rich, LePine, & Crawford, 2010; Schaufeli et al., 2002). However, there are many ongoing debates in the work engagement literature including, but not limited to, the lack of universal consensus regarding the theoretical base, the dimensionality of the construct, its relative state or trait-like nature, and the measurement and modeling of the construct (Albrecht, 2010; Bakker, Albrecht, & Leiter, 2011; Meyer & Gagné, 2008).

The chapters, papers and studies presented in this thesis outline, discuss and reference relevant debates in order to provide a theoretical and empirical rationale for the studies designed and executed across the research program. The research activities and empirical studies informed the development and submission of one theoretical paper and two empirical papers. The aim across these studies was to make a positive contribution to the literature by extending current research, theorizing, measurement and modeling of work engagement and related constructs. As such, this research sought not only to understand how work engagement is experienced and cultivated by salespeople, but also how it is influenced by the work environment, climate, or organizational context, and how a salesperson's personal psychological resources can be drawn on to facilitate engagement, improve attitudes towards work, and generate improved performances.

Research Focus

The remaining sections of this chapter provide a brief explanation of the importance of the sales function, and the salesperson's role, and present a concise overview of the positive approach that underpins the research. Specifically, PP, positive organizational scholarship (POS), and positive organizational behavior (POB) will be introduced as these areas provide the theoretical foundation for the concepts under investigation across the research program. Thereafter, the research aims and thesis structure will be presented.

The Important Role of Sales and Selling

Improving productivity, product quality, and efficiency on the organizational supply-side would be futile if the improved products, processes or services did not end

up in the hands of the consumer. Following this line of argument, Lamb, Hair, and McDaniel (2006) persuasively argued that no job is more important to the success of a business than personal selling. Beyond skillfully performing traditional sales steps, salespeople increasingly need to master selling techniques and adapt them as required with different clients and different selling contexts (Spiro & Weitz, 1990; Weitz, Suja, & Suja, 1986). Furthermore, salespeople need to tune into and understand how one customer differs from another in order to provide effective ideas and creative solutions that will satisfy customer needs (Wang & Netemeyer, 2004). For the aforementioned reasons, and due to the distinctive attributes of the sales role, researchers have argued that the sales area is deserving of special attention in research and practice and the continued exploration of the organizational and personal factors that determine salesperson effectiveness (e.g., Vinchur, Schippmann, Switzer, & Roth, 1998).

A Positive Research Approach

The purpose of the PP movement "...is to begin to catalyze a change in the focus of psychology from pre-occupation only with repairing the worst things in life to also building positive qualities" (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000, p. 5). Whereas the importance of positivity is not a new discovery, contemporary PP researchers seek to provide more balance to the study and practice of psychology by devoting equitable importance and attention to the positive spectrum of human experience (Gable & Haidt, 2005; Linley, Joseph, Harrington, & Wood, 2006). Building on this purpose, the emerging fields of POS and POB seek to emphasize the need for "more focused theory building, research, and effective application of positive traits, states, organizations, and behaviors" (Luthans & Youssef, 2007, p. 322).

POS is defined as

the study of that which is positive, flourishing, and life-giving in organizations. Positive refers to the elevating processes and outcomes in organizations. Organizational refers to the interpersonal and structural dynamics activated in and through organizations, specifically taking into account the context in which positive phenomena occur. Scholarship refers to the scientific, theoretically derived, and rigorous investigation of that which is positive in organizational settings (Cameron & Caza, 2004, p. 731).

A wide variety of positively oriented high-performance or high-involvement work practices have been extensively studied and supported for their contributions to organizational performance and competitiveness (e.g., Huselid, 1995; Lawler, 1992; Pfeffer, 1998). Vandenberg, Richardson, and Eastman (1999), for example, showed a significant positive association between the provision of high-involvement work practices including training and incentive practices and organizational effectiveness, as mediated by employee morale. Whereas POS is in line with PP in its positive focus and scientific rigor, its more organization-level orientation distinguishes it from other positive approaches such as POB.

POB is focused on “the study and application of positively oriented human resource strengths and psychological capacities that can be measured, developed, and effectively managed for performance improvement in today’s workplace” (Luthans, 2002b, p. 59). POB involves the study of individual positive psychological conditions and human resource strengths related to performance improvement and employee well-being, and ultimately the conditions under which employees thrive and achieve peak performance in organizational contexts (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2008). Areas of research focus include positive psychological states including work engagement, flow, self-efficacy, and hope; as well as other cognitive capacities (e.g., creativity) and affective capacities (e.g., humor).

POS and POB approaches are potentially useful to understanding how salespeople experience engagement and how such experiences translate into positive attitudes, retention and performance at work. Constructs underpinned by these approaches will be explored throughout the research program in papers one, two, and three (chapters two, three, and four, respectively). Furthermore, the specific constructs will be modeled within the positively oriented motivational process delineated within the job demands-resources (JD-R) model. It is important to note briefly that the JD-R model has been the most prominent framework for examining positive job and personal resource antecedents that influence work engagement and downstream outcomes including job performance (e.g., Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001; Demerouti & Cropanzano, 2010). A more comprehensive introduction of the JD-R model will be provided in papers one and three to explain the modeling of constructs investigated across the research program (chapters two and four, respectively).

Research Aims

The overall aims of the research were to:

1. Explore and understand the experience of work engagement for sales professionals; and to
2. Propose and test a theoretical model of selected positively oriented organizational (POS) and personal resources (POB) that influence salesperson attitudinal and performance outcomes through their respective relationship with salesperson work engagement.

Thesis by Publication

This thesis has been completed by publication toward the degree of Doctorate of Organizational Psychology. Thesis by publication requires the student researcher, supported by their academic supervisor, to develop a series of related yet independent papers for submission, review, and publication in peer-reviewed academic journals. The individual papers must be submitted, in review, in press, or published at the time of thesis submission. Though there is no number of publications specified, sufficient theoretical and empirical research must be demonstrated across the research program and be presented as required within the submitted journal papers.

In completing this thesis, three papers were developed, which were related to the overall research aims outlined above. The three papers were then integrated within the overall thesis; with additional chapters provided in order to structure the thesis and to guide the reader through the overall research program. Whilst unnecessary repetition has been avoided where possible, it is important to note that some literature and arguments have necessarily been repeated across chapters to ensure the reader is provided with appropriate context, rationale, and detail at different parts of the overall thesis. The aims of each chapter are briefly introduced below in order to provide a high-level outline of the research conducted.

Overall Structure of the Thesis: Chapters and Papers

The remainder of this thesis proceeds as follows:

Chapter 2: A model of salesperson engagement and performance (Paper 1)

reviews key research and proposes a theoretical model of salesperson engagement and performance.

Chapter 3: A qualitative exploration of salesperson engagement (Paper 2)

rationalizes the use of interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA: Smith, Jarman, & Osborn, 1999) to explore the lived-experience of work engagement, and work-related flow for sales professionals. It then presents an interpretative account of the dimensions, characteristics, relationships, and distinctions between salesperson work engagement and work-related flow.

Chapter 4: Testing a higher-order structural model (Paper 3) presents and

statistically analyzes an elaborated version of the theoretical model proposed in Paper 1. By way of introduction, Chapter 4 provides important additional information, that, due to word constraints, were not included in Paper 3. This includes an expanded review of key theoretical or methodological issues that informed the modeling, and a more detailed explanation of the quantitative methodologies and analytical techniques employed in the paper.

Chapter 5: Integrated discussion and conclusions provides an integrated

discussion of the overall research program. This includes a summary of key findings and contributions; practical implications for researchers, organizations, and practitioners; research limitations and suggestions for future research.

Supporting materials are provided at the end of the thesis, by way of appendices. These include examples of the recruitment materials and documents approved by the ethics committees, which enabled the studies to be undertaken with organizational samples. The interview guide and scale items utilized at each stage of the research program are also provided.

Chapter 2: A Model of Salesperson Engagement and Performance (Paper 1)

Aims and Context for Paper 1

There were three main aims in writing Paper 1. The first aim was to provide an initial understanding of how work engagement and related constructs are experienced within a sales context. Specifically, the paper aimed to review the concept of work engagement and selected antecedent POS and POB resources within the context of sales and salesperson performance at work. The second aim was to propose a theoretically defensible model for testing in future research (see Figure 1, Paper 1). The motivational process delineated within the job demands-resources model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Llorens, Bakker, Schaufeli, & Salanova, 2006; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2007) is explained as it provides the underlying framework for the proposed theoretical model. Salesperson performance is modeled as the outcome variable, and is discussed with reference to work engagement and modeled antecedent POS and POB resources. The third aim of Paper 1 was to inform the practitioner and academic readership of the Journal of Management and Organization of some practical applications and intervention recommendations underpinned by theory and empirical research, as they relate to the proposed modeling and the sales context.

Declaration for Thesis Chapter 2 (Paper 1)

Declaration by candidate

In the case of Chapter 2 (Paper 1), the nature and extent of my contribution to the work was:

Nature of contribution	Extent of contribution (%)
Conceptual development, conducted literature review; prepared first and full draft of manuscript; redrafted manuscript; incorporated co-author's feedback into final manuscript; prepared and submitted for publication.	80%

The following co-author contributed to the work:

Name	Nature of contribution
Simon Albrecht	Conceptual critiquing and development, Feedback on draft manuscripts.

Candidate's Signature		Date
-----------------------	--	------

Declaration by co-author

The undersigned hereby certifies that:

1. the above declaration correctly reflects the nature and extent of the candidate's contribution to this work, and the nature of the contribution of the co-author;
2. they meet the criteria for authorship in that they have participated in the conception, execution, or interpretation, of at least that part of the publication in their field of expertise;
3. they take public responsibility for their part of the publication, except for the responsible author who accepts overall responsibility for the publication;
4. there are no other authors of the publication according to these criteria;
5. potential conflicts of interest have been disclosed to (a) granting bodies, (b) the editor or publisher of journals or other publications, and (c) the head of the responsible academic unit; and
6. the original data are stored at the following location(s) and will be held for at least five years from the date indicated below:

Location(s)	Monash University, School of Psychology and Psychiatry, Caulfield campus
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Signature		Date
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Reprint of Published Manuscript

Salesperson engagement and performance: A theoretical model

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ABSTRACT

Sales performance is widely regarded as an important index of individual and organizational performance. Sales employees require access to organizational and job resources as well as personal resources in order to function effectively. An individual-level salesperson performance model is proposed that draws from the motivational process represented in the Job Demands-Resources Model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Organizational and job resources are conceptualized in terms of employee involvement climate (Riordan, Vandenberg, & Richardson, 2005). Personal resources are conceptualized in terms of employees' psychological capital (Luthans & Youssef, 2004). The model delineates how employee involvement climate influences engagement; how psychological capital influences performance; how employee involvement climate and psychological capital interact to influence employee engagement; and how, in turn, engagement impacts salesperson performance. The model will potentially prove useful to human resource managers, organizational development practitioners, and sales managers aiming to up-skill and more fully involve and engage their salespeople in order to optimize salesperson performance.

Keywords: salesperson performance, work engagement, high-involvement work systems, employee involvement climate, psychological capital, positive organizational behavior, job demands-resources model

A productive sales force is critical to the success of modern sales and service oriented organizations. Moreover, salespeople play a key role as boundary spanners between suppliers and customers (Vinchur, Schippmann, Switzer, & Roth, 1998). Contemporary high-performing salespeople do more than simply execute standard steps of traditional selling processes. Increasingly they serve more like trusted consultants and partners, working together with customers to build long-term and mutually beneficial relationships (Anderson & Huang, 2006). Therefore, continued research is required to extend our understanding of the individual and organizational factors that facilitate effective salesperson performance in modern-day organizational contexts (Vinchur et al., 1998).

Whereas a substantial amount of research has established that organizational climate (e.g. Gelade & Ivery, 2003; Liao & Chuang, 2004) and high-performance work practices (e.g. Evans & Davis, 2005; Guthrie, 2001; Huselid, 1995; Liao, Toya, Lepak, & Hong, 2009; Takeuchi, Lepak, Wang, & Takeuchi, 2007) can influence outcomes such as organizational performance, recent research has established that work engagement is also an important predictor of work-related outcomes such as employee health and well-being (e.g. Schaufeli, Taris, & Bakker, 2006; Simbula, 2010) and job performance (e.g. Salanova, Agut, & Peiro, 2005; Xanthopoulou, Heuven, Demerouti, Bakker, & Schaufeli, 2008). Whereas work engagement has

been extensively researched in a wide variety of employment contexts (e.g. Bakker, Hakanen, Demerouti, & Xanthopoulou, 2007; Mauno, Kinnunen, & Ruokolainen, 2007), there has been limited research which has focused specifically on salespeople and the unique context of sales and selling.

The authors here propose a theoretical model to extend the literature and guide future research and practice into factors that facilitate and enhance salesperson engagement and performance. The model is theoretically grounded in the widely respected job demands-resources model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007), and the recent and growing literatures on *high-performance work systems* (e.g. Boxall & Macky, 2009; Liao et al., 2009; Takeuchi, Chen, & Lepak, 2009) and *employee involvement climate* (Riordan, Vandenberg, & Richardson, 2005), *work engagement* (Bakker, Schaufeli, Leiter & Taris, 2008; Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Roma, & Bakker, 2002) and *psychological capital* (Luthans & Youssef, 2004; Luthans, Youssef, & Avolio, 2007a, 2007b). More specifically, the model delineates the effect of employee involvement climate on salesperson performance, mediated through work engagement. In addition, the model presents personal resources in the form of psychological capital moderating the relationship between employee involvement climate and work engagement. Importantly, we highlight the relevance of these emerging theoretical frameworks and constructs to explain salesperson performance.

JOB DEMANDS-RESOURCES MODEL: THE MOTIVATIONAL PROCESS

The job demands-resources (JD-R) model is a practical framework for conceptualizing antecedents, correlates, consequences, and organizational outcomes including employee performance (e.g. Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Llorens, Bakker, Schaufeli, & Salanova, 2006; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2007).

The model provides a flexible framework for describing the interplay between demands placed on an organization, department, or individual employee and the resources required to motivate positive action, engage employees, and achieve outcomes such as enhanced well-being and performance (for a full review, see Bakker & Demerouti, 2007).

As originally proposed (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007), demands and resources are posited to evoke two relatively independent psychological processes. Whereas high demands lead to the experience of strain which impairs employee and organizational functioning and well-being, resources are related to motivational processes. As such, the provision of resources impacts intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, which in turn supports employee achievement of work-related goals (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). In effect, when employees have the necessary resources they become more engaged during work activities, more committed to their job, and perform better because they derive greater fulfillment from their work (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001; Hackman & Oldham, 1980). Bakker and Demerouti (2007) and Xanthopoulou et al. (2007) have argued that the job demands-resources model can be applied in various occupational settings, irrespective of the demands or resources involved.

Beyond traditionally recognized job resources such as autonomy and support (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007), Macey, Schneider, Barbera, and Young (2009) identified a 'high performance work environment' as a key organizational-level resource contributing to engagement and performance at work. More specifically, Macey et al. argued that high performance work practices address four key factors (employee capacity, reason/motivation, freedom, knowledge) which serve to enable or facilitate individual work engagement and organizational outcomes. Personal resources have also been identified as important positive contributors to work

engagement and performance (e.g. Bakker & Demerouti, 2008; Xanthopoulou et al., 2007), with recent literature identifying psychological capital as a key personal resource (Sweetman & Luthans, 2010).

The proposed model (see Figure 1) seeks to extend the motivational process within the job demands-resources model by consolidating recent management thinking and research on positive organizational and personal resource systems within a single integrative framework. Owing to this positive focus, and the weaker associations typically found between job demands and work engagement (e.g. Halbesleben, 2010; Mauno et al., 2007), the proposed model focuses on the motivational process of the job demands-resources model. This representation parallels other research on the motivational process with service-oriented employees (e.g. Xanthopoulou et al., 2008). As such, the model focuses on determining how high-performance inducing job and organizational resources (i.e. participative decision making, performance-based rewards, information sharing, and training and development) and personal resources in the form of psychological capital (i.e. self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience) influence salesperson performance through engagement.

HIGH-INVOLVEMENT WORK SYSTEMS AND EMPLOYEE INVOLVEMENT CLIMATE

Researchers have provided considerable empirical evidence suggesting that broadly scoped high-involvement work practices (also termed high-performance or high-commitment work practices) represent the optimal way of managing employees and developing human capital in the modern world of work (e.g. Boxall & Macky, 2009; Huselid, 1995; Lawler, 1991, 1992; Pfeffer, 1998; Wiesner, McDonald, & Banham, 2007; Wood, 1999). While there are numerous high-involvement work practices including the provision of pay-for-performance compensation, training and development, and employee flex-time (e.g. Combs, Liu, Hall, & Ketchen, 2006), it is widely regarded that these are best applied in the context of multiple, reinforcing practices (Huselid, 1995), and when done so, are labeled as high-involvement work systems (HIWS; Lawler, 1992).

Combs et al. (2006) meta-analysis on 92 studies of high-involvement work systems and practices showed an estimated overall effect size of $r_c = .20$ between high-involvement systems or practices and organizational performance. Combs et al. argued that this effect size is much larger than what is commonly found among other organizational-level phenomena. Furthermore,

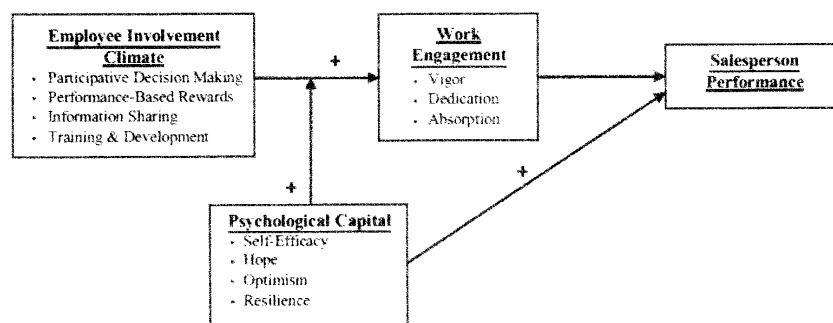


FIGURE 1: MODEL OF EMPLOYEE INVOLVEMENT CLIMATE AND PSYCHOLOGICAL CAPITAL OPERATING THROUGH ENGAGEMENT ON SALESPERSON PERFORMANCE.

Combs and colleagues reported that systems of high-involvement practices exert a significantly greater influence on performance than individual high-involvement practices ($r_c = .28$ versus $.14$, respectively). The systemic or synergistic effect identified in the above data represents a key element of the high-involvement work systems proposition. Alternatively known as the *virtuous overlaps approach* to system synergy (Chadwick, 2010), it is the integration of complimentary practices that shape the patterns of interactions between and among employees that produce the systems productivity gains (Boxall & Macky, 2009). Furthermore, synergy can also be linked to the specific context for which a system of practices is employed. For instance, Subramony (2009) meta-analysis recognized differences in corrected effect sizes between manufacturing ($r = .36$) as compared to service ($r = .21$) samples on business outcomes.

High-involvement work systems share some conceptual overlap with the notion of organizational climate. Involvement and participation are fundamental dimensions of organizational climate (e.g. Patterson et al., 2005) and, more particularly, Employee Involvement Climate (Riordan et al., 2005). Whereas research on sales and service has focused on such concepts as service climate and the psychological contract (e.g. Cutcher, 2008), sales outcomes resulting from employee involvement climate have not been the specific focus of empirical investigation. Researchers interested in sales specific outcomes might usefully consider employee involvement climate as an organizational resource owing to recognized relationships with productivity, effectiveness and morale (Riordan et al., 2005).

Riordan and colleagues (2005) defined and operationalized employee involvement climate in terms of Lawler and colleagues' four core high-involvement work system factors: *performance-based rewards*, *participative decision making*, *information sharing* and *training and development* (Lawler, 1996; Lawler, Mohrman, & Ledford, 1995). Riordan and colleagues (2005) specified

employee involvement climate as an aggregate of the four factors in hypothesis testing, which subsumes and explains the covariation between the four first-level factors. However, in line with James and James (1989) notion of a higher-order climate factor, and Vandenberg, Richardson, and Eastman (1999) higher-order high involvement work system construct, we propose that employee involvement climate be best conceptualized and operationalized at the higher-order level (see Figure 1).

The first employee involvement climate factor, performance-based rewards, is concerned with the extent to which employees recognize that their work-related behaviors and activities determine the rewards they receive. Employee involvement climate theory in the context of sales would suggest that when sales employees possess favorable perceptions of compensation practices such that they perceive clear linkages between their behaviors, their performance, and their incentives, they will be more likely to adjust their behaviors to be consistent with organizational goals.

The second employee involvement climate factor, participative decision making, refers to employees' shared perceptions about the control they have over (or say in) decisions that affect their work role and tasks (Riordan et al., 2005) and the extent to which employees believe they experience challenge, autonomy and responsibility in their work (Hackman & Lawler, 1979). Relating employee involvement climate to the sales context, Anderson and Huang (2006) noted that being able to make on-the-spot decisions enables salespeople to enhance their image and competence in relation to customers, and thereby feel more psychologically empowered and motivated for managing customer relationships. As modeled in Figure 1, feelings of being psychologically empowered and motivated at work translate equally into feelings of being 'engaged' at work.

The information sharing factor of employee involvement climate exists when employees perceive that information about their organization's goals and plans are shared with them (Riordan

et al., 2005). A sales organization may derive benefit from having knowledgeable employees who are able and motivated to act in a manner consistent with the organizational objectives of which they have been informed (Shadur, Kienzle, & Rodwell, 1999). For instance, communicating and consistently reinforcing the organization's vision and culture have been recognized as important precursors to effective salesperson performance (Robertson et al., 2006).

Finally, the training and development factor of employee involvement climate refers to employee perceptions that ongoing training and development is provided to expand the knowledge and skills employees can draw on in order to perform effectively; thus providing them with necessary resources (job and personal) to perform their work (Lawler, 1992). Employees who perceive that they are provided with training and opportunities to develop skills and knowledge are likely to show superior information processing and execute more effective decisions, and are therefore more likely to demonstrate improved performance (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Furthermore, training of service-oriented professionals has been shown to be associated with improvements in job attitudes and an indirect reduction in turnover intentions through organizational commitment (e.g. Beatson, Lings, & Gudergan, 2008). 'Today more than ever, salespeople must have a working knowledge across various topics in order to meet increasing customer expectations (e.g., changes in market dynamics, business enabling technologies, and business ethics)' (Attia, Honeycutt, & Leach, 2005, p. 253). The provision of relevant ongoing training and development is therefore needed in order to develop and maintain a high level of salesperson competence.

WORK ENGAGEMENT AND SALESPERSON PERFORMANCE

Figure 1 shows work engagement directly influencing salesperson performance. The most widely agreed conceptualization of work engagement emerged from the work of Schaufeli and

colleagues (2002). Although competing conceptualizations and definitions have evolved (e.g. Harter & Schmidt, 2008; Saks, 2008) the general consensus is that work engagement is defined as 'a positive, fulfilling, affective-motivational state of work-related well-being that is characterized by *vigor*, *dedication*, and *absorption*' (Bakker et al., 2008, p. 187). *Vigor* refers to high levels of energy and mental resilience invested while working; an employee's willingness to make appreciable efforts in their job; and their persistence when faced with difficult situations (Schaufeli et al., 2002). *Dedication* is characterized by a strong psychological involvement in one's work, demonstrated through a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge (Schaufeli et al., 2002). *Absorption* refers to intense concentration on and immersion in work. This experience is often characterized by positive and intensely focused attention such that time seems to pass quickly and employees have difficulty detaching from their work tasks (Schaufeli et al., 2002).

Importantly, researchers (albeit often using different conceptualizations and measures of engagement) have identified reliable relationships between work engagement and relevant organizational and employee outcomes. Engagement has, for instance, been shown to positively influence job attitudes such as job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Saks, 2006); employee performance (Saks, 2006; Salanova et al., 2005); and other business unit performance measures such as customer satisfaction and loyalty, service climate, profitability, productivity and turnover (e.g., Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002; Harter, Schmidt, Killham, & Asplund, 2006; Salanova et al., 2005). However, despite ongoing progress regarding our understanding of engagement and its outcomes (e.g. Bakker & Schaufeli, 2008; Maslach & Leiter, 2008), as previously noted, the relationship between work engagement and salesperson performance has yet to be clearly established. Similarly, the contextual and personal factors which facilitate or enable engagement in a sales context have yet to be fully defined.

Furthermore, the extent to which engagement might mediate the relationship between organizational contextual factors (e.g. employee involvement climate) and salesperson performance has also yet to be established.

Work engagement mediating employee involvement climate and salesperson performance

Consistent with modeling in Figure 1, a number of researchers have identified that the influence of organizational factors on functions of individual or organizational performance are mediated through work engagement (Saks, 2006; Salanova et al., 2005; Sonnetag, 2003; Xanthopoulou et al., 2008). Saks (2006), for example, reported results showing antecedents including reward and recognition (an employee involvement climate factor) and perceived organizational support, operating through engagement to influence organizational citizenship behavior, attitudes, and intentions to quit. Furthermore, Salanova and colleagues (2005) presented a good fitting structural model showing engagement mediating the relationship between organizational resources including training and autonomy (factors aligned with an employee involvement climate) and an indicator of performance–customer loyalty.

Literature also suggests that effective information transfer (an employee involvement climate factor) through the use of communication systems (Hoover, 2005; Yates, 2006) influences work engagement and subsequent organization performance. More generally, Macey and colleagues (2009) argued that engagement mediates the relationship between a high-performance work environment (analogous with employee involvement climate) and employee and organizational performance. Overall, there is increasing and considerable evidence to suggest that work engagement in effect serves as an explanatory psychological mechanism by which organizational level factors influence individual and organizational performance. Taken together, the modeling shown in Figure 1 compliments recent management thinking (e.g.

Macey et al., 2009) and provides a potential means of extending the empirical literature linking human resource systems, organizational climate, and work engagement to the sales context.

PERSONAL RESOURCES AND SALESPERSON PERFORMANCE

Questions still remain as to the best individual characteristics for predicting salesperson performance. Numerous studies into salesperson performance have found modest, albeit inconsistent, effects for trait-like individual difference variables such as the big-five personality characteristics including extraversion and conscientiousness (e.g. Barrick & Mount, 1991; Conte & Gintoft, 2005; Krishnan, Netemeyer, & Boles., 2003; Mount & Barrick, 1995; Tett, Jackson, & Rothstein, 1991; Vinchur et al., 1998); sociability, potency, and achievement orientation (Hough, 1992; Hough, Eaton, Dunnette, Kamp, & McLoy, 1990; Vinchur et al., 1998; Warr, Bartram, & Martin, 2005); and more recently, core self-evaluations including locus of control (Sager, Strutton, & Johnson, 2006).

In a seminal meta-analysis on salesperson performance Churchill et al. (1985), after reporting modest relationships between 'enduring' personal characteristics and salesperson performance, argued that 'influenceable' personal characteristics might do a better job of explaining variations in performance. Churchill et al.'s proposition that influenceable (elsewhere termed 'developable' or 'state-like') constructs may be more relevant to salesperson performance than more enduring trait-like factors is in line with more recent research on the general work population. Luthans and colleagues (2007a, 2007b) observed developable personal characteristics to be better predictors of outcomes including job satisfaction than more enduring personality constructs. For instance, and with reference to the current context, Härtel, Gough, and Härtel (2006) identified customer service providers higher in optimism (a constituent dimension of psychological capital) as positively related to an indicator of salesperson performance–customer satisfaction.

Of practical relevance, whereas stable, trait-like constructs will likely remain the primary assessment and profiling pathway for salesperson recruitment, the periodic measurement of developable personal characteristics such as optimism may usefully supplement management, human resource or organizational development assessments geared at performance improvement and professional development for sales employees. As such, measuring and understanding developable personal resources with demonstrated links to motivation, job satisfaction and performance may provide a foundation for ongoing training and development initiatives and motivational interventions.

