

Job Engagement, Job Satisfaction, and Contrasting Associations with Person-Job Fit

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Abstract

Forms of well-being vary in their activation as well as valence, differing in respect of energy-related arousal in addition to whether they are negative or positive. Those differences suggest the need to refine traditional assumptions that poor person-job fit causes lower well-being. More activated forms of well-being were proposed to be associated with poorer, rather than better, want-actual fit, since greater motivation raises wanted levels of job features and may thus reduce fit with actual levels. As predicted, activated well-being (illustrated by job engagement) and more quiescent well-being (here, job satisfaction) were found to be associated with poor fit in opposite directions – positively and negatively respectively. Theories and organizational practices need to accommodate the partly contrasting implications of different forms of well-being.

There have been surprisingly few conceptually-based empirical comparisons between the correlates of different forms of well-being. Different aspects partly overlap with each other within the general construct of health (e.g., Warr, 2012a), but their divergent attributes can also be linked to contrasting causes and consequences. It is important to identify each one's key elements and the potential implications of those for associations with other variables. This paper focuses on well-being differences in relation to the fit between workers' values, wants or preferences and the job features currently available to them.

The traditional notion of "job satisfaction" will be compared with the more recently studied form of well-being labeled as "job engagement". These differ in their level of activation or arousal, a principal dimension within the affective circumplex model established in other areas of research (e.g., Remington, Fabrigar, & Visser, 2000; Russell, 1980, 2003; Yik, Russell, & Feldman Barrett, 1999). The circumplex framework (illustrated in Figure 1) views affects not only in respect of their positive or negative valence, the degree to which they are pleasant or unpleasant, but also in terms of energized activation, a person's "state of readiness for action or energy expenditure" (Russell, 2003, p. 156). Cognitive processes associated with positive activation include a stronger focus on desirable outcomes and raised expectancies of reward from the investment of energy (e.g., Seo, Feldman Barrett, & Bartunek, 2004).

Whatever its target (a job, oneself, or something else), satisfaction is a positive affect with moderate-to-low arousal in the circumplex. Consistent with its derivation from the Latin "satis", meaning "enough", the term implies sufficiency or adequacy – something is satisfactory or OK, rather than being wonderful or exciting. By definition in terms of its original meaning, "satisfaction" refers to an acceptable level rather than to an enthusiastic, energized state.

Job engagement also has positive valence, but it differs in being more strongly activated. “It is the sense of energy and enthusiasm in engagement that makes the construct different” (Macey & Schneider, 2008, p. 24); “engagement connotes activation, whereas satisfaction connotes satiation” (p. 8). The notion of engagement incorporates positive feelings as does satisfaction, but additionally brings in energized experiences and enthusiasm within the top-right quadrant of Figure 1. Engaged workers are motivated to expend energy even in the face of difficulties and threats to their well-being (Kahn, 1990). Thus Leiter and Bakker (2010, p. 1) defined job engagement as “a positive, fulfilling, affective-motivational state of work-related well-being”; Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Romá, and Bakker (2002, p. 74) described how it is “characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption”; and the review by Bakker, Albrecht, and Leiter (2011) found “a growing consensus that engagement can be defined in terms of high levels of energy and high levels of involvement in work” (p. 22). As emphasized by Rich, Lepine, and Crawford (2010), engagement is a “motivational concept” (p. 619).

Central to motivation (from the Latin “*motus*”, past participle of “*movere*”, to move) is the presence of motive power in the form of energy. Energy becomes directed, as individuals allocate their resources in pursuit of goals they believe are likely to lead to valued and rewarding outcomes – the positive-valence ones they want and whose attainment is likely to make them feel good (e.g., Kanfer, Chen, & Pritchard, 2008; Steers, Mowday, & Shapiro, 2004; Van Erde & Thierry, 1996). Motivation – in engagement and elsewhere – thus involves explicit or implicit anticipation of satisfaction, as goals are chosen and behavior is energized and directed in relation to envisaged positive outcomes.

On the other hand, job satisfaction is more reactive, in terms of feelings about what has already been attained and is likely to be attained. As defined by Locke (1969, p. 316), it is “the pleasurable emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one’s job as achieving or facilitating the achievement of one’s job values”. (A value is that which is wanted – considered by the person to be “desirable” (Schwartz, 1999, p. 24) or “good or beneficial”; Locke, 1970, p. 485.) Someone who is satisfied with his or her job believes that it has provided or will provide an acceptable level of what is wanted.

Wants and feelings are thus central to both engagement and satisfaction, but their primary role differs between the two constructs. In motivated states like engagement, people by definition have wants that are unsatisfied, whereas in more reactive states like satisfaction people’s wants have been or are expected to be fulfilled. (Of course, within those general statements there are differences in the degree to which wants are or are not satisfied.) In broad terms, engagement may be viewed as energized satisfaction; engaged workers are necessarily satisfied in some respects, but satisfied workers may or may not be engaged.

