

Employee engagement and two types of bureaucracy: An investigation into the top-four Iranian universities

Asal Aghaz*, Asra Tarighian

Department of Management, Science and Technology; Amirkabir University of Technology, Tehran, Iran

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of bureaucratic structure on the employee engagement (EE). Our study extends previous researches by considering bureaucracy from two points of view: enabling versus hindering. We study the extent to which these two types of bureaucracy are related to the two forms of employee engagement: organizational (OE) and work engagement (WE). The viewpoints of the employees working at top-four Iranian universities have been examined through a quantitative survey. The results indicate the positive significant impact of enabling bureaucracy on both types of employee engagement with the stronger effect on work engagement among employees of universities. However, our findings show no significant impact of hindering bureaucracy on employee engagement, whether work engagement or organizational one.

Keywords

Employee engagement, Enabling bureaucracy, Hindering bureaucracy, Organizational engagement, Work engagement.

* Corresponding Author, Email: a.aghaz@aut.ac.ir

Introduction

In recent years, the concept of employee engagement (EE) has been under investigation in many studies (e.g. Macey & Schneider, 2008; Shuck, 2011). However, this topic still remains worthy to be explored by further researchers (Eldor & Vigoda-Gadot, 2016).

Engagement which has been defined as a level of commitment to job or organization (Baumruk, 2004; Richman, 2006; Saks, 2006; Shaw, 2005), or a positive emotional state towards the work (Robinson et al., 2004; Vaijayanthi et al., 2011) can provide a host of advantages for organizations.

Several authors have reached to the conclusion that EE is associated with personal and organizational success (Baumruk, 2004; Harter et al., 2002; Richman, 2006). However, following some reports, an increasing number of today organizations are suffering from the decline of their employees' engagement mainly because of inadequate infrastructures (Saks, 2006). Although the importance of the factors contributing to the EE has been studied by some of the authors, the findings have hitherto remained inadequate and focused primarily on the behavioral constructs. In this sense, although several efforts have been made to investigate the behavioral correlates and antecedents of EE, few empirical studies are carried out to explain its structural antecedents (Rich et al., 2010). Better said, while the importance of structural factors as predictor of EE is worthy of investigation, there are hardly clear studies among the large body of research in this area. So, this study aims to investigate EE regarding the role of structural factors.

Through the lens of some authors, the future of the developing societies not only depends on the economic conditions but also relies on their well-designed infrastructures. In so doing, the development potential of these countries proves to be associated with the development of their organizational structure (Al-Namir & Palmer, 1982).

As proposed by Weber (1978), bureaucracy is the most fundamental structure transforming societies from an underdeveloped

to a developed one. Despite its deficiencies, bureaucratic structure remains to be the prerequisite for the development of public administration in developing countries (Utaybi, 1992).

Beyond the previous studies mostly considering the dark side of bureaucracy, this study investigates this construct adopting a holistic view initially theorized by Adler and Borys (1996). According to them, a distinction must be made between two types of bureaucracy: enabling versus hindering. Although bureaucracy has been heavily criticized for being a dysfunctional structure, different types of bureaucracy received a considerable attention by some researchers along a spectrum, with enabling on one end and coercive on the flip side.

It is obvious that, universities are one of the most important institutions in the development process of societies. Hence, improving the performance of the universities, specifically the top ones, would facilitate the countries' growth and development. Given that employee engagement contributes to the organizational performance, investigating factors influencing the performance of Iranian top universities would have effective results for facilitating the development process. Hence, regarding the dearth of empirical studies in this field, the purpose of this study is to investigate the role of two types of bureaucracy (i.e. enabling vs. hindering) as predictors of employee engagement (i.e. work and organizational engagement) among the employees of top-four Iranian universities.

Employee engagement

Work engagement

In recent decades, 'employee engagement' has received increasing research interest by several authors. Having been emphasized in academic and practitioner literature, the concept has been examined in a considerable number of studies. Through the lens of academicians, the distinction must be made between EE and the other behavioral constructs (Bakker, 2011)

The idea of engagement was primarily proposed by (Kahn, 1990,

1992) for whom personal engagement refers to “the harnessing of organization members’ selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively and emotionally during role performances”.

