

# “Same Same” But Different?

## Can Work Engagement Be Discriminated from Job Involvement and Organizational Commitment?

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**Abstract.** The present study investigates whether work engagement (measured by the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale; UWES) could be empirically separated from job involvement and organizational commitment. In addition, psychometric properties of the Swedish UWES were investigated. Discriminant validity of the UWES was tested through inspection of latent intercorrelations between the constructs, confirmatory factor analyses, and patterns of correlations with other constructs (health complaints, job and personal factors, and turnover intention) in a sample of Information Communication Technology consultants ( $N = 186$ ). **Conclusion:** Work engagement, job involvement, and organizational commitment are empirically distinct constructs and, thus, reflect different aspects of work attachment. The internal consistency of the Swedish UWES was satisfactory, but the dimensionality was somewhat unclear.

**Keywords:** discriminant validity, Utrecht Work Engagement Scale, job involvement, organizational commitment

The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) was recently introduced (Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Romá, & Bakker, 2002) as an empirical gauge of the latent construct “work engagement.” Work engagement is defined as a “persistent, positive affective-motivational state of fulfilment” (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001, p. 417) or – in simpler words – being charged with energy and fully dedicated to one’s work. In line with the general shift toward positive psychology, work engagement was introduced as a conceptual “opposite” of burnout, which is a response to chronic work-related stress manifested as depleted emotional resources, cynical attitudes toward work, and reduced professional efficacy (Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1996).

### “Same Same” – or Different?

The introduction of new concepts should always be accompanied by rigorous validation procedures to avoid redundancy issues with respect to already existing concepts (Campbell & Fiske, 1959; Cook & Campbell, 1979; Schwab, 1980). Moreover, when new instruments are introduced, they should be tested to make sure that they effectively capture the construct they are supposed to tap (Cook & Campbell, 1979). The area of work commitment research already provides a rich array of concepts representing different aspects of attachment and affect toward the organization, the work in general, and the job in particular (see Morrow, 1983). For work engagement to be con-

sidered a valid contribution to this research field, its ability to discriminate against other, adjacent constructs must be established. Work engagement has been shown to empirically discriminate against burnout and workaholism (Schaufeli, Taris, & van Rhenen, manuscript submitted for publication). However, whether work engagement can be empirically separated from other positively denoted concepts concerning the relationship between the employee and the work is yet to be shown. The conceptualization of work engagement (Schaufeli et al., 2002) comprises a state of well-being, characterized by high levels of energy (that are invested in work) but the concept also makes reference to involvement (being dedicated, enthusiastic, and inspired by one’s work) and commitment (being engrossed and attached to one’s work). Thus, the purpose of the present paper was to investigate whether work engagement can be empirically separated from the previously established constructs of job involvement (Kanungo, 1979) and organizational commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

### Conceptual Differences

Unfortunately, the terminology is confused by the interchangeable use of the labels of engagement, involvement, and commitment in literature (see e.g., Kanungo, 1979; Maslach & Leiter, 1997; Meyer & Allen, 1997; Mowday, 1998). Nevertheless, work engagement, job involvement, and organizational commitment are clearly differentiated concepts, each with specific trademarks.

Being introduced and studied as a concept in health psychology, work engagement stresses the assumption of "optimal functioning" at work in terms of well-being. It can be described as similar to having "flow", i.e., being carried away and experiencing a sense of total harmony (see Csikszentmihalyi, 1997), but in contrast to flow, which tends to be a peak experience, work engagement is more stable and longer lasting. Being described as the opposite of burnout (feeling drained of energy and fed up with work), the primary characteristic of work engagement is the presence of energy and content (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Theoretically (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004), work engagement is proposed to develop as a function of the same job resources that fuel motivation (see Hackman & Oldham, 1980) and inspire positive emotions toward the organization, thus, employees who feel engaged are more than willing to stay on the job. These assumptions have gained promising empirical support (Bakker, Demerouti, De Boer, & Schaufeli, 2003; Durán, Extremera, & Rey, 2004; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Llorens, Schaufeli, Bakker, & Salanova, 2004).

