Examining Organizational Identification on Work Engagement Via Structural Equation Modeling

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ABSTRACT

This study examines how organizational identification relates to work engagement, highlighting how employees' sense of belonging influences their engagement levels. Organizational identification refers to how closely employees connect with the organization's values and objectives. Furthermore, work engagement encompasses a positive and fulfilling work mindset characterized by absorption, vigor, and dedication. By reviewing existing literature and analyzing empirical data, this study assesses how work engagement is influenced by organizational identification and the fundamental frameworks that underpin this relationship. This research aims to address this gap by examining the impact of organizational identification on work engagement. It employs structural equation modeling to analyze this relationship and offers insights that could guide management practices to enhance employee engagement. The results indicate that employees who identify with their organization show higher engagement, benefiting both the organization and its employees. Understanding this relationship enables organizations to develop strategies that promote organizational identification, ultimately increasing employee involvement and fostering a more enthusiastic and vibrant workforce. The study also provides recommendations for practical interventions to strengthen identification and improve work engagement.

Keywords: Organizational Identification, Work Engagement, Organization

INTRODUCTION

Organizational identification, an employee's connection to their organization, significantly impacts workplace behaviors such as work engagement (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Work engagement includes vigor, dedication, and absorption. (Schaufeli et al., 2002), How employees emotionally and cognitively connect with their work has been widely studied. Research shows that employees who identify strongly with their organization are more engaged and display incredible energy and dedication (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008).

Research into the connection between work engagement dimensions and organizational identification has revealed differing vigor, dedication, and absorption impacts. Dedication, for instance, often emerges as the most strongly associated dimension, reflecting an emotional investment that closely aligns with identification (Van Knippenberg, 2000). While more behavioral, vigor can also enhance identification by contributing to employees' perception of their organizational effectiveness. Meanwhile, absorption, though linked to engagement, is less frequently discussed in connection with identification and has shown mixed results regarding its impact on long-term organizational attachment (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010). Although numerous studies have examined work engagement broadly, few have dissected

how each specific engagement dimension contributes uniquely to organizational identification. This study seeks to fill this gap by reviewing each dimension separately, offering insights into whether particular aspects of engagement, like dedication, play a more significant role in strengthening identification. Additionally, although much of the previous research has concentrated on the overall connection between engagement and identification, this study utilizes structural equation modeling to measure the strength of each relationship, providing a clearer insight into how these constructs are related.

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analyzes complex relationships between multidimensional constructs, such as work engagement and organizational identification.

This study focuses on work engagement and organizational identification, highlighting how a strong sense of belonging and alignment with values boosts employee motivation and performance.

The results of this study align with previous research in showing a strong association between dedication and organizational identification, supporting the notion that employees who find personal meaning and purpose in their work tend to identify more with their organization (Bakker et al., 2011). However, the findings on absorption's weaker link to identification diverge slightly from prior studies that suggested a more robust association (e.g., Demerouti et al., 2001). This discrepancy could be attributed to varying contexts or sample characteristics, which may influence how immersion in work translates into organizational attachment.

The study's findings contribute to the broader understanding of work engagement by isolating which aspects are most crucial for fostering organizational identification. For practitioners, this suggests that engagement strategies focusing on building dedication, such as meaningful task assignments and recognition, are likely to yield more substantial identification outcomes. From a theoretical perspective, these insights underscore the importance of recognizing the multidimensionality of engagement and the specific roles each dimension plays in organizational psychology.

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was adapted to analyze complex relationships between multidimensional constructs, such as work engagement and organizational identification. SEM enables:

Path Analysis: Measures vigor, dedication, and absorption impacts on organizational identification.

Validation Testing: This evaluates model validity using statistical robustness indices such as χ^2/df, RMSEA, CFI, and NFI.

Error Management: This method considers measurement errors for reliability. It offers a thorough and reliable framework for hypothesis testing and model validation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Organization

In today's world, Cutajar (2012, p. 3) asserts that organizations should find the right members whose talents align with their goals to achieve them. Furthermore, they must train and develop their members to meet their talent profile standards (Kiziltan & Fidan, 2023, p. 50).