The two constructs are similar in that both are forms of positive well-being reflecting some attainment of wanted states. However, their differences illustrate some philosophers’ alternative perspectives on the nature of happiness and psychological health – either more “hedonic” or more “eudaimonic”. In hedonic terms, a happy person is one who experiences pleasure and avoids pain (i.e., approach and avoidance wants have been satisfied), but eudaimonic accounts also emphasize positive outcomes from the pursuit of objectives that are in some sense worthwhile (e.g., Warr, 2007; Waterman, 1993). More than two centuries ago, Ferguson (1767/1966) argued that “happiness is not that state of repose, or that imaginary

freedom from care, which at a distance is so frequent an object of desire . . . it arises more from the pursuit than from the attainment of any end” (p. 49). “Activity is of more¹ importance than the very pleasure [one] seeks” (p. 43).

The presentation so far has concerned the meaning of the two constructs, irrespective of how they are measured. In reviewing empirical findings, is important also to consider how far particular operationalizations reflect accurately the concepts themselves. In respect of job engagement, current scales’ content validity is high, as items explicitly cover themes that relate directly to the construct itself (e.g., Schaufeli, Bakker, & Salanova, 2006). However, many widely-used scales of job satisfaction have extended beyond their construct’s true meaning as relatively passive acceptance of an adequate situation, instead recording perceptions and feelings that are more activated or energized.

For example, the early job satisfaction inventory of Brayfield and Rothe (1951) asks about “enthusiasm” and “real enjoyment”; job satisfaction within the Index of Organizational Reactions (e.g., Smith, Roberts, & Hulin, 1976) includes feelings of accomplishment, encouragement and enthusiasm; items of the Job Descriptive Index (Smith, Kendall, & Hulin, 1969) include *creative*, *challenging*, and *stimulating*, and the Job in General Scale (Ironson, Smith, Brannick, Gibson, & Paul, 1989) contains *worthwhile*, *ideal*, and *enjoyable*; other investigations have made use of scales of job satisfaction including items like *great* (Edwards & Cable, 2009) or *rewarding* (Grandey, Cordeiro, & Crouter, 2005).

Scales of these kinds can be extremely valuable in measuring well-being, but it is important to note that they do not properly map onto the conceptual definition of satisfaction. Instead, they take a broader perspective and introduce activated notions that are within the construct of engagement. A second form of job satisfaction instrument is more narrowly targeted on satisfaction itself, either using a single question (e.g., “all things considered, how satisfied are you with your job?) or asking about separate satisfactions with key characteristics (pay, colleagues, supervisor, the work itself, etc.) and aggregating these into an overall score (e.g., Ostroff, Shin, & Kinicki, 2005; Warr, Cook, & Wall, 1979; Weiss, Dawis, England, & Lofquist, 1967). When empirically contrasting satisfaction with engagement, it is important to assess satisfaction in this second manner, excluding surplus beyond-satisfaction themes which may overlap with engagement itself.

Motivation Level and Person-Job Fit

Implications of this difference in emphasis between the relative quiescence of satisfaction and the active wants of motivational well-being constructs such as engagement are important for several theories and practices in applied psychology. For example, well-being correlates of job content have traditionally been examined in hedonic terms, such that the satisfaction of wants is considered paramount. In that respect, theories about person-environment (P-E) fit have viewed incompatibility between an individual and his or her environment as a significant source of stress. As described by Edwards and Van Harrison (1993), “the central hypothesis of P-E theory is that misfit between the person and the environment leads to psychological, physiological, and

¹ This could be considered an exaggeration, in that pleasure and activity might instead be accorded equal importance.

behavioral strains, such as dissatisfaction, boredom, anxiety, depression, elevated serum cholesterol, smoking, and so on” (pp. 628-9). “The concept of P-E fit is particularly prominent in organizational stress research” (Edwards, 1996, p. 292).

A much-studied form of congruence between person and environment, “supplies-values” fit (e.g., Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005; Ostroff & Judge, 2007), has been examined in terms of discrepancies between a person’s preferences, wants or values and the presence or absence of conceptually similar aspects of the environment. French, Caplan, and Van Harrison (1982) focused on person-job (P-J) fit as a specific form of P-E fit, asking about discrepancies between the degree to which a particular feature was or was not present in a person’s job (J) and the amount of that feature that he or she would like to have (P). Poorer P-J fit was expected to be significantly associated with lower well-being in terms of dissatisfaction, boredom, anxiety, depression, irritation and somatic complaints.

Although findings from this early study revealed the predicted pattern only sometimes, later research has confirmed that poorer P-J fit in terms of wanted and actual levels is widely associated with lower job satisfaction and greater strain (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). Writers express proper caution about inferring causality from correlational evidence, but generally tend to the view (above) that poor fit *leads to* reduced hedonic well-being. However, differences may be envisaged in this respect between more hedonic aspects and those eudaimonic forms of well-being which are more activity-based. In hedonic terms, good supplies-values fit is expected to promote satisfaction, as a person responds with positive feelings to environmental conditions which match those that are desired (e.g., Locke, 1969, 1970); the primary influence is likely to be from J to P. However, in respect of energized motivational-as-well-as-affective states such as job engagement, causal processes are likely instead to be more from the person (P’s motivation) to his or her perception of the job (J’s perceived misfit with values).

