

## Does Workplace Friendship Contribute Toward Work Engagement among Employee of West Java's Industrial Area?

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### Abstract

Organization needed energetic and dedicated employees, employees who are engaged with their work. But some surveys show that engagement among employee specially millennials tend to be decreased. One of the factors can contributed toward work engagement is workplace friendship. This study aims to examine whether workplace friendship contribute toward work engagement among employee in the industrial area of West Java. The participants involved were 409 employees in the industrial area of West Java (Bekasi, Karawang, Purwakarta, and Bandung Raya) with a minimum working period of one year or more. The instruments used in this study were the Workplace Friendship Scale (WFS) to measure workplace friendships with a reliability of 0.687 and The Utrecht Work Engagement (UWES) to measure work engagement with a reliability of 0.929. The data analysis technique used is simple linear regression analysis using the SPSS version 26 program. The results show that workplace friendship contribute toward work engagement among employee in the industrial area of West Java

**Keywords :** workplace friendship, work engagement, West Java's industrial area.

### Introduction

Human resources can make organization to develop and maintain the organization existence in society. According to Bakker and Leiter (2010), organization are not only looking for prospective employees with above average abilities, but also looking for prospective employees who can invest in themselves to participate fully in work, are proactive and have a high commitment to standards. quality performance. Organization also needed energetic and dedicated employees, employees who are engaged with their work. But some surveys show that engagement among employee specially millennials tend to be decreased.

Dale Carnegie Indonesia's survey 2016 stated that only 25% of the millennial workforce (born 1986-2000) was fully involved with the organization they worked for (Kusumaningrum, 2017). Results of the Crest Survey in 2018 by Kevin Stiles in the article ACT Consulting revealed that 87% of employees who work in various parts of the world, do not have work engagement (Azzadina, 2018). In fact, the role of millennials as the main workforce in a company is even greater in line with the retirement of the Baby Boomers generation (1945-1964) and the promotion of Generation X (1965-1985) occupying the responsible position.

Researchers assume that low engagement conditions can occur in all companies, including companies located in West Java industrial areas such as Bekasi, Karawang, Purwakarta, and Greater Bandung areas. Taylor's survey said that Bekasi, Karawang, and Purwakarta are still favourite areas for industrial and logistics areas (Hutapea, 2019) and Bandung Raya has a role as a gateway to international areas and has the potential to encourage the surrounding area as well as a service center, processing center, and transportation node serving several provinces or nationally (Kumparan.com)

Work engagement is a state of high positive energy, affective motivation combined with a high level of dedication and a strong focus on work (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010). The concept of work engagement shows three factors that characterize employee behavior: vigor shows a high level of energy, effort, and persistence in the face of difficulties at work; dedication means being firmly engaged in work, showing feelings of importance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride and challenge, and absorption refers to a

pleasurable state of complete immersion in work, characterized by time passing quickly and an inability to separate oneself from work (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Lockwood (2007) stated that work engagement is a situation in which a person can be emotionally and intellectually committed to the organization. Work engagement as feeling energetic, enthusiastic, alert and feeling proud of the results of their work. Engagement is enjoyable and has various positive outcomes for psychological well-being. According to Bakker and Leiter (2010), employees who have high engagement will work more than "good enough", are committed to goals, use intelligence to make choices on how best to work engagement to complete a task, monitor their own behavior to determine what is done is correct and in accordance with the objectives to be achieved and will make a decision to correct it if necessary. Furthermore, Bakker (2011) also states that employees who have high work engagement have three advantages. First, employees become happier and more enthusiastic, so they can produce work resources that have an impact on task completion and better performance results. Second, employees will be physically and mentally healthier, so that employees can focus more on completing their work. Third, employees will channel work engagement to other employees, so that interpersonal relationships can be well established and group performance will be better. Schaufeli (2012) said that employees who have work engagement also have high initiative in doing tasks and are more motivated to learn more than what they do on a daily basis.

Several factors can affect work engagement, including wellbeing (Ryan & Deci, 2001; Susniene & Jurkauskas, 2009; Field & Buitendach, 2011), organizational commitment (Trofimov et al., 2017), job sources (Quiñones et al., 2013), authentic leadership (Safitri, 2019) and workplace friendship (Yan et al, 2020; Huh & Lee, 2021; Ugwu et al, 2022). From some of the factors above, researchers are interested in workplace friendship, as Methot et al (2016) said when employees have good friendships at work, the togetherness and volunteerism of friendships at work provide them with potential resources and support to achieve work goals. Especially among employee in West Java's industrial area.

