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Engagement Contagion from Managers to Employees: The role of Eudaimonic Well-being Beliefs

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Abstract

This study examined the engagement (vigor and dedication) contagion from managers to employees and the role of managers' eudaimonic well-being beliefs (EWBs) as precursor of it. EWBs refer to the degree to which managers define their own well-being at work based on self-development and contribution-to-others. Using multilevel structural equation modelling, we tested whether managers' engagement at Time 2 mediates the relationship between their EWBs at Time 1 and employees' engagement at Time 2. Participants were 53 managers and 360 employees from organizations serving persons with intellectual disabilities. Results confirmed that managers' engagement mediates the relationships between their EWBs and employees' engagement. These findings provided support that managers' EWBs foster their own engagement, which then positively links to employees work engagement. The research contributes to the literature by corroborating that engagement contagion exists within organizations but also reporting that EWBs produce this contagion in organizations for persons with intellectual disability.

Keywords: engagement, eudaimonic wellbeing beliefs, contagion, persons with intellectual disabilities

Introduction

Over the past decades, engagement (as a positive affective-motivational and work-related psychological state, Schaufeli et al., 2002) has become one of the most significant topics of analysis and conversation among scholars and practitioners worldwide (Bakker & Leiter, 2010; Kular & Kingston, 2008; Quint & Boyd, 2014; Welsch, 2016; Yadav & Ranjan, 2020). Engaged employees have been observed to wholeheartedly invest themselves in their work (Kahn, 1990). Due to finding more meaning in their work and having a sense of purpose derived from work, they exhibit resourcefulness, motivation, and a positive emotional disposition towards their roles, co-workers, and those they serve (Cataldo, 2011). Nevertheless, research frequently reveals low levels of engagement among employees. For instance, according to the evidence obtained from a random sample of 57,022 full and part-time employees, Gallup (2015) found that engagement declined for the first time in over a decade in 2021. Just over one-third of employees (34%) were engaged. This is especially relevant because an unengaged employee is someone who merely fulfills the basic requirements of their job and puts in minimal effort, without displaying any signs of genuine involvement or commitment. They typically invest only the minimum level of effort necessary to fulfill their responsibilities (Welsch, 2016).

In this context, scholars argue that the relation between managers and employees is an essential element to produce engagement (Brunetto et al., 2014; Osborne & Hammoud, 2017). Managers are key to determining job resources and, therefore, must be an antecedent of employee engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Harter et al., 2002; May et al., 2004). It is assumed that managers hold a significant role in shaping the dissemination of motivational and affective behaviors (George, 2000). Indeed, at least a 70% variance in employee engagement is attributed to managers, according to Gallup (2015) estimates.

Therefore, examining whether managers' engagement is transmitted to employees is a relevant issue. With this in mind, the current research study contributes to the literature by testing whether the "contagion effect" exists from managers to employees in organizations for individuals with intellectual disability. That is, we examine the degree to which managers' engagement crosses over to positively impact employees' engagement. Generally, social contagion is defined as "the spread of affect, attitude, or behavior from person A (the 'initiator') to person B (the 'recipient')" (Levy & Nail, 1993, p. 275). The contagion effect describes how individual routinely "catch", reflect and act on each other's feelings when working together. It makes sense that employees would naturally be aware of and pay consideration to managers' expressions and actions (Johnson, 2008), including behaviors and verbalizations that transmit engagement. However, research about engagement contagion has mainly concentrated on how engagement spreads within work teams (e.g., Bakker et al., 2004, 2006; Bakker & Xanthopoulou, 2009; Torrente et al., 2013). By contrast, the literature on managers' engagement and its influence on employee`s engagement has remained relatively unexplored (Decuypere & Schaufeli, 2020; Kular & Kingston., 2008). To our knowledge, only two research studies (Quint & Boyd, 2014; Welsch, 2016) have empirically examined engagement contagion from managers to employees. Welsh (2016) did not find evidence for the contagion of engagement from managers to employees investigating within a large retail call center. Quint and Boyd (2014) confirmed that engagement of managers positively impacts engagement of their subordinates in retail stores. The current research study contributes to expand this still incipient view by examining the engagement contagion between managers and employees in service organizations dedicated to individuals with intellectual disabilities.