Motivation’s unsatisfied wants within greater engagement encourage perceived incongruence with actual levels since engagement-related wants have been raised. Engaged workers’ greater motivation means that they tend to want more than they have of many job characteristics. The motivated state of engagement is thus expected to be accompanied by worse rather than better person-job fit. That energy-linked expectation reverses the more usual assumption that “the greater the perceived congruity the greater the likelihood of engagement with work” (Maslach & Leiter, 2008, p. 501).

Poor fit between wanted and actual levels is thus expected to be associated with lower job satisfaction but also with higher job engagement, since principal causal priorities are assumed to differ between the two constructs. The more passive state of satisfaction is assumed to be primarily (but not exclusively, see below) a reaction to external conditions, such that this form of well-being flows mainly from high levels of want-actual fit. On the other hand, the energized state of engagement with its stronger activating potential is particularly likely to shape motivation-related perceptions of misfit, ensuring that many wanted levels exceed those currently available.

In addition to these assumed primary causal processes – different for the two constructs – smaller impacts are envisaged in reverse directions. For example, feelings of dissatisfaction (P) are likely to increase supplies-values misfit (J), as they prime people to attend to negative aspects

of their environment, leading them to notice and emphasize problems with potentially troublesome features. Workers with low job satisfaction may thus reduce their perceived levels of some features, increasing their perceived want-actual incongruence.

For job engagement, in addition to the primary influence of raised motivation (above) a secondary positive impact can occur in the reverse direction, from J to P. High levels of work demands and challenges can be attractive for workers who are more engaged in a job, leading them to become drawn in and still more energized. Raised levels of some job features may thus increase wanted levels (thereby reducing fit) for more engaged workers, as feature-enhanced motivation nourishes their initial engagement.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1 concerns the overall framework outlined above in terms of different levels of energy within the two forms of well-being. It is predicted that job satisfaction will be associated negatively with poor fit between a person and a job, as is conventionally assumed, but that in contrast this association will be positive for the motivation-linked construct of job engagement. A second hypothesis supplements this general expectation, in terms of whether poor fit is treated either algebraically or absolutely.

In algebraic scoring (used in the majority of investigations), differences between two variables (here, wanted and actual levels) are defined positively or negatively for opposed directions of poor fit. Thus, if one direction of incongruence (say, a wanted level above an actual level) is scored positively, the opposite direction of incongruence (a wanted level below what is present) is given a negative score, indicating a reduction rather than an increase in misfit. On the other hand, absolute scoring treats all discrepancies as positive whether those fall above or below zero.

In terms of wanted-minus-actual levels, algebraic scoring thus indicates the degree to which individuals value amounts of a feature that are greater than is present, with poor fit in a negative direction (having a minus score) being treated in effect as particularly low positive misfit. The algebraic emphasis is on incongruence in only one direction (here wanting more), with wanting less treated as a reduced form of that poor fit. However, absolute analyses additionally emphasize wanting less, as they turn negative discrepancies into positive scores and accord positive weight to misfit in either direction. Absolute scoring thus provides a more comprehensive index of incongruence as fully defined, better reflecting wanting less in addition merely to wanting more. The two types of measure reflect different forms of poor fit, albeit intercorrelated because of overlapping positive scores.

As argued in the previous section, engaged workers (being motivated as well as satisfied) tend to want levels of many job features to be higher than do less engaged individuals. Job engagement is thus expected to be particularly strongly associated with want-actual misfit when that is scored algebraically – emphasizing the degree to which people want more than they have. However, satisfaction is a more passive state, often requiring job levels to be lower than currently present, for example in terms of reduced stressors or overload. Values-supplies misfit is thus particularly likely to be associated with low satisfaction when it is measured in absolute terms – emphasizing wanting less as well as wanting more.

In overview, Hypothesis 1 predicts associations between poor person-job fit and well-being that are negative for job satisfaction and positive for job engagement. Hypothesis 2 predicts (a) that significant poor-fit effects for job engagement will be more common with algebraic than absolute scoring, and (b) that for job satisfaction significant poor-fit effects will be more common when scored absolutely than when scored algebraically.

Method

On an international website advising individuals without charge about assessment processes for staff recruitment and development, a questionnaire was completed by 840 employed people from a range of organizations in several countries. Analyses were restricted to employed individuals who used English as their first language, and principal countries of residence were United Kingdom (48%), Australia (21%), New Zealand (6%) and USA (5%). Fifty-three percent were male and their average age was 35 years. Most respondents (64%) held a university or college degree, 32% were managers, and 9% were supervisors or team leaders. Most common business sectors were finance, banking, retail, aviation and manufacturing, with 9% employed in the public sector.

