

Does meaningful work affect affective commitment to change? Work engagement contribution



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Orientation: Affective commitment to change plays an important role in facilitating change to adapt to changing needs, one of which is in the education sector. Therefore, it is necessary to examine what factors are thought to increase affective commitment to change.

Research purpose: The study aims to examine the direct and indirect effect (with work engagement as a mediator) between meaningful work and affective commitment to change, especially in the education sector.

Motivation for the study: The education sector contributes greatly to the development of a country to deal with rapid changes and increasing affective commitment to change has an important role in dealing with continuous change.

Research approach/design and method: This study involved the use of structural equation modelling to analyse data collected from 501 faculty members from 16 higher education institutions in Indonesia.

Main findings: The main findings of the study indicate that the structural equation model revealed that work engagement functions as a partial mediator in the relationship between meaningful work and affective commitment to change.

Practical/managerial implications: Organisations need to create an atmosphere that creates meaningful work experiences and increase work engagement to foster affective commitment to change to drive successful organisational transformation.

Contribution/value-add: This study has presented the advantageous impact of meaningful work and work engagement on affective commitment to change.

Keywords: commitment to change; faculty members; Indonesia; meaningful work; work engagement; higher education.

Introduction

Organisational change has become a hot topic in recent years, as companies are always trying to stay competitive and meet the demands of a rapidly changing external environment. However, the process of implementing change is not easy; this is shown in several studies that state that 60% – 70% of organisations have failed to execute their change initiatives successfully (Errida & Lotfi, 2021; Jones et al., 2018; Waisy & Wei, 2020). This means there is a need for enterprises to determine the appropriate remedies for these obstacles to survive and continue high performance (Jones, 2013). Moreover, most of these problems were associated with human resources issues such as employee commitment (Mosadeghrad & Ansarian, 2014).

The higher education sector, much like other industries, faces similar challenges in dealing with environmental changes (Waisy & Wei, 2020). This is mainly because of the significant pressure exerted on higher education by globalisation, thereby necessitating continuous adaptation. For example, academic institutions are compelled to evaluate and enhance themselves based on certain mechanisms such as quality assurance, accreditations and world ranking systems (Hechanova & Cementina-Olpoc, 2013). This was further intensified by government rules and regulations implemented to institutions keep abreast of the times and compete with their counterparts in foreign nations (Faisaluddin et al., 2023). Therefore, higher education institutions in the world, especially those in developing countries, including Indonesia, are required to always be ready to face and predict changes that may occur, so that they can maintain and improve competitiveness, quality and meet the standards demanded by the government.

In addressing the changing demands of the times, the Director General of Innovation Strengthening at the Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education said that universities of the future must shift from teaching universities to research universities. This emphasises that faculty members should not only focus on teaching but also actively conduct research (Totoh, 2020). The government's seriousness towards the importance of research is also shown by the issuance of various regulations related to research and publications, such as Regulation No. 20 of 2018 of the Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education (Permenristekdikti) regarding research and Permenristekdikti No. 69 of 2016 regarding the establishment of reviewers and procedures for assessing the implementation of research.

According to Foks (2015), a crucial factor in successfully implementing change is commitment. When every member of the organisation demonstrates a strong commitment to change, the transition can be executed effectively (Shum et al., 2008). It is also believed that when employees are personally motivated and recognise the inherent benefits, their commitment to change is usually more genuine and leads to greater success compared to commitment driven by coercion or obligation. Moreover, the affective component was reported to have the strongest effect with behavioural support for a specific change among the three components of commitment to change (Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002; Meyer et al., 2007; Parish et al., 2008). Waisy and Wei (2020) said that further factors that affect affective commitment to change under different contexts should continue to be studied by researchers as affective commitment to change is the best indicator of success in all organisations' change initiatives.

Several studies have been previously conducted, but none was found to examine the relationship between meaningful work, work engagement and affective commitment to change as one research model. However, previous studies have shown that meaning (Mangundjaya, 2014a, 2019a) and work engagement (Susilo & Mangundjaya, 2019) have positive effect on affective commitment to change. This is the reason this study was also conducted to determine the intermediating role of work engagement in the relationship between meaningful work and affective commitment to change.