Orucu (2013, p. 119) states that organization is the extent to which it ensures that objectives can be implemented. It is almost impossible for individuals to achieve their goals on their own. There must be an order if there are many people in a community. An organization is necessary. An organizational structure is a diagram that indicates the relationships and duties between an organization's jobs, people, and resources. It takes the shape of a pyramid and demonstrates an order of titles or roles (Ulgen & Mirze, 2013, p. 298, as cited in Cubukcu, 2020, p. 177).

Ayvaci (2015) argues that organizational theorists emphasize describing the relationship between individuals and organizations (Alkan, 2016, p. 74).

One of the primary roles of an organization is to bring expectedness to social life. It is usually deemed both a structure and a continuing process (Schoeneborn & Vásquez, 2017, as cited in Jancsics, 2024). Organization pertains to a shared social system, according to (Scott, 1998), "people, things, roles, and organizational norms" (p. 11) that people establish. Thus, the aim is to support the collective achievement of predetermined objectives (Jancsics, 2024). According to Dutton, Dukerich, and Harquail (1994), organizations function as social systems formed by individual behavior through norms, values, and norms. When employees identify with the organization, their performance and productivity are supposed to be enhanced, promoting a sense of attachment. This relationship between organizational identity and sustainability focuses on the significance of organizational identification in organizational behavior (Alkan, 2016, p. 74).

Organizational Identification

Organizational identification's initial model was introduced by March & Simon (1958), and some researchers continued to contribute to the concept, such as Brown (1969), Rotondi (1975), and Ashforth & Mael (1989) (Kose & Pehlivanoglu, 2020, p. 2152).

Brown (1969) examined identification in organizations using Kelman's process (1958), which defines organizational identification as a self-determining response to social interactions. Brown (1969) built on the structure of social categorization created by Foote (1951) (Basar & Basim, 2015, p. 664).

Employees are expected to align themselves with the organization as they define their identity comparatively based on the values and characteristics the organization is believed to represent. (Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004, p. 2). This pertains to the consequences of the self-concept (Pratt, 1998) and the feeling of unity (Ashforth & Mael, 1989).

Parker and Haridakis (2008) point out that organizational identification can be achieved through communication, cognition, and affect. According to the communication approach, interacting with others is the primary way to achieve the identification process. By expressing a common interest in the organization's aims, regulations, and goals, one can develop organizational identification (Parker & Haridakis, 2008; Ravasi & van Rekom, 2003, as cited in Milton et al., 2016, p. 287).

Aspects of Organizational Identification

Patchen (1971) divides organizational identification into "loyalty, affiliation (membership), and similarity." He defines them as follows:

Organizational loyalty shows an employee's dedication to the organization's objectives. Affiliation (membership) captures the connection and satisfaction of believing one is part of the organization. Organizational similarity refers to the alignment of shared goals and values between the organization and its employees (Ghannam & Taamneh, 2017, p. 1028).

Work Engagement

Work engagement is an encouraging mental state related to work, considered by a strong sense of "absorption, vigor, and dedication" (Schaufeli et al. 2002, as cited in Bakker & Demerouti, 2008, p. 209). Vigor involves exhibiting great energy and persistence in work. Furthermore, dedication reflects how committed an individual is, intensely engaged in and experiencing difficulty, excitement, and importance. Absorption refers to a profound involvement in work, where individuals find such joy that time feels like it is racing, making it challenging to disengage from their tasks (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004, as cited in Bakker & Demerouti, 2008, p. 210). A significant amount of enthusiasm and energy is evident when employees deeply engage in their work.

Additionally, they must notice how quickly time flies as they are fully engrossed in their tasks (May et al., 2004, as cited in Bakker & Demerouti, 2008, p. 210). Work engagement is seen as a critical driver of motivation. Engaged employees are more likely to strive for ambitious goals.

Work Engagement and Social Identity

The study's exploration of work engagement elements—vigor, dedication, and absorption—enhances the application of SIT by clarifying how different engagement behaviors influence organizational identification. For instance, dedication aligns closely with SIT's principles, reflecting a strong emotional connection to the organization's values, positioning it as a significant factor in fostering organizational identification. Meanwhile, vigor and absorption, though behavioral, also aid in identity integration by creating an energized and focused relationship with work, potentially strengthening the individual's bond with the organization (Schaufeli et al., 2002).

