

# How Human Capital, Hope, and Work Engagement Drive Task Performance

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Research paper

## How Human Capital, Hope, and Work Engagement Drive Task Performance

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the direct effects of human capital, hope, and work engagement on task performance. A sample of 183 employees from an Indonesian manufacturing company was randomly selected to participate in a questionnaire-based study. The path analysis method using multiple regression was employed to test the proposed model. The findings show that human capital, hope, and work engagement have a significant positive impact on task performance. Additionally, human capital and hope were found to be positively associated with work engagement. The study contributes to the existing literature by focusing on the employees' perspective and highlighting the importance of work engagement in improving task performance. The research also fills a gap in the literature by specifically examining the views of manufacturing employees. The results have implications for human resource managers in the manufacturing industry, providing a new dimension to the debate on task performance. This study is the first to demonstrate that work engagement has a direct effect on task performance and that human capital and hope are key factors in promoting work engagement. Overall, the study provides a valuable contribution to understanding how organizational behavior variables impact task performance in the manufacturing industry.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The investment in training and development by businesses and industries is a clear indication of the importance of enhancing task performance through human capital development (Griffin, Phillips, & Gully, 2020). The increase in the Indonesian HR development budget also shows the government's commitment to improving the country's workforce (Fitriani, 2021). However, the statement that the 2020 budget allocation (IDR 941.6 billion) for human resources development is insufficient and hard to implement suggests there may be challenges in achieving the desired results (Fitriani, 2021). It is important for businesses and governments to continually assess the effectiveness of their training and development programs to ensure that they are meeting their goals and objectives.

Task performance is an important aspect of organizational behavior as it reflects the effectiveness of an employee in carrying out their work responsibilities (Haryanto et al., 2022; Shin, Hur, & Kang, 2016). Traditionally, task performance has been studied in terms of productivity and efficiency, often associated with management's goals of maximizing output and minimizing costs. However, there is increasing recognition of the importance of occupational health in understanding task performance (Beaton et al., 2009). Occupational health focuses on maintaining the physical and mental well-being of employees, which can have a significant impact on their ability to perform their tasks effectively (Kianto, Shujahat, Hussain, Nawaz, & Ali, 2019). Therefore, it is important to consider both traditional management goals and the well-being of employees when studying task performance.

Work engagement is a key construct in understanding employee performance and productivity (Rich et al., 2010; Saks, 2019). It refers to the level of an employee's involvement and enthusiasm for their work and is often seen as a positive attitude toward work (Kahn, 1990). Studies have shown that higher levels of work engagement are associated with better task performance, job satisfaction, and overall well-being (Afrahi, Blenkinsopp, Fernandez de Arroyabe, & Karim, 2022). It's a critical factor for organizations to consider in enhancing their employees' performance and productivity.

Human capital is a crucial aspect of organizations as it refers to the knowledge and skills possessed by employees that are valuable assets for the organization (Wright and McMahan, 2011; Zhou et al., 2019). Human capital is intangible and difficult to measure, but it can provide significant competitive advantages to organizations that invest in it (Becker, 1964; Ahmed et al., 2020). It can be developed through various means, such as on-the-job training, education, and experience, and it is an important factor in the success of an organization. By investing in

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Human capital, organizations can improve the quality of their workforce, increase productivity, and gain a competitive edge in the market (Collins, 2021).

Hobfoll (1989) and Lee and Gyamfi (2023) define hope (HP) as a valued object, personal characteristic, condition, or energy that serves as a means to achieve a desired goal or outcome. Work engagement (WE) refers to the concept of an employee's utilization of their role in a physically, cognitively, and emotionally invested manner. Human capital (HC) refers to the knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics possessed by an employee that can produce positive results (Harris, Pattie, & McMahan, 2015).

Rose (2022) argues that expectations can increase work engagement by providing physical, emotional, and motivational benefits to employees. Similarly, Lee and Gyamfi (2023) emphasize that human capital can improve cognitive and attention abilities, which in turn can improve the task performance of knowledge-based employees. (Harris et al., 2015).

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1. Human Capital and Task Performance

According to the human capital theory, people can acquire different forms of capital, such as education, schooling, and training, which can lead to the development of internal resources or capabilities. This can enhance individual and organizational productivity. While studies have investigated the relationship between human capital and company success, few have explored the impact of human capital on task performance. Osei et al. (2019) found that human capital among service employees had a positive effect on work performance. However, Chowdhury et al. (2014) found that task-specific experiences were more crucial to revenue productivity in small companies than company-specific HR. Therefore, it is important to consider the nature of the work when examining the relationship between an individual's human capital inventory and the performance of their work. For instance, employees in the manufacturing service industry, especially those in customer-facing roles, need to integrate psychological input and emotional intelligence into their routine work. Hence, this study's first hypothesis is