In addition, our study also contributes to knowledge by examining a potential precursor of managers' engagement in organizations for individuals with intellectual

disability: Eudaimonic well-being beliefs (EWBs). EWBs refer to the degree to which individuals believe that their own well-being is based on self-development (personal growth) and contribution-to-others (helping others) (McMahan & Estes, 2011b; Pătraş et al., 2017). Following a contextualized approach that considers the particularities of the sector where the manager works, it is reasonable to expect that managers working in organizations for persons in situations of vulnerability or at risk of exclusion (i.e., individuals with intellectual disability) are engaged if they are high in EWBs. This sector usually requires long-term relationships with individuals with intellectual disabilities and their families. It is emotionally demanding but provides meaning to the work that is done, as it allows for a significant improvement in the lives of service users (see Martínez-Tur et al., 2021). If the manager believes that their well-being is based on self-development (personal growth) and contribution-to-others (helping others), then they will be more engaged when working in this sector.

Considering the above arguments, we examine the relationships among EWBs, managers' engagement, and employees' engagement using a multilevel framework and conducting two measurement times (see Figure 1). Specifically, we test whether managers' engagement (T2) mediates the relationship between managers' EWBs (T1) and employees' engagement (T2).

Concepts

In our research study, we consider two main concepts: engagement and EWBs. Engagement refers to a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind (Maslach et al., 2001; Salanova et al., 2005; Schaufeli et al., 2002). Initially, engagement has been composed of three dimensions or facets: vigor (high levels of energy, willingness to invest effort in one's work, and persistence even during difficulties); dedication (a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, and challenge); and absorption (high levels of concentration).

However, subsequent studies proposed that the core of engagement consists of vigor and dedication (e.g., Moliner et al., 2008; Taris et al., 2017), while absorption maybe is a possible outcome (Bakker et al., 2008). It was argued that vigor and dedication describe the two genuine underlying components of engagement. Vigor reflects the energetic dimension of well-being at work, whereas dedication describes the commitment component (see Taris et al., 2017). Continuing with this perspective, the present study also focuses on the core of engagement, considering vigor and dedication to capture the construct.

The EWBs construct connects beliefs to eudaimonic well-being. On the one hand, beliefs have a cognitive nature, and they reflect the characteristics or consequences that a person attributes to an object or behavior (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Ajzen, 1991). On the other hand, eudaimonic well-being is based on the Aristotelian happiness tradition, considering that fulfilling potential and achieve virtue are the sources of human well-being. Therefore, EWBs refer to the degree to which the person thinks that well-being is based on eudaimonia happiness. That is, persons have EWBs if they attribute to the object (well-being) the characteristics of eudaimonic happiness. To capture these beliefs, McMahan and Estes (2011b) proposed two dimensions: "self-development" and "contribution-to-others". Self-development is based on the achievement of potential and personal growth, whereas contribution-to-others is related with providing valuable support to others within the community. In addition, EWBs can be contextualized. In other words, people can develop EWBs in different meaningful contexts. Based on this idea, Pătraş et al. (2017) considered the two dimensions of EWBs in the workplace. Accordingly, organizational members vary in the extent to which they perceive that their own well-being at work is based on self-development (personal growth) and contribution-to-others (helping others) within their work environment. We believe that contextualizing EWBs in the workplace is especially relevant

to understanding engagement in a research context such as that of organizations for individuals with intellectual disability.

Research Context

Service organizations play a crucial role in addressing societal challenges (Holloway, 2012). This is the case of service organizations dedicated to individuals with intellectual disabilities, which is the focus of our study. They serve as a crucial and specialized entity aimed at providing support and assistance to individuals in situations of potential vulnerability and at risk of exclusion due to having this type of disability. These organizations deliver complex therapeutic, social, leisure, and educational services. Their employees usually experience notable levels of pressure, as documented by various studies (e.g., Shanafelt & Noseworthy, 2017). This pressure poses a potential challenge to their engagement in caregiving responsibilities. Recognizing this, it becomes evident that maintaining high levels of engagement is crucial for ensuring the delivery of services accurately. In this context, where it is crucial to provide support to individuals with intellectual disabilities, the fact that managers have EWBs in their work (with emphasis on personal growth and helping others) can contribute to them having high engagement and, perhaps more importantly, to the spread of this engagement among the employees. This process is discussed in the next section.

