



THE CALLING OF EMPLOYEES AND WORK ENGAGEMENT: THE ROLE OF FLOURISHING AT WORK

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Abstract. *Purpose* – Both the researchers and practitioners believe that engaged, energetic and focused employees provide sustainable competitive advantage to the organization. Therefore, the aim of this study was to explore whether the calling of the employees is related to work engagement and to observe if flourishing at work exerts a mediating role in this proposed relationship.

Research Methodology – The time-lag method was followed to collect data from a sample of 101 employees working in different organizations from service industry.

Findings – Results showed that calling is a critical psychological driver of work engagement explaining about 30% variance and it is valuable in shaping the employees orientation.

Limitations – The data collection for the study was restricted to one major city so care must be taken in generalizing the results. Moreover, the use of cross sectional data may not completely capture the true nature of the psychological constructs like calling, flourishing and engagement.

Implications – This study helps human resources managers to hire individuals who feel “called” to the job and devise training programs that shape their work orientation in order to engage and retain them.

Originality – The current study considered work engagement as a psychological state and empirically tested psychological drivers- calling as the work orientation and flourishing. The proposed relationships, to the best of our knowledge, were not empirically tested previously.

Keywords: calling at work, work engagement, flourishing at work, work orientation, self determination theory, positive organizational outcomes.

JEL Classification: M19.

Introduction

“...no company, small or large, can win over the long run without energized employees who believe in the mission and understand how to achieve it.”

Jack Welch, former CEO of GE

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The modern era of technology is dynamic, highly demanding and challenging for companies. Coping successfully with this complex business environment will constitute a competitive advantage for organizations (Abid et al., 2016). Under these conditions, companies are trying to explore new ways to be more competitive sometimes investing a lot of money. However, it has been recognized that the best way to gain competitive advantage is recruiting and retaining capable, dedicated and engaged employees (Abid et al., 2016; Kular et al., 2008). For this reason, the work engagement of employees has become an important topic of interest for researchers and practitioners in the field of positive organisational behavior (Abid et al., 2018a; Cooper-Thomas et al., 2014; Kolodinsky et al., 2018; Macey & Schneider, 2008; Mahon et al., 2015; Rich et al., 2010) As a result, substantial progress has been made in the last decades, to define, conceptualize and distinguish this concept from other related notions, exploring its antecedents and analyzing its outcomes (Abid et al., 2016; Bakker et al., 2008; de Crom & Rothmann, 2018; Kahn, 1990; Mahon et al., 2015; Rothbard & Patil, 2012). According to the literature, work engagement improves employee performance and organizational effectiveness (Gruman & Saks, 2011), increases employee job satisfaction, increases commitment, lowers absenteeism and decreases turnover intentions (Albrecht et al., 2015). Other organizational outcomes of the employee's work engagement includes business growth, increasing productivity, more adaptability with the changing environment, more creativity and high profitability (Macey & Schneider, 2008; Rich et al., 2010; Rothbard & Patil, 2012; Saks, 2006).

Therefore, researchers and practitioners are highly interested in identifying the antecedents of work engagement. According to the previous studies it can be asserted that personal vision, positive moods, emotional intelligence, positive organizational support (Mahon et al., 2015), job characteristics, rewards, positive feedback, good relationship with colleagues and supervisors, training and growth opportunities (Kolodinsky et al., 2018; Krishnaveni & Monica, 2016) are significant drivers of employee engagement at the workplace.

Despite increasing interest and the academic progress achieved in this area, still more research should be done to identify and explore the factors associated with the work engagement of employees (Smithikrai, 2019; Saks & Gruman, 2014). Even more, the antecedents and consequences of the work engagement of employees remain unclear, pointing out that it is necessary to address more empirical research that allows to have a concept rigorously delimited and empirically validated (Mecey & Schneider, 2008; Suomäki et al., 2019; Saks, 2006). Mahon et al. (2014) suggested that the psychological antecedents of work engagement need to be explored. Similarly, Wiedemann (2019) feels that it is vital for scholars working on work engagement, to explore the conditions that are necessary for employees to be able to tap into the instinctive drive for personal growth and purpose, not only for their own health and well-being, but for the health and well-being of their organizations. Therefore, this study investigates the psychological factors that influence the work engagement of employees, we focus specifically on employee's calling orientation to work as an important antecedent of work engagement. Existing literature refers to the concept of calling, describing it as an ability to fulfill one's core values at work. This ability allows viewing one's work more as a meaningful mission than as a means to earn resources, therefore motivating to engage (Kolodinsky et al., 2018; Ziedelis, 2019). This study is based on the Self-Determination Theory

(SDT) (Ryan & Deci, 2000) to emphasize the role of intrinsic motivation in explaining the mechanism through which an employee's calling orientation to work is connected to his/her work engagement. When employees have a calling to their work they find themselves more adjusted for their job and are more likely to feel passion towards it, they are intrinsically motivated to perform it thus deriving happiness in their workplace. These positive emotions of joy, interest and happiness shape the attitude towards work. Limited literature exists that empirically tested if the calling to work is related to employee work engagement. Moreover, this study also explores the mediator role of flourishing at work in the proposed relationship between calling at work and work engagement.