Hypotheses development

Meaningful work and affective commitment to change

Commitment plays a vital role in facilitating change (Armenakis et al., 1999; Coetsee, 1999). Commitment to change was specifically defined as the motivational force that drives individuals to take actions essential for the successful execution of change initiatives (Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002). The concept was further divided into three components by Herscovitch and Meyer (2002), which include (1) desire to provide support for change based on a belief in its inherent benefits (affective commitment to change), (2) a recognition that there are costs associated with failure to provide support for the change (continuance commitment to change) and

(3) a feeling of obligation to support change (normative commitment to change).

This study focused on the affective component because previous reports showed its ability to provide strong support for certain behaviours needed to implement changes (Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002; Meyer et al., 2007; Neves, 2009). It has also been proven to serve as a psychological mechanism needed by every employee to succeed during the process of implementing changes in an organisation (Mangundjaya, 2013; Michaelis et al., 2009). Employees with a strong affective commitment to change have been reported to have a higher propensity to exert every effort to participate and become more engaged in the change initiative to guarantee its success (Morin et al., 2016). Another reason why this study focuses on affective commitment to change is because in previous studies it has been proven that feeling meaningful at work has the highest impact to commitment to change compared to normative and continuance commitment to change (Mangundjaya, 2014a). Affective commitment to change was defined as the willingness to embrace change based on a belief in its inherent benefits (Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002). The concept was also noted to hold a substantial influence on the implementation of change initiatives (Choi, 2011; Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002; Ning & Jing, 2012; Oreg et al., 2013). Most previous studies primarily focused on affective commitment to change (Choi, 2011; Ritz et al., 2012).

The emphasis on the concept has grown significantly as evidenced in studies by Waisy and Wei (2020), Mangundjaya (2019a, 2019b) Susilo and Mangundjaya (2019), as well as Radian and Mangundjaya (2019). Waisy and Wei (2020) argue that one of the most important reasons for failure in organisational change is the lack of commitment. Thus, one of the highest priorities in human resources management is to create committed employees during periods of organisational change. The same was also said by Mangundjaya (2019b) that organisations want to be successful with organisational change and should pay attention to their employees and the commitment to organisational change.

Based on previous studies, employees with higher levels of affective commitment to change generally show positive attitudes towards change initiatives (Ford & Ford, 2012). It was further noted that individuals with a stronger affective commitment were better equipped to comprehend the importance of proposed alterations and actively contribute to their successful implementation (Morin et al., 2016). Consequently, it is important to explore the factors that can enhance affective commitment to change as a significant contribution to the successful implementation of changes in organisations.

Past studies have confirmed that employees with meaningful perceptions of their jobs had a greater level of affective commitment to change, and this was considered important for any organisation (Mangundjaya, 2014a, 2019b). It was

also noted that meaningful work also affected affective commitment in other forms, specifically organisational commitment, as reported by Jiang and Johnson (2018), Usman et al. (2021), and a meta-analysis by Allan et al. (2019). This background information was used to develop the assumption that meaningful work has a constructive and noteworthy effect with affective commitment to change. Therefore, the following hypothesis was developed.

Hypothesis 1: Meaningful work is positively related to affective commitment to change.

Meaningful work and work engagement

Initially, the conceptualisation of meaningful work was primarily unidimensional, defined as the perception of workers regarding the usefulness, importance or value of their work (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). Several scholars, including Spreitzer (1995), and May et al. (2004) maintained this perspective even as the concept evolved. Meanwhile, some expanded it into a multidimensional construct such as Rosso et al. (2010), Lips-Wiersma and Wright (2012) and Steger et al. (2012). This study adopted the framework proposed by Steger et al. (2012), which encompasses three key facets. The first is psychological meaningfulness (PM in work); this is related to an individual's personal perception of their job as valuable and significant. The second is meaning-making (MM), which represents a significant source of purpose in an individual's life. The third is the greater good motivation (GG Motivation); it reflects a consistent desire to make a positive impact on the collective well-being.

Meaningful experiences occur when individuals engage in actions that align with their core values and have the ability to articulate the significance of their work (Allan et al., 2014; May et al., 2004). The perception of work as meaningful by employees had a positive impact on both their personal and professional outcomes (Pratt & Ashforth, 2003; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). They became more productive and exhibited a deeper level of engagement with their work compared to those that do not find the job meaningful (Holbeche & Springett, 2003; May et al., 2004; Milliman et al., 2003; Olivier & Rothmann, 2007).

