Engage them to Public Service: Conceptualization and Empirical Examination of Employee Engagement in Public Administration
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Engage Them to Public Service: Conceptualization and Empirical Examination of Employee Engagement in Public Administration

Eran Vigoda-Gadot¹, Liat Eldor¹, and Lior M. Schohat¹

Abstract
This article deals with the emerging concept of Employee Engagement (EE) and its meaning for public administration research and theory. Generically, EE reflects a positive, fulfilling, affective-motivational, work-related state of mind characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption. In an attempt to understand whether the concept of EE is meaningful for public administration research and theory, we examine its essence and foundation using a comparative method. First, we compare EE with two well-established employee–organization relationship (EOR) concepts: Affective Commitment (AC) and Job Involvement (JI). Second, we compare EE in public versus private sector employees, and finally, we compare the concept in employees and managers in the public sector. Our study is based on an interactive sample of 593 employees and managers from both the private and public sectors in Israel. The results support several hypotheses. First, EE is an empirically distinct construct compared with other EOR concepts. Second, EE is higher among public sector employees than private sector employees. Third, EE is higher among public managers than public employees. Implications of our findings and recommendations for future theoretical and empirical studies of EE are discussed.

Keywords
employee engagement, commitment, job involvement, discriminant validity, public sector motivation

Introduction

Literature on Employee–Organization Relationship (EOR) has grown rapidly in recent years, especially developing the concept of Employee Engagement (EE; Albrecht, 2010a; 2010b; Bakker & Leiter, 2010; Macey & Schneider, 2008a; Rothbard & Patil, 2010). EE represents a positive, affective-motivational, work-related state of mind characterized by vigor, fulfillment, absorption, and dedication (Rothbard, 2001; Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Roma, & Bakker, 2002). However, EE lacks almost any reference in the public administration literature and has

¹University of Haifa, Mount Carmel, Haifa, Israel

Corresponding Author:
Eran Vigoda-Gadot, Head, School of Political Science, University of Haifa, Mount Carmel 31905 Haifa, Israel
Email: eranv@poli.haifa.ac.il
not been acknowledged by the employee–public organization relationship literature. This is quite surprising in light of the New Public Management (NPM) paradigm that highlights performance improvement, initiative, and service orientation (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2000) characteristics, which also lie at the core essence of employee engagement. A simple search in academic databases (ProQuest and PsycNET) yielded a total of 681 articles on EE, 78% dated 2005 and onward, of which only 99 publications (14%) were truly academic. None of these articles discussed the implications of EE in relation to public organizational theory.

We therefore submit that EE is a concept that deserves recognition in the EOR literature, especially within the public arena. Its potential contribution to the understanding of employee functioning in public service seems promising. Furthermore, we will try to challenge the argument that EOR in the public sector is fundamentally rational and bureaucratic (Lynn, 1988), and propose EE as an affective-motivational relationship that contributes to a better understanding of public employees’ attitudes.

Scientific recognition for any new concept should be accompanied by rigorous validation procedures to avoid any redundancy with already well-established concepts. Thus the examined concept must demonstrate a relationship with close but different terminologies (i.e. convergent validity) and a lack of overlap (i.e. discriminant validity) with similar concepts in that field (Cook & Campbell, 1979; Schwab, 1980). To date, EE has been distinguished from workaholism and burnout (e.g., Gorgievski & Bakker, 2010; Schaufeli, Taris, & Bakker, 2006; Schaufeli, Taris, & Van Rhenen, 2008) and from positive behaviors at work (e.g., Halbesleben & Wheeler, 2008; Hallberg & Schaufeli, 2006). However, whether EE can be empirically distinguished from other EOR concepts, in the public arena and around it, such as Affective Commitment (AC) and Job Involvement (JI) is yet to be shown. The idea that EE is measured with components of other EOR constructs is otherwise known as the “Jangle Fallacy” or putting “old wine in a new barrel” (Macey & Schneider, 2008a). Therefore, one important question is whether or not EE is simply a repackaging of similar EOR constructs (Macey & Schneider, 2008a). Another question is its meaning for different work arenas such as the public and the private spheres. To date, no comparison has been made between the public and the private sectors with regard to EE. Hence, we will try to demonstrate how knowledge about the employee–public organization relationship in general, and EE in particular, adds to a better understanding of public personnel management and of public administration in general.

**EE in Public Administration: Theory and Hypotheses**

**Employee Engagement (EE)**

Kahn (1990, p. 694) originally defined employee engagement as “the harnessing of organization members’ selves to their work roles by which they employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performance.” His formal description sees engagement as a dynamic, dialectical relationship between those physical, cognitive, and emotional energy drivers and work roles. In this perspective, work roles allow employees to invest their physical, cognitive, and emotional energies in a holistic and simultaneous fashion (Kahn, 1992).

Inspired by Kahn’s (1990, 1992) seminal theory on psychological engagement, Rothbard (2001) defines EE as an employee’s psychological presence in or focus on role activities or “being there,” and elaborates on this definition by suggesting that there are two critical components in role engagement: attention and absorption. Rich, LePine, and Crawford (2010) have gone beyond this narrow conceptualization of EE as a cognitive state and broadened Rothbard’s measure of engagement. Their study reverts to the earlier theorizing of Kahn (1990, 1992) and develops a measure that includes three components of engagement: physical, emotional, and
cognitive. Rich et al. (2010) propose that EE should be conceptualized and measured so that there are three subcomponents. Their definition adds Rothbard’s (2001) cognitive component and includes the aspects of both attention and absorption.

Interestingly, it is the issue of burnout that has stimulated research on EE. In the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI), Maslach and Leiter (1997) define engagement as the opposite end of a continuum between engagement and burnout. They argue that whereas engagement is characterized by vigor, involvement, and efficacy, these are direct opposites of the three burnout dimensions: exhaustion (vs. vigor), cynicism (vs. involvement), and ineffectiveness (vs. efficacy).

