

# Employee Engagement: A Literature Review

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## Abstract

Employee engagement is an important issue in management theory and practice. However, there are still major differences in the concept, theory, influencing factors and outcomes of employee engagement, and there is still no authoritative standard. This paper attempts to review and summarize previous research results on employee engagement. Two kinds of definitions of employee engagement are identified: employee engagement as a multi-faceted construct (cognition, emotions and behaviors) and as a unitary construct (a positive state of mind, a dedicated willingness, the opposite of burnout). Three theoretical frameworks are used to explain the varying degrees of employee engagement: Needs-Satisfaction framework, Job Demands-Resources model and Social Exchange Theory. The influencing factors of employee engagement are divided into three categories: organizational factors (management style, job rewards, etc.), job factors (work environment, task characteristics, etc.) and individual factors (physical energies, self-consciousness, etc.). Employee engagement is found to have a positive relationship with individual performance (organizational commitment, positive behavior, etc.) and organizational performance (customer satisfaction, financial return, etc.) The research findings show that there are three shortcomings in previous studies: lack of research on demographic variables, personality differences and cross-cultural differences in employee engagement, lack of research on the mediating or moderating role of employee engagement, and lack of intervention mechanism for employee

engagement.

**Keywords:** employee engagement, literature review, recommendations

## 1. Introduction

Employee Engagement has been a hot research topic among positive psychologists, human resource researchers and management practitioners in recent years. Because of the emergence of positive psychology, work engagement, as a positive aspect of psychology, is increasingly popular in occupational health psychology. Engaged employees have a sense of energetic and effective connection with their work activities and see themselves as able to deal well with the demands of their job (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Due to the needs of business practice, many consulting organizations are conducting continuous research on employee engagement by surveying employers and employees. Despite a plethora of research on employee engagement, there is a lack of the consistency in its definitions, measures, antecedents and outcomes. Besides, due to cultural differences, the same engagement techniques do not necessarily work for employees in all countries. In the global context, there is no systematic review of the results of the study on employee engagement to date. This review examined the electronic academic journals of EBSCO database, DOAJ database, Google Scholar and CNKI database, electronic books and paper books in English and Chinese.

### Objectives of Study

- 1) Synthesize the definitions and theoretical basis of employee engagement.
- 2) Synthesize the antecedents associated with employee engagement
- 3) Synthesize the outcomes associated with employee engagement

## 2. Definitions of Employee Engagement

There are different definitions of employee engagement among different scholars, organizations and different countries (Table 1). The concept of employee engagement was first proposed by Kahn (1990) as the harnessing of organization members' selves to their work roles; self-employment and self-expression of people physically, cognitively, and emotionally in their work lives. Since Kahn proposed this concept, researchers have proposed different definitions which reflect different understanding of employee engagement in each study, but this caused confusion for business management whether the efforts which improve employee engagement are working in all organizations.

### 2.1 *Employee Engagement as a Multi-faceted Construct*

May et al. (2004) stated that employee engagement included not only cognition, but also the flexible application of emotions and behaviors. Wellins and Concelman (2005) stated that engagement is a mixture of commitment, loyalty, productivity, and ownership. Saks (2006) defined employee engagement as a "different and unique concept" which is composed of knowledge, emotion and behavior. Cha (2007) defined employee engagement as the employee's active involvement in work and the state of full physiology, cognition, and emotion that accompanies the work engagement, including three dimensions: work

engagement, organizational recognition, and sense of work value. Macey and Schneider (2008) suggested to regard employee engagement as a wide-ranging term which contains different types of engagement (traits engagement, psychological state engagement, behavioral engagement), and each one needs different conceptualizations, such as proactive personality (traits engagement), involvement (psychological state engagement) and organizational citizenship behavior (behavioral engagement). Bakker (2011) summed the engagement as a positive, highly awakened emotional state with two features: energy, and involvement. Soane et al. (2012) developed a model of employee engagement that has three requirements: a work-role focus, activation and positive affect. Xu et al. (2013) divided employee engagement into four dimensions: organizational identity, work attitude, mental state, responsibility effectiveness. Xiao and Duan (2014) stated that employee engagement was a conceptualization including five dimensions: initiative, loyalty, effectiveness, identity and commitment. Liu (2016) stated that employee engagement of knowledge worker was composed of five dimensions: organizational identity, dedication, absorption, vigor, pleasant harmony.