Studies have been continuously conducted on meaningful work with different outputs, such as work engagement. Most of the findings showed the ability of meaningful work to predict work engagement (Gogi et al., 2019; Rahmi et al., 2021; Van Wingerden & Van Der Stoep, 2018). Ahmed et al. (2018) also stated that meaningful work perception was important to the enhancement of employees' work engagement. Another study further showed that the encouragement of beliefs in meaningful work could enhance work engagement (Fouché et al., 2017). This generally means employees become more engaged with work when they perceive their work as meaningful as noted by previous studies (Ahmed et al., 2016; Steger et al., 2012). Therefore, the following hypothesis was formulated to be tested in this study.

Hypothesis 2: Meaningful work is positively related to work engagement.

Mediating role of work engagement

The concept of engagement was first introduced by Kahn (1990). The concept was divided into personal engagement and personal disengagement to describe how individuals involve or detach themselves from their work roles (Kahn, 1990). The personal engagement aspect was explained as the process when employees utilise their personal attributes as well as show physical, cognitive and emotional expressions while fulfilling their job roles. Meanwhile, personal disengagement was described as the process when individuals separate themselves from their work roles, and this led to withdrawal and defensive behaviours on a physical, cognitive or emotional level. Kahn (1990) further argued that involvement and exhaustion represented opposite ends of a spectrum concerning job well-being.

The concept of work engagement was also first explained by Maslach and Leiter (1997). The study proposed engagement and burnout existed as opposite ends of a spectrum in relation to job well-being. Burnout represents the unfavourable end while engagement indicates the favourable end. However, Schaufeli et al. (2002) argued against the notion that these two concepts should be perfectly negatively correlated. The study believed it was unreasonable to expect such a perfect effect. In fact, conducting an empirical study to explore the relationship between engagement and burnout using the same questionnaire was discovered not to be feasible. These arguments led Schaufeli et al. to develop the concept of work engagement and defined it as a positive state of mind in relation to work. It was further characterised by three dimensions, which include vigour, dedication and absorption. Vigour entails mental resilience, elevated liveliness and determination in tasks, as well as perseverance in challenging situations. Dedication is marked by a sense of pride, enthusiasm, importance, inspiration and challenge. Absorption refers to being fully immersed in one's tasks, experiencing deep concentration perceiving time as passing quickly and finding it difficult to stop working. These three dimensions formed the core components of work engagement (Schaufeli et al., 2002).

Some of the variables reported to be correlated with work engagement include meaningfulness, transformational leadership (Meng et al., 2022), stress and meaningful work (Rahmi et al., 2021). The concept has also been used as a mediator to link one variable to another. This is evident from previous investigations showing its intermediating role in the relationship between loneliness at work and organisational citizenship behaviour (Tian et al., 2021), distributive justice and turnover intention (Chen et al., 2022), as well as meaningful work, use of strength and performance (Van Wingerden & Van Der Stoep, 2018).

Work engagement was also found to be significantly influenced by meaningful work (Geldenhuis et al., 2014; Jung & Yoon, 2016; Van Wingerden & Van Der Stoep, 2018) and had a positive influence both directly and as an intermediary factor on affective commitment to change

(Susilo & Mangundjaya, 2019). Therefore, it was applied in this study to serve as a mediating variable in the relationship between meaningful work and affective commitment to change. This is because of the fact that commitment to change can be enhanced through engagement (Mangundjaya, 2014b; Susilo & Mangundjaya, 2019). The background information led to the development of the following hypotheses.

Hypothesis 3: Work engagement is positively related to affective commitment to change.

Hypothesis 4: Work engagement mediates the relationship between meaningful work and affective commitment to change.

Theoretical framework: Social exchange theory

The social exchange theory provides a framework to understand social relationships established on mutual benefits between individuals (Blau, 1964). Exchange perspectives also have been commonly employed to explain commitment (Scholl, 1981). This means social exchange theory is a fundamental concept to comprehend workplace behaviour and has been utilised to elucidate work-related attitudes like job satisfaction and commitment (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Furthermore, successful social exchanges usually generate confidence because of the involvement of unspoken responsibilities that cannot be legally enforced, and this can lead to a shared commitment and dedication to the connection (Blau, 1964).