Saks (2006), who developed his definition through a social exchange model, also argues for a multidimensional perspective of EE. Saks (2006) defined EE as “a unique construct of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral components . . . associated with individual role performance” (p. 602). Extending Saks’ (2006) model, a recent review by Macey and Schneider (2008a) documented EE as “. . . a desirable condition, has an organizational purpose, and connotes involvement, commitment, passion, enthusiasm, focused effort and energy, so it has both attitudinal and behavioral components” (p. 4). These scholars propose EE as an all-inclusive umbrella concept that contains three different types of engagement: trait engagement, state engagement, and behavioral engagement. Each of these forms of engagement is built on the next, eventually leading to complete EE, and entails various conceptualizations such as proactive personality, job involvement, and organizational citizenship behavior, respectively.

In this study, EE is treated in line with the approach of Schaufeli et al. (2002). Accordingly, engagement is defined as “. . . a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption” (p. 74). Vigor refers to high levels of energy and mental resilience at work, willingness to invest effort in one’s work, and persistence in the face of difficulties. Dedication refers to being strongly involved in one’s work and experiencing a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge. The third component, absorption, involves full concentration on one’s work to the point of experiencing time as passing quickly (Schaufeli et al., 2002; Schaufeli, Bakker, & Salanova, 2006).

We found three characteristics of EE’s conceptualization to be noteworthy. First, the definition of EE concerns the self-investment and the resources of simultaneous physical, emotional, and cognitive energies that employees bring to their work. Thus EE is more than just the investment of a single aspect of the self; it represents an investment of multiple dimensions (physical, emotional, and cognitive) so that the experience is simultaneous and holistic (Kahn, 1990; Rich et al., 2010; Schaufeli et al., 2002). Second, EE should refer to a psychological attachment associated with the work role rather than an attitude toward job resources. As Macey and Schneider (2008b) stated, “Engagement is not measured by indicators of the work environments” (p. 79).

Another essential characteristic of EE’s conceptualization is its definition as an “attitude” vs. a “behavior” Kahn (1990) argued that EE ebbs and flows—a condition that may vary both between and within employees. We argue that engagement as an attitude of employees to their organizations is no less intense than parallel job attitudes (i.e., OC), but is shorter in its duration and transferable across various workplaces. However, EE is also a behavior (intra and extra role) that employees can carry from one workplace to another. Thus we agree with Macey and Schneider’s (2008a) position that engagement is likely to contain both attitude-like and behavior-like components.

In the current study, we used the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES), which consistently relies on the definition and validity of EE suggested by Schaufeli et al. (2002). It includes a subscale for each of the three engagement dimensions (i.e. vigor, dedication, absorption) that have repeatedly been shown to have a superior three-factor structure fit with sufficient internal consistencies (Bakker, Albrecht, & Leiter, 2011). The UWES consists of 17 items (Schaufeli et al., 2002), and recently a short, nine-item version has also been developed and validated (Schaufeli
et al., 2006). The UWES has encouraging psychometric features such as internal consistencies (Cronbach’s α) that typically range between .80 and .90 (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Recent confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) studies have supported the theoretically based, correlated, three-factor structure of UWES (e.g., Hakanen, 2002; Hallberg & Schaufeli, 2006; Schaufeli et al., 2002, 2006). All of these studies have also shown that the three factors of EE are highly interrelated (with correlations between 0.60 and 0.99), whereas correlations between the latent variables of a covariance structure model range from .80 to more than .90 (Bakker & Leiter, 2010; Schaufeli et al., 2006).

Although the UWES is the most extensively used scientifically derived measure of engagement and has been validated in several countries (Bakker, 2009; Bakker, Albrecht, & Leiter, 2011; Schaufeli et al., 2006), it is not the only measure of EE (May, Gilson, & Harter, 2004; Rich et al., 2010; Rothbard, 2001). Building on Kahn’s (1990) conceptual foundation, scholars have also proposed slightly different measures. For example, Rothbard (2001) regards role attention and absorption as two major aspects of engagement, while May et al. (2004) and Rich et al. (2010) introduced three-dimensional measures of engagement that are very similar to the engagement scale of Schaufeli et al. (2002). More specifically, May et al. (2004) distinguished between a physical component (e.g., “I exert a lot of energy performing my job”), an emotional component (e.g., “I really put my heart into my job”), and a cognitive component (e.g., “Performing my job is so absorbing that I forget about everything else”), which correspond respectively to the dimensions of vigor, dedication, and absorption suggested by Schaufeli et al. (2002). To the best of our knowledge, information about the psychometric qualities of these scales is not available yet. Thus we decided to follow the conservative approach suggested by Schaufeli et al. (2002) and use it for the development of our rationale and the empirical stage of this study.

To summarize, EE captures how employees experience their work and broadens our view of the meaning of contemporary EOR (Albrecht, 2010b). Most scholars agree that engagement reflects the simultaneous investment of physical, affective, and cognitive energies in work. Nevertheless, despite the exploration of the construct over the past decade, there is still no consensus about its meaning. There is also a need for greater clarity in its definition and measurement (Albrecht, 2010a). We argue that focusing on EE may offer public sector organizations a competitive advantage and may contribute to a better understanding of employee functioning in public service.

**EE and Other EOR Constructs**

One of the major goals of this study is to examine whether EE is empirically distinct from other well-established EOR constructs (i.e., AC and JI), and thus deserves special recognition and attention in public sector management. To become established, any new concept must demonstrate a relationship to the examined field as well as a lack of redundancy with similar constructs (Cook & Campbell, 1979; Schwab, 1980). Assuming EE belongs to the conceptual framework of EOR, we expect the relationship between EE and close constructs such as AC and JI to resemble the relationships that exist within these variables themselves. However, the EOR field already provides a prolific variety of constructs representing different perspectives on and attachments to the organization. Therefore, at the same time, we argue that EE possesses some additional unique value that is not conveyed by either AC or JI (Cook & Campbell, 1979).

