

The Influence of Self-Efficacy, Optimism, Hope and Resilience on Work Engagement: Role of Perceived Organizational Support as Mediator

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Abstract

Lecturers have a significant influence on the process of quality development in higher education institutions, namely in fulfilling the targets of national education (enhancing intellectual capacity of the nation and developing civilized people). They can contribute to higher education institutions provided that they maintain effective efforts (in terms of quantity and direction), good attitudes, motivation to work and are supported by their institutions. Hence, it is crucial for lecturers to recognize their responsibility and performance, as well as measure their efforts according to the indicator of success. One way to improve organizational performance is by identifying the extent of lecturers' work engagement. Several studies have examined such components of work engagement as self-efficacy, optimism, hope and resilience. The present study aims to consider several psychological constructs related to self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience which influence work engagement, using a mediator variable of perceived organizational support on lecturers of public higher education institutions in Surakarta. Samples include 393 lecturers of Universitas Sebelas Maret Surakarta. Data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with the application of Lisrel 8.70 program. The analysis results indicate that 1) the model is considered fit, 2) there is a significant influence of self-efficacy, optimism, hope and resilience on lecturers' work engagement, and 3) perceived organization support is a good mediator to connect the variables.

Keywords: work engagement, perceived organizational support, self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience

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Introduction

Lecturers have a significant influence on the process of quality development in higher education institutions, namely in fulfilling the targets of national education (enhancing intellectual capacity of the nation and developing civilized people). Law No. 14 of 2005 regarding Teachers and Lecturers defined lecturers as professional lecturers and scientists who are responsible for transforming, developing, and delivering knowledge, technologies, and arts through education, research, and community service (Chapter I Section I Article 2).

Appropriate attempts must be made to avoid employee turnovers and ensure organizational success, one of which is by maintaining engagement. Work engagement refers to employees' who accept and abide by the organization's vision, mission, and purpose in every part of their working process. Lecturers' work engagement is constructed through a long process and requires high commitment from both leader and personnel. Therefore, leader's consistency in mentoring employees and lecturers is required. To build work engagement, a leader of an organization is expected to have several skills, such as communication, feedback-giving, and performance assessment techniques (McBain, 2007).

Many researchers have examined the characteristics of work context with work engagement. However, several personal characteristics also influence the engagement. For example, when an individual is optimistic about their future, engagement is more likely to happen (Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2007). Such research investigated roles of three resources (self-efficacy, organization-based self-esteem, and optimism) to predict employee engagement. The results of the research demonstrated that, when employees are effectively involved, they believe that they can meet demands in a set of contexts. Additionally, the engaged employees ensure that they will obtain good results in life (optimism) and meet their needs by participating in the organization. The three personal resources also gave unique contribution in explaining the variance in employee engagement from time to time, exceeding impacts of job resources and previous engagement levels (Bakker, Schaufeli, Leiter, & Taris, 2008).

The relation between the concept of engagement and psychology was popularized by Kahn (1990). According to him, engagement refers to a condition when people employ and expresses themselves physically, cognitively, emotionally, and mentally in their work performances. Kahn (1990) argued that engagement culminates from a psychological state in which personal resources are expressed. At this state, individuals do not have to constrain their beliefs, values, thoughts, feelings, tendencies, and relationships. All of the aspects are realized in behaviors at work. Kirkpatrick (2007) defined engagement as the involvement at work, covering interest, enthusiasm, and investment during employees' performances. Further, he explained that an empirical study has revealed that engagement is associated with several positive behaviors and outcomes. Schaufeli et al. viewed engagement in different construct and defined it as a fulfillment of positive state relating to employment and thoughts characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli, Salanova,

Roma, & Baker, 2002). Nelson & Simmons defined engagement in as when employees feel positive emotions toward their work, find their work to be personally meaningful, consider their workload to be manageable, and have hope about the future of their job (as cited in Attridge, 2009).

The above research indicates highly-varied relationships with employee engagement. Our research attempts to consider several theoretical constructs related to work engagement, one of which is psychological capital. Psychological capital is the positive psychological state of an individual, characterized by self-efficacy upon task-completion, optimism, hope, and the ability to survive and bounce back when dealing with problems (resiliency) (Luthans et al., 2007).

Schaufeli & Bakker (2003) stated that there are two factors that influence work engagement, namely job demand-resources (JD-R) model and psychological capital. The former involves physical, social, organizational environments, salary, career opportunities, social support (i.e., supervisor, partner) as well as performance feedback. Meanwhile, the latter covers self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience.

The present research seeks to discover the influence of self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience on work engagement and the extent to which perceived organizational support could mediate the relationship. Perceived organizational support is assumed to be the mediating variable for the maximum achievement of psychological capital to gain employee engagement. This research is based on the conceptual model proposed by Sweetman & Luthans (2010). In addition to the proposed direct impact self-efficacy, optimism, hope and resilience on work engagement; there is also preliminary research indicating that positive emotions may mediate engagement (Sweetman & Luthans, 2010). This theory posits that employees' subjective beliefs, expectancies, and appraisals (e.g., efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience) may be sources of positive emotions and subsequent employee attitude and behavior.

