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# Daily Fluctuations in Work Engagement

## An Overview and Current Directions

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**Abstract.** This article presents an overview of the literature on daily fluctuations in work engagement. Daily work engagement is a state of vigor, dedication, and absorption that is predictive of important organizational outcomes, including job performance. After briefly discussing enduring work engagement, the advantages of diary research are discussed, as well as the concept and measurement of daily work engagement. The research evidence shows that fluctuations in work engagement are a function of the changes in daily job and personal resources. Particularly on the days that employees have access to many resources, they are able to cope well with their daily job demands (e.g., work pressure, negative events), and likely interpret these demands as challenges. Furthermore, the literature review shows that on the days employees have sufficient levels of job control, they proactively try to optimize their work environment in order to stay engaged. This proactive behavior is called job crafting and predicts momentary and daily work engagement. An important additional finding is that daily engagement has a reciprocal relationship with daily recovery. On the days employees recover well, they feel more engaged; and engagement during the day is predictive of subsequent recovery. Finding the daily balance between engagement while at work and detachment while at home seems the key to enduring work engagement.

**Keywords:** affective events, diary, employee engagement, job demands-resources model, work engagement

The concept of employee work engagement has generated enormous interest in the academic and practitioner domains (Albrecht, 2010; Macey et al., 2009). Most research on work engagement – an active, positive state of vigor, dedication, and absorption – has focused on differences between individuals and has treated day-to-day fluctuations in engagement as measurement error (Sonnentag, Dormann, & Demerouti, 2010). In the present article, I will argue that organizational psychology needs a more dynamic approach that can model short-term changes in work engagement and its correlates. My central aim is to give an overview of research on daily fluctuations in work engagement. Although it is informative to know employees' levels of enduring work engagement, an analysis of daily work engagement may inform us why organizational results change from day to day. Why do even engaged employees have off-days? Can the level of engagement change as a

function of the work activity? In addition to answering these questions regarding daily and momentary work engagement, I will discuss the predictors and outcomes of daily engagement. Professionals and employees themselves can use these insights to advance work engagement from day to day.

### Enduring Work Engagement

The concept of work engagement was initially developed to capture an enduring, affective-motivational state of employees regarding their job. Specifically, Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Romá, and Bakker (2002, p. 74) defined work engagement as "... a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor,

dedication, and absorption.” In essence, work engagement captures how workers experience their work: as stimulating and energetic and something to which they really want to devote time and effort (the vigor component); as a significant and meaningful pursuit (dedication); and as engrossing and something on which they are fully concentrated (absorption; Bakker, Schaufeli, Leiter, & Taris, 2008). In a similar vein, Rothbard and Patil (2010) have defined work engagement as “an employee’s psychological presence in a role – or “being there.” It is the person’s focus of attention, their absorption, and their available energy directed toward work-related tasks.”

Work engagement differs from other well-known concepts such as job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Whereas the latter concepts refer to attitudes toward the job and organization, respectively, engagement represents an attitude toward work itself (dedication). Employees who are satisfied with their job in general and committed to their organization are often also enthusiastic about their specific work activities, but this is not necessarily the case. Additionally, work engagement signals high levels of physical and cognitive energy (vigor), and a clear focus and concentration on the work activity (absorption). Thus, work engagement is a much more active positive concept than satisfaction and commitment – it informs workers that they want to invest time and effort in their work activities. Employees may be highly engaged in their work and yet be low on organizational commitment – the content of the work may be much more important than where one works. Indeed, research has shown that engagement can be theoretically and empirically distinguished from related concepts like job satisfaction and organizational commitment (e.g., Bakker & Oerlemans, 2011; Hallberg & Schaufeli, 2006).

Furthermore, previous survey research has convincingly shown that job resources are the most important predictors of work engagement, particularly when job demands are high (Bakker, Hakanen, Demerouti, & Xanthopoulou, 2007; Hakanen, Perhoniemi, & Toppinen-Tanner, 2008). Job resources are those physical, social, psychological, or organizational aspects of the job that are functional in achieving work goals, such as social support from colleagues, performance feedback, and supervisory coaching. Such resources can be used to cope with high job demands, and to grow and develop in one’s job (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Job resources also have a positive influence on positive self-beliefs, including self-efficacy, optimism, and self-esteem. These personal resources, in turn, facilitate vigor, dedication, and absorption (Bakker, 2011; Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2009a).