Despite its potential impact on firm performance, calling at work has been scarcely studied (Duffy et al., 2018; Lysova et al., 2019). According to the literature there is some research with musicians, nurses and front-line employees in hotels (Ziedelis, 2019; Dobrow, 2013; Hagmaier & Abele, 2015; Lee, 2016). The purpose of this study is to provide new empirical evidence about this topic proposing new relationships. Supported in the SDT, we hypothesize that calling at work is related to work engagement and that this relationship could be mediated by flourishing at work in a group of South Asian employees.

According to the aforementioned, the objectives of this study are 1) to examine the direct relationship between calling at work, flourishing and work engagement and 2) to examine the mediator role of flourishing at work in the proposed relationship between calling at work and work engagement. This study tries to provide new useful evidence for both practitioners and researchers who are aware that engaged employees are the main asset for any organization and constitute a competitive advantage for companies in current days (Abid et al., 2016). Moreover, the importance of engaged employees in enhancing organizational performance and improving employee productivity cannot be denied. If employees are unhappy and dissatisfied then they may find it very difficult to concentrate on their work and put less effort to achieve their work goals. This state of demotivation can have undesirable consequences such as high absenteeism, high turnover and poor quality performance which implies substantial costs for the organization (Park & Shaw, 2013). On the contrary, employees who have calling orientation towards their work are expected to go further having exceptional performance, using their whole potential pursuing their profession as their passion (Duffy et al., 2014), all of these being characteristics of work engagement. Therefore, it is crucial for the organizational behavior field to identify and understand the underlying mechanism that could influence the work engagement of employees.

1. Literature review and hypotheses development

1.1. Work engagement and calling at work

The seminal work of Kahn (1990) has laid foundations for research on work engagement as a psychological state which was defined initially as "the harnessing of organization members' selves to their work roles" (Kahn, 1990, p. 694). Most of researchers consider that work engagement is a psychological presence that captures the degree to which employees are attentive, engrossed and focused to their work role activities (Bakker et al., 2008; Rothbard & Patil, 2012). These authors suggest that work engagement is a multidimensional construct

that comprises of both physical and cognitive components. Based on the seminal Kahn's work, Rothbard and Patil (2012) conceptualized work engagement on the basis of three critical elements: attention, absorption and energy. *Attention* refers to material resources within a person that can be applied to a given task. *Absorption* refers to the capacity and ability to apply these resources intensely and *energy* means the physical effort that employees put forth towards task accomplishment. This research takes into account the definition proposed by Kahn (1990). Many researchers have tried to explore models of work-engagement (also often viewed as work engagement, job engagement, or simply engagement), like, Christian, Garza, and Slaughter's (2011) meta-analysis showed evidence for their proposed model, a model of engagement antecedents and consequences. Literature for engagement antecedents were found for job characteristics (e.g., autonomy, task significance, and social support), for leadership (transformational leadership and leader-member exchange factors), and for dispositional characteristics (conscientiousness, positive affect, and proactive personality). As regards to the consequences of work engagement, they found evidence for both task performance and for contextual (i.e., extra-role, prosocial) performance. They also make a clear case for engagements discriminant validity from other common attitudinal constructs – job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and job involvement (Kolodinsky et al., 2018). Traditionally, calling refers to the meaningful call towards activities that are ethical, social and personally significant. Calling is considered unique to a person and it includes activities that the individual feels he must do to fulfill the purpose of his life. Researchers have viewed calling as a religious entity, as work orientation and in secular perspectives (Wrzesniewski, 2012). As a religious entity it is considered as people who are called by God to a particular occupation to serve society (Weber, 1993). As work orientation calling is considered as the duty and destiny to express a personal passion. Called employees feel identified with their work and strive to make a social contribution through their work (Bunderson & Thompson, 2009). The secular perspective emphasizes that the calling is originated from within an individual, identified through introspection, meditation or relational activities and serves self-actualization needs of a person (Hagmaier & Abele, 2012). A called person recognizes his or her interest for a particular profession and tries to adopt that profession to satisfy himself or herself. Moreover, there is a consensus among scholars that calling is action oriented, prosocially focused and advocates a meaning or mission (Elangovan et al., 2010).