Eisenberger et al. (1986) revealed that perceived organizational support (POS) could improve employees' emotional viscosity to the organization. The term perceived organizational support generally refers to the employees' beliefs about how much the organization values their contribution and well-being. Employees with fulfilled socio-emotional needs commit to an organization more easily compared to those with unfulfilled needs.

Perceived organizational support is a concept developed based on social exchange theory. Social exchange theorists have alluded to employment as the trade of effort and loyalty for tangible benefits such as salary, compensation, and social rewards (Gould, 1979; Levinson as cited in Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). According to Gouldner, when someone receives kind treatment from others, the norms of reciprocity obligate him/ her to repay the kindness (as cited in Eisenberger et al., 2001). This norm also applies to the employee-organization relationship. Employees will make the efforts to show their loyalty to the organization if their contribution is appreciated and well-being nurtured.

According to Eisenberger et al. (1986), perceived organizational support is the employees' global belief concerning the extent to which the organization values their contribution and cares about their well-being. In other words, it becomes the indicator of how much an organization appreciates their employees.

Perceived organizational support plays a role in fulfilling the employees' socio-emotional needs, ensuring that aid will be available for them when needed. It determines the readiness of the organization in providing rewards and compensation based on the employees' performance. It also acts as a guarantee of the availability of organizational support.

Self-efficacy refers to an individual's confidence in his/her ability to apply cognitive resources to produce a specific result (Luthans & Youssef, 2004). In 1998, Stajkovic & Luthans (Luthans, Youssef & Avolio, 2007) provided a broader sense of self-efficacy: individual's confidence in their ability to mobilize their motivation, cognitive resources and courses of action to succeed at a specific task in a set context. According to Maddux (2002), similar to confidence, self-efficacy is considered as the most important determinant in producing engagement and in measuring an individual's persistence against barriers and challenges.

Optimism is the tendency to approach life positively (Myers, 2002). It exerts an important influence on health, both physical and psychological (Scheier & Carver, 2009). The Great Dictionary of the Indonesian language defines optimism as an attitude or way of life which considers positive sides and expects positive outcomes. Scheier & Carver believe that, in psychological research, optimism

is assumed as expectations of a given situation that are filled with hopes (as cited in Reivich & Gillham, 2003). Generally, optimism relates to several health conditions. According to Reivich & Gillham (2003), optimistic individuals tend to experience fewer symptoms of depression and physical illness. Additionally, they also display more effective coping strategies compared to pessimistic individuals.

Seligman (1990) explained that optimism and pessimism are linked to tendency of thinking about the causes of everything that happens in life. Optimistic individuals tend to consider problem as an external matter that are temporary and specific. On the contrary, pessimistic individuals tend to regard their problem as permanent, holistic and internal. Hence, optimism relates to a higher level of motivation, achievement, and physical well-being; as well as fewer depressive symptoms (Reivich & Gillham, 2003).

Gibson, Ivancevich, & Donnelly (2005) explained that the theory of hope arose following the motivation theory by Victor Vroom. Hope relates to the belief that specific outcomes would follow behavior. In this case, it could refer to the opportunities that employees can gain. Hope exists when an individual has the belief that an opportunity will come when the efforts they directed towards a certain level of achievement would produce favorable outcomes. Meanwhile, according to Erickson (Luthans & Jensen, 2002), hope is defined as a unidimensional construct involving an overall perception that a target would be achieved. Therefore, hope could be formed from the existence of perceived ability for someone to achieve their objectives.

Snyder (Luthans et al., 2007) defined hope as a positive level of motivation, based on the interaction between agency and pathways. Agency is an energy directed to the objectives, while pathways are the plans to achieve it. Snyder (Luthans et al., 2007) wrote that there are two types of objectives, long-term and short-term. The interaction between agency and pathways would result in success. In other words, the energy possessed by an individual will continuously be directed to the plans designed to achieve objectives in life, increasing chances of success.

Luthans, Youssef & Avolio (2007) explained that, before the emergence of positive psychology, many types of research on resilience had mainly focused on risky children, delinquent juveniles and families with problems. In those research, risky children, delinquent juveniles, and families with

problems who could live a normal life after a traumatic incident would be called as extraordinary individuals with resilience.

Goldstein & Brooks (2005) stated that studies concerning resilience has significantly improved over the past twenty years. They are directed to high-risk population, focusing on overcoming emotional, developmental and economical challenges. Further, Adiprasetyo et al. (2011) defined resilience as an ability to adjust or recover oneself from difficult situations positively. Moreover, Luthans et al. (2007) defined resilience, in reference to psychological capital approach, as an ability to bounce back from problems and positively adapt to accept and experience challenging situations. Individuals with resilience can adapt well to bad and challenging situations, allowing them to exceed their limit. This implies that they not only adapt but also make use of such situations as a motivation to improve ability and produce better outcomes compared to others.

