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Job Demands and Resources as Antecedents of Work Engagement: Comparative Research on Finland and Russia

Abstract

Purpose: This study examines work engagement and its antecedents in two countries: Finland and Russia. The job demands-resources model (JD-R model) provides the background theory for the analysis.

Design/methodology/approach: This study uses a quantitative approach with a cross-sectional research design. The data was analysed using descriptive methods and stepwise logistic regression analysis.

Findings: The overall level of work engagement was higher in Finland than in Russia. The opportunity to learn new skills at work was the strongest predictor of work engagement in both countries. The most significant difference was that once job demands and resources were taken into account, the managerial position has a strong effect on work engagement in Russia, while in Finland it has no significant effect.

Practical implications: Knowledge about the antecedents of work engagement and especially the strong effect of opportunities to learn new skills on work engagement could encourage organisations to provide their employees with development opportunities throughout their careers.

Originality/value: This study adds to the limited comparative research on work engagement and its predictors.

Keywords: work engagement, job demands-resources model (JD-R) model, job resources, job demands, comparative research

Introduction

This article examines work engagement from a comparative perspective. The research question guiding this article is as follows: What are the predictors of work engagement, and do they differ between the Finnish and Russian contexts?

Work engagement is defined as a persistent, positive, affective-emotional state of fulfilment in one's job (Hallberg & Schaufeli 2006), and it plays an increasingly important role in global competition. Studies have shown that work engagement has several positive consequences: it predicts, for example, the effectiveness of the work (Rich et al. 2010; Kahn 1990), lower turnover intention (Schaufeli & Bakker 2004) and employee proactivity (Salanova & Schaufeli 2008). Employee engagement is also a predictor of financial success among organisations (Wefald & Downey 2009). Given these positive outcomes for both employees and organisations, it is crucial for organisations to understand the most important predictors of work engagement to ensure they can implement changes and become more competitive.

This study compares two very different working contexts – Finland and Russia – and reveals interesting insights into the predictors of work engagement in different work contexts. Russia and Finland have significantly different business and working cultures, but they face similar challenges related to global competition. Russia is a huge country with significant economic power, and while it carries remnants of Soviet systems in its work life (Kets de Vries et al. 2004; Puffer & McCarthy 2011), there are signs of change (Balabanova et al. 2015). On the other hand, Finland is a smaller but competitive player, and the quality of Finnish work life is high compared with other European countries (Parent-Thirion et al. 2007). Both countries have a long-standing economic and trade partnership; in fact, many Finnish firms have subsidiaries in Russia, and vice versa. Both as individual actors and as trade partners, it is important for these countries to understand the significance of work engagement within their own borders and the relevance of their work life to their business partnerships.

The topic of work engagement has been widely discussed and studied internationally. However, this topic has been studied in Finland only in the past ten years (e.g. Hakanen, Schaufeli & Ahola 2008; Mauno, Kinnunen & Ruokolainen 2007; Taipale et al. 2011), and there is growing academic interest in the topic. In the Russian context, with a few exceptions (e.g. Khazagerova 2014; Nesterova 2014), work engagement has not yet been empirically studied, which is one of the reasons why it is

important to include Russia in this field of research and discussion. Work engagement also remains under-investigated in comparative studies, and there are no studies exclusively comparing Finland and Russia. There is some empirical evidence that both work engagement and its antecedents may be culturally contingent (e.g. Brough et al. 2013; Garczynski et al. 2013; Farndale & Murrer 2015). In this light, the overall aim of this paper is to extend research on cultural variation in the levels and antecedents of work engagement. In Russia, there have been attempts to modernise work life, and thus Finland is an excellent subject of comparison to investigate whether or not Russia has achieved these objectives.

The job demands-resources model (JD-R model) provides the background theory for this study. This model is based on the idea that job demands are related to the exhaustion component of burnout and that a lack of resources is related to disengagement (Demerouti et al. 2001). Although this model has been used in several work engagement studies, it has never been used in a study exclusively comparing Finland and Russia. This setting is significant because in comparative studies, it is important to find out whether the phenomenon (in this article work engagement) and theory behind it are the same across contexts (Puffer & McCarthy 2011).