Our literature review demonstrates that EE is described as the experience of being “fully there” in terms of the physical, affective, and cognitive investment of energies in work (Kahn, 1990; Schaufeli et al., 2002). According to this view, EE is reflected holistically and simultaneously and thus provides a more comprehensive explanation for EOR than is found in the well-researched concepts emphasizing narrower aspects of employees’ investment of energies in
work. In this perspective, scholars have conceptualized EOR in terms of affective energy investment. For example, Affective Commitment (AC) is conceptualized as the emotional attachment of employees to their organization based on shared values and interests (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Given that AC represents an emotional state of attachment, Macey and Schneider (2008a) suggested that it might be a facet of EE (i.e., state engagement), but a facet that is insufficient to be described as engagement. Another approach to explaining EOR based on a relatively narrow aspect of employees’ investment is in terms of cognitive energy. The leading example is Job Involvement (JI), which stresses a “cognitive or belief state of psychological identification” (Kanungo, 1982 p. 342). According to Macey and Schneider (2008a), EE differs from JI because JI is a cognitive construct. Thus JI may also be considered a facet of EE rather than being equated with EE. Although these constructs demonstrate the EOR, each focuses on a different aspect of investment of the self in explaining why employees choose to invest themselves in work: AC focuses on affective energy, while JI focuses on cognitive energy. Nevertheless, while these narrower explanations could also account for EOR, they do not account for the employees’ ability to choose to invest their affective, cognitive, and physical energies simultaneously in work as a more holistic investment of the self. We argue that that choice is embodied in EE (Kahn, 1992). Engagement at work is reflected in the simultaneous investment of cognitive, emotional, and physical energies not only in the feeling of positive emotions toward the job, or by being cognitively identified with the work. Thus we argue that EE represents a more comprehensive phenomenon, one that is more encompassing than more familiar EOR concepts such as AC and JI. Therefore, EE’s simultaneous investment of energies in work may provide a better explanation for the employee–public organization relationship in a rapidly changing public administration arena. Thus a first hypothesis is suggested:

**Hypothesis 1 (H1):** EE will be distinguished from Affective Commitment and Job Involvement and positively related to Affective Commitment and Job Involvement in the public sector.

**A Cross-Sectorial View of EE**

Differences between the public and the private sector are well documented in the literature (e.g., Dye, 1995; Rainey, 2003). A major difference is that while the purpose of the public sector is to provide services to citizens, the private sector aims mostly at maximizing financial gain (Ghobadian, Gallear, Viney, & O’Regan, 2007). Although considerable similarities between the sectors do exist (e.g., in structure, client orientation, heterogeneity of outcomes, managerial techniques, and performance measurement), differences have always fascinated researchers seeking to identify the uniqueness of each sector. For public administration scholars and professionals, the differences, more than the generic similarities, are perceived as crucial for change, reforms, and a better prognosis for the sector. One of the major differences is in managerial and human resource mechanisms, such as employment conditions, type of employment contracts, and motivation to work and serve (i.e., Perry, 1990). A basic notion is the one concerning differences in levels of EE across the two sectors.

Although EE is becoming a widely used concept in management thinking, its contribution to and implications for public sector organizations has seldom been explored. Since EE consists of mission-related characteristics such as dedication, absorption, and devotion (Schaufeli et al., 2002; Schaufeli, Bakker, & Van Rhenen, 2009), a core goal of studies in the field is to characterize the activity of public service employees toward the state and the citizens. The responsibility of the public sector is to promote public policy with a sense of “mission” toward the state and its citizens. This unique sense of purpose calls for committed, involved, and engaged public sector
employees who serve rather than simply do the job. Moreover, EE also coheres with major NPM values such as dealing with citizens as clients, increased responsiveness, and going beyond formal duties to complete a public mission (Hood & Peters, 2004). According to the NPM doctrine, public organizations are expected to soften their bureaucratic approach toward the citizens, reduce red tape, and become more responsive and sensitive to citizens’ needs (Lynn, 1998). Perceiving citizens as clients who are entitled to quality services lies at the core of the NPM approach (Parry, 2003). Since EE is characterized by affect, initiative, and dedication, it may well reflect and encourage responsiveness to citizens evident in both the speed and quality of outcomes. We therefore feel that EE is essential for building modern public administration. The drive to install a sense of “mission” among public personnel may encourage higher levels of effectiveness and quality service that will benefit citizens, policy makers, and other stakeholders in the public sphere. Accordingly, we expect EE to be higher among public sector employees, and therefore suggest the second hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2 (H2): Public sector employees will have higher levels of EE than private sector employees.

A Cross-Sectorial View of EOR

Public sector organizations have undergone changes in recent years. First, the NPM reforms have attracted a great deal of interest and have been adopted in many Western and non-Western societies (Caiden & Caiden, 2002). Therefore, efforts are being made to change the attitudes and perceptions of public sector employees as to their job and mission of service (Vigoda-Gadot & Meiri, 2008). Second, protean careers and the need for self-fulfillment are emerging as a significant part of public organization work (Hall, 2002, 2004; McDonald, Brown, & Bradley 2005; Reitman & Schneer, 2003). Further evidence is found in an innovative research approach that indicates the existence of a relationship between Public Service Motivation (PSM) and commitment to and identification with public organizations (Moynihan & Pandey, 2007; Perry, 1996; Wright, 2004; Wright & Pandey, 2008). PSM theory claiming that employees may be predisposed to “respond to motives grounded primarily or uniquely in public organizations” (Perry & Wise, 1990, p. 368) might be helpful in distinguishing between public and private organizations. The enjoyment or self-satisfaction associated with serving society and helping the needy becomes a motivating drive. Work-related values such as the employees’ desire to help others, benefit society, or engage in meaningful public service (Frank & Lewis, 2004; Lewis & Frank, 2002; Vinzant, 1998) are highlighted today more than in the past. Thus we also expect to find differences between public sector employees and private sector employees with regard to AC and JI. Therefore, we suggest the third hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3 (H3): Public sector employees will score higher on Affective Commitment and Job Involvement than private sector employees.

