

***The Effect of Goal Structure on Job Performance:  
The Mediating Role of Goal Orientation and Work Engagement***

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**Abstract**

Research on work engagement has been widely studied and almost exclusively focused as a dependent variable, based on work engagement model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008). The objective of this study is to examine the pathways from goal structure to job performance through goal orientation and work engagement. The job performance model was tested with supportive staffs in the public university. Data were analyzed by using path analysis.

The results indicate that goal structure and goal orientation have positive relation with job performance. Additionally, the goal structure has an indirect effect on job performance through goal orientation and work engagement. The overall goodness-of-fit statistical analysis depicts that the causal model of job performance in university staffs is the best fit to the empirical data. Effort to increase the goal structure and to increase the goal orientation could influence engagement and job performance. Availability of the goal orientation and work engagement may increase job performance. The information about direct, indirect and total effects of all variables in the tested model, suggestions and implications for increasing job performance in university staffs are discussed.

**Keywords:** goal structure, goal orientation, work engagement, job performance

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## **Introduction**

The subject of job performance has been researched extensively within the area of industrial and organizational psychology because the Job performance is a consequence of the proceedings that are pertinent to the organizations' goals (Campbell, 1990; Borman, 2004). The performance is also connected to the organization objectives, as well as the personal goal. (Campbell, 1990) Job performance is similar to the prospective for the individual workers performance. It is the sign of the capacity to carry out the tasks allocated and to meet conformity goals and strategies put by the organization (Beach, 1980).

In accordance with the systematic review that is associated with the job performance, it is pointed out that the kind of work performance is diverse in stipulations of the description of the idea employed during the determination. This study of job performance can be separated into 4 dimensions that comprise Contextual performance, Task performance, Counterproductive job performance and extra dimensions (Koopmans et al, 2011). The aspects that influence work performance on numerous factors are presented inside the literature review. Work engagement is one of the mainly well-liked variant that affects the performance of workers. Earlier researches promote the connection between work engagement in the workers performance, and the outcomes of the business. The study is carried out by the components of a behavior by task performance and background performance (Bakker et al., 2004; Bakker et al., 2006).

Work engagement is a constructive idea that connected to experience within work performance and completely fills the significance of existence. The research of Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) demonstrates that work engagement incorporated 3 dimensions which are Dedication, Vigor, and Absorption.

There are lots of investigators studies regarding the concept of work engagement (Bakker et al., 2011; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010). The researches pointed out that work engagement is the main aspect that added to a comprehension of the organization and staff linked with the organization productivity (Rich, Lepine, & Crawford, 2010; Saks, 2006). Moreover, the work engagement raises efficiency within the work performance to an advanced point, both within the organization and individual.

Bakker and Demerouti's (2008) examined the earlier researches in field of work engagement from 2002 to 2008. The work engagement is a main base that adds to the performance attainment. The research synthesis on aspects connected to the work engagement within the works is offered in the nature of models JD-R. The model integrates aspects from job resources that are linked with positive views. On the physical area of the organization that fuels development, it can be attained in individual resources related with optimistic self-evaluation and the capability of persons to manage their own inducements to work performance and insist aspects on the work as a pressure feature in performance.

The variable is the affiliation between job resources and individual aspects. The model is the work engagement of the Bakker and Demerouti (2008) having a concentration on outside aspects or external factors. Job and individual resource is to be considered as well as aspects that influence the work engagement on the job

performance that are as significant as aspects that influence the work engagement on the work engagement behavior. Nevertheless, Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2013) confirmed that exterior factors influence the interior aspects which are compatible with earlier study. The study goal structure is to analyze the influence, both directly and indirectly through goal orientation to work engagement.

Other aspects that added the job performance like objective structure and goal orientation were analyzed. Ames (1992) describes why an individual sets a goal orientation, work engagement and advanced job performance. Correspondingly, the opinion of the purpose adds to the goal orientation (Ames, 1992; Ames & Ames, 1984). The goal orientation is employed to inspire persons to complete activities as allocated and used like a basis to decide clearly the behavioral goals. It is employed like feedback to transform their performance in the goal as well (Bandura, 1986; Locke & Latham, 1984).

