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## Calling, Work Engagement and Work Meaningfulness

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**Abstract:** This study was conducted to examine the influence of the work as a calling and work engagement moderated by work meaningfulness. Data distributed to 346 lecturers in Indonesia from public and private universities in Indonesia. Data was collected through questionnaires distributed through direct surveys and post (mail survey). From the results of the hypothesis test, it was found that the work as a calling have a positive and significant influence toward work engagement and stronger when moderated by the meaningfulness of work. Based on the results of the study, it is assumed that within a given job, individuals with sense of calling would have a more positive sense of work engagement and the stronger presence of a calling related to more work engagement indirectly through higher work meaningfulness. The results supports the theoretical model that calling have positive outcomes because it provides a sense of meaningfulness and identity at work. As suggested by the findings, it is allowed people to more experience work engagement, or vigor, dedication and absorption at work.

**Keywords:** Calling, work engagement, work meaningfulness

### INTRODUCTION

A calling or vocation is a function or career toward which one believes himself to be called (Novak, 1996 in Dik & Duffy, 2009). Calling in this sense does not necessarily entail the religious connotation of being called by god (Bunderson & Thompson, 2009; Weiss *et al.*, 2004), but refers to having uncovered the “personal destiny..something that we are good at and something we enjoyed” (Novak, 1996 in Dik & Duffy, 2009) entailing one’s work. It was also highlighted that a calling orientation requires a match between a person and his/her job (Novak, 1996 in Dik & Duffy, 2009; Weiss *et al.*, 2004).

The meaning of work as a calling can be interpreted as a feeling that the work they choose can not be separated from their life (Wrzesniewski *et al.*, 1997). According Tanudjaja (2013) the meaning of work as a calling is the orientation set by a person to his work and has an impact on individuals, groups, and organizations. Individuals with a calling regard their work to be their purpose in life rather than a means for

financial rewards (job) or advancement (Elangovan, Pinder, & McLean, 2011; Wrzesniewski *et al.*, 1997). Individuals with the meaning of work as a vocation will feel himself “full” and interpret the work as a fulfillment until the end of his life (Tanudjaja, 2013). When a person has the meaning of working as a call, the person will exert more effort as a form of devotion. People with the meaning of calling work no longer assume that his job is just to meet the necessities of life. It supports Wrzesniewski’s (1997) theory, workers with a working sense as a vocation believe that contribution in this work can have an impact on the company and the surrounding environment (Tanudjaja, 2013). Moreover, a number of university students (Hirschi, 2011; Duffy *et al.*, 2012) reported that they regard their work as a calling and callings are likely to affect individual career development and organizations in numerous ways, for example, in terms of increased job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

According to Schaufeli, Bakker & Salanova (2006), work engagement is a positive, satisfying, and work-related mental condition characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption engagement in the organization becomes the main characteristic of the company’s success in dealing with employee human resource issues. The higher the employee’s ties to the organization the better the performance and in turn the better the company’s performance. Employees work not only for financial compensation but also nonfinancial benefits such as personal and career rewards. Therefore, it is impossible to establish their engagement only with a very structural approach. They as individuals must first be “tied up” with a value system approach. Organizational culture systems as well as corporate work cultures (efficient, quality, transparent and accountable) must be embedded since they enter the new social system of the company and gradually they are fostered, therefore that the value system in the company has become its needs (Saks & Ashforth, 2002).

Work meaningfulness is defined as how a person judges that his work is his life. In the study of Bunderson and Thompson (2003) on zoo workers, the workers felt that when they left their bachelor’s degree just to take care of animals it was a pleasure for them. Workers have their own satisfaction when they see the animals they train and care about is doing what human beings do like sitting, standing, or doing other things. Not only satisfied with their work, but they also feel proud of the profession they live as a zookeeper. A belief that when they participate in conservation goals at the zoo creates a sense of meaning in a very strong job and the importance of working as zookeepers. Locke and Latham (1990) used the goal theory to design the theoretical framework of work orientation (Wrzesniewski *et al.*, 1997). The theory is used to build a set of arguments about differences in assumptions of an area and work behavior can affect different employment behavior. In an attempt to define the meaning of work, Locke and Latham assume an individual’s work orientation as the individual’s interpretation of the work. Statements about the meaning of work are related to what it means to work, how it means to work, how important it is to work in context for the rest of life, and how a job affects the behavior of work, performance, other individuals and organizational outcomes to provide answers to the statement of Puspita (2012). Work meaningfulness refers to how people see the significance of their work (Rosso, Dekas & Wrzesniewski, 2010).

This research focused on work engagement as a positive personal and organizational outcome of callings at work and work meaningfulness to be a major reason why calling are related to work engagement.