Public organizations are seen as heavily bureaucratic, seniority-based environments characterized by strong managerial authority, control, and influence (Rainey, 1982). Such a sense of efficacy among managers might lead to higher levels of EE. If administrative positions are seniority-related, it is reasonable to assume that public managers will have greater identification with and a better understanding of the organizational goals, greater involvement in organizational activity, and hence stronger commitment than their employees (Morrison, 1994; Paarlberg & Perry, 2007; Rousseau & Shperling, 2001). Low rates of turnover in the public sector, compared with those of the private sector, support this notion even further. In addition,
studies have found managerial extra-role performance to be higher than that of employees (Hofmann, Morgeson, & Gerras, 2003; Lam, Hui, & Law, 1999; Morrison, 1994). Finally, according to the NPM approach, managers are required to evaluate their employees’ performance and even their own performance (Lam, 1997). Since performance appraisal is now a criterion for assessing the quality of managerial work, it may be expected that managers will have a direct interest in increasing achievement and improving performance (Khademian, 1998; Rousseau & Shperling, 2001). To the best of our knowledge, no study has thus far examined differences in EE levels between managers and employees in the public sector. Therefore, we suggest a fourth and final hypothesis:

**Hypothesis 4 (H4):** EE is higher among public sector managers than among lower ranked employees.

**Method**

**Sample and Procedure**

The study was based on a cross-sectoral survey of 593 employees from the private and public sectors in Israel. The respondents were approached based on a database of a private employment agency. Permission to use the list and to approach the target population was obtained in advance. The database consisted of employees from various professions, levels of seniority, and organizations, and both the private and public sectors. To increase the variation and heterogeneity of the sample, we ensured that respondents represented various characteristics of the work force in Israel, with regard to core business (e.g., technology, finance, industry, services welfare, education, health, hi-tech), size (small—up to 49 employees, large—1,000 employees or more), roles and professions (e.g., administration, research and development, manufacturing, service). The organizations’ size distribution was small to medium—48.1%; large—51.9%. More than half the respondents (58.8%) held nonmanagerial positions and the other 41.2% held various levels of managerial positions. The average age of the participants was 37.38 (SD = 9.46). Respondents had on average 16.38 (SD = 2.85) years of education, and the average seniority at their current organization was 6.07 years (SD = 7.76). The average number of jobs employees had held (including their current one) was 3.6 (SD = 2.04), and the average overall occupational seniority was 13.9 years (SD = 9.24).

Data were collected using e-mail and electronic questionnaires built specifically for the study. The questionnaires presented the general goal of the study and assured confidentiality and anonymity of the data and the responses. We emphasized that the data would be used for research purposes only. Participation in the study was strictly on a voluntary basis.

Utilizing an Internet-based platform for an online questionnaire offers several advantages: (a) a greater likelihood of reaching a large and more heterogeneous sample population, thereby increasing the generalizability of the study’s findings (Kent & Lee, 1999; Mehta & Sivadas, 1995; Sheehan & McMillan, 1999); (b) the guarantee of respondents’ anonymity, which may lead to more candid answers about sensitive behaviors and the ability to control for social desirability (Bachman, Elfrink, & Venzana, 1999; Couper, 2000; Sheehan, 2001); (c) participants control the response timing, which allows them to complete the questionnaire at their convenience and emotional availability (Thomas, 2004); (d) completion of the questionnaire is performed solely by the participants without researcher intervention, which may minimize researcher bias (Thomas, 2004); (e) elimination of the need to reenter the responses, thereby eliminating possible data entry errors that might skew the research findings (McFerland, Ryan, & Poul, 1998).
However, an online questionnaire also has some potential limitations. First, the response rates for an online questionnaire might be lower than the response rate to a traditional survey (Dillman, Smyth, & Christian, 2009). An online questionnaire is especially suitable for populations known to have access to the Internet and work with it regularly (Wimmer & Dominick, 2003). We believe that our study minimized the bias caused by these limitations by analyzing a relatively large and heterogeneous sample, and by ensuring a solid response rate (25%) using reminders sent to participants at intervals of a few weeks, encouraging them to complete the questionnaire. Second, according to Dillman et al. (2009), to reduce the probability of sample error and to increase the representativeness of the sample, the study’s target population must be defined accurately, and the survey must be distributed to this specific population. Third, misunderstood instructions or browser incompatibility may lead to difficulty in responding to the questionnaire and subsequent noncompletion thereof. To avoid such instances, the research questionnaire was compatible with various different web browsers. The instructions were clear and concise, and prevalidated with a pilot study of 113 respondents.

Measures

Table 1 presents the psychometric characteristics of the main research variables including reliability levels (Cronbach’s α) with regard to the two sectors examined. Unless stated otherwise, the scale for each of the measures is from 1 (completely disagree) to 5 (completely agree).

**Employee Engagement (EE)**. We used the shorter version of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale—UWES validated by Schaufeli et al. (2006) that relies on Schaufeli et al.’s (2002) definition of EE and the validated long version of the scale. The responders were asked to rate their answers across a 7-level frequency scale ranging from 1 (once a year) to 7 (once a day). The short scale includes nine items and examines the three dimensions of vigor, dedication, and absorption. Thus vigor was assessed with three items (e.g., “At my work, I feel I am bursting with energy”) and reliability was 0.87; dedication was measured with three items (e.g., “My job inspires me”) and reliability was 0.86; absorption was assessed with three items (e.g., “It is difficult to detach myself from my job”) and reliability was 0.64. This relatively low level of reliability may be attributed to different interpretations when it comes to items that contain metaphors (e.g., “Time flies when I am working”). The full list of items for this measure is in the appendix.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Private Sector (n = 368)</th>
<th>Public Sector (n = 225)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Employees</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Engagement (EE)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vigor</td>
<td>5.57</td>
<td>1.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedication</td>
<td>5.16</td>
<td>1.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absorption</td>
<td>5.20</td>
<td>1.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Affective Commitment (AC)</td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>9.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Job Involvement (JI)</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td>4.73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: N = 593.
Affective Commitment (AC). We used four items from the Allen and Meyer’s (1990) Scale for Affective Commitment. EE was examined with this type of commitment because it is conceptually the closest commitment to EE and the related variables. Reliability was 0.85.

Job Involvement (JI). We used five items from the Kanungo (1982) Scale that defined JI as cognitive identification with work. We chose the items that presented the highest loading in previous factor analyses. Reliability was 0.86.