Psychological capital as a key personal resource

Luthans and Youssef (2004) and Luthans et al. (2007a, 2007b) argued there is utility in aggregating four core developable or influenceable psychological constructs into a higher-order construct they labeled psychological capital. Bakker and Schaufeli (2008) posited that psychological capital fits within the motivational process of the job demands-resources model and Sweetman and Luthans (2010) argued that psychological capital serves as a personal resource that influences work engagement. Psychological capital is defined as an individual's positive psychological state of development characterized by *self-efficacy*, *optimism*, *hope*, and *resilience* (Luthans et al., 2007a, p. 3). Sweetman and Luthans (2010) provided a detailed review of the links between specific psychological capital attributes and engagement dimensions for the general work population.

With respect to understanding how psychological capital might play out in a sales context, it is likely that salespeople with low self-efficacy will enter a sales interaction with reduced confidence in their ability. These people may struggle with negotiations and find the process of personal selling overwhelmingly challenging. Furthermore, those who lack hope and optimism will not have high expectations of themselves in their sales role and lack competence in recruiting and investing the

required energy to achieve set goals. As such, they will likely be unable to harness their motivation and will find it difficult to persist through challenging periods in order to meet their objectives (i.e. sales targets or quotas). This can affect their ability to create strategies for overcoming obstacles they encounter. Finally, salespeople who have difficulty recovering from setbacks easily and adapting smoothly to changing demands (e.g. bouncing back after a lost account or a rejected proposal) are likely to have difficulty meeting the demands of a sales role in the modern competitive landscape. The level of engagement these salespeople demonstrate will diminish and their overall job performance is likely to suffer. It therefore seems logical that interventions aimed at developing these personal resources will have a positive influence on the engagement and performance of employees who take on the demands of a sales role.

Consistent with the modeling shown in Figure 1, there is growing empirical evidence in support of conceptualizing psychological capital as a distinct higher-order state-like construct (for a review, see Luthans, Avolio, Avey, & Norman, 2007). Luthans and colleagues (2007a, 2007b), for example, showed psychological capital to be a better predictor of job satisfaction (study 1 sample 2: $N = 404$, $r = .39$, $p < .001$) than each of the following, trait-like constructs (conscientiousness: $r = .15$, $p < .01$; extraversion: $r = .24$, $p < .001$; core self-evaluations: $r = .32$, $p < .001$). Furthermore, Luthans and colleagues (2007) reported that higher-order psychological capital better relates to key work outcomes including employee performance and absenteeism than do the individual constituent constructs of psychological capital (i.e. self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience), analogous to the synergistic effects proposed for high-involvement work systems. The evidence in support of the higher-order modeling of both psychological capital and employee involvement climate mitigates the need to explain how each of the four employee involvement climate factors influence engagement and how each of the four psychological capital dimensions moderate the

influence of each of the four employee involvement climate dimensions on engagement.

The proposition that psychological capital will act as a moderator is supported by Luthans, Norman, Avolio, and Avey (2008). Luthans and colleagues argued that if a person does not have the aptitude, propensity or individual capacity for engaging in work-related activities, high levels of a particular contextual variable (e.g. employee involvement climate) would not necessarily lead to substantive changes in the criteria of interest (e.g. engagement or performance). Therefore, and consistent with the modeling in Figure 1, it is likely that the influence of an employee involvement climate (contextual variable) on outcomes such as work engagement and salesperson performance will depend on an individual's levels of personal resources – their psychological capital. Further to this and consistent with the moderating effect shown in Figure 1, Baldauf and Cravens (2002) argued for further clarification regarding how the interaction between personal and organizational characteristics explain and account for employee motivation and salesperson performance outcomes. Further to such argument, Figure 1 shows the influence of employee involvement climate on engagement being moderated by an employee's level of psychological capital.

SUMMARY

In summary, the model shows that creating an employee involvement climate characterized by a highly involving and supportive climate achieved through favorable practices for performance-based reward and recognition, ongoing training and development, participation in strategic decision making and the sharing of critical information is likely to be effective at engaging employees during work activity, and consequently predictive of greater salesperson performance. Additionally, the effect of an employee involvement climate on work engagement and subsequent performance is likely to be dependent on the level of psychological capital; namely, the recruitment and investment of employees' self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience.

The proposed modeling aims to provide a useful contribution to both the engagement and sales literatures by integrating employee involvement climate as job and organizational resources and psychological capital as personal resources in a theoretical model. Showing how a system of organizational resources interacts with a system of personal resources to influence the engagement and performance of salespeople presents an extension to the theoretical literature worthy of future empirical investigation. Recent work by Macey and colleagues (2009) that links high-performance work systems with engagement, and recent work by Sweetman and Luthans (2010) that links psychological capital with engagement, also support the proposed modeling in Figure 1. Similarly, proposing psychological capital as a developable higher-order individual difference variable adds to the literature on salesperson performance and positioning an involvement related contextual variable (employee involvement climate) within the model addresses some previously noted deficiencies in the literature with respect to the functioning of contemporary sales organizations (Churchill et al., 1985; Piercy & Lane, 2005; Robertson et al., 2006). While the proposed integrative framework has a clear and specific reference to the sales context, we see no reason why it cannot be applied more generally.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS AND INTERVENTION RECOMMENDATIONS

From a practical perspective, the modeling will potentially benefit human resource and organizational development practitioners. The model can be used to highlight the key personal and organizational resources affecting work engagement levels and employee performance, and provides human resource practitioners with an indication of where they may wish to target training and development interventions. Targeted interventions aimed at developing sales employee self-efficacy, for instance, may be indicated by survey data collected with reference to the model. Similarly, organizational development interventions focused on implementing

more communication and participation may be indicated by survey data collected with reference to the model. Importantly, given the interaction between personal resources and job resources proposed in the model, it is unlikely that an either-or solution will be most efficacious. The higher-order model suggests that synergies can be obtained by simultaneously focusing on a range of both job and personal resources when attempting to optimize engagement and performance in sales contexts.

More specifically, in terms of interventions designed to improve levels of work engagement and psychological capital of employees, recent literature proposes individual level interventions (Luthans, Avey, Avolio, Norman, & Combs, 2006; Luthans, Avey, Patera, 2008; Schaufeli & Salanova, 2010) and organization or job level interventions (Leiter & Maslach, 2010; Macey et al., 2009; Schaufeli & Salanova, 2010). Importantly, Schaufeli and Salanova suggested cultivating optimism, setting and pursuing goals (relevant for hope and self-efficacy development), and increasing resilience as three of their eleven individual level interventions aimed at improving engagement in the workplace. Additionally, Macey and colleagues (2009) also recommended interventions that build confidence (related to self-efficacy) and resiliency as key to building employee engagement.

Importantly, drawing on recognized utility analysis formulas used in human resource management, Luthans and colleagues (2006) demonstrated sizable bottom line returns following the modest investment required to run a two to three hour intervention aimed at increasing psychological capital. Furthermore, Luthans et al. (2008) showed significant improvements in participant psychological capital with an easy to implement and low cost web-based psychological capital intervention.

Specifically, intervention activities for developing salesperson hope might usefully focus on instructing salespeople to determine personally valuable and meaningful goals as these will produce an uplift in agency or *willpower* (Luthans & Jensen, 2002) to achieve set goals. Furthermore, Luthans et al. (2006) showed that by implementing

'obstacle planning', which involves forecasting potential 'bad events' or obstacles, and minimizing their impact by developing multiple realistic alternative pathways to goals (Luthans, et al., 2006), participants developed a sense of *waypower* (Luthans & Jensen, 2002) to circumvent the obstacles. Obstacle planning with salespeople will also develop optimism through the reinforcing of a positive explanatory style (Luthans et al., 2006) such that salespeople demonstrating a more negative or pessimistic focus on obstacles or barriers will practice identifying and reframing their efforts in line with more positive alternatives. Resilience training activities might usefully involve salespeople identifying a recent personal setback within their work domain, identifying their immediate reactions to the identified setback, and assessing what the realistic impact of their setback was. Training can then be provided to help frame alternative perceptions as to the causes of the event; i.e. what was in their control, out of their control, and any options for taking positive action. By repeating this exercise, participants reinforce this as a learned cognitive framing process which has been argued will develop not only resilience, but again also support the development of 'realistic' optimism (Luthans et al., 2006).

Leiter and Maslach's (2010) conceptual framework for work engagement interventions provides one of a number of approaches which can be used to develop job and organizational level engagement. Analogous to the modeling in Figure 1, and drawing from the job demands-resources model, Leiter and Maslach suggested that providing job resources (such as autonomy) through procedural or structural changes or training interventions will help to maintain engagement vigor, dedication, and absorption. With reference to the current modeling of employee involvement climate and psychological capital as the resources influencing work engagement, a motivational intervention (Leiter & Maslach, 2010) would seek to enhance these resources and thus give rise to improvements in engagement and performance over time.

In line with Leiter and Maslach's recommendations, Macey et al. (2009) proposed an engagement campaign based on developing a high-performance work environment (conceptually aligned with employee involvement climate as a job/organizational resource) to enable the cultivation of workforce engagement, leading to greater performance, well-being, and organizational productivity. As previously introduced, they argued that high-performance work practices address four key factors that are fundamental to building and maintaining work engagement – building the 'capacity to engage', 'reason or motivation to engage', 'freedom to engage', and 'knowing how to engage' (for a full review see Macey et al., 2009).

The first and crucial element in intervention development involves integrating work engagement into an organization's information flow (an employee involvement climate factor) by way of an initial survey, reporting, and feedback process. Asking for and seeking to understand how people feel about their work and for their perceptions on areas of work life can provide early warning signals of problems (Leiter & Maslach, 2010). Supporting this initial survey process, phase one of Macey and colleagues (2009) engagement campaign also involves the rollout of diagnostics and an engagement survey.

Following a thorough diagnostic survey process, both Leiter and Maslach (2010) and Macey and colleagues (2009) proposed a process of thorough action planning. Briefly put, Leiter and Maslach (2010) presented four dimensions to which action planning must focus in order for the motivational interventions to produce positive changes to resources: *understanding*, *participation*, *resources*, and *authority*. Importantly, the effectiveness of any motivational intervention will require processes that facilitate understanding and broad participation and decision making from employees. These dimensions will be enabled through a survey feedback process and the maintenance of ongoing information sharing of findings and plans to employees, recruiting employee involvement in the development of interventions as much as possible. When action planning Leiter and Maslach argued

strongly in favor of allocating sufficient and appropriate resources to the process of intervention development and action planning and that such resource expenditures ought to become part of the organization's ongoing financial planning. Finally, it is essential that accessible and appropriate authority required to support the development, decision making, and implementation of motivational interventions is made available (Leiter & Maslach, 2010). Specifically, processes must support the participation of the sales function such that their recommendations for action are welcomed, support in developing and articulating their business case for intervention is ensured, and appropriate decision-making authority is readily accessible.

In line with the suggestions made by both Leiter and Maslach (2010) and Macey and colleagues (2009), and consistent with our theoretical modeling, multi-modal resource-oriented motivational interventions that build an employee involvement climate through developing a high-performance work environment, in conjunction with building personal psychological capital resources through training and development initiatives, will create a synergy that will improve work engagement and create an uplift in salesperson performance, as well as promote well-being and greater organizational productivity.

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Having established the validity of the proposed model, ideally using confirmatory factor analysis and moderated structural equation modeling (e.g. Ping, 1995, 1996) in longitudinal designs (Singer & Willett, 2003), future research may usefully be directed toward identifying whether work engagement fully or partially mediates the relationship between job and personal resources and salesperson performance. Whereas the current model proposes an interaction between employee involvement climate and psychological capital on engagement, it is also plausible that psychological capital may moderate the relationship between engagement and salesperson performance. However, the viability or validity of psychological capital as a moderator of

the relationship between motivational states and performance has yet to be established and requires theoretical and empirical examination.

Other future research efforts could be devoted toward elaborating the proposed model to incorporate previously identified personal and job resources identified by Bakker and Demerouti (2007) and Xanthopoulou and colleagues (2007) into the sales context. Yet another useful avenue for future research will be to conceptualize and examine the impact of leadership styles and abilities on salesperson engagement and performance. This paper represents an initial attempt to map out what we hope will be an ongoing and productive research program investigating the contextual and individual difference factors which serve to influence salesperson performance in contemporary organizational contexts.

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Chapter 3: A Qualitative Exploration of Salesperson Engagement (Paper 2)

Chapter 1 outlined the research aims. The preceding chapter presented Paper 1 which addressed these aims by way of a literature review and theoretical model of key antecedents and outcomes related to salesperson work engagement. In order to more fully understand how salespeople experience work engagement (research aim one) prior to model testing (in connection with research aim two), the researcher conducted a qualitative study to explore the *lived experience* of salesperson work engagement. It was anticipated that this study would offer insights into work engagement generally, and salesperson experiences of the state of work engagement more specifically, which would inform the subsequent measurement and quantitative analyses of engagement within a full theoretical model (presented in Paper 3).

The introduction to this chapter will provide the initial rationale and context for the qualitative study. Following this, Paper 2 entitled “Finding flow beyond salesperson work engagement: A qualitative exploration”, is presented. This paper is currently under review for publication in the Journal of Positive Psychology.

Rationale for Conducting the Qualitative Study

A qualitative research methodology was chosen for several reasons. Firstly, the use of a qualitative research methodology is appropriate for addressing the first research aim. Specifically, qualitative research enabled the gathering of in-depth information about the subgroup (salespeople) and their unique experiences of work engagement (Merriam, 2002). Furthermore, in order to obtain in-depth information, participants need to feel free to discuss their unique perspectives and experiences that have been personally relevant for them during their working life as a sales professional. Therefore,

Paper 2 outlines the phenomenological research paradigm and the interpretative phenomenological analysis approach utilized to explore and understand salesperson work engagement and thereby address research aim one.

Secondly, whereas considerable quantitative research has been conducted on work engagement (see Paper 1 for a review), research into the state of work engagement using qualitative methods is relatively scarce in the published literature. Paper 2 serves to, in part, redress this gap. Thirdly, and as previously mentioned in Chapter 1, there are still many issues and ongoing debates surrounding, but not limited to, the theoretical base, dimensionality and state or trait-like nature of engagement (e.g., Albrecht, 2010; Meyer & Gagné, 2008). Key debates surrounding work engagement that are addressed by the qualitative study are introduced more completely in Paper 2. For instance, researchers have often recognized areas of overlap between work engagement and conceptually similar constructs including work-related flow (e.g., Macey et al., 2009) and job attitudes such as job satisfaction, job involvement, and organizational commitment (e.g., Newman, Joseph, & Hulin, 2010). Although empirical research has to a large extent differentiated work engagement from job attitudes (e.g., Hallberg & Schaufeli, 2006; Rich et al., 2010), empirical research on work engagement and work-related flow has largely progressed along independent paths. Opportunities exist to better understand how work engagement and work-related flow are experienced, related, and distinct. Progressing such opportunities is a central focus of the qualitative study reported in Paper 2.

Taken together, the qualitative research aimed to highlight qualities, dimensions, and/or characteristics of salesperson engagement which could usefully inform and supplement the measurement and modeling of salesperson work engagement in

subsequent quantitative investigations carried out as part of the research program (Paper 3, Chapter 4). Such an approach aimed to either confirm and consolidate or extend existing engagement dimensions and characteristics and their associated nomological networks.

Declaration for Thesis Chapter 3 (Paper 2)

Declaration by candidate

In the case of Chapter 3 (Paper 2), the nature and extent of my contribution to the work was:

Nature of contribution	Extent of contribution (%)
Designed study methodology, designed interview, liaised with host organization and participants, collected, transcribed and analyzed data, initiated publication, conducted the literature review, wrote the manuscript, incorporated co-author's feedback into final manuscript, prepared, and submitted manuscript for publication	90%

The following co-author contributed to the work:

Name	Nature of contribution
Simon Albrecht	Validity checks on qualitative data analysis and interpreted themes, Conceptual critiquing and development, Feedback on draft manuscripts.

Candidate's
Signature

	Date
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Declaration by co-author

The undersigned hereby certifies that:

1. the above declaration correctly reflects the nature and extent of the candidate's contribution to this work, and the nature of the contribution of the co-author;
2. they meet the criteria for authorship in that they have participated in the conception, execution, or interpretation, of at least that part of the publication in their field of expertise;
3. they take public responsibility for their part of the publication, except for the responsible author who accepts overall responsibility for the publication;
4. there are no other authors of the publication according to these criteria;
5. potential conflicts of interest have been disclosed to (a) granting bodies, (b) the editor or publisher of journals or other publications, and (c) the head of the responsible academic unit; and
6. the original data are stored at the following location(s) and will be held for at least five years from the date indicated below:

Location(s) Monash University, School of Psychology and Psychiatry, Caulfield campus

Signature

	Date
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Reprint of Submitted Manuscript

Finding Flow Beyond Salesperson Work Engagement: A Qualitative Exploration

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Abstract

This paper aims to provide an interpretation of the lived experience of salesperson work engagement and work-related flow. Interviews were conducted with a sample of 14 salespeople from a large Australian-based consumer goods enterprise. Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) was used to explore and interpret the interview data. The data suggested affective, cognitive and conative dimensions to be underlying salespersons' psychological experience of work engagement and work-related flow. Salesperson work engagement was interpreted as a self-regulatory state, characterized by energy (interpreted as affective), focus (cognitive) and striving (conative). Work-related flow was interpreted as an automated self-regulatory state characterized primarily by eudaimonia and vitality (interpreted as affective), complete absorption within one's present activity (cognitive) and intuitive striving (conative). The relationships and distinctions between salesperson engagement and flow are interpreted and discussed. Overall, the findings contribute to the literature thereby addressing the relative paucity of published research on work engagement using qualitative methods. Furthermore, the study represents one of the first attempts to interpret, compare and contrast the lived experience of work engagement with that of work-related flow. Given that IPA researchers typically use small and selective samples, the results provide useful frameworks and guidance as to the conceptualization, measurement and development of work engagement and work-related flow in sales-related contexts. Future research directions are discussed.

Keywords: Flow; Work Engagement; Conation; Self-Regulation; Sales; Striving

There has been a growing body of theoretical literature and empirical research focused on the concepts of work engagement (e.g., Bakker & Demerouti, 2008; Kahn, 1990, 1992; Macey, Schneider, Barbera & Young, 2009; Xanthopoulou, Heuven, Demerouti, Bakker, & Schaufeli, 2008) and work-related flow (e.g., Bakker, 2005, 2008; Bakker & Geurts, 2004; Csikszentmihalyi & LeFevre, 1989; Demerouti, 2006; Eisenberger, Jones, Stinglhamber, Shanock, & Randall, 2005; Salanova, Bakker, & Llorens, 2006) that has developed, particularly over the last ten years. Although researchers have often recognized areas of overlap and a relationship between engagement and flow (e.g., Macey et al., 2009), empirical research on these constructs has largely progressed along independent paths. Opportunities exist to better understand how work engagement and flow are experienced and related.

Work Engagement

The concept of work engagement remains very topical and popular in academic, corporate and consulting arenas across the globe. The interest in engagement has emerged as a consequence of the widely accepted proposition that engagement is a key ingredient of positive, productive and profitable workplaces (Macey et al., 2009). However, despite the significant body of research demonstrating an association between work engagement and functional work attitudes, performance, and work-related well-being (e.g., Hallberg & Schaufeli, 2006; Salanova, Agut, & Peiro, 2005; Schaufeli, Taris, & Bakker, 2006; Simbula, 2010; Xanthopoulou, Heuven, Demerouti, Bakker, & Schaufeli, 2008), there is no universal consensus regarding the theoretical base, dimensionality, state or trait-like nature, or measurement of the construct (e.g., Meyer & Gagné, 2008). While also acknowledging the enormous progress that has been made in the study and understanding of work engagement, Bakker and colleagues (2008, 2011)

and Albrecht (2010) recently overviewed some of the, as yet, unresolved conceptual, definitional and measurement issues in the engagement literature. Such unresolved issues include the definition of engagement and the nature and number of the core elements or dimensions of engagement.

Kahn (1990) pioneered thinking and research on work engagement. Kahn conducted a qualitative study using a descriptive grounded theory approach and defined engagement as the harnessing of employees' selves to their work roles through the investment of personal energies across affective, cognitive, and physical dimensions. Kahn called for further qualitative and quantitative research to explore processes by which engagement is created at differing depths across the three dimensions. Kahn (1992) later characterized engagement in terms of attentiveness, connection, integration (experiencing a sense of wholeness in a situation) and focus during work. In an alternative line of research, Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Roma, and Bakker, (2002, p. 74) defined work engagement as a "positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind reflecting employee vigor, dedication, and absorption." Bakker and Demerouti (2008) and Schaufeli and Bakker (2010) have since argued that vigor, dedication and absorption largely correspond with physical, affective, and cognitive engagement dimensions originally proposed by Kahn (1990). Though Kahn's affective, cognitive, and physical dimensions have since been operationalized by Rich, LePine and Crawford (2010), the overlap and differences between the conceptualizations have yet to be formally or empirically examined.

Whilst there has been extensive and ongoing research using vigor, dedication and absorption as dimensions of engagement (e.g., Schaufeli et al., 2002), Bakker, Schaufeli, Leiter, and Taris (2008) recognized that less attention has been devoted to

understanding self-regulatory mechanisms which form part of engagement. Bakker and colleagues (2008) called for further research to gain insight into the self-regulatory mechanisms and processes that enable people to manage their own engagement. Furthermore, Bakker and Demerouti (2008) called for research to focus on the processes that are involved during the engaged state in order to gain insight into how work engagement leads to favorable outcomes. Consistent with these views, Macey and colleagues (2009) described engagement as a “psychic kick of immersion, *striving*, absorption, *focus*, and involvement” (p. 5; italics added). They proposed that “engagement implies going after, seeking, and striving” (p. 5). Such characteristics or qualities of engagement are particularly pertinent to self-regulatory theories of motivation (e.g., Bagozzi, 1992; Kuhl, 2000), theory of trying (Bagozzi & Warshaw, 1990), Ryan and Deci’s (2000) self-determination theory, and Gollwitzer’s (1990) phases of motivated action as these theories specifically recognize conative (or volitional) mental processes. Therefore, in addition to the already recognized vigor/behavioral, dedication/affective and absorption/cognitive dimensions of engagement, a greater understanding of the self-regulatory nature of engagement and its underlying conative qualities appears worthy of consideration. An increased understanding of the conative or volitional nature of work engagement may bring into sharper focus *how* this psychological state is experienced at varying levels or depths and may lead researchers to better understand how engagement is related to positive attitudinal, well-being and performance outcomes.

Flow and Work-Related Flow

The recognition that flow is an important organizational construct derives from its associations with employee engagement and well-being (Novak, 1996) and

performance (e.g., Demerouti, 2006). Work engagement and flow have both recently been situated within the suite of *positive organizational behavior* constructs (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008). Csikszentmihalyi (1975, p. 36) broadly defined flow as the “holistic sensation that people feel when they act with total involvement”. Csikszentmihalyi (1990, 2000) identified nine dimensions or conditions of the optimal experience of flow. These include: enjoyment, intense concentration, action–awareness merging (feeling so deeply involved that action or behavior feels almost automatic) and autotelic experience (experience of the activity as intrinsically rewarding or worth doing for its own sake) (for a full review see Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, 2000). Similarly, work-related flow has been defined as a short-term peak experience at work that is characterized by absorption, work enjoyment, and intrinsic work motivation (Bakker, 2005). It is noteworthy that Kahn (1990, 1992) recognized the similarities between his conceptualization of engagement or presence and the concept of flow. Kahn (1990, 1992) noted that being attentive, absorbed, connected, and focused during episodes of personal engagement (Kahn, 1990, 1992) are similar to feeling totally involved and demonstrating intensely focused concentration during experiences of flow (e.g., Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2002).

There is a rich history of qualitative research on the flow experience and its phenomenology in different contexts (e.g., Csikszentmihalyi, 1997; Csikszentmihalyi & Nakamura, 2010; Hefferon & Ollis, 2006). However, there remain unresolved issues regarding the motivational determinants and dynamics underpinning flow (Ceja & Nevarro, 2009; Kowal & Fortier, 1999; Moneta, 2010), and the relative importance of job, situational or personal characteristics to the experience of work-related flow (e.g., Demerouti, 2006; Nielson & Cleal, 2010).

Relationships Between Work Engagement and Work-Related Flow

Researchers have noted similarities and differences between the state of engagement and the experience of flow (e.g., Hirschfeld & Thomas, 2008; Macey et al., 2009; May et al., 2004; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). With respect to similarities, both constructs have, at least in part, generally been conceptualized and operationalized with reference to an ‘absorption’ dimension. That is, both constructs have included qualities of ‘full concentration’, ‘focused attention’ and a ‘distorted sense of time’ (e.g., Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, Schaufeli et al., 2002). With respect to differences, work engagement is generally considered to be a more pervasive state, whereas flow is generally considered to be more short-term in nature and referred to as ‘optimal’ or ‘peak’ experience (e.g., Bakker, 2005; Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, 2000; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Furthermore, though some researchers propose that engagement is a useful predictor of or precursor to flow (e.g., Atman, 1987; Langelaan, Bakker, van Doornen, & Schaufeli, 2006; Moneta, 2010), other researchers have suggested that people achieve engagement through the experience of flow (e.g., Lovelace, Manz, & Alves, 2007). Whichever causal sequence might best explain the association, it is certainly the case that recent engagement research using daily diary methods (e.g., Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2009) and ensuing questions about the validity of measuring moment to moment, hourly and daily fluctuations in engagement (Albrecht, 2010; George, 2010) have served to blur the lines that might define the experience of flow and engagement.

The Current Study

The current qualitative study used data drawn from a sample of salespeople to investigate the lived-experience of work engagement and work-related flow. It is widely

regarded that effective selling is critical to the success of modern economic organizations (Vinchur, Schippmann, Switzer, & Roth, 1998). Indeed it has been argued that no job is more important to the success of a business than sales (Lamb, Hair, & McDaniel, 2006). Given the increasing emphasis on sales performance in a globalized and competitive economy and the known links between engagement and performance (e.g., Salanova et al., 2005; Xanthopoulou et al., 2008) and flow and performance (e.g., Demerouti, 2006), it remains important to understand how salespeople experience work engagement and work-related flow. Whilst flow researchers have quite often employed qualitative methods (e.g., Csikszentmihalyi, 1997; Hefferon & Ollis, 2006), engagement researchers have largely relied on quantitative methods. The current study aimed to redress, to some extent, the paucity of published qualitative research on work engagement. It was hoped that by examining the phenomena within the highly demanding and dynamic context of sales; key dimensions, characteristics, and features that determine the experience of engagement as a high-performance state, and flow as a peak or optimal experience, could be identified. Furthermore, the research aimed to clarify how engagement and flow are related, and how they are distinct.

The following three questions were central to the research agenda:

- 1. How do salespeople experience work engagement?*
- 2. How do salespeople experience work-related flow?*
- 3. In what ways are work engagement and work-related flow related and/or distinct?*

Method

Research Design

The phenomenological paradigm, and in particular the interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) methodology, was chosen because of its appropriate fit with the research objective of obtaining detailed perspectives from salespeople on their experiences of being engaged and experiencing flow during their work (Smith, Jarman, & Osborn, 1999). The intent behind IPA is for the researcher to attain "...an insider's perspective, trying to understand what it is like to stand in the shoes of the participant whilst recognizing this is never completely possible" (Smith & Eatough, 2006, p. 324). The phenomenological researcher is tasked with interpreting the concealed meaning behind the experiences embedded within the narrative data. Whereas Hefferon and Ollis (2006) employed IPA to explore the experience of flow for ballet dancers, within the limited number of published qualitative investigations on work engagement (e.g., Kahn, 1990; Schaufeli et al., 2001), none have specifically employed IPA as a method. IPA utilizes small sample sizes, with the intent of giving a truly in-depth analysis of participant responses (Smith & Eatough, 2006). Smith and Osborn (2003) reported that "IPA studies have been published with samples of one, four, nine, and fifteen" (p. 54).