Within the theory of achievement goal orientations, individuals will behave based on the particular accomplishments or the reason that person would perform (Ames, 1992; Urdan, 1997; Elliot, 1999). The study has established the key that the individual would do better based on their objective (Farr, Hofmann & Ringenbach, 1993; Phillips & Gully, 1997; Van Yperen & Janssen, 2002). The hypothesis of achievement goal orientations is a psychological concept. Furthermore, it is employed to explain the behavior within the milieu of job as well as individual growth. Within industrial and organizational psychology area's persons started to apply the study within education and managerial performance of the staff in the institution during early 90's (Vande Walle & Slocum, 2001). Even though the accomplishment goal orientations have been used, the research has not yet shown a lot.

This current study targets to test the impact of the goal structure on the job performance by means of goal orientations and work engagement depending on the work engagement model of the Bakker and Demerouti (2008).

## **Method**

### *Participants & Procedure*

Participants were supporting staffs. Survey questionnaires were distributed to 300 employees. Items that were originally developed in English were translated into Thai and some were developed by the researcher, underwent internal consistency and item total correlation analyses; this was to ensure good validity and reliability before test administration. The survey protocol was certified by the Ethical Review Committee for Research Involving Human Research Subjects, Faculty of Medicine, Siriraj Hospital, Mahidol University.

### *Measure*

Participants were invited to indicate their level of agreement with each statement on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 "Strongly disagree" to 5 "Strongly agree". All scales were developed in Thai and psychometric properties (e.g. item analysis, content testing, construct validity and reliability)

### *Job performance*

Job performance is measured by the level of awareness of personal behavior and performance to achieve the goals . By measuring from the task performance. The researchers developed the concept of Viswesvaran, 1993 , which the researchers have developed measures to assess self report by divided into 3 dimensions. 1) Productivity is the amount of goods or services are delivered to clients as agreed with the agency . 2) Job knowledge is knowledge and expertise or skilled personnel are present at work. 3) Quality is the results of the work show that it meets the standards set by the agency and worth the resources invested in the organization .

### *Work engagement*

Work engagement was measured with the 17-item version of the “Utrecht Work Engagement Scale” (UWES; Schaufeli et al., 2003). This scale is characterized by three subscales assessing the three dimensions of work engagement (e.g., “At my job, I feel strong and vigorous.” [vigor dimension], “I find the work that I do full of meaning and purpose.” [dedication dimension] and “I get carried away when I am working.” [absorption dimension]). Participants answered on a 5-point Likert-type scale

### *Goal orientation*

The measure aims to goal orientation expertise, Measured by using a scale developed by the researchers based on goal orientation divided into 2 dimensions, are mastery goal orientation was indicated by an emphasis on this document which has been updated by the synthesis form Hulleman (Hulleman; et al. 2010) Some part on the set of measurements patterns of adaptive learning scales: PALS by Midgley (Midgley; et al 2000) The scale has 5 different scales which matching you the most to the less.

### *Goal structure*

The scale of goal structure is measured the development of a set patterns of adaptive learning scales: PALS. by Midgley (Midgley ; et al., 2000) The scale is used to measure the goal of the agency's operations are divided into 2 dimensions, are A mastery goal structure was indicated by an emphasis on learning, understanding job-related and to develop the ability to work. (e.g., “ focus on learning something related to your practice” “the agency has sent you to your training so that you are capable enough to work”. While a performance goal structure was indicated by an emphasis on the results of operations, performance and competition. (e.g., “ has a policy focused on results achieved in their stuffs.” “Agencies will notify you that you have to perform at any level.”) Participants answered on a 5 point Likert-type scale.

### **Data analysis**

Descriptive statistics and correlations were computed for the demographic variables and variables in the conceptual framework model. Path analysis was applied to test

whether goal structure could predict job performance in the supportive staffs, either directly or indirectly. Goal structure was used as exogenous variables, while goal orientation and work engagement were used as mediators.