Due to their motivational potential, job resources help employees to meet their work targets. Thus employees who have access to many (vs. few) job resources typically show higher levels of work engagement and perform better – they are willing to go the extra mile. Indeed, a recent meta-analysis (Christian, Garza, & Slaughter, 2011) on the relationship between work engagement and task and contextual performance resulted in corrected correlations of .39 and .43, respectively. Moreover, research findings

suggest that highly engaged employees outperform those with low engagement levels on a range of financial performance measures (Macey, Schneider, Barbera, & Young, 2009). Thus, in general, job resources foster enduring work engagement; and enduring work engagement, in turn, is an important predictor of job performance.

I will now turn to daily fluctuations in work engagement. What do we know about daily changes in vigor, dedication, and absorption? What are the daily antecedents and consequences of work engagement? How can we further develop theory, research, and practice using daily diary approaches? Before answering these questions, I will briefly discuss the diary research method and its advantages.

## Diary Research

In quantitative diary research, participants are requested to fill in short questionnaires at several occasions, for example during five consecutive work days or several times during the same day. Participants respond to questions about what happened during the workday by selecting from predetermined answer options. Diary methods enable the study of feelings, thoughts, and behaviors within the natural work context (Ohly, Sonnentag, Niessen, & Zapf, 2010). In addition, participants can report about the characteristics of their work environment, which may fluctuate on a daily basis. Whereas in survey studies the person is the unit of analysis, in diary studies the situation is the unit of analysis. Thus, surveys assume stability over time in the investigated constructs, and focus on differences between persons regarding, for example, their working conditions and work engagement (interindividual variation). In contrast, diaries assume fluctuations in the investigated constructs and focus on differences between situations (intra-individual variation). Thus, diary methods are particularly useful to capture the short-term dynamics of experiences and behaviors in the work context.

Diary studies enable researchers to capture “life as it is lived” (Bolger, Davis, & Rafaeli, 2003, p. 597). For example, with the experience sampling method, participants may be asked to fill out a very brief questionnaire on their smart phone every time they receive a push message (e.g., Kuntsche & Labhart, 2013). Alternatively, in a daily diary study, participants may be requested to fill out a short online questionnaire at the end of every workday during a 2-week time period. With these diary methods, researchers can assess phenomena and processes in peoples’ natural life contexts, for example at the workplace and at home.

Diary studies have some advantages compared to survey studies. First, diary studies reduce retrospective bias (Reis & Gable, 2000). Whereas general questionnaires on working conditions and work engagement often suffer from social desirability and are dependent on peoples’ memories that are often inaccurate, behavioral and work engagement measures that are collected on a daily basis have the advantage of minimizing the filter of memory and social desirability (Kahneman, Krueger, Schkade, Schwarz, & Stone,

2004). Second, diary studies also have the advantage that the situational context can be taken into account when studying feelings, cognitions, and behavior (Ohly et al., 2010). For example, police officers may be instructed to report their emotional labor strategies and work engagement immediately after every second interaction with civilians. In this way, the investigated phenomena and processes relate to very specific encounters police officers have when on patrol.

Third, and related to the previous point, as outlined by Ohly and her colleagues (2010), a within-person approach enables us to examine the more proximal predictors of work engagement. Diary studies can help address questions concerning when employees feel engaged. Are there specific situational features that need to be present during a specific day in order to feel engaged? For example, it is conceivable that not necessarily a generally high level of resources such as a supportive leader increases daily work engagement. Rather, the friendly remark and instrumental help on a specific day may increase daily work engagement (Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2012). In a similar vein, not only generally high levels of self-efficacy are important for work engagement, but particularly the levels of task-related self-efficacy on a specific day may be crucial for daily work engagement (Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2009b; Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Heuven, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2008). By investigating proximal predictors of daily work engagement we can find out when people have their best days, and why even engaged employees have off-days.

## Daily Work Engagement

Sonnentag (2003) was the first to challenge the prevailing view that engagement refers to a persistent and pervasive affective-cognitive state (Schaufeli et al., 2002). She proposed that work engagement should not only be seen as an enduring experience. Rather, she argued and showed that levels of work engagement may vary within the same employee from one day to another, in response to specific situational and personal conditions (see also, Sonnentag et al., 2010). Thus, daily work engagement was introduced as complementary to enduring work engagement.