Seminal research on the meaning of work suggests that different people describe work in a different way, some of them as a job, they focus on financial earnings, others as a career with focus on progression in it, and others as a calling which focuses on self-actualization from socially constructed work (Wrzesniewski et al., 1997). Individuals with calling orientation of work identify themselves with their work and express their passion and excitement through their work. Called people experience both self-congruence and outer congruence. Self-congruence means coherence between the ideal and real self, that is, "I am what I want to be", whereas outer congruence refers to compatibility between an individual's interests, required job skills and job related tasks (Hagmaier & Abele, 2015). Some studies have shown many positive outcomes of calling at work, among them, higher level of satisfaction (Dobrow, 2006; Wrzesniewski et al., 1997), reduced absenteeism (Wrzesniewski et al., 1997), greater passion and identification with work (Bunderson & Thompson, 2009) and lower levels of

depression and stress (Oates et al., 2005). Still, the conditions and mechanism that when calling leads to positive and/or negative outcomes are poorly understood (Lysova et al., 2019).

Based on the SDT (Ryan & Deci, 2000), our study is focused in the component of intrinsic motivation towards work that allows calling to work. SDT emphasizes that people are motivated because of autonomous or controlled motives. Autonomous motives refer to that the intrinsic motivation makes people do an activity because they find it fascinating and derive an instant pleasure, happiness and contentment from that activity (Ryan & Deci, 2000), whereas, controlled motives are externally regulated, for example, meeting supervisor's expectations (Gagné & Deci, 2005). In the first case, when an employee is self-motivated to work without being pressurized by external factors, he uses his or her strengths to get engaged in learning. This learning leads to greater confidence, self-efficacy, satisfaction and thereby better job performance (Hagmaier & Abele, 2015; Hirschi, 2012).

Thus, called employees find their work as an expression of their passion and identity, something that allows them to experience fulfillment through their job (Bunderson & Thompson, 2009; Hagmaier & Abele, 2015; Hirschi, 2018). Moreover, they experience a perfect fit between their job requirements and their aptitude, talent and interest (de Crom & Rothmann, 2018; Hagmaier & Abele, 2015). To experience calling at work allows to people to have a clear and strong work goal orientation and thus they feel a stronger commitment to pursue those goals for self-actualization (Duffy et al., 2014). Limited previous literature has confirmed that the relationship between perceived calling and work engagement exist. Hirschi (2012) found a moderate relationship between the two variables and Xie, Xia, Xin, and Zhou (2016) in time lagged survey study found that perceived calling, measured at Time 1, was predictive of later work engagement. Similarly, Ziedelis (2019) in a survey study with 351 nurses under controlled demographic and work environment factors found that calling was significantly related to dedication and energy components. Based on SDT (Ryan & Deci, 2000), we argue that called people find themselves intrinsically motivated and passionate towards their work and their work gives them identity. Thereby, they try to utilize their full potential and resources (attention, absorption) and put in their full effort to carry out their passion (energy). Thus, we hypothesize that:

H1: Calling at work is positively related to the work engagement of employees.

1.2. Calling at work and flourishing

The flourishing of employees refers to those employees who are self-motivated, booming, successful, happy and continuously learning at the workplace (Bono et al., 2012). Flourishing at work means an employee's sought-after well-being state, attained through positive experiences and the efficient management of job-related factors (Rautenbach, 2015). This construct is related but different to thriving, well-being, and work engagement. Researchers have identified hedonic and eudemonic aspects of flourishing. The Hedonic aspect relates to a positive mind set, the presence of enjoyment, pleasure and life contentment and absence of negative emotions (i.e: distress) (Disabato et al., 2016; Deci & Ryan, 2008), in other words, hedonism implies to maximize the experience of pleasure (Peterson et al., 2005). On the other hand, the eudemonic aspect (initiated by Aristotle) focuses on the way of functioning when facing life challenges and includes authenticity, meaning, growth and excellence (Huta

& Waterman, 2014). Under this concept lies the theory of self-actualization (Maslow, 1970), psychological well-being (Ryff & Singer, 1996) and SDT (Ryan & Deci, 2000), the latter, used in this study. A fundamental part of human flourishing is recognizing one's purpose in life. In eudaimonist philosophy, it is living in agreement with one's true self, and struggling to grasp one's highest potential. In Maslow's theory of motivation, an individual's purpose is to do what he is meant for (Wiedemann, 2019). Called individuals identify themselves with their work, experience high self-confidence, feel satisfied and believe in the positive contribution of their work, which in turn, translates into higher career and life satisfaction (Hirschi & Herrmann, 2012; Lee, 2016). Calling gives a meaningfulness and sense of purpose to one's work for a positive contribution towards society that in turn enhances life satisfaction, happiness, joy, positive emotions and thereby relating to flourishing (Dik et al., 2012; Duffy et al., 2014; Hagmaier & Abele, 2012; Huta & Waterman, 2014). In contrast, those who miss their callings undergo a psychological state of regret, unfulfillment, frustration and stress because of a non-congruence of the inner and outer self (Berg et al., 2010). So far researchers have identified several sources of flourishing among them, the work itself, the leader's behavior, workplace relationships and even personality traits (Bono et al., 2012). Under this framework, we suppose that calling at work may lead to the flourishing of employees at the workplace, thus we hypothesized:

H2: Calling at work is positively related to the flourishing of employees.

1.3. Flourishing and work engagement

Human behaviors are influenced by emotions (Fredrickson, 2001; Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). Emotions trigger interest, allow concentration, shape perception, motivate action and lead to adaptability and creativity (Fredrickson, 2001). In the work context, employee emotions are critical in shaping employee behaviors and perception towards their work roles and organizations. The Affective Events Theory (AET) by Weiss and Cropanzano (1996) suggests that work events may provoke positive emotions and moods at the workplace resulting in positive outcomes like job satisfaction and in-role job performance. When employees flourish at work, they should be less inclined to consider parting with their institution, and enrich their performance, both within and beyond the limits of their job description (Redelinguys et al., 2019). It indicates that employees are most probably engaged with work when they flourish at the workplace. As discussed earlier, work engagement is defined in literature as a psychological presence in the work role (Bakker et al., 2008; Kahn, 1990; Rich et al., 2010). Since work engagement is represented by the employee's level of psychological focus and presence in work role, factors like moods, aspirations, and hopes must be empirically validated as antecedents of work engagement (Mahon et al., 2015). The Broaden and Build theory by Barbara Fredrickson (2001) points out that "...experiences of positive emotions broaden people's momentary thought-action repertoires, which in turn serve to build their enduring personal resources, ranging from physical and intellectual resources to social and psychological resources". These resources in turn lead to positive outcomes at individual and organization levels. Based on AET (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996) and the Broaden and Build theory (Fredrickson, 2001), it is comprehensible to say that

when an employee experiences positive emotions like happiness, satisfaction and thriving at the workplace, they use their full potential to carry out their work tasks and use their full energy to focus on their work roles. Therefore, based on the above arguments, we argue that flourishing at the workplace is a critical driver of work engagement and therefore we propose the following hypothesis:

H3: Flourishing at work is positively related to employee work engagement.

1.4. Flourishing as a mediator

Literature shows that happiness, well-being and positive moods have a significant role as mediator to explain and predict positive outcomes. For example, happiness mediates organizational virtuousness and affective commitment relationships, that is to say, the development of organizational virtues (through respect, honesty, compassion and forgiveness) improve employees' well-being and encourage a more dedicated workforce (Rego et al., 2011). Hopes and positive affects play a significant mediating role in increasing employee creativity by promoting authentic leadership (Rego et al., 2014).

According to scholars of human flourishing, people have an inner drive to expand their capacities and connections; they want to learn, grow, and make an impact (Wiedemann, 2019). There is a consensus in the literature that called people feel self-congruent, recognize their work as their passion and destiny, feel identified and take it as a positive contribution in society as a whole. Without being externally pressurized, they are intrinsically motivated to do their work and their job becomes self-satisfying and an enjoyable activity for them (Hagmaier & Abele, 2012, 2015; Lee, 2016). This, in turn, allows them to put their full energy and skills to perform their work roles (Mahon et al., 2015). In contrast, if an employee feels that "I am not fit to do this job", feels frustrated, depressed or burned out, this will restrict him to concentrate on his tasks. Therefore, it is comprehensible to assume that one's "call" is a source of positive emotion and satisfaction and hence lead to a focused attention, an intense absorption and an exertion of full energy in carrying out work tasks. Hence, we hypothesize that;

H4: Flourishing mediates the relationship between calling at work and work engagement.

Figure 1 shows the theoretical model and hypothesized relationships.