Participants and Context

A selective sample of 14 consenting sales professionals from a large Australian-based consumer goods enterprise participated in the study. The sample size is entirely appropriate to gain an in-depth analysis of the salesperson experience using an IPA

approach (Smith et al., 1999; Smith & Osborn, 2003). The 11 males and three females were aged between 21 and 57 years. Tenure ranged from six-months to 22 years.

Procedure

Semi-structured interviews are the method of choice in IPA as they both guide the researcher to topics under study and provide an open-ended framework for participants to provide rich data (e.g., Smith & Eatough, 2006; Smith & Osborn, 2003). It has been noted that participants frequently discuss aspects of their experiences that are not anticipated by the researcher (Shaw, 2001). Semi-structured interviews permit participants to take the discussion in unique directions, allowing them more range to discuss experiences that are meaningful to them. The IPA qualitative methodology stands in stark contrast to quantitative approaches in which specific, researcher-driven hypotheses or models are tested.

The first author designed the semi-structured interview which initially used open-ended questions about episodes of work engagement. Questioning explored what it meant to the participant to be engaged with work, or at their place of work, and how it was experienced. More specific probing questions followed in order to identify work engagement and/or flow dimensions and characteristics, as well as whether any additional qualities uniquely apply to experiences within the sales context. Specifically, participants were asked to discuss any feelings, thoughts, or actions that characterized their experiences of work engagement. Additionally, participants were asked in what ways being engaged was similar or different to being “vigorous and/or energetic”, “dedicated, inspired, and/or proud”, and “absorbed, immersed, and/or intensely involved” during work. In order to explicitly explore the experience of flow, participants were asked to describe their best or peak experiences and their optimal

level of engagement at work. Taken together, this direct line of questioning was geared towards examining and validating the prevalence and significance of existing dimensions of engagement and flow in participant experiences.

The interviews were conducted by the first author and ranged between 45 and 60 minutes in duration. Participant consent to record the interviews was obtained and each interview was transcribed in its entirety. All audio was transcribed verbatim and reviewed for accuracy by the first researcher subsequent to collecting the data through participant interviews.

Data-analytic process

The data analysis was conducted in accordance with the phenomenological approach and IPA procedures and guidelines described by Smith and colleagues (Smith & Eatough, 2006; Smith et al., 1999; Smith & Osborn, 2003). The following three step approach was taken: 1) looking for themes in individual transcripts; 2) connecting the themes across transcripts; and finally, 3) translating the themes into a narrative account and thematic model.

In step 1, the first transcript was read three times in order to: 1) identify significant, salient or interesting aspects of the participant's responses and record researcher observations; 2) identify and record emerging patterns of meaning reflected within the key statements identified; and 3) refine interpreted observations to be more concise and to reflect, where appropriate, psychological terms implicated within the data (Smith & Eatough, 2006). These interpreted observations were classified as themes. This process of analysis was then repeated for all remaining participant interview transcripts.

The second step involved clustering the themes across the sample. In other words, the researcher reviewed all within participant themes, and began to look for patterns, clusters or groupings based on the content and interpretations across the participants. Themes that did not fit with the emerging structure or did not have a sufficient evidentiary base were dropped at this point. Although the frequency or prevalence of themes within the data was one consideration, themes were not selected solely on this basis. In keeping with the practice of IPA (Smith et al., 1999) the depth and significance of participant narrative and the ability of a theme to reflect other aspects of the data, were also considered.

The third step involved generating a summary of participant themes, noting exemplar quotes that illustrate each theme, and then structuring the themes in a form of diagram or thematic model (see Figure 1) demonstrating the themes and their relationships. The thematic model and exemplar quotes were then used to create a narrative account of the data; which was then written up as the study findings (see below). The interpreted account represents the key dimensions, characteristics, and experiential nature of salesperson engagement and work-related flow that emerged from the data, as well as the relationships and distinctions between the states.

Validity considerations

A number of measures were taken to improve the validity of the study findings. First, the methods were described in sufficient detail to allow replication (Baker, Pistrang, & Elliot, 2002). Second, independent credibility checks were conducted, with the second author, who did not conduct any of the interviews, acting to challenge, as appropriate, the primary researcher's interpretations and focus of attention (e.g., Baker et al., 2002; Elliot, Fisher, & Rennie, 1999; Smith, 1996; Smith & Osborn, 2003).

Furthermore, Elliot and colleagues (1999) argued that qualitative researchers are obliged to be open and transparent about the theoretical frameworks and paradigms which inform their interpretation of the data. For the present analysis, the interpretative frameworks of both researchers have been influenced by training and practice in organizational psychology, previous research on work engagement and work-related flow, and previous work in client service industries.

Qualitative researchers (e.g., Baker et al., 2002; Elliot et al., 1999; Popay, Rogers & Williams, 1998; Smith, 1996) also advocate presenting evidence in support of themes that emerge through exemplar quotes and visual representations of the data such as tables of themes, diagrams or thematic models. For the present analysis, example quotes reflecting the participants' lived experiences of work engagement and work-related flow are reported in the results section and summarized in the form of a thematic model (see Figure 1). Finally, qualitative researchers advocate that it is important to acknowledge limitations (Elliot et al., 1999; Popay et al., 1998). Consistent with this advice, the discussion section acknowledges the limitations around generalizing findings and conclusions beyond the groups studied and possibly similar groups in similar settings.

Results

The results are described in three sections. The first section reports the dimensions, characteristic qualities, and nature of salesperson engagement interpreted from the data themes. The second section follows the same approach to report the experience of salesperson work-related flow. Section three provides a more complete interpretation of the relationship and distinction between salesperson work engagement and work-related flow which emerged from the participant narrative and themes.

How do Salespeople Experience Work Engagement?

The first research question was focused on uncovering how work engagement is experienced by salespeople in order to identify the psychological dimensions and characteristics of the phenomenon. As per Figure 1, three key themes or dimensions emerged: energy, focus, and striving. Each dimension was interpreted to be underpinned by affective, cognitive, and conative faculties of mind, respectively. In addition to these three themes, the analyses revealed a self-regulatory nature to be underlying salespersons' experience of work engagement.

Energy - The affective dimension of engagement

When participants discussed their experiences of engagement at work, various emotions, feelings and moods were described. Specifically, participants spoke of feeling “enthusiastic”, “excited” and “energetic” – each of which represent highly activated emotional states.

Some representative comments include:

P4: “...because if you’re enthusiastic about it [work] then... then you can really engage yourself in what you do. You can really get into your job... and [if] suddenly the enthusiasm isn’t there then my level [engagement] will completely drop... you’ve got to... you’ve got to be enthusiastic.”

P14: “...it is like being energetic I think... energetic in the way you talk to people, it is being enthusiastic as well...If I am engaged I am pretty excited, pretty happy. I will walk away and think - I enjoyed that.”

Participants also offered colloquialisms such as “pumped up” or feeling a “high” to reflect their subjective experience of activated emotions and a felt sense of positive stimulation during episodes of engagement:

P12: “I’m happy, pumped and ready to go.”

P10: "...you're on a high or something like that... you're feeling energetic."

The overall theme interpreted has been labeled "energy" (see Figure 1). Energy was interpreted to represent an affective dimension of engagement whereby the engaged salesperson experiences highly activated positive emotions most clearly characterized by a sense of energy, enthusiasm and positive stimulation.

INSERT FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE

Focus - The cognitive dimension of engagement

Participants' descriptions of engagement were interpreted to reflect quite complex cognitive processes. Participants explained that, while engaged, their mental state is characterized by a high degree of focus, attentiveness, and concentration. They also reported being mentally active, alert, aware, receptive and responsive to incoming information/stimuli; and "switched on" to their immediate work activity:

P9: "Monday to Friday the more engaged I am the better, because the more focused I am...When you're engaged you pick up on peripheral things. When you walk into a store or something like that, you don't just see what's in front of you. You'll look for the things around you - suppose it's being focused or switched on. It's picking up the "one percenters", not just the main things."

P8: "You've got to be ready for what happens and pounce on it. Sense of awareness, I guess. Aware of different circumstances and what could happen."

P6: "There are definite days when you are really switched on, you're really focused, you have other days, where you probably not as driven."

P1: "You've got to make sure that you're focused and you know what you do want to get across in that timeframe that you've got, because otherwise you can get off track and something else pops in so you've got to be focused."

The theme represents the salespersons' active focus and attentiveness to work tasks and the work environment. It was interpreted that salespeople apply focus and concentration in order to perceive, process, interpret, problem solve, deliberate, decide, and plan work-related behavior. Furthermore, focus, attention and awareness appear to be used self-reflectively in order to appraise, evaluate, and judge the effectiveness of one's action such that modifications to future performances can be made. Consistent with participant descriptions, the theme has been labeled "focus" and represents a cognitive dimension of salesperson work engagement (see Figure 1).

Striving - The conative dimension of engagement

When participants described and discussed their experiences of engagement at work, distinct conative or volitional aspects of psychological functioning were interpreted from their responses. The study of conation has been neglected since the rise of behaviorism, despite previously having occupied a significant position in the history of psychology (Hilgard, 1980). Conation has been referred to as the human capacity to set and pursue personal agendas (e.g., Hershberger, 1988; Sheldon & Elliot, 1999); the intentional, purposeful, and striving component of motivation (Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Muraven & Tice, 1998; Emmons, 1986); and the "characteristic way in which people go about fulfilling their desires" (Gerdes & Stromwall, 2008, p. 235). Participants explained that, when engaged, they experience a high degree of conscious and deliberate effort and persistently give their all during work tasks. This is further characterized by qualities including determination, drive and perseverance:

P2: “Trying really hard means you’re engaged. If you’re not trying, and so it’s not about thinking or behaving, it’s even before that, you know, trying to always get the best result... being engaged is giving more, wanting to do your work, wanting to be there, wanting to work for the organization, wanting to work for your customers. So, being engaged is more, to step above just doing your work, for me. That's what it means to me”.

P8: “For me, it’s important I have the desire to actually want to achieve something, the thinking part flows from that and then does the execution... and if you're engaged...and if you have a goal at the end of the day you'll be more driven and have more desire to get the job done correctly...Determination, I guess, finishes the job off. You might have the passion, the discipline, and the ideas for it all. But it is the determination to actually fulfill the job as well... there’s a bit of burn, you know you want to succeed and you think you’re on to something and everything’s working right... you’ve got that drive and motivation to, you know, make sure everything’s going to plan.”

P9: “When I’m engaged I’m like a dog with a bone...chase it down to the end. I love chasing a goal.”

The striving theme appears to be bolstered by an appetite for achievement perceived by the salesperson as a sense of “wanting”, “hunger” and “eagerness”. These characteristics were interpreted as conative in nature and the overall theme has been labeled *striving* (see Figure 1). In his outline of self-regulatory processes underlying human motivation, Bagozzi (1992) proposed that conation is necessary to explain how cognition and affect transition into behavior. Accordingly, and as reported in the following section, the analyses revealed a self-regulatory dimension underlying the three themes of work engagement interpreted.

The self-regulatory nature of engagement

Underlying the affective, cognitive and conative dimensions of engagement reported above, the participant narratives suggested that salesperson engagement was a conscious self-regulatory state. The participants’ descriptions illustrate how being engaged during work requires the conscious and effortful cultivation and regulation of energy, focus and striving:

P9: “Well, your energy gives you your drive and if you don't have your drive, then you’ve got no chance of being engaged...When I'm engaged, I want to do everything and I want to do everything yesterday. You know, but at the same time, you’ve got to sort of be able... to stand back and say, hang on... Have we taken it all in? Are we doing it the right way rather than just going hell for leather? Because as much as, you know, the drive and motivation is a good thing, sometimes you can...you can miss opportunities along the way to achieving that goal when you could have achieved three goals. It's a bit of a juggling act but yeah, you need to be able to... to stop and just assess and go - okay, I will keep going in that direction. Or we might need to branch off here and cover that over there or that sort of thing... If I've got a positive frame of mind, I will be thinking clearly, I'll be focused on what I'm doing”.

P12: “You have to think about it. Because you think - if I do this how is it going to affect the other person? Or me? Am I going to get in too far over my head? So you have to think about it, you can't just let it go on auto pilot.”

P14: “I think it is a choice. I think it does have feeling but I think you choose to be engaged.”

In sum, the data clearly suggests that salesperson engagement is experienced as a positive psychological state reflected by a sense of energy, focus, and striving that is consciously self-regulated in order to meet the situational and task relevant demands encountered within one's job role (see Figure 1.).

How do Salespeople Experience Work-Related Flow?

Interviewees were asked to describe their best experiences of engagement and their most optimal and peak experiences at work. The experience of work-related flow was interpreted from the narrative. Analogous with salesperson descriptions of work engagement, the experience of work-related flow was underpinned by affective, cognitive, and conative (or volitional) dimensions. However, the characteristics within the three themes suggested work-related flow was a qualitatively distinct experience from salesperson work engagement. Three themes were identified: eudaimonia and vitality, absorption, and intuitive striving. Each of the themes will be interpreted below and accompanied by example participant narratives. The thematic model presented in

Figure 1 represents the underlying dimensions and characteristics interpreted from the themes. Figure 1 shows flow elevated above engagement to reflect the comparatively heightened or peak nature of the experience as indicated by the themes and characteristics outlined below. Furthermore, representing the dimensions as overlapping reflects the high degree of integration and interdependency between the dimensions as evidenced in the narratives.

Eudaimonia and vitality – The affective experience of flow

The psychological conditions that appear critical for the manifestation of flow include the presence of highly activated positive affect. However, during a flow experience it is “passion”, “enjoyment”, and the “rush” or “buzz” the person feels during their experiences that constitute an extension of the enthusiasm and energy characteristic of being engaged.

P14: “...when I am passionate about something. That is always good because I know what is in my heart, I want to talk about it and get a buzz from doing it.”

P1: “When you’re really into it, the experience I have is if you are... if you feel it swinging your way [the sales interaction], it’s a real rush. I really enjoy it, it really gets you going and it’s like let’s keep going... You know, and then you become more open and they become more open and I just enjoy it. It’s really a bit of a rush actually.”

P12: “Like I couldn’t sit still. It’s a kind of feeling like - what now? I don’t know what else could top it. Like nothing could make me sad, nothing could make me unhappy.”

The heightened experiences described by participants are consistent with the enjoyment dimension of flow (Bakker, 2005). However, beyond the more *hedonic* feelings of enjoyment, Waterman, Schwartz and Conti (2008) proposed that flow is characterized by the experience of *eudaimonia*. Consistent with the participant experiences as reported, eudaimonic happiness refers to feelings that result from

engaging in activities that are meaningful to the individual (i.e., that they are “passionate” about or “really into”), often as they provide opportunities for self-expression or self-actualization and growth beyond merely pleasant (hedonic) feelings (Waterman et al., 2008). Additionally, and complimentary to the experience of eudaimonia, a strong sense of *vitality* was interpreted from the narrative. Vitality refers to the “energy that is exhilarating and empowering, that allows people to act more autonomously and persist more at important activities” (Deci & Ryan, 2008, p. 184). This sense of vitality is consistent with the “rush” and “buzz” reported by participants and an amplified form of the positive energy and enthusiasm experienced during engagement. Taken together, salespeople in flow appear to experience a high degree of eudaimonia and vitality beyond the experience of engaged energy that may be a result of greater personal meaning, significance or connectedness to various aspects of their work tasks or situations.

Absorbed and “in the zone” – The cognitive experience of flow

In addition to eudaimonia and vitality, work-related flow was characterized by a person’s complete *absorption* in their moment to moment experience. Participants described being completely “in the zone” (see comments below). Their experience was interpreted as a deep sense of involvement in a task and mindful awareness of and alertness to their moment to moment actions. This deep involvement appears to culminate in a psychological state characterized by an absence of self-consciousness and action-awareness merging typically described in flow research (e.g., Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2002). Furthermore, the interplay between vitality and empowerment (outlined above) and absorption during flow was evident in participant descriptions of “invincibility” which are consistent with

the high sense of control condition of flow (e.g., Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2002). These characteristics represent a qualitatively distinct cognitive state from the interpretation of the cognitive *focus* dimension of engagement previously described. As such, they are more indicative of, and consistent with, *absorption* in the flow research (e.g., Csikszentmihalyi, 1990).

P1: “When you’re in the store, you’re living you but you’re absorbed in the situation...there is nothing else.”

P1: “But once you're in that zone, I suppose you call it. You are focused and ... it takes you away from all of that and you’re just focused on that side of it [selling]... and you have to be because you can't be thinking. You really do have 100% going on [mentally] when you are doing it.”

P9: “You know, you sort of live and breathe it. If you've got a project that you're working on, you just, it absolutely swallows you up and you can't help it... Yeah, absolutely, if you’re engaged you're absolutely immersed in it.”

P11: “you feel more alert... You feel... I guess lighter, that sort of thing. It wouldn't matter what would have happened, nothing would be too big of a challenge when you are feeling like that. Like - yep, that's fine. Bring it on, whatever you want. ... Not quite invincibility but there is just that aura that I can do anything.”

Intuitive striving – The conative experience of flow

Participants’ descriptions of heightened or peak experiences at work suggested a sense of *intuitive striving* to be underlying flow. As noted previously, there appears to be considerable interplay between the flow dimensions. Specifically, the experience of cognitive absorption and the manifestation of striving during flow are highly interdependent. Consistent with Csikszentmihalyi and Csikszentmihalyi (1988), it is one’s volition (conation) that keeps the attention absorbed in the task at hand instead of moving on to other targets. The conscious striving that drives the salesperson during experiences of engagement transitions into a more automatic or *intuitive striving* due to

the total cognitive absorption in the moment to moment actions and loss of self-consciousness experienced:

P7: "...you know, it's so fantastic and you just want to chase it and do it. You get too engulfed, it's hard to you know, to backtrack and go and do something else."

P8: "You potentially think or feel without even knowing..."

P11: "...at the beginning as soon as I started it, it just kept going. Oh, I can do this, I can do that and it just kept on going. And I'm still going to tweak next month because I got more feedback... And as I said it can be in the thinking or the behavior. I could be there at seven o'clock in the morning and I could still be going at five o'clock and everyone else is "I want to go home" and that sort of thing but I'd be like "no, I still got the energy, I can still do this and get this done."

In sum, taking the three highly interdependent dimensions together, the data clearly suggests that salesperson flow experience involves eudaimonia and vitality when completely absorbed in work activity to which they feel meaningfully connected or passionate. Particularly evident in the *intuitive striving* dimension, the flow experience involves a sense of effortlessness underpinned by automated self-regulation (see Figure 1).

In What Ways are Work Engagement and Work-Related Flow Related and/or Distinct?

The interpretation of participant narrative provides insights into how work engagement and work-related flow are related but distinct psychological states. As interpreted above and portrayed in Figure 1, perhaps the most salient distinction between the experiences of engagement and flow lies in the apparent transition from conscious striving and self-regulation during episodes of engagement to intuitive striving and a loss of self-focus and loss of conscious self-regulation during flow. Specifically, the participant data suggested that the engaged salesperson is conscious of

the activated emotions they are experiencing and which they are regulating during work tasks. Furthermore, they are conscious of the quality and depth to which they cognitively invest focus and attention during their work. Additionally, the degree of determination they demonstrate as they *strive* to achieve during work tasks is experienced as a highly deliberate, effortful, and conscious pursuit. In contrast, the automated or non-deliberate self-regulation characteristic of salesperson flow serves to create the sense of “effortlessness” which has previously been proposed as a central characteristic of the flow experience (e.g., Csikzsentmihalyi, 1990).

Discussion

How do salespeople experience work engagement? How do salespeople experience work-related flow? In what ways are work engagement and work-related flow related and/or distinct? The purpose of our study was to deeply explore the lived experiences of salespeople using a phenomenological research method in order to bring greater clarity to these questions and add to the body of positive organizational behavior research.

Whereas our interpretation of salesperson engagement aligns in many ways with existing theories and perspectives on work engagement, the data provided a number of important insights that help broaden our understanding of the construct. By contrast, the data related to participants’ flow experiences were more consistent with existing literature. This contrast may in part be explained by the fact that the phenomenology of flow has been extensively examined and reported whereas no previous studies have employed IPA methods to investigate the ‘lived experience’ of work engagement. The following discussion will focus on the unique and theory building interpretation of salesperson engagement and suggest directions for future research. Following this, a discussion of salesperson flow will be provided. The discussion will firstly focus on

novel qualities interpreted and highlight future research directions. Thereafter, the interpretation that salesperson engagement can act as an antecedent to the flow experience will be briefly discussed, followed by study limitations and conclusions.

Salesperson Engagement as a Consciously Self-Regulated Motivational State

The results confirmed that, for the sample of salespeople interviewed, work engagement is a positive state-like experience that shares many similar qualities to existing conceptualizations of the construct. The energy dimension of salesperson engagement was characterized by feelings of energy and enthusiasm which are consistent with engagement vigor (Schaufeli et al., 2002), emotional (Rich et al., 2010), and energy (Macey et al., 2009). Furthermore, Bakker, Albrecht and Leiter (2011) recently argued that these positive and highly aroused qualities are consistent with existing circumplex models of activated positive affect (e.g., Russell, 1980).

The *focus* dimension of salesperson engagement which emerged can be characterized by a complete cognitive investment of the salesperson in their task. This focus dimension resembles Schaufeli et al.'s (2002) absorption dimension, which has been considered the cognitive component of engagement (e.g., Bakker & Demerouti, 2008; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010). Our interpretation of focus, however, emphasizes a conscious attentiveness, alertness and self-awareness invested by the salesperson during the engaged state. In addition, focus here involves the deliberate steering of attention to task relevant information which enables the engaged salesperson to figure out how to perform their focal task most effectively. As such, the focus dimension more clearly signals cognitive processes and characteristics more closely aligned with Kahn's (1990, 1992) cognitive dimension characterized by mental vigilance, attentiveness and *presence*. Consistent with the above, Rich et al. (2010) operationalized cognitive job

engagement with items including “At work, I am absorbed by my job” and “At work, my mind is focused on my job” (pg. 634).

Beyond the discussion of engagement energy and focus, additional questions regarding the dimensionality of engagement need to be addressed. For example, previous authors have suggested that work engagement is comprised largely of affective and cognitive dimensions (Schaufeli et al., 2002), which has led researchers to aggregate only two dimensions (usually vigor and dedication) when measuring engagement (e.g., Salanova & Schaufeli, 2008). In line with arguments we have previously outlined, we argue that it is time to understand and discuss the conative, volitional nature of work engagement as this has been largely neglected in the literature to date. Further support for this more complete and multi-dimensional view has been offered by Lord, Diefendorff, Schmidt, and Hall (2010). These authors argued that understanding motivation in the workplace increasingly relies on an understanding of how individuals allocate volitional, cognitive, and affective resources across multiple tasks (see also Kanfer, Chen, & Pritchard, 2008; Vancouver, 2008).

Striving and Self-Regulation as key Contributions to the Engagement Literature

Although *striving* has been used as a descriptive quality of employee engagement (e.g., Kahn, 2010; Macey et al., 2009), little discussion has been offered regarding the underlying mental processing implicated during the experience of striving. While participant data suggested that striving shares common characteristics with Schaufeli et al.’s (2002) dedication dimension including inspiration and challenge, the data also suggested that striving was underpinned by more conative mechanisms. In contrast, dedication is most often represented as a cognitive construction (e.g., Bakker & Demerouti, 2008; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010).

Bagozzi (1992) argued that part of the reason researchers in the areas of cognition and attitudes have not demonstrated a strong ability to predict behavior is because the construct of conation has been omitted. As previously noted, Bagozzi proposed that conation is necessary to explain how cognition and affect (or knowledge and emotion) facilitate human behavior through self-regulatory mechanisms. Whereas the theory of reasoned action (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975) and the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1985) delineate how attitudes can encompass intentions that determine subsequent behavior, Bagozzi (1992, p. 185) discusses conative self-regulation whereby volitional desires such as “craving, hungering, longing... yearning” (analogous with the “wanting” and “hunger” characteristics of striving) imply a motivational commitment to act in a certain way that is different to an attitude - intention relationship (for a full review see Bagozzi, 1992). Therefore, given the striving theme in the present analysis was best characterized by qualities such as determination, drive, desire, wanting and willful effort, engagement was interpreted to more clearly and additionally include volitional or conative mechanisms. The proposition of a *conative* (volitional) *striving* dimension, therefore, begins to address Bakker and colleagues (2008) call to explore the self-regulatory mechanisms of work engagement. Moreover, the recognition that current conceptualizations of engagement neglect to explicitly recognize conative or volitional qualities as distinct from the affective and cognitive dimensions necessitates further investigation.

This interpretation is generally consistent with self-regulatory theories of motivated action (e.g., Bagozzi, 1992; Kuhl, 2000) and specific motivational mechanisms (e.g., autonomous self-regulation) from a self-determination theory perspective (e.g., Ryan & Deci, 2006). Although Meyer and Gagné (2008) and Meyer, Gagné and Parfyonova (2010) have published some initial propositions regarding how

work engagement might usefully be conceptualized in line with self-determination theory, it is clear more extensive theoretical and empirical research is warranted. Furthermore, examining action models of motivation which recognize volition and intention (e.g., goal intentions, implementation intentions; Gollwitzer, 1990) might further extend our understanding of the conative nature of engagement and add to the nomological networks of work engagement and flow. Finally, we propose that the measurement of engagement evolves to capture and assess conation and the degree of volitional striving one experiences during work episodes as this would present a worthy extension to the body of research.

Salesperson Work-Related Flow as an Automated Self-Regulatory State

Analogous with the underlying dimensionality of salesperson engagement, flow was interpreted to be underpinned by qualities of mind reported as affective, cognitive and conative (volitional). Participant descriptions largely corresponded with Csikszentmihalyi's (1975, 1990, 2000) conceptualization of flow and Bakker's (2005) and Demerouti's (2006) descriptions of work-related flow. With reference to engagement, the experience and dimensions of flow reflected a more integrated and qualitatively distinct state. Taken together, a greater focus in this discussion will be given to the qualities of flow interpreted from the data that extend our understanding of the experience and highlight future research directions.

Work-related flow experiences were characterized by *eudaimonia* and *vitality* (interpreted as affective) coupled with complete *absorption* (interpreted as cognitive) within one's task activities. The cognitive flow dimension was consistent with existing conceptualizations of flow (Bakker, 2005; Csikszentmihalyi, 1975, 1990). However, beyond the enjoyment dimension of work-related flow (e.g., Bakker, 2005), *eudaimonia*

and the meaningful and passionate investment of self was interpreted. This finding is consistent with more recent empirical research (Waterman et al., 2008). In addition, *vitality* and the sense of empowerment (e.g., Deci & Ryan, 2008) experienced during flow represent a quality of the affective experience of flow not previously emphasized in the literature. We there suggest that future research investigate how eudaimonia and vitality are experienced in relation to flow.

Consistent with Csikszentmihalyi's (2000) interpretations of action–awareness merging and autotelic experience, the salesperson in flow experiences *intuitive striving* (interpreted as conation) as they effortlessly perform their work and gravitate towards task achievement. Whereas flow research has interpreted conative and volitional underpinnings of the experience (Csikszentmihalyi & Csikszentmihalyi, 1988), additional research into the domain in terms of the conscious versus intuitive or automated self-regulation of intentions is warranted. For example, concepts such as automated self-regulation (e.g., Bargh et al., 2001) have not specifically been investigated in research on flow and may lead researchers to learn how conscious striving might transform into a more intuitive striving and effortless self-regulation characteristic of the flow experience.