In a more recent study, considerable contributions are made to the conceptualization of employee- organization relationship. In so doing, employees the engagement of whom is in high level, are more conscious, active, enthusiastic and energetic (Eldor & Vigoda-Gadot, 2016). Moreover, they are more likely to suggest their ideas, needs and opinions for the sake of their organizations (Morrison, 2014).

As proposed by Saks (2006), the author who made several efforts in this field, EE can be defined in terms of work engagement (WE) and organization engagement (OE) (Ghosh et al., 2014). According to Kahn (1990, 1992), “work engagement” is usually accompanied by hardworking and in this sense three factors including meaningfulness, safety, and availability play an important role to increase engagement. Later, Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) developed the most frequently used definition of WE: a positive, satisfying, work-related emotional state defining how employees experience their work.

Typically, it is highly unacceptable that engagement results in several positive consequences (Kahn, 1992). Regarding the energetic psychological state of WE, it can prevent depression (Hakanen & Schaufeli, 2012).

As a multidimensional (Alfes et al., 2013), and a motivational construct (Rich et al., 2010), WE mostly observed among energetic employees (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008), is conceptualized by three items including vigor, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli et al., 2002).

‘Vigor’, the first item, is the characteristic of energetic and self-motivated employees showing mental resilience in their works. ‘Dedication’ is defined as strong involvement of employees at work while employees have the feelings of meaningfulness and eagerness. ‘Absorption’, the last item, refers to a profound concentration on one’s work, without paying attention to time passing (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).

Organizational engagement

There exist reasons to believe that most of the studies conducted in the field of engagement have concentrated on WE rather than OE. However, regarding today's competitive world, studies have pointed to the conclusion that attitudes toward organization aside, the role of attitudes toward job should be regarded as well (Malinen et al., 2013). According to Saks (2006), WE and OE stem from different psychological conditions; hence, the distinction must be made between the two constructs and their different antecedents and consequences (Ghosh et al., 2014). In this line, the potential impact of OE on important organizational variables places emphasis on carrying out the studies with a focus on this construct (Saks, 2006).

Saks (2006) defines OE as profound involvement of organizational members in their organization as well as the feeling of proud because of their membership at the organization. According to him, OE is an employee's attitude toward his/her organization and characterized by employees who want to stay within their organizations, follow the organization norms and try to improve the performance of the organization as a whole.

The role of psychological conditions in creating OE is addressed by May et al. (2004). For them, proper fit between employees and their jobs as well as needed autonomy for carrying out one's work lead to higher level of OE. Hence, the first hypothesis of this study can be proposed as follow:

H1. Work engagement has a significant impact on organizational engagement.

Antecedents of employee engagement

Despite the fact that several authors have addressed the significant impact of OE on employee outcomes, organizational growth and performance (Baumruk, 2004; Richman, 2006), the dearth of empirical studies in this field calls for more efforts to study factors contributing to OE.

In this sense, regarding the several advantages of employee engagement for organizations, factors contributing to the employee engagement have been investigated by some authors.

According to Saks (2006), the leadership style, perceived justice and compensation system are the most important predictors of EE. In the same terrain, as mentioned by Bakker & Demerouti (2008), the antecedents of work engagement can be categorized into two groups including job related antecedents and personal related ones.

According to Zhang (2011), interpersonal communication, trustworthiness, the nature of the task, support from supervisors, career development opportunities, contribution to organizational performance, being proud of organization and effective relationship with the peers are the most fundamental factors contributing to the EE. Wollard and Shuck (2011) also found out 42 antecedents of engagement half of which are individual antecedents and the other half are organizational ones.

Recently, Christian et al. (2011) categorized the antecedents of WE into three groups including job characteristics, leadership style, and dispositional characteristics that lead to improved job performance. In the same vein, Rich et al. (2010), suggest person-organization fit, supportive atmosphere, and core self evaluations as the main predictors of employee engagement.

Reviewing the following studies indicate that whereas most of these investigations put emphasis on the role of behavioral factors as the main predictors of employee engagement, few studies are allocated to examine the role organizational factors with a focus on structural aspects.