### *2.2 Employee Engagement as a Dedicated Willingness*

Hewitt Organization (2001) referred to employee engagement as the extent employees are willing to stay in the company and work hard for the company, reflected in three aspects: 1) “Say”: employees use a positive language to describe their company, colleagues, and their jobs. 2) “Stay”: employees strongly hope to be a member of the company, want to stay in the company for a long time, instead of using existing jobs as a temporary transition. 3) “Strive”: employees are willing to devote extra effort to work for the success of the company. Towers organization (2001) defined employee engagement as the degree of willingness and ability of employees to help companies succeed, dividing it into rational engagement and sensuous engagement. Rational engagement generally involves the relationship between individuals and companies, such as the degree of employees’ understanding of their roles and departmental roles. When work can bring money, professional skills or personal development and other benefits, employees will generate the sense of rational engagement. Sensuous engagement depends on employee satisfaction, and the sense of self-achievement from job as a member of the organization (Fang et al., 2010). Xie (2006) pointed out that employee engagement is employee’ dedication to a profession, including hard work, dedicated to the company, loyal to the boss, and self-confidence.

### *2.3 Employee Engagement as a Positive State of Mind*

Schaufeli et al. (2002) defined engagement as a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption, and a more persistent and pervasive affective-cognitive state that is not focused on any specific object, event, individual, or behavior. Harter et al. (2002) defined employee engagement as the individual’s involvement and satisfaction with as well as enthusiasm for work. Zeng and Han (2005) referred to employee engagement as having a long-lasting, positive emotional and motivational state of awakening their work, ready to devote themselves to work at any time, and are accompanied by pleasant, proud, and encouraging experiences during work.

## 2.4 Employee Engagement as the Opposite of Burnout

Maslach et al. (2001) stated that engagement is an energy, participation, and effectiveness, corresponding with three features of burnout: exhaustion, cynicism and reduced professional efficacy, and engagement and burnout are two ends of a continuum. Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) stated that vigor and dedication are direct opposites of exhaustion and cynicism, respectively. González-Romá et al. (2006) expanded two groups of opposite dimensions (emotional exhaustion-vigor, cynicism-dedication) as two different and latent dimensions (energy and identity). Demerouti et al. (2010) stated that cynicism and dedication are two ends of “identity” dimension, while emotional exhaustion and vigor are not supported as two ends of the “energy” dimension.

Table 1. Definitions of employee engagement

Authors	Definitions	Category
Kahn (1990)	The harnessing of organization members' selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances	Employee engagement as a multi-faceted construct
May et al. (2004)	How the organization's members devote themselves to work, including not only cognition, but also the flexible application of emotions and behaviors	
Wellins & Concelman (2005)	A mixture of commitment, loyalty, productivity, and ownership	
Saks (2006)	The combination of knowledge, emotion and behavior related to the individual's role performance	
Cha (2007)	Employee's active involvement in work and the state of full physiology, cognition, and emotion that accompanies the work engagement, including three dimensions: work engagement, organizational recognition, and sense of work value	
Bakker (2011)	A positive, highly awakened emotional state with two features: energy, and involvement	
Macey & Schneider (2008)	A wide-ranging term which contains different types of engagement (traits engagement, psychological state engagement, behavioral engagement)	

Table 1. (continued)

Authors	Definitions	Category
Soane et al. (2012)	A work-role focus, activation and positive affect.	Employee engagement as a multi-faceted construct
Xu et al. (2013)	Employees' organizational identity, work attitude, mental state, responsibility effectiveness	
Xiao & Duan (2014)	Employees' initiative, loyalty, effectiveness, recognition and commitment	
Liu (2016)	Employees' organizational identity, dedication, absorption, vigor, pleasant harmony	
Hewitt Consulting (2001)	The extent how employees are willing to stay in the company and work hard for the company, including three elements: say, stay and strive	Employee engagement as a dedicated willingness
Towers Consulting (2001)	Degree of willingness and ability of employees to help companies succeed, including rational and sensuous engagement	
Xie (2006)	A sense of professional responsibility, including hard work, dedicated to the company, loyal to the boss, and self-confidence	
Schaufeli et al. (2002)	A positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption	Employee engagement as a positive state of mind
Harter et al. (2002)	The individual's involvement and satisfaction with as well as enthusiasm for work	
Zeng & Han (2005)	Having a long-lasting, positive emotional and motivational state of awakening their work, ready to devote themselves to work at any time, and are accompanied by pleasant, proud, and encouraging experiences during work	