The empirical analysis is based on survey data collected in Russia and Finland. These data include the Finnish Quality of Work Life Survey (N = 2,641, the sample used in this study) and the Russian Quality of Work Life Survey (N = 780). The data is analysed using descriptive methods and stepwise logistic regression analysis. In the following section, the contexts of Finnish and Russian work life are introduced, followed by the concept of work engagement and the JD-R model. Subsequently, the research design and the results of the study are presented. To conclude, the results, limitations, strengths and practical implications of this study are discussed.

Work Life and Work Engagement in Finland and Russia

Finland and Russia are neighbours with a long-standing economic and trade partnership. Russia is Finland's top importer and is third in terms of countries receiving Finland's exports (Finnish-Russian Chamber of Commerce 2016). However, there is a huge gap between Finland and Russia in terms of their work lives and business cultures.

In Finland, like in the other Nordic countries, the quality of work life is generally high compared with other European countries. The workers report, for example, higher-quality work tasks and better opportunities for participating in decision-making and learning at work (Hartikainen et al. 2010; Parent-Thirion et al. 2007). Furthermore, the Finnish labour market is stable, and industrial relations are based on trust and negotiations between trade unions and employers. While the unemployment rate in Finland is lower than the EU average, it is higher than in other Nordic countries (Nordic Council of Ministries 2016).

Finnish workers have high autonomy and are able to influence their own work. Most of the employees have a great deal of influence on their order of tasks, working methods and pace of work. Additionally, a large proportion of wage earners see themselves as having opportunities for development at work (Lehto & Sutela 2009.) Studies show high stability in employee well-being, but some issues, like perceived job insecurity, have changed over the years. The economic recession in the early 1990s saw an increase in perceived job insecurity, but this level has decreased since then (ibid., 129). Management styles in Finnish work life have also developed through different paradigms. Today, the most advanced leadership styles lean towards innovation theories and seeing employees as individuals in need of personal development and learning opportunities. Employee well-being is also highly emphasised in this leadership model (Seeck 2012).

Russian work life has also experienced profound change over the past 25 years, yet many things remain consistent. The Russian labour market is characterised today by relatively stable employment and low unemployment (Gimpelson & Kapeliushnikov 2011). Although the majority of post-Soviet enterprises were privatised during the 1990s, the state still plays a significant role by exerting administrative pressure on firms. The share of small- and medium-sized enterprises is lower than in most other European countries (ibid.). Regarding the role of the state and state enterprises in Russia, Clarke (2006) asserted that modern management structures and practices have rarely penetrated beyond the level of senior management. The practices of production and human resource management are still slowly changing from the Soviet-era style (Korotov 2008). Russian work organisations are hierarchical and have high power distance, and the practices are still based on informal relationships and negotiations between workers and managers (Puffer & McCarthy 2011; Gimpelson & Kapeliushnikov 2011). It seems that Russian work organisations are still quite authoritarian. Furthermore, Russian wage earners have less autonomy, and managerial control is

stronger than in Finland (Popova 2010). In Russia, senior managers are more active in daily routines than in Finland, where autonomous teams play a crucial role (Mamia & Melin 2007).

Work Engagement

The concept of work engagement comprises the employee's relationship to his/her work and the strength of this connection. It is defined as a persistent, positive, affective-emotional state of fulfilment in the job and the experience of being energised and fully dedicated to one's work (Hallberg & Schaufeli 2006). It was originally described by Kahn (1990) as a motivational concept, where employees' physical, cognitive and emotional energies are directed towards work. In recent research, the most frequently cited description has been that of Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzales-Roma and Bakker (2002), which characterises work engagement as a combination of vigour, dedication and absorption. Vigour refers to one's energy at work and the willingness to invest in the work during challenging times. It is consistent with the concepts of motivation and persistence. Dedication describes the feeling of the relevance or meaning of the work, as well as enthusiasm towards and pride in the work. Absorption refers to deep concentration during the work. This includes immersion in the work to the point where the time seems to pass quickly and the employee finds it difficult to detach from the work (Schaufeli et al. 2002).

Work engagement has a positive influence, for example, on the effectiveness of the work (Rich, Lepine & Crawford 2010; Kahn 1990), turnover intentions (Schaufeli & Bakker 2004) and the proactivity of employees (Salanova & Schaufeli 2008). Moreover, Yalabik et al.'s (2013) study suggests that work engagement at least partially mediates the relationships of affective commitment to better job performance and turnover intention, as high engagement reduces turnover intention. These consequences make work engagement an important target of study, as it has a remarkable impact on both employee and organisation performance.