Workplace friendships are defined as informal interpersonal relationships in the workplace, where workplace friendships provide an intimate relationship between employees, as distinct from instrumental relationships such as mentoring relationships and supervisor-subordinate relationships (Cao & Zhang, 2020; Dobel, 2001; Nielsen, et al., 2000). Dimensions of workplace according to Nielsen et al., (2000) are friendship opportunity and friendship prevalence. Friendship opportunities, i.e. the extent to which employees talk to each other and build informal relationships with other employees in the workplace. Friendship opportunities include behaviors such as seeking opportunities to get to know friends at work, working with friends, and communicating easily with friends everywhere. Friendship prevalence includes behaviors such as discussing personal problems with friends at work, sharing secrets, discussing work-related issues, and whether friendships only last in the work environment or not. Someone who has friendships at work can increase support and information that helps individuals do their jobs, reduce stress (for example, by removing barriers to success) and improve the quality of work (Singh & Srivastava, 2020). How about among employee of West Java's industrial area as a favourite areas for industrial and logistics areas and has a role as a gateway to international areas and has the potential to encourage the surrounding area as well as a service center, processing center, and transportation node serving several provinces or nationally? Researchers assumed that work engagement among employee of West Java's area have a low engagement based on data that most them are millennials. And its can contributed by workplace friendship.

Based on the background and phenomena that the researcher has described, the researcher is interested to examine whether workplace friendship contribute toward work engagement among employee in the industrial area of West Java.

## Method

This study used a quantitative approach with a correlational design., involved 409 respondents with the following characteristics (1) Employees who work in the industrial area of West Java (Bekasi, Karawang, Purwakarta, and Greater Bandung) (2) Minimum working period of one year or more in the same place. Because the population of employees in the West Java industrial area is unknown, researcher used Lemeshow' formula (Lemeshow et al, 1990) to get the number of samples. Respondents consisting of 125 male employees and 284 female employees, aged between 20 to 61 years, with the latest education from high school to master's degree, with a working period of 1 to more than 5 years, staff

positions up to manager, spread across the city of Karawang. , Purwakarta, Bekasi, Cikarang, Cikampek, Bandung, Cimahi, and Padalarang.

### Research Instruments

There were two research variables in the study: workplace friendship and work engagement. We used two instruments, Workplace Friendship Scale (Nielsen, 2000) for workplace friendship and Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004) for work engagement. Workplace Friendship Scale consists of two aspects, 1) the opportunity for friendship (for example, I have the opportunity to get to know my co-workers), and 2) the friendship prevalence (for example, I have made strong friendships at work). Items on

workplace friendships were scored 1 – 5 point Likert scale (1 = “strongly disagree”, 5= “strongly agree”). Base on Nielsen (2000), the instrument has a reliability in each aspect: 0.84 for the opportunity for friendship aspect and 0.89 for the friendship prevalence aspect (Nielsen et al., 2000). UWES consists of 17 items with the dimensions of work engagement: vigor, dedication, and absorption. Items on the UWES are scored on a seven-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (never) to 7 (always). The UWES reliability of Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) is 0.91.

The instruments used in this study were adapted by adjusting the language from English to Bahasa. However, in this study, the researcher only did the adaptation on the Workplace Friendship Scale (WFS) instrument developed by Nielsen et al. (2000). Meanwhile, the other instrument, Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES), had been adapted and developed by Safitri (2019). The result of the reliability test for the WFS instrument is 0.687. Then, the results of the reliability test from Safitri (2019) for the UWES instrument is 0.929.

### Data Collection

The data collection technique used in this study was through a questionnaire in the form of a google form. Collected indirectly (online) through social media such as whatsapp, twitter, and instagram on August -September 2022 to employees in the West Java industrial area involving 409 participants.

