Work Engagement: Trust and Respect to Engage your People

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Abstract

Objectives: The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of interpersonal relationships (i.e. respect and felt trust) on work engagement among employees from the manufacturing sector in Jordan represented by a critical Oil and energy supply company; Al-Manaseer Group in Jordan. The study attempts to uncover the impact of procedural justice on employees’ work engagement. Methods/Statistical Analysis: Data collected from 181 respondents were analyzed using SEM/Amos for data analysis, conformity factor analysis, path analysis, regressions and correlations. Findings: Results indicated that respect that employees receive from their managers and employees’ felt trust positively affected their work engagement. Both mediated the relationship between procedural justice and work engagement and felt trust mediated the relationship between respect that employees receive from direct manager/supervisor and job engagement. The results also revealed that procedural justice has a positive effect on perceived respect from their direct manager/supervisor, with an also positive effect on employees’ felt trust. Application/Improvements: Empirical study serves manufacturing organizations and hence its findings may provide a better understanding of the impact of respect, trust and justice on employees’ work engagement. Thus, effective interpersonal relationships may further predict significant organizational consequences that require further research and analysis.

Keywords: Felt Trust, Procedural Justice, Respect, Work Engagement

1. Introduction

It is no longer viable to ignore the pervading influence of interpersonal relationships in organizations. Good interpersonal relationships mean a positive environment and a supportive work climate that are necessary to produce better results.

Positive interpersonal relationships facilitate many desirable outcomes such as organizational learning, cooperation, effectiveness, and employee loyalty. Researchers have argued that interpersonal relationships predict proactive work behaviour and work engagement, in turn improving the organization’s performance. Social relationships can positively enhance and smooth employees’ performance at work. However, higher levels of job dissatisfaction, leave intention, and negative health outcomes occur in organizations with passive and negative interpersonal relationships. Conversely, members in high-trust groups have higher levels of motivation than low-trust groups, leading to higher performance resulting from higher joint effort. There is immense research discussing interpersonal relationships in general and trust, respect, and engagement in particular. However, there seems a lack of studies covering an important area investigating the impact of interpersonal relationships represented by the respect that employees receive from their immediate managers, and employee felt trust and their impact of work engagement. This study will also contribute to the literature by studying the role of procedural justice on work engagement among employees in organizations.

This study will take place in Jordan at one major utility group in Jordan that is Manaseer Group. Jordan has a markedly different societal context for interpersonal relationships.
relationships from western countries and thus, offers an appropriate context for studying interpersonal relationships. Jordanian manufacturing companies expanded and developed in a way to bring more partnerships at the local and global levels with growth and expansion that require special attention to interpersonal relationships and their impact on work engagement which has a fundamental impact of organization’s survival and competitiveness.

Moreover, this study, mainly, attempts to explore the impact of respect that employees receive from their managers on work engagement and to explore the impact of felt trust on work engagement.

2. Interpersonal Relationships

Valued interpersonal relationships are expected to build a positive workplace environment where people feel comfortable, happy, motivated, and treated fairly. Such positive workplaces are required for organizations to achieve a high level of organizational and personal outcomes and performance. Trust and respect are predicted to be significant factors that influence organizational outcomes.

One popular definition is presented as the willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectation that the other will perform a particular action important to the trustor, irrespective of the ability to monitor or control that party.

3. Work Engagement

Work engagement occurs when people choose to invest their full selves into role-related activities and become psychologically present when performing their roles. Also defined engagement as a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigour, dedication, and absorption.

Another accepted definition of work engagement defined as a positive attitude held by employees characterized by a unwillingness and ability to help their company succeed, by providing sustainable discretionary effort. Hence, engaged employees are likely to be more satisfied and have more positive emotions to their job and their organization, willing to go above and beyond literal formal obligations, and characterized by their identification with goals and values of the organization.