Person-job fit was investigated through 33 job features identified as important for job-related well-being in Warr's (2007, 2012b) "vitamin" model. Features were defined and described in a way that allowed measures of the person and the environment to be commensurate with each other. For each feature wanted and actual levels were examined through the same two items derived from pre-test studies; these were presented in an overall random sequence and subsequently averaged for each feature.

Participants first reported how much of each feature they would like in their ideal job – described here as a wanted job feature (WJF). For example, "In your ideal job, how much opportunity would you have to try out new ideas or procedures?" and "In your ideal job, how much responsibility would you have for a team or larger unit?". After all features' wanted levels had been reported, participants rated for the same items how much of each was present in their current job – the perceived level of an actual job feature (AJF). For both wanted and actual levels (WJF and AJF) the same nine response options were provided. Scored from 1 to 9, these ranged from "None at all" to "The most possible".

Primary components were identified from analyses of WJF data. Employing principal axis factoring and promax rotation with Kaiser normalization, eigen values and scree patterns pointed to the presence of eight intercorrelated factors accounting for 58 per cent of the variance. Factor labels, illustrative content and high reliabilities are as follows, and descriptive statistics are in Table 1 and the paper's Appendix.

1. Supportive environment: Eight job features covering physical and social supports such as a comfortable workplace, job security, feedback about performance, and supportive colleagues (alpha coefficients: WJF .90; AJF .91).
2. Competition and financial focus: Four features such as working in a competitive market, focusing on financial outcomes, and competing with other people (alpha coefficients: WJF .89; AJF .89).

3. Personal influence: Four job features including the chance to organize your own activities, the opportunity to express your views, and having influence on the organization (alpha coefficients: WJF .87; AJF .91).
4. Challenging workload: Five features such as very demanding goals, a lot of work to do, and long hours (alpha coefficients: WJF .81; AJF .90).
5. Ethical principles: Four features covering consistency with personal values, concern for social responsibility, and contribution to society (alpha coefficients: WJF .85; AJF .86).
6. Career progress: Four features including prospects for promotion or other career moves, personal development, and taking a variety of roles (alpha coefficients: WJF .90; AJF .93).
7. Amount of social contact: Two features involving frequency of interaction with others and number of social contacts (alpha coefficients: WJF .84; AJF .79). Correlations between the two component features were: WJF .66; AJF .55.
8. Status: Two features covering a high-status position and responsibility for a team or larger unit (alpha coefficients: WJF .81; AJF .87). Correlations between the two component features were: WJF .51; AJF .67.

In addition, participants reported their job engagement and overall job satisfaction. Engagement was measured through six items linked to conceptualizations by Kahn (1990) and Schaufeli et al. (2006) and consistent with the “growing consensus” identified by Bakker et al. (2011, p. 22) that the construct can be defined in terms of high energy and high involvement in a job (Inceoglu & Fleck, 2010; Inceoglu & Warr, in press). In relation to the past two months, three items each covered job-related energy (for instance, “My job makes me feel energized”) and job absorption (e.g., “I get carried away by what I’m working on”). These were presented in a random sequence, with nine response options that ranged from *never* to *always*. Inceoglu and Warr (in press) report from three samples the presence of a single job engagement factor and high internal reliabilities (.91, .85 and .90); the present alpha coefficient was .89. The scale has clear content validity and taps principal aspects of the construct. Positive construct and criterion validity have been demonstrated by Inceoglu and Fleck (2010) and Ungemah (2010); for instance, scores have been found to be correlated around .50 with self-ratings of working hard and extra-role contributions.

As pointed out above, job satisfaction has previously been measured with a range of different contents, often extending beyond the nature of the focal construct itself – a relatively passive acceptance of an adequate (“satisfactory”) situation. In order to increase measurement separation from job engagement, targeted assessment of satisfaction itself is conceptually desirable, asking about that construct alone rather than also including other positive themes. Participants in this study responded to “Overall how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your job?” with seven options from *extremely dissatisfied* to *extremely satisfied*. The use of overall assessments of this directly-targeted kind helps to reduce respondent fatigue and sustain attention. They are commonly used in survey research (e.g., De Jonge, Bosma, Peter, & Siegrist, 2000), and have been shown to be highly correlated with multi-item indicators (Wanous, Reichers, & Hudy, 1997).

Fit between perceived wanted and actual levels of each job factor (WJF and AJF respectively) was examined through two-step regressions, including in separate analyses either algebraic or absolute incongruence. In respect separately of job satisfaction and engagement, two parallel equations for each job factor thus contained either the algebraic value of WJF-minus-AJF (equivalent here to WJF alone; e.g., Cronbach & Furby, 1970) or the absolute value of WJF-minus-AJF. Incongruence effects were examined in separate analyses for each job factor through *beta* weights representing the increment in variance in either satisfaction or engagement accounted for by the separate and single inclusion of each form of incongruence: How much does the addition of fit with a wanted level increase the correlation of a job factor with well-being over and above its content alone?