Theory and hypotheses

The contagion of engagement from managers to employees

As mentioned above, engagement is a matter for organizations. Engaged employees provide better services and do their jobs effectively (Bakker & Leiter, 2010; Chalofsky, 2009). By contrast, disengaged employees are effortless, with robotic actions which display incomplete role performance (Kahn,1990). Therefore, the question that naturally arises is how organizations and their leaders can enhance their employees' engagement to a significant

degree and what factors contribute to this. Managers are instrumental in playing a significant role in this process (Lowe, 2012; Mitra et al., 2017; Schaufeli, 2021; Shaw, 2005; Veshne, 2017). It is estimated that achieving that managers spend at least 20% of their time in the employee activity that motivates them, service providers will spend 80% of their time doing what their managers need them to do (Schafeli, 2021). However, the interaction between managers and employees, by itself, does not necessarily increase engagement. It is reasonable to expect that managers' engagement is a precursor. That is, if managers are engaged, it is more likely that employees will also experience higher levels of engagement. In the interaction with their employees, managers could be agents of influence spreading their engagement. This is consistent with social contagion (Levy & Nail, 1993). In fact, two defining characteristics of social contagion are present in the engagement contagion from managers to employees: a) the social character of the interaction; and b) the spread of emotions and behaviors related with engagement.

The pre-fix "social" describes the social nature of the contagion. In our study, this is reflected in a social context based on the interaction between two parties: the manager and the employee. In addition, it is reasonable to argue that the employee will imitate or reflect the behaviors and emotions of engagement of a person in an authoritative and expert role, such as the manager. In addition to the automatic tendency to mimic the behaviors of others increasing the emotional convergence (Hatfield et al., 1993), research has shown that employees' emotions are easily affected by managers' emotions because managers have higher power and status (Yam et al., 2017). This is transferrable to engagement. Engagement encompasses various behaviors, including the expression of emotions and verbally charged statements, which can be evaluated by others (Bakker et al., 2006). If emotional and motivational behaviors can be elicited through contagion, there is a logical basis for

anticipating that engagement may operate in a similar way (Welsh, 2016). Based on the above arguments we propose the following:

H1: *Managers' engagement –vigor and dedication– is positively related with employees' engagement –vigor and dedication, respectively*

EWBs as antecedent of managers' engagement

Individuals high in EWBs believe that their own well-being depends on the degree to which they achieve self-development (personal growth) and contribute to others having a better life. In other words, they think that their own happiness is associated with personal growth and a civic and virtuous life based on being a better person and helping others (McMahan & Estes, 2011a). As mentioned earlier, these beliefs can be contextualized in the work environment to understand well-being beliefs in the workplace, describing individual differences (Pătraş et al., 2017). That is, organizational members differ in the degree to which they believe that their well-being in the workplace is based on self-development due to work and helping others (e.g., colleagues, clients). In our study, we focus on managers' EWBs. Specifically, we propose that EWBs is crucial to understand managers' engagement in organizations for individuals with intellectual disability.

Why are the EWBs of managers related to their engagement? Generally, beliefs are cognitive representations through which the person associates an object or behavior with relevant characteristics or consequences. Additionally, individuals are motivated to behave in ways that express their beliefs (e.g., Loken, 1982). For example, if a person anticipates that eating fresh foods will have positive consequences for their health (beliefs), then they are more likely to consume such products (behavior). In addition, beliefs are sensitive to the context (e.g., Bek & Lock, 2011; Van Leeuwen, 2014). This sensitivity to context allows us

to understand the flexibility of individuals' belief systems. For instance, the relevance of a certain type of belief may vary from one context to another. In one context, it may clearly guide people's responses and behaviors, while in another context, it may not be as relevant. This is what happens with EWBs in organizations for individuals with intellectual disabilities. These beliefs are particularly relevant in this organizational context because support is provided to individuals in situations of possible vulnerability and/or risk of exclusion. Engagement (vigor and dedication) in this context demands the belief that contributing to improving the lives of others and achieving self-development (EWBs) are sources of well-being in the workplace. By contrast, it is very complicated that, in this context, an individual who does not believe that their well-being at work is based on being a better person and helping others will show engagement. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis.