Data analysis
The first goal of this study is to test the construct validity of the UWES in the employee–public organization relationship literature. Thus we examined the discriminant validity of EE vis-à-vis AC and JI following a two-step process similar to that outlined by Hallberg and Schaufeli (2006). We used the AMOS software to conduct a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and examined whether EE, AC, and JI are empirically separate constructs. To evaluate the extent to which the specified model reproduced the underlying covariance matrix, several global fit indices were used. The goodness of fit of the models was evaluated using χ² index tests. A general rule is that a low and nonsignificant χ² value represents a good fit between the model and the data. The ratio of the model’s chi-square to degrees of freedom is considered a satisfactory value if the ratio’s value is up to 2. However, χ² is sensitive to sample size. The probability of rejecting a hypothesized model increases as the sample size increases, even if the difference between the fit model and the “true” underlying model is very small. To overcome this problem, the computation of relative goodness-of-fit indices is strongly recommended (Bentler, 1990). The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) and Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR; Bentler, 1995) were also evaluated. Hu and Bentler (1999) recommend SRMR values below .08 for a good fit. RMSEA values below .08 are generally considered as reflecting a reasonably good fit of the model with the data, while values more than 0.1 indicate a poor model fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999). To examine whether the proposed solution exhibited a superior fit with the data in comparison to other, competing solutions, the Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI, also known as TLI) and the Comparative Fit Index (CFI; Bentler, 1995) were examined. The CFI and NNFI measure the improvement in the fit with the data by comparing the hypothesized model with an independent model that specifies no covariance among the variables. The NNFI and CFI range between 0 and 1; values greater than .90 are considered as indicating a good model fit (Byrne, 2001; Hu & Bentler, 1999). Latent intercorrelations were used to examine the convergent validity of the EOR variables. Finally, MANOVA analyses were used for hypotheses dealing with sectorial differences.

Findings
Tables 2 and 3 present the steps we took to support H1, dealing with the potential autonomous conceptual standing of EE. First, we conducted Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) for three models: (a) one-factor model, (b) Five-factor model that includes the three subscales of EE (i.e. vigor, dedication, absorption), AC, and JI., and (c) an improved 5-factor model where the error variance of vigor Items 1 and 2, and dedication Items 3 and 4 were allowed to correlate. As can be seen, the one-factor model was inferior to the other two models, implying that EE in the public sector is not embedded in other close concepts. In addition, the revised model (Model 2mod) best fits the data, $\chi^2(90) = 168.06$, $CFI = .97$, $NNFI = .96$, $SRMR = .05$, $RMSEA = .06$, especially compared with the alternative five-factor model, $\Delta\chi^2(4) = 82.02$, $p \leq .001$.

Next, we examined the latent intercorrelations between the three dimensions of EE (i.e., vigor, dedication, absorption) and AC and JI. Table 3 presents the results and the internal
reliabilities of those variables. As can be seen, all three dimensions of EE were positively related to AC and JI at the .01 level: vigor was positively related to AC ($r = .57$), and to JI ($r = .40$); dedication was positively related to AC ($r = .70$), and to JI ($r = .56$); and absorption was positively related to AC ($r = .50$), and to JI ($r = .58$). These findings support H1.

To reconfirm the revised model (i.e. Model 2mod), we again applied CFA among the private sector sample of 368 employees. This sample was quite similar to the public sector sample in most demographic characteristics (e.g., age, gender, education, seniority). This analysis confirmed our previous assertions and yielded quite similar results. With $\chi^2(90) = 260.24$, CFI = .96, NNFI = .94, SRMR = .05, and RMSEA = .07; this model was in fairly good fit with the data.

Next, we examined how well the items relate to the factors (validity) and how well the revised model (Model 2mod) accounts for the variances (reliability). Table 4 presents the $t$-values and $R^2$ results. As shown, reliabilities are solid for all five factors, with $R^2 = .32$ or higher.

Table 5 presents a MANOVA comparing the public sector and the private sector. The MANOVA indicates significant differences between the public and the private sectors, Wilks’s Lambda = .913, $F(5, 587) = 11.12; p \leq .01$, in at least one or more of the five factors (i.e. vigor, dedication, absorption, AC, JI). The means of Vigor for public sector employees ($5.57$, $SD = 1.24$) were higher than those in the private sector ($5.18$, $SD = 1.36$), and $F(1, 591) = 12.37; p \leq .01$. The means of Dedication for public sector employees ($5.16$, $SD = 1.51$) were higher than those in the private sector ($4.50$, $SD = 1.64$), and $F(1, 591) = 24.30; p \leq .01$. Quite similar figures were found for Absorption. The means of public sector employees ($5.2$, $SD = 1.29$) were higher than those in the private sector ($4.90$, $SD = 1.43$), and $F(1, 591) = 8.41; p \leq .01$. The AC of public sector employees were also significantly higher ($2.69$, $SD = .76$) as compared with
those of private sector employees ($2.33, SD = .70$), and $F(1, 591) = 51.12; p \leq .01$. Finally, the means of JI for public sector employees ($2.51, SD = .94$) were higher than those in the private sector ($2.51, SD = .90$), and $F(1, 591) = 7.27; p \leq .01$. These findings support H2 and H3.

To support H4, we again used a MANOVA. The variable “number of subordinates” was divided into two categories with equal distributions: (a) employees with no subordinates and (b) managers who had at least one subordinate. Table 6 presents the differences between employees and managers in the public and in the private sectors, focusing on the differences between

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### Table 4. t-Values and $R^2$ Results for the Model 2mod