Engagement as a Pathway to the Flow Experience

As depicted in Figure 1, and in line with emerging research (e.g., Moneta, 2010), engagement can be conceptualized as an antecedent to flow. Support for the proposition that engagement enables flow is also consistent with Atman's (1987) taxonomy of conation which presents five stages through which motivated action unfolds. Engagement corresponds with Atman's third stage and describes intention development in relation to goals; and Atman's fifth stage characterizes flow by

complete immersion in a task and a loss of self-consciousness. In contrast, Lovelace, Manz, and Alves (2007) proposed that people achieve greater engagement through flow experiences. The current account and thematic model indicates that consciously investing and self-regulating one's energy, focus and striving during engagement is a necessary, but not sufficient, pathway to the flow experience. In line with this proposition, future longitudinal research is needed using a combination of quantitative methods including Experience Sampling Methodology (e.g., Csikszentmihalyi & Larson, 1987) and validated scales, to establish how, and under what conditions, engagement leads to flow.

Limitations

Although the methods chosen for the present study provide a rich account of the subjective experiences of salesperson work engagement and work-related flow, there are a number of study limitations. First, the sample was sourced from a single organization that provides manufactured consumer goods to retail operators. As such, even though the sample size was more than adequate for IPA research, caution should be taken in generalizing the results. Second, the focus on salespeople has meant that the results may not extend to other professions. Whereas much of the work engagement literature has been performed on various occupations and industries, flow research has tended to have a narrower focus such that particular activities where flow occurs are the focus of research attention. Thirdly, phenomenology and interpretative analyses may reflect theoretical biases of the researchers. Although the questions were framed based on theoretical descriptions and explanations in motivation, work engagement and flow theories and attempts were made to ensure the trustworthiness of the results, other theoretical lenses could result in different interpretations.

Conclusion

A core intention of this study was to empirically examine work engagement and flow and their interrelations and distinctions using qualitative methods as this has been largely neglected to date. Furthermore, the researchers aimed to provide a framework which might guide future conceptualization and measurement development and help progress theory on work engagement and work-related flow. We addressed our aims by developing and presenting a thematic map and narrative account of salesperson experiences. This study also reports on what is believed by the researchers to be one of the first attempts to interpret, compare and contrast the lived experience of work engagement with that of work-related flow.

We hope our findings simultaneously corroborate, extend and bring into a more sharply defined contextual focus previously published research findings in a systematic and integrated way. We have argued on the basis of our findings that it is particularly important to acknowledge the conative dimensions of engagement and flow as they are key to understanding the degree of conscious and effortful self-regulation underpinning engagement, and the distinctly automated and intuitive striving revealed for the flow experience. We have argued that while IPA has been recognized as a valid and useful means for exploring the lived experiences of people at work (Smith et al., 1999), little research of this type has been devoted to exploration of work engagement. Given the organizational benefits claimed to be attributable to these constructs we hope the interpretation and thematic model will prove useful to researchers investigating the emergence and maintenance of engagement and flow in various organizational contexts.

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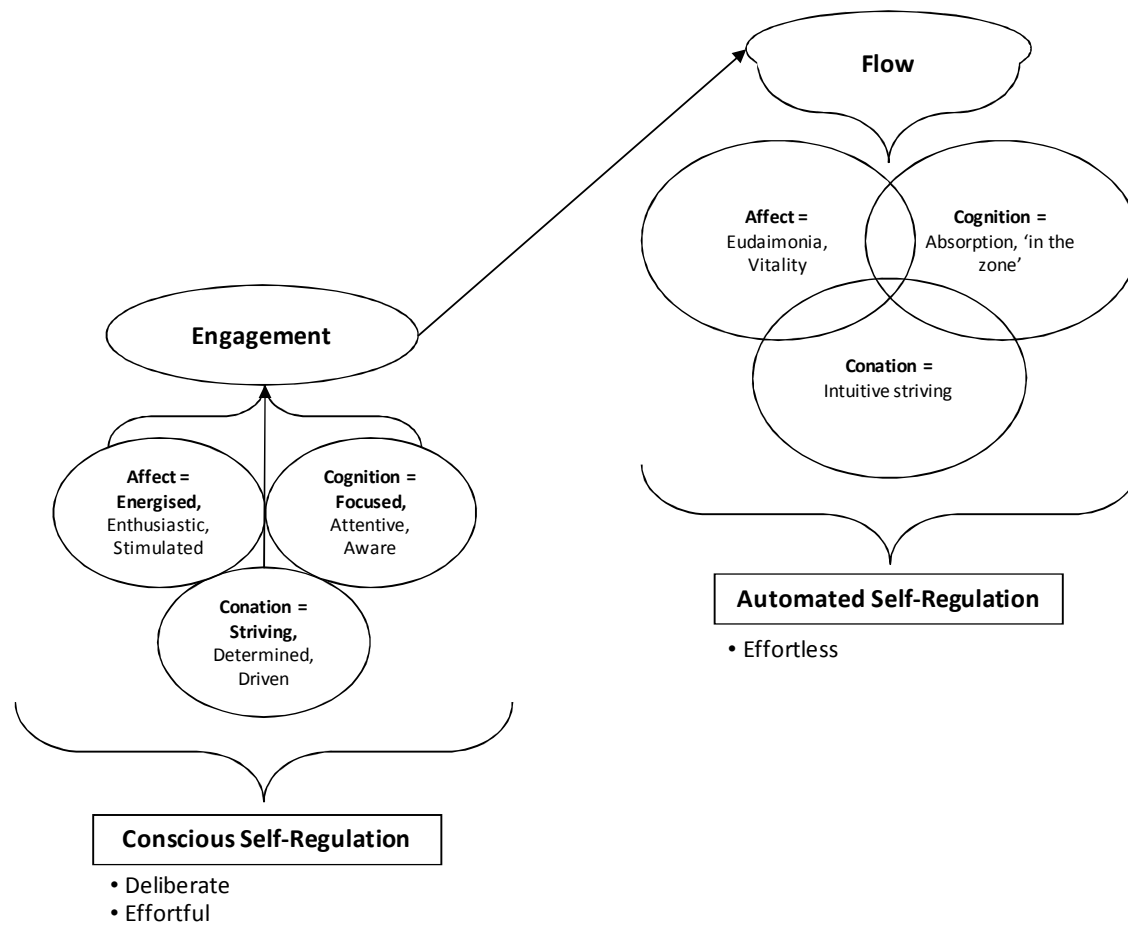


Figure 1. Dimensions, Characteristics and Experiential Nature of Salesperson Work Engagement and Work-Related Flow

Chapter 4: Testing a Higher-Order Structural Model (Paper 3)

The preceding chapter presented a qualitative investigation into salesperson work engagement and work-related flow. This chapter presents the quantitative study reported as Paper 3, entitled “Salesperson work engagement: The test of a higher-order structural model.” Paper 3 has been submitted for publication with the Journal of Managerial Psychology and is currently under review. This chapter has four sections. The first section provides contextual information and explains a number of research considerations and activities that led to the development of an elaborated version of the theoretical model originally proposed in Paper 1. Section two, an expanded literature review, outlines a number of theoretical and methodological considerations that were not possible to integrate within the Journal of Managerial Psychology submission due to word count restrictions for publication and the expectation that the audience is not likely to require an in-depth discussion of *all* theoretical arguments and methodological considerations that informed the study. Section three, an expanded methodology section, provides a more detailed explanation and defense of the quantitative/statistical methods employed to test the theoretical model than what is typically required by journal editors in empirical papers submitted for publication. The final section presents Paper 3 which introduces the elaborated theoretical model (see Figure 1), reports on the measurement and model testing, and discusses key findings and implications, limitations and future research directions.

Contextual Information

As previously outlined, the quantitative study reported in Paper 3 was designed to test a theoretical model of POS-oriented organizational and POB-oriented personal resource antecedents to salesperson work engagement and downstream attitudinal,

turnover intention and performance outcomes, as underpinned by the JD-R motivational process. Whereas the theoretical model proposed in Paper 1 (Figure 1, Chapter 2) outlined a significant proportion of the variables modeled and tested in the quantitative study; the original model was subsequently elaborated in two key ways. Firstly, the model incorporated supplementary items to assess salesperson work engagement dimensions and qualities that emerged from the qualitative study findings reported in Paper 2. Specifically, the themes, qualities and characteristics of the experience of salesperson work engagement identified in participant narrative were used to create three 5-item subscales for the three salesperson work engagement dimensions – energy, focus, and striving (see scale items presented Appendix C). The items were developed by the research student in consultation with the research supervisor. The salesperson work engagement scale items supplemented the measurement of work engagement using the UWES-9 (Schaufeli, Bakker & Salanova, 2006), to ensure content validity and to enable a test of convergent validity. The rationale underpinning the inclusion of a sub-set of UWES-9 items is explained further in Paper 3.

The second elaboration of the model involved the inclusion of additional outcome variables. Whereas salesperson performance was the outcome variable discussed in Paper 1, a number of additional important outcomes were measured, modeled, and tested in Paper 3. With reference to the salesperson performance outcome, measures for task performance, creative performance, and adaptive selling behaviors were used (Mulki, Jaramillo, & Marshall, 2007; Robinson, Marshall, Moncrief, & Lask, 2002; Wang & Netemeyer, 2004). Furthermore, relevant attitudinal constructs were modeled as outcomes. Specifically, job satisfaction, affective organizational commitment, and work-related well-being were assessed and modeled as a higher order overall work attitude factor. Finally, intention to turnover was also modeled as an

additional outcome variable. The expanded literature review below, and the introduction to Paper 3, present literature and evidence that supports the inclusion of these additional outcomes, and, where relevant, their measurement and modeling as higher order factors.

Work Engagement: An Expanded Literature Review

Job Demands-Resources Modeling of Work Engagement

A broad range of theories, models and frameworks have been invoked in attempts to explain the processes by which performance, favorable job attitudes, and employee well-being can be developed in organizational contexts. Such theories include conservation of resources theory (Hobfoll, 1989); self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985); social exchange theory (Blau, 1964); broaden-and-build theory of positive emotion (Fredrickson, 2001); job characteristics theory (Hackman & Oldham, 1980); high-involvement work system theory (HIWS, Huselid, 1995) and the job demands–resources model (JD–R, Bakker & Demerouti, 2007, 2008). Of these, the JD–R model is undoubtedly the most widely cited and widely used theoretical model in the work engagement literature.

As briefly outlined in Paper 1, the basic premise of the JD-R model is that two categories of work characteristics (job resources and job demands) evoke two relatively independent psychological processes that determine employee well-being and performance: a motivational process and a health impairment process (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). The motivational process explains how job resources (e.g., autonomy and support) and personal resources (e.g., self-efficacy and optimism) directly influence work engagement, which in turn influences outcomes such as commitment, in-role and extra-role performance, personal initiative and financial outcomes (for reviews, see

Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Hakanen & Roodt, 2010). The JD-R health impairment process explains how job demands (e.g., workload, time pressure) deplete employees' mental and physical resources, which leads to health and performance impairment (e.g., strain and burnout). Furthermore, JD-R theory (see Bakker & Demerouti, 2007) shows that job demands moderate the relationship between job resources and work engagement, and conversely, that resources buffer the impact of demands on strain and health impairment. The full dual process JD-R model has been applied across a wide range of research settings and organizational contexts (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Although the JD-R has yet to be applied to explain selling behavior and sales outcomes, the motivational process outlined in the model may well equally apply in sales contexts. It is plausible, for example, that context specific job resources (e.g., sales training) and personal resources (e.g., optimism, resilience) can influence the extent to which sales employees experience work engagement and consequently achieve context relevant outcomes such as sales performance and the use of creative selling techniques or adaptive selling behaviors.

Work Engagement

As previously noted, research focused on work engagement has been thriving in academic and practitioner fields across the globe (e.g., Albrecht, 2010; Bakker & Leiter, 2010). Papers one and two have acknowledged the considerable progress that has been made in theory building and empirical research into work engagement. However, as outlined in Paper 2, Albrecht (2010) and Bakker, Albrecht and Leiter (2011) have also highlighted a number of as yet unresolved issues in the engagement literature. Paper 3 addresses a number of these issues. In particular, the issue of identifying the core dimensions which constitute the construct and how it is then best defined will be

discussed in Paper 3. The issue of whether engagement is best modeled as a multi-dimensional first order construct or as a higher order factor will also be discussed in Paper 3. The issue of whether engagement is conceptually and empirically distinct from established constructs such as job satisfaction, job involvement, job commitment, and work-related well-being will be discussed below as the issue directly pertains to the modeling proposed but was beyond the scope of the review presented in Paper 3.

With respect to the issue of how engagement is associated with similar constructs such as job satisfaction, job involvement and commitment, Le, Schmidt, Harter and Lauver (2010) recently argued that “construct proliferation and construct redundancy are major problems today in industrial/organizational psychology, organizational behavior, and other social science areas” (p. 112). When new constructs that are similar to existing ones are proposed, questions as to whether the new construct is simply *old wine in a new bottle* can arise (e.g., Macey & Schneider, 2008). Some researchers have argued that work engagement can be clearly distinguished from more traditionally investigated positive attitudinal constructs such as job satisfaction, commitment and involvement (e.g., Hallberg & Schaufeli, 2006; Rich et al., 2010). Other researchers (e.g., Harter & Schmidt, 2008) have argued that engagement and job satisfaction, job involvement and commitment sit within a similar content domain. Furthermore, Newman et al. (2010) proposed that engagement and job satisfaction, job involvement and commitment are best considered as first order constituents of a higher-order attitude construct they labeled the ‘A’ Factor. Newman and colleagues (2010) argued that the constructs, though conceptually distinct, may not be practically or even empirically distinct, and that higher-order modeling of an overall attitude construct provides a more appropriate way of specifying measurement models as opposed to examining the constructs separately. In support of their arguments, Newman and

colleagues' meta-analysis (k: 6 to 19; n: 1,331 to 10,054) reported corrected correlations between engagement (as measured by the UWES; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003) with job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and job involvement ranging from .54 to .61.

With respect to the distinctions between work engagement and work-related well-being, work engagement has been posited to be a component of well-being (e.g., Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Hyvönen, Feldt, Tolvanen, & Kinnunen, 2010; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Additionally, Robertson and Cooper (2010) recently called for explicit integration of both psychological well-being and engagement in order to establish a *full engagement* construct. However, the issue as to whether engagement should be measured and modeled as a component of well-being or the reverse is yet to be fully resolved. For example, and in contrast to engagement being conceptualized as a component of well-being, alternative research models have conceptualized well-being as an outcome of work engagement (e.g., Schaufeli, et al., 2006; Simbula, 2010). Clearly, further opportunities exist to examine the interrelationships between work engagement and work-related well-being and whether work-related well-being could be modeled as a facet of higher order work attitude given the more stable attitude-like nature of well-being constructs. Furthermore, given the well-established conceptual association between job satisfaction and well-being (e.g., Warr, 1990) and given that researchers (e.g., Saks, 2006) have consistently modeled satisfaction as an outcome of engagement, the modeling of engagement and well-being as separate constructs remains tenable.

As will be outlined, the questions as to whether work engagement itself is best measured and modeled as a uni-dimensional or composite first order construct, as a multi-dimensional first-order construct, or a higher-order multi-dimensional construct,

has yet to be fully resolved. Whereas some researchers (e.g., Rich et al., 2010) have argued that work engagement is best conceptualized as a higher-order construct with multiple first-order factors, other researchers have specified work engagement as a composite variable and operationalized it by aggregating the vigor, dedication and absorption items at the first-order level (Schaufeli et al., 2006). In support of this argument, Schaufeli and Bakker (2003) and Salanova and Schaufeli (2008) argued that the interrelations among engagement dimensions are sufficiently strong to suggest that they refer to the same underlying construct. To make things more complex, although Schaufeli and Bakker (2010) identified absorption as a ‘common denominator’ in differing definitions of engagement, Bakker and Leiter (2010) and Salanova, Llorens, Cifre, Martinez, and Schaufeli (2003) have suggested that absorption may be better conceptualized as an outcome of engagement rather than a constituent dimension. It may be this line of reasoning that has led researchers to aggregate only two dimensions (usually vigor and dedication) when measuring engagement (e.g., Salanova & Schaufeli, 2008). It is clear that agreement as to what constitutes the core dimensions of work engagement has not yet been fully achieved. Continued research on the measurement and modeling of engagement is required. Specifically, the suggestion that engagement can be best conceptualized and specified as a second-order factor composed of salient first order factors (e.g., Rich et al., 2010), requires further investigation.

Work Engagement and Salesperson Performance

It has been argued that the integration of multiple measures of work-related outcomes is likely to better capture overall performance in its broader sense (Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002; Harter, Schmidt, & Keyes, 2003). In line with this argument, Harrison, Newman, and Roth (2006) recently conducted a comparative study that incorporated meta-analysis with structural equations modeling. The findings indicated that although a researcher's criterion of choice is often task performance; a more holistic and integrative perspective of performance is likely to have stronger predictive power and result in better fitting structural models.

With specific reference to work engagement, Bindl and Parker (2010) recently argued that organizations, by enhancing work engagement, can influence the extent to which employees demonstrate three different types of performance related work role behavior: proficiency, adaptivity, and proactivity. Within the sales literature, many performance dimensions have been explored, and most align with the dimensions proposed by Bindl and Parker. The traditional performance dimension of task performance is reflected by the degree to which a sales employee is proficient at performing tasks required in their job role (e.g., achieving sales targets and other business objectives and understanding customer needs and work processes). Adaptivity and proactivity are reflected in salespersons' ongoing attempts to develop and master alternative selling techniques and adapt them as required when working in different selling contexts, with different clients and different client needs (Spiro & Weitz 1990; Weitz, Suja, & Suja 1986). Adaptive selling behaviors might include demonstrating a flexible selling approach and understanding how one customer differs from another (i.e., adaptive selling behavior; Weitz et al., 1986) and coming up with new ideas for satisfying customer needs and generating creative selling ideas (i.e., creative

salesperson performance; Wang & Netemeyer, 2004). Wang and Netemeyer have demonstrated significant positive correlations between adaptive selling behaviors and creative salesperson performance as high as $r = .68$, which provide some initial supporting evidence of the viability of higher order modeling. Figure 1 shows salesperson task performance, adaptive selling behaviors, and creative salesperson performance, modeled as a higher-order construct, influenced by salesperson work engagement, and the organizational and personal resources of EIC and PsyCap.

Work Engagement, Job Attitudes and Intention to Turnover

As previously mentioned, traditional job attitudes including job satisfaction and organizational commitment, as well as employees' intention to turnover have been examined as outcomes in the mainstream research on work engagement (e.g., Hallberg & Schaufeli, 2006; Rich et al., 2010). Whereas researchers have advocated for the conceptualization of a higher-order 'A' or attitude factor (Newman et al., 2010), and job attitudes such as job satisfaction have been considered an aspect of employee well-being (Page & Vella-Brodrick, 2009), work-related well-being has not to date been included in higher-order attitude conceptualizations. However, and as previously noted, given the established conceptual association between well-being and job satisfaction, intrinsic workplace well-being, defined by ones satisfaction with intrinsic work values such as meaningfulness and achievement at work (Page, 2005), might usefully be modeled as a constituent of an overall work attitude construct (as presented in Figure 1). Finally, ITO has often been found to be inversely related to work engagement and job attitudes (Hallberg & Schaufeli, 2006; Rich et al., 2010; Saks, 2006). Whereas research has recognized direct effects of work engagement on ITO (e.g., Saks, 2006; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004), owing to the state-like nature of work engagement, it is likely to also

indirectly influence ITO through its impact on the more stable job attitudes such as commitment and well-being. Figure 1 therefore shows work engagement directly influencing overall work attitude and indirectly influencing ITO.

PsyCap and Engagement

A substantial amount of empirical research has demonstrated strong associations between individual dimensions of PsyCap, in particular self-efficacy and optimism, and work engagement (e.g., Xanthopoulou et al., 2007; Xanthopoulou, Heuven, Demerouti, Bakker, & Schaufeli, 2008; Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2009). Additionally, Halbesleben (2010) reported strong meta-analytic associations between self-efficacy and optimism and work engagement ($r_c = .50$ and $r_c = .37$ respectively). With respect to the synergistic effects of PsyCap beyond its components, Avey, Wernsing, and Luthans (2008) presented preliminary empirical evidence that higher-order PsyCap influences employees' emotional engagement, albeit it indirectly through employees' positive emotions. More recently, Sweetman and Luthans (2010) proposed that the "synergistic potential of efficacy, hope, optimism, and resiliency making up PsyCap would seem to be a powerful predictor of the interrelated components of vigor, dedication, and absorption associated with work engagement" (p. 63). However, as yet, there is limited empirical evidence supporting the association between *higher-order* PsyCap and work engagement. Further empirical research on the discrete versus the synergistic effects of the core PsyCap dimensions is warranted.

Expanded Methodology

The primary objective of this section is to orient the reader towards the systematic analytical approach adopted to develop and test the proposed theoretically

grounded measurement and structural models. This section will provide a rationale for the use of confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural equation modeling (SEM). In particular, Anderson and Gerbing's (1988) two-step approach to measurement modeling (MM) and SEM is reviewed. Moreover, this section will provide a clear explanation of the steps taken to conduct the analyses. Specifically, the specification and respecification of measurement models and higher order measurement model testing will be explained. Tests of convergent and discriminant validity and the use of various statistical techniques and model fit statistics will be outlined. It is important to note that some of the information presented in this chapter is necessarily repeated in Paper 3.

Preliminary Analyses

Analyses for Paper 3 (Chapter 4) were conducted in SPSS version 17 and in AMOS version 17. SPSS version 17 was primarily used for data entry, preliminary analyses and to generate descriptive statistics, frequencies, correlations and reliability analyses. Preliminary analysis included tests for multivariate normality, outliers, and missing values. Scale frequency distributions were examined to see whether any responses were recorded outside of the scale options specified. No out-of-range values were found suggesting that no data entry errors occurred that would impact data interpretation. All scales were normally distributed suggesting that outliers did not significantly impact the variables in the data set. Preliminary analyses and descriptive statistics were included in Paper 3 and can be reviewed in Table 1 (see the following section).

Measurement Modeling and Structural Equation Modeling Rationale

AMOS version 17 was used in the main analyses to conduct measurement and structural modeling using confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) and structural equations modeling (SEM). Confirmatory factor analysis has been widely used to assess factorial validity of measurement models (Williams, Fletcher & Ronan, 2007). SEM is a common statistical technique that has growing currency in the social sciences and is now common practice in published organizational psychology research (Byrne, 2001). SEM provides a useful framework for analyzing data as it extends upon a variety of multivariate techniques including factor analysis, discriminant validity testing, and multiple regressions (Hox & Bechger, 1998). Structural equations modeling and confirmatory factor analysis are statistical techniques that can both confirm the measurement properties of the model constructs as well as the relationships between modeled variables (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988).

SEM has some major advantages over other statistical techniques such as regression analysis or general linear model analysis. Firstly, by taking a confirmatory rather than an exploratory approach to analysis, researchers are forced to determine the pattern of relationships between the constructs a priori. As a result, SEM is an effective tool for inferential analysis (Byrne, 2001). Secondly, and in contrast to alternative statistical techniques such as regression or general linear modeling, SEM enables researchers to assess and correct for measurement error. This is important because not taking account of error may lead to serious mistakes and misinterpretations (Byrne). Finally, exploratory data analysis techniques are only able to measure observed variables, whereas structural equations modeling is able to measure both latent, unobserved constructs as well as observed variables.

Anderson and Gerbing (1988) advocated a two-step approach to model design and identification in structural equations modeling. The first step involves specifying a measurement model where the observed items in the survey are linked to their assumed underlying construct, with all constructs then allowed to freely correlate (Anderson & Gerbing). This measurement modeling technique essentially links the item scores or *indicators* to the unobserved, underlying construct they were designed to measure (Byrne, 2001). CFA is used to provide an assessment of the extent to which the data *fit* the measurement model as proposed. The second step of the two-step approach involves developing the structural model whereby the researcher specifies how the constructs are expected to *causally* relate to each other. These relationships should be extrapolated based on relevant theory where all variables, relationships, and directions of relationships are clearly modeled. It is noteworthy that, particularly with cross-sectional designs, the use of the term *causal*, or similar, needs to be applied and interpreted with due caution because associations do not indicate *cause* in any strict sense of the term.

Although it is possible to estimate both the measurement and structural models simultaneously in many statistical programs, Anderson and Gerbing (1988) strongly advocated for separate estimation of the models. Indeed, they recommended “separate estimation and respecification of the measurement model prior to simultaneous estimation of the measurement and structural sub-models” (p. 417). This is recommended because independent measurement modeling allows convergent and discriminant validity to be assessed and scales to be re-estimated and refined as needed *prior* to any structural analysis. Furthermore, Anderson and Gerbing argued that measurement models will almost always fail to provide acceptable fit without model re-specification. Moreover, where the measurement and structural models are assessed simultaneously and model misspecification has occurred, Anderson and Gerbing argued

that it is likely both the measurement models and structural model will be incorrectly interpreted.

Other researchers have also commented on this two-step approach, acknowledging the benefits of simultaneous estimation of the measurement and structural models, after having first obtained a good fitting measurement model (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1992). These researchers suggested that the two-step technique results in more accurate relationships, avoids measurement and structural interaction and is particularly useful when exploring new relationships and theory. As such, the generally accepted technique for structural equations modeling involves first assessing the measurement models independently, before progressing to analyze a combined measurement and structural model. It is worthy of note that although the two-step model procedure was followed, in order to manage model complexity, loadings and errors determined from the measurement model were not carried into structural analysis.

Measurement Modeling

Measurement properties of the known and proposed factor structures of EIC, PsyCap, work engagement, salesperson engagement, salesperson performance, overall work attitude and intention to turnover were assessed across a series of confirmatory factor analytic models using AMOS 17.0. The six core constructs proposed in the structural model (EIC, PsyCap, salesperson work engagement, overall work attitude, ITO, and salesperson performance) were first specified and tested at the first order level. Then, except for ITO (a uni-dimensional construct), the measured variables in the study were specified as higher order or 'second-order' latent factors (Jöreskog, 1970). Second-order (*confirmatory*) latent factors were proposed by Jöreskog (1970), and Dwyer and Oh (1987) recommended their use to, in effect, combine several related

first-order factors into a single higher-order latent factor to simplify a structural equation model. Higher-order latent factors are increasingly being discussed (e.g., Bagozzi & Heatherton, 1984; Newman et al., 2010; Ping, 2004) and specified in organizational research (e.g., Avey, Luthans, Smith & Palmer, 2010; Rich et al., 2010).

A brief outline of the approach to measurement modeling is reported in Paper 3 (see the following section). A more comprehensive explanation of the approach used to test first-order measurement models, including model specification and re-specification, and then testing the validity of the proposed higher-order modeling is provided below. Salesperson work engagement is outlined as an exemplary case of the approach and steps. Thereafter, and in order to mitigate unnecessary repetition, only pertinent information and literature underpinning the rationale for the measurement modeling (specification, respecification, higher order modeling) relevant to the remaining study variables will be provided.