Table 1. (continued)

Authors	Definitions	Category
Maslach et al. (2001)	The opposites of three features of burnout: energy, participation, and effectiveness	Employee engagement as the opposite of burnout
Schaufeli & Bakker (2004)	The opposites of two features of burnout: vigor and Dedication	
González-Romá et al. (2006)	The opposite of cynicism of burnout: dedication	
Demerouti et al. (2010)	Independent of burnout: vigor	

### 3. Theoretical Frameworks of Employee Engagement

A wide range of theoretical frameworks have been used to explain employee engagement. Different researchers explain employee engagement from different theoretical perspectives in their own empirical study. There is no unique theoretical framework for employee engagement to date. In this review, needs-satisfaction framework, JD-R Framework and social exchange theory are discussed to explain employee engagement as follows (Table 2).

The needs-satisfaction framework is first reflected in Kahn's (1990) definition of engagement. Kahn (1990) supposed that employees are more engaged in their work, when three psychological needs are satisfied: meaningfulness (sense of return on investments of self in role performance), safety (sense of being able to show and employ self without fear of negative consequences to self-image, status, or career), availability (sense of possessing the physical, emotional, and psychological resources necessary for investing self in role performances). When the organization fails to provide these resources, individuals are more likely to withdraw and defend themselves from their roles. Meaningfulness is influenced by the nature of the job; that is, its tasks, roles, and work interactions. Psychological safety is mainly influenced by the social environment; that is, by interpersonal relationships, group and intergroup dynamics, management style and process, and organizational norms. Finally, availability depends on the personal resources that people can bring to their role performance, such as physical energies, emotional energies, insecurity and outside life.

Employee engagement is also affected by Job Demands-Resources Model (Salanova et al., 2005; Bakker et al., 2005; Hakanen et al., 2006; Schaufeli et al., 2009; Xanthopoulou et al., 2009; Crawford et al., 2010; Salminen et al., 2014). Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model believe that different organizations may be confronted with different working environments, but the characteristics of these environments can be always classified in two general categories—job demands and job resources—thus constituting an overarching model that may be applied to various occupational settings, irrespective of the particular demands and resources involved. Job demands refer to those physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects of the job that require sustained physical and/or psychological (cognitive and emotional) effort and are therefore associated with certain physiological and/or



psychological costs. Examples are a high work pressure, role overload, poor environmental conditions and problems related to reorganization. Job resources refer to those physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects of the job that are either/or: (1) functional in achieving work goals; (2) reduce job demands and the associated physiological and psychological costs; (3) stimulate personal growth and development (Bakker et al., 2003). Thus, the JD-R model can explain the assumption that employees are more likely to engage with their work when they get job-related resources from the organization.

A stronger theoretical rationale for explaining employee engagement can be found in social exchange theory (SET). Levinson (1965) stated that employment is a transaction between labor, loyalty and actual interest, and social rewards. To a certain extent, the relationship between employee and employer is suitable for reciprocity, in which a request for return will lead to beneficial results to both parties no matter who gain the preferential treatment. Masterson et al. (2000) proposed that one party expects a return in the future after contributing or providing services to the other party. At the same time, the party that gets something of value will produce a sense of responsibility to return the other party. For individuals who have helped them, employees will actively give a return to gain more benefits in the future. Many scholars analyzed the relationship between organization and members based on social exchange theory. Employees are loyal to the organization and work hard in exchange for economic benefits and social rewards, establishing the organization-employee relationship. Eisenberger et al. (1986) stated that high levels of perceived organizational support create obligations within individuals to repay the organization, thereby demonstrating an attitude and behavior conducive to the organization. Saks (2006) argued that one way for individuals to repay their organization is through their level of engagement. In other words, employees will choose to engage themselves to varying degrees in response to the resources they received from their organization.