Organizational structure: from hindering to enabling bureaucracy

Most of the different interpretations from the word 'bureaucracy' can be traced back to German author, Max Weber, whose work on bureaucracy was the starting point for everlasting studies in contemporary and future research on bureaucratic structure (Heady, 2001). Weber's proposed ideal bureaucratic system was a cognitive concept hardly observable in a real world (Kotnis, 2004). According to Weber (1978), bureaucracy can be defined with regard to five features including: hierarchy, division of labors, rules and procedures,

impersonality and technical qualifications. These central features distinguish bureaucracy from all traditional forms of ruler ship, which emphasize persons rather than rules and processes.

While bureaucracy is said to be the most efficient form of organization and superior to any other organizational forms (Weber, 1978); in the eyes of the subsequent authors, it is not as perfect as Weber claim (Gajduschek, 2003); however, Weber was aware of the disadvantages of bureaucracy and its threats to democracy as well.

In the public view as well as from the perspective of some authors, bureaucracy is often considered as red tape, laziness of bureaucrats, complexity of rules and regulations and inefficiency. However, in the opinion of some other scholars, the problem is not the bureaucracy but it largely stems from the type of the bureaucracy adapted. In this line, in response to some authors suggesting avoidance of bureaucratic structures for creating more innovative and dynamic organizations (Kotnis, 2004), Adler and Borys, (1996) as well as Adler (1999), pointed out that in contrast to those considering bureaucracy as red tape and rigid rules, bureaucracy can contribute to the improvement of rationality. Hence, instead of labeling all bureaucracies as unfavorable, a distinction must be made between bureaucratic structures inhibiting effective performance and those leading to better organizational performance. The former one, labeled 'hindering bureaucracy', has been heavily criticized mainly because of its rigidity and the high level of centralization. In this kind of bureaucracy, obeying rigid rules and regulations is mandatory; however, creativity, risk taking and any changes are not welcomed.

On the flip side, the latter one, labeled 'enabling bureaucracy', is the type of structure the focus of which is on the formalized rules, procedures and regulations in a way that results in problem solving and higher level of efficiency. Looking for solving problems rather than punishing any type of failure, enabling bureaucracy is based upon the structure which does not perform as an obstacle to efficiency.

By facilitating flexibility, enabling bureaucracy can contribute to the creative ideas as well as extra role behaviors (Adler & Borys, 1996; Saporito & Coombs, 2013). This type of bureaucracy improves

the development of novel ideas in organization via facilitating innovation and transferring technology. From the behavioral perspective, flexible bureaucracies are characterized by the delegate leadership style as well as the higher level of accountability among followers as opposed to that of hindering bureaucracies (Utaybi, 1992).

The idea of enabling versus hindering bureaucracy, initially theorized by Adler and Borys (1996), was a new paradigm in the area of organizational structure and processes. They challenged the presumption of the unfavorability of all the bureaucratic structures and connoted some of the features of bureaucratic structures (e.g. clear power structures and useful policies and procedures) as pleasant. Reviewing the studies carried out in the field of formalization indicates that employees appreciate efficient and flexible structures, rules and regulations, whereas criticize inefficient ones (Saparito & Coombs, 2013).

Employee engagement in the light of bureaucratic structure

As mentioned before, the idea proposed and theorized by Adler and Borys (1996), distinguishes between functional and dysfunctional formalization. In so doing, they differentiate between rules and regulations contributing to enhanced performance of an organization and those formulated with the aim of higher level of control over employees. For instance, procedures developed to document organizational experiences likely serve as mechanisms to increase employees' commitment as well as their performance. On the flip side, procedures formulated to have greater control over employees often cause employees' anger and destroy their initiatives. However, the preference for the extent of the formalization largely depends upon the characteristics and requirements of organizations. In an organization the employees of which are highly committed supervisory structures help employees to increase their managerial abilities. In this sense, the high level of interpersonal and conceptual skills of the supervisors play an important role in enhancing the efficiency of such structures (McGuigan, 2005).