Tracing the history of job involvement inevitably stirs associations to "conceptual confusion." Basically, one can find two different approaches in the literature – one that focuses on how the job influences a person's self-esteem (Lodahl & Kejner, 1965) and another that focuses on how the job helps define a person's identity (Lawler & Hall, 1970). However, the "clearest and most precise conceptualization of the construct" (Brown, 1996, p. 236) is provided by Kanungo (1979) who takes a motivational approach to job involvement by stressing a cognitive, psychological identification with work, which includes the notion that work may satisfy salient needs and expectations. The (theoretically defined) intrinsic connotations of job involvement (Brown, 1996; Lawler & Hall, 1970; Lodahl & Kejner, 1965) are consistent with empirical findings summed up in an extensive meta-analysis by Brown (1996). Brown concludes that the job-involved person is someone who: (a) finds their job motivating and challenging, (b) is committed both to their work in general, to the specific job, and to the organization, making them less inclined to consider leaving their position, (c) engages more closely in professional relationships with, e.g., supervisors, and therefore stands a better chance of feedback. However, job involvement appears to be unaffected by role perceptions and does not appear to be related to mental or physical ill-health (Brown, 1996).

Most research and literature on organizational commitment concern attitudinal, affective aspects (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Meyer & Allen, 1997). This type of commitment refers to the emotional attachment that employees form with their organization, based on shared values and interests (Meyer & Allen, 1997; Mowday, 1998). Empirically, most effort has been extended relating organizational commitment to employee retention attitudes (Brown, 1996; Jaros, 1997; Meyer & Allen, 1997) in accordance with the assumption that employees who develop a strong bond with their organization are expected to be

more motivated to remain therein. Usually, affective organizational commitment appears to be more dependent on job characteristics than personal factors, indicating that it has less to do with intrinsic motivation than extrinsic circumstances (Morrow, 1983). Organizational commitment has not been very extensively researched from a health perspective, although it appears that appreciation and positive affections regarding the situation surrounding work is beneficial in terms of well-being (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Since most research has been conducted on cross-sectional data, an alternative interpretation is that feeling good and healthy reflects in positive attitudes toward one's surroundings. The major point here, however, is that organizational commitment is associated with absence of health complaints.

To summarize, work engagement, job involvement, and organizational commitment all refer to positive attachment to work and they also contain reciprocal, theoretical references to each other. Therefore, it was assumed that they would share *some* variance, but not overlap to the extent where redundancy actualizes, that is, weak to moderate correlations between the constructs were expected (Proposition 1). With respect to the conceptual differences of the constructs presented above, it was expected that they would be empirically separable (Proposition 2). Furthermore, it was expected that the three constructs would display different associations with health complaints, job and personal characteristics, and turnover intention (Proposition 3). Given that work engagement is introduced as a health psychology concept, it was expected that this concept would be primarily related to (lack of) health complaints (burnout, depressive symptoms, somatic complaints, and sleep disturbances). It was also expected that work engagement would correlate positively with job resources (autonomy and feedback) but display a negative correlation with role perceptions (workload and role conflicts) that would be experienced as drawbacks of the work situation. Finally, a negative correlation with turnover intention was expected. Because job involvement has been identified as primarily dependent on intrinsic factors, it was expected that this construct would correlate positively with the importance of performance for one's self-esteem (see Lawler & Hall, 1970). Job involvement was also expected to display a positive correlation with feedback and a weak, negative correlation with turnover intention. However, previous empirical results do not support any assumptions about relationships between job involvement and health complaints or role perceptions (role overload or role conflict). Along with work engagement, organizational commitment is an affective response to job characteristics. However, organizational commitment mainly concerns attitudes toward the organization and was primarily expected to evidence a strong and negative correlation with turnover intention. It was also expected that organizational commitment would increase in the presence of beneficial job characteristics, and consequently, decrease in the presence of negative role perceptions ascribed to work. Finally, a negative correlation with health complaints was expected, however this association

was assumed to be weak to moderate as organizational commitment is primarily defined as an attitudinal construct.