The norm of reciprocity, linked to social exchange theory, suggests that employees are more likely to support organisational change when they receive benefits from their workplace. This study proposed that faculty members who perceive their work as meaningful are likely to encounter positive experiences. These positive experiences, in turn, motivate them to actively engage in their work and consequently become more satisfied and willing to support the changes initiated by the institution. The support serves as an exchange for the positive experiences they have gained and as a means to maintain the benefits received. This is in line with the theory of social exchange from Blau (1964) that reciprocity strengthens and stabilises the inherent tendencies of social exchange. In this case, it becomes a necessary condition for continued exchange. This means individuals need to fulfil certain obligations based on the benefits previously received to obtain more benefits (Blau, 1964).

Previous study proved that individuals with meaningful work experience had a significant increase in the level of work engagement (Rahmi et al., 2021) and commitment to change (Mangundjaya, 2014a). This further influenced the effect between work engagement and affective commitment to change (Susilo & Mangundjaya, 2019). Therefore, the faculty members with positive experience were expected to view their work as valuable, and this can increase work engagement and the willingness to commit to their institution in the process of implementing certain changes. This aligns with the principles of exchange theory that positive experiences can be viewed as benefits received. To continue receiving these benefits, individuals are required to engage in an exchange by

increasing their involvement and commitment. Therefore, this study adopted the social exchange theory to explore the relationship between meaningful work, commitment to change and work engagement.

Materials and methods

This study used a cross-sectional survey design and a quantitative research approach. The quantitative design has its origins in the natural sciences; nevertheless, some variables in the social sciences domain can be quantified using conventional techniques; hence the approach was used for this study (Walliman, 2022). Cross-sectional research establishes correlations between variables and can be used to rule out other hypotheses (Spector, 2019).

Sample and procedure

This study involved 501 faculty members from higher education institutions located in different cities within the Central Java region of Indonesia. The participants in this investigation were chosen via a method of multistage cluster random sampling. This technique is used with the consideration of a large number and types of higher education like as universities, academies, institutes and polytechnics, the size of the area and tends to be homogeneous. The criterion for the participants required that they were a faculty member who has worked for more than 6 years, which guarantees that they have been exposed to and have knowledge of two distinct work scenarios – one before and another after the introduction of the change initiative.

According to the demographic information collected in this study, 233 individuals (46.5%) were male, while 268 individuals (53.5%) were female. The study included individuals who were 25 years of age or above, with most falling within the 25–34 age range ($n = 171$, 34.1%). Additional age groups represented were 35–44 years ($n = 164$, 32.7%), 45–54 years ($n = 107$, 21.4%) and over 55 years ($n = 59$, 11.8%). In terms of work experience, the majority of participants had worked for 7–12 years ($n = 276$, 55.1%), while 91 individuals (18.2%) had worked for 13–18 years and 134 individuals (26.7%) had worked for over 18 years. As for academic rank, 463 individuals (92.4%) were in the role of assistant professor, 37 individuals (7.4%) held the position of associate professor and 1 individual (0.2%) held the position of professor. Finally, in terms of educational attainment, 430 individuals (85.8%) held master's degrees, while 71 individuals (14.2%) held doctoral degrees.

Study measures

The commitment to change scale developed by Herscovitch and Meyer (2002) and adapted into Indonesian by Faisaluddin et al. (2023) is used to measure affective commitment to change. It comprises three components; affective commitment to change, continuance commitment to change and normative commitment to change. However, this study only uses six items to measure affective commitment to change, each of which has seven alternative answers with a scale of 1–7 (1 = strongly

disagree to 7 = strongly agree). The results of an internal consistency Cronbach's alpha are 0.71. Therefore, it can be used in a study. The Cronbach's alpha for this study was 0.79.

Meaningful work was measured using the Work and Meaning Inventory (WAMI) developed by Steger et al. (2012) and adapted into Indonesian by Rahmi et al. (2021). This measuring tool consists of 10 items to uncover three dimensions of meaningful work: positive meaning, meaning making and greater good motivations. Each item is given five alternative answers with a scale of 1–5 (1 = absolutely untrue to 5 = absolutely true). The results of an internal consistency Cronbach's alpha is 0.89; thus this WAMI meets psychometric criteria and can be used in a study. The Cronbach's alpha for this study was 0.91.