Work Engagement dimensions and Social Identity theory

This study uses Social Identity Theory (SIT) (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) to explore the link between work engagement and organizational identification. It posits that individuals derive part of their self-concept from belonging to social groups like workplaces. This identification process encourages employees to align their attitudes and behaviors with their organization's values and goals, promoting unity and loyalty. (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Within this framework, organizational identification reflects how employees integrate their sense of self with their organization, resulting in a psychological attachment that influences work engagement behaviors. Social identity theory states that affiliation with an organization influences self-perception and identity. (Ashforth & Mael, 1989, as cited in Milton, Sinclair & Vakalahi, 2016, p. 288). Affective dimensions of organizational identification are commonly related to feelings of joy, pride, humiliation, and guilt (Ashforth et al., 2008, as cited in Milton et al., 2016, p. 288).

Work Engagement Dimensions and Social Identity Theory

The study examines work engagement dimensions—vigor, dedication, and absorption—to enhance SIT's application by differentiating engagement behaviors that influence organizational identification. Dedication strongly aligns with SIT principles, reflecting an emotional connection to the organization's values and thus driving identification. Vigor and absorption also foster a focused connection to work, deepening individual attachment to the organization (Schaufeli et al., 2002).

Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model

The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model (Demerouti et al., 2001) works in tandem with SIT by illustrating how organizational resources—like support, recognition, and opportunities for development—boost work engagement. JD-R posits that resources fostering vigor, dedication, and absorption will likely strengthen organizational identity. When employees perceive adequate resources, they experience higher engagement, which aligns with SIT by strengthening their identification with the organization. The JD-R model thus explains the mechanisms through which engagement dimensions may lead to greater organizational attachment.

METHODOLOYG

The statistical analyses were conducted using the SPSS 24.0 program. The study data were analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques, including mean, standard deviation, median, frequency, ratio, minimum, and maximum. Explanatory factor analysis was also used. We used LISREL 8.7 and structural equation modeling (SEM).

Research Purpose

This study explores how organizational identification impacts work engagement, treating the former as an

independent variable and the latter as a dependent variable. The study aims to reveal essential employee motivation and productivity insights by examining how this identification affects work engagement. It will also explore when employees feel connected to their organizations and assess the impact on work engagement through structural equation modeling.

Research Sampling

The study employed a purposive sampling approach, targeting professionals within Technopark based in Istanbul to ensure relevance to organizational identification and work engagement. Participants were selected based on the criteria of ten employees in an organization to create a representative sample. This selection process aimed to capture diverse perspectives within the target population. The final sample consisted of just over 250 employees with at least 3 years of experience at Technopark.

Data Collection Procedures

Data was gathered through a structured survey conducted over three months using in-person interviews. This survey featured questions evaluating participants' organizational identification, work engagement, and demographic information. Prior to collecting data, a small group from the target population tested the survey instrument to ensure the questions were clear and relevant. Participants were also informed about the study's purpose and assured of their confidentiality.

potential Source of Bias

The research analyzed sampling and response biases to address possible error sources. A diverse participant group was ensured to meet the established criteria to minimize sampling bias. Careful wording of survey questions was employed to lessen response bias, underscoring the significance of anonymity for respondents. Researcher bias was countered by utilizing standardized data collection and analysis methods and through peer review of the survey's design and methodology.

Linking Theory to the Research Question

By combining the SIT and JD-R models, we establish a solid theoretical basis for analyzing how various aspects of work engagement uniquely influence organizational identification. Social Identity Theory suggests that employees engage more deeply as they strengthen their identification with the organization. Simultaneously, the JD-R model illustrates how targeted organizational practices can foster various dimensions of engagement. This dual-theory approach offers a robust framework for examining the study's hypothesis: vigor, dedication, and absorption uniquely contribute to strengthening organizational identification.

Contribution to Theory and Practice

This research is framed within these theoretical models to affirm that engagement dimensions are vital elements in organizational identification. It also establishes a foundation for developing specific engagement strategies. Practitioners can leverage these insights to design initiatives that enhance employees' commitment and energy, boosting their engagement and sense of belonging within the organization.