Whereas enduring work engagement refers to how engaged employees feel in relation to their work in general, over long periods of time, daily engagement reflects a transient state of mind that exists on a given moment and fluctuates within the same individual over short periods of time (e.g., day to day or hour to hour; Sonnentag et al., 2010). The between-person approach that assesses enduring engagement is particularly valuable in organizations to find differences in work engagement between teams or departments. The within-person approach that assesses daily or state work engagement is particularly valuable to find differences between occasions or activities that coincide with high or low levels of work engagement. For example, a scientist may feel extremely vigorous, dedicated, and absorbed on

the day she is writing an article, whereas engagement levels may show a steep decline on the days she works on her administration. Daily diary studies can assess fluctuations in work engagement from day to day, and can simultaneously assess which part of the variance in engagement should be ascribed to between-person differences.

Previous research provides evidence for substantial within-person fluctuations in work engagement. On the week-level, the study by Bakker and Bal (2010) showed that 47% of the total variance in engagement was attributable to within-person fluctuations (this means that 53% of the variance was attributable to between-person variance). Similarly, daily diary studies have shown that the amount of total variance in engagement that may be attributed to within-person fluctuations is 42% on average across different occupational settings (Xanthopoulou & Bakker, 2012). Thus, a considerable amount of variance in daily work engagement can be attributed to within-person fluctuations, supporting the relevance of a diary approach to work engagement.

## Measurement

Zuckerman (1983) has argued that enduring and state facets of the same construct can be measured with the same scale by changing the instructions and by adapting the items so as to refer to the specific time frame one is interested in. When we measure states, participants are asked to respond to the items of the scale by taking into account their experience during the “past week,” “today,” or “right now.” The most typical example is the Positive Affectivity Negative Affectivity Schedule that consists of eight different temporal instructions depending on the experience that one is interested to measure (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988). These instructions vary from “right now” (i.e., momentary affect) to “in general” (i.e., general affect).

Research on daily work engagement has followed the same logic. The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES; Schaufeli et al., 2002; Schaufeli, Bakker, & Salanova, 2006) is the most commonly used instrument to measure work engagement both as an enduring trait and as a state (Sonnentag et al., 2010). The UWES incorporates items measuring each of the three subdimensions including “At my work, I feel bursting with energy” (vigor), “I am enthusiastic about my job” (dedication), and “I am immersed in my work” (absorption). Accordingly, when enduring work engagement is assessed, participants are asked to rate how vigorous, dedicated, and absorbed they generally feel at work (ranging from never or once a year to very often or daily). In contrast, when daily work engagement is measured, the items are adjusted and refer to the specific “week,” “day,” or “hour.”

Breevaart, Bakker, Demerouti, and Hetland (2012) performed a multilevel factor analytic study on the daily version of the UWES. The authors pooled data from three studies among Dutch employees from various occupations. In each of these studies, day-level work engagement was assessed with an adaptation of the 9-item version of the

UWES across five workdays. Comparisons of competing models revealed that the multilevel model, which captured the interdependency between the two levels of analysis (i.e., between-person and within-person level), was the model that fit best to the data. The three-factor structure of the work engagement construct was confirmed on a day-to-day basis, and it showed a better fit than the one-factor solution. Furthermore, the factor loadings and factor correlations were substantial both at the between-person level and at the within-person level of analysis indicating that the UWES operates very well at both level of analysis. All in all, the study by Breevaart, Bakker, Demerouti, et al. (2012) shows that the daily version of the UWES is a valid and reliable instrument that can be used to assess within-person fluctuations in work engagement.

### Daily Drivers of Engagement

While survey research has convincingly shown that job and personal resources are the most important predictors of work engagement, and that job demands can strengthen this relationship, an important question is whether these findings also apply at the day-level. Do job and personal resources operate in a similar way on a day-to-day basis? Are people more engaged on the days they have access to many psychological resources? During the past decade, about 20 studies on daily work engagement have been published. These studies indicate that engagement fluctuates substantially from day to day (Xanthopoulou & Bakker, 2012), and that these fluctuations can be predicted using the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007, 2008, 2014). What follows is a review of diary studies that highlight salient points.