To measure work engagement, the 9-item abbreviated version of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-9) was used, which was developed by Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) and adapted into Indonesian by Kristiana et al. (2018). This measuring tool consists of 9 items that reveal three aspects: vigour, dedication and absorption. Each item is given seven alternative answers with a scale of 0–6 (0 = never to 6 = always). The results of testing this measuring instrument show person and item interaction ($\alpha = 0.85$), person reliability ($= 0.71$) and item reliability ($= 0.95$); thus this UWES-9 meets psychometric criteria and can be used in a study. The Cronbach's alpha for this research was 0.90.

Data analysis

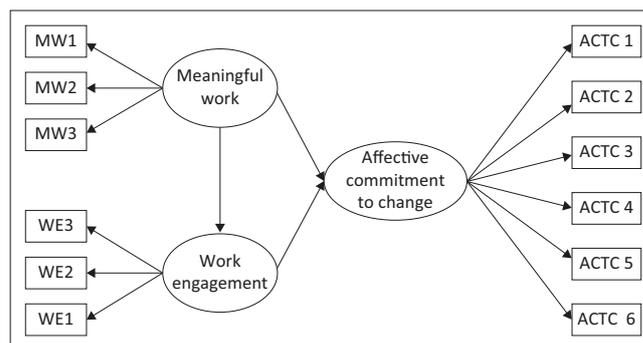
In this investigation, we used descriptive statistics to look at socio-demographic features like gender, age, marital status, grade, education and tenure. The variable was described using mean and standard deviation. Pearson correlation was utilised to test the effect between variables. In addition, the researchers employed structural equation modeling (SEM) for data analysis, where meaningful work was the independent variable, affective commitment to change was the dependent variable and work engagement was the mediator. The data were analysed using Lisrel 8.80. Cronbach's alpha was used to assess reliability. Figure 1 displays the model used in this study.

Ethical considerations

An application for full ethical approval was made to the Universitas Padjadjaran Research Ethics Committee, and ethics consent was received on 09 September 2020. The ethics approval number is 824/UN6.KEP/EC/2020. The authors ensured that all participants gave written informed consent to participate in the completion of the questionnaire without coercion before they participated in the study. Consent given included the publication of anonymised responses.

Results

The data obtained were analysed using *t*-test and ANOVA. The result showed that the demographic factors did not have



ACTC, affective commitment to change; MW, meaningful work; WE, work engagement.

FIGURE 1: Research model.

any impact on affective commitment to change, meaningful work and work engagement as indicated in Table 1.

Pearson's correlation results show a significant and positive effect, between meaningful work and work engagement, meaningful work and affective commitment to change and between work engagement and affective commitment to change. The correlation's worth for each of these factors is presented in Table 2.

Moreover, the model fit test showed that the measuring instrument was suitable because it fulfilled six out of seven current indicators. The achievement of the fit result required that the *p*-value be less than 0.05, Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) be less than 0.80 (MacCallum et al., 1996), while Goodness of Fit Index (GFI), Adjusted Goodness Fit of Index (AGFI) (MacCallum & Hong, 1997), Normed Fit Index (NFI), Non Normed Fit Index (NNFI) and Comparative Fit Index (CFI) are equal to or greater than 0.90 (Bentler, 1990). The result showed that $\chi^2 = 268.03$ ($p = 0.000$), RMSEA = 0.05, GFI = 0.94, AGFI = 0.92, NFI = 0.95, NNFI = 0.96 and CFI = 0.97. Furthermore, Cronbach's alpha was also found to be excellent, as indicated by affective commitment to change ($\alpha = 0.79$), meaningful work ($\alpha = 0.91$) and work engagement ($\alpha = 0.90$). Figure 2 and Table 3 also show the pattern of the correlation between meaningful work and affective commitment to change, which was partially mediated by work engagement.

Figure 2 and Table 3 highlight the fact that meaningful work had a significant effect on both work engagement and affective commitment to change. Moreover, work engagement displayed a significant effect to affective commitment to change. It was also noted that the relationship between meaningful work and affective commitment to change was partly mediated by work engagement. This indicated that hypotheses 1, 2, 3 and 4 were substantiated.