The first in a series of measurement models examined the specification of salesperson work engagement. From a theoretical perspective, it is common to investigate the structure and effect of unobservables like engagement or motivation through analyses by statistically relating covariation between measured variables to latent variables (Borsboom, Mellenbergh, & van Heerden, 2003). As previously outlined, general work engagement comprised of measured items drawn from the UWES-9 (Schaufeli et al., 2006) and the measured variables for the three salesperson specific engagement dimensions were each comprised of items developed following the qualitative study reported in paper 2. Consistent with standard approaches to latent factor modeling (e.g. Borsboom, et al., 2003), CFA was used to model the latent variables. The first model tested was a four factor model of salesperson work

engagement. This model was comprised of latent variables for energy, focus, and striving and the nine item work engagement scale (UWES-9; Schaufeli et al., 2006). A total of 24 indicators (items) were included in the model. Five indicators were specified to load on each of the energy, focus, and striving latent factors, and the nine items of the UWES-9 were specified to load on a ‘UWES’ latent factor. The UWES-9 items were included because of their demonstrated validity and reliability with respect to the measurement of work engagement (Schaufeli et al., 2006). Figure 1 illustrates the specified 24 item four factor model. The AMOS output from the initial measurement model suggested the model may benefit from respecification in order to provide a more valid measurement model.

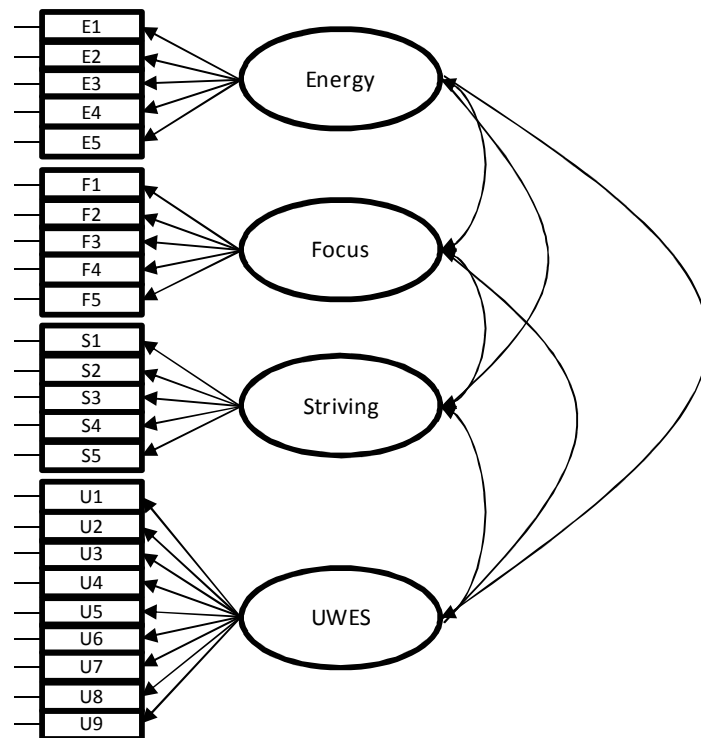


Figure 1. Initial four factor measurement model of salesperson engagement.

Note: UWES = 9-item Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (Schaufeli et al., 2006).

Validity considerations and model respecification

Convergent and construct validity for each of the variables was assessed by examining the item factor loadings for each indicator on their designated construct (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). Construct validity refers to the extent to which a measured item corresponds to an underlying construct, while convergent validity considers whether a measure is correlated with the other variables it is supposed to be related to. A minimum loading of .50 for each item on their specified dimension is required to establish construct validity (Kline, 1998).

Anderson and Gerbing (1988) recognized that measurement models will usually benefit from some re-specification and that initial models almost always fail to provide acceptable fit. As such, model respecification will most likely be routinely required in order to achieve a good fit for a measurement model in confirmatory factor analysis. Anderson and Gerbing suggested that re-estimation of the measurement model should not be based solely on statistical inferences but also on relevant theory and item content. By taking into consideration theory and content as well as the statistical output, the researcher can reasonably decide whether to specify any misfitting items on another construct or to remove the item from the analysis completely (Anderson & Gerbing).

Jöreskog and Sörbom (1996) suggested that modification indices are the most useful statistical tools for re-specifying hypothesized models. Modification indices provide a value for each fixed parameter which shows the minimum amount the chi square statistic would change if the parameter was freed (Byrne, 2001; Hox & Bechger, 1998). Holmes-Smith and colleagues (2005) suggested that modification indices larger than 3.84 indicate that the chi square statistic would be significantly reduced if that parameter was freed. As such, parameters with the largest modification index are

usually freed during analysis in order to better approximate the true model.

Modification indices are generally freed in a sequence of model re-specifications where the parameter expected to produce the largest improvement in chi square is removed first. This process continues systematically until optimum model fit is achieved. This process was followed for each of the measured variables in the study.

The net reduction in the number of items for each scale assessed throughout the measurement modeling aligns with Warr, Cook, and Wall's (1979) and Bagozzi and Yi's (1998) calls for shortened scales of organizational constructs. Short scales are useful in organizational research as the researcher is able to test more constructs without extending the time needed for participants to complete the survey, which is a recognized reason for response fatigue (Edwards et al., 1997).

In line with the above rationale and approach, the output on for the initial 24-item measurement model of salesperson work engagement was reviewed for construct validity by assessing item factor loadings and modification indices. This process led to a reduction of the number of items for each scale. A refined four factor model was respecified and tested for model fit whereby the factors for energy, focus, striving and the UWES-9 each comprised of 3 indicator items. The scale items reflected in the respecified model are presented in Appendix C.

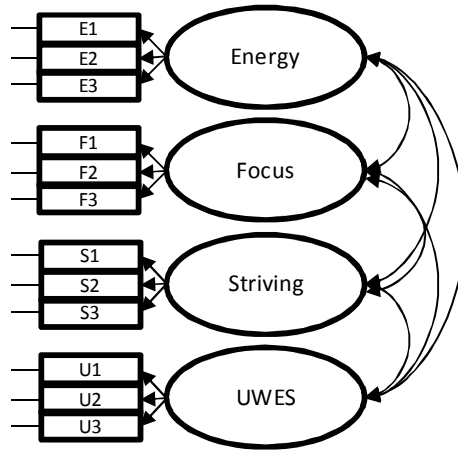


Figure 2. Respecified four factor measurement model of salesperson work engagement.

The strong correlations between the work engagement dimensions (e.g., vigor, dedication, absorption) as previously reported by researchers (e.g., Schaufeli, et al., 2002, 2006), together with the higher-order factor structure adopted in some model specifications of work engagement (e.g., Rich et al., 2010) suggested the plausibility of a second order salesperson work engagement factor (Christiansen, Lovejoy, Szymanski, & Lango, 1996). It is noteworthy that the three item UWES sub-scale (as shown in Figure 2) consisted of one item drawn from each of the vigor, dedication and absorption dimensions. The fit statistics for the first order engagement model were χ^2 ratio = 1.74, AGFI .90, CFI = .98, and RMSEA = .06; thus providing initial support for the first order measurement modeling.

Higher order model testing

The proposed higher-order specification of the multi-dimensional engagement constructs are shown in Figure 3. The decision as to whether the first or higher order modeling provided a viable specification of the construct was based on the target coefficient₂ (TC₂; (Marsh, 1987)). The TC₂ provides the ratio of the χ^2 value of the

higher order model relative to the freely correlated first-order model, after adjusting for lack of fit associated with the first-order indicators in both models. TC_2 is a valid test for determining whether a higher order specification is appropriate and is obtained with the following formula:

$$\frac{(\chi^2 \text{ for 1st-order uncorrelated model} - \chi^2 \text{ for the 2nd-order model})}{(\chi^2 \text{ for 1st-order uncorrelated model} - \chi^2 \text{ for the 1st-order correlated model})}$$

Marsh argued that TC_2 values greater than .90 indicate the viability of higher order modeling. Table 2 in Paper 3 (see the following section) presented the fit indices for the respecified and higher order measurement models of salesperson work engagement as well as the TC_2 value which exceeded the .90 cut-off (Marsh, 1987). Taken together, it was concluded that the higher-order model of salesperson work engagement was viable.

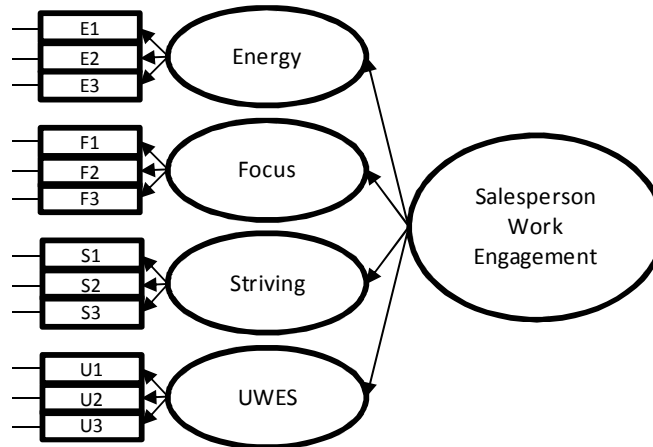


Figure 3. Second order factor measurement model of salesperson work engagement.

The approach outlined above was followed for the first order measurement model specification and respecification, and then higher order model testing for

PsyCap, EIC, overall work attitude and salesperson performance. The rationale for higher order modeling has been provided in the expanded literature review outlined previously and the introduction to Paper 3 (see the following section). All higher order factors achieved acceptable criteria for model fit and for TC₂. Table 2 in Paper 3 provides a summary of these results. Additionally, the specification of ITO as a uni-dimensional first order construct yielded good fit to the data (χ^2 ratio = 1.40, CFI = .99, and RMSEA = .04). The scale items for all measured variables are presented in bold in Appendix C.

Discriminant validity testing

Tests for discriminant validity are conducted when correlations between constructs are sufficiently high to suggest considerable overlap among the constructs (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). Such tests aim to ascertain if the constructs are empirically distinct and independent constructs, or whether they would be better conceptualized as a single construct. Given the debate regarding the discriminant validity between work engagement and higher order 'A' factors, the strong correlation between salesperson work engagement and overall work attitude was expected (Newman, et al., 2010). As such, discriminant validity testing was conducted to examine whether salesperson work engagement and overall work attitude were empirically distinct. Discriminant validity is tested by comparing chi square values when the covariances between the latent constructs are first fixed to one, against when they are freely estimated; known as a chi-square difference test. A significant difference between the chi square values, as determined using a chi square probabilities table, indicates discriminant validity (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). As reported in Paper 3, the chi-square difference test indicated that the models were significantly different ($\Delta\chi^2$

[df1] = 8). Additionally, because there was an unexpectedly high correlation between overall work attitude and the first order ITO construct, a second chi-square difference test was performed. This test also yielded a significant difference ($\Delta\chi^2$ [df1] = 380.6), thus supporting discriminant validity.

Structural equation modeling and assessing model fit

By default, AMOS uses the maximum likelihood method to estimate the *fit* of the proposed parameters to the data. The statistical output produced by AMOS enables researchers to assess and evaluate model fit. Byrne (2001) suggested that it is ideal to take a number of perspectives and statistical findings into account when assessing model fit. Many of the goodness of fit indices are sensitive to sample size and model complexity and as a result their power varies with changing samples and models (Hox & Bechger, 1998). For this reason, and as described below, researchers have suggested assessing goodness of fit with multiple fit indices (Marsh, Balla, & Hau, 1996; Williams et al., 2007).

Both absolute and incremental (or comparative) fit indices were used for the present research to ascertain goodness of fit. Absolute indices consider the absolute discrepancy between the implied variance and covariance matrix and the empirical matrix of the sample variances and covariances (Holmes-Smith et al., 2005). Examples of the absolute fit indices used in this study are the Normed Chi Square and the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA). Alternatively, incremental fit indices assess how much better the fitted model is to a baseline model (Holmes-Smith et al.). The baseline model from which the comparison is made is most often the null or independence model. Incremental fit indices should have values between zero and one, where zero suggests that the specified model is not better than the null or independence

model, and one indicates a perfect fit (Holmes-Smith et al.). Incremental fit indices used in this study included the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) and the Parsimony Goodness of Fit Index (PGFI). A more detailed review of the goodness of fit indices utilized in this study is provided below.

The chi square goodness of fit statistic tests whether the matrix of implied variances and covariances is statistically different to the empirical sample variances and covariances matrix (Holmes-Smith et al., 2005). As noted, the chi square statistic is one of the fit indices that is sensitive to sample size which means that as the number of cases in the sample increases, so does the chi square value and the likelihood of rejecting the specified model (Holmes-Smith et al.). Furthermore, the more complex the model, the larger the chi square will be and the more likely it is that the specified model will be rejected. Chi square's sensitivity to sample size has led researchers to call for the use of a variety of fit indices to ascertain which of a competing range of models provides best fit (Bentler, 1990; Bentler & Bonnet, 1980; MacCallum, Browne, & Sagawara, 1996).

While most fit indices show some sensitivity to sample size, they are generally impacted much less than the chi square statistic (Box & Hechger, 1998). Indeed, the normed chi square was specifically developed to address this limitation. The normed chi square index divides the chi square value by the degrees of freedom (Holmes-Smith et al., 2005) and is both more robust with respect to sample size as well as model complexity. Ideally, the normed chi square value should be greater than one and less than two to indicate good fit (e.g., Arbuckle & Wothke, 1997; Holmes-Smith et al., 2005). Values between two and three indicate a reasonably good fitting model, while values less than one indicate over fit (Holmes-Smith et al.).

Aside from the normed chi square statistic, the comparative fit index (CFI) and Parsimony Goodness of Fit Index (PGFI) were used to assess model fit. The commonly used Goodness of Fit Index (GFI, Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1984) and Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI) were not used as these are considered inadequate for fit assessment in larger models (Anderson & Gerbing, 1984). Furthermore, it has been argued that the commonly used Normed Fit Index (NFI) is limited in its utility as it tends to underestimate model fit when presented with a small sample size (Bentler, 1990). Whereas some researchers advocate that CFI values should exceed 0.95 to demonstrate good model fit (e.g., Hu & Bentler, 1999), CFI values exceeding 0.90, and a PGFI of around 0.50 have elsewhere been argued to signify good fit (Byrne, 2001).

The RMSEA was originally conceptualized nearly three decades ago, and is increasingly being recognized as one of the most important indices in structural equations modeling (Byrne, 2001). The RMSEA takes into account that most empirical research deals not with populations but with samples within the population. As such, this fit statistic considers the error of approximation and is less strict than the chi square distribution which only holds when the model fits the population (Holmes-Smith et al., 2005). RMSEA point estimates less than .05 indicate good fit, while values between .05 and .08 suggest reasonable fit (Kline, 1998). Other researchers have proposed that RMSEA values between .08 and .10 suggest mediocre fit, while values exceeding .10 suggest poor fit (MacCallum et al., 1996).

The RMSEA fit statistic is supported by confidence interval statistics which report 90% confidence interval around the RMSEA point estimate (Byrne, 2001). These intervals assist researchers in evaluating model fit, suggesting that where a large confidence interval exists it is difficult to accurately determine how well the model fits

the population (MacCallum et al., 1996). Alternatively, a small confidence interval suggests that the RMSEA value accurately reflects how well the model fits in the population. RMSEA confidence intervals below .05 suggest good fit, intervals straddling .05 indicate plausible fit, and statistics above .05 suggest poor fit (MacCallum et al.). It is notable that like the chi square, the RMSEA is influenced by sample size. Indeed the RMSEA confidence intervals are less accurate with small sample sizes and high model complexity (Byrne). As a result, when investigating complex measurement models with multiple constructs of interest, a large sample size is needed to obtain a small confidence interval.

As previously outlined, SEM was used to test the overall fit of the proposed and competing models. More specifically, given that both mediated and moderated relationships were proposed in the model (see Figure 1, Paper 1 and the elaborated model in Figure 1, Paper 3) the analysis involved mediated and moderated structural equation modeling (MSEM). Whereas the traditional Sobel (1982) test is often employed to examine the significance of indirect or mediated effects, Cheung and Lau (2008) recommended using the bias corrected bootstrap method for defining confidence intervals and significance for mediation in SEM analyses. As such, and as outlined in Paper 3 (following section), mediation was assessed using Bias Corrected Bootstrap tests in AMOS in order to report the magnitude and significance of expected indirect effects and the 95% confidence interval generated from the test.

With regard to the testing interactions or moderated relationships, the MSEM method has distinct statistical advantages over more traditional analyses such as hierarchical regression analyses. First, MSEM can test for main, moderation and mediation relationships within a nomological net simultaneously assessed. Secondly,

MSEM provides multiple and more robust measures of fit for the models under study. Finally, SEM/MSEM, in contrast to regression analysis, allows for explicit modeling of measurement errors and thus takes into account of the biasing effects of measurement error. A number of alternative methods can be used to assess proposed moderated relationships. Ping's (1995, 1996) recommended processes were followed for the present analyses using the AMOS software package. Ping's (1995, 1996) MSEM methods were selected over alternative methods as they have been concluded to involve user friendly processes that recover parameter values well (for a full review see Cortina, Chen, & Dunlap, 2001). In line with the rationale and approach outlined above, the analytical process followed for the SEM and MSEM models tested is outlined in Paper 3. A Microsoft Word version of the Paper 3, as submitted to the Journal of Managerial Psychology, is presented below.

Declaration for Thesis Chapter 4 (Paper 3)

Declaration by candidate

In the case of Chapter 4 (Paper 3), the nature and extent of my contribution to the work was:

Nature of contribution	Extent of contribution (%)
Designed project methodology, sourced and designed measures, liaised with host organization and participants, collected and analyzed data, initiated publication, instigated key ideas, conducted the literature review, wrote the manuscript, incorporated co-author's feedback into final manuscript, prepared, and submitted manuscript for publication.	80%

The following co-author contributed to the work:

Name	Nature of contribution
Simon Albrecht	Conceptual critiquing and development; statistical advice; feedback on draft manuscripts.

Candidate's
Signature

Date

Declaration by co-author

The undersigned hereby certifies that:

1. the above declaration correctly reflects the nature and extent of the candidate's contribution to this work, and the nature of the contribution of the co-author;
2. they meet the criteria for authorship in that they have participated in the conception, execution, or interpretation, of at least that part of the publication in their field of expertise;
3. they take public responsibility for their part of the publication, except for the responsible author who accepts overall responsibility for the publication;
4. there are no other authors of the publication according to these criteria;
5. potential conflicts of interest have been disclosed to (a) granting bodies, (b) the editor or publisher of journals or other publications, and (c) the head of the responsible academic unit; and
6. the original data are stored at the following location(s) and will be held for at least five years from the date indicated below:

Location(s)

Monash University, School of Psychology and Psychiatry, Caulfield campus

Signature

Date

Reprint of Submitted Manuscript

Salesperson work engagement: The test of a higher-order structural model

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to extend job demands-resources theory by testing the motivating role of higher-order organizational and individual resources on salesperson work engagement, performance, work attitudes, and intention to turnover. Data from a sample of 226 sales professionals were used to conduct confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modeling. A model was tested which showed the direct, mediating and moderating influence of employee involvement climate and psychological capital on salesperson performance, overall work attitude and intention to turnover through salesperson work engagement. The motivating role of organizational and personal resources modeled as employee involvement climate and psychological capital, respectively, explained over half of the variance in salesperson work engagement. By means of mediated effects through salesperson work engagement, the model explained over two-thirds of the variance in overall work attitude, which then inversely influenced intention to turnover, again explaining over two-thirds of the variance. Psychological capital directly predicted over half of the variance in salesperson performance. The findings suggest that sales managers, organizational development practitioners and human resource managers ought to invest in strategic human resources practices that create an employee involvement climate in conjunction with providing training opportunities for developing psychological capital (hope, optimism, self-efficacy and resilience) for their downstream impact on engagement and outcomes.

Keywords: Salesperson performance, work engagement, psychological capital, employee involvement climate, high-involvement work systems, positive organizational behavior, job attitudes, job demands-resources model

Salespeople are a critical link between suppliers and customers (Vinchur, Schippmann, Switzer, & Roth, 1998). High-performing salespeople do more than simply execute standard steps of traditional selling processes. Increasingly salespeople are required to be proactive, creative, and adaptive in their work with customers, and serve more like trusted consultants and partners working to build long-term and mutually beneficial relationships (Anderson & Huang, 2006). A meta-analysis on predictors of salesperson job performance by Vinchur et al. (1998) called for continued research in modern-day organizational contexts to extend our understanding of how personal factors, such as potency, and organizational factors, such as training and salary, lead to improvements in performance, job attitudes, and lower turnover within sales contexts.

There has been a proliferation of organizational research exploring how positive people and organizations impact performance, well-being, and other desired individual, group and organizational outcomes (see Donaldson & Ko, 2010). Positive psychology, or the science of well-being and optimal human performance, focuses on explaining and achieving such outcomes by complementing the contribution offered by more traditional deficit-oriented approaches such as found in the stress and coping literatures (Luthans & Youssef, 2007). More particularly, the two emerging sub-disciplines of positive organizational behavior (POB; Luthans, 2002a, 2002b, 2003; Luthans & Youssef, 2007) and positive organizational scholarship (POS; Cameron & Caza, 2004) provide an organizing framework for “research on positive states, outcomes and generative mechanisms” (Roberts, 2006. pp.292-293). Both POB and POS have been said to be fundamental to future research and theory development on individual and organizational-level performance and well-being (Donaldson & Ko, 2010).

Although the emergence of positive psychology has reinvigorated research and practitioner interest in constructs such as well-being and optimal performance, their importance has long been recognized in organizational research (Luthans & Avolio, 2009; Youssef & Luthans, 2007). For instance, organizational-level constructs such as high-performance or high-involvement work systems (e.g., Huselid, 1995; Lawler, 1991, 1992) and more recently, individual constructs such as work engagement (e.g., Kahn, 1990, 1992; Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Roma & Bakker, 2002) and psychological capital (PsyCap; Luthans, Youssef, & Avolio, 2007), have long been identified as key contributors to positive individual, team and organizational performance.

Job Demands-Resources Model: The Motivational Process

The job demands-resources (JD-R) model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007, 2008) is a widely used and influential model, which elegantly but powerfully explains the emergence and management of work engagement and burnout. In line with the tenets of positive psychology, some researchers have focused solely on engagement and the associated motivational processes of the model (e.g., Xanthopoulou, Heuven, Demerouti, Bakker, & Schaufeli, 2008). The motivational processes explain how job resources (e.g., autonomy and support) and personal resources (e.g., self-efficacy and optimism) directly influence work engagement, which in turn influences outcomes such as commitment, in-role and extra-role performance, personal initiative and financial outcomes (for reviews, see Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Demerouti & Cropanzano, 2010; Hakanen & Roodt, 2010). The motivational process provides a useful framework for investigating how POB and POS-oriented resource constructs influence important outcome variables such as performance, job attitudes (including commitment and job

satisfaction), and employee intentions to stay or leave the organization, through their associations with work engagement. Some key motivational relationships as they might apply in a sales context are modeled in Figure 1 and explained below.

Work Engagement

Work engagement has consistently been shown to be associated with improved job performance (e.g., Christian, Garza, & Slaughter, 2011; Salanova, Agut, & Peiro, 2005; Xanthopoulou et al., 2008), more positive work attitudes such as job involvement, commitment (e.g., Hallberg & Schaufeli, 2006), job satisfaction (Rich et al., 2010), turnover intentions (Saks, 2006), and employee well-being/mental health (e.g., Schaufeli, Taris, & Bakker, 2006; Simbula, 2010). However, despite considerable advances in the field, some disagreement remains surrounding the definition, dimensionality, and measurement of the construct (Meyer & Gagné, 2008; Meyer, Gagné, & Parfyonova, 2010; Newman, Joseph, & Hulin, 2010). While acknowledging the enormous progress that has been made, Albrecht (2010) and Bakker, Albrecht and Leiter (2010) recently highlighted a number of as yet unresolved issues in the engagement literature. These include, but are not limited to: identifying the core dimensions which constitute the construct and how it is best measured and defined; and knowing if engagement is best modeled as a multi-dimensional first order construct or as a higher-order factor.

With respect to the issue of the dimensionality and definition of work engagement, Kahn (1990, 1992) originally described engagement as the harnessing of an employee's full self to their work role performances through the simultaneous investment of affective, cognitive, and physical energies. In an alternative line of research, Schaufeli et al. (2002) defined work engagement as a positive, fulfilling,

work-related state of mind reflecting employee vigor, dedication, and absorption. Bakker and Demerouti (2008) and Schaufeli and Bakker (2010) proposed that vigor, dedication and absorption correspond with the affective, cognitive, and physical/behavioral dimensions, as such, mirroring the dimensions originally proposed by Kahn (1992) and later operationalized by May et al., (2004) and Rich et al., (2010). However, Rich and colleagues (2010) recently argued that the instrument most commonly used to assess work engagement (UWES; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003) does not precisely map onto Kahn's conceptualization. Further to this issue, there may be additional dimensions of engagement not explicitly encompassed by Schaufeli and colleagues (2002), Kahn (1990) or Rich and colleagues (2010). Macey et al. (2009), for example, argued in support of a definition of engagement that, amongst other things, more explicitly acknowledges a focus on alignment with, and the achievement of, organizational goals and uses characteristics such as 'energy' 'focus' and 'striving' to describe engagement. In summary, given that affective energy, cognitive focus, and discretionary effort or striving appear to be core and foundational characteristics of engagement, further theorizing and quantitative and qualitative research may potentially identify and validate additional qualities or dimensions of work engagement.

The question as to whether work engagement itself is best measured and modeled as a unidimensional construct, a composite first order construct, a multi-dimensional first-order construct, or a higher-order multi-dimensional construct, has yet to be fully resolved. Whereas some researchers (e.g., Rich et al., 2010) have argued that work engagement is best conceptualized as a higher-order construct with multiple first-order factors, other researchers have specified work engagement as a composite variable and operationalized it by aggregating the vigor, dedication and absorption items at the first-order level (Schaufeli, Bakker, & Salanova, 2006). Continued research on the

measurement and modeling of engagement is required. Specifically, the suggestion that engagement can be best conceptualized and specified as a second-order factor composed of salient first order factors (e.g., Rich et al., 2010), requires further investigation.

Work Engagement and Salesperson Performance

Increasing research evidence suggests that employee engagement is related to individual work performance (for a review see Demerouti & Cropanzano, 2010). Schaufeli and colleagues (2006), for example, demonstrated a positive relationship between work engagement and outcomes including in-role ($\gamma = .37$) and extra-role ($\gamma = .32$) performance in a large heterogeneous sample. More recently, a meta-analysis on work engagement by Christian and colleagues (2011) reported mean corrected correlations with task performance (.43) and contextual performance (.34). There is widespread agreement that employee performance is best conceptualized as a multi-dimensional construct (e.g., Griffin, Neal, & Parker, 2007). Griffin and colleagues noted that linking appropriately conceived dimensions to the context within which work is performed is important when investigating employee performance. Performance, within a sales domain, has been assessed using both generic performance dimensions (e.g., task performance, contextual performance) and salesperson specific performance dimensions (e.g., salesperson creativity or adaptive behaviors). Wang and Netemeyer (2004), for example, reported moderate to strong correlations ($r = .46$ to $r = .68$) between creative salesperson performance, adaptive selling behaviors, and salesperson self-rated performance. Figure 1 shows salesperson task performance, adaptive selling behaviors, and creative salesperson performance, modeled as a higher-order construct influenced by salesperson work engagement.

Work Engagement, Job Attitudes and Intention to Turnover

Traditional job attitudes including job satisfaction and organizational commitment, as well as employees' intention to turnover (ITO), have been examined as outcomes in mainstream research on work engagement (e.g., Hallberg & Schaufeli, 2006; Rich et al., 2010; Saks, 2006). The meta-analysis by Christian and colleagues (2011) reported mean corrected correlations with job satisfaction, organizational commitment and job involvement ranging between .52 and .59. Whereas research has recognized direct effects of work engagement on ITO, owing to the state-like nature of work engagement, engagement is likely to also indirectly influence ITO through its impact on the more stable job attitudes such as commitment and satisfaction. Figure 1 shows work engagement directly influencing overall work attitudes and indirectly influencing ITO.