In her study among Italian teachers, Simbula (2010) asked participants to complete a general questionnaire and a daily survey over a period of five consecutive workdays. As predicted on the basis of the JD-R model (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001), the results showed that daily support from colleagues contributed positively to daily work engagement, and indirectly contributed to daily job satisfaction and mental health, after general levels of work engagement and outcome variables had been controlled for. This motivational process in which daily job resources predict daily work engagement and job satisfaction was independent from the health-impairment process proposed by the JD-R model. On the days that teachers were exposed to more job demands and experienced more problems in balancing work and family life, they reported higher levels of daily exhaustion and health problems.

In another study among flight attendants, Xanthopoulou et al. (2008) found evidence for a similar effect of social support. The attendants were kindly requested to fill out diaries over consecutive flights to three intercontinental destinations. Results of multilevel analyses revealed that colleague social support during the flight from The Netherlands to the US had unique positive effects on self-efficacy and work engagement during the flight back from the US to The Netherlands. Self-efficacy did *not* mediate the

relationship between social support and engagement, but work engagement mediated the relationship between self-efficacy and job performance. In addition, colleague social support had an indirect effect on performance through work engagement. Thus, when the flight attendants received more support from their colleagues they felt more engaged, and they were better able to serve the passengers.

Social support may satisfy employees' need for belongingness (Baumeister & Leary, 1995), but may also signal a more subtle process. Bakker and Xanthopoulou (2009) argued that during daily interactions at work, engagement might cross over from one employee to another. The crossover of vigor and absorption may be an unconscious modeling process, where employees automatically mimic the facial expressions, postures, and behaviors of their colleagues (cf. Hatfield, Cacioppo, & Rapson, 1994). The crossover of dedication may be a more conscious process, during which employees actively "put themselves in the shoes" of their colleagues. Thus, the dedication expressed by employees may have a positive impact on their colleagues' level of dedication, because colleagues may realize that they have the same reasons to be enthusiastic about work. Bakker and Xanthopoulou (2009) found that daily work engagement indeed crosses over from one person to another – particularly on the days people have more business and informal contacts (phone, e-mail, face-to-face) than usual. On these days, vigorous coworkers facilitate each other's job performance. Future research should try to unravel the specific processes that cause the crossover of daily work engagement.

Two diary studies investigated the impact of daily transformational leadership. Transformational leadership is defined as leadership behavior that transforms the norms and values of the employees, whereby the leader motivates the workers to perform beyond their own expectations. Transformational leaders try to enhance followers' involvement with the goals of their organization (Bass, 1999). Central components of transformational leadership are intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation, and individual consideration of followers' personal development. In the first study, Tims, Bakker, and Xanthopoulou (2011) investigated whether and how daily transformational leadership influences daily follower work engagement, through follower personal resources. Consultants filled out diary surveys over five consecutive workdays. The results of multilevel analyses showed that daily transformational leadership relates positively to followers' daily work engagement, and day-levels of optimism fully mediate this relationship. However, in this study, daily self-efficacy did not act as a mediator.

In the second study, Breevaart, Bakker, Hetland, and Demerouti (2012) hypothesized that transformational leaders have a positive influence on their followers' work engagement through followers' job resources (social support and autonomy) and need fulfillment (autonomy, relatedness, and competence). For 40 days, 61 naval cadets filled out a questionnaire at the end of each day. Results showed that daily transformational leaders positively influenced their followers' daily work engagement. As predicted, daily job resources and daily need fulfillment

mediated this relationship. Compared to social support, autonomy appeared to be the strongest mediator. Thus, on the days leaders show transformational behavior, they mobilize their followers' job resources and fulfill followers' daily needs. This may explain why daily transformational leadership has a positive impact on daily follower work engagement.

Some other diary studies have provided evidence for the contention that daily job resources have a positive impact on daily work engagement, through daily personal resources. Xanthopoulou et al. (2009b) conducted a study among Greek employees working in a fast-food restaurant. Participants were asked to fill in a survey and a diary booklet for five consecutive days. Consistent with the hypotheses, results showed that employees were more engaged on days that were characterized by many job resources. Daily job resources, like day-level team climate and day-level autonomy, contributed positively to employees' personal resources (day-levels of optimism, self-efficacy, and self-esteem), which, in turn, explained daily work engagement. Moreover, the higher employees' levels of daily work engagement, the higher their objective financial results.