Table 2. Theoretical frameworks of employee engagement

Theories	Authors	Characteristics
Needs-Satisfaction Framework	Kahn (1990)	Meaningfulness: sense of return on investments of self in role performance
		Safety: sense of being able to show and employ self without fear of negative consequences to self-image, status, or career
		Availability: sense of possessing the physical, emotional, and psychological resources necessary for investing self in role performances

Table 2. (continued)

Theories	Authors	Characteristics
Job Demands-Resources Model	Bakker et al. (2003)	Job demands refer to those physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects of the job that require sustained physical and/or psychological (cognitive and emotional) effort and are therefore associated with certain physiological and/or psychological costs.
		Job resources refer to those physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects of the job that are either/or: 1) functional in achieving work goals; 2) reduce job demands and the associated physiological and psychological costs; 3) stimulate personal growth and development.
Social Exchange Theory	Levinson (1965)	A request for return will lead to beneficial results to both parties no matter who gain the preferential treatment.
	Masterson et al. (2000)	One party expects a return in the future after contributing or providing services to the other party. At the same time, the party that gets something of value will produce a sense of responsibility to return the other party.
	Eisenberger et al. (1986)	High levels of perceived organizational support create obligations within individuals to repay the organization, thereby demonstrating an attitude and behavior conducive to the organization.
	Saks (2006)	Employees will choose to engage themselves to varying degrees and in response to the resources they receive from their organization.

#### 4. Antecedents and Outcomes of Employee Engagement

Employee engagement refers to employees' physical, cognitive and emotional input in the work. Past researches showed that the influencing factors of employee engagement can be summarized as three categories: organizational factors (leadership, superior support, job resources, fairness, etc.), job factors (work environment, job participation, job enrichment, etc.) and individual factors (extraversion, resilience, self-consciousness, etc.). The research on consequences of employee engagement mainly focus on two aspects—the influence of employee engagement on individual performance (enthusiasm, excellence, satisfaction, devotion, etc.) and on organizational performance (productivity, profitability, customer loyalty, etc.)



#### *4.1 Antecedents of Employee Engagement*

The antecedent variables of employee engagement can be divided into three categories: organizational factors, job factors and individual factors (see Table 3). Most of researches focus on one or two of the three factors, except for the research of May et al. (2004). Kahn (1990) proposed that task characteristics, role characteristics, work interaction, group and inter-group dynamics, management style & process, organizational norms have an influence on employee engagement. Harter et al. (2002) pointed out that work environment, direct supervisor, senior management team, colleagues have an influence on employee engagement. Salanova and Schaufeli (2008) stated that job control, job participation, job feedback, job rewards, job security, supervisor support have an influence on employee engagement. May et al. (2004) stated that job enrichment, work role fit, rewarding co-worker, supportive supervisor and self-consciousness have an influence on employee engagement. Zhang and Gan (2005) found that support, sense of fairness, interpersonal consumption, and conflict have an influence on employee engagement. The research of Langelaan et al. (2006) stated that neuroticism, extraversion and mobility have an influence on employee engagement.

Job demands-resources theory believes that job resources and personal resources independently or together predict employee engagement. When high job requirements are required, job resources and personal resources have a more positive impact on employee engagement. Therefore, job resources and job demands are two very important antecedent variables for employee engagement. Job resources can reduce the impact of job demands, promote job goal and stimulate personal growth, learning and development. Schaufeli and Bakker (2004), Bakker and Demerouti (2008), Xanthopoulou et al. (2009) stated that the available job resources are the main predictors of engagement. Farndale's (2015) study showed that certain job resources (financial returns, team atmosphere, participation in decision-making) positively affect employee engagement in three countries (Mexico, Netherlands, and the United States). The cross-cultural theory was used to explain the difference in the intensity of the relationship between these job resources and engagement.

In terms of personal resources, dedicated employees seem to be different from other employees, including optimism, self-efficacy, and self-esteem, resilience, positive coping style, and demographic variables. These resources can help dedicated employee control and influence their work environment, so personal resources can promote employee dedication. Bakker et al. (2006) found that resilience is an individual resource that promotes employee engagement in the study of female headmasters. Xanthopoulou (2009) also studied personal resources such as self-efficacy, self-esteem, and optimism as important factors in predicting engagement. Empirical analysis of Rich et al. (2010) showed that nuclear self-evaluation (self-esteem, self-efficacy, control points and stable emotion) and engagement are positively correlated. Simbula et al. (2011) found that self-efficacy has a short-term (4 months) and long-term (8 months) lag impact on engagement. Christian et al. (2011) showed that there is a positive correlation between responsibility, positive emotions, positive personality, and engagement. Gan and Gan's (2014) empirical study showed that extraversion, conscientiousness affect engagement through job requirements or resources. The study of Roof (2015) showed that there is a relationship between spirituality and vigor and dedication.

Thompson et al. (2015) stated the direct and indirect impact of positive psychological capital on employee engagement. In the longitudinal study of Korean hotel employees, Paek et al. (2015) found that front-line staff with high psychological capital invest more in their own work.