In Finland, work engagement has become a very popular research topic, whereas in Russia it is still only a marginal topic. Even though the theory of work engagement has been researched in several countries, there are still very few comparative studies and none comparing Finland and Russia. Finland, together with Sweden and the Netherlands, has been reported to have a higher level of work engagement compared to five other European countries (namely Bulgaria, Germany, Hungary, Portugal and the UK) (Taipale et al. 2011). In the Finnish context, studies have shown that job

resources influence future work engagement, which predicts organisational commitment (Hakanen et al. 2008a). In a two-year longitudinal study, researchers observed that the experience of work engagement was stable during the study period and that job control – seen as a job resource – was among the strongest predictors of work engagement (Mauno et al. 2007).

On the other hand, the research on work engagement in Russia has been limited to small-scale explorative studies (e.g. Nesterova 2014). There is empirical evidence that the work engagement of Russian employees can be positively predicted by special professional education, tenure, managerial position, perceived employability and job satisfaction. Among the 'Big 5' personality traits, conscientiousness, agreeableness and extraversion are also positively connected with work engagement. Furthermore, job resources – such as the meaningfulness of work, the potential to exert an influence in the workplace and identification with one's career – are positive predictors of work engagement, while job demands – including role conflicts, personal conflicts in the workplace, poor working conditions and emotional burnout – are associated with decreased work engagement (Nesterova 2014). In a practice-oriented study, Khazagerova (2014) suggested the following four ways to boost work engagement in Russia: firms should improve the quality of their management and leadership, promote a culture of trust and integrity, provide more opportunities for older workers and continuously measure progress.

The Antecedents of Work Engagement: Job Demands-Resources Model

The JD-R model states that job demands are related to the exhaustion component of burnout, and that job resources are related to engagement (Demerouti et al. 2001; Schaufeli & Bakker 2004). Demerouti et al. (2001, 501) describe job demands as 'those physical, social, or organisational aspects of the job that require sustained physical or mental effort and are therefore associated with certain physiological and psychological costs.' They describe job resources as 'those physical, social, or organisational aspects of the job that may do any of the following: (a) be functional in achieving work goals; (b) reduce job demands and the associated physiological and psychological costs; (c) stimulate personal growth and development' (ibid.).

The *job resources* this study focuses on include satisfaction with leadership, good team spirit in the work community, the opportunity to learn new skills at work and job control. Good leadership occurs when leaders have clear expectations, are fair and recognise good performance; such leadership has

a positive effect on work engagement by engendering a sense of attachment to the job (Kahn 1990; Macey & Schneider 2008). In addition to leadership, a supportive work community has a positive connection to work engagement (Maslach et al. 2001). Job control refers to the opportunity to make decisions regarding one's work (Karasek & Theorell 1990), and this is also related to a high level of work engagement (Salanova et al. 2005) and having the opportunity to learn new skills in the workplace (Bakker & Demerouti 2007).

Job demands in this study refer to insecurity, time pressure and mental stress. The subject of job insecurity relates to the fear of losing one's job and becoming unemployed (De Witte 1999), and it has been found to have a negative effect on work engagement (Bosman et al. 2005). Time pressure, such as tight deadlines and a lack of time to accomplish work-related tasks, can be harmful to the health and well-being of employees (Nätti et al. 2015). However, time pressure can also lead to positive outcomes, such as work engagement, but the motivating effects of moderate-level time pressure hold only when the employees do not find the tasks and time pressure unreasonable (Schmitt et al. 2015). Mental stress can occur in highly mentally demanding work, such as teaching. Similar to other job demands, it has a negative connection to work engagement (Hakanen et al. 2006).

Only a few cross-national studies have focused on job demands and resources as predictors of work engagement based on a comparative perspective. Brough et al. (2013) examined samples of employees from thirteen Australian and two Chinese organisations and reported that both job resources and job demands were positively related to work engagement. Farndale & Murrer (2015) used corporate data from a single MNC in three countries (USA, Mexico and the Netherlands) and showed that job resources positively influenced engagement, with some distinctions in the strength of relationships.

The current study attempts to partly overcome the limitations of previous research on cross-cultural differences in the relationship between JD-R and work engagement. It does so by 1) examining a wider set of job demands and job resources compared to earlier comparative studies (Brough et al. 2013; Farndale & Murrer 2015), 2) employing the widely recognised Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) and 3) using data from individual respondents employed in a wide range of industries in Russia and Finland.