## Psychometric Properties of the Swedish UWES

Although a Swedish translation of the UWES is offered (in Schaufeli, Bakker, & Salanova, manuscript submitted for publication), psychometric properties of this version have not yet been published. Nevertheless, it is important to investigate reliability and validity of a measure when translated into different languages (Schaufeli & van Dierendonck, 1993). Therefore, establishing the factorial validity and reliability of the Swedish version of the UWES constituted a second aim of the present study. The conceptualization of work engagement involves three aspects, namely vigor (feeling energetic and resilient at work), dedication (being proud of and happy about one's work), and absorption (being totally immersed in one's work). In some samples (e.g., in Germany, see Sonnentag, 2003), the UWES did not successfully reflect this dimensionality and instead the dimensions were collapsed into a single "work engagement" construct. However, studies from a variety of countries as well as occupational samples (Schaufeli, Martínez, Marques Pinto, Salanova, & Bakker, 2002) report that a three-factor solution appears to better reflect the underlying data matrices than other, competing models. Still, the inconsistency between countries warrants empirical testing of the dimensionality when the UWES is translated. Based on the theoretical conceptualization of work engagement and previous empirical support, it was expected that the three-factor model would also be reflected using Swedish data (Proposition 4).

The internal consistency of each subscale of the UWES was also considered. Previous studies (Schaufeli et al., 2002; Schaufeli et al., submitted for publication) report adequate reliabilities ( $> .70$ ) of all three subscales. Hence, it was expected that the internal consistency of vigor, dedication, and absorption captured by the Swedish version of the UWES would exceed recommended criteria (Proposition 5). Results reflecting the factorial validity of the Swedish version of the UWES can be viewed in Tables 3 and 4.

## Method

### Subjects and Procedure

The data used in the present study was collected within the framework of a scientific project on employee health and motivation at the Swedish section of an international Information Communication Technology (ICT) and management consultancy company. The data collection was conducted in spring 2004 and designed in cooperation with management and the department of personnel. Pilot inter-

views were conducted with representatives for different occupational roles held within the company in order to understand the nature of their work, and identify occupation-specific stressors and motivators. Based on the interviews as well as relevant theories, and previous empirical findings, a questionnaire was designed to capture variables reflecting the work situation, motivation, and well-being among the sample. We targeted a selection of employees (every third,  $N = 521$ ) and mailed a questionnaire to their homes together with a cover letter. The letter explained the general aim of the project and emphasized volition and that responses would be treated with utmost confidentiality. The participants were asked to return their questionnaires directly to the university affiliation of the research team in postage-paid reply envelopes. Four reminders were sent out before the total response rate was concluded ( $N = 186$ , 36%). The sample was composed of consultants (IT software developers, IT support, IT programmers, project managers, management consultants,  $N = 175$ ); and administrative personnel ( $N = 11$ ). Mean age was 41 years ( $SD = 8.99$ ), and average organizational tenure was 8 years ( $SD = 7$ ). The proportion of women was 37%. No significant differences were found in demographic profiles (age, sex, and tenure) neither between the consultants and the administrators, nor between respondents and nonrespondents. Group level results from the project have been fed back to both the participants (during one of their regular consultant meetings) and management (during a separate meeting), as part of the agreement with the organization.

Measures (descriptive statistics and Cronbach's  $\alpha$  of all study variables) can be found in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptives and reliabilities for all study variables

Study variables	Mean	SD	Cronbach's $\alpha$
<i>Work attachment</i>			
Work engagement (composite measure)	3.63	1.05	.93
Job involvement	2.28	.70	.70
Organizational commitment	2.77	.72	.80
<i>Health complaints</i>			
Emotional exhaustion	2.36	1.08	.78
Cynicism	2.32	1.53	.75
Depressive symptoms	1.81	.47	.87
Somatic complaints	1.12	.63	.78
Sleep disturbances	2.37	.59	.85
<i>Job factors</i>			
Autonomy	3.42	.77	.82
Feedback	2.89	.59	.75
Role overload	3.38	.85	.79
Role conflict	2.43	.71	.75
<i>Personal factors</i>			
Intrinsic motivation	3.08	1.10	.65
Turnover intention	2.57	1.10	.84