H2: *Managers' EWBs (self-development and contribution-to-others beliefs) are positively related with managers' engagement (vigor and dedication)*

The mediation processes

The previous hypotheses (H1 and H2) described an analytical approach in proposing links among our study variables. Taken together, these two hypotheses allow us to propose a complementary holistic approach that reflects the mediations underlying Figure 1. Specifically, mediation processes can be suggested where managers' EWBs (T1) are positively related to their engagement (T2). Likewise, in turn, the engagement of managers leads to the engagement of employees (T2). As Hayes (2012) pointed out, identifying mediations enhances the maturity of the research because it goes beyond the mere relationship between two variables, allowing the examination of processes. To achieve this,

and since the manager reported information on two constructs (beliefs and engagement), they have been measured at two temporal moments. This way, problems related to shared method variance and the potential artificial amplification of the relationship between the two constructs are avoided. Thus, the following mediations are proposed:

H3a: *Vigor reported by managers (T2) mediates the relationship between managers' EWBs (self-development and contribution-to-others beliefs) (T1) and vigor reported by employees (T2).*

H3b: *Dedication reported by managers (T2) mediates the relationship between managers' EWBs (self-development and contribution-to-others beliefs) (T1) and dedication reported by employees (T2).*

Method

Procedure and Participants

In the current research study, data was collected from 58 small centers that provide services to individuals with intellectual disabilities. Centers were affiliated with an NGO in Spain called "Plena inclusión", which aims to provide different types of services for individuals with intellectual disabilities (therapeutic, leisure, educational, etc.). Participants (managers and employees) signed an informed consent document assuring confidentiality and voluntary participation. The procedure was approved by the University Ethics Committee of the corresponding author of this study. Daily contact and coordination between the manager and their employees in each center, to deliver the services, were required to participate in the study. Moreover, the employees had to have contact with intellectual disabilities as part of their daily job. They held different positions such as psychologists, occupational therapists, social workers, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, and primary health care workers.

Members within each small center function as a cohesive team with the shared objective of accomplishing their main goal (improving the quality of life of individuals with intellectual disability), all under the guidance of a designated manager. To empirically test our hypotheses, we collected data from two key informants. First, the manager of each center completed surveys at two separate time points, with an interval of 4 weeks between the two assessments. Managers reported about their EWBs in T1, whereas they answered a scale about their engagement at work in T2. Second, a minimum of three employees from each center were required to participate in the study, reporting their engagement. These participants were selected at random from the pool of employees who regularly interact with individuals with intellectual disabilities as part of their daily work. Five centers were excluded from the analysis due to their inability to meet the aforementioned participation criteria (usable surveys from the managers and at least 3 employees). Our final data set comprised 53 managers and 360 employees. On average, managers were 45.83 years old (*SD* = 8.75), and 73.6% of them were female. The number of employees per center ranged from 3-17 (Mean = 6.79, *SD* = 2.78). The average age of employees was 39.41 years (*SD* = 9.17) and 77.2% of them were women.

Managers' measures

EWBs (T1). The two dimensions of EWBs ("contribution to others" and "self-development") were measured using the "Beliefs about Well-Being Scale" (McMahan & Estes, 2011b), adapted to workplace by Pătraș et al. (2017). Contribution-to-others well-being beliefs was measured by a 4-item scale that asked managers to rate the degree to which helping others is included in their conception of well-being. Indeed, managers rated how well each item contributes to their own workplace well-being. Responses scored on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). A sample item includes "Working in a way that benefits others". Self-development well-being beliefs were also measured on a 4-

item scale. Again, managers were asked to report the degree to which the content of each item contributes to their own well-being. Responses ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). A sample item was: "Working to achieve one's true potential". High scores were indicative that managers consider contribution-to-others and self-development as a meaningful part of their well-being at the workplace.