Data and Method

This study uses data from two surveys. The first is the Finnish Quality of Work Life Survey, created and administered by Statistics Finland. It has been conducted every four years since 1977 and it provides a representative sample of Finnish employees. The data used in this study came from the latest survey, which was conducted in 2013. The survey was conducted via face-to-face and telephone interviews. The respondents were selected among the respondents of the Labour Force Survey. Those respondents who worked at least 10 hours per week were invited to participate in the Quality of Work Life Survey. The survey included wage earners who are aged 15 to 64. In total, 4,876 interviews were conducted (Sutela & Lehto 2014).

The second data source is the Russian Quality of Work Life Survey, which follows the general research design of the Finnish Quality of Work Life Survey but only administers selected parts of the survey. Therefore, the variables used in this study are similar and thus comparable. The Russian data was collected via standardised face-to-face interviews using a population-based sampling technique in Moscow, Omsk and Nizhny Novgorod in November 2014. The data collection was conducted by a professional polling firm. This was the very first time when this data, which follows the structure of the Finnish Quality of Work Life Survey, was collected in Russia.

The sampling design of the Russian data was developed in order to provide the same proportions of respondents' distribution by industry as the Finnish sub-sample of private sector employees in 2008. These industries include the following: 1) manufacturing, 2) trade, 3) construction, 4) healthcare and social services, 5) transport and communications, 6) teaching, 7) finances, insurance and real estate and 8) other industries (including legal, personal, printing, security, travel services, etc.).

The Russian sample includes 780 private sector employees working full-time and with permanent contracts. However, while the Russian survey was focused only on private sector workers working full-time, the Finnish survey covered all wage earners. For a workable comparison, only full-time private sector workers with permanent contracts (N = 2,641) were selected for this study from the Finnish data. There have been claims that the private sector in Russia has informal and unregistered labour agreements instead of permanent contracts, but some studies noted that permanent contracts have represented the majority in the private sector since the late 1990's (Clarke & Borisov 1999). About 10% of all wage earners in Russia nowadays are working on a fixed-term contract (Carabchuck 2010). In Finland, according to Statistics Finland's Working Conditions Survey (2013),

12% of employees have fixed-term contracts (Sutela & Lehto 2014). In the Finnish data, women constitute 39% of the workforce, while in the Russian data women represent 54% of the workforce. Furthermore, the mean age in the Finnish data is 43 years, while in the Russian data it is 40 years.

A stepwise logistic regression analysis was used in this study. Regression analysis shows not only the linear dependence, but also the curvilinear dependence between the variables. In addition, unlike linear regression analysis, it does not suppose the normal distribution of the dependent variable (Tabacknick & Fidell 2001, 517). As work engagement was not normally distributed in the data, the logistic regression analysis was a more suitable option for the analysis than a linear analysis. The stepwise analysis shows separately the level of the explained variance for personal background variables, job resources and job demands, which were added to the model in three steps. Thus, the stepwise analysis can show whether it is job resources or job demands that affect work engagement more significantly. This is essential when comparing the results to previous studies, as most of them have shown that job resources are more important antecedents for work engagement than job demands. The Finnish and Russian data was analysed using two separate regression analyses. Analysing the data separately, rather than in the same model, enabled this study to concentrate more effectively on the special characteristics of work engagement in both countries.

Measures

The **personal background** variables in this study included gender, age, managerial position and the presence of children (including both minors and over 18-years-olds) living in the same household. Age was analysed in the following two classes: under 40 years and 40 years or over.

Job resources, as mentioned above, included satisfaction with leadership, a good team spirit in the work community, the opportunity to learn new skills at work and job control. **Job demands** comprised insecurity, time pressure and mental stress. Some indicators include only one item, and some of them are summated scales formed for this article. All indicators were turned into dichotomous variables. Scales, item formulations and Cronbach's alphas are presented in Table 1.