LISREL 8.72 (Joreskog and Sorbom, 1996) was used to estimate the path models using maximum likelihood (ML) estimation. The covariance matrix was used as input and measurement errors were allowed to be related. The overall fit of this model was evaluated by considering three criteria: chi-square, comparative fit index (CFI) greater than .90 (Browne & Cudeck, 1993) and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) less than .08 (Kliwer & Murrelle, 2007). The fit was also evaluated by checking standardized residuals greater than 2.00. A very good model fit is considered to have a relative chi-square ( $\chi^2/df$  ratio) of 3.00 or less with CFI and NNFI at .90 or higher (Bentler & Bonett, 1980).

## Results

Means, standard deviations, and correlation coefficients among all the variables in the tested model are presented in Table 1. The results show significant relationships among the exogenous variables, dependent variable and mediators. All measures demonstrated adequate levels of reliability (0.783–0.955).

Table 1 Means, standard deviations, correlations ( $n=300$ )

Variables	1	2	3	4
Goal Structure	1			
Goal Orientation	.474**	1		
Work engagement	.472**	.628**	1	
Job Performance	.346**	.602**	.676**	1
<i>M</i>	3.582	3.944	3.762	3.785
<i>SD</i>	.546	.515	.547	.474

\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , ( $n=300$ ); the values in the parenthesis are Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient.

Work engagement has a strong path to job performance. However, goal structure is not related to job performance directly, but are related indirectly through the goal orientation and work engagement to job performance. Thus, pathways from goal structure, goal orientation, and work engagement to job performance indicate both direct and indirect effects. In summary, the results suggest that the antecedents explained 56% of the variance in job performance.

The results show s significant relationships among exogenous variables, mediators, and criterion variables (Figure 1) as follows.

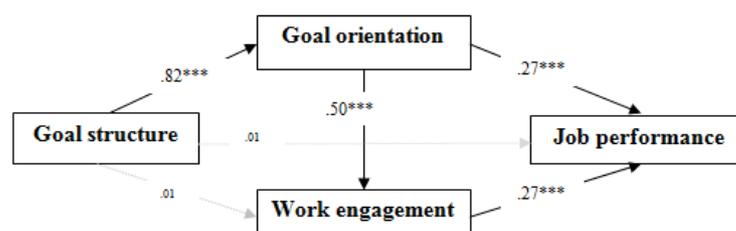


Figure 1

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

This study has investigated the pathways of goal structure, goal orientation and work engagement to job performance. It was revealed and confirmed that all independent and mediator variables jointly and relatively contributed to job performance. The fit indices indicated that the hypothesized model had a reasonably adequate fit to the empirical data.

Multiple path mediation tests showing the importance of staff's goal structure was acted as independent variable in the model. It also included how staffs could be to increase job performance through mediators such as goal orientation and work engagement.

Base on the analysis, work engagement has a strong path to job performance. This is consistent with the previous researches on work engagement. Schaufeli et al. (2006) found that work engagement is strongly related to job performance. Other studies found the similar main results (Rich, Lepine, & Crawford, 2010) Moreover, worker with engagement will perform better than worker who has none or less engagement in work (Gierveld & Bakker, 2005).

Previous studies also indicated more information that worker who has more engagement in work will lead to a positive performance. (Schaufeli et al., 2006; Gierveld & Bakker, 2005)

Goal structure had indirect and total effects on job performance through the goal orientation and work engagement. This finding is supported by the previous studies conduct with high school student population. It is depicted that goal structure is related to a goal orientation positively and can be explained the expertise of the students. (Luo, Hogan, & Paris, 2011; Wolters, 2004).

Moreover, the studies concerning goal structure, goal orientation, and performance were done by using concept of mediating study (Silver, Dwyer, & Alford, 2006).

As suggested by these findings, goal structure can be a strong motivator of the behavior. Staffs with high goal structure are well at setting and achieving goals and planning strategies for encountering long-term obligations. However, the increasing of job performance should be concerned the mediators such as goal orientation and work engagement. Put more effort to build up goal structure will increase both goal orientation and work engagement as well. Base on the model analysis in this study can be applied in order to increase the plan and operational effectiveness of the university both policy and practice.

Future studies should enlarge the population and develop the program for optimizing the goal structure in university staffs.

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