Ten Brummelhuis, Bakker, Hetland, and Keulemans (2012) investigated the impact of New Ways of Working (NWW) on the daily work engagement of knowledge workers. NWW enable employees to choose when and where to work, while being supported by electronic communication. The results of a 5-day diary study showed that the daily use of NWW was positively related to daily work engagement and negatively related to daily exhaustion due to increased effective and efficient communication. In addition, NWW enhanced connectivity among coworkers, resulting in enhanced daily engagement and reduced exhaustion. However, Ten Brummelhuis and her colleagues also found a positive relationship between NWW and exhaustion, because NWW increased interruptions during the work process. Nevertheless, they concluded that NWW have the potential to foster daily work engagement.

Kühnel, Sonnentag, and Bledow (2012) tested some of the propositions of the JD-R model on the level of daily processes, namely additive and interaction effects of day-specific job demands and day-specific job and personal resources on day-specific work engagement. One hundred fourteen employees completed electronic questionnaires three times a day over the course of one working week. Hierarchical linear models indicated that day-specific resources (psychological climate, job control, and being recovered in the morning) promoted work engagement. As predicted, day-specific job control qualified the relationship between day-specific time pressure and work engagement: on days with higher job control, time pressure was beneficial for work engagement. On days with lower job control, time pressure was detrimental for work engagement. These findings support the JD-R model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014) and contribute to the literature on daily fluctuations in job characteristics.

Although not designed to test the interaction between job demands and resources, the findings of a recent experience sampling study among software developers (Bledow, Schmitt, Frese, & Kühnel, 2011) are consistent with the

JD-R model. The authors developed an affective shift model of work engagement according to which work engagement emerges from the dynamic interplay of positive and negative affect. The affective shift model posits that negative affect is positively related to work engagement if negative affect is followed by positive affect. Data on affective events, mood, and work engagement was collected twice a day over 9 working days. In support of the model, negative events and negative mood experienced in the morning of a working day were positively related to work engagement in the afternoon if positive mood in the time interval between morning and afternoon was high. Whereas the initial negative affect may have been the result of confrontation with high job demands, the shift to positive affect may have been caused by the availability of job resources (e.g., colleague support, positive feedback, skill variety). Thus, work engagement in the afternoon was most probably the result of a combination of high job demands and high job resources (cf. Bakker, 2011; Bakker & Demerouti, 2014) – a central prediction in the JD-R model.

Taken together, quantitative diary research suggests that daily fluctuations in job resources explain daily fluctuations in work engagement, partly through their influence on daily personal resources like daily self-efficacy and daily optimism. In addition, there is some evidence for an interaction between daily job demands and resources: job resources are particularly motivating when the job demands are high. It seems that job resources satisfy basic needs on a daily basis. In addition, it is possible that job resources can change job demands into challenges. Most of the findings of diary research are consistent with those of survey research. Nevertheless, it is conceivable that whereas a short-term, daily increase in job demands can be perceived as a challenge, long-term exposure to job demands may act more like a hindrance stressor (Lepine, Podsakof, & LePine, 2005). Prolonged exposure to high levels of job demands (e.g., work pressure, conflicts, cognitive demands) may be very stressful and hinder the achievement of work-related goals. Future research should more specifically focus on different processes leading to work engagement at the general, enduring level and at the day-level.

## Daily Job Crafting

One important proposition of the JD-R model is that employees may actively change the design of their jobs by choosing tasks, negotiating different job content, and assigning meaning to their tasks or jobs (cf. Parker & Ohly, 2008). This process of employees shaping their jobs has been referred to as job crafting (Demerouti, 2014; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). By changing the content of their work or the work environment, employees may give more meaning to their work, increase their person-job fit, and increase their own work engagement (Bakker, Tims, & Derks, 2012; Tims, Bakker, & Derks, 2012).