The scale for **work engagement** consisted of the following three items: (1) I feel strong and energetic in my work, (2) I am enthusiastic about my work and (3) I feel satisfied when I am deeply engaged in my work. These items also appeared in Schaufeli and Bakker's (2003; 2006) Utrecht Work

Engagement Scale (UWES). These three items matched three areas of engagement – vigour, dedication and absorption – and they were summated to form an indicator for work engagement for this study. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to estimate the reliability of the summated scale. Alpha coefficients range in value from 0 to 1 and may be used to describe the reliability of factors extracted from two or more scales. The higher the score, the more reliable the generated scale is. Usually, 0.7 is considered an acceptable reliability coefficient (Santos 1999). The alpha for these three items measuring work engagement was 0.77 in the Finnish data and 0.83 in the Russian data, so they can be considered reliable.

The original scale for these three items included in the summated scale ranging from 1 to 4, where 1 signified 'completely true' and 4 'not true at all'. For the multivariate analyses, a dummy variable was made, and in the dummy 1 meant 'engaged' and 0 'not engaged'. Only those who answered 'completely true' to *all* the three questions were included in the 'engaged' group.

Table 1. Variables used in the analysis.

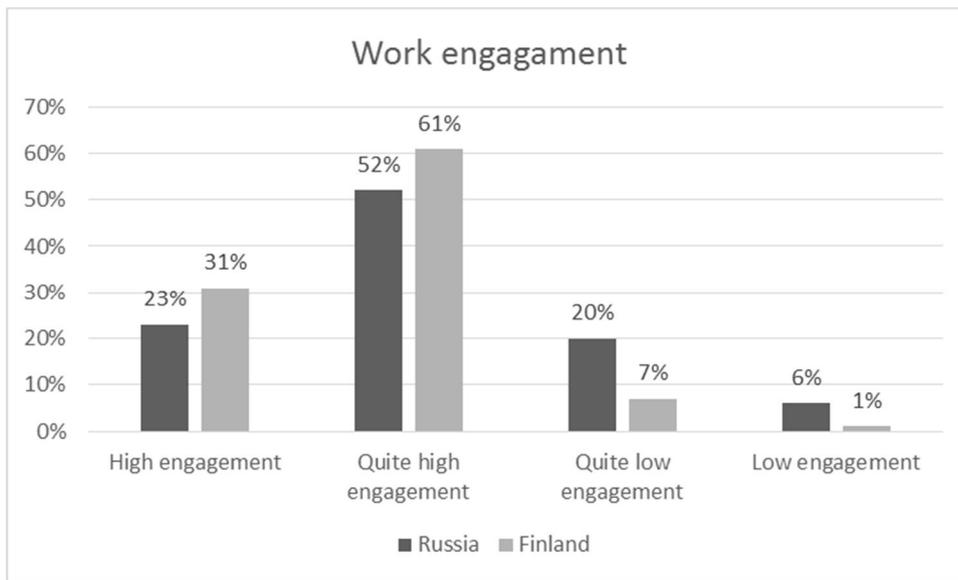
	<i>Items</i>	<i>Original scale</i>	<i>Alpha</i>
<i>Job resources</i> <i>Satisfaction with leadership</i>	1) My superior supports and encourages me	1= totally agree...5= totally disagree	.86 Finland .78 Russia
	2) My superior rewards good work performances		
	3) My superior is inspiring		
	4) My superior trusts his/her employees		
<i>Team spirit in work community</i> <i>Learning opportunities</i>	An open atmosphere and team spirit prevail at my workplace	1= Totally agree... 5= totally disagree	
	opportunities for self-development in current workplace	good, fair or poor	
<i>Job control</i>	Are you able to influence 1) the contents of your tasks	1= a lot ...4= not at all	.77 Finland .89 Russia
	2) the order in which you do the tasks,		
	3) the pace of the work and		
	4) the working methods		
<i>Job demands</i> <i>Insecurity</i>	Does your work carry the following insecurity factors? 1)Threat of dismissal,	yes/no	.82 Finland .81 Russia
	2)temporary dismissal,		
	3) unemployment		
	4) unforeseen changes		
<i>Time pressure</i>	How much do time pressure and tight time schedules affect your work	1= Very much... 5= Not at all	
<i>Mental stress</i>	Do you regard your current tasks as mentally demanding	1 = very undemanding... 5 = very demanding	

The goodness of fit of the regression models was evaluated using Hosmer-Lemeshow statistics, where a good model produced a nonsignificant chi-squared test result ($p > 0.05$) (Tabachnick & Fidel 2001, 535, 539). All three steps of the model reached this level in both datasets. The Nagelkerke test showed the (pseudo)explained variance of the model. According to the analysis, the final step of the model for the Finnish data had a value of 0.16, while the final step of the model for the Russia data had a value 0.25, which means that the model explained 16% of the variance of work engagement in Finland and 25% in Russia.