4. Respect

While trust is very important and vital for better organizational outcomes and healthy interpersonal relationships, respect is also relevant and fundamental in our everyday life, because it is essential for human interaction and social relationships, it is important for building a moral community. All people want to be respected in both private and work life. If you ask people about the most important value in their work life, respect and how they are treated will take the highest priorities. Employees are more concerned with being treated with respect than recognition and appreciation. In defined trust as an attitude towards others; where there is what justifies the attention, feeling of appreciation, and worth to that person. The most general, and the simplest definition of respect provided by, they defined respect as a perceived worth according to one person by one or more others. suggested that respectful manager is the key for those looking at increasing profitability, increasing competitive edge, and engaging their workforce in fulfilling work.

Respect can foster a sense of psychological safety, a sense of belonging and support members to feel secure. Moreover, employees’ commitment and engagement can be obtained by demonstrating respect by leaders.

A study of nearly 20,000 employees from around the world revealed that respect was the most effective leader behavior on employees’ work engagement and commitment. Porath’s study reported 56% of those employees who get respect from their leaders have better health and well-being, and most of them have reported greater engagement and satisfaction with their jobs. So, the current study attempts to fill the gap in the literature by investigating the impact of such relationships based on the assumption that people often feel that they are
satisfied when they show concern and respect for them, in turn, they are more engaged in their jobs.

It can, therefore, be hypothesized that:

H1: Respect that subordinates receive from direct manager/supervisor has a positive effect on their level of job engagement in Manaseer group.

5. Employees’ Felt Trust

Felt trust refers to subordinates’ feeling of being trusted by their supervisors. Felt trust seems to positively affect various work outcomes such as cooperative behaviors, job performance, organizational citizenship behaviors, and satisfaction, which in turn boost organizational performance. Spreitzer and Mishra (1999) have conducted a study based on data collected from 517 top managers working in 43 firms. Their study indicated that trust in employees can be substituted for control, as well as trust in employees was positively related to involvement of employees in decision making which in turn enhances organizational performance. Found that trust in the leader and the subordinate’s feeling of being trusted motivate employee’s cooperative behavior. Subordinates then, are more willing to make closer mutual trust relationship, which promotes the level of subordinates’ work engagement and involvement. All this might contribute to subordinates’ perception of felt trust and related somewhat to the perception of respect. In, have argued that fairness might also be a way of showing that the subordinate is trusted. Although extensive research has been carried out on both respect and trust in organization, no study has so far examined the potential relationship between respect that employees receive from direct managers or supervisors and their felt trust. In line with this rationale, the current study hypothesises that there is a strong relationship between respect and felt trust, and in turn, the following hypotheses are derived:

H3: Respect that subordinates receive from their direct manager/supervisor has a positive effect on their level of felt trust.

H4: Employees felt trust mediate the relationship between respect that employees receive from direct manager/supervisor and job engagement.

6. Respect and Felt Trust

Previous research has demonstrated that felt trust has a positive relationship with various work outcomes. For example, suggested that subordinates’ feelings of being trusted are associated with feeling appreciated and satisfied by their managers and supervisors. It also predicts that subordinates’ cooperative behaviors may enhance organizational performance. Subordinates then, are more willing to make closer mutual trust relationship, which promotes the level of subordinates’ work engagement and involvement. All this might contribute to subordinates’ perception of felt trust and related somewhat to the perception of respect. In, have argued that fairness might also be a way of showing that the subordinate is trusted. Although extensive research has been carried out on both respect and trust in organization, no study has so far examined the potential relationship between respect that employees receive from direct managers or supervisors and their felt trust. In line with this rationale, the current study hypothesises that there is a strong relationship between respect and felt trust, and in turn, the following hypotheses are derived:

H2: Subordinates’ felt trust has a positive effect on their level of job engagement in Al Manaseer Group.