There is some evidence that employees also engage in job crafting on a weekly and daily basis. Bakker and Bal (2010)

conducted a study on weekly work engagement among Dutch teachers. Using the JD-R model, they predicted and found that teachers' weekly job resources were positively related to their week-levels of work engagement, and that week-level work engagement was predictive of week-level performance. Importantly, they also found evidence for a positive, lagged effect of weekly work engagement on next week's job resources. Specifically, momentary work engagement was positively related to levels of autonomy, exchange with the supervisor, social support from colleagues, and opportunities for development in the subsequent week. These findings are consistent with the JD-R model (Bakker, 2011; Bakker & Demerouti, 2008), and suggest that when employees are more engaged, they are more inclined to mobilize or craft their own job resources.

In a recent study, Petrou, Demerouti, Peeters, Schaufeli, and Hetland (2012) focused specifically on daily job crafting and explored its contextual determinants and relationship with daily work engagement. Job crafting was conceptualized as "seeking resources," "seeking challenges," and "reducing demands." Participants were 95 employees from several organizations who completed a 5-day diary survey. As hypothesized, they found that employees were most likely to seek resources and less likely to reduce demands on the days that were characterized by high levels of work pressure and autonomy (on active days). Furthermore, Petrou and his colleagues found that day-level seeking challenges (but not resources) were positively associated with day-level work engagement, whereas day-level reducing demands were negatively associated with day-level work engagement. Taken together, these findings suggest that engaged employees craft their jobs on a daily basis. By crafting their work environment, they influence their own daily work engagement – particularly when they have the autonomy to do so. Thus, daily job crafting is a predictor and outcome of daily work engagement (Bakker, 2011).

## Momentary Work Engagement

Sonnentag (2011) agrees that it is important to look at daily changes in work engagement, so that we can better capture the dynamic and temporal aspects of engagement. She argues that examining engagement from day to day might even be a too rough assessment, and proposes that engagement may fluctuate from hour to hour, similar to within-day fluctuations of job performance (Beal, Weiss, Barros, & MacDermid, 2005). The nature of the task at hand may be an important determinant of whether we experience work engagement. For example, whereas most doctors will be highly engaged when treating patients; they may feel less engaged during night shifts or when filling out medical records. Likewise, salespersons may feel highly vigorous and dedicated during a sales pitch when trying to sell a product or service, but may feel low on engagement when dealing with customer complaints.

In an unpublished study, Bakker, Oerlemans, and Sman (2012) used a combination of a daily quantitative diary method and the day reconstruction method (DRM; Kahneman et al., 2004) to investigate job crafting, momentary work engagement, and daily work engagement. Individuals working in consultancy or education filled out a general questionnaire, a diary and a day reconstruction questionnaire. In total, 197 days and 2270 tasks were analyzed with multilevel modeling. Each working day, participants were requested to indicate all work-related tasks they engaged in, and to fill out the approximate times at which an activity began and ended. A total of 11 activities were offered as options: core task, administration, responding to email, contact with external clients, meeting with colleagues, having a break alone, having a break with colleagues, interactions with colleagues, preparing a meeting, preparing a lesson, and preparing for a main task. By chronologically reconstructing the workday, the DRM technique helps employees to accurately recall how they felt during each of the work tasks (Kahneman et al., 2004). After reconstructing their workday, participants were asked to rate the extent to which each activity satisfied their basic needs of relatedness, autonomy, and competence. In addition, they were asked to indicate how engaged (vigorous, dedicated, and immersed) they were in each task.

The results of multilevel analyses showed that daily job crafting of social and structural job resources predicted need satisfaction at the *task* level (Bakker, Oerlemans, et al., 2012). More specifically, employees who proactively asked for feedback and support and who mobilized their opportunities for development and autonomy, were better able to satisfy their needs for relatedness, competence, and autonomy while working on a range of tasks. This need for satisfaction, in turn, predicted momentary engagement during the task. In addition, the higher the levels of *momentary*, task-related engagement throughout the day, the higher the overall day-levels of work engagement. These findings suggest that the level of engagement can change as a function of the work activity. There is substantial variation in momentary engagement from task to task, and daily work engagement can be predicted by the sum of all momentary engagement levels during the various tasks carried out throughout the day. Employees who engage in job crafting and mobilize their daily job resources are most likely to satisfy their needs at work, because they choose the tasks they find intrinsically motivating and they have the resources to adequately cope with each task.