Table 3. Antecedents of employee engagement

Authors	Antecedents	Categories
Kahn (1990)	task characteristics, role characteristics, work interaction	job factors
	group and inter-group dynamics, management style and process, organizational norms	organizational factors
	physical energies, emotional energies, insecurity, outside life	individual factors
Harter et al. (2002)	work environment,	job factors
	direct supervisor, senior management team, colleagues	organizational factors
May et al. (2004)	job enrichment	job factor
	work role fit, rewarding co-worker, supportive supervisor	organizational factors
	self-consciousness	individual factor
Schaufeli & Bakker (2004), Bakker & Demerouti (2008) Xanopoulou et al. (2009)	available job resources	organizational factor
Zhang & Can (2005)	support, sense of fairness, interpersonal consumption, and conflict	organizational factors
Langelaan et al. (2006)	neuroticism, extraversion and mobility	individual factors
Bakker et al. (2006)	resilience	individual factors
Salanova et Schaufeli (2008)	job control, job participation, job feedback, job rewards, job security, supervisor support	organizational factors
Xanthopoulou (2009)	self-efficacy, self-esteem, and optimism	individual factors

Table 3. (continued)

Authors	Antecedents	Categories
Rich et al. (2010)	self-esteem, self-efficacy, control points and stable emotion	individual factors
Simbula et al. (2011)	self-efficacy	individual factors
Christian et al. (2011)	responsibility, positive emotions, positive personality	individual factors
Gan & Gan (2014)	extraversion, conscientiousness	individual factors
Roof (2015)	spirituality	individual factors
Thompson et al. (2015) Paek et al. (2015)	positive psychological capital	individual factors
Farndale (2015)	financial returns, team atmosphere, participation in decision-making	organizational factors

#### 4.2 Outcomes of Employee Engagement

At present, the research on employee engagement outcomes are mainly focused on two aspects—individual performance and organizational performance, among which, the relationship between employee engagement and organizational performance is the focus of current research (Table 4).

Dedicated employees are more active in their work, have better health, and perform better (Susana et al., 2007). Compared with employees who are not dedicated, dedicated employees get more satisfaction from work, higher organizational commitment, and less willingness to leave the organization (Yang, 2005). Dedicated employees have positive behavior (Wilmar & Arnold, 2006). Overall, dedicated employees have more active organizational behaviors and are willing to pay more. This has been validated in the study of Dutch employees, in which engaged employees have more overtime than disengaged employees (Sonnentag, 2003). Salanova et al. (2005) studied the relationship between organizational resources, employee engagement, and employee performance. Based on a survey of 342 employees in 114 hotels, it was concluded that organizational resources can have a positive impact on employee engagement, in turn, employee engagement will have a positive impact on employee performance. Saks (2006), based on the research conducted on 102 employees from different organizations, concluded that employee engagement has a positive impact on organizational citizenship behavior. In the theoretical model constructed by Bakker and Demerouti (2008), employee engagement has a positive effect on employees' out-of-role performance.

Some empirical researched showed that there is a positive correlation between employee engagement and organizational performance. Harter et al. (2002) research showed that the correlation between employee engagement and employee turnover is -0.30, the correlation

with customer satisfaction is 0.33, and the correlation with employee profit is 0.17. Salanova et al. (2005) found that the level of employee engagement can affect the organization's service climate through the study of the quality of hotel and restaurant services, and thus affect the performance of employees and customer loyalty. Wyatt Consulting's research showed that employee engagement is closely related to shareholder returns. The average return to shareholders by employees with lower engagement, medium engagement, and high engagement within 3 years are 76 percent, 90 percent and 112 percent, respectively (Zhao & Sun, 2010). Xanthopoulou et al. (2009) stated that employee engagement can have a positive effect on the financial performance of the organization. Based on human strengths, after years of empirical analysis, Harter et al. (2002) proved that employee engagement is a "soft index" that affects organizational performance, and it is related to the five major indicators of organizational performance—productivity, profitability, customer loyalty, employee retention, and security.