Research Contribution and Novelty

Previous studies examined work engagement and organizational identification, but this research provides new insights by examining the individual effects of vigor, dedication, and absorption on identification. Previous works treat work engagement as a single entity, limiting understanding of how specific engagement factors influence identification. (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010).

This research uses structural equation modeling (SEM) to measure the path coefficients for vigor, dedication, and absorption in organizational identification. SEM clarifies the relationships among these variables and highlights which engagement aspects are crucial for enhancing organizational identification. Dedication is more closely linked to organizational identification than vigor or absorption, guiding organizations to prioritize specific engagement strategies.

Unique Value of Study Findings for Theory and Practice

The study reveals that emotional investment in work (dedication) drives organizational identification more than energy (vigor) or focus (absorption). This finding suggests that enhancing an employee's sense of purpose fosters loyalty better than merely improving energy or immersion. Additionally, examining engagement through its dimensions advocates for a detailed approach in future research and organizational practices. It indicates that engagement is not uniformly linked to organizational identification; certain aspects may influence it more based on context and role. Overall, the study clarifies work engagement's role in organizational identification, provides a framework for engagement interventions, and offers valuable knowledge to organizational psychology and HR management.

Results and Findings

Distribution of Demographic Characteristics

Of the participants, 28.7% (n=71) were aged 21-25 years, 30.8% (n=76) were aged 26-30 years, 28.7% (n=71) were aged 31-35 years, and 11.7% (n=29) were aged 36 years and above. Regarding gender, 37.7% (n=93) were female and 62.3% (n=154) were male. In terms of income, 17.4% (n=43) had incomes between 20,000-25,000 TL, 15.0% (n=37) had incomes between 25,001-30,000 TL, 7.7% (n=19) had incomes between 30,001-35,000 TL, 10.9% (n=27) had incomes between 35,000-40,000 TL, 5.7% (n=14) had incomes between 40,001-45,000 TL, and 43.3% (n=107) had incomes of 45,001 TL and above. Regarding education, 7.3% (n=18) had an associate degree, 66.4% (n=164) had a bachelor's degree, and 26.3% (n=65) had a master's degree. In terms of sector, 83.4% (n=206) worked in the private sector and 16.6% (n=41) worked in the public sector.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics

		n	%
Age	21-25 Age	71	28.7
	26-30 Age	76	30.8
	31-35 Age	71	28.7
	36 Age and Above	29	11.7
Gender	Female	93	37.7
	Male	154	62.3
Income	20,000-25,000 TL	43	17.4
	25,001-30,000 TL	37	15.0
	30,001-35,000 TL	19	7.7
	35,000-40,000 TL	27	10.9
	40,001-45,000 TL	14	5.7
	45,001 TL and Above	107	43.3
Education	Associate degree	18	7.3
	Bachelor's degree	164	66.4

	Master's degree	65	26.3
Sector	Private sector	206	83.4
	Public sector	41	16.6

Results of Explanatory Factor Analysis and Confirmatory Factor Analysis

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure and Bartlett's test of sphericity were evaluated to assess the suitability of conducting explanatory factor analysis. A KMO value close to 1 indicates that factor analysis is appropriate for the current dataset (Živadinović, 2004). The analysis calculated it as 0.902 on the work engagement scale and 0.876 on the scale of organizational identification. Based on the obtained data, analyzing the data group was deemed appropriate.

Exploratory factor analysis revealed that the scale comprises four sub-dimensions. The variance explained was 54.88% for the work engagement scale and 62.59% for the organizational identification scale. It is generally acknowledged that higher variance ratios from the analysis indicate a more robust factor structure, with a range of 40% to 60% deemed adequate in social fields (Karagöz, 2017). The research findings align with this, as all values fall within the literature's specified range.