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors/items</th>
<th>$\beta$ (SE)</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Vigor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UWES-1</td>
<td>1.00 (0.07)</td>
<td>13.34</td>
<td>0.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UWES-2</td>
<td>0.90 (0.07)</td>
<td>12.18</td>
<td>0.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UWES-6</td>
<td>1.41 (0.09)</td>
<td>14.93</td>
<td>0.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Dedication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UWES-3</td>
<td>1.10 (0.08)</td>
<td>12.30</td>
<td>0.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UWES-4</td>
<td>1.50 (0.10)</td>
<td>14.24</td>
<td>0.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UWES-7</td>
<td>1.49 (0.09)</td>
<td>15.49</td>
<td>0.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Absorption</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UWES-5</td>
<td>1.27 (0.13)</td>
<td>9.62</td>
<td>0.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UWES-8</td>
<td>1.28 (0.10)</td>
<td>11.80</td>
<td>0.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UWES-9</td>
<td>1.28 (0.07)</td>
<td>8.75</td>
<td>0.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Affective Commitment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 1</td>
<td>0.88 (0.07)</td>
<td>11.16</td>
<td>0.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 2</td>
<td>0.95 (0.05)</td>
<td>16.62</td>
<td>0.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 3</td>
<td>1.04 (0.06)</td>
<td>17.14</td>
<td>0.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 4</td>
<td>0.83 (0.05)</td>
<td>16.60</td>
<td>0.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Job Involvement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 1</td>
<td>0.99 (0.06)</td>
<td>14.96</td>
<td>0.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 2</td>
<td>0.91 (0.07)</td>
<td>12.11</td>
<td>0.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 3</td>
<td>0.94 (0.06)</td>
<td>14.31</td>
<td>0.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 4</td>
<td>0.94 (0.06)</td>
<td>14.20</td>
<td>0.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 5</td>
<td>0.64 (0.05)</td>
<td>8.35</td>
<td>0.29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: UWES = Utrecht work engagement scale.

### Table 5. MANOVA for Differences Between Public Sector and Private Sector Employees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Private sector $N = 368$</th>
<th>Public sector $N = 225$</th>
<th>$F(1, 591)$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Vigor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12.37***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Dedication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>24.30***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Absorption</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8.41**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Affective Commitment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7.27**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Job Involvement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>51.12***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Wilks’s Lambda=.913.

***p ≤ .001. **p ≤ .01. *p ≤ .05.
managers and employees in the public sector. The table illustrates significant differences between employees and managers in the public sector, Wilks’s Lambda = .81, $F(5, 219) = 9.78; p \leq .001$, in at least one or more of the five factors. The means of Vigor for managers ($5.99, SD = .96$) were higher than those of employees ($5.21, SD = 1.34$), $F(1, 223) = 24.23; p \leq .001$). Likewise, means for Dedication among managers ($5.77, SD = 1.18$) were higher than those of employees, $4.63, SD = 1.56, F(1, 223) = 36.83; p \leq .001$. As for Absorption, the means for managers ($5.77, SD = 1.08$) were higher than those for employees ($4.86, SD = 1.32, F(1, 223) = 31.79; p \leq .01$). The AC of managers were also significantly higher ($M = 3.62, SD = .75$) as compared with those of employees ($3.1, SD = .86, F(1, 223) = 22.52; p \leq .01$). Finally, the means of JI among managers were higher ($3.03, SD = .90$) than those for employees ($2.44, SD = .89, F(1, 223) = 23.75; p \leq .01$). These findings support H4.

### Table 6. MANOVA for Differences Between Employees and Managers (Overall and Public Sector)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Overall employees ($N = 348$)</th>
<th>Overall managers ($N = 245$)</th>
<th>Public sector employees ($N = 120$)</th>
<th>Public sector managers ($N = 105$)</th>
<th>$F(1, 591)$</th>
<th>$F(1, 223)$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vigor</td>
<td>SD 1.37 Mean 5.01</td>
<td>SD 1.12 Mean 5.78</td>
<td>SD 1.34 Mean 5.21</td>
<td>SD 0.96 Mean 5.99</td>
<td>52.18</td>
<td>24.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedication</td>
<td>SD 1.64 Mean 4.3</td>
<td>SD 1.42 Mean 5.33</td>
<td>SD 1.56 Mean 4.63</td>
<td>SD 1.18 Mean 5.77</td>
<td>57.65</td>
<td>36.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absorption</td>
<td>SD 1.41 Mean 4.74</td>
<td>SD 1.21 Mean 5.55</td>
<td>SD 1.32 Mean 4.86</td>
<td>SD 1.08 Mean 5.77</td>
<td>53.33</td>
<td>31.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective Commitment</td>
<td>SD 0.89 Mean 2.87</td>
<td>SD 0.89 Mean 3.21</td>
<td>SD 0.86 Mean 3.10</td>
<td>SD 0.75 Mean 3.62</td>
<td>20.21</td>
<td>22.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Involvement</td>
<td>SD 0.87 Mean 2.37</td>
<td>SD 0.90 Mean 2.88</td>
<td>SD 0.89 Mean 2.44</td>
<td>SD 0.90 Mean 3.03</td>
<td>47.06</td>
<td>23.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: All $F$ values are $p < .001$; Wilks’ Lambda (overall) = .883; Wilks’ Lambda (public sector) = .817.

**Discussion and Summary**

The literature of EE is impressive and still growing. It points to the potential of EE as an inclusive concept that can contribute to a better understanding of the management of human capital in many organizations (Albrecht, 2010b). In this study we focused on the meaning of EE in the public sector, because we feel it has special bearing on citizens who interact with it. Engaged employees have high levels of energy, are enthusiastic, and are fully immersed in their daily work (Macey & Schneider, 2008a; May et al., 2004). Such engagement has a positive effect on their clientele. In line with this, modern public organizations need their employees to be proactive, show initiative, take responsibility, and be committed to high quality performance standards. Ulrich (1997, p. 125) summarizes this view, noting that “Employee contribution becomes a critical issue because in trying to produce more output with less employee input, organizations have no choice but to try to engage not only the body but the mind and soul of every employee.” Similarly, public organizations need public servants who feel energetic and dedicated, are absorbed in their work for the public, and hence are physically and mentally engaged.