7. Organizational Justice

Organization justice refers to the study of fairness within organizations. Reported a positive relationship between organizational justice and several organizational outcomes such as organizational commitment, job satisfaction, performance, and citizenship behaviors. Procedural justice that is more context-relevant can be defined as the employees’ perception toward fairness of organizational policies, procedures and the processes used by decision makers. For example, postulates that justice is an important antecedent to employee engagement. Based on a sample of 208 hotel employees and their managers working in North Cyprus, concluded that organizational justice has a strong effect on both organizational citizenship behavior and job satisfaction. Also, argued that all dimensions of organizational justice - distributive, procedural and interactional justice - have a significant and positive influence on commitment. In this study, however, the attempt is to explore the impact of procedural justice on work engagement.
8. Procedural Justice and Interpersonal Respect

Hypothesize that all types of justice including the procedural type of justice provide strong signals of worker’s worth and respect. It has been found that perceived procedural justice is strongly influenced by interpersonal treatment and the way individuals are treated during the implementation of the procedures. According to group-value model, when individuals perceive fair treatment by people, group and organizations, they may feel that they are respected and welcomed within these group and organizations, which may enhance their feelings of self-worth.

Thus, it can be hypothesized the following:

H5: Procedural justice has a positive effect on the respect that employees receive from their direct manager/supervisor in Manaseer Group.

H6: Respect that employees receive from their direct manager/supervisor mediate the relationship between procedural justice and job engagement.

9. Organizational Justice and Employees’ Felt Trust

Felt trust has received considerable and increasing attention in trust literature. Most researchers indicated that felt trust has a positive relationship with various work outcomes such as cooperative behaviors, job performance, organizational citizenship behaviors, and satisfaction, which in turn boost organizational performance. In suggested the role of employees’ feeling of being trusted is highly significant and vital for employees than most types of incentives and appreciations. Argued that fairness is a manager’s tool to show that the subordinate is trusted. Argued that felt trust is positively associated with workplace productivity and engagement. Accordingly, the current study expects a positive relationship between procedural justice and employees’ felt trust. Therefore, it can be hypothesized the following:

H7: Procedural justice has a positive effect on employees’ felt trust.

H8: Employees’ felt trust mediates the relationship between procedural justice and job engagement.

10. Method

10.1 Sample

A questionnaire was administered and distributed to the employees of Almanseer Group in Jordan. This Group is operating across the region, involved in oil, energy, and manufacturing. The original sample consists of 350 employees, and data were obtained from 181 with a response rate of 52%. The sample consists of employees from 25 to 55 yrs of age. Majority of the sample were male 148 (82%). 95% of the sample with a diploma or bachelor’s degree.

90% were office employees and 10% were supervisors. Majority of employees have worked in the company from 3 years to 15 years.

10.2 Measures

The questionnaire consists of five sections, the first was related to the demographics (gender; age; education; employment duration and job position). The other four sections of the instrument involved items related to respect from the immediate manager (12 items), felt trust (6 items), procedural justice (6 items) and job engagement (9 items). 5-point Likert scale was used for all measures.

Respect from Immediate Manager/supervisor was measured by 12-item scale adopted from Respectful Leadership Scale developed by. Cronbach alpha coefficients for these items were 0.89.

Felt trust was measured by 6 items from with minor modification to fit the context. Example item includes “Given my track record, my immediate manager sees no reason to doubt my competence and preparation for the job”. Cronbach alpha coefficients for these items were 0.88.

Procedural Justice was measured by 6 items developed by. The items were modified to suit the current research context. Example item includes “I have influence over the (outcomes) arrived at by my organizational procedures”; “My manager does not make improper remark or comments”. Reliability measures = 0.85 and 0.91 respectively.

Job Engagement was measured by shortened version (UWES-9) developed by. Reliability = 0.92.

Table (1) presents the means, standard deviations, correlations, and reliabilities for all variables. The
reliabilities of all variables were acceptable for research purposes and ranged from 0.85 to 0.92. All variables were positively correlated to each other at p<0.01.

### 11. Data Analysis

In this study, data were analyzed using Anderson and Gerbing's (1988) two-step approach whereby the estimation of the confirmatory measurement model precedes the estimation of the structural model. The theoretical model was tested using SEM/AMOS analysis. All study variables were subjected to a series of exploratory factor analysis (EFA). During the EFA process, some of the items had loadings below 0.50, cross-loaded, or were not clearly identified with any of the study factors.