Table 2: KMO and Bartlett's Test Results of Work Engagement and Organizational Identification Scales

	Work Engagement	Organizational Identification
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.	0.902	0.876
Chi-Square	1748.480	748.215
Df	136	15
Sig.	<0.000	<0.000

To evaluate the measurement model's validity through convergent and discriminant validity assessments. Convergent validity indicates that all items support and validate one another. Composite reliability (CR) indicates how consistently the constructs perform. Average variance extracted (AVE) measures the proportion of variance attributed to the construct (Azwa et al., 2016). For each construct, a composite reliability (C.R.) of 0.6 and above and an average variance extracted (AVE) of 0.5 and above are required (Pervan et al., 2018). According to Fornell and Larcker (1981), a composite reliability of over 0.6 indicates sufficient convergent validity, even if the AVE is below 0.5. Our analysis shows that convergent validity is affirmed when the composite reliability values for each construct surpass 0.6, even if the AVE is lower than 0.5 (Pervan et al., 2018). Our study found that CR and AVE values exceed specified thresholds, as shown in Table 3. Cronbach's alpha from 0.70 to 0.99 indicates reliable scales (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). Our study revealed that Cronbach alpha values fell within the specified ranges.

Table 3: Results of the CR, AVE, and Cronbach's Alpha Value of the Work Engagement and Organizational Identification Scales

	Cronbach's Alpha	AVE	CR
Vigor	0.824	0.479	0.843
Dedication	0.759	0.364	0.763

Absorption	0.732	0.443	0.796
Work Engagement	0.894	-	-
Organizational Identification	0.877	0,557	0,880