Challenging the idea based on which formalization is considered as an obstacle to creativity, Adler and Borys (1996) found out that creativity might be developed in formalized structures given that employees realize organizational goals as their own ones. Adopting a sociological approach, they supposed that from the viewpoints of employees committed to the organizational goals, formalization can be served as a favorable means to achieve organizational goals rather than an obstacle to their independence.

The difference between hindering and enabling bureaucracy roots in how to view the standards. In enabling bureaucracy, standards serve to transfer the best way of performing tasks, provide alignment between different jobs, and facilitate redesigning work processes. Taking the above-mentioned considerations into account, standards not only do not work as limitations but also improve the capabilities of workers (Hess, 2006).

A large part of this differential can be attributed to the study carried out by Hoy and Sweetland (2001) who explained bureaucracy with regard to the two concepts including formalization and centralization. According to them, 'formalization' refers to the extent to which written rules and procedures are placed emphasis in an organization which can be categorized into enabling versus coercive one (Adler & Borys, 1996). In this sense, enabling formalization is defined as flexible guidelines contributing to problem solving, whereas coercive formalization is based upon punishment as well as rigid rules. 'Centralization', the second concept, refers to the extent to which employees are involved and participated in organizational decision-making processes (Anderson & Kochan, 2012). Regarding the negative correlation between centralization and empowerment which may cause the feelings of powerlessness among employees (Conger & Kanungo, 1988), organizational members working under centralized circumstances are less likely to involve in extra role behaviors (Raub, 2008).

As mentioned before, a considerable number of studies have been devoted to investigate antecedents of EE most of which place higher priority on behavioral antecedents of WE; however, any emphasis an

organization places on behavioral factors should be accompanied by structural matters. In this sense, Guest (2014) suggested that in order to steer organizations toward flourishing EE, an integrated system of HRM policies, practices and procedures should be embedded within the organization. In so doing, organizational structure as one of the most important functions of HRM in organizations should be designed properly to contribute to the EE and organizational performance as well. In this line, while appropriately designed organizational structure and procedure can contribute to the high level of EEE (whether WE or OE), dysfunctional structures and procedures may inhibit it.

Hence, regarding the pre-mentioned discussions, the second and third hypothesis of this study can be proposed as below:

H2. Enabling bureaucracy positively predicts work engagement.

H3. Hindering bureaucracy negatively predicts work engagement.

Many factors have been reported to have an effect on OE. As reported by the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) Special Expertise Panels (Lockwood, 2007), through the lens of Human Resource Management, OE is influenced by HR practices. For instance, the results of a study indicates that financial aspects of work and rewards paid for jobs have remarkable impacts on OE (Higgs, 2006). Furthermore, other HR practices such as opportunities for training as well as compensation could also play a considerable role in enhancing OE (Juhdi et al., 2013; Lockwood, 2007). That is to say, OE can be enhanced by applying appropriate HR policies and practices. Among different functions of HRM, job design importantly exerts influence on OE. In this line, the result of one survey indicates a strong correlation between OE and job design (Juhdi et al., 2013). In this sense, how employees' job is designed and how the jobs are defined in the organizational structure impact on the level of OE. Therefore, regarding the importance of the structural factors as the antecedents of EE (whether WE or OE) the fourth and fifth hypotheses of this study can be formulated as below:

H4. Enabling bureaucracy positively predicts organizational engagement.

H5. Hindering bureaucracy negatively predicts organizational engagement

The conceptual framework and the formulated hypothesis of this study are depicted in the Figure 1.