## Work Attachment

The short version (see Schaufeli et al., submitted for publication) of the UWES was used to assess three dimensions of work engagement, namely *Vigor* (3 items; e.g., "When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work"), *Dedication* (3 items; e.g., "I am enthusiastic about my job"), and *Absorption* (3 items; e.g., "I'm happily engrossed in my work"). Reliabilities are displayed in Table 2. Response alternatives were given on a Likert scale (0 = *never* to 6 = *always/every day*). Job involvement was measured using a six-item version (Sjöberg & Sverke, 2000) of Kanungo's (1982) Job Involvement Scale (sample item "I believe my recent job to be central in my life"). (Affective) Organizational commitment was assessed using Meyer and Allen's (1991) scale consisting of eight items (e.g., "I would very much like to make a career within this organization"). Response alternatives for job involvement and organizational commitment were given on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *do not agree* to 5 = *agree completely*).

## Health Complaints

The core aspects of *burnout* (Hallberg & Sverke, 2004; Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998), emotional exhaustion and cynical attitudes, were assessed with two of the subscales (five items each) from a Swedish translation of the Maslach Burnout Inventory-General Survey (Maslach et al., 1996). Example items: "I feel used up at the end of a work day" (emotional exhaustion) and "I just want to do my job and not be bothered with anything else" (cynical attitudes). Burnout response alternatives ranged from 0 (*never*) to 6 (*always/every day*) on a Likert scale. *Depressive symptoms* were assessed using the 12-item version of the General Health Questionnaire (Goldberg, 1978) from which a sample item reads "During the last 6 months, have you been having trouble sleeping due to worries" and was scored on a four-point Likert scale (0 = *never* to 3 = *always*). *Somatic complaints* were assessed using 10 items from Andersson (1986), slightly modified by Isaksson & Johansson (1997); sample item: "During the last six months, have you been suffering from gastro-intestine problems"). Response alternatives were given on a five-point Likert scale (0 = *never* to 4 = *always*). *Sleep disturbances* were assessed with 12 items. Four of the items (e.g., "Do you have trouble sleeping") were adopted from "Karolinska Sleep Questionnaire" (Åkerstedt et al., 2002) and the remaining eight (e.g., "Do you feel tired during the work day," "Do you feel well rested when you start working again after a weekend") were developed by Aronsson, Svensson, and Gustafsson (2003). Response alternatives were given on a five-point Likert scale (1 = *never* to 5 = *every day*).

## Job Factors

Four items were used to assess *autonomy* (e.g., "I can make my own decisions on how to organize my work"), derived

from different autonomy scales (Hackman & Oldham, 1975; Walsh, Taber, & Beehr, 1980). *Feedback* was assessed using three items based on Hackman and Oldham (1975) (e.g., "I usually know if my work is satisfactory"). Because ICT consultants perform the majority of their work temporarily located at the workplaces of their customers, feedback items were slightly rephrased to reflect (1) perceptions of feedback from colleagues at the workplaces where the daily work is actually performed, as well as (2) perceptions of feedback from colleagues at the consultancy company. *Role overload* was operationalized using three items (e.g., "I often have too much to do at work") from different role-overload scales (Beehr, Walsh, & Taber, 1976; Nystedt, 1992; Sverke & Sjöberg, 1994) whereas *role conflict* was assessed with six items (e.g., "I receive incompatible requests from two or more people") based on Rizzo, House, and Lirtzman (1970). The pilot interviews indicated that contradictory requests from the customer and the employer may be an important source of role conflict specific for this type of consultancy work. Hence, an additional item ("It is difficult to combine customer demands with employer demands") was added to the role conflict scale in order to increase the external validity. Response alternatives for all job factors were given on a five-point Likert scale (1 = *never* to 5 = *every day*).