Given that engagement is defined as positive affect in conjunction with raised motivation, engagement and satisfaction are of course necessarily intercorrelated, as illustrated empirically by Rich et al. (2010) ($r = .56$ with a satisfaction measure which included liking). As outlined above, observed correlations of job engagement with other variables necessarily embody feelings of satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Empirical separation of the two constructs can be improved through analyses of each one which statistically control for the other. The report of comparative findings below will therefore focus on the associations between person-job fit and each form of well-being after taking into account the presence of the other.

Results

As expected from their valence-based conceptual overlap, the measures of job engagement and job satisfaction were found to be intercorrelated; $r = .56$. Data columns 5 and 6 of Table 1 show that wanted levels of the eight job factors (WJF) were consistently greater than their perceived actual levels (AJF), with overall means (at the bottom of the table) of 6.81 and 5.41 respectively. The final columns indicate that 74% of WJF responses exceeded perceived actual levels (AJF), but only 18% of responses were of the want-less kind.

Table 1 also presents correlations of job satisfaction (JS) and engagement (JE) with both actual (AJF) and wanted (WJF) levels of each of the eight factors. In order to control for the other form of well-being (see above), partial correlations are presented in all tables, showing associations with one form of well-being independently of the other. The studied factors (AJF) were somewhat more predictive of job satisfaction than of job engagement (mean controlled r 's of .30 versus .22), but that difference was sharply reversed for desired feature levels (WJF). Although job engagement was widely associated with WJF scores (mean controlled $r = .28$), job satisfaction was completely unrelated to level of wants (mean controlled $r = -.03$).

Those JS-JE differences depended in part on the nature of a job feature – more comfort-focused versus more competition-focused. For those aspects of a job that tend to offer comfort or personal security (Factors 1, 5, and 6 in Table 1), the average controlled correlation of AJF with job satisfaction was double that with engagement (.40 and .20 respectively). Conversely, for those aspects emphasizing competitive work and financial targets (Factor 2) perceived levels were much more strongly associated with job engagement than with job satisfaction – mean controlled r 's with AJF of .23 and .05 respectively. These JE-OJS correlational contrasts between the two kinds of job feature are consistent with the greater motivational content of

engagement relative to satisfaction. However, they had not been hypothesized, and warrant more focused empirical investigation.

Hypothesis 1 predicted that, although job satisfaction will be associated negatively with poor person-job fit as conventionally assumed, this association will be positive for the motivation-linked construct of job engagement. Tables 2 and 3 summarize the findings separately for algebraic and absolute incongruence. In both cases, poor-fit *beta* weights were found to be associated significantly with satisfaction in a negative direction (average values, at the bottom of the tables, of -.14 and -.18) but positively with engagement (mean *r*'s of +.27 and +.19), supporting the hypothesis.

Hypothesis 2 concerned differences between the two forms of poor-fit scoring. Algebraic scoring emphasizes poor fit in a positive direction, here indicating that individuals want greater amounts of a job characteristic than are perceived to be present. Given that raised levels of engagement involve desires for greater stimulation in a job, algebraic scoring is especially likely to reveal want-actual misfit effects for engaged workers as they report wanting more than they currently have. On the other hand, absolute scoring augments an incongruence score by adding negative (wanting less) fit as a positive value. That form of poor fit is more likely to occur for satisfaction (wishing to reduce amounts perceived as excessive) than for the motivated, wanting-more engagement. Hypothesis 2 thus predicted (a) that significant poor-fit effects for job engagement will be more common with algebraic than absolute scoring, and (b) that for job satisfaction significant poor-fit effects will be more common when scored absolutely than when scored algebraically.

This pattern is shown in the findings reported in Table 4 for the 33 job features examined. For job engagement, 27 of the 33 features showed significant (positive) controlled algebraic poor-fit effects at the .001 level, but only 12 features exhibited absolute effects in that way. On the other hand, for job satisfaction significant (negative) poor-fit effects were uncommon in algebraic analyses (for only six of the 33 features) but much more likely (in 19 cases) for absolute analyses. Chi-square tests against expected equality confirmed that both these predicted imbalances were significant ($p < .02$ and $p < .01$ respectively).

Discussion

This study has refined the general statement that person-job fit is important for worker well-being, by predicting and finding distinct patterns for job satisfaction and job engagement. Hypotheses about motivation as well as merely affect within well-being envisaged a reversal of conventional person-environment causal expectations for those forms of well-being that are more energized than the traditionally-studied job satisfaction. For that relatively passive form of well-being, poor supplies-values fit was predicted to be associated with lower scores as conventionally expected – supporting the assumption of a primary causal impact from person-environment incongruence to lower well-being. On the other hand, the reverse pattern was predicted in respect of more energized well-being such as job engagement. In that case, stronger desires for positive job characteristics were assumed to contribute to greater incongruence between perceived supplies and values.