Results

Although the overall level of work engagement was quite high in both countries, it was higher in Finland. The result is statistically significant ($p=0.000$). In Finland, almost one-third of the respondents were highly engaged in their work, while in Russia, the number was almost one-quarter of the respondents. The level of low engagement is remarkably low: 1% in Finland and 6% in Russia (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Level of work engagement in Russia and Finland



The results of the regression analysis for both countries are displayed in Table 2. In the Russian data, the personal background variables explained 7% of work engagement. Age and managerial position had statistically significant effects. According to the analysis, those over 40 years old in a managerial position were more likely to be engaged in their work. The managerial position was a stronger predictor of engagement between these variables.

In Step 2 of the analysis, work resources – i.e. work control, the opportunity to learn new skills, team spirit in the workplace and satisfaction with leadership – were added to the model, and the explained variance increased to 21%. This is a difference of 14 percentage points compared to Step 1. All the job resource variables were statistically significant, and all had quite strong associations with engagement. The strongest job resource variable was the opportunity to learn new skills at work, as

those who had such an opportunity were almost four times more likely to be engaged than those who did not. Age and managerial position remained significant in Step 2.

Adding work demands in Step 3 increased the explained variance to 25%, but compared to Step 2 of the regression analysis, the variance rose by only 4%. Therefore, it is clear that in this model, work resources explain the work engagement of Russian employees more strongly than job demands. All the variables added had a statistically significant effect on work engagement, but the addition of work demands to the model caused job control, added in Step 2, to lose its statistical significance on engagement in Step 3. The addition of work demands in Step 3 did not cause any changes in the statistical significance of the personal background variables added in Step 1. The absence of perceived insecurity had the strongest positive effect on the engagement of the job demands, and the lack of time pressure was almost as strong a predictor. Thus, insecurity and time pressure decreased engagement. Interestingly, the Russian employees who saw their work as mentally stressful were more likely to be engaged.

In Step 3, when observing all the variables, the opportunity to learn new skills at work was clearly the strongest predictor of work engagement. Those who had such opportunities were almost four times more likely to be engaged in their work than those who had no or poor learning opportunities. Having a managerial position, satisfaction in leadership, lack of time pressure and perceived insecurity were also important predictors of work engagement.

In the Finnish data, gender, age and managerial position had a statistically significant effect on work engagement, but the explained variance was only 2%. In Finland, women were more likely to be engaged in their work, while in the Russian data gender was not statistically significant. Moreover, in Finland, younger employees (aged under 40 years) were more likely to be engaged in their work, whereas in Russia, the older employees were more likely to be engaged.

The addition of work resources to the model in Step 2 increased the explained variance up to 14%, but it also caused the attainment of a managerial position to lose the quite strong and statistically significant impact on work engagement that was noticed in Step 1. It is noteworthy that in the Russian sample, the managerial position remained statistically significant until Step 3; this was among the top four predictors of work engagement. The other personal background variables – age and gender – remained statistically significant. All the work resources had a statistically significant effect on work engagement. In both the Finnish and Russian data, the strongest predictor was clearly the

opportunity to learn new skills at work. Team spirit and satisfaction with leadership had equally strong effects on work engagement. Notably, in the Russian data, satisfaction with leadership was not a statistically significant predictor of work engagement. Furthermore, job control, which had no statistically significant connection to work engagement in the Russian data, was a strong and significant predictor of work engagement in the Finnish data.

The significance of all the work resources, age and gender was maintained after adding work demands to the model. Having children living in the same household also had a statistically significant effect in Step 3, although it was not significant in Step 2. The addition of job demands raised the explained variance by only 2%, as the explained variance was 16% for the whole model. Thus, for both Finnish and Russian employees, job resources are more important predictors for work engagement than job demands. The absence of insecurity had the strongest effect on work engagement in Finland and Russia alike. In the Finnish data, the effect of mentally stressful work was the opposite of the Russian data, as those in Finland who did not consider their work mentally stressful were more likely to be engaged in their work. Having mentally stressful work was the second strongest predictor of work engagement in Finland, while time pressure was third.