Therefore, four items were removed from the respect measure (R1, R2, R3, R4), three items from the felt trust (FT1, FT2, FT4) one item from the procedural justice (J6), and one item from work engagement (En1). All removed items during the EFA are shown in Table (2).

**Table 1.** Means, standard deviations, correlations, and reliabilities for study variables

| Variables          | M    | SD    | 1  | 2   | 3    | 4    |
|--------------------|------|-------|----|-----|------|------|
| 1 Respect          | 1.727| .512  |    | (.893)|     |      |
| 2 Felt Trust       | 1.919| .624  | .675**| (.911)|     |      |
| 3 Procedural Justice| 2.376| .731  | .483**| .588**| (.853)|     |
| 4 Job Engagement   | 1.946| .761  | .440**| .557**| .611**| (.916)|

**Note:** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level, N = 181. Reliabilities are in parentheses.

**Table 2.** Removed items during EFA

| Items     | Factor       | Reason for Removing |
|-----------|--------------|---------------------|
| R1        | Respect      | Low loading         |
| R2        | Respect      | Not Identified to any factors |
| R3        | Respect      | Low loading         |
| R4        | Respect      | Cross loading       |
| FT1       | Felt Trust   | Cross loading       |
| FT2       | Felt Trust   | Cross loading       |
| FT4       | Felt Trust   | Low loading         |
| J6        | Procedural Justice | Not Identified to any factors |
| En1       | Work Engagement | Cross loading |

Results demonstrated seven-factor solution with eigenvalues greater than 1.0 and loading cumulative of 68.1% of the variance. Table (3) presents the results of exploratory factor analysis (EFA) for all study factors with good reliabilities.

**Table 3.** The exploratory factor analysis (EFA) for all study factors

| Items | Engage | Respect | Felt Trust | P. Justice |
|-------|--------|---------|------------|------------|
| R5    | .539   |         |            |            |
| R6    | .673   |         |            |            |
| R7    | .646   |         |            |            |
| R8    | .753   |         |            |            |
| R9    | .742   |         |            |            |
| R10   | .836   |         |            |            |
| R11   | .772   |         |            |            |
| R12   | .630   |         |            |            |
| FT3   | .532   | .550    | .890       | .912       |
| FT5   |        |         |            |            |
| FT6   |        |         |            |            |
| FT7   |        |         |            |            |
| FT8   |        |         |            |            |
| FT9   |        |         |            |            |
| FT10  |        |         |            |            |
| J1    |        |         |            | .721       |
| J2    |        |         |            | .715       |
| J3    |        |         |            | .829       |
| J4    |        |         |            | .535       |
| J5    |        |         |            | .655       |
| En2   | .763   | .819    | .793       | .877       |
| En3   |        |         |            |            |
| En4   |        |         |            |            |
| En5   |        |         |            |            |
| En6   | .775   | .790    | .629       |            |
| En7   |        |         |            |            |
| En9   |        |         |            |            |

**Notes:** Extraction Method: Maximum Likelihood; Rotation Method: Promax with Kaiser Normalization; Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy value is 0.920; Bartlett's test of Sphericity: sig. 0.000 and Reliabilities are in parentheses; Loadings under 0.50 are not presented.
All variables were then subjected to CFA with AMOS to assess the quality of the measurement model using convergent and discriminant validity for the key variables prior to hypothesis testing. Following, the examination of multiple model fit indices was conducted. Model fitness was assessed using the following fit indices: CMIN/DF measure; the comparative fit index (CFI); Bollen's Incremental Fit Index (IFI); TLI = Tucker-Lewis Index; SRMR = standardized root mean squared residual; RMSEA = root mean squared error of approximation and PClose measure. The fit indices for the initial model fit indicated that the model needed to be re-specified to fit better with the sample data. To improve model fit, 1 item was removed due to low loading, 2 items were sequentially removed due to the significant value of residual covariance exceeding a value of 2.0 and significantly decrease the model fit. Finally, 3 items were removed to achieve adequate convergent and discriminant validity, as well as reliability (Table 3). All removed items during confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) are shown in Table (4).