The contrasting patterns were observed in a sample of 840 workers. For well-being in the form of job satisfaction poorer P-J fit was associated with lower levels of well-being, particularly in terms of absolute, bidirectional incongruence. However, for well-being as job engagement associations with poor fit were consistently in the opposite direction – poorer fit between actual and wanted levels was accompanied by more rather than less engagement, especially in terms of algebraic effects. For example, poor fit in respect of the opportunity for personal influence (factor 3) was linked to significantly worse job satisfaction in algebraic and absolute analyses with negative *beta* coefficients of -.22 and -.23 respectively. However, for more activated well-being in the form of job engagement those *beta* coefficients were strongly positive (.28 and .26), as engaged workers desired more influence opportunities than were currently available to them.

It is essential for research and practice to give greater emphasis to motivated forms of well-being to balance perspectives on relatively passive positive experiences. Frameworks of eudaimonic happiness and positive health make clear the importance of thriving and flourishing despite adversity and the value of active involvement in one's environment. The psychological significance of job conditions should be measured not only in terms of satisfaction and the absence of strain, but also through more energized constructs such as engagement and involvement. In addition to its intrinsic importance, well-being in the form of engagement has also been shown to be significantly associated with reduced depression and burnout aspects of mental health (e.g., Hakanen, Schaufeli, & Ahola, 2008).

Measurement of job features was here based on perceptions by a job-holder rather than through indicators that are independent of that person. This procedure is followed in the majority of person-job studies (e.g., Kristof-Brown et al., 2005, Table 1), and is attractive for both practical reasons and on the theoretical grounds that environmental features have their impact through the way they are perceived rather than in isolation from the individual. However, given that other variables in the analyses are from the same respondent, well-known problems of interpretation arise from common-method variance (e.g., Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). Conclusions throughout the literature about job content, poor fit and workers' feelings and attitudes are thus widely subject to caution in that respect.

Common-method artifacts are of particular concern in relation to hypotheses about the actual magnitude of associations; does an observed correlation attain the predicted size? However, the present hypotheses are not of that kind. Instead, they compare between levels of differently-computed association based on the same data – between different correlations derived either from the same items or from the same individuals. Hypothesis 1 compares two forms of scoring (algebraic and absolute) derived from identical responses to a common set of items. Comparative findings about the two analyses of the same data cannot be attributed to common-method effects, since those are held constant in the comparisons. Similarly, Hypothesis 2 compares between associations derived from the same individuals, rather than testing the magnitude of those associations themselves. Although the size of correlations in general may have been affected by single-person responding, any influence would be constant within the hypothesis-relevant analyses.

Engagement is viewed as energized satisfaction, and its unique role when distinguished from satisfaction needs examination. Statistical controls for the contrasted aspect of well-being were therefore applied in order to identify unique relationships with job satisfaction or

engagement over and above the impact of the other variable. Uncontrolled analyses have also been conducted, confirming that the hypotheses were supported as described above, but (as expected from the presence of between-variable confounding) less strongly than in the controlled analyses.

The paper's findings indicate that current theories of person-job fit need to be amended to accommodate dissimilar processes for different forms of well-being. Poor fit does not impair all forms of well-being, but can be positively, rather than negatively, associated with well-being constructs that include energized elements. Models and empirical research in this area should seek to incorporate possible causal influences in either direction between fit and well-being, recognizing that directional priority can shift according to the degree to which a type of well-being under examination is more proactive versus more passive.

The notion that aspects of well-being can themselves cause poor P-J fit as well as being only a response to it draws attention to possible dispositional sources of satisfaction and engagement. Shorter-term well-being of both kinds is likely to reflect longer-term personality, as traits summarize typical wants and behaviors. Job satisfaction is known to be significantly associated with dispositions such as emotional stability, conscientiousness and self-efficacy (e.g., Judge & Bono, 2001; Judge, Heller, & Klinger, 2008). Although fewer studies to date have examined job engagement as a function of personality, significant associations with conscientiousness, emotional stability, extraversion and self-efficacy have recently been found (Halbesleben, 2010; Langelaan, Bakker, Van Doornen, & Schaufeli, 2006), especially emphasizing links with more energized aspects of personality (Inceoglu & Warr, in press). Given the inherent conceptual overlap between traits and states, future investigations can be expected to yield additional evidence about traits' associations with state engagement.

The fact that an aspect of the environment (here the nature of job characteristics' fit with wanted levels) can be divergently associated with different psychological states is difficult to accommodate in current theoretical frameworks. However, mixed experiences are very common in everyday life in the form of affective ambivalence (e.g., Smelser, 1998), as people have different kinds of feelings and varied reactions to different aspects of a situation. Ambivalence and environmental features' differentiated links with different aspects of well-being require greater research and conceptual attention.