When looking at all the variables, the opportunity to learn new skills at work was clearly the strongest predictor of work engagement in both Finland and Russia. The rest of the job resources, namely job control, good team spirit in the work community and satisfaction with leadership were also among the five strongest predictors.

Table 2. Antecedents of work engagement in Russia and Finland. Stepwise logistic regression analysis.

	RUSSIA						FINLAND					
	Step 1	Step 2.		Step 3.		Step 1.	Step 2.		Step 3.			
	Exp(B)	95% C.I.for EXP(B)	Exp(B)	95% C.I.for EXP(B)	Exp(B)	95% C.I.for EXP(B)	Exp(B)	95% C.I.for EXP(B)	Exp(B)	95% C.I.for EXP(B)	Exp(B)	95% C.I.for EXP(B)
		lower-upper		lower-upper		lower-upper		lower-upper		lower-upper		lower-upper
Gender (ref. woman)	1,41	0,98-2,04	1,40	0,95-2,06	1,36	0,92-2,01	0,74***	0,62-0,90	0,71***	0,59-0,85	0,70***	0,58-0,84
Age (ref. over 40 years)	0,68*	0,46-0,99	0,60*	0,40-0,90	0,57*	0,38-0,86	1,29**	1,11-1,57	1,20*	1,00-1,44	1,22*	1,01-1,59
Children (ref. Not having children)	1,30	0,89-1,90	1,22	0,82-1,82	1,25	0,83-1,88	1,18	1,00-1,41	1,17	1,40-1,51	1,22*	1,02-1,56
Managerial position (ref. no)	2,25***	1,56-3,25	1,96**	1,32-2,91	1,98***	1,32-2,96	1,39***	1,18-1,66	1,09	0,92-1,34	1,16	0,96-1,42
Job resources												
Job control (ref. no)			1,85*	1,09-3,15	1,58	0,92-2,73			1,53***	1,26-1,85	1,48***	1,22-1,97
Learning opportunities (ref. no)			3,80***	2,07-6,94	3,74***	2,02-6,92			3,40***	2,43-4,73	3,55***	2,54-4,47
Team spirit in work community (ref. not good)			1,86**	1,19-2,90	1,61*	1,02-2,55			1,94***	1,52-2,47	1,76***	1,38-2,04
Leadership (ref. not satisfied)			1,97**	1,29-3,01	1,88**	1,21-2,92			1,90***	1,52-2,36	1,78***	1,42-2,07
Job demands												
Insecurity (ref. yes)					1,90*	1,17-3,10					1,49***	1,19-1,88
Time pressure (high)					1,88*	1,08-3,28					1,22*	1,01-1,49
Mental stress(ref. high)					0,37*	0,16-0,85					1,36**	1,12-1,58
Constant					0,01***						0,03***	
Cox & Snell R Square	0,04		0,13		0,16		0,01		0,12		0,128	
Nagelkerke	7 %		21 %		25 %		2 %		14 %		16 %	
change of nagelkerke			14 %		4 %				12 %		2 %	
Hosmer & Lemeshow test sig.	0,689		0,656		0,714		0,89		0,51		0,673	
	N=703, missing 9,9%						N= 2510, missing 5%					

Conclusion and Discussion

The results of this study indicate that there are many interesting similarities and differences between Finland and Russia with regard to work engagement and its predictors. The results suggest that both job resources and job demands affect engagement in Finland and in Russia. However, job resources explained the variance of work engagement more significantly than job demands, as noted in previous studies (Mauno et al. 2007; Hakanen et al. 2008.)

The high level of engagement in Finnish wage earners noted in this study has also been noted in other cross-national studies (Taipale et al. 2011), which suggests that work engagement is considered one of the key attributes of employees in Finland. The slightly lower level of work engagement in Russian employees can be explained by the fact that labour has a somewhat different meaning in Russia than in Finland and other European countries; in Russia, it is viewed primarily as a means of satisfying basic needs (Magun & Rudnev 2012). The high importance of materialistic values in Russian culture leads to instrumental, or extrinsic, work motivation and, correspondingly, to lower levels of engagement (ibid.).