*H1: Human capital has a direct effect on task performance*

### 2.2. Hope and Task Performance

The theory of hope suggests that people can achieve success by possessing cognitive abilities such as agency thinking and path thinking, which entail having the will to succeed and the perceived capacity to identify and pursue the path to success (Sedera et al., 2022; Rose, 2022). Alarcon et al. (2013) found that hope is consistently associated with positive outcomes in areas such as academic and athletic performance, health, and psychological well-being. In the workplace, hope is linked to positive attitudes such as employee task performance, organizational commitment, and work happiness (Youssef and Luthans, 2007). Hope has also been found to be linked to employee performance expectations assessed by higher-level supervisors (Luthans, Luthans, & Luthans, 2021). Research suggests that hope facilitates many beneficial cognitive processes that allow for higher work skills through employee expectations. Thus, we hypothesize that:

*H2: Hope has a direct effect on task performance*

### 2.3. Work Engagement and Task Performance

It should be recognized that although elevated work engagement can result in better task performance, excessive engagement without sufficient support can lead to burnout among employees (Mazzetti, Schaufeli, & Guglielmi, 2018). Thus, it's crucial for organizations to foster their workers' engagement levels with appropriate resources such as training and developmental programs, conducive work surroundings, and work-life balance initiatives. This approach can not only enhance task performance but also prevent the detrimental effects of burnout. Thus, we hypothesize that:

*H3: Work Engagement has a direct effect on task performance*

### 2.4. Human Capital and Work Engagement

According to Talebzadeh and Karatepe (2020), employees who receive training and development opportunities tend to have higher levels of work engagement. This may be due to the fact that training and development activities can enhance employees' self-efficacy, which is a crucial factor for work engagement. In addition, providing opportunities for human capital development can increase employees' job satisfaction and organizational commitment, as they perceive their organization as supportive and invested in their growth (Morales-Sánchez and Pasamar, 2020). Overall, the literature suggests that investing in human capital development can yield positive outcomes for both employees and organizations. Thus, we hypothesize that:

*H4: Human capital has a direct effect on work engagement*

### 2.4. Hope and Work Engagement

According to COR theory, resources are important inputs to work engagement, and hope is an important resource for generating both work engagement and task performance (Rose, 2022). High levels of Hope can lead to positive emotions, high expectations, and the belief that one has the necessary resources to succeed (Carton, 2018; Sedera et al., 2022). This, in turn, can promote engagement and motivation at work. On the other hand, individuals with

$$\text{Task Performance} = \beta_1 * \text{human capital} + \beta_2 * \text{hope} + \beta_3 * \text{work engagement} + e \quad (1)$$

motivation. Previous research has also found a positive relationship between expectations and work engagement, further supporting the link between Hope, work engagement, and task performance (Karatepe, 2014). Thus, we hypothesize that:

H5: Hope has a direct effect on work engagement

This study's postulated model is depicted in Figure 1 as the foundation of the preceding discussion.

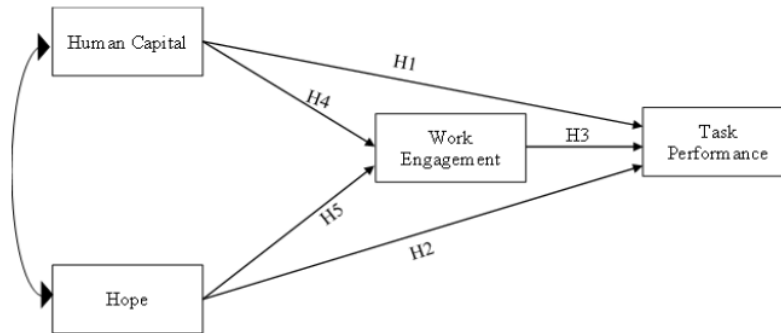


Figure 1. Model of Hypothesized

### 3. METHODS

#### 3.1. Sample and Procedure

The study focused on 183 manufacturing employees from 20 companies in Banten Province, with a response rate of 73.20%. The employees were on average 33.14 years old, had 9.21 years of education, and 8.07 years of tenure in their current organization. 55% of the employees in the sample were male, and 83% were married. The industrialized sector of the companies included construction, steel manufacturing, and pipe manufacturing.

#### 3.2. Measurement

The measurement scales used in the study. It appears that a Likert scale with a range of 1 to 5 was used to measure all variables. The task performance variable was measured using a 4-item scale adapted from Bandula and Jayatilake (2016), with a high internal consistency of  $\alpha = .91$ . The Human capital variable was measured using a 4-item scale adapted from Kuvaas and Dysvik (2009), with a high internal consistency of  $\alpha = .85$ . The hope variable was measured using a 4-item scale adapted from Snyder (2002), with a good internal consistency of  $\alpha = .83$ . The work engagement variable was measured using a 4-item scale adapted from Rich et al. (2010), with a high internal consistency of  $\alpha = .94$ . The study also controlled for potential demographic variables that may influence work engagement, such as gender, age, and education. Gender was coded as 1 for male and 2 for female. Age was coded as 1 for 21-30, 2 for 31-40, and 3 for 41 and above. Education was coded as 1 for Diploma, 2 for Undergraduate, and 3 for Postgraduate.