Discussion

The objective of this study was to examine the direct and indirect effect between meaningful work and affective commitment to change through work engagement. The findings showed that meaningful work has a significant effect on affective commitment to change. This corroborated

TABLE 1: Demographic characteristics of the study participants.

| Variables | N(501) | ACTC | | | MW | | | WE | | |
|----------------------|--------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| | | M | SD | Sig. | M | SD | Sig. | M | SD | Sig. |
| Gender | - | - | - | 0.51 | - | - | 0.75 | - | - | 0.28 |
| Male | 233 | 4.44 | 0.68 | - | 3.98 | 0.47 | - | 4.99 | 0.79 | - |
| Female | 268 | 4.32 | 0.64 | - | 4.00 | 0.47 | - | 5.06 | 0.69 | - |
| Age | - | - | - | 0.48 | - | - | 0.33 | - | - | 0.33 |
| 25–34 | 171 | 4.43 | 0.72 | - | 3.93 | 0.46 | - | 4.98 | 0.74 | - |
| 35–44 | 164 | 4.37 | 0.65 | - | 4.01 | 0.46 | - | 5.04 | 0.70 | - |
| 45–54 | 107 | 4.36 | 0.64 | - | 4.03 | 0.51 | - | 5.01 | 0.83 | - |
| > 55 | 59 | 4.38 | 0.50 | - | 3.99 | 0.46 | - | 5.18 | 0.66 | - |
| Tenure | - | - | - | 0.14 | - | - | 0.52 | - | - | 0.51 |
| 7–12 | 276 | 4.42 | 0.72 | - | 4.00 | 0.45 | - | 4.96 | 0.77 | - |
| 13–18 | 91 | 4.26 | 0.53 | - | 3.84 | 0.41 | - | 5.06 | 0.65 | - |
| > 18 | 134 | 4.38 | 0.61 | - | 4.02 | 0.48 | - | 5.15 | 0.72 | - |
| Academic rank | - | - | - | 0.07 | - | - | 0.94 | - | - | 0.67 |
| Assistant professor | 463 | 4.34 | 0.63 | - | 3.98 | 0.48 | - | 5.08 | 0.68 | - |
| Associate professor | 37 | 4.15 | 0.49 | - | 4.04 | 0.43 | - | 5.05 | 0.80 | - |
| Professor | 1 | 4.50 | 0.00 | - | 4.00 | 0.00 | - | 5.22 | 0.00 | - |
| Education | - | - | - | 0.64 | - | - | 0.10 | - | - | 0.26 |
| Master degree | 431 | 4.38 | 0.66 | - | 3.98 | 0.47 | - | 5.02 | 0.03 | - |
| Doctoral | 70 | 4.34 | 0.67 | - | 4.07 | 0.45 | - | 5.12 | 0.09 | - |

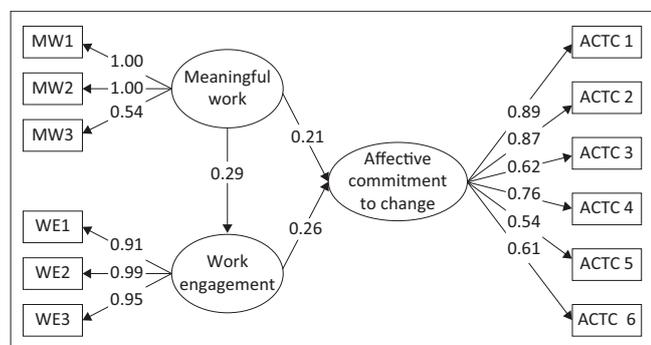
ACTC, affective commitment to change; MW, meaningful work; WE, work engagement; SD, standard deviation.

TABLE 2: Mean, standard deviations, and correlations.

| Variables | Mean | SD | ACTC | MW | WE |
|-----------|-------|------|--------|--------|----|
| ACTC | 33.17 | 5.75 | 1 | - | - |
| MW | 42.01 | 5.45 | 0.26** | 1 | - |
| WE | 45.24 | 6.69 | 0.21** | 0.48** | 1 |

** $p < 0.01$.

ACTC, affective commitment to change; MW, meaningful work; WE, work engagement; SD, standard deviation.



ACTC, affective commitment to change; MW, meaningful work; WE, work engagement.