## Personal Factors

*Intrinsic motivation*, or importance of performance (e.g., at work) for self-esteem, was operationalized with three items from Hallsten, Bellagh, and Gustavsson's scale (2002). The items (e.g., "I have felt an inner force to accomplish something valuable through my work activity") were scored on a five-point Likert scale (1 = *totally disagree* to 5 = *totally agree*). *Turnover intention* was assessed with three items (Sjöberg & Sverke, 2000; based on items from Lyons, 1971 and Camman et al., 1979) reflecting intention to give notice. An example item was "Given the freedom of choice, (not depending on the job market, etc.) I would quit my current position." Scoring was made on a five-point Likert scale for both intrinsic motivation and turnover intention.

## Data Analyses

The main objective – to test discriminant validity of the UWES – was accomplished in three steps. First, latent intercorrelations between the constructs were inspected for evaluation of conceptual overlap. Second, Confirmatory Factor Analyses (CFA) were performed using Lisrel 8 (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1993) to test whether work engagement, job involvement, and organizational commitment could be empirically separated. A uni-factor model ("general work attachment") was contrasted with a three-factor model specifying three distinct constructs. To evaluate the

extent to which the specified model reproduced the underlying covariance matrix, global fit measures including the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR; Bentler, 1995) and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) were evaluated. Hu and Bentler (1999) recommend SRMR-values below .08 for a good fit, and for the RMSEA – values below .08 are generally considered as reflecting a good fit of the model to the data. To investigate whether the proposed solution showed superior fit to data in comparison to other, competing solutions, the Non Normed Fit Index (NNFI) and Comparative Fit Index (CFI; Bentler, 1995) were examined. NNFI and CFI both range between 0 and 1, and values greater than .90 indicate adequate model fit. Third, correlations with other variables (health complaints, work climate, intrinsic motivation, and turnover intention) were investigated.

The second aim, to investigate the factorial validity of the Swedish version of the UWES, was accomplished in two steps. First, a CFA (Lisrel 8) was performed contrasting a one-dimensional model of work engagement with a three-dimensional model, using the same evaluation criteria as in the previously described CFA. Second, Cronbach's  $\alpha$  coefficients for all subscales were considered assuming that a coefficient above .70 indicates good internal consistency of the subscale (see Nunally, 1978).

## Results

### Discriminant Validity of the UWES

The latent intercorrelations between the constructs ranged between .35 and .46, indicating between 12% and 21% of shared variance (see Table 3). This supports the assumption that the constructs are related but do not overlap to the extent where redundancy was actualized. Inspection of the results from CFA (Table 2) corroborated this assumption, indicating that the model specifying work engagement, job involvement, and organizational commitment as three distinct constructs showed a clearly superior fit to the underlying covariance matrix as compared to the one-dimensional model.

Both absolute and comparative fit measures for the three-dimensional model meet the above-mentioned criteria of good fit, whereas both absolute and comparative fit measures failed to reach above suggested cut-offs for the one-dimensional model. Thus, with respect to the empirics, the representation of work engagement, job involvement,

and organizational commitment as distinct constructs are superior to a composite measure of work attachment.

Next, work engagement, job involvement, and organizational commitment were correlated with health complaints, job (autonomy, feedback, workload, role conflict) and personal factors (intrinsic motivation and turnover intention). Table 3 shows that work engagement was primarily related to lack of health complaints, as reflected by strong, consistent correlation coefficients.

As expected, with the exception of somatic complaints, organizational commitment evidenced a similar pattern of associations, appearing, however, to be somewhat more moderately related. The results indicate that primarily work engagement but also organizational commitment are represented in healthy employees. Job involvement was unrelated to all health complaint measures, indicating that this construct has other connotations. With respect to job factors, all three constructs appeared to increase in the presence of autonomy and feedback, however positive job characteristics appear to be less significant for job involvement. As for (negative) role perceptions, the pattern of associations differed between the constructs. Job involvement was associated with high workload, but unrelated to role conflict. Work engagement and organizational commitment were both unrelated to workload, but associated with low levels of role conflict. As expected, only job involvement was related to intrinsic motivation. All three constructs appeared to be related to a decreased inclination to quit one's work, but organizational commitment evidenced the most obvious association with turnover intention. Work engagement was moderately, and job involvement weakly negatively correlated with the intention to give notice.