Table 4. Outcomes of employee engagement

Authors	Outcomes	Categories
Xanthopoulou (2009)	financial performance of the organization	organizational performance
Harter et al. (2002)	employee profit, employee turnover	individual performance
	customer satisfaction, organization's service climate	organizational performance
Sonnentag (2003)	more overtime	individual performance
Salanova et al. (2005)	employee performance	individual performance
Yang (2005)	more satisfaction from work, higher organizational commitment, less willingness to leave	individual performance
Wilmar & Arnold (2006)	positive behavior	individual performance
Saks (2006)	organizational citizenship behavior	individual performance
Susana et al. (2007)	more active in work, better health, better performance	individual performance
Bakker & Demerouti (2008)	employees' out-of-role performance	individual performance
Zhao & Sun (2010)	return to shareholders	organizational performance

## 5. Conclusion

### 5.1 Summary

Employee engagement is an important concept to organizational leaders and employees alike. This paper, through the review of definitions, theories, antecedents and outcomes of employee engagement, highlighted what the body of research has indicated on the topic of employee engagement. Employee engagement usually refers to employees' physical,

cognitive and emotional input in the work. Needs-Satisfaction framework, Job Demands-Resources model and Social Exchange Theory have been used to explain varying levels of employee engagement in the organizations. According to Needs-Satisfaction framework, employees' sense of meaningfulness of work elements, job security and the availability of personal resources determine their engagement in role performances. According to JD-R model, high-levels of job-related and personal resources can reduce the exhaustion and other negative outcomes caused by job demands which require employees to pay additional efforts. According to social exchange theory, relationships between employees and employers are based on norms of reciprocity. When employees feel that they are being treated well and valued by their employer, they are more likely to respond by exerting effort on behalf of the employer in the form of raised levels of engagement (Alfes et al., 2013a). With regard to variables related to employee engagement, antecedent variables mainly include three categories: organizational factors, job factors and individual factors, and outcome variables are mainly focused on individual performance and organizational performance.

### *5.2 Discussion*

The literature review of employee engagement reflected the following results. First, employee engagement starts with the personal work experience and is a typically individual decision that cannot be forced. It involves individual employees, not organizations. Therefore, employee engagement is an individual-level concept, not a group-level concept. Second, employee engagement is an active, work-related psychological state that includes perceptions, emotions, and behaviors, with the features of energy and involvement. Thus, engagement can be experienced emotionally, cognitively, and be displayed behaviorally. Third, the relationship between burnout and engagement is complicated. The empirical results showed that burnout and engagement were two ends of the same continuum in one dimension (cynicism-dedication), but independent of each other in another dimension (emotional exhaustion-vigor). Therefore, engagement cannot simply be expressed in the opposite mode of burnout scores but requires a specialized and independent measurement. Fourth, employee engagement is a composite of attitude and behavior. The dedication, involvement, and other cognitive and emotional components in the engagement reflect the attitudes of the employees, while vigor and absorption reflect the employees' physical input and are displayed through employee behavior. Fifth, most of researches focus on the influencing factors (organizational, individual, job) of employee engagement, this indicates employee engagement is a widely concerned issue among the academia and business practitioners. Besides, the contributions of employee engagement to organizational performance indicates the critical role of engaged employees to the success of an enterprise.

### *5.3 Limitation*

This paper made a literature review of employee engagement, but this review does not capture all the studies in areas related to employee engagement because of the limited time and resources. First, this review examined only some studies published in peer-viewed journals and books which are mainly viewed online. Second, there are too many research

findings about the definitions, theoretical basis, antecedents and outcomes of employee engagement, this paper only reviewed some of them according to the author's propensity which will inevitably lead to bias and incompleteness of the review of employee engagement. Third, employee engagement in this review refers to individual engagement, not involving team engagement and organizational engagement.

#### *5.4 Recommendations for Future Research*

A wide range of studies have been conducted on employee engagement since Kahn (1990) made up the concept of engagement (Kahn, 1990), but there is still much research to be done in the area of employee engagement. From this literature review, there seems to be a lack of research focusing on the impact of employees' demographics, personality traits and cultural differences on engagement. The comparative studies of cross-national employee engagement are scarce except for famous Utrecht Work Engagement Scale. Besides, the researches on employee engagement are mainly focused on its antecedents and outcomes, neglecting the mediating or moderating role of employee engagement between some variables. Finally, this review shows a major deficiency that researchers have to pay attention to, that is, there is a lack of the research on the intervention measures which best reflect the practical values of employee engagement research in the human resource management field. Therefore, it's my hope that future research can explore the mediating or moderating role of employee engagement, enrich the antecedents of employee engagement by adding factors of demographics, personality, cross-culture, and make empirical studies on the intervention measures improving employee engagement by longitudinal survey so as to better guide management practice.

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