Engagement (T2)**.** We assessed Engagement of managers using the Spanish version of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Managers were asked to rate two dimensions associated with "core of engagement": *vigor* (6 items, e.g., ''I feel strong and vigorous in my job'') and *dedication* (5 items, e.g., ''To me my work is challenging''). The participants rate their own vigor and dedication using a scale ranging from never (0) to always (6). High scores on vigor and dedication indicated high engagement.

Employees' measures

Engagement (T2)**.** Engagement of employees was also assessed with the Spanish version of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Employees were asked to rate two dimensions associated with "core of engagement", with the same items that have been used for the managers. Therefore, high scores on vigor and dedication indicated high engagement.

Data analysis

To test the hypotheses, we conducted a multilevel structural equation modeling (MSEM), through Version 8 of Mplus (Muthén & Muthén, 1998–2019). We operated four 2-2-1 mediation models (with two levels (see Figure 1): a) contribution-to-others beliefs – vigor – vigor; b) contribution-to-others beliefs – dedication – dedication; c) self-development beliefs – vigor – vigor; and d) self-development beliefs – dedication – dedication) We also computed Monte Carlo (MC) confidence intervals to calculate the significance of the indirect

effects (IE) on multilevel modeling (Preacher & Selig, 2012), through Selig and Preacher`s web utility (2008).

Results

Table 1 presents descriptive indicators such means, standard deviations and bivariate correlations. Generally, managers' EWBs were positively correlated with their engagement. In addition, managers' and employees' engagement were also positively related. By contrast, there were no significant correlations between managers' EWBs and employees' engagement. Taken together, these preliminary results supported the expected relationships. Nevertheless, our analytical and mediation approaches provide a more solid test of hypotheses.

Our results supported H1, confirming a crossover between manager and employee engagement (see Table 2). Specifically, managers' vigor significantly predicted employees' vigor ($B = .18$, $p = < .05$). Additionally, managers' dedication significantly predicted employees' dedication ($B = .20$, $p < .05$). In essence, engaged managers seem to energize employees. Overall, our findings revealed that managers' engagement is positively related to employees' engagement, providing support for engagement contagion.

The findings also supported H2, supporting significant positive relationships between managers' EWBs at T1 (self-development and contribution-to-others beliefs), and their work engagement levels of vigor and dedication at T2 (see Table 2). Self-development beliefs ($B = .32$, $p < .05$) and contribution-to-others beliefs among managers ($B = .45$, $p < .01$) significantly and positively predicted their vigor. Similarly, self-development beliefs ($B = .31$, $p < .05$) and contribution-to-others beliefs among managers ($B = .38$, $p < .01$) positively predicted their dedication. Overall, managers with higuer EWBs in T1 exhibited heightened workplace engagement in H2, as evidenced by higher vigor and dedication

Please, insert Table 1 around here.

Our results confirmed the mediations of vigor proposed in H3a, for both self-development and contribution-to-others beliefs. The 2-2-1 MSEM showed a good fit for self-development beliefs: $\chi2 = 0.69$, df = 1, p = 0.40, RMSEA = 0.00, CFI = 1.00, TLI =1.09, SRMR within = 0.00, SRMR between = 0.07. Moreover, the between-level indirect effect (IE) was significant (unstandardized estimate of IE = .05, 95% MC CI =.001,.14). The findings also supported the mediation for contribution-to-others beliefs. The 2-2-1 MSEM showed a good fit: $\chi2 = 0.73$, df = 1, p = 0.39, RMSEA = 0.00, CFI = 1.00, TLI = 1.04, SRMR within = 0.00, SRMR between = 0.06. The between-level indirect effect (IE) was also significant (unstandardized estimate of IE = .07, 95% MC CI = .00, .17). Therefore, managers' vigor medidated the link from managers' EWBs to employees' vigor, supporting H3a.