Psychological Capital as a Personal Resource

The core POB construct, psychological capital or PsyCap, has been the subject of considerable theory and research over the past several years (e.g., Luthans & Youssef, 2007). PsyCap has been defined as an individual's positive psychological state of development characterized by *self-efficacy*, *optimism*, *hope*, and *resilience* (Luthans et al., 2007b). These four core "developable" psychological resources, when modeled as a higher-order construct, have been shown to substantially influence job performance (e.g., Avey, Luthans, & Youssef, 2010; Avey, Wernsing, & Luthans, 2008), employee well-being (e.g., Avey, Luthans, Smith, & Palmer, 2010), job attitudes (e.g., Avey et al., 2010a; Luthans et al., 2007a; Luthans, Norman, Avolio, & Avey, 2008) and intentions to turnover (Avey et al., 2010a) across multiple cultural contexts (Luthans, Avolio, Walumbwa, & Li, 2005). In line with the modeling of PsyCap in Figure 1, there is

growing empirical evidence that supports the modeling of PsyCap as a distinct higher-order state-like construct (for a review, see Luthans et al., 2007a,b).

Psychological Capital and Work Engagement

A substantial amount of empirical research has demonstrated strong associations between individual dimensions of PsyCap, in particular self-efficacy and optimism, and work engagement (e.g., Halbesleben, 2010; Xanthopoulou et al, 2007, 2008, Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2009). Sweetman and Luthans (2010) proposed that the “synergistic potential of efficacy, hope, optimism, and resiliency making up PsyCap would seem to be a powerful predictor of the interrelated components of vigor, dedication, and absorption associated with work engagement” (p. 63). However, as yet, there is limited empirical evidence supporting the association between *higher-order* PsyCap and work engagement, which highlights the importance of further empirical research.

Psychological Capital and Salesperson Performance

In a seminal meta-analysis on salesperson performance Churchill et al. (1985), after reporting modest relationships between “enduring” personal characteristics and salesperson performance, proposed that “influenceable” personal characteristics may better account for variations in performance. In a similar vein, PsyCap has been proposed as a “developable” or “state-like” individual difference variable that can be influenced through training interventions in order to enhance performance, well-being, job attitudes, and reduce ITO (e.g., Luthans, Avey, Avolio, Norman, & Combs, 2006). Figure 1 shows PsyCap directly influencing overall salesperson performance and

overall work attitudes, and also indirectly influencing performance through its association with work engagement.

Employee Involvement Climate as an Organizational Level Resource

High performance work systems (HPWS), also known as “high involvement” work systems, have been recognized as key contributors to organizational performance and competitiveness (Boxall & Macky, 2009; Combs, Liu, Hall, & Ketchen, 2006; Chuang & Liao, 2010; Huselid, 1995; Luthans & Youssef, 2007). A recent meta-analysis by Subramony (2009) identified HPWS as being significantly related to overall performance ($r = .32$) in a sample of 1752 employees across seven different studies.

Alternative models of HPWS have been proposed. Riordan and colleagues (2005) conceptualization of employee involvement climate (EIC) operationalizes the construct in terms of Lawler and colleagues’ (Lawler, 1996; Lawler, Mohrman, & Ledford, 1995) four core high-involvement work system factors: *performance-based rewards, participative decision making, information sharing and training and development*. These dimensions individually, and in combination as indicators of a higher-order construct, have been shown to lead to greater job performance, more positive job attitudes, and lower ITO (Vandenberg, Richardson, & Eastman, 1999). Although Riordan and colleagues (2005) specified EIC as an aggregate of the four constituent dimensions, given the higher modeling of climate proposed by James and James (1989) and research evidence provided by Vandenberg et al., (1999), EIC can equally be modeled as a higher-order construct (See Figure 1.).

A number of researchers have argued that the association between HPWS or EICs and attitudinal and performance outcomes may be fully or partially mediated by

work engagement. Macey and colleagues (2009), for example, proposed that the cultivation of a high-performance work environment serves as a vital contextual antecedent to employee engagement, which mediates the effects of HPWSs on performance and productivity outcomes. Therefore, Figure 1 shows EIC modeled as an organizational resource influencing salesperson outcomes (overall work attitude, ITO, and salesperson performance) through engagement.

Psychological Capital as a Moderator of the Relationship Between Employee Involvement Climate and Work Engagement

In terms of the influence that EIC has on work engagement, PsyCap is more likely to moderate rather than mediate the relationship. In support of this argument, Luthans, Norman, Avolio, and Avey (2008) argued that if a person does not have the aptitude, propensity or individual capacity for engaging in work-related activities, high levels of a particular contextual variable (e.g., employee involvement climate) would not necessarily lead to substantive changes in the criteria of interest (e.g., engagement or performance). Further to this, and consistent with the moderating effect shown in Figure 1, Baldauf and Cravens (2002) argued for further research aimed at elucidating how the interaction between personal and organizational characteristics explain and account for employee motivation and salesperson performance outcomes.

In summary, the aims of the research were to determine how POS resources (i.e., EIC: participative decision making, performance-based rewards, information sharing, and training and development) and POB resources (i.e., PsyCap: self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience) influence salesperson performance, overall work attitude, and ITO; and to determine if this influence is mediated by work or salesperson work engagement. Furthermore, the study aimed to determine whether employees'

PsyCap moderates the influence of EIC on salesperson work engagement. The model (see Figure 1) draws heavily from work engagement research underpinned by the motivational process within the JD-R model. In fitting with the current salesperson focus, the modeling proposed is consistent with recent JD-R motivational process research on work engagement and performance for service personnel conducted by Xanthopoulou and colleagues (2008).

[Insert Figure 1 about here]

Method

Participants

The sample consisted of 226 sales professionals recruited from three Australian-based organizations or through personal networks of the researchers. The first and second organizations ($n = 82$ and $n = 66$ respondents, respectively) were large consumer goods companies. The third organization was a large media enterprise ($n = 29$ respondents). The sample was further supplemented with an additional 49 anonymous respondents recruited via the researchers' personal and professional networks. Most participants were men ($n = 152, 67.3\%$) and participant age was distributed as: 18-29 = 24.3%; 30-39 = 37.2%; 40-49 = 23%; 50+ years = 15.5 %. Inclusion criteria stipulated that participants must have been employed in their job role for a minimum of 6 months.

Procedure

Ethics approval for the study was gained from the relevant Monash University Ethics Committee. All participants received an invitation to participate in the study via email. Interested participants were invited to complete an online questionnaire and submit their responses electronically.

Measures

Participants rated their own perceptions of employee involvement climate, psychological capital, work engagement, salesperson engagement, salesperson performance, overall work attitude and intentions to turnover.

Employee involvement climate

The core dimensions of employee involvement climate were measured with 12 items drawn from a scale previously tested and published by Riordan et al., (2005). Perceived *participative decision making* was assessed with three items, including: “I have sufficient authority to fulfill my job responsibilities”. *Information sharing* was assessed with three items, including: “The channels for employee communication with top management are effective”. *Training* was assessed with three items, including: “I have sufficient/adequate job-related training”. The *performance-based rewards* dimension was assessed with three items, including: “I am satisfied with the amount of recognition I receive when I do a good job”. All subscales have been shown to have acceptable alpha reliabilities and all items were scored on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (“strongly disagree”) to 7 (“strongly agree”). Higher scores on participative decision making, information sharing, training and performance-based rewards suggest a more positive employee involvement climate.

Psychological capital

Psychological capital was measured as a higher-order construct consisting of four dimensions, *hope* (e.g., “I can think of many ways to reach my current work goals”), *self-efficacy* (e.g., “I feel confident in representing my work area in meetings with management”), *resilience* (e.g., “I usually take stressful things at work in stride”), and *optimism* (e.g., “When things are uncertain for me at work, I usually expect the best”). The four dimensions were each assessed with items drawn from the 24 item Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCQ-24), a measure with demonstrated validity and reliability (Luthans et al., 2007a,b). All items were measured using a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (“strongly disagree”) to 7 (“strongly agree”). Higher scores indicate higher psychological capital.

Salesperson work engagement

Work engagement was measured with three items from the well-validated UWES-9 (Utrecht Work Engagement Scale-9; Schaufeli, Bakker & Salanova, 2006). The items “At my work I feel bursting with energy”, “I am enthusiastic about my job”, and “I feel happy when I’m working intensely” represent the dimensions of *vigor*, *dedication*, and *absorption*, respectively. All items were scored on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (“never”) to 7 (“always”). The UWES-9 items were supplemented with nine items written by the researchers to capture the *energy*, *focus*, and *striving* dimensions of salesperson engagement identified in a previous qualitative study (Medhurst & Albrecht, in review). The dimensions of *energy*, *focus*, and *striving* were each assessed with three items following an item stem that specifically reflected the affective, cognitive, and conative nature of the dimensions, respectively. Items assessing the energy dimension asked respondents to “Reflect back on how you have

felt at work over the past few weeks. Record the extent you have experienced the following feelings or emotions”, e.g., “Energized”. Items assessing the focus dimension asked respondents to “Think back over your work over the past few weeks. Record the extent each of the following words describes your thinking”, e.g., “Fully attentive”. Items assessing the striving dimension asked respondents to “Reflect back on your intentions at work over the past few weeks. Record the extent each of the following sentences describes how you have been”, e.g., “Striving to achieve”. All items were scored on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (“never”) to 7 (“always”). High scores on energy, focus, striving and the three UWES-9 items signified salesperson work engagement.

Salesperson performance

Three dimensions of self-reported salesperson performance were assessed. *Task performance* was assessed using three items drawn from Mulki, Jaramillo and Marshall’s (2007) sales measure. Respondents were asked to “reflect on your work and indicate to what extent you see yourself ...”, for example, “building effective relationships with customers”. *Creative performance* was assessed using five items from Wang and Netemeyer’s (2004) Salesperson Creative Performance scale. An example item included “coming up with new ideas for satisfying customer needs”. *Adaptive selling behavior* was assessed with three items from a scale developed by Robinson, Marshall, Moncrief and Lask (2002). An example item included “I can easily use a wide variety of selling approaches”. The sub-scales have been shown to have acceptable alpha reliabilities and have all been used in workplace studies to examine salesperson performance. All items were measured using a 5-point Likert scale

ranging from 1 (“practically never”) to 5 (“almost always”). Higher scores indicated higher self-rated salesperson performance.

Overall work attitude

Consistent with conceptualizations of a higher order global attitude or ‘A’ factor (Newman, Joseph, & Hulin, 2010) job satisfaction, affective organizational commitment and work-related well-being constructs were specified to form part of the higher-order construct of salespersons’ overall work attitude. *Job satisfaction* was assessed using three items from Curry, Wakefield, Price, and Mueller (1986). A sample item is “I feel fairly well satisfied with my job”. *Affective organizational commitment* was assessed using three items from the widely used scale developed by Allen and Meyer (1990). A sample item is “I feel a strong sense of belonging to my organization”. Items on these dimensions were measured using a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (“strongly disagree”) to 6 (“strongly agree”). Intrinsic work-related well-being was assessed with three items from the intrinsic sub-scale of the Workplace Well-Being Index (Page, 2005) using a 10-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (“completely dissatisfied”) to 10 (“completely satisfied”). A sample item is “How satisfied are you with how meaningful your work is?” The subscales have been shown to have acceptable alpha reliabilities. Higher scores on the three subscales indicated a more positive overall work attitude.

Intention to turnover

Four items were used to assess intention to turnover (Rosen & Korabik, 1991) and were measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (“strongly disagree”) to 5 (“strongly agree”). Rosen and Korabik reported an alpha reliability of .82 for the four

item scale. A sample item is “I often think about quitting”. Higher scores indicated a higher ITO.

Results

Descriptive statistics, correlations between the constructs (higher-order where applicable) and internal consistency estimates (on diagonal) are presented in Table 1. The significant correlations between the measured variables ranged from small ($r = .27$) to strong ($r = .86$) using Cohen, Cohen, West, and Aiken's (2003) criteria. Given the high correlations between some of the measured constructs additional assessments of discriminant validity as recommended by Anderson and Gerbing (1988) are described below.

[Insert Table 1 about here]

Measurement Modeling

Measurement properties of EIC, PsyCap, work engagement, salesperson work engagement, salesperson performance, overall work attitudes and ITO were initially assessed at the first order across a series of confirmatory factor analytic models in AMOS. On the basis of modification indices and factor loadings, each of the multi-dimensional constructs were refined and respecified (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). After respecification procedures all factors were indicated by three items (apart from salesperson creative performance, for which five strong items were retained). Jöreskog and Sörbom (1993) recommended a minimum of three items per construct when conducting structural equations modeling.

The higher-order specification for each EIC, PsyCap, salesperson work engagement, salesperson performance, and overall work attitudes was tested and compared to the first order modeling with reference to the target coefficient 2 (TC₂; Marsh, 1987). As shown in Table 2, although the fit statistics were similar for both first order and higher-order models, the TC₂ for all higher-order factors exceeded the recommended criterion value of .90 (Marsh, 1987), thus suggesting the appropriateness of the higher-order modeling. Furthermore, as shown in Figure 2, the loadings of each first order factor on its higher-order factor (ranging from .58 to .91) clearly exceeded the minimum value of .50 recommended by Kline (1998).

As previously noted, some of the correlations (see Table 1) between higher order constructs exceeded $r = .80$. Given the high correlation between overall work attitude and salesperson work engagement ($r = .86$) and overall work attitude and ITO ($r = -.86$) tests were conducted to assess whether the highly related constructs were significantly distinct. Chi-square difference tests (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988) indicated that salesperson work engagement and overall work attitude were significantly different ($\Delta\chi^2$ [df1] = 8.0) and overall work attitude and ITO were significantly different ($\Delta\chi^2$ [df1] = 380.6). In sum, as shown in Table 2, the CFI and RMSEA fit indices for the full measurement model, which included all higher-order factors plus first order ITO, (see Figure 2) demonstrated acceptable fit to the data.

[Insert Table 2 about here]

Structural Equation Modeling

Given the proposed mediated and moderated relationships as modeled in Figure 1, structural equations modeling (SEM) and moderated structural equation modeling (MSEM) formed part of the analytical strategy. Consistent with standard SEM practice, model fit was assessed with a variety of indices: chi-square critical ratio, Confirmatory Fit Index (CFI), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), and the Parsimony Goodness-of-Fit Index (PGFI). For example, CFI values exceeding 0.95 (e.g., Hu & Bentler, 1999) or 0.90 (Byrne, 2001) have been proposed to demonstrate good model to data fit. Similarly RMSEA values as high as 0.08, and PGFI of around 0.50, have elsewhere been argued to signify good fit (Byrne, 2001). Mediation was assessed using 95% confidence interval statistics generated from the Bias Corrected Bootstrap tests available in AMOS.

The proposed higher-order structural model (Model 2, Table 3) showed good fit to the data (see Table 3) and explained a significant amount of variance in measured outcomes. In total, seven of the 10 expected relationships proposed in Figure 1 were supported. A respecified model with two non-significant direct paths being deleted (the paths from salesperson work engagement to salesperson performance and from PsyCap to overall work attitude), yielded a similarly good fit to the data (Model 3, Table 3).

[Insert Table 3 about here]

Figure 3 demonstrates that both EIC ($\beta = .31$) and PsyCap ($\beta = .56$) had a significant and positive association with salesperson work engagement, together explaining a significant proportion of variance (52.1%). Furthermore salesperson work engagement was found to mediate the influence of both EIC and PsyCap on overall work attitude. The estimated indirect effects from EIC to overall work attitude through salesperson work engagement was .21 (CI: .09, .37, $p = .001$). The indirect effect from PsyCap to overall work attitude through salesperson work engagement was .78 (CI: .48, 1.5, $p = .001$). Salesperson work engagement was found to have a strong direct effect on overall work attitudes ($\beta = .68$), with 72% of the variance in overall work attitude explained by the model. Furthermore, overall work attitude demonstrated a strong negative direct effect on ITO ($\beta = -.82$) and significantly mediated the relationship between the antecedents EIC, PsyCap, salesperson work engagement and the ITO outcome. The estimated indirect effect from EIC to ITO through salesperson work engagement and overall work attitude was -.40 (CI: -.63, -.27, $p < .001$). The estimated indirect effect from PsyCap to ITO through salesperson work engagement and overall work attitude was -.62 (CI: -1.2, -.37, $p = .002$). The estimated indirect effect from salesperson work engagement to ITO through overall work attitude was -.67 (CI: -.90, -.48, $p = .002$). The model explained a significant proportion of variance in ITO (67.7%). Finally, PsyCap was a strong direct predictor of salesperson performance ($\beta = .69$) and explained a significant proportion of the variance (50.2%).

[Insert Figure 3 about here]

In addition to the proposed direct and indirect effects, Figure 1 shows organizational resources (i.e., EIC) interacting with personal resources (i.e., PsyCap) to influence salesperson work engagement. Studies on work engagement by Bakker, Hakanen, Demerouti, and Xanthopoulou (2007) and Xanthopoulou and colleagues (2008) have previously used MSEM to test interactions proposed in JD-R models. Ping's (1996) MSEM approach was followed for the present analysis because, when compared to various alternatives, it has been recommended as a user-friendly process that recovers parameter values well (Cortina, Chen, & Dunlap, 2001).

Consistent with Ping's recommendations, MSEM analyses proceeded with EIC, PsyCap and salesperson work engagement respecified at the first order level. Relevant values from the model were retrieved to fix the measurement properties of the latent interaction term in order to appropriately specify the MSEM model for testing. This respecified first-order MSEM did not demonstrate adequate fit to the data ($\chi^2 [62] = 44.57$, normed $\chi^2 = 3.33$, CFI = .872, PGFI = .593, RMSEA = .10 [CI: .087, .117]). In particular, the normed χ^2 and the RMSEA did not achieve acceptable cut off values and, importantly, the path from the latent interaction to the salesperson work engagement criterion was not significant. As such, the respecified higher-order model (Model 3) was preferred on the basis that it demonstrated acceptable fit statistics and significant parameter estimates and direct and indirect paths.

Discussion

This research tested a model showing how organizational and personal resources, through salesperson work engagement influence important outcome variables within a higher-order theoretical framework underpinned by the JD-R motivational process. More specifically, and based on existing theory and research, positive

organizational and personal resource systems in the forms of EIC and PsyCap, respectively, were modeled to influence overall salesperson performance, overall work attitude and ITO, mediated through salesperson work engagement. Extending JD-R theory, we sought to examine whether separate resource systems (organizational and personal) would interact to differentially influence engagement. Specifically, we examined whether the influence of EIC on salesperson work engagement was moderated by employees' level of PsyCap.

Overall, the study findings were generally consistent with existing models, theories and frameworks and supported the proposed modeling. The findings also provided a number of new insights and extensions to the understanding of modeled variables, JD-R theory, and the sales context in general. As such, the discussion below briefly summarizes findings that confirm existing research and findings that contribute new insights to the work engagement and sales literatures. Future research directions, the theoretical and methodological contributions, study limitations and a summary of the study implications will also be outlined.

The Motivational Process of Higher-Order POS and POB Resources Through Engagement on Outcomes

The results largely supported the JD-R proposition that positively-oriented organizational and personal resources (i.e. EIC and PsyCap) facilitate a motivational process through work engagement to exert a significant positive impact on outcomes (e.g., Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). EIC and PsyCap explained over half of the variance in salesperson work engagement. Over two-thirds of the variance was explained in overall work attitude, which then inversely influenced ITO, again explaining over two-thirds of the variance (see Figure 3).

The findings both support and extend existing research showing that organizational resources operate through engagement to influence attitudinal and performance outcomes (e.g., Saks, 2006; Salanova, Agut, & Peiro, 2005). Specifically, the findings suggest that a ‘system’ of organizational resources, operating as a higher-order construct, significantly influence work engagement and downstream overall work attitude and ITO outcomes. Furthermore, whereas Xanthopoulou and colleagues (2009) and Halbesleben’s (2010) meta-analysis identified the self-efficacy and optimism components of PsyCap to be strongly associated with greater work engagement, the present study extends previous work engagement and JD-R research and theory by modeling PsyCap as a higher-order system of personal resources. Consistent with Luthans and Youssef’s (2007) conceptualization of PsyCap, hope and resilience, in addition to self-efficacy and optimism, was here shown to demonstrate a significant impact on work engagement when modeled as components of higher-order PsyCap. Interestingly, higher-order PsyCap alone predicted over half of the variance in salesperson performance (see Figure 3.).

Psychological Capital as a key Direct Predictor of Salesperson Performance

The finding that PsyCap directly predicted over half of the variance in salesperson performance is consistent with extant research on higher-order PsyCap and general measures of job performance (e.g., Avey et al., 2010a; Luthans et al., 2007a), and highlights that the construct has utility as a powerful personal resource for salesperson performances. Future JD-R studies would benefit from including higher-order PsyCap as a personal resource thereby better capturing and operationalizing the synergistic effects that are theoretically built in to the construct. Furthermore, research

on salespeople and their performances might usefully consider including the construct as a key developable individual difference factor.

Contrary to expectations, PsyCap was not a significant moderator of the relationship between EIC and salesperson work engagement. Moreover, that salesperson work engagement was not directly related to overall salesperson performance was also contrary to previous research (e.g., Xanthopoulou et al., 2008). Instead, the data suggests that possessing and investing in positive psychological resources may be more important for performance, at least in a sales context, than being engaged. It may be that simply being engaged, without being psychologically well resourced, could lead salespeople to experience burnout and diminished performance in a sales context. For instance, the data was gathered during times when the Global Financial Crisis was putting pressure on industry. It may have been that being more engaged at work was not able to impact a salesperson's performance due to external economic and market pressures at the time, but instead acted as a protective factor; helping them to feel satisfied, committed and well at work, and more likely to stay with their employer. Cultivating and investing one's PsyCap personal resource skills during work, on the other hand, may have been better suited to influencing performance. As an example, having a more optimistic outlook and feeling a sense of hope that their future performances will help them to meet their work goals may have helped them to demonstrate greater resilience when faced with challenges and consequently persist positively and achieve greater performance. Whereas the current study modeled PsyCap personal resources as antecedents to work engagement in line with the traditional JD-R modeling, it is noteworthy that researchers have recently identified that the relationship between constituent dimensions of PsyCap (i.e. self-efficacy and optimism) and work engagement is reciprocal (e.g., Salanova, Schaufeli, Xanthopoulou, & Bakker, 2010;

Xanthopoulou et al, 2009). Further investigation into the differential impact of salesperson PsyCap and engagement on outcomes and their causal ordering is recommended.

A Pathway to Salesperson Retention

As previously noted, the mediated modeling of EIC and PsyCap through salesperson work engagement, and subsequently through overall work attitude, altogether explained over two-thirds of the variance in the ITO outcome (see Figure 3.). This finding is consistent with Saks (2006) who demonstrated significant inverse relationships between antecedents and ITO through engagement (e.g., Saks, 2006). The findings also largely support the JD-R motivational process in that the positive impact of resources on outcomes, such as retention, is exerted through work engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). The results therefore, in practical terms, suggest human resource strategies that can be employed by sales organizations to help motivate and retain their sales teams.

Theoretical and Methodological Contributions

This study set out to add to existing theory and research on work engagement in several ways. While building on existing dimensions of work engagement (vigor, dedication, and absorption) additional dimensions particularly relevant to the sales context, were proposed, measured and tested. As previously noted, a qualitative study on a sample of 14 sales professionals identified energy, focus, and striving as important aspects of salesperson work engagement (Medhurst & Albrecht, in review). These characteristics have been previously acknowledged in the engagement literature (e.g., Macey & Schneider, 2008). However, the current operationalization, in particular the

volitional *striving* dimension, reflected qualities that have not been widely represented in the work engagement literature. Such an emphasis is in line with mainstream motivational theory and consulting practice (e.g., Lord, Diefendorff, Schmidt, & Hall, 2010) and recent calls to examine self-regulatory mechanisms which form part of engagement (Bakker, Schaufeli, Leiter, & Taris, 2008). The results suggest that theories, models and measures of engagement need to more clearly acknowledge that the affective energy and cognitive focus associated with engagement needs to combine with volitional striving directed toward, and aligned with, the achievement of work and organizational goals, objectives and strategies. Future conceptualizations of engagement might usefully incorporate the supplementary salesperson work engagement dimensions (in particular striving) and measurement methods used (i.e., dimension specific item stems) in order to test whether they apply to general work populations.

Chi square difference tests empirically distinguished salesperson work engagement and a higher-order overall work attitude construct. Salesperson work engagement significantly predicted more positive overall work attitude reflected by job satisfaction, affective organizational commitment, and intrinsic work-related well-being. This finding confirms empirical distinctions between engagement and organizational commitment reported by Hallberg and Schaufeli's (2006) and Rich et al.'s (2010) distinctions with job satisfaction. The modeling of work-related well-being as a component of overall work attitude, instead of as a constituent dimension of engagement, is counter to the proposition introduced by Roberston and Cooper (2010). Taken together, these findings contrast with Newman and colleagues (2010) arguments and evidence supporting the existence of a higher-order job attitude or "A" factor comprised of job attitudes *and* employee engagement. Consistent with the argument that work engagement is a more activated experience than attitudes such as job

satisfaction (Bakker et al., 2011; Macey et al., 2009), this study supports the growing empirical research presenting engagement as a motivational state that significantly influences more stable attitudinal outcomes.

In summary, we hope this study makes an important contribution to the positive psychology literature including POS and POB, and to the JD-R and work engagement literature in the following ways. We argue for the utility and legitimacy of additional and alternative dimensions of engagement, with engagement operationalized as a higher-order factor. We posit that second order confirmatory factor analysis provides an appropriate method for extending theory and research on relevant motivational resources at the organizational and personal level. Specifically, second order CFA using SEM allows for the concurrent specification of multiple first order variables into higher-order factors and the testing of these with modeled correlates, antecedents, mediators, moderators and outcomes. Such a practice enables large complex models to be, in effect, simplified for testing in a structural equations model (Dwyer & Oh, 1987). We hope to have helped demonstrate some of the richness, depth and detail that higher-order measurement and structural modeling can contribute.

Limitations

There are clear limitations with respect to the generalizability of the study findings given the use of a relatively small sample and the use of self-report data. Where possible, future research should include and examine more objective ratings of salesperson performance in addition to self-reported data. Moreover, the study's cross-sectional design mitigates against determining the causal nature of, or reciprocal relationships between, the associations proposed in the model. Future studies should test

the model within a longitudinal design and preferably over a minimum of three time periods.

Practical Implications and Conclusions

To conclude, a positive profile of salesperson work life emerged from this study. When salespeople perceive that the organization and its human resource practices provide a supportive and involving working environment and climate, and where PsyCap personal resources are developed to a high level, salespeople tend to be more engaged, hold more positive work attitudes, intend to stay with their organization, and importantly, report greater sales performance. Therefore, cultivating an EIC by investing in and developing a high-involvement work environment underpinned by strategic human resource practices and interventions may provide a useful competitive advantage to a sales organization through an uplift to sales professionals' engagement levels, overall work attitudes and a reduction in voluntary turnover. Furthermore, developing and managing the PsyCap of salespeople may provide a competitive advantage in meeting the growing challenges facing salespeople in today's competitive business landscape.