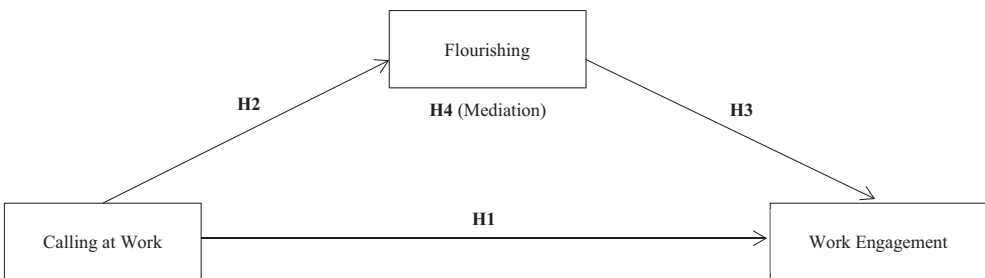


Figure 1. Theoretical model

2. Methodology

The objective of the study is to test the mediating role of flourishing at work between calling and work engagement using a positivist approach (the paradigm of quantitative research). According to the positivist approach, science is about to find out the truth and to understand the world thoroughly, carefully and meritoriously so that we could forecast and control it (Sachdeva, 2009). Bryman and Bell (2007) stated that this perspective supports the application of natural science methodologies to study the shared reality. In order to understand the reality, scholars generally depend to practice the scientific methods like observations, interviews, surveys and experiments to attain rigorous results (Neuman, 1997). Positivists believe in the empiricism of the idea, observation, experiment and measurement, which are considered the cores of scientific endeavor.

2.1. Participants and procedures

Employees of service sector companies located in Lahore (Pakistan) were targeted to collect data through convenience sampling during the first quarter (January-March) of 2018. A self-administered survey was conducted. Researchers introduced the purpose of research and asked the respondents for their informed consent to participate in this research. The anonymity and confidentiality of this survey was ensured to the employees. The reliable and validated instruments were applied in two sessions (time-lagged) separated by approximately 14 days to reduce common method bias as suggested by Podsakoff et al. (2003). At the time period 1 (T1), a total of 250 questionnaires were distributed to obtain data about demographic variables and calling at work. Out of those 198 completed questionnaires were received (a response rate of 79.2%). The respondents were asked to write a self-identifiable code on the questionnaire for matching data at Time 2 (T2). At T2, questionnaires were distributed to all 198 participants who responded at T1 to provide data regarding flourishing (mediator) and work engagement (criterion variable). Out of the 198 who responded at T1, only 127 participants responded at T2. After eliminating the incomplete and wrong questionnaires, we had an actual sample of 101 (a response rate of 51%).

Thus, the sample was composed of 101 employees from the service sector with manager positions. As we targeted diverse sample so the total population size is unknown. As regards to the adequacy of sample size, in behavioral research, sample size of between 30 and 500 is recommended (see for example, Roscoe, 1975, p. 163 or Abranovic, 1997, p. 307–308). As a rule of thumb, Roscoe (1975) indicates the sample size of 10 to 15 respondents per variable should be considered in multivariate analysis. In our study, we have 3 variables, hence, our sample should be at least $15 \times 3 = 45$. According to Kline (2015), sample size for multivariate analysis should be around 200. Therefore, we targeted the sample of 250 at T1 which finalized at 101 employees.

Of the total 101 employees, 84 of them were males (83%) and 17 were females (17%). The average age of the sample was 34 years (SD = 10.8). Most of the participants were holding postgraduate or higher degree (37.6%), followed by professional degree holders (34.6%). The average tenure in the organization of respondents was 8.12 years (See Table 1).

Table 1. Sample profile

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Female	17	16.8%
Male	84	83.2%
Marital Status		
Single	40	39.6%
Married	61	60.4%
Qualification		
Graduate	28	27.8%
Masters	20	19.8%
MPhil/MS	18	17.8%
Others	35	34.6%
Age		
Below 30	42	41.6%
30–39	33	32.7%
40–49	13	12.9%
50–59	10	9.9%
Above 60	3	3.0%
Tenure in Current Organization		
Less than 5 years	56	55.4%
6–10	18	17.8%
11–15	11	10.9%
More than 15 years	16	15.8%

2.2. Measurement

Calling. The calling of the employees was assessed using the scale developed by Dobrow and Tosti-Kharas (2011) having 12 items such as “I am passionate about what I currently do for work” and “I feel a sense of destiny about what I currently do for work”. The response to these items is taken on a 6 point Likert scale ranging from 1 = very strongly disagree to 6 = very strongly agree. In the psychological tests, the 6-point Likert’s type scale has a higher trend of discrimination and reliability than the 5-point Likert’s type scale (Chomeya, 2010). The reliability of the scale was assessed using Cronbach’s alpha. For the current study, the estimated internal consistency of this scale was $\alpha = 0.851$. This measure is shown valid and reliable in previous studies (e.g. Cao et al., 2019; Cain et al., 2018) with $\alpha > 0.70$.

