



Spiritual resources as antecedents of clergy well-being: The importance of occupationally specific variables



Grant R. Bickerton ^{a,*}, Maureen H. Miner ^a, Martin Dowson ^b, Barbara Griffin ^c

^a School of Social Sciences and Psychology, University of Western Sydney, Sydney, Australia

^b Wesley Institute, Sydney, Australia

^c Department of Psychology, Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 4 November 2014

Available online 7 January 2015

Keywords:

JD–R model

Spiritual resources

Work engagement

Turnover intention

Clergy

ABSTRACT

This study tests the job demands–resources model's proposal that the prediction of well-being at work is improved by identifying the most salient cohort-specific resources. Spiritual resources, conceptualized as a subcategory of personal resources, are identified as a salient resource for clergy, and their longitudinal influence on the occupational well-being of clergy ($n = 399$) is examined in three waves of data collection over an 18-month period. Results supported the antecedent role of spiritual resources in relation to well-being at work. Spiritual resources positively predicted future work engagement, which in turn predicted reduced turnover intention. The negative indirect effect of spiritual resources on turnover intention was fully mediated by work engagement. The findings support the need to identify relevant resources for specific work cohorts. For clergy, spiritual resources are important for motivation and vocational longevity, suggesting the need for spiritual interventions among this at-risk and under-researched population.

© 2015 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

The potential applicability of the job demands–resources (JD–R) model of occupational well-being (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001) is broadened by the suggestion that it can be tailored to a specific occupation by considering the most salient job and personal characteristics for that cohort (Bakker, Demerouti, & Sanz-Vergel, 2014). The present study aims to test this proposed flexibility by considering the relationship between an under-researched type of personal resources – *spiritual resources* – on the motivational process of the JD–R model within a unique occupational cohort–clergy. Specifically, the across time influence of spiritual resources is assessed on the positive motivational state of work engagement and subsequent occupational well-being among clergy. Applying the concept of resource-specific flexibility is particularly important for clergy as the extant research on this occupational group has concentrated on burnout and ill-health, tending to neglect both positive outcomes such as engagement and resources intimately related to their work identity and practices – personal spiritual resources (Meek et al., 2003; Golden, Piedmont, Ciarrochi, & Rodgerson, 2004). Our three-wave, full-panel longitudinal design allows for the testing of causal, reverse, and reciprocal relationships between spiritual resources, work engagement, and reduced turnover intentions as suggested by the motivation process of the JD–R model. Further, this study adds to a growing body of research concerning relationships between spirituality and indicators of organizational well-being and performance (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2010).

* Corresponding author at: PO Box 565, Mulgrave, VIC 3170, Australia.
E-mail address: Grant.Bickerton@ccca.org.au (G.R. Bickerton).

1.1 . Flexibility of the motivational process of the JD–R model

The JD–R model supplements a traditional health impairment process focusing on burnout, with a distinct *motivational* process whereby job and personal resources lead to work engagement and subsequent positive organizational outcomes such as lower turnover intention (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Within this framework, work engagement is defined as a persistent and positive affective-motivational state of fulfillment in employees characterized by vigor (high levels of energy), dedication (strong identification with work), and absorption (fully concentrated and happily engrossed in one's work) (Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Romá, & Bakker, 2002).

By not requiring a specific set of demands, resources, mental states and outcomes, the JD–R model does not necessitate specific sets of particular demands, resources, mental states, and outcomes, the JD–R model is distinguished from earlier models of work motivation and occupational stress (e.g., Hackman & Oldham, 1980 job characteristics model, Karasek, 1979 demand–control model, and Siegrist, 1996 effort–reward imbalance model) that assume a specific set of variables is relevant for all possible work environments (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Although some job and personal resources may be expected to be generally significant in every occupational group (e.g., decision latitude, development opportunities, and conscientiousness), the JD–R model assumes that specific resources may be relevant for unique work environments (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014; Schaufeli & Taris, 2014). Some support for this proposal was found by Hakanen and Lindbohm (2008) who identified the personal resource of optimism as especially important for work-related well-being among cancer survivors. Failure to account for the most relevant resources may inflate observed relationships between well-being at work and other more general resources.