The present paper is of course restricted to one form of person-environment fit (person-job, supplies-values fit), to one particular set of measurement instruments, and to one sample (a large and multi-national one, but comprising respondents with relatively high levels of education and management experience or potential). Replication and extension of the current findings are now desirable, for example through studies of less educated and manual workers within this framework. It is also desirable to apply the framework to congruence in terms of demands-ability fit in respect of personal competencies and job requirements; demands that are moderately above current ability may be linked to greater engagement but lower satisfaction.

Additional measures of satisfaction and engagement might also be examined, including multi-item indicators of job satisfaction. Nevertheless, the present single-item score has obvious content validity and is known to be significantly associated with multi-item satisfaction (e.g., Wanous et al., 1997). Furthermore, the contrasts observed here with job engagement are as

predicted and are substantial and consistent to such a high degree that they cannot be attributed to use of an allegedly unreliable indicator of satisfaction.

Job features are often recorded in terms of incumbents' perceptions rather than through independent measurement. As indicated earlier, that is theoretically desirable since individuals' reactions depend on what they experience, but it sometimes leaves unclear findings' dependence on consistent-response bias. Independent assessment of job characteristics would be useful, although that undoubtedly can have its own limitations. For instance, the tasks of different workers with the same job title are often not identical, so that a single independent assessment of their content would not be universally appropriate across a range of settings, and raters' unfamiliarity with a particular job's detailed nature can sometimes yield inaccurate judgments. On balance, self-reported environmental levels appear preferable in this area of research, but empirical comparisons with independent measures would also be useful.

In practical terms, the findings reported here point to a need for multi-track organizational approaches to person-job incongruence, aiming to find an appropriate combination of both good and poor fit. Although reducing all cases of poor fit might contribute generally to enhanced job satisfaction, correlational findings suggest that greater satisfaction alone is unlikely to energize workers in a way that improves work performance (Judge, Thoresen, Bono, & Patton, 2001). In addition, it appears desirable simultaneously to moderately *increase* poor fit in activating respects. Research into job characteristics alone (rather than their fit with workers' values) has suggested that activated well-being can arise especially from high demands joined with raised levels of other desirable features (e.g., Bakker, van Veldhoven, & Xanthopoulou, 2010). For example, setting difficult but realistic objectives or introducing challenging performance-based payment systems may reduce satisfaction while offering the potential for greater engagement and higher performance. However, given the centrality of satisfaction to engagement, it is essential that P-J fit in respect of some job features is enough to enhance satisfaction to a level that can underpin greater overall engagement. Furthermore, it is important for organizations to monitor levels of person-job fit across time, as motives can change with adaptation and experience and as job-feature levels can become modified by operational changes and job crafting by workers.

Managers seeking to raise staff engagement thus need to attend to satisfaction with several important job features but also to promote moderate demand-led dissatisfaction with other features. This research implies that it is a motivating balance between satisfying and energizing job content which should be sought, rather than aiming merely for high satisfaction across all features.

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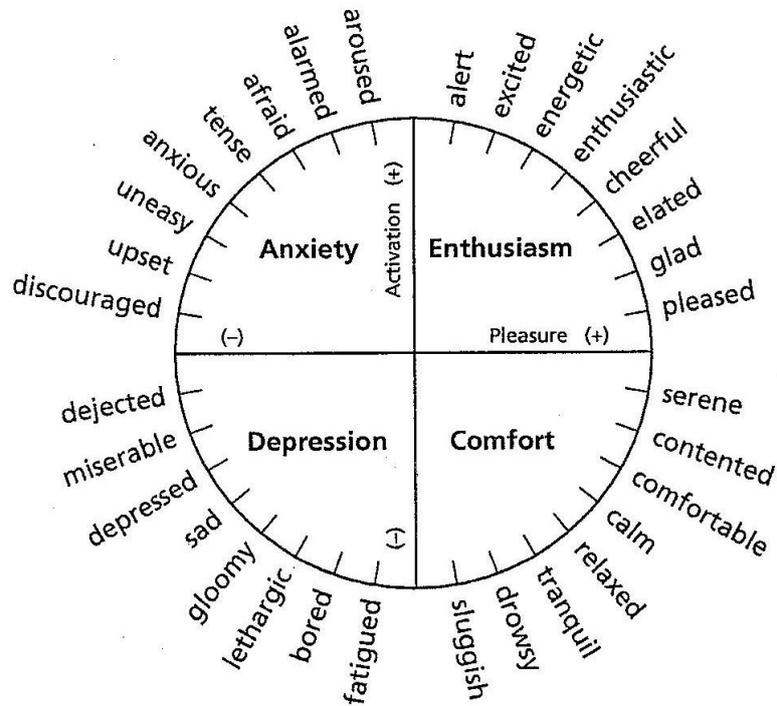


Figure 1. Some feelings and their locations within the affect circumplex.