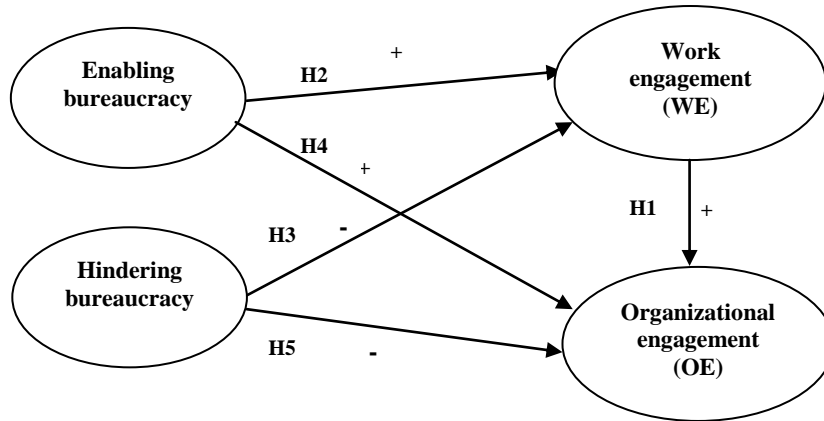


Fig. 1. The conceptual framework and hypotheses

Methodology

Participants

In accordance with the objectives of this research, the population of this study was top-four Iranian universities. Given that the role of higher education systems in moving societies toward development is hard to ignore, a considerable number of studies have been devoted to clarify important factors in the climate of higher education. In this line, there is a large body of studies placing emphasis on the role of the faculty members and students as stakeholders of universities. In this line, according to the dearth of studies considering university staff as studied population and regarding what university staff view as being organizationally engaged differs from the views of faculties as well as students, employees working at the universities are selected as population of this research. In other words, lack of researches focusing on the university staff viewpoints steers us toward investigating these groups to gain a better understanding of the perspectives of employees who are in direct communication with other stakeholder of universities (i.e. faculty members and students).

Given the impossibility of examining all the Iranian universities, purposive sampling is used as a sampling method. In this sense, with regard to the Islamic World Science Citation Center (ISC) ranking, at first four of the top universities in Tehran were selected, and then using random sampling data were gathered from the employees working at the four universities.

This study is a survey, which uses questionnaires to collect data. To increase the possibility of the return rate of questionnaires, they were distributed by researchers among employees and some of the managers working at the studied universities. Employees working in the central administrative departments of the four studied universities were about 600 among whom, using the Morgan table, 242 employees were considered as studied sample. In total, 250 questionnaires were distributed, among which 198 completed ones were returned. The characteristics of the participants are indicated in Table 1.

Table 1. Characteristic of participants

	Percent
Age	
Under 30	9.1
30–39	47.7
40–49	33.2
50 and above	9.6
Gender	
Male	41.8
Female	57.8
Managerial experience (Years)	
Without managerial experience	48.1
1-5	24.6
6-10	7.0
10 and above	19.8
Level of education	
Diploma or Associate degree	17.1
Bachelor's degree	50.3
Master's degree and above	32.1

Measures

Work engagement

Several instruments have been introduced by different authors to measure WE among which the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) (Schaufeli et al., 2002; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003), three-dimensional concept of engagement (May et al., 2004) and Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (OLBI) (Demerouti & Bakker, 2008) have been accepted and utilized by a considerable number of researchers. Measurement of WE is made by The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) designed by Schaufeli et al. (2002) as well as Schaufeli and Bakker (2003), with regard to its major acceptance by a great majority of scholars and its high validity in different contexts and countries. This measure entails three work engagement dimensions conceptualized by Schaufeli et al. (2002): vigor, dedication and absorption.

Organizational engagement

How to measure OE has been examined by some authors. Among different instruments proposed to measure OE, Saks's (2006) six-item scale has been employed in several studies and in different cultures. Hence, in this study, the scale designed by Saks was used to measure OE. Studied samples responded to the questions on a five-point Likert-type scale.

Enabling and hindering bureaucracy

As discussed earlier, the idea of enabling bureaucracy proposed by Adler and Borys (1996) and Adler (1999), later was expanded by authors such as Hoy and Sweetland (2001). In this study, 12 items scale designed by Hoy and Sweetland (2001) has been considered to measure enabling and hindering bureaucracy. In their scale, enabling bureaucracy is measured with regard to enabling formalization and enabling centralization; and hindering bureaucracy is measured regarding coercive formalization and hindering centralization.

Findings

The primary version of enabling versus hindering bureaucracy had 23 questions. However, after the first step of factor analysis, one question was dropped because of low factor loading. None of the questions were dropped for WE as well as OE. Data analysis indicated that Cronbach's alphas for the questions of WE, OE, enabling bureaucracy and hindering bureaucracy were 0.81, 0.79 and 0.83 respectively.