Flourishing. We used the scale developed by Schotanus-Dijkstra, Peter, Drossaert, Piet-erse, Bolier, Walburg, and Bohlmeijer (2016). The scale consists of 8 items. Sample items from this scale were “I actively contribute to the happiness and well-being of others” and “I am a good person and live a good life”. Respondents were requested to indicate their response on a 6-point itemized rating scale (1= very strongly disagree to 6 = very strongly agree). For the current study, the estimated internal consistency of this scale was $\alpha = 0.881$. This measure

is shown valid and reliable in previous studies (e.g. Compton, & Hoffman, 2019; Abid et al., 2018b) with $\alpha > 0.80$.

Work engagement. The three dimensions of this variable were assessed through two different scales. To measure attention and absorption, the scale of Rothbard (2001) was used. The third dimension, energy was measured using the scale developed by Rich, Lepine, and Crawford (2010). A total of 15 items were used to measure all three dimensions of work engagement. Sample items include “I exert my full effort to my job” and “when I am working, I am completely engrossed in my work”. Respondents were requested to provide their assessment for all items on the 6-point Likert scale (1 = never to 6 = always). For the current study the estimated internal consistency of this scale was $\alpha = 0.86$. This measure is shown valid and reliable in previous studies (e.g. Dumas, & Perry-Smith, 2018; Lupano et al., 2017) with $\alpha > 0.70$.

Age, gender and employee tenure in the organization were taken as the controls in this study. Literature supports that age, gender and education level have significant association with flourishing (Huppert & So, 2013; Momtaz et al., 2016). However, work engagement indicated a non significant correlation (Bakker et al., 2012; Runhaar et al., 2013; Sonnentag, 2003) with age, gender and tenure in the organization.

3. Results

Before testing the association among study variables, construct validity was tested. It assured whether the instrument taps the concepts as theorized. Construct validity is tested through convergent and discriminant validity (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). Convergent and discriminant validity of the measures were tested, as well as the inter-correlation among variables. SPSS version 20 was used for the analysis. Regarding convergent validity, Tabachnick and Fidell (2001) suggested the correlations between the factors of a particular construct should be higher (greater than 0.5 is acceptable). To assess the discriminant validity, correlations between factors of distinct construct should be low (should be less than 0.5). The results show that the correlation between factors of different constructs ranged from 0.002 to 0.459 whereas the correlation between factors of the same constructs ranged from 0.496 to 0.701.

Table 2. Confirmatory factor analysis

Models	χ^2	f	$^2/df$	TLI	IFI	CFI	GFI	RMSEA
Full Measurement Model	297.67	223	1.33	0.89	0.90	0.90	0.80	0.05
Model A ^a	408.25	229	1.78	0.74	0.77	0.76	0.74	0.09
Model B ^b	701.14	229	3.06	0.31	0.40	0.38	0.52	0.14

^a Flourishing and work engagement combined into one factor.

^b Calling and flourishing combined into one factor.

Confirmatory Factor Analyses (CFA) revealed that the hypothesized three factor model ($\chi^2 = 297.67$ with $df = 223$; $RMSEA = 0.05$; $CFI = 0.90$; $IFI = 0.90$, $GFI = 0.80$) substantially fits the data better than the two-factor model A ($\chi^2 = 408.25$ with $df = 229$; $RMSEA = 0.09$; $CFI = 0.76$; $IFI = 0.77$, $GFI = 0.74$) and the two factor model B ($\chi^2 = 701.14$ with $df = 229$; $RMSEA = 0.14$; $CFI = 0.38$; $IFI = 0.40$, $GFI = 0.52$) (see Table 2).

3.1. Preliminary analysis

Initial support for proposed hypotheses is solicited using bivariate correlation among the variables. Table 3 shows the descriptive statistics and correlation among variables which provides support for further hypothesis testing.

Table 3. Descriptive analysis and correlations

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
Calling	4.34	0.53					
Flourishing	4.58	0.74	0.392**				
Work Engagement	4.47	0.54	0.555**	0.388**			
Age	34.67	10.83	0.195	0.006	0.122		
Gender	–	–	–0.129	0.106	0.182	–0.169	
Tenure	6.36	8.12	0.142	–0.048	0.008	0.732**	–0.229*

Note: ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$.

Positive and significant correlation was found among variables. Calling is positively and significantly related to work engagement ($r = 0.555$) which provides support to H1. Correlation analysis also shows a positive and significant relationship between calling and flourishing ($r = 0.392$) which provides support to H2. Moreover, a significant correlation between flourishing and work engagement ($r = 0.388$) was found which provided support to H3. Age, gender, and employee tenure in an organization are considered as controls and were checked for their correlation. None of the control showed significant correlation with the study variables so these were not considered for further analysis.