## **CALLING AND WORK ENGAGEMENT**

Work Engagement is something unique and important for a person and organization to build the organization’s welfare and develop the organization, but unlike job satisfaction that is significantly related

to bottom-line organizational factors such as performance (Christian, Garza & Slaughter, 2011). In contrast to work engagement, job as a vocation also requires a deep passion for work and feels fulfilling one of the goals of living in work (Bunderson & Thompson, 2009; Dobrow & Tosti-Kharas, 2011). In empirical research among managers, Dobrow and Tosti-Kharas (2011) confirmed that the two constructions are significantly correlated but empirically different. Research Puspita (2012) stated that the meaning of work as a call is positively correlated with work engagement at one of the hospitals in Surabaya, Indonesia. This meant that the higher the nurse interpreted their work, the nurse will be more attached to his work. However, it was found that not all workers can interpret their work as a calling due to several factors so that motivation work down. In the study of Hirschi (2012) indicated that there was a positive correlation between job variables as a calling and work engagement among employees in German. Theoretically, people with their sense of work as their vocation have a deep sense of their meaning, dedication, and involvement in work (Dik, Duffy & Eldridge, 2009; Dobrow & Tosti-Kharas, 2011; Elangovan, Pinder & McLean, 2010), which conceptually related to work engagement. Based on the explanation above, it can be formulated hypothesis as follows:

**H1:** Presence of Calling will influence Work Engagement.

### **CALLING, WORK ENGAGEMENT AND WORK MEANINGFULNESS**

Work as a calling and work meaningfulness are two different theories because the work can be meaningful if the job has certain characteristics such as feedback, clarity of assignment (Humphrey, Nahrgang & Morgeson, 2007) and whether the work is considered a life purpose of calling. Conceptually, the calling should be regarded as a prelude to work meaningfulness, because a calling makes people feel meaningful and purposeful in the work they do (Rosso, *et al.*, 2010; Wrzesniewski *et al.*, 1997) and thereby improves the perception of one's work in order to Meaningful. Proponents of this assumption are cross-sectional studies by Duffy *et al.* (2012) which asserts that the prediction of calling as meaningful work is an important indicator of positive personal and results organization is a major psychological condition for community involvement in their work (Humphrey, Nahrgang & Morgeson, 2007; Rosso, Dekas & Wrzesniewski, 2010). A study conducted by Hirschi (2012) showed that there was a positive influence when the influence of work as a calling and work engagement in moderation by work meaningfulness. Research conducted on a number of these managers supports the results of several previous researchers research. Therefore, based on the explanation above, it can be formulated that the improvement of work meaningfulness becomes the main reason why the meaning of job as a call is related to work engagement.

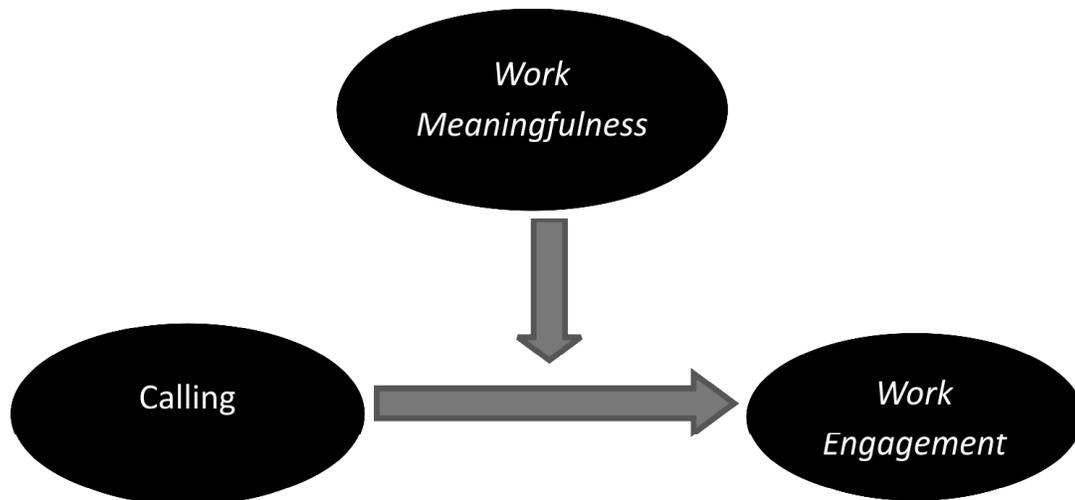
**H2:** Stronger presence of a calling relates to more work engagement indirectly through higher work meaningfulness

The research model used in this study was described in Figure 1.

### **METHODS**

#### **Sample of The Study**

The sample in this study was 346 lecturers from universities in Indonesia from both state and private universities. Data was collected through questionnaires distributed through direct surveys and post (mail survey).