### Psychometric Properties of the Swedish Version of the UWES

The results from the CFA investigating factorial structure of the Swedish version of the UWES can be viewed in Table 4.

A model assuming that work engagement is best represented as a one-dimensional construct was contrasted with a model assumed to reflect three aspects of work engagement (vigor, dedication, and absorption). Both models showed adequate fit measures, indicating that the one-dimensional representation and the three-dimensional representation of work engagement are equivalent. However, the

Table 2. Model fit for confirmatory factor analyses of work attachment ( $N = 186$ )

Model	df	Absolute fit			Comparative fit	
		$\chi^2$	SRMR	RMSEA	CFI	NNFI
One factor (work attachment)	230	1330.28	0.12	0.16	0.87	0.86
Three factors*	227	422.69	0.07	0.07	0.97	0.96

\*work engagement, job involvement, and organizational commitment

**Table 3.** Correlations between work attachment measures and aspects of health complaints, job factors and personal factors and latent inter-correlations between work engagement, job involvement and organizational commitment ( $N = 186$ )

	Work engagement	Job involvement	Org. commitment
<i>Latent intercorrelations between work attachment constructs</i>			
Work engagement	1		
Job involvement	.35**	1	
Org. commitment	.46**	.43**	1
<i>Correlates with work attachment constructs</i>			
<i>Health complaints</i>			
Emotional exhaustion	-.46**	.09	-.30**
Cynicism	-.57**	-.10	-.37**
Depressive symptoms	-.52**	.09	-.22**
Somatic complaints	-.30**	.13	-.12
Sleep disturbances	-.51**	.07	-.23**
<i>Job factors</i>			
Autonomy	.51**	.19**	.37**
Feedback	.38**	.16*	.42**
Role overload	.11	.31**	.09
Role conflict	-.36**	.06	-.23**
<i>Personal factors</i>			
Intrinsic motivation	-.04	.32**	-.11
Turnover intention	-.40**	-.20**	-.65**

**Table 4.** Model fit for confirmatory factor analyses of the Swedish UWES ( $N = 186$ )

Model	df	$\chi^2$	Absolute fit		Comparative fit	
			SRMR	RMSEA	CFI	NNFI
One dimension	27	111.14	0.05	0.13	0.97	0.95
Three dimensions (correlated)	24	93.87	0.04	0.13	0.97	0.96

**Table 5.** Cronbach's  $\alpha$  and (latent) intercorrelations for vigor, dedication and absorption ( $N = 186$ )

	(Latent) inter-correlations		
	Vigor	Dedication	Absorption
Cronbach's $\alpha$	.85	.89	.76
Vigor	—		
Dedication	.99***	—	
Absorption	.90***	.88***	—

\*\*\* $p < .001$

latent intercorrelations, ranging between .88 and .99 (see Table 5) indicate a substantial overlap between the different aspects of work engagement, which could be interpreted in favor of the one-dimensional approach.

Cronbach's  $\alpha$  (Table 5) for all three subscales was above .70, which is an indication of good, internal consistencies of all aspects of work engagement captured by the Swedish version of the UWES.

## Discussion

The present study aimed to investigate the measure of work engagement, UWES (Schaufeli et al., 2002), and whether it could discriminate against measures of the theoretically adjacent constructs job involvement (Kanungo, 1979) and (affective) organizational commitment (Allen & Meyer, 1996).

### "Same Same" But Different?

It could be successfully established that work engagement, job involvement, and organizational commitment represent three empirically distinct constructs. CFA and latent inter-correlations clearly showed that a three-factor representation of the underlying covariances was superior to a composite factor of work attachment. The results are in line with Morrow's (1983) suggestion that work attachment

should be decomposed and discussed in more precise units, acknowledging their conceptual differences. Correlations with health complaints, job and personal characteristics, and turnover intention further supported the discriminant validity of the UWES and the conceptual uniqueness of work engagement. The strong and consistent associations with health complaints underline the health component of work engagement. This is an important conceptual aspect that separates work engagement from job involvement and organizational commitment, and future elaboration of theoretical connotations of work engagement should focus upon this aspect. In terms of health, work engagement has been related to burnout (Maslach et al., 2001; Schaufeli et al., 2002), which is a rather narrow definition of health. However, the present study indicates that work engagement is consistently related to a wide range of (lack of) health measures, including depressive symptoms, somatic complaints, and sleep disturbances. This result provides two possible interpretations: (1) Work engagement is more than just the opposite of burnout in terms of employee well-being. It is a conceptualization of optimal functioning. (2) Work engagement is the opposite of burnout; however the definition of burnout needs to be expanded.