Table 4. Removed Items during CFA

| Items | Factor       | Reason for Removing                           |
|-------|--------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| R7    | Respect      | Residual covariance exceeding a value of 2.0  |
| R8    | Respect      | Convergent and discriminant validity          |
| FT10  | Felt Trust   | Residual covariance exceeding a value of 2.0  |
| J4    | ProceduralJustice | Convergent and discriminant validity    |
| En2   | Job Engagement | Convergent and discriminant validity         |

After successive refinements, the obtained adjusted model can be seen in Figure (1) with all items loaded quite well onto the factors. The result of the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) model fit indices indicated good model fit, the values for indices were CMIN/DF = 1.699; CFI=0.938; RMSEA=0.062; SRMR=0.058; PClose=0.041; TLI = 0.928 and IFI = 0.939. According to cutoff criteria for fit indexes for, these values represented a good decent model fit. Table (5) show the Estimations of the model fit measures.

Table 5. Estimation of the model fit measures

| Measure | Estimate   |
|---------|------------|
| CMIN    | 358.160    |
| DF      | 199.00     |
| CMIN/DF | 1.699      |
| CFI     | 0.938      |
| TLI     | 0.928      |
| IFI     | 0.939      |
| PClose  | 0.041      |
| SRMR    | 0.058      |
| RMSEA   | 0.062      |

12. Validity and Reliability of the Measurement Model

To ensure the validity of the measurement model, convergent and discriminant validity should be examined. All values were as evidenced by (convergent is AVE above 0.5, discriminate is squares root of AVE greater than correlations) and reliability evidenced by (CR value above 0.700). This value is in acceptable range. Table (6) represent model validity measures.
13. Results and Hypotheses

After obtaining the adjusted model, the structural model has been drawn, and the estimation by maximum likelihood method implemented by using Amos Program version 24. Figure (2) displays the standardized parameter estimates for the structural model. The model fit indices provide a good model fit for the structural model. The values for indices were CMIN/DF = 1.842; CFI = 0.925; SRMR = 0.075; RMSEA = 0.068; TLI = 0.913 and IFI = 0.926. This represented a good model fit, showing that the proposed research model fits the data reasonably. All estimated paths in the model were significant. Therefore, all hypotheses are supported. The standardized regression weights of the output and result of the hypotheses testing are presented in appendix (1).

### Table 6. Model Validity Measures

| Measure     | CR   | AVE  | MSV  | MaxR(H) | Engage | Respect | Felt_Trust | P_Justice |
|-------------|------|------|------|---------|--------|---------|------------|-----------|
| Engage      | 0.891| 0.580| 0.421| 0.907   | 0.762  |         |            |           |
| Respect     | 0.862| 0.514| 0.409| 0.878   | 0.544***| 0.717   |            |           |
| Felt_Trust  | 0.893| 0.583| 0.409| 0.900   | 0.528***| 0.640***| 0.764      |           |
| P_Justice   | 0.826| 0.547| 0.421| 0.854   | 0.649***| 0.571***| 0.518***   | 0.740     |

Notes: CR = Composite Reliability; AVE = Average Variance Extracted; MSV = Maximum Shared Variance; The square root of the AVE in bold; Engage = Job Engagement; Respect = Respect From Manager; Felt Trust = Felt Trust From Manager; P_Justice = Procedural Justice. Significance of Correlations: * p < 0.050; ** p < 0.010; *** p < 0.001

14. Discussion

The results in this study support the assumption that positive interpersonal relationships significantly and positively impact work engagement. This result confirms the one presented by [23], suggesting that positive relationships between employees and their leaders positively influence employees’ loyalty, commitment, and work engagement. Results in Table (5 and 6) indicated the positive impact of felt trust and respect on work engagement. Results in this study illustrated that subordinates’ feeling that they are trusted by their direct managers/supervisors has a significant positive effect on their level of job engagement. The results also indicated that felt trust mediates the relationship between respect

Figure 2. The structural model.
that employees receive from direct manager/supervisor and their level of job engagement.

