Work engagement and work alienation: Distinct or opposites?

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Work engagement and work alienation are considered as bipolar opposites of each other by many researchers. In light of this we examined whether the set of items measuring work engagement and work alienation indeed measure similar experience. Confirmatory factor analysis on responses drawn from various occupational groups (N = 269) revealed that it’s erroneous to consider both the constructs to be the opposite ends of a single continuum. This inference is also reinforced by the pattern of relationship observed between work engagement and work alienation on one hand with their antecedents (i.e. occupational self efficacy and meaning) and consequences (job satisfaction and turnover intention) on the other. Implications of this study on the conceptualization and measurement of work engagement and work alienation is also discussed.

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