Thus far, public administration theory and writing on EOR has been characterized by presenting a cognitive relationship that suited the bureaucratic and formal nature of the public sector (e.g., Rainey, 2003). Oddly enough, a bureaucratic and rational public administration poses a paradox versus employees’ activity of helping citizens, which is characterized by a sense of mission, dedication, and affective aspects. Despite this conflict between the two, they coexist in the employees’ daily functioning within the public sphere. When searching for an effective public administrator while attempting to improve service in public sector organizations, the affective aspect of the employee–public organization relationship has rarely been taken into account. This present study offers EE as a key element in the employee–public organization relationship for...
resolving the conflict between the rational and the affect. EE includes both characteristics such as achievement and performance orientation that cohere with NPM values (Parry, 2003; Pollitt, 1988), and it constitutes an affective relation characterized by a sense of mission, dedication, and energy (Schaufeli et al., 2002). This study also offers a potential answer to the main challenge in the public sector today, namely, performance enhancement. As this study shows, there is substantial research demonstrating EE’s uniqueness in being positively related to job performance and good citizenship behaviors (Bakker & Bal, 2010; Bakker & Demerouti, 2008; Rich et al., 2010; for an extensive overview, see Demerouti & Cropanzano, 2010).

Research also demonstrates that EE is positively related with good service provision, the improvement of client satisfaction (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008; Coffman & Gonzalez-Molina, 2002; Hakanen, Perhomeini, & Toppinen-Tanner, 2008; Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002), and quality of service (Salanova, Agut, & Peiró, 2005), which are central values in NPM (Parry, 2003). These findings are in line with recent public administration studies that support the argument that quality of service is the main component in citizens’ satisfaction with public services (Beï & Shang, 2006; Wisniewski, 2001). Based on these findings, one of the benefits of our study is presenting EE as a possible contributor to a high-quality, citizen-oriented public service system, which might lead to an increase in citizens’ trust in government agencies.

One of the interesting findings of our study is that EE is a theoretically autonomous concept distinguished from the similar concepts of AC and JI. EE is distinguished from JI (which reflects only a cognitive aspect) and from AC (which represents an emotional state of attachment) because EE incorporates cognitive, affective, and energy aspects simultaneously in a connected rather than fragmented manner (Kahn, 1992; Rothbard & Patil, 2010). These findings support Macey and Schneider’s (2008a) prediction that EOR constructs would correlate with EE with a Pearson’s value of around $r = .50$, suggesting that EE is unique although it shares conceptual space with parallel EOR concepts. Our finding is also in line with Macey and Schneider’s (2008a) argument that AC and JI might be facets of EE, but facets that are insufficient to be described as engagement. Thus we believe that our findings add to the reasoning that EE’s conceptual space is somewhat different. The extent to which employees invest their “full selves” in the execution of their work appears to be a different concept from the extent to which employees are identified with their jobs or value their organizations. Although some EE measures may share similar content items with measures of other constructs (e.g., items in the UWES such as “my job inspires me” vs. JI’s measure “I consider my job to be essential to my being,” see also Newman & Harrison, 2008), these items are combined in such way as to create a unique concept (Macey & Schneider, 2008a).

Psychometrically speaking, EE, AC, and JI are discriminated empirically. Instead of one undifferentiated, common EOR factor (Model 1; see Table 2), we demonstrated a separated five-factor structure that distinguishes between the constructs as various facets of EOR (Model 2; see Table 2). In line with previous CFA studies (e.g., Hakanen, 2002; Hallberg & Schaufeli, 2006; Schaufeli et al., 2002, 2006), the results of this study support the idea that EE can be considered a three-dimensional construct. However, the correlated three-factor structure did not display a flawless approximation with the data. There was one error covariance between vigor Item 1 (“At my work, I feel bursting with energy”) and vigor Item 2 (“At my job, I feel strong and vigorous”), and between dedication Item 3 (“To me, my job is challenging”) and dedication Item 4 (“My job inspires me”). The model fit clearly improved after allowing the error variance of these items to be correlated (Model 2mod; see Table 2). This finding indicates that these items share some combined variance that the vigor factor and the dedication factor cannot explain. Therefore, it seems that these two items from each dimension overlap and to some extent measure the same thing. However, future studies need to replicate this finding before further conclusions can be drawn.
High correlations among the three dimensions (from 0.83 to 0.91; see Table 3) would suggest a one-dimensional structure. Such a conclusion, however, leaves the question of the one vs. three-dimensionality of EE. Future studies should examine whether differentiation between the three dimensions have different causes and consequences in the public sector, so that a differentiation between the three dimensions would be preferred instead of a single score. Nevertheless, we suggest that future studies use a unidimensional factor if their goal is to investigate EE in a broader scope. The high correlations between the three dimensions indicate substantial overlap between them, which may restrict their use as separate dimensions.

We therefore argue that it is time to put aside the notion that Employee Engagement is nothing more that some “old wine—new bottle” conceptual cocktail. Rather than being merely a blend of “old wines,” EE also has new characteristics. We contend that there is significant evidence demonstrating that EE is an important standalone construct that is quite independent of other similar EOR constructs. The ongoing challenge is to examine EE against other EOR measures and clarify the relationship between these interrelated, but not identical, constructs. Future studies should also be directed at examining EE’s influence on employee functioning in the public arena. It may also be worthwhile testing EE against other measures such as psychological contracts, Public Sector Motivation (PSM), or Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) in and around the public sector.

Moreover, the discriminant validity toward more notions in work motivation and the public sector should also be pursued. With the increasing interest in and focus on Public Service Motivation (PSM), it is important to keep a close eye on the parsimony of the conceptual characteristics, while also making sure that work motivation in public domains does not become a secluded area of research with exclusive constructs applicable only within a small range of contexts. Following closely on this argument is the recommendation for future studies to examine the relationship between PSM and EE. Similarly, intrinsic motivational orientation is a propensity to engage in tasks for inherent interest and one’s own satisfaction (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Future research might also investigate the relationship between this personality-based factor and EE.