Our findings also supported the mediations of dedication proposed in H3b, although precautions must be taken in one of them, as we will indicate in the following. The 2-2-1 MSEM was not satisfactory for self-development beliefs: $\chi2 = 2.57$, df = 1, p = 0.11, RMSEA = 0.06, CFI = 0.77, TLI = 0.32, SRMR within = 0.00, SRMR between = 0.09. However, the between-level indirect effect (IE) was significant (unstandardized estimate of IE = .061, 95% MC CI = .00,.13), confirming the mediation of dedication expected in H3b. The results supported the mediation for contribution-to-others beliefs. The 2-2-1 MSEM showed a good fit: $\chi2 = 0.00$, df = 1, p = 1.00, RMSEA = 0.00, CFI = 1.00, TLI =1.44, SRMR within = 0.00, SRMR between = 0.00. Moreover, the between-level indirect effect (IE) was significant (unstandardized estimate of the IE = .07, 95% MC CI =. 007, .17), supporting H3d. Overall, the mediation of dedication was supported (H3b) (managers' dedication medidated the link from managers' EWBs to employees' dedication), but we shoud be cautious regarding self-development belifes as overall fit indices were not satisfactory for this specific construct. We will analyze this issue in more detail in the limitations section.

Please, insert Table 2 around here.

Discussion

In the context of organizations for persons with intellectual disability, our study examined engagement contagion from managers to employees, as well as managers' EWBs as a precursor of it. In general, the results provided evidence to support the contagion effect. In addition, our findings also confirmed managers' EWBs as an antecedent of this contagio. That is, when managers believe that their own well-being in the workplace is based on their self-development and contribution-to-others, they experience greater work engagement. This engagement of managers, in turn, is related to the engagement of employees. The implications of these results are discussed below.

Theoretical implications

Engagement contagion. The concept of engagement contagion builds on theories of social contagion (Levy & Nail, 1993), which posit that emotions and behaviors can spread from one person to another through interaction. In addition, as Yam et al. (2017) demonstrated, employees' emotions are highly influenced by managers' expressions due to their power and status. This rationale is transferable to the engagement transmission from managers to employees. After all, engagement is communicated through emotions and behaviors. However, the empirical research on engagement contagion from managers to employees, although highly relevant, is still very limited and the results are mixed (see Quint & Boyd, 2014; Welsh, 2016). Our finding that managers' engagement enhances employees' engagement aligns with research by Quint & Boyd (2014) supporting the existence of engagement contagion from managers to employees in the workplace. Thus, our study adds new evidence that this process can take place in organizations and differs from the results that

failed to confirm this contagion (Welsh, 2016). The contribution of additional evidence is important because the contagion process requires efforts in terms of design and data collection, as it necessitates the participation of at least two types of organizational members and a match between them.

EWBs as precursors of managers' engagement. In addition to studying the contagion from manager to employee, our study also contributes to knowledge because it investigates a precursor of that contagion. In other words, if the manager's engagement leads to employee engagement, what makes the manager engaged? Our answer has to do with the manager's beliefs, more specifically with beliefs about their well-being in the workplace. It is well-known that individuals tend to behave in a way which is congruent with their beliefs (Loken, 1982). However, the relevance of beliefs depends on the context (Bek & Lock, 2011; Van Leeuwen, 2014). In other words, there are beliefs that are especially relevant in some contexts and not so much in others. In organizations for persons with intellectual disabilities, EWBs are particularly relevant because they reflect the extent to which managers believe that their well-being depends on their personal growth (self-development) and helping (contribution-to-others), something that would be more difficult in companies where commercial motivation and profit prevail. After all, in organizations for persons with intellectual disabilities, it is necessary to demonstrate a commitment to assistance and a meaningful relationship with users beyond mere service transactions. In such a context, it is difficult for managers to be engaged (and to be able to transmit it to their employees) if they do not hold strong beliefs EWBs. Our results are congruent with this rationale.