Although many of the occupational health factors in the helping professions are also relevant for clergy, it is the institutionalised requirement to meet spiritual needs and foster spiritual growth in the lives of individuals and communities that distinguishes this work from other helping professions (Miner, 2007). One's spiritual life is also central to the vocational identity of clergy, and has been shown to have stronger associations with psychological well-being relative to volunteer spiritual leaders and general members of religious communities (Gemignani, 2002; Pargament, Tarakeshwar, Ellison, & Wulff, 2001). Although no clear consensus has been reached concerning a definition of spirituality (see Zinnbauer & Pargament, 2005), the current research follows a general trend of using the term spirituality to refer to personal beliefs, practices and subjective experiences related to the sacred (Hill & Dik, 2012).

Even though spirituality provides a framework for highly religious populations through which they perceive themselves, their work, and the world around them (Park, 2012), it has largely been overlooked in research focused on clergy (Golden et al., 2004; Hall, 1997). Since many dimensions of spirituality have robust associations with positive well-being (Ellison & Fan, 2008), spirituality may represent a significant source of personal resources salient for clergy (Pargament et al., 2001).

1.2 . Resources and the motivational process among clergy

Personal resources are aspects of the self that are associated with resilience and affect an individual's perceived ability to control and influence their environment (Hobfoll, Johnson, Ennis, & Jackson, 2003). In the work context, personal resources motivate and facilitate goal accomplishment, protect from job demands and their associated physiological and psychological costs, and stimulate personal growth and development (Schaufeli & Taris, 2014). The proposed relationship between personal resources and the motivational process of the JD–R model has been supported by numerous empirical studies (see Bakker, 2011).

Perceived control and meaningfulness are closely related to the definition of personal resources (Hobfoll, 1989), and are also two of the most cited psychological mechanisms that account for associations between dimensions of spirituality and positive well-being outcomes (Hood, Hill, & Spilka, 2009). Park (2012) hypothesizes that perceived access to divine resources of an all-powerful God with whom they are affiliated, increases the highly spiritual worker's perceived control and capability to accomplish goals. Further, recent research interest in the role of spirituality in the workplace suggest that when work itself is seen as serving God or fulfilling divine purposes, work-related strivings take on new significance and meaning, resulting in larger investments of time and energy and a greater likelihood of success (Hernandez & Mahoney, 2012; Paloutzian, Emmons, & Keortge, 2010). It is therefore plausible to assume that spiritual resources are positively related to work engagement and the motivational process through increasing perceived control and meaningfulness (see Bickerton, Miner, Dowson, & Griffin, 2014a).

Hypothesis 1. Spiritual resources have a positive cross-lagged effect on work engagement.

In addition to personal resources, the JD–R model includes job resources as an important predictor of engagement. Job resources refer to characteristics of one's work that reduce job demands, help achieve goals, and stimulate personal growth and development (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). In order to assess the relative influence of spiritual resources, the current study included three job resources (autonomy/decision latitude, supervisory support, and development opportunities) that have been associated with work engagement among a variety of occupations (see Halbesleben, 2010) as well as clergy (Buys & Rothmann, 2010). These three resources correspond to the three basic needs (autonomy, belongingness, and competence) identified by self-determination theory as determinant of intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

Hypothesis 2. Job resources have a positive cross-lagged effect on work engagement.

We use turnover intention, defined as the intention to withdraw from a work role or organization (Borda & Norman, 1997), as a work-related outcome of the JD–R model's motivational process (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). High rates of clergy turnover exacerbate a shortage of congregational ministers in many Christian denominations (Beebe, 2007).

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/886788>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/886788>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)