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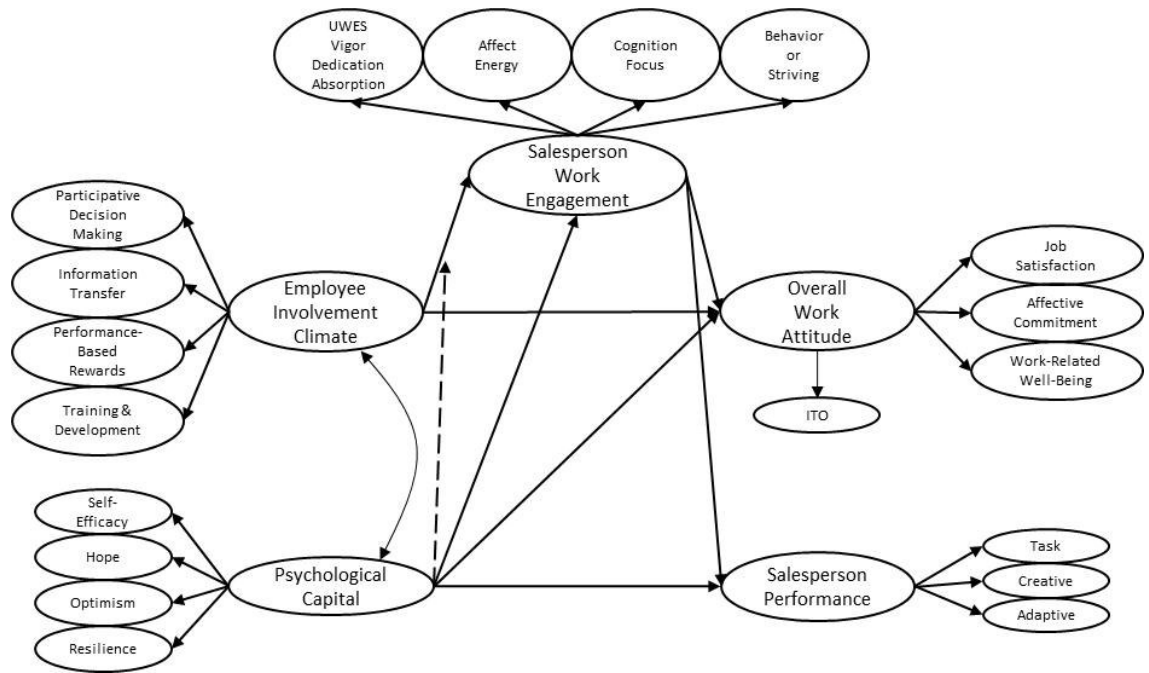
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Note: Broken arrow represents the proposed interaction. Items and errors not shown for ease of representation.

Figure 1. Theoretical model of the relationships between EIC, PsyCap, work engagement, overall work attitude, intention to turnover and salesperson performance.

Table 1.

Descriptive statistics, correlations, and internal consistency reliabilities.

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6
1 EIC	.90					
2 PsyCap	.39	.82				
3 Salesperson work engagement	.49	.66	.94			
4 Overall salesperson performance	.10 ^{ns}	.71	.54	.89		
5 Overall work attitude	.65	.56	.86	.27	.90	
6 ITO	-.44	-.32	-.61	-.10 ^{ns}	-.86	.92
<i>M</i>	5.14	4.80	5.46	4.16	6.03	2.10
<i>SD</i>	1.00	.50	.87	.53	1.18	1.00

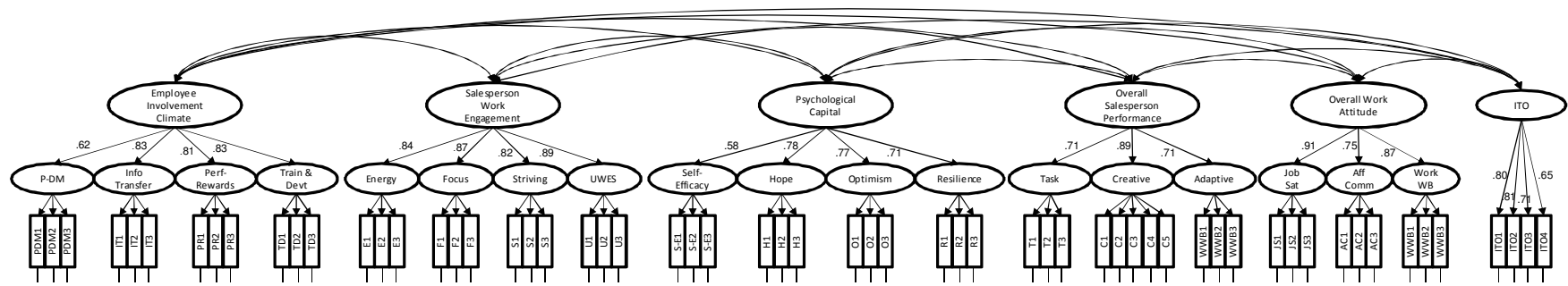
Note. *N* = 226. Diagonals are coefficient alpha reliabilities. EIC = Employee Involvement Climate; PsyCap = Psychological Capital; ITO = Intention to Turnover. Unless ns all coefficients were significant at $p < .01$]

Table 2.

Fit indices of measurement models

Model	Description	χ^2	df	χ^2/df	CFI	RMSEA	RMSEA 90% CI	TC ₂
1a	EIC First Order	77.6	48	1.62	.98	.05	[.03, .07]	.94
1b	EIC Higher-order	97.0	50	1.94	.97	.06	[.05, .08]	
2a	PsyCap First Order	76.8	48	1.60	.97	.05	[.03, .07]	.95
2b	PsyCap Higher-order	83.9	50	1.69	.96	.05	[.03, .08]	
3a	Salesperson work engagement First Order	83.6	48	1.74	.98	.06	[.04, .08]	.99
3b	Salesperson work engagement Higher-order	89.8	50	1.80	.98	.06	[.04, .08]	
4a	Overall work attitude First Order	36.8	24	1.53	.99	.05	[.01, .08]	1
4b	Overall work attitude Higher-order	36.8	24	1.53	.99	.05	[.01, .08]	
5	Salesperson Performance First Order	44.6	41	1.09	.99	.02	[.00, .05]	1
5b	Salesperson Performance Higher-order	44.6	41	1.09	.99	.02	[.00, .05]	
6	Full Measurement Model	2418.2	1677	1.44	.92	.04	[.04, .05]	

Note. $N = 226$. CFI = comparative fit index; RMSEA = root-mean-square error of approximation. TC₂ = Target Coefficient 2 (Marsh, 1987)



Note: no correlations among error terms specified.

Figure 2. Measurement model of higher-order EIC, salesperson work engagement, PsyCap, overall salesperson performance, overall work attitude and first order intention to turnover.

Table 3.

Fit indices (Maximum-Likelihood Estimates) of Hypothesized and Alternative Structural Equation Models

Model	Description	χ^2	df	χ^2/df	CFI	PGFI	RMSEA	RMSEA 90% CI
1	Null model	10975.2	1770	6.20	.000	.15	.15	[.15, .15]
2	Proposed Model: Higher-order structural model – all variables and paths excluding latent interaction	2448.4	1682	1.46	.92	.69	.05	[.04, .05]
3	Respecified Model	2461.9	1684	1.46	.92	.67	.05	[.04, .05]

Note. $N = 226$. CFI = comparative fit index; PGFI = parsimony goodness of fit index; RMSEA = root-mean-square error of approximation.

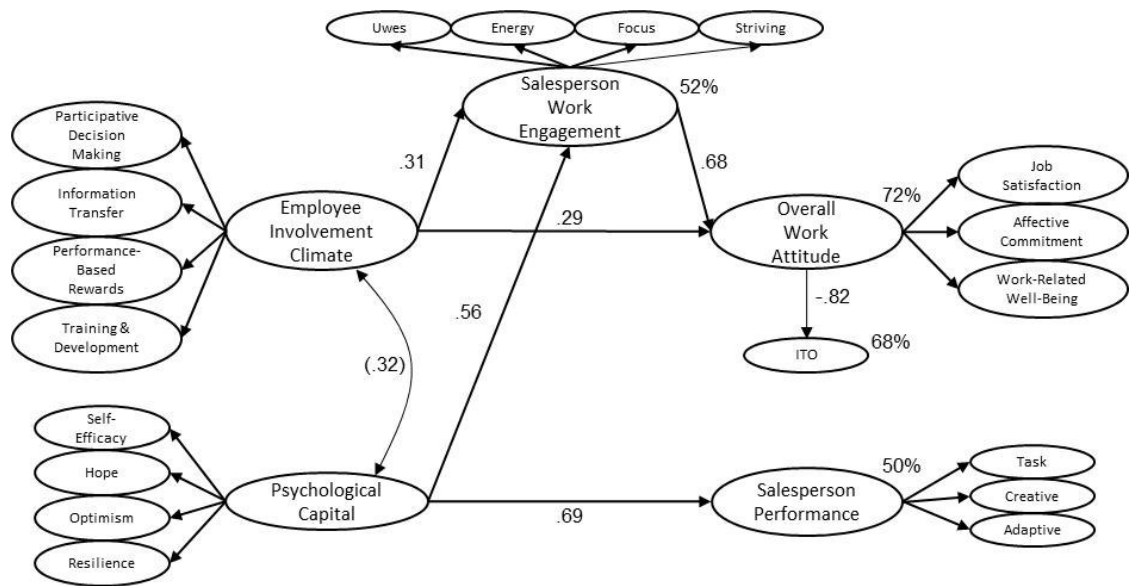


Figure 3. Respecified structural equation modeling results of antecedents to salesperson work engagement and outcomes.

Chapter 5: Integrated Discussion and Conclusions

The purpose of this chapter is to summarize and discuss key research findings and contributions to the literature, theoretical and methodological implications, and practical applications. The chapter also identifies limitations, challenges, and future research directions derived from the papers that contributed to this thesis. Specific detail relating to individual studies is provided in the preceding papers.

There were two central aims to this thesis. The first aim was to explore the lived experience of engagement in order to understand its psychological and motivational underpinnings. The second aim was to propose and test a theoretical model showing interrelationships between antecedents, outcomes, and salesperson work engagement. This thesis presented a series of papers and studies designed to address these aims. Paper 1 proposed a theoretical model of antecedent organizational resources in the form of EIC, and personal resources in the form of PsyCap, to salesperson work engagement, and in turn, salesperson performance (Chapter 2). Paper 2 reported on a qualitative study into the phenomenological experience of salesperson work engagement as differentiated from work-related flow (Chapter 3). Paper 3 tested an integrative model of higher order EIC and PsyCap, salesperson work engagement, and overall work attitude, ITO, and performance outcomes (Chapter 4).

This thesis was designed to make a positive contribution to the study of work engagement. Moreover, the research was designed to extend the application of theories and models including work engagement and the motivational process within the JD-R model to the sales context. The theoretical modeling in Paper 1 and model testing in Paper 3 integrated constructs and measurement approaches by including EIC organizational and PsyCap personal resources (modeled as higher order factors) as

antecedents to higher order salesperson work engagement, attitudinal, and performance outcomes. The research program involved the rigorous application of multiple research methods including qualitative (IPA) and quantitative (CFA, SEM, and MSEM) approaches to deepen and broaden our understanding and application of work engagement and positive organizational psychology (POB, POS).

Summary of Key Contributions of Paper 1

As reviewed in Paper 1, although work engagement research has typically explored job and personal resources as antecedents to engagement in studies using the JD-R model, researchers have also identified organizational resources as important contributors to work engagement and subsequent downstream individual and organizational outcomes resulting from the JD-R motivational process (e.g., Albrecht & Wilson-Evered, in press; Saks, 2006; Salanova, Agut, & Peiro, 2005). Building on the extant research, the theoretical model proposed in Paper 1 made two important contributions to the modeling of the JD-R motivational process, and to the study of work engagement and salesperson outcomes more generally. Firstly, the theoretical model consolidated recent management thinking and research by integrating positive organizational (i.e. EIC) and personal (i.e. PsyCap) resource systems within a single framework. Secondly, EIC and PsyCap were proposed as higher order factors to better capture and operationalize the synergistic effects that are theoretically built in to the constructs. The integrative modeling of higher order organizational and personal resources as antecedents to salesperson work engagement and outcomes (i.e. performance) provided a firm rationale for an empirical investigation into how these factors play out in real-life organizational settings.

Summary of Key Findings and Contributions of Paper 2

As introduced in Paper 2, there were a number of debates and gaps in the work engagement literature that provided the initial context for conducting a qualitative study into the experience of work engagement. The study was designed with two central aims. First and foremost the study aimed to redress the relative paucity of published qualitative research on work engagement. Secondly, the study sought to provide an initial examination into how work engagement was related to and differentiated from an associated psychological state – work-related flow – as this has largely been neglected in empirical research to date. Taken together, by addressing these study aims, a greater understanding of work engagement was achieved (research aim one) and two key contributions to the literature were identified.

The first contribution was to present striving as an essential dimension of salesperson work engagement underpinned by conative (volitional) mental processes. Although striving has been used as a descriptive quality of employee engagement (e.g., Kahn, 2010; Macey et al., 2009), little discussion has been offered regarding the underlying mental processing implicated during the experience of striving. The analysis of salesperson narrative identified that a striving dimension characterized by qualities such as determination, drive, desire, wanting, and willful effort was more clearly and additionally related to conative or volitional mental processing than either affective or cognitive processes. As discussed in Paper 2, this interpretation is consistent with previous literature including self-regulatory theories of motivated action (e.g., Bagozzi, 1992; Kuhl, 2000) and specific motivational mechanisms (e.g., autonomous self-regulation) from a self-determination theory perspective (e.g., Ryan & Deci, 2006).

The second contribution for Paper 2 pertains to how work engagement might be related to and distinguished from the experience of work-related flow. Although researchers consistently report overlap and relationships between the two states (e.g. Bakker, 2005; Hirschfeld & Thomas, 2008; Macey et al., 2009; May, Gilson, & Harter, 2004; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004), an empirical examination into how they are each experienced, related, and distinct has not explicitly been presented in the literature to date. Whereas the paper highlighted a number of distinctive qualities between the phenomenological experience of salesperson engagement and flow, one key finding is worthy of summarizing here. As discussed in the paper, and presented in the thematic model (see Figure 1, Chapter 3), salesperson work engagement was underpinned by conscious self-regulation whereas the experience of work-related flow reflected automated self-regulation. For the sample of salespeople investigated, the state of work engagement involved the conscious, deliberate, and effortful cultivation and regulation of energy, focus, and striving required to meet the situational and task relevant demands encountered during work. Consistent with Csikszentmihalyi and Csikszentmihalyi (1988), when a flow experience emerged it was one's volition (conation) that kept attention absorbed in the task at hand instead of moving on to other targets which was interpreted to couple with a sense of intuitive striving, effortlessness, and automated self-regulation. Taken together, the findings reinforce Bakker, Schaufeli, Leiter, and Taris' (2008) and Bakker and Demerouti's (2008) proposals that understanding self-regulatory mechanisms, which form part of engagement, present a valuable contribution to the literature.

Summary of Key Findings and Contributions of Paper 3

Paper 3 tested an elaborated version of the theoretical model originally proposed for testing in Paper 1. The model integrated supplementary items to assess salesperson engagement dimensions – energy, focus, and striving – with traditional work engagement measurement (UWES-9; Schaufeli et al., 2006), following the qualitative study reported in Paper 2. This approach allowed for the assessment of a higher order salesperson work engagement construct within a theoretical model of higher order organizational and personal resource antecedents and downstream outcomes as underpinned by the JD-R motivational process. In addition to salesperson performance, which was also modeled as a higher order factor comprised of task performance, creative performance, and adaptive selling behaviors as first order factors, the elaborated model also incorporated first order job satisfaction, affective organizational commitment, and work-related well-being as a higher order overall work attitude construct, and first order intention to turnover as outcome variables in the model.

As discussed in Paper 3, the study findings largely supported the proposed modeling and were generally consistent with existing models, theories, and frameworks. The findings also provided a number of contributions to the literature which extended our current understanding of modeled variables, JD-R theory, and the sales literature in general.

Building on the theoretical rationale presented in Paper 1, the finding that organizational resources operated through engagement to exert a strong positive influence on overall work attitudes and a strong inverse impact on ITO, thereby explaining over half of the variance in these outcomes (72% and 68%, respectively), is consistent with previous research (e.g., Saks, 2006; Salanova et al., 2005). As reported

in Paper 3, the findings suggest that a ‘system’ of organizational resources, operating as a higher-order construct comprised of EIC dimensions (participative decision making, performance-based rewards, information sharing, and training and development) can significantly influence salesperson work engagement and downstream overall work attitude and ITO outcomes. Furthermore, whereas Xanthopoulou and colleagues (2009), and Halbesleben’s (2010) meta-analysis, identified the self-efficacy and optimism components of PsyCap to be strongly associated with greater work engagement, the study extended previous work engagement and JD-R research and theory by modeling the complete PsyCap construct as a higher-order system of personal resources. Consistent with Luthans and colleagues’ (2007a) conceptualization of PsyCap, hope and resilience, in addition to self-efficacy and optimism, were here shown to demonstrate a significant impact on work engagement when modeled as components of higher-order PsyCap. Interestingly, higher-order PsyCap alone predicted over half of the variance in salesperson performance (see Figure 3.).

Contrary to expectations and previous research (e.g., Xanthopoulou et al., 2008), salesperson work engagement was not directly related to overall salesperson performance. Furthermore, the expected moderation effect of PsyCap on the relationship between EIC and salesperson work engagement, was not supported. Taken together, the findings highlight that PsyCap has utility as a powerful personal resource for salesperson performances. This is consistent with extant research on higher-order PsyCap and general measures of job performance (e.g., Avey et al., 2010; Luthans et al., 2007a). The data suggests that possessing and investing in positive psychological resources may be more important for performance, at least in a sales context, than being engaged. As proposed in Paper 1, and reiterated in Paper 3, future JD-R studies would benefit from including higher-order PsyCap as a personal resource thereby better

capturing and operationalizing the synergistic effects that are theoretically built in to the construct. Furthermore, additional investigation into the differential impact of salesperson PsyCap and engagement on performance outcomes is recommended.

In summary, and as discussed in Paper 3, the study provided important contributions to the positive organizational psychology literature including POS and POB, and to the JD-R and work engagement literature in a number of ways. The paper argued for and defended the utility and legitimacy of additional and alternative dimensions of engagement, with salesperson work engagement operationalized as a higher-order factor. Second order confirmatory factor analysis was argued to provide an appropriate method for extending theory and research on relevant motivational resources at the organizational and personal level. Specifically, second order CFA using SEM allowed for the concurrent specification of multiple first order variables into higher-order factors and the testing of these with modeled correlates, antecedents, mediators, moderators, and outcomes. Given that the practice enables large complex models to be, in effect, simplified for testing in a structural equations model (Dwyer & Oh, 1987) and yielded strong results in the current study, the paper helped to demonstrate some of the richness, depth, and detail that higher-order measurement and structural modeling can contribute.

Implications for Organizations

Rather than relying on standard approaches to measuring and improving work engagement, the qualitative findings support the importance of directly investigating employees' experiences of work. Such investigations need not necessarily employ complex research methods (e.g., IPA) but instead, might employ simpler thematic or cluster analyses on transcribed interview data in order to identify organization-specific

qualities that could inform the development of measures and variables important to the organizational context. This approach could equally be applied to understanding the work climate (e.g. Langford, 2009) or employees' personal resources in order to uncover context-specific outcomes that are important to understand, measure, and improve. For instance, employee opinion surveys could include sets of questions that can be statistically linked to variables and higher order factors (Langford). Such an approach would add value by allowing more sophisticated analysis into the relative importance of organizational and personal factors that together reinforce a higher order resource system and consequently influence related variables such as engagement, attitudes, turnover intentions, and performance. The findings of such analyses would enable targeted interventions to be designed that facilitate the motivational process delineated within the JD-R model.

Furthermore, as previously outlined in Paper 1, a practical overview for how the theoretical modeling of EIC, PsyCap, work engagement, and salesperson performance would potentially benefit sales managers and human resource and organizational development practitioners was provided. The elaborated model outlined in Paper 3 can therefore be used to highlight the key personal and organizational resources affecting work engagement and employee performance, which provides human resource practitioners with an indication of where they may wish to target learning and organizational development interventions. For instance, data and results obtained by organizations using instruments such as climate, culture, and employee opinion surveys might identify issues associated with some or many of the variables within the model. As discussed by Medhurst and Albrecht (2011), practitioners could then draw on evidence-based individual-level interventions (e.g., Luthans, Avey, Avolio, Norman, & Combs, 2006; Luthans, Avey, & Patera, 2008; Schaufeli & Salanova, 2010) and

organization or job level interventions (Leiter & Maslach, 2010; Macey et al., 2009; Schaufeli & Salanova, 2010) in order to design targeted interventions aimed at developing sales employees EIC, PsyCap, engagement, and improve subsequent attitudes, retention, and performance.

Limitations

With reference to the qualitative study presented in Paper 2 (Chapter 3), although the IPA methodology provided a rich account of the subjective experiences of salesperson work engagement and work-related flow, there were a number of study limitations. Firstly, the sample was sourced from a single organization. As such, even though the sample size was more than adequate for IPA research (Smith & Eatough, 2006; Smith et al., 1999; Smith & Osborn, 2003), caution in generalizing the results was advised. Secondly, the focus on salespeople meant that the results may not extend to other professions or the general work population. Thirdly, phenomenology and interpretative analyses may reflect theoretical biases of the researchers. Although the questions were framed based on theoretical descriptions and explanations in motivation, work engagement and flow theories, and attempts were made to ensure the trustworthiness and validity of the findings, other theoretical lenses could result in different interpretations.

With regards to the quantitative study presented in Paper 3, although most of paths proposed in the theoretical model were validated (seven out of 10; see Figure 3, Paper 3), there were a number of limitations identified. With respect to the generalizability of the study findings, there were clear limitations with respect to the use of a single, relatively small sample and the use of self-report data. Although the sample size ($N = 226$) provided satisfactory power for the analyses performed, where possible,

future research should use larger samples, preferably with 150+ valid responses from each (of several) participating organization, and include and examine more objective ratings of salesperson performance in addition to self-reported data. Moreover, the study's cross-sectional design mitigated against determining the causal nature of, or reciprocal relationships between, the paths proposed in the model. Finally, the data were collected for sales professionals only, which imposes limits on the generalizability of study findings to the general work population. Future studies should test the model within a longitudinal design and preferably over a minimum of three time periods in order to validate the current findings and assess the directional nature and any reciprocal causality that may be associated with the significant paths identified.

Future Research Directions

Given the rich and insightful findings underlying the experiences of salesperson work engagement and work-related flow interpreted from the qualitative study, researchers should continue to explore work engagement, and related states, using qualitative methods. For instance, the IPA methodology presents an appropriate qualitative method for investigating psychological experiences such as engagement and other states. Researchers employing such a method may continue to uncover novel qualities or dimensions relevant to the phenomenon under study or specifically relevant to the study population or context. Furthermore, the method allows researchers to explore any nuances, distinctions, and interrelations between experiences as described by study participants. A practical application of the qualitative study findings was the design of supplementary scale items for testing salesperson engagement dimensions in addition to traditional work engagement items. Therefore, salesperson work engagement was specified as a higher order factor in the empirical model reported in

Paper 3 (Chapter 4), which demonstrated initial construct and predictive validity, and importantly, significant relationships with antecedent resources (EIC and PsyCap) and outcomes (overall work attitude and ITO).

As outlined above, a novel conceptualization of salesperson work engagement was specified and tested in the empirical model presented in Paper 3 (Chapter 4). As previously reported, the results suggest that theories, models, and measures of engagement need to more clearly acknowledge that the affective (energy) and cognitive (focus) dimensions of engagement need to be combined with a volitional striving dimension which is directed toward, and aligned with, the achievement of work and organizational goals, objectives, and strategies. Given that the scale item wording could equally be applied to different working contexts, the model might usefully be generalized to other working populations where high engagement is considered important. Future researchers operationalizing work engagement might consider incorporating the supplementary salesperson work engagement dimensions (in particular striving) and measurement methods used (i.e., dimension specific item stems) in order to test whether they apply to related professional services populations (e.g., customer service and consulting) and general work populations.

In the quantitative study reported in Paper 3 (Chapter 4), the survey data was collected at the same time point and, in line with the limitations outlined above, future research ought to employ a longitudinal design. Such an approach will enable data on the measured variables to be taken at a number of time points; or data on subsequent salesperson performance to be collected at some point in time after the EIC, PsyCap and salesperson work engagement data is collected. Either approach will provide stronger evidence of directional relationships between antecedent EIC and PsyCap resources,

salesperson work engagement, overall work attitudes, ITO, and salesperson performance outcomes. It is noteworthy that researchers have recently identified that the relationship between constituent dimensions of PsyCap (i.e. self-efficacy and optimism) and work engagement is reciprocal (e.g., Salanova, Schaufeli, Xanthopoulou, & Bakker, 2010; Xanthopoulou et al., 2009), which thus presents an avenue for future research incorporating all four factors of higher order PsyCap. Moreover, longitudinal research is required to investigate the causal order of organizational and personal resources on engagement and outcomes in order to further extend research and theory on the JD-R motivational process. In line with the propositions of conservation of resources theory (Hobfoll, 1989, 2002) it is plausible that future models tested within longitudinal research designs may usefully delineate the influence of various resource systems on engagement and important outcomes. Further to this point, JD-R theory ought to reconcile the differential influence of resources on outcomes in order to continue to legitimately explain organizational and employee phenomena. Finally, although job resources were the primary focus of the current research program, JD-R theory suggests job resources particularly influence engagement when job demands are high. Future research on the highly demanding role of sales which aims to use the current modelling ought to also include job demands and take consideration of the JD-R health impairment process (e.g. Bakker & Demerouti, 2007).

Conclusions

This thesis was devoted to understanding work engagement within the sales context. Moreover, this thesis sought to understand how organizational and personal resources influence work engagement, and how engagement then influences important attitudinal, turnover, and performance outcomes. Exploring the lived experience of

work engagement provided the candidate with complex theoretical and methodological challenges. Furthermore, the integrative modeling of higher order resource systems as antecedents to higher order salesperson work engagement and outcomes also provided rich challenges and rich learning for the candidate given the complexities of measurement modeling, structural equation modeling, and tests of mediation and moderation as discussed. However, researchers and practitioners should not shy away from tackling such challenges and working through the various complexities of conducting mixed methods research using sophisticated analytical techniques. An integrated and highly involved approach involving a mixture of qualitative and quantitative research methodologies may be what is required to deepen our understanding of how work engagement is cultivated and experienced; and the impact this motivational state has on important outcomes in specific work contexts. In order to meet this challenge, there was no room for fearing practical complexities and technical challenges. The hope that such an approach would allow for the development and evaluation of unique, integrative models for testing in real-life organizational samples was maintained throughout the research program. It is a further hope that, where insightful results have emerged, future research will seek to validate the various conceptual, measurement, and modeling advances proposed in alternative organizational contexts. The pursuit of greater work engagement, strengths in psychological capital, more positive work climates and job attitudes, and improved retention and performance, both for individuals and organizations, is a noble and achievable cause.

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List of Appendices

Appendix A	Human Ethics Certificate of Approval
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Appendix A: Human Ethics Certificate of Approval



MONASH University

Standing Committee on Ethics in Research Involving Humans (SCERH)
Research Office

Human Ethics Certificate of Approval

Date: 15 August 2008
Project Number: CF08/1421 - 2008000687
Project Title: An exploration of salesperson performance, engagement, employee involvement and psychological capital
Chief Investigator: Dr Simon Albrecht
Approved: From: 15 August 2008 To: 15 August 2013

Terms of approval

1. The Chief investigator is responsible for ensuring that permission letters are obtained and a copy forwarded to SCERH before any data collection can occur at the specified organisation. Failure to provide permission letters to SCERH before data collection commences is in breach of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research and the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research.
2. Approval is only valid whilst you hold a position at Monash University.
3. It is the responsibility of the Chief Investigator to ensure that all investigators are aware of the terms of approval and to ensure the project is conducted as approved by SCERH.
4. You should notify SCERH immediately of any serious or unexpected adverse effects on participants or unforeseen events affecting the ethical acceptability of the project.
5. The Explanatory Statement must be on Monash University letterhead and the Monash University complaints clause must contain your project number.
6. Amendments to the approved project: Requires the submission of a Request for Amendment form to SCERH and must not begin without written approval from SCERH. Substantial variations may require a new application.
7. Future correspondence: Please quote the project number and project title above in any further correspondence.
8. Annual reports: Continued approval of this project is dependent on the submission of an Annual Report. This is determined by the date of your letter of approval.
9. Final report: A Final Report should be provided at the conclusion of the project. SCERH should be notified if the project is discontinued before the expected date of completion.
10. Monitoring: Projects may be subject to an audit or any other form of monitoring by SCERH at any time.
11. Retention and storage of data: The Chief Investigator is responsible for the storage and retention of original data pertaining to a project for a minimum period of five years.



