

BEYOND PERFORMANCE: EXAMINING THE ROLE OF WORK ENGAGEMENT ON EMPLOYEE VOICE AND OUTCOMES

Employee engagement has been argued to be an important driver of a firm's competitive advantage, as employee engagement has been linked to both individual- and group-level outcomes. Conceptualized as an individual being psychologically and personally vested in one's task performance, work engagement fosters passion, vigilance, and focus to enhance one's work experience. However, management researchers know little about the relationship between work engagement and two important outcomes beyond task performance: manager perceptions of the extent to which an employee is promotability and manager perceptions of employee creativity.

Theory and research suggest manager perceptions of employee promotability and creativity may be important outcomes associated with work engagement. It is possible managers may perceive engaged employees as better able than non-engaged employees to generate the personal and job resources necessary to perform differentially demanding tasks at higher organizational levels. Furthermore, managers may view engaged employees as more creative, as work engagement helps individuals overcome challenges, engage in self-expression, and increases one's commitment to work. However, very little is known about the explanatory mechanisms linking engagement to promotability and creativity.

In order to investigate why managers may perceive engaged employees to be promotable and creative, a research team comprised of Dr. Sandy Wayne (UIC), Dr. Chenwei Liao (Michigan State University) and Eric J. Michel (UIC) surveyed 453 employees and their managers within a *Fortune 500* building supply company.

Implications of this research:

- ***Voice behavior is one mechanism that links work engagement to manager perceptions of promotability and creativity.*** Voice behavior, exemplified by raising constructive suggestions to improve how work is conducted or to offer new information designed to increase organizational effectiveness, is one type of discretionary expression undertaken by employees. Our findings suggest engaged employees are more willing to speak up regarding issues that they are passionate about and consequently, managers take note of this behavior.
- ***Work engagement provides internal motivation for employees to believe they are able to speak up at work and to perceive norms that support speaking up.*** When employees believe they possess the efficacy to speak up and recognize norms that

encourage speaking up, our findings suggest engaged employees are more likely to do so.

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