Additionally, the findings reveal agreement with Lin et al. (2018) who suggested that employees who feel trusted positively affect workplace productivity and engagement. Nevertheless, there is a lack of empirical research investigating the effect of felt trust on job engagement. However, this finding to some extent is in line with Bies & Moag (1986) who found that felt trust is positively associated with task performance and interpersonal facilitation.

Results also revealed that respect that subordinates receive from direct manager/supervisor positively affects the subordinates’ level of trust in manager, and that respect had an indirect effect on subordinates’ level of job engagement through subordinates’ affect-based trust in manager, and through subordinates’ feeling that they are being trusted. When subordinates feel that they are respected by their direct managers or supervisors, they are more willing to trust those managers, in turn, they become more engaged in their jobs. These results are in line with Gove et al. (2008) who concluded that managers are perceived as trustworthy when subordinates feel that those managers treat them.

Moreover, organizational justice demonstrated a significant positive effect on the respect that subordinates receive from their direct managers/supervisors.

Argued that treatment with respect is an input for fair judgment. Consistent with our findings in this study Bies & Moag (1986) suggested that respect for people and civility are part of an individual’s perception of procedures to be fair or not.

Finally, the current study found that procedural justice has a significant positive effect on subordinates’ felt trust and that procedural justice has a positive impact on subordinates’ level of work engagement through subordinates’ feeling being trusted. Subordinates’ feeling of fairness lead to a higher level of trust in supervisors.

Suggested that fair treatment makes subordinates feel that they are being trusted, which in turn promote their cooperative behaviors, job performance, organizational citizenship behaviors, satisfaction, and ultimately enhancing engagement to their job.

15. Limitations and Future Research

Measures used in this study were all self-reported, which raises the question of whether common method biases may have influenced our results. However, for future research to obtain more robust findings and to enhance the generalizability of the findings, result should be
cross-validated using additional methodologies and examining a broader range of participants from different organizations and countries. However, this limitation can be encountered by a mixed-methods approach with qualitative and quantitative methods. Moreover, experimental or longitudinal designs can be utilized in future research to test the suggested relationships further. Future researchers can also overcome issues inherent to the longitudinal design by selecting a stable setting and limiting participant attrition. Finally, Further research in felt trust and affect-based trust is recommended due to prior research evidence that employees' felt trust is positively associated with various organizations and individuals' outcomes such as task performance, organizational citizenship behaviors, job satisfaction and employee's cooperative behavior.

16. Implications

This study offers several theoretical implications and suggests several opportunities for more in-depth research regarding the study constructs. The first important implication of the current study is the need for researchers to consider referents of trust other than supervisors. Although trust in subordinates and their felt trust are very important for workplace relationships and associated with many organizational outcomes such as job engagement. Almost all previous studies have examined unidirectional trust with focusing on trust in supervisors, and very little research has examined trust in downward relationships. So, the findings of the current study suggest that trust literature is vital for researchers to examine the associations between trust in downward relationships and employee's cooperative behavior.

The second theoretical implication is in emphasizing the importance of examining felt trust and its consequent associations with respect and work engagement. Found that felt trust is vital for predicting outcomes of commitment, job satisfaction, and positive attitudes among employees. Procedural justice also revealed significant importance and impact on work engagement in Al-Manaseer group in Jordan. Finally, due to lack of trust and respect studies in the Jordan, this study makes significant contributes by encouraging managers in Al-Manaseer group and other similar energy companies to consider the significance of felt trust, respect, justice and value their impact on work engagement and other work-related consequences.

17. Conclusion

Due to the importance of maintaining positive relationships increasing trust and respect-culture leading to work engagement, this effort suggests several recommendations for Jordanian oil and energy organizations, specially Al-Manaseer Group to improve levels of work engagement via positive interpersonal climate characterized by trust, respect and justice. Overall, work engagement seems very important antecedent to enhanced quality of work, performance, and productivity. Given such positive outcomes of work engagement, Jordan manufacturing companies like Al-Manaseer Group need to provide the necessary antecedents conducive for work engagement including positive interpersonal climate with felt trust, respect, and procedural justice.

18. References

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