Professor Ben Canny
Chair, SCERH

Cc: Mr Adrian Medhurst

Postal – Monash University, Vic 3800, Australia
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Email scerh@adm.monash.edu.au www.monash.edu/research/ethics/human/index/html
ABN 12 377 614 012 CRICOS Provider #00008C

Appendix B: Correspondence, Explanatory Statement, Consent Form, Interview

Schedule for the Qualitative Study



Dear *insert business name* Associate,

My name is Adrian Medhurst and I am conducting a research project as part of my Doctorate in Organizational Psychology at Monash University in Melbourne, Australia. This research is being supervised by Dr Simon Albrecht from the Faculty of Medicine at Monash.

My research program is focused on the area of salesperson engagement and performance and the organizational conditions and personal resources that predict these important business outcomes.

You, along with approximately 30 other sales employees are invited to participate in the research. Participation will involve the participation in an interview which should take no more than one hour of your time. You will be interviewed on the concept of engagement at work; what engagement means to you, and how you reflect on your experiences at work.

I would like to reassure you that your responses will be kept fully CONFIDENTIAL. At no time will your individual responses be shared with anyone within or outside of your organization. All data collected will remain exclusively with the researchers at Monash University.

Please note that your participation is entirely VOLUNTARY. If you do not want to participate in the survey for any reason, you do not have to. I would, however, very much appreciate your participation as I need a maximum number of responses to report the results with confidence.

If you have any questions regarding the research project, please contact Adrian Medhurst or Simon Albrecht on +613 9903 1956 or email Adrian.Medhurst@med.monash.edu.au or simon.albrecht@med.monash.edu.au. The findings will be sent via email to all participants in the form of a plain language summary report at the conclusion of the study. Participants will also be advised of a link to the on-line version of the summary report.

I thank you in advance for your participation in this research project.

Best regards,
Adrian Medhurst and Simon Albrecht
Monash University, Melbourne, Australia



Project Title: An exploration of salesperson performance, engagement, employee involvement, and psychological capital.

Investigators: Adrian Medhurst & Simon Albrecht

The project:

Researchers Adrian Medhurst and Simon Albrecht from Monash University are undertaking a study to explore the scientific experience of engagement at work. Employee engagement is a buzzword in the consulting world and an emerging hot topic in the scientific literature. Currently, however, there is debate as to what engagement means, how it should be measured, and also the existence of engagement as an employee phenomenon that is meaningfully dissimilar from existing topics such as intrinsic motivation and job satisfaction.

Therefore, it is an aim of this study to address these issues. It is hoped that the information obtained through interviews with salespeople and sales managers may provide insight into the experience of engagement at work for salespeople. This information will be used in conjunction with scientific methods to create a new measure of engagement for research at a later stage.

The process:

We would like to invite you to participate in the study. Participation involves taking part in a face to face interview with the researcher which should take no longer than one hour. In order to participate you must be between the ages of 18 and 65 years. Furthermore, you must currently be in a job position that comprises of a sales component, to which you are measured against KPI's including, but not limited to, sales volume/quantity, percentage of target achieved, overall revenue delivered. Individuals who do not fit the criteria outlined above will not be needed to participate in the study, however, you are encouraged to forward this information sheet to anyone you know who does; who you think may wish to participate. The questions are designed to gather information about your background, your beliefs, perceptions, and experiences of engagement during work activity. An example from the interview is: "Do you think you are engaged at work? Explain why/why not:"

It is important to note that your responses will be treated as strictly confidential. Your name will be obtained to allow the researchers to merge your responses with your work performance data. All information you provide will be kept in the strictest confidence. Only the researchers will have access to your individual responses. Data will be kept on University premises in a locked cabinet for 5 years, as per University regulations. The results of this study will be reported to your organization and will likely be published in a scientific journal; however, no identifying features of any participants will be used in reporting the findings.

Please note that your consent to participate will be required. Therefore, you will be requested to signify your consent online upon receiving and agreeing to the terms of the study. Your participation in the research is entirely voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time with no adverse consequences. In the unlikely event that you experience any emotional discomfort during or after filling in the questionnaire you are encouraged to contact Lifeline on 13 11 14 and a counselor will be able to advise of supports available to you; or contact your medical practitioner. In the event that you feel upset or distressed or have questions associated with participating in the study, please feel free to contact the researchers to discuss your concerns. Furthermore, if you have any concerns or complaints about the study or the way it is being conducted please contact Monash University Ethics Committee (SCERH) via the contact details provided below.

Please consider the purposes and time commitment of this study before you decide whether or not to participate. You may save this information sheet for your records.

If you have any inquiries please contact the investigators:

Adrian Medhurst & Simon Albrecht: (Ph): 03 9903 1956, E-mail: Adrian.medhurst@med.monash.edu.au or simon.albrecht@med.monash.edu.au

If you would like to view the results of the study you are encouraged to visit <http://www.spppm-cf.med.monash.edu.au/surveys2010/amedhurs/> upon the conclusion of the study.

This research conforms to the principles set out by the Standing Committee on Ethics in Research Involving Humans (SCERH).

Should you have any complaint concerning the manner in which this research (CF08/1421 - 2008000687) is conducted, please do not hesitate to contact the Monash University Standing Committee on Ethics in Research Involving Humans at the following address:

The Secretary

The Standing Committee on Ethics in Research Involving Humans (SCERH)

Building 3D

Research Grants & Ethics Branch

Monash University VIC 3800

Tel: +61 3 9905 2052 Fax: +61 3 9905 1420 Email: scerh@adm.monash.edu.au

RESEARCH PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Research Project: CF08/1421 – 2008000687

Title: An exploration of salesperson performance, engagement,
employee involvement, and psychological capital.

NOTE: This consent form is to be retained by the researcher and kept secure. At the completion of the research it will be retained in accordance with university regulations for research data involving human participants.

I agree to take part in the Monash University research project specified above. I have had the project explained to me, and I have read the Explanatory Statement, which I will keep for my records. I understand that agreeing to take part means that I am willing to:

- Take part in a face-to-face interview regarding my experiences at work in my sales role
- Have the interview recorded for research purposes

I agree to be interviewed by the researcher ☐ Yes ☐ No

I understand that my participation is voluntary, that I can choose not to participate in part or all of the project, and that I can withdraw at any stage of the project without being penalised or disadvantaged in any way.

I understand that any data that the researcher extracts from the interview for use in reports will not, under any circumstances, contain names or identifying characteristics.

I understand that any information I provide is confidential, and that no information that could lead to the identification of any individual will be disclosed in any reports on the project, or to any other party.

I understand that reports based on the interview(s) will be kept in a secure storage and accessible only to the researchers connected to this project.

Participant's name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Interviewer's name: _____

Work Engagement Interview Schedule (Salespeople)

I am going to ask some quite broad questions, and others will appear more targeted. The questions and discussion we have are intended to explore your experience of engagement with your work and at your place of work. It will be most beneficial to explore how you explain what engagement means to you; how you think, feel, and act at work along with any other conditions that you attribute to your experience of engagement. I encourage you to offer actual experiences, stories of your working life, and even analogies during your responses in order to provide the richest picture of your experiences of engagement.

PART (A) - General opening

Demographics: Name: Age: Tenure: Education:

(note gender)

1. I am going to start very broad with this discussion. On the whole, how would you describe what its like to be engaged at work?

- 1.1. I'm wondering, in what ways do you like or dislike the experience of being engaged at work?

- 1.2. Can you tell me about the defining features of being engaged?

Probe – Thoughts, Feelings, Actions/Behaviors:

- What would you say are the main things you notice about the experience? _
- What do you notice about yourself? _____
- What do you notice about the work environment? _____
- What do you notice about your co-workers or leaders? _____
- Is 'being engaged' like a way you work or more like an event or a situation?

Tell me more about [the above]:

1.3. I'm wondering how engaged you are at work at the moment?

Can you tell me about your current degree of engagement at work?

1.4. Have you experienced being engaged at work within the last 3 weeks? If so, can you tell me about it?

Yes	No	Don't know
Q-below	Why do you think this?	Why do you think this?

- **If yes**, can you give me a score from 0 = lowest possible degree of engagement to 10 = highest possible degree of engagement; how engaged you have been:

0___1___2___3___4___5___6___7___8___9___10

1.5. Thinking about work in general. What is the general [or average] level at which you experience being engaged at work? Can you give me a score [0 = lowest possible degree of engagement to 10 = highest possible degree of engagement]

0___1___2___3___4___5___6___7___8___9___10

1.6. I'm wondering whether you can tell me what a '0 score' on 'being engaged at work' would look like for you?

1.6.1. Do you have a personal example?

1.6.2. Would you say there is a word that defines or describes a '0' score?

1.7. Can you tell me what a '10 score' on 'being engaged at work' would look like for you?

1.7.1. Do you have a personal example?

1.7.2. Would you say there is a word that defines or describes a '10' score?

1.8. What do you notice about yourself when you are engaged versus when you are not?

Probe – Differences (personal)

- What comes to mind when you think about being engaged versus not engaged?
- What is different about the way you are thinking? Feeling?
- How do you feel about being engaged versus not engaged at work?

- I'm wondering, is there anything else that is different about you?
- What do you notice doing or wanting to do when you're engaged versus when you are not?
- What do you notice about your work environment?
- What else is going on during those experiences? For you? At work? At home? Socially?
- What is your attitude towards work when you're engaged?
- Do you engage yourself, do others, does the work environment or your particular job tasks?

2. Thinking about your previous experiences at work. Please describe, in as much detail as possible, an episode or story of being engaged at work that you have experienced.

I would like you to give enough detail so that someone who has never experienced an event of this kind would know just what it was like for you. So I may prompt you with questions for more information. Sound ok?

- 2.1.** Please include how this experience arose,
- 2.2.** The experience itself, and
- 2.3.** How this experience came to a resolution, if it did.

[illegible]

PART (B)

3. Boosters, Blockers, Optimal/Peak Engagement (disengagement & over-engagement [optional Q's]), Sustainable?

3.1. Tell me about the things that contribute to you being engaged at work? What things boost your experiences of engagement?

3.2. Tell me about the things that restrain, limit, or stop you being engaged at work? What things/people/events block your experiences of engagement?

3.3. Do you believe there is an optimal or peak degree of being engaged at work? If so, tell me what this would be like for you: [prompts: Explain why?]

3.4. *Is your optimal experience of engagement sustainable? [explain why/how]*

3.5. *I'm wondering whether there is such thing as too much or too little when it comes to being engaged. What are your thoughts? [explain why]*

PART (C)

The following questions may appear somewhat more focused or specific. However, I encourage you to continue to explain yourself as openly as you would like. If necessary, we can return to the questions after exploring your thoughts. Keep in mind we are exploring your experiences at work.

4. Would it be accurate to describe being engaged as being a way you feel? [prompt: Emotions at work?]

Yes	No
-----	----

Can you tell me more about that? In what ways is being engaged associated with feelings or emotions or moods? Explain:

5. Would it be accurate to describe being engaged as a way of thinking? [prompt: How are you thinking when you're engaged]

Yes	No
-----	----

Can you tell me more about that? Is an engaged way of thinking a process or a state of mental activity? Tell me more about your reasons: Explain why you think this:

6. Would it be accurate to describe being engaged as a way of behaving or performing at work? Is being engaged a direct contributor to the way you act at work during your day?

Yes	No
-----	----

Can you tell me more about that? What do you want to do when you're engaged? Explain:

4(II) If you think being engaged has something to do with feelings [emotions or moods], how important is this *feeling* component to the overall experience of being engaged? [0 = not at all important to 10 = extremely important]

0___1___2___3___4___5___6___7___8___9___10

5(II) If you think it is (somewhat) about the way you think, how important is engaged thinking to the overall experience? [0 = not at all important to 10 = extremely important]

0___1___2___3___4___5___6___7___8___9___10

6(II) If you think it is (somewhat) about the way you behave, act, or perform, how important is this component of behavior to the overall experience? [0 = not at all important to 10 = extremely important]

0___1___2___3___4___5___6___7___8___9___10

7. Would it be accurate to describe being engaged like being vigorous or energetic at work? In what ways is being engaged similar or different to being vigorous or energetic at work? Explain:

8. Would it be accurate to describe being engaged as being dedicated, inspired, proud at work? In what ways is being engaged similar or different to being dedicated, inspired, proud, or the like? Explain:

9. Would it be accurate to describe being engaged as being absorbed, immersed, or intensely involved in work? In what ways is being engaged similar or different to being absorbed by or intensely involved? Explain:

7(II) If you being engaged is (somewhat) about being vigorous and energetic, how important are these elements to the overall experience of being engaged? [0 = not at all important to 10 = extremely important]

0___1___2___3___4___5___6___7___8___9___10

8(II) If you think being engaged is (somewhat) about being dedicated, inspired, proud - how important are these elements to the overall experience of being engaged? [0 = not at all important to 10 = extremely important]

0___1___2___3___4___5___6___7___8___9___10

9(II) If you think being engaged is (somewhat) about being absorbed, immersed, or intensely involved in work activities, how important are these elements to the overall experience of being engaged? [0 = not at all important to 10 = extremely important]

0____1____2____3____4____5____6____7____8____9____10

10. Is there anything else you can think of that you would like to tell me which will help me understand what engagement means to you?

Conclusion: That concludes the interview. I thank you very much for your contributions today; your insights are greatly appreciated.

Is there anything further you would like to discuss before we finish today?

**Appendix C: Correspondence, Explanatory Statement and Scale Items for the
Quantitative Study**



Dear [insert company name] sales professional [or insert name],

My name is Adrian Medhurst and I am conducting a research project as part of my Doctorate in Organizational Psychology at Monash University in Melbourne, Australia. This research is being supervised by Dr Simon Albrecht from the Faculty of Medicine at Monash.

My research program is focused on the area of salesperson engagement and performance and the organizational conditions and personal resources that predict these important business outcomes.

You, along with 500 other sales employees are invited to participate in the research. Participation will involve the completion of an on-line questionnaire which should take approximately 20 minutes to complete. You can access the on-line questionnaire by clicking on the link below (or copying it into a browser) – read the introduction to the study and begin the survey by scrolling to the bottom left hand corner:

<http://spppm-cf.med.monash.edu.au/surveys2010/amedhurs/>

I would like to reassure you that your responses will be kept fully CONFIDENTIAL. You will have the option to provide your name upon submission of your responses to the questionnaire, however, this is NOT compulsory. You are requested to provide your name or staff number as this will enable the researchers to merge work performance data with your responses to the questionnaire for more comprehensive analyses. If you do not wish to provide your name, you have the option, and are encouraged to participate anonymously. In this case, only your individual responses will be used for data analysis. At no time will your individual responses be shared with anyone within or outside of your organization. All data collected will remain exclusively with the researchers at Monash University.

Please note that your participation is entirely VOLUNTARY. If you do not want to participate in the survey for any reason, you do not have to. I would, however, very much appreciate your participation as I need a maximum number of responses to report the results with confidence.

If you have any questions regarding the research project, please contact Adrian Medhurst or Simon Albrecht on +613 9903 1956 or email adrian.medhurst@med.monash.edu.au or simon.albrecht@med.monash.edu.au. The findings will be sent via email to all participants in the form of a plain language summary report at the conclusion of the study. Participants will also be advised of a link to the on-line version of the summary report.

I thank you in advance for your participation in this research project.

Best regards,

Adrian Medhurst and Simon Albrecht
Monash University, Melbourne, Australia



Project Title: An exploration of salesperson performance, engagement, employee involvement, and psychological capital.

Investigators: Adrian Medhurst & Simon Albrecht

The project:

Researchers Adrian Medhurst and Simon Albrecht from Monash University are undertaking a study to examine how a sales employees' work environment facilitates work activity and performance. Specifically, employees' perceptions of their work environment, particularly concerning their perceived involvement in, and support from the organization are expected to be associated with how engaged they are during work activity. Consequently, sales employee work engagement is likely to be associated with their job attitudes, intentions to leave, and performance at work. Scientific research on employee involvement has largely been observed at the organizational and not individual level. Employee involvement climate research positively targeted this gap, yet is limited and in need of replication and advancement to the work domain of sales. Research on employee engagement has also predominantly been directed towards work domains other than the sales area. Therefore, it is an aim of this study to address these issues and provide insight into the configuration of an employee involvement climate that will positively influence employee engagement, performance, job related attitudes, and employees intentions to stay.

The process:

We would like to invite you to participate in the study. Participation involves filling in an online questionnaire which should take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete.

In order to participate you must be between the ages of 18 and 65 years. Furthermore, you must currently be in a job position that comprises of a sales component, to which you are measured against KPI's including, but not limited to, sales volume/quantity, percentage of target achieved, overall revenue delivered. Individuals who do not fit the criteria outlined above will not be needed to participate in the study. The questions are designed to gather information about your background, perceptions of the practices and processes that shape your environment at work, your personal tendencies and preferences regarding how you feel, think, and behave at work, as well as your level of satisfaction with your job, commitment to your organization, and intentions to stay with or leave the organization. An example from the questionnaire is: "Indicate your response to the following statement on a scale from 0='Never', to 6='Always'; My job inspires me".

Data and confidentiality:

It is important to note that your responses will be treated as strictly confidential. Submission of the questionnaire will not be monitored to ensure your privacy and anonymity. Any information you provide will be kept in the strictest confidence. Only you and the researchers will have access to your individual responses. Data will be kept on University premises in a locked cabinet for 5 years, as per University regulations.

The results of this study will be reported to your organization and will likely be published in a scientific journal; however, no identifying features of any participants will be used in reporting the findings.

Please note that your consent to participate will be required. Therefore, you will be requested to signify your consent online upon receiving and agreeing to the terms of the study. Your participation in the research is entirely voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time with no adverse consequences. In the unlikely event that you experience any emotional discomfort during or after filling in the questionnaire you are encouraged to contact Lifeline on 13 11 14 and a counselor will be able to advise of supports available to you; or contact your medical practitioner. In the event that you feel upset or distressed or have questions associated with participating in the study, please feel free to contact the researchers to discuss your concerns. Furthermore, if you have any concerns or complaints about the study or the way it is being conducted please contact Monash University Ethics Committee (SCERH) via the contact details provided below.

Please consider the purposes and time commitment of this study before you decide whether or not to participate. You may save this information sheet for your records.

If you have any inquiries please contact the investigators:

Adrian Medhurst & Simon Albrecht: (Ph): 03 9903 1956, E-mail:

Adrian.medhurst@med.monash.edu.au or simon.albrecht@med.monash.edu.au

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Building 3D

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Monash University VIC 3800

Tel: +61 3 9905 2052 Fax: +61 3 9905 1420 Email: scerh@adm.monash.edu.au

Questionnaire items for the Quantitative Study

Note: Only the **bolded** items were included in the analyses

Salesperson Work Engagement – Energy sub-scale

Reflect back on how you have felt at work over the past few weeks. Record the extent you have experienced the following feelings or emotions:

At work over the past few weeks, I have felt...

Item no.	Item	Never ≈ 0%	Rarely	Sometimes	A moderate amount ≈ 50%	Often	Almost always	Always ≈ 100%
1	Energized	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2	Positively stimulated	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3	Enthusiastic	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4	Highly Activated	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5	Lively	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Salesperson Work Engagement – Focus sub-scale

Think back over your work over the past few weeks. Record the extent each of the following words describes your thinking:

At work over the past few weeks, I have been...

Item no.	Item	Never ≈ 0%	Rarely	Sometimes	A moderate amount ≈ 50%	Often	Almost always	Always ≈ 100%
1	Focused	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2	Totally connected with my tasks	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3	Really concentrating on my work	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4	Fully attentive	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

5	Completely 'in the moment' during my tasks	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	--	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Salesperson Work Engagement – Striving sub-scale

Reflect back on your intentions at work over the past few weeks. Record the extent each of the following sentences describe how you have been:

At work over the past few weeks, I have been...

Item no.	Item	Never ≈ 0%	Rarely	Sometimes	A moderate amount ≈ 50%	Often	Almost always	Always ≈ 100%
1	Determined	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2	Driven to reach my objectives	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3	Intent on putting in 100%	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4	Striving to achieve	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5	Willing to exert my best effort	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Psychological Capital PCQ-24

Item No.	Item	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	I feel confident analyzing a long-term problem to find a solution	1	2	3	4	5	6
2	I feel confident in representing my work area in meetings with management	1	2	3	4	5	6
3	I feel confident contributing to discussions about the company's strategy	1	2	3	4	5	6
4	I feel confident helping to set targets/goals in my work area	1	2	3	4	5	6

5	I feel confident presenting information to a group of colleagues	1	2	3	4	5	6
6	I feel confident contacting people outside the company (e.g. suppliers, customers) to discuss problems	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	If I should find myself in a jam at work, I could think of many ways to get out of it	1	2	3	4	5	6
8	At the present time, I am energetically pursuing my work goals	1	2	3	4	5	6
9	There are lots of ways around any problem	1	2	3	4	5	6
10	Right now I see myself as being pretty successful at work	1	2	3	4	5	6
11	I can think of many ways to reach my current work goals	1	2	3	4	5	6
12	At this time, I am meeting the work goals that I have set for myself	1	2	3	4	5	6
13	When I have a setback at work, I have trouble recovering from it, moving on	1	2	3	4	5	6
14	I usually manage difficulty one way or another at work	1	2	3	4	5	6
15	I can be “on my own”, so to speak, at work if I have to	1	2	3	4	5	6
16	I usually take stressful things at work in stride	1	2	3	4	5	6
17	I can get through difficult times at work because I’ve experienced difficulty before	1	2	3	4	5	6
18	I feel I can handle many things at a time at this job	1	2	3	4	5	6
19	When things are uncertain for me at work, I usually expect the best	1	2	3	4	5	6
20	If something can go wrong for me work-wise, it will	1	2	3	4	5	6
21	I always look on the bright side of things regarding my job	1	2	3	4	5	6
22	I’m optimistic about what will happen to me in the future as it pertains to work	1	2	3	4	5	6

23	In this job, things never work out the way I want them to	1	2	3	4	5	6
24	I approach this job as if “every cloud has a silver lining”	1	2	3	4	5	6

Work Engagement - UWES-9

Item No.	Item	Never	Almost Never (A few times a year or less)	Rarely (Once a month or less)	Sometimes (A few times a month)	Often (Once a week)	Very Often (A few times a week)	Always (Every day)
1	At my work, I feel bursting with energy	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
2	At my job, I feel strong and vigorous	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
3	I am enthusiastic about my job	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
4	My job inspires me	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
5	When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
6	I feel happy when I am working intensely	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	I am proud of the work that I do	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
8	I am immersed in my work	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
9	I get carried away when I am working	0	1	2	3	4	5	6

Employee Involvement Climate

Item No.	Item	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	I have sufficient authority to fulfill my job responsibilities	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
2	I have enough input in deciding how to accomplish my work	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
3	I have enough freedom over how I do my job	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
4	Company goals and objectives are clearly communicated to employees	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
5	The channels for employee communication	0	1	2	3	4	5	6

	with top management are effective							
6	Top management is adequately informed of the important issues in my department	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	Company policies and procedures are clearly communicated to employees	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
8	I often have to rely on the grapevine to get job-related information (reverse)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
9	Most of the time I receive sufficient notice of changes affecting my work group	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
10	I am satisfied with the amount of recognition I receive when I do a good job	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
11	Generally I feel this company rewards employees who make an extra effort	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
12	There is a strong link between how well I perform my job and the likelihood of receiving a raise in pay/salary	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
13	There is a strong link between how well I perform my job and the likelihood of receiving high performance appraisal ratings	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
14	If I perform well, I am more likely to be promoted	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
15	I receive sufficient training to do my job	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
16	Education and training are integral parts of this company's culture	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
17	I have had sufficient/adequate job-related training	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
18	If I felt that I needed more job-related training, the company would provide it	0	1	2	3	4	5	6

Creative Salesperson Performance

Item no.	Item	Practically never	Seldom	Sometimes	Usually	Almost always
1	Making sales presentations in innovative ways	1	2	3	4	5
2	Carrying out sales tasks in ways that are resourceful	1	2	3	4	5
3	Coming up with new ideas for satisfying customer needs	1	2	3	4	5
4	Generating and evaluating multiple alternatives for novel customer problems	1	2	3	4	5
5	Having fresh perspectives on old problems	1	2	3	4	5
6	Improvising methods for solving a problem when an answer is not apparent	1	2	3	4	5
7	Generating creative selling ideas	1	2	3	4	5

Task Performance

Item no.	Item	Practically never	Seldom	Sometimes	Usually	Almost always
1	Building effective relationships with customers.	1	2	3	4	5
2	Making effective presentations to customers.	1	2	3	4	5
3	Achieving sales targets and other business objectives.	1	2	3	4	5
4	Understanding our products and services.	1	2	3	4	5
5	Providing feedback to management.	1	2	3	4	5
6	Understanding customer needs and work processes.	1	2	3	4	5
7	Contributing to my sales unit's revenues.	1	2	3	4	5

Adaptive Selling Behavior

Item no.	Item	Practically never	Seldom	Sometimes	Usually	Almost always
1	I try to understand how one customer differs from another.	1	2	3	4	5
2	I like to experiment with different sales approaches.	1	2	3	4	5
3	I can easily use a wide variety of selling approaches.	1	2	3	4	5
4	When I feel that my sales approach is not working, I can easily change to another approach.	1	2	3	4	5
5	I am very flexible in the selling approach I use.	1	2	3	4	5

Job Satisfaction

Item No.	Item	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	I find real enjoyment in my job	1	2	3	4	5	6
2	I like my job better than the average person	1	2	3	4	5	6
3	I am seldom bored with my job	1	2	3	4	5	6
4	I would not consider taking another kind of job	1	2	3	4	5	6
5	Most days I am enthusiastic about my job	1	2	3	4	5	6
6	I feel fairly well satisfied with my job	1	2	3	4	5	6

Affective Organizational Commitment

Item No.	Item	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	I really feel as if this organization's problems are my own	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2	I feel like 'part of the family' at my organization	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3	I feel 'emotionally attached' to this organization	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4	This organization has a great deal of personal meaning to me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5	I feel a strong sense of belonging to my organization	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Intrinsic Work Related Well-Being
How satisfied are you...

Item No.	Item	Completely Dissatisfied					Neutral					Completely Satisfied
1	with how much responsibility you have at your organization?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2	with how meaningful your work is?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
3	with your independence at your organization?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
4	that your work allows you to use your abilities and knowledge?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
5	with the sense of achievement your work gives you?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
6	with being valued as a person at your organization?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
7	with the recognition you receive for good work?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
8	with your level of influence in your organization?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Intention to Turnover

Item no.	Item	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	I often think about quitting	1	2	3	4	5
2	If I could, I would move to another organization	1	2	3	4	5
3	I will probably not stay with this organization for much longer	1	2	3	4	5
4	Lately, I have taken an interest in job offers in the newspaper or online	1	2	3	4	5