Table 1

Job Characteristics' Actual Levels (AJF) and Wanted Levels (WJF): Controlled Correlations with Job Satisfaction (JS) and Job Engagement (JE) (N = 840)

Job Factor	AJF correlation with JS, controlling for JE	AJF correlation with JE, controlling for JS	WJF correlation with JS, controlling for JE	WJF correlation with JE, controlling for JS	Mean AJF (<i>sd</i>)	Mean WJF (<i>sd</i>)	Percent wanting more	Percent wanting less
1. Supportive environment	.40	.17	-.04	.18	5.46 (1.31)	6.83 (.98)	83	13
2. Competition and financial focus	.05	.23	.02	.31	4.75 (1.86)	5.94 (1.42)	73	22
3. Personal influence	.34	.25	-.06	.28	5.24 (1.67)	6.90 (1.08)	83	12
4. Challenging workload	.27	.29	.00	.41	6.10 (1.47)	6.58 (.98)	54	40
5. Ethical principles	.40	.25	-.04	.28	5.73 (1.51)	7.25 (1.05)	83	11
6. Career progress	.39	.19	-.08	.19	4.70 (1.77)	7.32 (1.10)	91	6
7. Amount of social contact	.22	.17	.00	.28	6.31 (1.59)	7.06 (1.18)	54	27
8. Status	.29	.23	-.01	.28	4.96 (2.06)	6.58 (1.35)	70	16
Mean of 8 factor-values	.30	.22	-.03	.28	5.41 (1.66)	6.81 (1.14)	74	18

Table 2

Algebraic Poor Fit: Regression Values in Separate Analyses of Job Satisfaction and Job Engagement

Job Factor	Job Satisfaction, controlling for Job Engagement			Job Engagement, controlling for Job Satisfaction		
	Overall: Adjusted <i>R</i> -squared	Job factor <i>beta</i> weight	Algebraic poor fit <i>beta</i> weight	Overall: Adjusted <i>R</i> -squared	Job factor <i>beta</i> weight	Algebraic poor fit <i>beta</i> weight
1. Supportive environment	.44***	.22***	-.18***	.35***	.28***	.17***
2. Competition and financial focus	.32***	.05	.00	.39***	.38***	.26***
3. Personal influence	.41***	.14**	-.22***	.39***	.45***	.28***
4. Challenging workload	.37***	.17***	-.10	.45***	.61***	.43***
5. Ethical principles	.45***	.21***	-.22***	.38***	.42***	.24***
6. Career progress	.43***	.21***	-.17***	.36***	.38***	.25***
7. Amount of social contact	.35***	.12**	-.10	.37***	.36***	.28***
8. Status	.38***	.14**	-.14**	.38***	.42***	.27***
Mean of 8 factor-values	.39	.16	-.14	.38	.41	.27

** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Table 3

Absolute Poor Fit: Regression Values in Separate Analyses of Job Satisfaction and Job Engagement

Job Factor	Job Satisfaction, controlling for Job Engagement			Job Engagement, controlling for Job Satisfaction		
	Overall: Adjusted <i>R</i> -squared	Job factor <i>beta</i> weight	Absolute poor fit <i>beta</i> weight	Overall: Adjusted <i>R</i> -squared	Job factor <i>beta</i> weight	Absolute poor fit <i>beta</i> weight
1. Supportive environment	.44***	.23***	-.19***	.35***	.28***	.18***
2. Competition and financial focus	.32***	-.01	-.11**	.36***	.26***	.11**
3. Personal influence	.42***	.13**	-.23***	.38***	.42***	.26***
4. Challenging workload	.38***	.16***	-.15***	.38***	.35***	.15***
5. Ethical principles	.45***	.20***	-.23***	.39***	.42***	.25***
6. Career progress	.43***	.20***	-.18***	.36***	.37***	.23***
7. Amount of social contact	.37***	.07	-.18***	.35***	.25***	.16***
8. Status	.38***	.15***	-.15***	.36***	.33***	.16***
Mean of 8 factor-values	.40	.14	-.18	.37	.34	.19

** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Table 4

Number of Significant ($p < .001$) Controlled Correlations between Job Features and Each Form of Well-being

Form of well-being	Number of significant algebraic correlations	Number of significant absolute correlations
Job engagement	27 (all positive)	12 (all positive)
Job satisfaction	6 (all negative)	19 (all negative)

Note: Total number of features studied = 33; correlations are controlled for the other form of well-being (see the text).

Appendix

Between-factor correlations: Perceived Actual Job Features (AJF) (above the diagonal) and Wanted Job Features (WJF) (below the diagonal)

Job factor	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Supportive environment		.28	.54	.38	.72	.60	.43	.41
2. Competition and financial focus	.30		.51	.53	.26	.55	.41	.47
3. Personal influence	.42	.45		.62	.61	.70	.48	.72
4. Challenging workload	.33	.59	.50		.51	.62	.48	.61
5. Ethical principles	.62	.27	.56	.48		.65	.53	.53
6. Career progress	.60	.48	.63	.46	.51		.46	.63
7. Amount of social contact	.40	.47	.59	.54	.54	.47		.47
8. Status	.45	.52	.61	.50	.46	.60	.51	