The opportunity to learn new skills at work is the strongest predictor of work engagement in both countries. This relationship between learning opportunities and work engagement has also been noted in other studies (see Billet 2001). The high significance of managerial position in Russia, but not in Finland, can be explained by considerably higher levels of societal power distance in Russia compared to Finland (Taras et al. 2012), resulting in the more prominent hierarchy in Russian work life, where managers hold a lot of power and are very authoritarian, directive and control-oriented (Puffer & McCarthy 2011). The fact that front-line Russian employees are much more dependent and powerless than their Finnish counterparts explains both the lower levels of work engagement in Russia and the considerable increase in engagement after obtaining a managerial position.

Interestingly, although job control was a significant predictor in both countries, it was not the strongest predictor, as it has been in other studies that make European comparisons (e.g. Taipale et al. 2011). All the job demands were statistically significant predictors of work engagement in the third step of the model in both countries and, as in other studies (e.g. Taipale et al. 2011; Mustosmäki et al. 2013), job demands decreased work engagement. In both countries, insecurity had the strongest negative effect on work engagement among job demands (see also Mauno et al. 2005). An interesting exception is mentally stressful work, which had a negative effect on engagement in the Finnish data

and a positive effect in the Russian data. In the Russian data, 85% of the informants saw their work as mentally straining, compared to 46% in the Finnish data. This may indicate that mental strain or stress is seen as a 'normal', and thus acceptable, part of work in Russia, while it is viewed more as a problem in Finland.

This comparison contributes to earlier findings on the antecedents of work engagement. Some antecedents of work engagement were found to be similar in Russia and Finland. On the other hand, the results of this comparative study also imply that work life in Russia and work life in Finland differ and each has its own characteristics, which is also true of work engagement. In Russia, there have been attempts to modernise work life, but it seems that the high power distance still affects work engagement. It is still unclear whether Russia is going to try to emulate Western countries' work culture or choose its own path.

Nevertheless, the results show some similarities in explaining the work engagement in these two countries. Although work life in Finland and work life in Russia have different characteristics, it seems that the theory of work engagement and the JD-R model work quite similarly in both countries. JD-R is thus a workable tool for comparing countries that vary as widely as Finland and Russia.

Practical and Societal Implications

Having learning opportunities in the workplace is clearly the strongest predictor of engagement in both countries. This indicates that organisations should put effort into offering employees development opportunities throughout their careers. The most important point is that employees must have variation in their work that leads to everyday learning opportunities (see also Billet 2001).

One of the major differences between the countries examined in this study was the importance of a managerial position as an antecedent of work engagement in Russia; by contrast, it had no significance in Finland. These results indicate that Russian organisations should continue modernising their leadership practices and move towards less hierarchical work communities while increasing employee involvement and participation (see also Puffer & McCarthy 2011; Khazagerova 2014). Leadership style also affects learning opportunities. Leaders have to trust their employees to let them develop their skills in new tasks and areas. According to the results, Finnish employees appreciate community and leadership almost equally, so organisations should invest in both. The predictors of

insecurity should also be taken into account. At the very least, employees should be informed of the situation and plans of organisations, as a lack of information may lead to uncertainty and insecurity.

In Finland, the government is pushing reforms aimed at making structural changes in the labour market. The government is trying to decrease regulation and increase flexibility and mobility. The main goal is to attract new investment and have more people engaging in economic activity. These aims should be promoted further. In Russia, it seems that the status quo is being maintained. The population is ageing, productivity is low and administrative control over enterprises is strong. Moreover, new investments are being halted, private consumption is decreasing and economic capacities are declining. Russia also needs to put effort into adjusting its work life, as employees should be seen as the most important resource of organisations.

Limitations

The limitations of this study are methodological and theoretical. The Russian sample, which is relatively small and urban-centred compared to the Finnish sample, may not be totally representative and is therefore a limitation of this study. No previous research has analysed and tested the fit and reliability of both the work engagement measures and the measures that the JD-R model includes in Russian work life. There are several studies on European work life using these measures, but the ability to compare the results to Russian studies is more limited. Furthermore, mainly one-item measures were used in this analysis instead of summated scales, which may have affected the results. The data used was cross-sectional and thus the causal relationship cannot be proven. For future research, longitudinal studies would be necessary, but there is no suitable data available as of yet. Nevertheless, the strength of this study is the unique data, which enables the comparison of the work engagement predictors across these two countries for the first time. Cross-national studies on work engagement are still rare, and comparisons between Finland and Russia have just begun. The differences between Finnish and Russian work life and work engagement should be studied further and within different sectors of work.

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