Conceptually speaking, the present study implies that work engagement and organizational commitment are more closely related than work engagement and job involvement. Although the CFA supported that idea that they are distinct constructs, they appear to correlate to other constructs in a similar manner. With previous work (Lawler & Hall, 1970; Lodahl & Kejner, 1965) indicating that job involvement is primarily a function of the individual, and organizational commitment a function of the situation (Meyer & Allen, 1997), the most obvious interpretation is that job involvement should be considered as an independent variable whereas work engagement and organizational commitment should be viewed as dependent variables in work/organizational research models. A recent article by Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) also finds support for the notion that work engagement mediates the relationship between motivational job resources and work commitment, which could explain the similar relationships between these constructs and job resources. However, interpretations need be made with caution, since most research rests upon cross-sectional data. Theoretically, though, it makes sense that if employees receive sufficient support in the form of job resources, they will be more content with their work situation, their organization, and also experience better, psychosomatic health.

### The Swedish Version of the UWES (Short Scale)

A second aim was to establish factorial validity of the Swedish (short) version of the UWES (Schaufeli et al., 2002), since psychometric properties of this version had not been previously published. The results were equally supportive of a one-dimensional and a three-dimensional representation of work engagement. Although a rather exten-

sive empirical body of evidence (see Schaufeli et al., submitted manuscript) support the three-factor model, some ambiguity about factor structure has been presented by Sonnentag (2003), especially concerning the short form of the UWES (see Schaufeli et al., 2002) where extremely high inter-correlations between the constructs appear to favor a one-dimensional solution. According to Schaufeli et al. (submitted for publication), a composite measure is preferable with respect to practical matters. The internal consistency coefficients of each the subscales were satisfactory (and like their latent intercorrelations they were similar to findings in other countries; see Schaufeli et al., submitted). The post hoc reliability analyses showed that the  $\alpha$  of the composite measure was also good, providing good grounds for use of the scales both as separate units if one is interested in detailed aspects, or as a composite measure if one is interested in work engagement in a broader scope. Most importantly, it was concluded that the conceptualization and operationalization of the UWES can be successfully employed to Swedish contexts.

### Limitations and Future Research

The present study used data from a cross-sectional design. A longitudinal design could be employed in future research to investigate test-retest reliability of the Swedish version of the UWES, and whether work engagement, job involvement, and organizational commitment may predict different behavioral outcomes (predictive validity; see Cronbach & Meehl, 1955). It should also be established whether the Swedish version of the UWES successfully taps work engagement in other occupational samples than ICT consultants.

The discriminant validity toward more positive notions in (work) psychology should also be pursued. With the increasing focus on positive aspects of work and well-being, it is important to keep a close eye on the parsimony of the conceptual characteristics, while also making sure that work psychology does not become a secluded area of research with unique constructs applicable only within a small range of contexts. Following closely upon this argument is the suggestion for future research to investigate the concept of engagement outside the arena of work, also developing instruments that can tap this aspect of optimal functioning in other contexts. With its conceptual link to burnout, work engagement constitutes an important bridge between the research traditions of organizational psychology and health psychology. With the UWES gaining more and more support as a valid and reliable operationalization of work engagement, future research on psychological processes at work will probably result in more sophisticated models that can contribute to more elaborate understanding of employee well-being. The most important implication of the present study was that work engagement contributes to the field of positive work psychology beyond (some of the) already existing operationalizations that are frequently



used in work and organizational psychology. That is – work engagement, job involvement, and organizational commitment are *not* “same same” – but different!

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