Content validity of the questionnaire was assessed by experts and for assessing construct validity confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used. Table 2 shows the CFA results of the hypothesized model by the use of LISREL. With the aim of assessing the fit of the data, fit indices including GFI, AGFI, IFI, CFI, RMSEA and χ^2/df , have all been calculated. According to our findings, based on the results of the standardized loadings and t-values as well as the results of the proposed four-factor structure (WE, OE, enabling bureaucracy and hindering bureaucracy) good fit with the data is observable (RMSEA: 0.067; CFI: 0.93; χ^2/df ratio: 1.95 and NNFI: 0.97).

Table 2. The results of the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA)

Construct indicators	Standardized loadings	t-Value
Enabling bureaucracy		
Enabling formalization	0.67	13.66*
Enabling centralization	0.70	14.31*
Hindering bureaucracy		
Coercive formalization	0.56	5.92*
Hindering centralization	0.72	9.02*
Work engagement (WE)		
Dedication	0.75	10.43*
Vigor	0.68	11.69*
Absorption	0.65	10.66*
Organizational engagement (OE)		
OE1	0.93	6.32*
OE2	0.46	5.56*
OE3	1.02	16.14*
OE4	1.06	16.94*
OE5	0.59	7.86*

RMSEA: 0.067 (≤ 0.10 recommended); CFI: 0.93 (≥ 0.90 recommended); χ^2/df ratio: 1.95 (< 3 recommended); NNFI: 0.97 (≥ 0.90 recommended).

* Significant at p-value $< .05$ level.

In order to test the hypothesis of this study, structural equation modeling was applied. Figure 2 indicates the results of data analysis by the use LISREL 8.52. As presented in Figure 2, the findings of LISREL indices showed a good fit for the proposed model (0.02 for RMSEA, 0.98, 0.94 and 0.96 for GFI, AGFI, CFI respectively; and 2.62 for chi-square/df ratio). Regarding the mentioned indices this research leads us to the conclusion that work engagement has a significant impact on organizational engagement (H1 is supported). In the same vein, enabling bureaucracy has a positive impact on work engagement (Standardized loadings=0.53; t value= 3.59) as well as organizational engagement (Standardized loadings=0.55; t value= 4.47); therefore, H2 and H4 are supported. However, in the case of hindering bureaucracy results indicated that hindering bureaucracy does not predict work engagement (Standardized loadings= -0.24; t value= -0.25) as well as organizational engagement (Standardized loadings= -0.03; t value= -0.27); so, H3 and H5 are not supported.

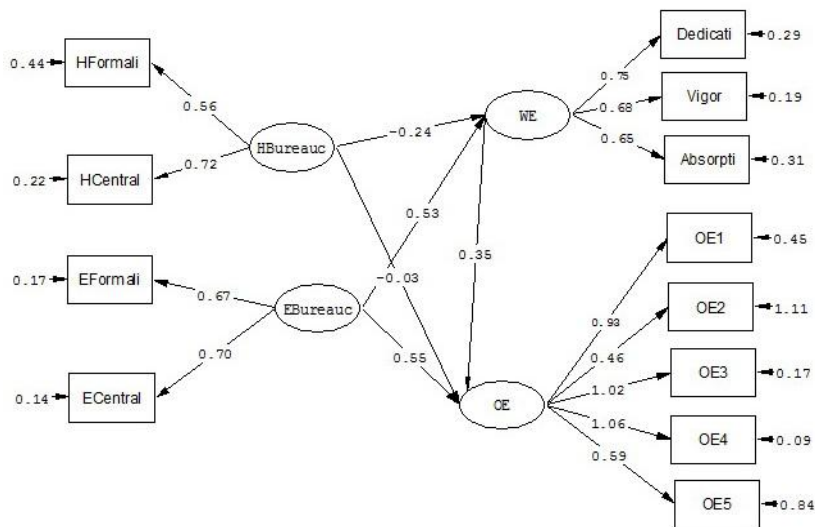


Fig. 2. Parameter estimates of the tested model

Table 3 shows the results of one-sample t-test. Means, standard deviations and significance for the two types of bureaucracy as well as OE and WE are presented in table 3. According to this table, while the

mean score for enabling bureaucracy is lower-than-average level (2.64), for hindering bureaucracy it is higher-than-average level (3.21). Results of the t-test also shows the higher-than-average level mean-score (3.65) for WE; and lower-than-average level one (2.81) for OE indicating the lower level of the OE in comparison with WE.