Source: Modification of Hirschi (2012)

### Research Instruments

Instrument in this study consist of 24 statements for all research variables (calling, work engagement and work meaningfulness)

- Presence of calling was measured by instruments developed by Hirschi (2011) of the two item (“ I have a calling to a particular kind of work; “ I have a good understanding of my calling as it applies to my career”).
- Work engagement was measured with short version of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale by Schaufeli, Bakker, & Salanova (2006)
- Work meaningfulness was measured by instruments developed by Bunderson and Thompson (2009) with five-item scale (e.g, “I have a meaningful job”).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### Validity and Reliability Testing

Ghozali (2011) stated that the test used to measure the validity of a legitimate or valid whether or not the questionnaires of study. A questionnaire study is said to be valid if the questions on the questionnaire were able to express something that is measured by the questionnaire. Meanwhile, the reliability test conducted to demonstrate the accuracy and precision of the measuring. A construct or variable said to be reliable if it gives Cronbach alpha values  $\geq 0,60$  (Nunnally, in Ghozali 2011). Results validity and reliability of each item in question can be seen in table 1 and 2.

### H1: Calling and Work Engagement

In this study, the first hypothesis was presence of calling influenced work engagement, tested with simple regression analysis. The test results were as presented in Table 3. In Table 3 found that calling influenced

**Table 1**  
**Validity Testing Result**

	1	2	3
WE1		.672	
WE2		.690	
WE3		.560	
WE4		.740	
WE5		.737	
WE6		.583	
WE7		.703	
WE8		.757	
WE9		.665	
WE10		.683	
WE11		.717	
WE12		.635	
WE13		.728	
WE14		.401	
WE15		.701	
WE16		.505	
WE17		.565	
CA1	.922		
CA2	.916		
WM1			.781
WM2			.854
WM3			.868
WM4			.839
WM5			.868

**Table 2**  
**Reliability Testing Result**

Variable	Cronbach Alpha
Work Engagement	0.899
Calling	0.816
Work Meaningfulness	0.890

work engagement. Therefore, the first hypothesis was supported. The result supported the findings of Dobrow and Tosti-Kharas (2011), Hirschi (2012) and Puspita (2012), which found people with their sense of work as their vocation have a deep sense of their meaning, dedication, and involvement in work. This meant that the higher the individual interpreted their work, they will be more attached to his work.

**Table 3**  
**Results of 1<sup>st</sup> Hypothesis**

<i>Model</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>R Square</i>	<i>Adjusted R Square</i>	<i>Std. Error of the Estimate</i>
1	.629a 6.42086	.396	.394	

a. Predictors: (Constant), TWE

**ANOVA<sup>b</sup>**

<i>Model</i>		<i>Sum of Squares</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>Mean Square</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
1	Regression	9299.657	1	9299.657	225.570	.000 <sup>a</sup>
	Residual	14182.242	344	41.227		
	Total	23481.899	345			

**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

<i>Model</i>		<i>Unstandardized Coefficients</i>		<i>Standardized Coefficients</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
		<i>B</i>	<i>Std. Error</i>	<i>Beta</i>		
1	(Constant)	30.602	2.619		11.687	.000
	TSR	4.382	.292	.629	15.019	.000

## H2: Work Meaningfulness moderate the relationship of Calling and Work Engagement

According to Humphrey, Nahrgang and Morgeson (2007) work meaningfulness and calling are theoretically distinct because work can be perceived as meaningful due to certain job characteristics that are independent of whether the work is perceived as one's purpose in life. Several studies have linked the presence of calling as meaningful work meaningfulness is an important indicator of positive personal and results organization is a major psychological condition for community involvement in their work (Humphrey, Nahrgang & Morgeson, 2007; Rosso, Dekas & Wrzesniewski, 2010). In this study, the second hypothesis testing was done by moderated regression analysis and test results can be seen in Table 4. The result showed that the third hypothesis was supported with Studies of Duffy *et al.*, (2012) and Hirschi (2012) showed that there was a positive influence when the influence of work as a calling and work engagement in moderation by work meaningfulness.

**Table 4**  
**Results of 2<sup>nd</sup> Hypothesis**

<i>Model</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>R Square</i>	<i>Adjusted R Square</i>	<i>Std. Error of the Estimate</i>
1	.683a	.466	.463	6.04357

a. Predictors: (Constant), TC

**ANOVA<sup>b</sup>**

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	10953.896	1	5476.948	149.952	.000 <sup>a</sup>
	Residual	12528.003	343	36.525		
	Total	23481.899	345			

**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	43.405	3.113		13.941	.000
	TC	.669	.669	.040	.418	.676
	MO1	.119	.018	.646	6.730	.040

a. Dependent Variable: TWE

**CONCLUSION**

The purpose of the study was to to examine the influence of the work as a calling and work engagement moderated by work meaningfulness. Based on the results of the study, it is assumed that within a given job, individuals with sense of calling would have a more positive sense of work engagement and the stronger presence of a calling related to more work engagement indirectly through higher work meaningfulness. Specifically, the results supports the theoretical model that calling have positive outcones because it provides a sense of meaningfulness and identity at work. As suggested by the findings, these factors allow people to more often experience work engagement, or vigor, dedication and absorption at work.

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