The χ2 /df (2.66), RMSEA (0.082), CFI (0.97), and NFI = (0.95) values of the organizational identification scale are within the acceptable fit range, as shown in Figure 1. Similarly, the χ2 /df (4.41), RMSEA (0.99), CFI (0.97), and NFI = (0.95) values of the work engagement scale are within the acceptable fit limits, as shown in Figure 2. (Erkorkmaz et, al. 2013).
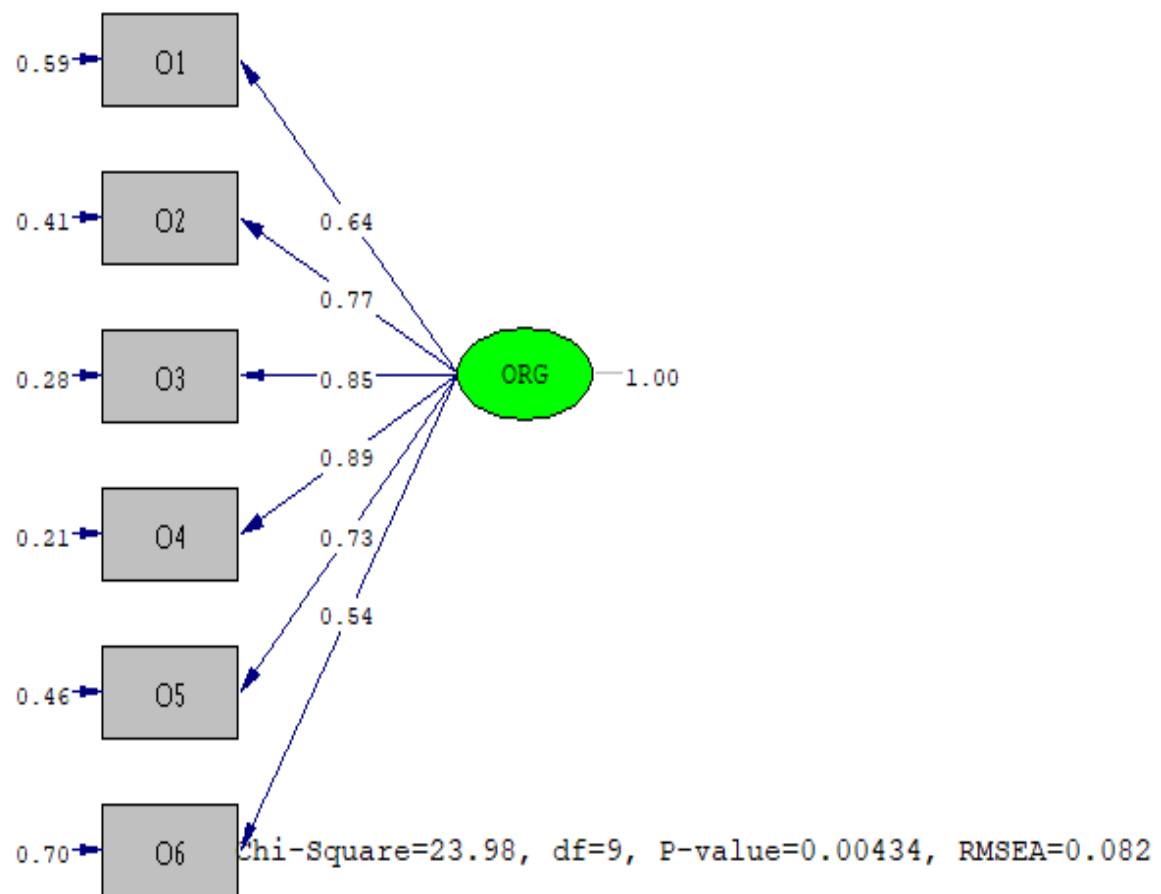
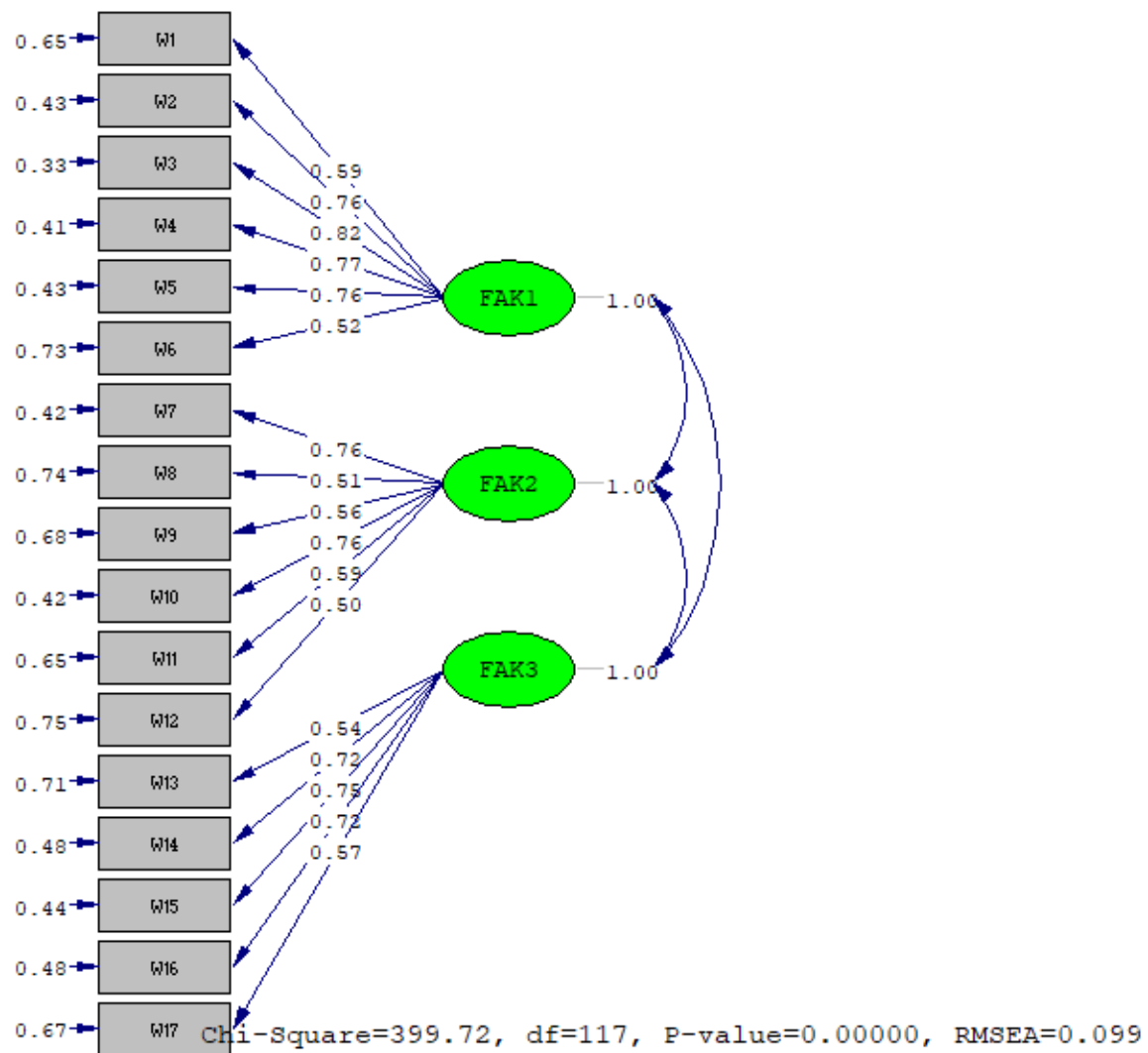**Figure 1:** Values of the Organizational Identification Scale