Table 3. The results of the one-sample t-test

Variable	Mean	SD	t	sig
Enabling bureaucracy	2.64	0.73	-6.659	0.000
Enabling formalization	2.66	0.78	-5.906	0.000
Enabling centralization	2.62	0.79	-6.652	0.000
Hindering bureaucracy	3.21	0.67	4.338	0.000
Coercive formalization	3.45	0.75	8.320	0.000
Hindering centralization	2.97	0.86	-0.467	0.641
Work engagement (WE)	3.65	0.76	11.849	0.000
Dedication	3.45	0.91	6.814	0.000
Vigor	3.78	0.81	13.254	0.000
Absorption	3.80	0.86	12.722	0.000
Organizational engagement (OE)	2.81	0.88	-2.846	0.005

Regarding the dimensions of the studied main variables, the mean scores for both dimensions of enabling bureaucracy are lower than average level (2.66 and 2.62 respectively); however, in the case of hindering bureaucracy, while the mean score for coercive formalization is higher than average level (3.45), for hindering centralization it is relatively at near average level (2.97). With regard to WE, all three dimensions are higher than average level.

The correlation between the two types of bureaucracy, WE and OE were tested using Pearson correlation coefficients. As presented in Table 4, there is a significant positive correlation between enabling bureaucracy and both types of EE, i.e. WE and OE, with stronger correlation between enabling bureaucracy and OE. Our findings also indicated significant negative correlation between hindering bureaucracy, WE, and OE. It is worth to note that the correlation between OE and both types of bureaucracy (i.e. enabling vs. hindering

bureaucracy) is higher than the correlation between WE and those two types of bureaucracy. However, the correlation with the former type of bureaucracy is positive whereas for the latter one it is negative. Additionally, in the light of the results of this study, WE and OE are significantly and positively correlated.

Table 4. Correlations of variables

Variable	1	2	3
Enabling bureaucracy			
Hindering bureaucracy	-0.521**		
Work engagement (WE)	0.489**	-0.280**	
Organizational engagement (OE)	0.658**	-0.452**	0.559**

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (two-tailed)

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed)

To analyze the significant differences among respondents’ opinions regarding the demographic variables paired- sample t-test (in the case of gender) and one-way ANOVA (in the case of age, level of education and level of managerial experience) were used. The results indicated no considerable differences among respondents’ opinions regarding gender, age, and level of managerial experience). However, with regard to the level of education results showed that the higher the level of respondent’s education, the lower the level of OE as well as WE.

Discussion

A considerable number of researchers put emphasis on the important influence of bureaucracy on social relationships (e.g., Adler & Kwon, 2002; Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998; Pynes, 2008). The extent to which such an influence is considered as negative or positive depends upon whether bureaucratic structure contributes to the development of employees or performs as an obstacle to good performance (Adler & Borys, 1996; Saporito & Coombs, 2013). In contrast to enabling structures helping to the enhancement of the educational systems, coercive structures seems to be an obstacle for proper performance of educational process (Bolman & Deal, 1991). Despite the general perception based on which bureaucracy is considered as equivalent as

red tape, rigid rules, and delaying works, it would contribute to the process of the rationality development. Further, as mentioned earlier, the distinction should be considered between enabling bureaucracy which contribute to the higher performance of the organizations by applying formalization combined with decentralization, and hindering one which emphasizes on rigid rules, formalization and strict hierarchy.

This study aims to examine the impact of the two types of bureaucracy- .i.e. enabling and hindering- on the organizational and work engagement from the viewpoints of the employees working at top-four Iranian universities. According to the results of this study, while enabling bureaucracy positively predicts WE as well as OE, hindering bureaucracy has not a significant impact on both types of engagement.