FIGURE 2: Result of structural equation modelling analysis.

the results of an earlier investigation by Mangundjaya (2014a) that the perception of meaningful work had a greater influence on the commitment to change compared to competence, impact or determination. The finding also reinforced the outcomes of a meta-analysis by Allan et al. (2019) that meaningful work had large meta-analytic correlations with commitment. This showed that meaningful work should not be associated with only organisational affective commitment (Jiang & Johnson, 2018; Usman et al., 2021) but also affective commitment to change.

It was also discovered that meaningful work had a significant effect on work engagement, and this was in line with the

TABLE 3: The mediational testing of the variables.

| Path | Direct effect | Indirect effect | p-value | Conclusion |
|--|---------------|-----------------|---------|-------------|
| Meaningful work - affective commitment to change | 0.21 | - | 0.000 | Significant |
| Work engagement - affective commitment to change | 0.26 | - | 0.000 | Significant |
| Meaningful work - work engagement | 0.29 | - | 0.000 | Significant |
| Meaningful work - work engagement - affective commitment to change | - | 0.07 | 0.000 | Significant |

findings of numerous previous studies (Ahmed et al., 2016, 2018; Allan et al., 2019; Rahmi et al., 2021). Allan et al. (2019) indicated a significant meta-analytic correlation between meaningful work and work engagement, while Ahmed et al. (2016) reported that meaningful work was one of the most significant factors influencing work engagement compared to other factors. Moreover, the findings showed work engagement had a significant effect on the affective commitment to change. This served as an endorsement of the results of the investigation by Susilo and Mangundjaya (2019) that the sustenance of employees' engagement was one of the factors to achieve a successful transition in a company. The phenomenon was associated with the ability of organisational engagement to provide favourable outcomes, such as enhanced performance.

Work engagement was also found to have played the role of a partial mediator in the relationship between meaningful work and affective commitment to change. Partial mediator occurs when the independent variable already has a direct effect on the dependent variable, but this effect is weaker than when the mediator variable is added to the model (Hair et al., 2022). Thus, work engagement can be said to be a partial moderator because it can increase the effect of meaningful work on affective commitment to change. This was observed to have supported the findings of Susilo and Mangundjaya (2019) that work engagement served as a

partial mediator and also had a significant relationship with affective commitment to change. Meaningful work was correlated to affective commitment to change, but the introduction of work engagement as a mediator enhanced the relationship. Based on the explanations above, it can be concluded that all hypotheses in this study are accepted.

Limitations and future research

The study has certain limitations. Firstly, all the parameters used were measured through a questionnaire completed independently by the participants. This means the measurement procedure can be influenced by biases related to social desirability and response distortion because of the tendency of the participants to present themselves in a favourable light. For this reason, we encourage future researchers to use multi-source and mixed techniques for data collection. Secondly, data were collected from only private educational organisations that experienced changes because of the regulations made by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology. Therefore, there is a need to conduct further studies on different types of organisations that have implemented some transformations. These can include non-educational or government organisations that have experienced changes because of acquisitions or mergers.

In the future, we expect institutions are able to pay attention to the meaningful work of their employees, especially faculty members to be able to increase the work engagement and affective commitment to change of faculty members in facing the demands of change. The government also needs to provide massive socialisation and training related to the changes that occur to accelerate the delivery and adaptation for the higher education institutions in Indonesia.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study provided empirical evidence to support the positive impact of meaningful work and work engagement on affective commitment to change. Moreover, it also showed that work engagement acted as a mediator in the relationship between meaningful work and affective commitment to change. Therefore, organisations undergoing changes should prioritise efforts to foster a sense of dedication among their employees. This is because of the fact that the creation of meaningful work experiences and the enhancement of work engagement play pivotal roles in achieving this goal. The recognition of the significance of these factors can contribute to cultivating affective commitment to change, which serves as a valuable asset in driving successful organisational transformations.

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premises. Without their cooperation, this research would not have been possible.

Competing interests

The authors have declared that no competing interest exists.

Authors' contributions

F.F., E.F., Y.N. and Z.R.H. jointly developed ideas for research. Furthermore, F.F. is responsible for data collection and article writing. E.F. is responsible for critical commentary on the research methodology and results. Y.N. and Z.R.H. commented critically in the Introduction and Discussion section. All authors have read and agreed to the submitted version.

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Data availability

Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no new data were created or analysed in this study.

Disclaimer

The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of any affiliated agency of the authors.

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