### Data Analysis

The data analysis technique used in this study is simple regression analysis. After the data was collected, the researchers then analyzed the data using the SPSS version 26 application

## Result

### Description of Workplace Friendship

The general description of workplace friendship for employees in the West Java industrial area is divided into two categories, namely high and low levels of friendship at work, as shown in the following table:

Table 1: Workplace friendship

Variable	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Workplace friendship	Low	195	48%
	High	214	52%
	Total	409	100%

The results show that out of 409 respondents, 52% of them have workplace friendship in the high category

## Description of Work Engagement

Table 2 : Work engagement

Variable	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Work Engagement	Low	164	40%
	High	245	60%
	Total	409	100%

The table 2 shows that 60 % ( 245) out of 409 Weast Java's industrial employees have high category of work engagement

## Contribution Workplace Friendship toward Work Engagement

### Hypothesis

H0: There is no contribution of workplace friendship toward work engagement

Ha: There is contribution of workplace friendship toward work engagement

Table 3 : Contribution workplace friendship toward Work engagement

	B	R Square	Sig
(Constant)	29.588		
Workplace friendship	1.283	0.295	0.000
<i>Work Engagement</i>			

The table above shows that the significance value of workplace friendship toward work engagement is 0.000 (<0.05) which indicates that H0 is rejected and Ha is accepted. This means that workplace friendship has a significant contribution toward work engagement. The table above also shows that the magnitude of the contribution of workplace friendship variables has a significant effect on work engagement of 0.295 with a percentage of 29.5% which indicates that there are 70.5% predictors or other independent variables that can affect work engagement.

$$Y = 29.588 + 1.283X + e \quad (1)$$

Based on these equations, it can be concluded that each additional workplace friendship will increase work engagement by 1,283. The symbol  $e$  is an error in research that can be interpreted as another predictor that may have an influence on work engagement. So it can be said that workplace friendship has a positive effect on work engagement.

## Discussion

Based on the purpose research, to examine whether there is contribution of workplace friendship toward work engagement of employees in West Java's industrial area, we can see that the result showed that workplace friendship has a significant toward work engagement. This is evidenced by a significance value of 0.000 (<0.005).

The research result is in line with previous research conducted by Yan et al (2021) and Ariyabuddhiphongs and Boonsanong (2019) which stated that workplace friendship is positively related to work engagement. The assumptions of previous research Omuris (2019) revealed that future research should examine the relationship between workplace friendships and employee work outcomes by explaining the relationship between workplace friendships and work engagement. Although employees cannot choose co-workers, they can determine who will be their close friends (Omuris, 2019). As Nielsen (2000) that Workplace friendship is defined as the extent to which one perceives an opportunity to form a strong bond with and a trust in coworkers; operationally workplace friendship consists of opportunity for and prevalence of friendship in organizations.

Khaleel et al (2016) revealed that workplace friendship is an important element in the organizational environment. Friends at work are reflected as resources in many ways. Workplace-related friends provide social support to individuals who are considered a resource associated with increased engagement.

Methot et al (2016) explain when employees have good workplace friendships, the togetherness and volunteerism of friendships at work provides them with potential resources and support to achieve work goals. In such a work environment, employees are increasingly willing to dedicate their effort, energy, and time to their work, indicating a high level of job involvement (Bakker & Bal, 2010).

In this study, it was shown that most of the respondents who participated tended to have a high level workplace friendship. This can be interpreted that respondents tend to have perceived themselves as having relationships to form bonds and trust with colleagues. In addition, based on the demographics of respondents related to workplace friendship for the gender category, it shows that there is a significant difference with the highest average score for the male gender (49.48) and the lowest for the female gender (49.00). In other categories, age, last education, city of work, length of work, and based on job title, there was no significant difference because the test results differed more than 0.05. Most of employees of West Java's area have a high level work engagement. In the work engagement variable, the difference test for the categories of gender, age, and education, there is a significant difference based on the results of the different test whose value is less than 0.05. While in the category of city where work, length of work, and job title there is no significant difference because the test results differ more than 0.05. The results of work engagement is different from the assumption of the researcher at the beginning of the study, that employees in the West Java industrial area have low work engagement. So for further researchers it is recommended to explore the factual phenomena that occur among the population first. Another limitation of our research is the range or characteristics of age in this study were too wide, so that the distribution of the questionnaires was not evenly distributed.

## Conclusion

The conclusion that can be drawn from this study is that workplace friendship contributed toward work engagement among employee of West Java's industrial area. We also found that the level of workplace friendship and work engagement are in the high category.

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