The mediation processes. Beyond the contagion effect and the role of beliefs, considered separately, our study also contributes to knowledge because holistically it confirms the existence of a process or mechanism in which managers' engagement mediates between their EWBs and employees' engagement. As suggested by Hayes (2012), scientific

research should investigate processes that go beyond relationships between two constructs, achieving greater maturity in advancing knowledge. Our approach aligns with this by testing the mediation process itself. Additionally, we have carried out the study by temporally separating the constructs reported by the manager, avoiding methodological issues (artificial amplification of relationships due to common method variance) that could invalidate the results.

Practical implications

A key practical implication from our findings underscores the importance for organizations to adapt the training and development programs to the unique context of managers working with persons with intellectual disabilities. Training modules and development programs (e.g., about healthy working conditions) can integrate components that emphasize managers' EWBs, stressing the importance of fostering meaningful relationships, promoting purposeful work and personal growth, and prioritizing the help to both employees and service users. In sum, training and development can promote a civic-minded approach to work, among managers, based on personal development and contributing to others.

In addition, selection and promotion processes can include the evaluation of EWBs. Individual differences in these beliefs can also cause differences in the extent to which engagement is disseminated within organizations for individuals with intellectual disabilities. Assessments during hiring or promotion can consider managers' intrinsic passion for personal growth and help to others, which is congruent with the suggestions by Murphy et al. (2023) in the health service sector. By intentionally selecting and promoting managers aligned with values underlying EWBs, the prevailing leadership can cultivate rich and supportive workplaces that positively influences employees' engagement and, consequently, the quality of life of persons with intellectual disabilities.

Limitations and future studies

While this study adds to prior research, it does have several limitations that should be addressed. Although we have temporally separated the measures reported by the managers, which helps to avoid methodological problems and establish more solid relationships, it would be welcome to have more measures of the constructs over time. This would not only allow for more robust conclusions about causal relationships but also open the door to studies of dynamics, that is, changes over time. For example, daily diary studies with repeated measures could examine to what extent beliefs are able to provoke trajectories in the engagement of managers and employees, as well as verifying if fluctuations in managers' engagement over time are accompanied by changes in employees' engagement. Another limitation is related to the type of organizations we have studied. The characteristics of our participating organizations are close to those of other social and health-care organizations and service settings. However, future efforts could test our model in organizations from these other service sectors to determine its generalizability. Third, it is recommendable to know whether the results of this research are generalizable to different culture settings. It is likely that the positive effects of promoting and possessing EWBs is quite universal in the sector we have investigated, given the contextual characteristics of organizations for persons with intellectual disabilities. However, it is advisable to test our hypotheses in other cultures to verify if, for example, differences in power distance (Hofstade et al., 2005) affect the extent to which engagement is contagious from managers to employees. In fact, power distance differences could be a factor explaining the aforementioned mixed results in the incipient literature on this topic. Finally, the mediation we have proposed has received support in the four analyses conducted, and the overall fit indices have been satisfactory in three out of the four analyses, which provides significant support for our hypotheses. Nevertheless, there is one mediation where these indices have not been satisfactory. Perhaps the sample size is

explaining this result. Although it appears to have been an exception, it would be advisable to replicate these analyses with other data in the future (if possible, increasing the sample size) to corroborate the observed mediations.

Conclusion

Despite these limitations, this study provides evidence regarding the existence of engagement contagion from managers to employees. Employees are sensitive, therefore, to the behaviors and emotions associated with the engagement of their managers. Furthermore, our study suggests that this contagion begins because managers have a conception of their own well-being at work based on a civic life of personal development and helping others, which is very relevant in organizations oriented towards caring for persons in vulnerable situations such as those with intellectual disabilities.