Table 4 shows the results of regression analysis for proposed hypotheses. Regarding H1, predicting the relationship between calling and work engagement, $\beta = 0.564$, $p < 0.05$ (Table 4) shows support for the hypothesis. H2 indicates the impact of the employee's calling on their flourishing at the workplace. The $\beta = 0.547$ and $p < 0.05$ provides support to H2. As H3 predicted that the flourishing of employees is positively associated to work engagement, the $\beta = 0.151$ (Table 4) provides supporting our H3.

Table 4. Regression analysis

Relationship	R Square	Coefficient	SE	p-value
H1. Calling \rightarrow Work Engagement	0.308	0.564	0.085	0.000***
H2. Calling \rightarrow Flourishing	0.153	0.547	0.129	0.000***
H3. Flourishing \rightarrow Work Engagement	0.151	0.283	0.067	0.000***

Note: *** $p < 0.05$.

H4 was related to the mediated mechanism and predicted that flourishing at work mediates the relationship between calling and work engagement. To assess the mediating effect of flourishing on the relationship between calling and work engagement, a process by Adrew Hayes (2013), Model 4 was used with 1000 bootstrapping. The results are shown in Table 5. The $R^2 = 0.342$ shows that the proposed model explains 34.2% variance in work engagement. Regression of work engagement is predicted from both calling (H2) and flourishing (H3). Results show that calling significantly predicts work engagement even with flourishing in the model, $\beta = 0.483$, $t = 5.34$, $p < 0.001$; flourishing also significantly predicts work engagement, $\beta = 0.064$, $t = 2.26$, $p = 0.02$. The positive B value for calling indicates that as calling increases, work engagement also increases. Similarly, as flourishing goes up, work engagement is also enhanced. For the indirect effect $\beta = 0.081$ falls between 0.0025 and 0.161. This range does not include zero, therefore, the indirect effect is valid and it is inferred that flourishing mediates the relationship between calling and work engagement. Both the direct and indirect effects are significant so the relationship between calling and work engagement is mediated by flourishing and therefore, H4 is supported.

Table 5. Mediation analysis

Outcome: Work Engagement						
Model Summary						
R	R ²	MSE	F	Df1	Df2	p
0.58	0.34	0.19	25.54	2.00	98.00	0.000
Model	Coeff	SE	t	p	LCCI	ULCI
Constant	1.69	0.39	4.32	0.000	1.04	2.34
Flourishing	0.14	0.06	2.26	0.02	0.04	0.25
Calling	0.48	0.09	5.34	0.000	0.33	0.63
Direct Effect of X on Y						
	Effect	SE	t	p	LCCI	ULCI
Calling	0.48	0.09	5.34	0.000	0.33	0.63
Indirect Effect of X on Y						
	Effect	Boot SE	Boot LLCI	Boot ULCI		
Flourishing	0.08	0.04	0.002	0.16		

4. Discussion

Work engagement is a psychological state that allow employees to enjoy their work, hence results in achieving higher performance constitute a competitive advantage for organizations. The drivers of work engagement need to be further studied because knowledge in this regard is still scarce. This study, supported in the Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000) proposed that calling at work is a critical predictor of work engagement and contributes to extend the literature by specifying that flourishing as a linking factor through which the employee’s calling orientation to work is related to work engagement. In line with previous studies that substantiate positive outcomes of calling like greater passion for work

and strong identification with work (Kolodinsky et al., 2018; Ziedelis, 2019; Bunderson & Thompson, 2009), the results indicate that called employees are better engaged to their work roles. Employees who experience calling at work consider themselves a contributing source for society which enhances their self-efficacy and leads them to higher confidence levels and better job performance. Therefore they feel energized towards their work and utilize their full potential and resources in carrying out their task activities. Moreover, the results supported that called employees flourish at the workplace which is also mirrored in literature. The literature supports that calling leads to a higher level of life, work satisfaction and enhanced self-congruence (de Crom & Rothmann, 2018; Duffy et al., 2014; Hagmaier & Abele, 2015; Wrzesniewski et al., 1997). Employees find themselves self-congruent with their work, satisfying their self-actualization needs so they feel happy and satisfied and therefore they flourish at the workplace.

Furthermore, calling at work explained a 30.8% variance in work engagement (see Table 4). This means that work by itself satisfies other important needs of employees such as self-fulfillment, self-actualization and well-being apart from financial and security needs as theorized (Hagmaier & Abele, 2015; Hirschi et al., 2018). This finding reinforces that calling is a critical driver of work engagement and it is valuable in shaping the employees orientation. As it was pointed out in the literature, positive emotions trigger the employees interest in their work allowing their concentration (Fredrickson, 2001). The results of this study support that flourishing allows employees to be engaged to their work roles. According to the results, the proposed relationship between calling at work and work engagement is supported, as well as the meditational role of flourishing. These findings are in line with the existing literature which asserts that called people fit their job and derive happiness and satisfaction from it. These employees are involved and engaged to their work putting all their capacities to achieve high performance (Hagmaier & Abele, 2012; Lee, 2016; Wiedemann, 2019).