## Daily Detachment at Home

Bakker, Petrou, and Tsaousis (2012) have shown that work engagement does not lose its influence when the working day is over. They collected data among teachers and their intimate partner. Structural equation modeling analyses supported the spillover hypothesis that teachers who were highly engaged at work invested more in the relationship

with their partner. Engaged teachers gave more support and attention to their partner, and invested more energy in solving relationship problems. In addition, the results showed that teachers' relationship investments, in turn, contributed to partner well-being. Other studies have suggested that the enthusiasm and energy that is characteristic of work engagement may also cross over directly from employees to their partner at home, particularly when the partner shows empathy (e.g., Bakker, Shimazu, Demerouti, Shimada, & Kawakami, 2011).

This positive spillover effect of work engagement was replicated and expanded in an experience-sampling study aimed to determine the relationship between daily work engagement and work-to-family facilitation. Culbertson, Mills, and Fullagar (2012) asked county extension agents (individuals who bring agricultural and homemaking information to local people and help them resolve farm, home, and community problems) to respond to two daily surveys for 2 weeks. Results indicated that daily work engagement had a positive effect on family life. On the days that participants experienced higher levels of work engagement, they were more helpful at home, and could better deal with personal and practical issues in their private life. The effect of daily engagement in facilitating work-family relations was partially mediated by positive mood. Interestingly, the relationship between work engagement and facilitation of work-family relations was moderated by work-family capitalization. Thus, the impact of daily work engagement on work-to-family facilitation was stronger on the days that the agents shared their positive work experiences at home.

Although the research evidence clearly shows that work engagement is associated with positive outcomes for the organization, individual employees, and their family; employees also need time periods for temporarily disengaging (i.e., psychological detaching) from work (Sonnentag, Mojza, Binnewies, & Scholl, 2008). In one of the first diary studies on the relationship between recovery and work engagement, Sonnentag (2003) examined the impact of recovery during leisure time on work-related outcomes. Public service employees completed a questionnaire and a daily survey over a period of five consecutive working days. Multilevel analyses showed that day-level recovery was positively related to day-level work engagement and day-level proactive behavior (personal initiative, pursuit of learning) during the subsequent workday. These findings show that recovery in the evening is needed for engagement during the (next) workday.

Ten Brummelhuis and Bakker (2012) examined which specific off-job activities enhance next morning vigor because these activities enable recovery from work. In addition, they investigated whether adequate recovery helps employees to work with more engagement on the next workday. As predicted, leisure activities (social, low-effort, and physical activities) increased next morning vigor through enhanced psychological detachment and relaxation. In contrast, high-duty off-job activities (work and household tasks) reduced vigor because these activities diminished psychological detachment and relaxation. The results support the assumption that recovery occurs when employees engage in off-job activities that allow for

relaxation and psychological detachment. Adequate recovery enhances vigor in the morning and helps employees to stay engaged during the next workday.

In their study among German employees from various industries, Sonnentag et al. (2008) hypothesized that work engagement and psychological detachment from work during off-job time predict high positive affect and low negative affect and that psychological detachment is particularly important when work engagement is high. Hierarchical linear modeling showed that a person's general level of work engagement and the week-specific level of psychological detachment from work during off-job time jointly predicted affect at the end of the working week. As expected, work engagement moderated the positive relationship between psychological detachment and positive affect: this relationship was stronger for those high in enduring work engagement. These findings suggest that both engagement when being at work and disengagement when being away from work are most beneficial for employees' affective states.

Finally, Sonnentag, Mojza, Demerouti, and Bakker (2012) examined the within-person relations between morning recovery level (i.e., feeling refreshed and replenished) and work engagement throughout the day, and between work engagement throughout the day and the subsequent recovery level at the end of the workday. They hypothesized that job stressors (situational constraints, job demands) moderate these relations, because stressors distract attention from the tasks, interrupt the work process, and consume energy resources. Data were collected among employees working in a variety of industries (services, production, administration, banking, insurance). Participants filled out a diary booklet during one workweek two times per day. The results showed that morning recovery level predicted work engagement during the workday, and work engagement predicted subsequent recovery level at the end of the workday after controlling for morning recovery level. As hypothesized, situational constraints attenuated these relations, but job demands did not. The results suggest that recovery translates into employee work engagement, and work engagement, in turn, prevents a loss in recovery level throughout the day, particularly when situational constraints are low. Situational constraints seem to interrupt the reciprocal process between recovery level and work engagement, because constraints consume the available energy.