#### 3.3. Analytical Approaches

This study employed the Hayes Process analysis to test the proposed model and hypotheses. Hayes's conditional process analysis, which is also known as the analysis of "moderated mediation", was utilized to estimate mediation models that allow for the moderation of a mechanism using ordinary least squares regression-based path analysis (Hayes, 2018). The computational tool, known as the process macro, was introduced by Hayes (2018) and has preprogrammed models that estimate all the path analyses for each equation separately (Hayes, 2018). The Hayes process was chosen for this study because it generates all the required statistics, including conditional indirect effects and the index of moderated mediation. Moreover, it implements bootstrapping in a way that facilitates inference using these statistics, and it avoids the piecemeal nature of "estimation with regression" associated with indirect effects by focusing on integration across the pieces (Hayes, 2018). By employing the Hayes process macro, the full model was tested simultaneously, resulting in a more conservative and appropriate test of the model.

In model 1, the endogenous variable is task performance, with two exogenous variables namely, human capital, hope, and work engagement.

$$\text{Task Performance} = \beta_1 \cdot \text{human capital} + \beta_2 \cdot \text{hope} + \beta_3 \cdot \text{work engagement} + e \quad (1)$$

Model 2, the endogenous variable is work engagement, with two exogenous variables namely, human capital and hope.

$$\text{Work Engagement} = \beta_1 \cdot \text{human capital} + \beta_2 \cdot \text{hope} + e \quad (2)$$

#### 4. RESULTS

A total of 250 questionnaire forms were gathered, with only 183 of them being used. Data is loaded into the SPSS application to examine the scale's reliability and validity so that hypotheses can be tested. Table I presents the demographics and frequency distribution of the respondents. of the participants, 27.3% held executive office positions, 52.5% were undergraduates, 54.6% were male, and 42.6% were between the ages of 31-40 years.

**Table 1.** Demographics

Variabel	Pegawai	Percentase (%)
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	100	54,6
Female	83	45,4
<i>Age</i>		
21 - 30 years old	69	37,7
31 - 40 years old	78	42,6
> 40 years old	36	19,7
<i>Education</i>		
Diploma	63	34,4
Undergraduate	96	52,5
Master	24	13,1
<i>Job Designation</i>		
Executive Officer	50	27,3
Manager	115	62,8
Assistant Manager	18	9,8

The value of the Pearson correlation coefficient is reviewed to investigate the Correlation Coefficient between independent and dependent variables. According to the findings in Table 1, it was found that the Pearson correlation coefficient (r) between organizational behavior and task performance was statistically significant (p = 0.000). There is also a moderate positivity rate (0.41 < r < 0.70; Hair et al., 2018.) between task performance and human capital (r = 0.64), hope (r = 0.61), and work engagement (r = 0.67); between work engagement and human capital (r = 0.67) and hope (r = 0.54); between human capital and hope ((r = 0.54).

**Table 1.** Descriptive Statistics and Correlation between Variables

No	Variable	1	2	3	4
1	Human Capital	-			
2	Hope	0,54**	-		
3	Work Engagement	0,67**	0,69**	-	
4	Task Performance	0,64**	0,61**	0,67**	-

Note: \*ρ < .05; \*\*ρ < .01; \*\*\*ρ < .001

The purpose of this study was to evaluate how organizational behavior in Indonesian manufacturing affects task performance. The study has five research questions as shown in Table 2

**Table 2.** Hypothesis Test Results

Variable		Coefficient (β)	t value	ρ	R <sup>2</sup>	Results
Independent	Dependent					
Human Capital	Task Performance	.32	4.70	0.00	.67	Supported
Hope		.30	3.26	0.00		Supported
Work Engagement		.23	3.76	0.00		Supported
Human Capital	Work Engagement	.42	7.47	0.00	.63	Supported
Hope		.47	8.45	0.00		Supported

#### *Human capital, hope, and work engagement on task performance*

Path analysis indicated that human capital, hope, and work engagement variables are related to task performance and contributed a total of 67% of the variance in task performance ( $R^2 = .67$ ,  $F(1, 179) = 72.14$ ,  $p < .000$ ). There was a positive and significant relationship between human capital and task performance ( $\beta = .32$ ,  $t = 4.70$ ,  $p < .00$ ); thus, Hypothesis 1 was supported. Thus, increasing the perception of human capital will improve the levels of task performance. There was a positive and significant relationship between hope and task performance ( $\beta = .30$ ,  $t = 3.26$ ,  $p = .00$ ); hence, Hypothesis 2 was supported. It can be predicted that the more employees feel hope in their employment status, the more they are performing their tasks. There was a positive and significant relationship between work engagement and task performance ( $\beta = .23$ ,  $t = 3.76$ ,  $p = .000$ ); hence, Hypothesis 5 was supported. It can be summarized that the more employees involve the work engagement in the workplace the level of task performance will be improved.