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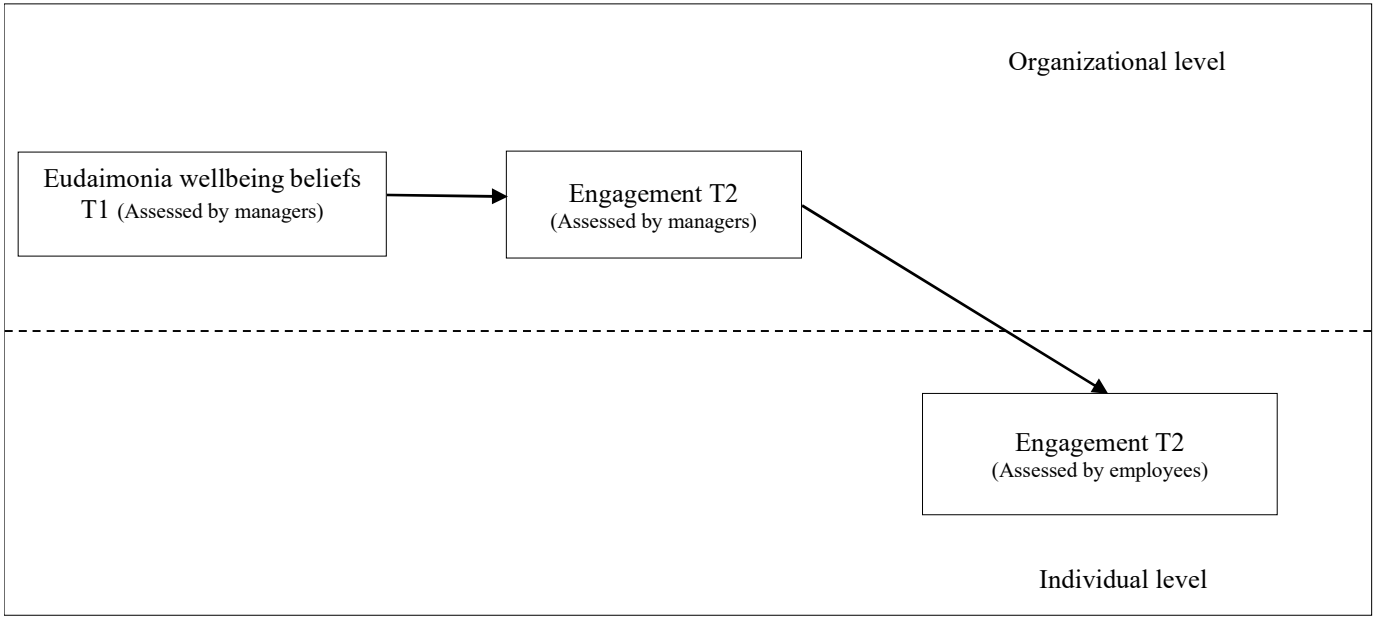

Figure 1. Conceptual model.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics and correlations.

	Range	Mean	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6
Organizational level (Managers)									
1. COWBs T1	1-7	6.47	0.50	(0.80)					
2. Self-development T1	1-7	6.30	0.57	0.60**	(0.75)				
3. Vigor T2	0-6	5.24	0.58	0.41**	0.33**	(0.78)			
4. Dedication T2	0-6	5.34	0.66	0.31**	0.26**	0.77**	(0.90)		
Individual level (Employees)									
5. Vigor T2	0-6	5.23	0.71	0.03	0.01	0.14*	0.08	(0.83)	
6. Dedication T2	0-6	5.09	0.94	0.04	-0.04	0.15**	0.14**	0.73**	(0.87)

Notes: COWBs = "Contribution-to-others" wellbeing beliefs. T1 = Time 1; T2 = Time 2. *SD*=standard deviation. *p <0.05, **p <0.01. Pearson's correlation coefficient was computed for interval data. Cronbach's alpha coefficients are in brackets on the diagonal

Table 2. Tested 2-2-1 models.

	Assessed by managers				*Assessed by employees*			
	Vigor T2		Dedication T2		Vigor T2		Dedication T2	
	Parameter	SE	Parameter	SE	Parameter	SE	Parameter	SE
Assessed by managers								
COWBs T1	0.45**	0.13	0.38**	0.13	--	--	--	--
Self-development T1	0.32*	0.13	0.31*	0.14	--	--	--	--
Vigor T2	--	--	--	--	0.18*	0.08	--	--
Dedication T2	--	--	--	--	--	--	0.20*	0.09

Notes: COWBs = "Contribution-to-others" wellbeing beliefs. T1 = Time 1; T2 = Time 2. * $p < 0.05$. ** $p < 0.01$. Coefficients are unstandardized