These findings reach us to the conclusion that while the presence of enabling bureaucracy leads employees to be more engaged with their work as well as their organization, hindering bureaucracy does not necessarily inhibit employees' engagement. The reason may stem from the Iranian employees level of agreeableness. It seems that working in the hindering structures has been common among most of the employees and they have got used to work in such systems. Better said, mainly because of the prevalence of hindering bureaucracy in many Iranian organizations, several numbers of employees have learned to adapt themselves to any situations. So, while the authors expect the significant negative impact of hindering bureaucracy on employee engagement, the results do not support it. However, our results indicated that by creating enabling bureaucracy employee engagement can be increased. In other words while the presence of hindering bureaucracy does not significantly decrease employee engagement, its absence in conjunction with the presence of enabling bureaucracy would increase their engagement.

Our results also indicated the lower-than-average level of enabling bureaucracy as well as OE and on the flip side, the higher- than-average level of hindering bureaucracy as well as WE. As previously mentioned employee engagement is influenced by structural and

personal factors and leads to higher job performance. Hence, it should be considered as a significant predictor of employees and organizational performance. When employees feel engaged in their job, they work in a more efficient manner, and contribute to organizational performance (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008). Hence, finding the ways by which employee engagement can be enhanced plays an important role in improving the organizational performance. In this line, the responsibility of enhancing employee engagement falls on human resource management department. In so doing, by redesigning organizational structure, implementing competency based performance and training systems, HRM managers can set the stage for enhancement of employee engagement (Bakker, 2011). However, it should be noted that engagement needs to be considered as an important organizational and cultural strategy that is related to the all levels of an organization (Frank et al., 2004; Saks, 2006). For sure, in the process of redesigning systems, policies and moving to the more enabling structures, HRM managers need to be supported by the top management who has an important role in formulating visions of the future (Kira & Forslin, 2008).

Regarding the several advantages of employee engagement, HRM practitioners are suggested to consider the beneficial aspects of enabling bureaucracy- i.e. more flexibility, less formalization, higher level of cooperation and innovation as well as learning from the mistakes- in redesigning the structure of the organization (Eldor & Vigoda-Gadot, 2016).

Our research extends previous researches in some ways. First, in contrast to the several number studies investigating bureaucracy as a one dimensional concept which transfers the meaning of red tape, following Adler and Borys (1996), we examine this construct from the two viewpoints- .i.e. enabling vs. hindering. In this sense, we determined the extent to which two types of bureaucratic structure can contribute to developing employee engagement.

Second, in contrast to a great majority of studies in the scope of higher education the focus of which are on the faculties or students, this article puts emphasis on the employees working at the university

mainly because of their significant role in shaping the atmosphere of the universities.

Limitations and future orientations

This study confronts with a number of limitations. First, due to the practical impossibility of involving all factors contributing to the employee engagement, this study focuses on the impact of one of the less-examined structural factors which has not been studied by previous researchers. Hence, according to this study the responsibility of investigating the other factors contributing to employee engagement falls on the future researchers. In this sense, based on the findings of this article and in line with the study carried out by (Saks, 2006), investigating other antecedents of employee engagement is worthy of future research.

It is worthy to note that emphasizing on the role of structural factor as less-studied factors influencing on employee engagement does not imply ignorance of personal factors. For sure, the role of individual difference variable is hard to ignore and is suggested to be investigated by future researchers (Maslach et al., 2001; Saks, 2006).

Second, the population of this study was the employees working in top Iranian universities. The results would be interesting as well if it was carried out regarding other stakeholders of universities, .i.e. faculties and students.

As a final caveat to any interpretation of the results, it should be noted that as emphasized by Bakker (2011), more engagement is not always better; mainly because of the need of employees for gaining opportunity to be relaxed during the workday. To the knowledge of some scholars and practitioners, regarding avoidance from job burnout, employees whose level of engagement is facing with rise and fall, have greater performance in comparison with those that of whom is relatively constant.

All in all, flourishing a culture of engagement should be a priority for organizations and it is worthy to adopt a holistic approach which aside from putting emphasis on employee engagement consequences considers its antecedents and drivers (Popli & Rizvi, 2016).

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