Figure 2: Values of the Work Engagement Scale

Result of Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)

Below are the results from the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). Figure 3 and Table 5 show the goodness of fit statistics and limits for the structural model.

Table 4: Limits and the results of the structural model

Fitness Criterion	Perfect Fitness	Acceptable Fitness	Model 1
χ^2 /df	$1 \leq \chi^2$ /df ≤ 3	$3 < \chi^2$ /df ≤ 5	2.34
RMSEA	$0 \leq$ RMSEA ≤ 0.05	$0.05 <$ RMSEA ≤ 0.10	0.074
NFI	$0.95 \leq$ NFI ≤ 1	$0.90 <$ NFI < 0.95	0.92
NNFI	$0.95 \leq$ NFI ≤ 1	$0.90 <$ NNFI < 0.95	0.94
SRMR	$0 \leq$ SRMR < 0.05	$0.05 \leq$ SRMR < 0.10	0.087
CFI	$0.97 \leq$ CFI ≤ 1	$0.95 \leq$ CFI < 0.97	0.95

Table 5 shows that the outputs of our model range from acceptable to perfect fit. Furthermore, a {χ^2 /df} value under 3 indicates a satisfactory fit. This means that for model 1, a χ^2 /df value less than 3 is statistically significant (Erkorkmaz & Ark. 2013).

The path coefficient from vigor to organizational identification is 0.24, indicating a positive relationship. This

suggests that greater vigou2r correlates with increased organizational identification. The path coefficient from dedication to organizational identification is 0.56, indicating a positive relationship. This suggests that increased dedication correlates with more robust organizational identification. The path coefficient connecting absorption and organizational identification is 0.07, reflecting a positive correlation. This indicates that more excellent absorption correlates with more robust organizational identification.
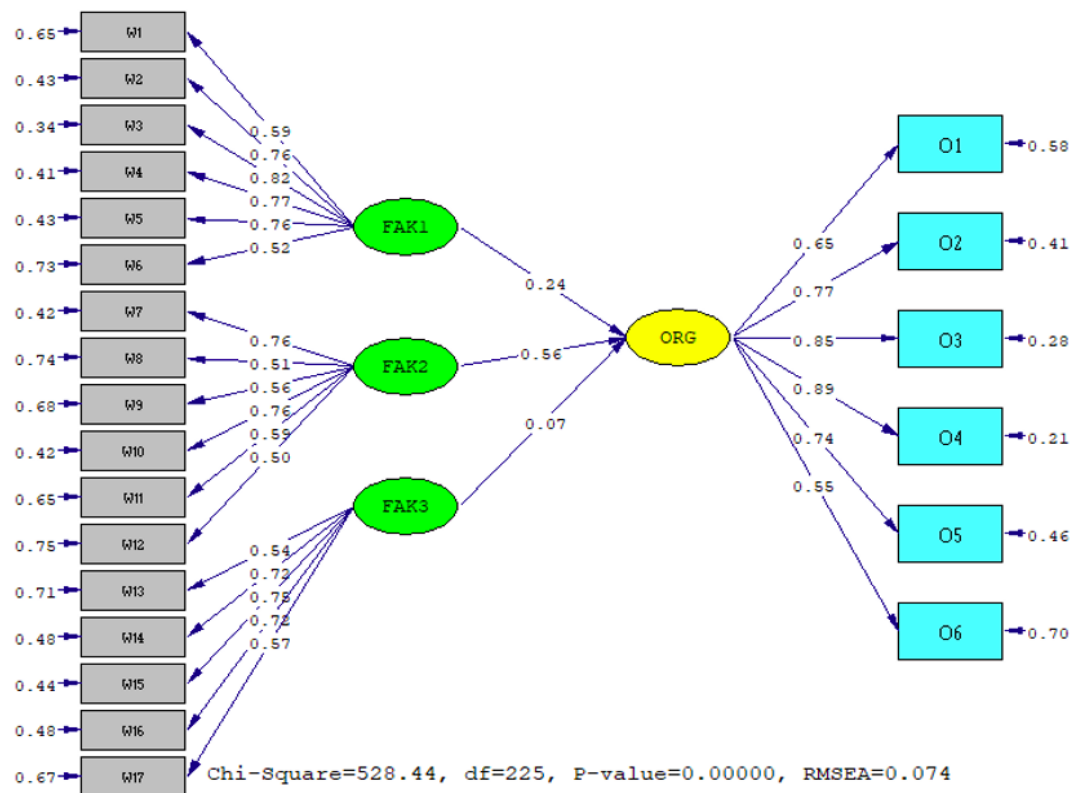