The current study gains strength by adopting methodological measures to reduce common method bias as suggested by Podsakoff et al. (2003). First, the anonymity was assured by assigning a self-identifiable code to the respondents. Secondly, different anchoring was used for scales of different variables and thirdly, the data for different variables was collected at two time periods separated by 14 days. Moreover, the Herman single factor was conducted to check common method bias. The result shows that a single factor extracted using SPSS explained the 26.7% variance. Since it is less than 50%, we can safely say that our data set does not suffer from common method bias (Harman, 1976). Moreover the current study used regression analysis for preliminary hypotheses support which is in line with current literature studies (like de Crom & Rothmann, 2018; Kolodinsky et al., 2018; Ziedelis, 2019) and further used Process by Hayes (2013) for mediation analysis which is considered as latest technique as compared to Baron and Kenny (1986).

Conclusion and implications

Theoretically, this study adds to the body of literature by testing calling as the driver of work engagement and explains how the flourishing of employees mediates the relationship between calling at work and work engagement. The current study considered work engage-

ment as a psychological state and to enhance the understanding of the construct further, this study empirically tested psychological drivers – calling as the work orientation and flourishing. The objectives of this study were 1) to examine the direct relationship between calling at work, flourishing and work engagement and 2) to examine the mediator role of flourishing at work in the proposed relationship between calling at work and work engagement. The results showed that calling and flourishing explained 34% variance in work engagement and flourishing partially mediated the relationship between calling and work engagement. In line with objectives of the study, the results confirm that called employees are better engaged to work. Moreover, those employees who feel called towards their work, usually flourish which further enhance their work engagement.

From the individual perspective, the results of this study show that called employees flourish at the workplace and are more engaged to their work. When employees feel their call to a particular job, they experience a congruence between their interests, skills and the job position (Hagmaier & Abele, 2015) which leads to greater job and life satisfaction and reduces frustration, regret and dissatisfaction (Berg et al., 2010).

From the organizational perspective, managers are always looking for employees who are satisfied, committed, creative and achieve high performance (Gruman & Saks, 2011; Rothbard & Patil, 2012). Moreover, organizations are also interested to employ those people who tend to remain in the firm and display low or no absenteeism (Albrecht et al., 2015). Considering the positive outcomes discussed above, managers need to shape the employees work orientation so that they consider work as a useful, enjoyable, and satisfying activity to get engaged to it. Practically, this study is helpful to human resource managers to devise training programs that can change work perception, attitudes and behavior patterns of employees. Moreover, calling orientation could serve as important criteria in recruiting to evaluate the applicant's work orientation. Managers can clarify how the employees' work fits with the organization mission and contribute socially to inspire their calling orientation. In addition, based on the results of this study, we argue that the employee's calling orientation to work represents a mutual benefit as it leads to work engagement, that in turn translates into positive organizational outcomes and at the same time satisfies self-actualization needs of employees to create a win-win situation for both parties. This study recommends employees to sense their call in order to flourish at work and stay committed to their work role. It will help them become a useful member of the organization and society.

Limitations and future directions

Although the findings supported all the hypotheses, the study has some limitations. First, a relatively small sample size limits the generalizability of results. Future studies should be done with a larger sample, selected through a probability sampling design to enhance the generalizability. Secondly, the use of cross sectional data may not completely capture the true nature of the constructs like calling, flourishing and engagement as they represent a personal perception, an emotional and psychological state respectively. Longitudinal data is more suitable for checking the psychological nature of constructs.

Regarding future research, more empirical and longitudinal studies are required to enhance a deeper understanding of calling by explaining why and how callings influence our work experience. Moreover, the possible darker side of callings such as the consequences of missing one's call needs to be examined. Similarly and regarding work engagement, future studies should focus how each of the sub components, attention, absorption and energy are affected over time. In addition, there is a need to study the predictors and consequences of work engagement at group and organizational levels. Further research on flourishing should be oriented to understand how the behaviors, attitudes and actions of flourishing employees influence the organization and what kind of virtues and personal strengths allow them to be flourishing.

Moreover, moderators such as the psychological capital, organization support and supervisory behaviors may be taken into account in future studies. In order to extend the domain of the theory, future studies may take into account different sectors such as education, medical and defense services. The use of longitudinal data and experimental design is recommended for future studies to check causal and reciprocal relationships between the studied constructs.

Disclosure statement

The authors declare that they have no competing financial, professional or personal interests from other parties.

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