Altogether, these studies show that daily engagement at work coincides with daily detachment while at home. Thus, daily work engagement has a reciprocal relationship with recovery. On the days employees recover well, they feel more engaged; and engagement during the day is predictive of subsequent recovery.

## Future Research

One decade after the first publication on daily work engagement (Sonnentag, 2003), we know a lot more about its proximal predictors and outcomes, as well as the underlying psychological mechanisms. Nevertheless, there are several unresolved issues that require further attention.

For example, it is still unclear whether daily work pressure acts as a challenge or hindrance job demand (Lepine et al., 2005), and whether the perception of daily job demands as hindering or challenging is dependent on the occupational sector. Exposure to daily work pressure may be positively related to daily work engagement in occupations where work pressure is a “natural” phenomenon, like in the media sector – if sufficient job resources are available. In contrast, work pressure may be very stressful and hinder the achievement of work-related goals in other sectors, like health care where mistakes have enormous consequences. Future research should more specifically focus on different processes leading to work engagement at the day-level, and at the general enduring level.

Moreover, in an attempt to further disentangle methodological as well as theoretical issues, future studies could make more extensive use of Beal et al.’s (2005) episodic approach in examining daily work engagement. Instead of capturing daily work engagement experiences across the course of the workday or week, this approach would allow examining the engagement experience for each work episode across a workday, separately (cf. Bakker, Oerlemans, & Sman, 2012). Such an approach would enable capturing fluctuations over shorter periods of time, as well as to look closer at the experience and its specific components. As Fay and Sonnentag (2010) suggested, the use of the episodic approach in practice may reveal alternative psychological mechanisms underlying the relationship between daily work engagement and performance. For instance, one may argue that an employee who is extremely engaged in a task on a given moment may choose not to interrupt his work in order to help a colleague, which would suggest low (instead of high) extra-role performance. Further insights into the mechanisms that explain daily work engagement are needed in order to either establish the current theoretical framework or proceed to specific refinements.

## Practical Implications

This review shows that daily work engagement and recovery are extremely relevant for employee functioning. Unfortunately, current guidance and policy is completely ignorant of the importance of within-person processes. One important practical implication of the present analysis is that management needs to become more aware of fluctuations in daily employee work engagement. Being aware of daily changes in work engagement draws attention to daily triggers of engagement. Thus, management may use knowledge on the antecedents of daily work engagement and start to encourage the daily “enactment” of job resources (see, Daniels, 2006). Management may also consider offering training or sufficient levels of daily autonomy so that employees can optimize the design of their jobs by engaging in daily job crafting. By actively seeking job resources, reducing hindrance demands, and increasing job challenges on a daily basis, employees can foster their own daily work engagement (cf. Bakker, 2011; Bakker & Demerouti, 2014).

## Conclusion

In this article, I have given an overview of the literature on daily work engagement. Through quantitative diary research, we can avoid methodological problems in the study of work engagement. A diary approach enables an examination of the more proximal predictors and outcomes of work engagement. Employees show substantial fluctuations in their levels of work engagement – from day to day and from task to task. The diary studies that have been conducted during the past decade show that these fluctuations are a function of the changes in daily job and personal resources. Particularly on the days that employees have access to many resources, they are able to cope well with their daily job demands (e.g., work pressure, negative events). Moreover, on resourceful days, job demands seem to change into challenges and be positively related to work engagement. Daily work engagement is much closer causally tied to real work-related events and behavioral outcomes (including performance) than a judgment that requires aggregating previous experiences over an extended period of time (as is the case with enduring work engagement). On the days employees have sufficient levels of job control, they proactively try to optimize their work environment in order to stay engaged. This proactive behavior is called job crafting and predicts momentary and daily work engagement. Through diary research, we have learned that daily work engagement may cross over between colleagues, and spill over to family life. An important additional finding is that daily engagement has a reciprocal relationship with recovery. On the days employees recover well, they feel more engaged; and engagement during the day is predictive of subsequent recovery. Finding this balance between engagement while at work and detachment while at home seems the key to enduring work engagement.

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