Figure 3: Structural Equation Modeling

Discussion:

The analysis shows that our model indicates an acceptable to perfect fit, as the fitness criteria in Table 5 imply. The x2/value for model 1 being less than 3 supports the statistical significance of model fit (Erkorkmaz et al., 2013). The analysis confirms validity and reliability based on the measurement model, indicating adequate convergent validity as composite reliability values are higher than 0.6, even in cases where AVE is under 0.5. The scales employed in this study demonstrate strong reliability, with Cronbach alpha values ranging from 0.70 to 0.99. Furthermore, the goodness-of-fit indices for the organizational identification and work engagement scales confirm that the model fits within an acceptable range. Additionally, the path coefficients indicate a positive correlation between vigor, dedication, and absorption factors with organizational identification. Specifically, the SEM analysis reveals that vigor (0.24) and dedication (0.56) exhibit moderate to strong positive correlations with organizational identification, while absorption (0.07) shows a more minor, albeit positive, relationship. These results suggest that employees with greater vigor, dedication, and absorption identify more with their organization. The model offers a solid foundation for understanding how work engagement influences organizational identification. The analysis results indicate that the measurement model demonstrates acceptable validity and reliability, with goodness-of-fit indices affirming a solid alignment with the data. The findings show positive links

between work engagement—vigor, dedication, absorption—and organizational identification. Dedication is the most impactful, followed by vigor, while absorption shows a lesser yet positive influence.

CONCLUSION

To enhance the practical implications of these results, organizations can view them as a roadmap for boosting employee engagement and fostering more robust organizational identification. For instance, given dedication's significant impact, companies should prioritize cultivating a work environment that nurtures commitment through meaningful tasks, recognition initiatives, and personal and professional development opportunities. Additionally, by advocating for vigor through work-life balance and wellness programs, organizations can establish an invigorating atmosphere that encourages employees to engage more profoundly with their values and objectives. These practical strategies render the study's findings crucial for organizational leaders and policymakers looking to elevate employee engagement and loyalty.

Limitations and Scope for future Research

Several limitations may emerge when examining organizational identification and its effects on work engagement via Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). Here are some typical limitations to consider: SEM depends on self-reported data, which can introduce biases such as social desirability or response bias, potentially impacting the accuracy of reports on organizational identification or engagement. Limited sample sizes or insufficient diversity within the sample such as studying employees from only one organization or industry can hinder the generalizability of the findings. Therefore, large sample size is essential when using structural equation modeling (SEM) to ensure statistical power and stable estimates. Organizational identification and work engagement can be analyzed across organizational and cultural contexts. However, their definition and operationalization may need to be more consistent in their validity. Establishing clear and uniform definitions ensures meaningful interpretations and applications of these concepts. Improving these limitations can enhance the robustness and applicability of the findings through additional data collection methods, longitudinal designs, or supplementary analyses such as sensitivity testing. One significant issue was the data collection process, which was constrained by the decision to gather responses from Technopark employees during their break times. This approach was intended to streamline the process; however, it led to a lack of engagement from the participants. Had the participants been given more time to reflect and respond, their opinions may have been articulated more clearly and accurately.

Acknowledgments

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no interest of conflict

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