#### *Human Capital and Hope on work engagement*

The results showed that human capital is related to work engagement and contributed a total of 63% of the variance in work engagement ( $R^2 = .63$ ,  $F(1, 180) = 136.541$ ,  $p = .000$ ). There was a significantly positive relationship between human capital and work engagement ( $\beta = .42$ ,  $t = 7.47$ ,  $p = .00$ ); hence, Hypothesis 3 was supported. As a result, it was discovered that human capital provided by manufacturing firm management has an impact on work engagement while working in the manufacturing company. There was a significant and positive link between hope and work engagement. ( $\beta = .47$ ,  $t = 8.45$ ,  $p = .00$ ); as a result, Hypothesis 4 was supported. It indicates that the higher the level of hope, the higher the level of work engagement.

## 5. DISCUSSION

The aim of this study is to investigate the impact of human capital, hope, and work engagement on task performance in Indonesian manufacturing companies. To achieve this, we integrated human capital theory (Klein, Becker, & Meyer, 2012) and hope theory (Snyder, 2002; Schornick et al., 2023) with task performance theory, using work engagement theory as a direct mechanism and Conservation of Resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989) as an overarching framework. Our results confirm that human capital and hope are important employee resources that not only positively affect work engagement but also enhance it, leading to improved task performance. Furthermore, work engagement is positively associated with task performance, supporting the second tenet of COR theory that employees strategically allocate their energy to address job performance requirements (with task performance as the primary focus and work engagement as a secondary priority) to protect themselves from resource loss. These findings support the work engagement theory of multiple-role duties and also reveal that human capital has a significant and positive impact on work engagement.

The anticipated positive relationship between human capital (including education, training, experience, and age) and work engagement may be explained by the concept of human capital dissimilarity. This refers to the extent of difference in human capital between the employee being rated and the peer who is providing the assessment of work engagement. Peers with differing levels of human capital may contribute less effort due to their inability to establish and maintain collegial relationships. Consequently, human capital disparities are likely to influence how the employee being rated interacts with their evaluator. This may result in older or more highly-educated employees being perceived as less supportive, especially by their younger colleagues.

The study found that human capital, hope, and work engagement positively affect task performance in Indonesian manufacturing organizations. The conceptual model presented in this research is valuable for academic research as it sheds light on the role of human capital, hope, and work engagement within manufacturing organizations. This study contributes to the field of organizational behavior, especially in terms of managing and improving human relations within manufacturing firms, which is crucial for addressing labor and talent shortages. The model focuses on two primary predictors, human capital and hope, and their effects on work engagement and task performance. Managers must foster respectful interactions with colleagues and subordinates and implement consistent and appropriate training programs, such as cross-cultural training for hotels with both local and expatriate employees. Ensuring job security is essential to provide benefits and maintain a positive public image. Lastly, individual qualities, such as personal attributes and attitudes toward service work, play a critical role in enhancing employee satisfaction. A positive self-image and a natural inclination towards service-mindedness are valuable attributes for manufacturing workers.

The study has potential limitations that should be considered when interpreting the results. First, the research sample was collected only from the industrial area of Banten Province, which is underrepresented in human capital research, expectations, work engagement, and employee task performance. This limits the generalizability of the research findings to management theory and practice. Future researchers should test research models in different regions to increase the generalizability of the results. Second, this research is strong in providing human capital variables and expectations as exogenous variables for organizational behavior research, where the treatment of

these two variables is still relatively new. Third, the data used in this study to estimate the strength of pathway relationships come from cross-sectional data. Therefore, it cannot prove causal hypotheses, but it does offer strong preliminary non-experimental evidence that causal models are reasonable.

## 6. CONCLUSION

Our findings indicate that task performance is positively impacted by human capital, hope, and work engagement. Additionally, human capital and hope have a significant direct influence on work engagement. This research has contributed to our understanding of how human capital, hope, and work engagement can be operationalized and tested in the context of the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989). We have also established a framework that links these variables with employee task performance, and our results demonstrate that work engagement acts as a mediator between human capital, hope, and task performance. The study addresses the challenges faced by manufacturing companies operating in volatile and dynamic business environments, as human capital, hope, and work engagement are identified as potential predictors of employee task performance.

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