A notable finding is that EE and the related attitudes are higher among public sector employees than among private sector employees. This finding is in line with other studies showing that public sector employees are motivated by a sense of mission and prefer intrinsic rewards (Crewson, 1997; Frank & Lewis, 2004; Gabris & Simo, 1995; Lewis & Frank, 2002; Rainey, 2003) rather than extrinsic rewards (Khojasteh, 1993). In contrast, private sector employees are motivated by extrinsic rewards (Chughtai, 2008; La Pine, Erez, & Johnson, 2002; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Paine, & Bachrach, 2000; Rotenberg & Moberg, 2007). Additional confirmation of this finding can be found in an innovative research area that indicates a positive relationship between PSM and employee commitment to public organizations, and affective attachment to work in public service (Moynihan & Pandey, 2008; Naff & Crum, 1999). PSM is influenced by commitment to public organizations, identification with such institutions, and an affective relationship to work in public service (Perry, 1996; Sangmoook, 2006; Wright, 2007; Wright & Pandy, 2008). These findings reconfirm our argument that public sector employees are motivated by a different set of internal values and intrinsic motivation that influences the intensity of their relationship to the organization. The enjoyment or self-satisfaction associated with serving society and helping citizens thus becomes a motivating force. Based on established knowledge from the organizational behavior arena, we point to the usefulness of the concept of “fit” in public administration research and practice. Person Organization Fit (POF) is reflected in the degree to which the skills and values of the employee fit the organization’s value (Bretz & Judge, 1994). The findings of the study suggest that this fit is important and that matching the employee with the policy and values of the public organization may be useful. Thus this study recommends that a better fit between employees’ values and the organizational mission may serve as a trigger for a more effective public sphere.
Another contribution made here is the reconfirmation of the existence of unique characteristics in the employee–public organization relationship stemming from the different goals and unique activity of this sector. In this context, our study adds to the discussion regarding the appropriateness of importing managerial knowledge from the private sector, and contributes food for thought to the question of whether the employee–organization relationship is a generic concept, or whether it contains unique sectoral characteristics. One of the benefits of this research, therefore, is its reinforcement of the recognition that the study of public administration cannot rely only on managerial knowledge from the business sector. From our perspective, scholarly efforts must be made to create a managerial, organizational body of knowledge that is compatible with the characteristics of our discipline.

Research demonstrates that EE is negatively related to burnout (e.g., Maslach & Leiter, 2008; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Reducing the levels of burnout of public sector employees, especially among employees who provide service to citizens, may improve the level of responsiveness toward the citizens as suggested by the NPM approach (Lynn, 1998; Vigoda, 2000). The resulting influence on the efficiency of the public sector and improvement of services provided to the citizens is clear. Therefore, future research within the work environments of public service should further examine EE in relation with burnout and stress of public servants. Furthermore, with EE gaining recognition for its “added values” and the UWES obtaining more support as a valid and reliable operationalization of EE, future studies on the psychological processes in public services reconsider and redefine the meaning of employee well-being in public administration.

An interesting practical contribution of our study is relevant for employee recruitment in public service. EE may serve as an indicator for hiring employees who are devoted, have initiative, and an affective relationship to public service. Employees who are strongly engaged with the organization are proactive, initiate changes, promote innovation, and invest efforts in improving the performance of their organization (Grant & Ashford, 2008; Harter et al., 2002; Saks, 2006; Salanova et al., 2005). Spotting these employees at the selection stage and hiring them for public service may improve the performance of public organizations and contribute to the establishment of an efficient and quality public services system.

The limitations of our study should also be noted. First, the present study used data from a cross-sectional design that precludes the uncovering of cause–effect relationships. Thus, we must note that our study does not allow for any causal implications, because the study design was not longitudinal. Longitudinal studies of EE are rare in general. However, longitudinal research is particularly important when it comes to discriminating between EE, AC, and JI for at least three reasons: (a) these three types of EOR might be causally linked; (b) the antecedent variables might play a different causal role in the case of EE, AC, and JI; and (c) it is unclear whether the correlated three-factor structure of UWES remains unchanged over time. Second, the study was based on self-reports, meaning that the magnitude of the study’s findings may have been biased due to common method variance or common source errors. However, this possibility is not as troublesome as one might expect in studies of discriminant validity like the current one. Third, the study is based on data collected in a single culture (Israeli). Multicultural data could provide much more reliable findings about differences in EE between public and private sectors.

Finally, we believe that this article sets a milestone as far as EE’s existence in the public sector goes. There is room to conduct additional research to expand its conclusions. We feel that integrating the study of EE into the study of public administration will promote understanding about how employees function in the public sector and add to the knowledge in our discipline. Future studies should examine sectorial characteristics that may disrupt EE’s contribution to the public sector. Based on studies that point out EE’s positive influence emanating from the resources that it provides to the employee when dealing with demands at work (Bakker, Hakanen, Demerouti, &
Xanthopoulou, 2007; Hobfoll, 2002; Karasek, 1979), studies may look for the relationship between EE and active participation in the workplace, engagement in organizational conflicts or in organizational politics, as well as in other voice activities that are so vital in public arenas. Since organizational politics is relatively high in the public sector (Vigoda 2002; Vigoda-Gadot & Kapun, 2005), future studies may also look for the relationship between EE of public employees and their perceptions of organizational politics or political skills. We further believe that research efforts directed at locating, moderating, or accelerating factors of EE will also add significant knowledge to understand employee functioning in the public sphere. Findings in these directions will add to the understanding of EE’s unique contribution and expand our understanding of its meaning for employee–organization relationships, especially in the public sphere.

Appendix

Facets of Employee Engagement (EE) in the Public Sector:

Vigor

1. At my work, I feel bursting with energy.
2. At my job, I feel strong and vigorous.
3. When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work.

Dedication

1. To me, my job is challenging.
2. My job inspires me.
3. I find the work that I do full of meaning and purpose.

Absorption

1. It is difficult to detach myself from my job.
2. I feel happy when I am working intensely.
3. Time flies when I’m working.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

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**Bios**

**Eran Vigoda-Gadot** is the Head of the School of Political Science and the Head of the Center for Public Management and Policy (CPMP), University of Haifa, Israel. Vigoda-Gadot is the author and coauthor of more than 130 articles and book chapters, 8 books and symposiums as well as many other scholarly presentations and working papers in the field of public administration, public management, and organizational behavior.

**Liat Eldor** is a doctoral student in organizational behavior at the Graduate School of Management, University of Haifa. She earned her MPA from the School of Political Science, University of Haifa. Her current research interests include employee engagement, work motivation, and organizational learning for both public and business organizations.

**Lior M. Schohat** earned his Ph.D. in Organizational Psychology from the University of Georgia. He teaches management and leadership in the School of Political Science, University of Haifa and is a senior consultant to major private and public organizations in Israel.