Positive psychology emerged as a reaction to the psychological approach that focuses largely on pathological aspects of human function and behavior. Luthans (2011) explained that the objective of positive psychology is to use scientific methodologies to discover and promote factors that enable individuals, group, or organizations to develop. Luthans et al. (2007) suggested that resilience is included in positive psychology, defined as the ability to deal with problems or high-risk circumstances positively. Resilience is found in individuals who can adapt to difficult circumstances by facing it positively to achieve intended goals. In this case, adapting is marked by flexibility, adjustment, and response to change and uncertainty in a non fixed time.

Method

Participants

As many as 400 lecturers (229 males & 164 females) who have worked in Universitas Sebelas Maret for a minimum of one year, were recruited to participate in this study. These participants came from various faculties. The samples include lecturers of public higher education institutions in Surakarta who fulfills the inclusion criteria: (1) Lecturers certified as minimum expert assistant; (2) Minimum two years of service; (3) Age between 30-65 years old.

Measurements

Work engagement Scale

Work engagement is a positive attitude toward work-related situations, characterized by strength and dedication (Schaufeli, Salanova, Roma & Bakker, 2002). The aspects used to measure work engagement (Schaufeli et al., 2002) include vigor, dedication, and absorption. Based on those aspects, we chose the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) as the measurement scale. It consists of 17 profitable statements, in a five-point Likert scale option for the responses (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). The scale demonstrated good level of reliability with a Cronbach alpha= 0.768.

Perceived Organizational Support scale

The measuring tool used in this study is a psychological scale that refers to the aspects of perceived organizational support proposed by Eisenberger et al. (1986). These aspects are: showing concern over the welfare of lecturers, responding to lecturers' difficulties, caring about lecturers' work performance and responding to lecturers' ideas and opinions. The organization's support scope consists of 16 favorable items and 16 unfavorable items, amounting to a total of 32 items. The higher the obtained score, the higher the POS level on the lecturer and vice versa. The responses are given in the form of a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). It has good reliability with a Cronbach alpha= 0.965

Self-efficacy scale

Self-efficacy is the belief that one can successfully perform the behaviors required to obtain a particular outcome (Bandura, 1977). According to Bandura (1977), the aspects of self-efficacy consists of magnitude, generality, and strength. The measurement tool has 18 items, distributed into nine favorable and unfavorable items. The higher the score, the higher the self-efficacy the subject has. Meanwhile, the lower the score, the lower the subject's self-efficacy. The measures demonstrated good value of Cronbach alpha= 0.899.

Optimism scale

Optimism is an individual's tendency to consider the problem as an external matter that is temporary and specific (Seligman, 1990). Optimism was measured based on three aspects formulated by Seligman (1990), namely permanence, pervasiveness, and personalization. The

instrument consists of 18 items (statements). A higher score reflects a higher level of optimism and vice versa. This instrument demonstrated good reliability with a score of Cronbach alpha= 0.874

Hope scale

Hope refers to beliefs, motivations, perceptions that involve emotion and cognition, strength, determination and internal commitment to discovering possible ways to achieve goals in life by planning. Snyder suggests two aspects of hope, namely agency and pathways. The two aspects put forward by Snyder (Luthans et al., 2007) are used to be a gauge of hope in this study. This instrument consists of 16 items, divided into eight favorable and eight unfavorable items. The higher the obtained scores, the higher the expectation of the subject of the organization. Similarly, the lower the obtained score, the lower the subjects' expectation to their organization. This instrument demonstrated good reliability with a score of Cronbach alpha= 0.904

Resilience scale

Resilience is the ability to endure and adapt positively to the prospect of overcoming problems, eliminating the negative impacts of unpleasant circumstances. We used the aspects put forward by Wagnild & Young (as cited in Wagnild, 2009) to measure resilience, namely perseverance, inner balance or equanimity, meaningfulness, self-reliant, and existential aloneness. The instrument consists of 16 items with the distribution of eight favorable and unfavorable items. The higher the score, the higher the resilience. Meanwhile, the lower the score, the lower the resilience. This instrument demonstrated good reliability with a score of Cronbach alpha= 0.87

Procedure

We conducted a research scale tryout by distributing the instrument to 400 lecturers employed at Sebelas Maret University Surakarta. Out of the 400 instruments that we distributed, 375 were completed and returned to us within three months. Additionally, 20 were returned incomplete. Hence, the valid number of copies used to test the discriminating power and reliability of the instrument was 355. The final version of the instrument that has been tested for reliability and validity were then distributed to another 400 research subjects. As many as 393 were returned and later analyzed, while seven others were eliminated due to incomplete responses. We used the total item correlation to measure validity and reliability using SPSS version 22.0. All data were simultaneously scored and entered for analysis in Structural Equation Modelling 8.50.

Result

The tests for the model indicate that the model is considered fit. Table I presents several characteristics of the goodness of fit that indicates good fit.

Table I
 Goodness of fit model

Statistics	Value	Fit Criterion	Annotation
Chi Square	0.000	$p > 0.05$	Unfit
RMSEA	0.155	≤ 0.08	Unfit
GFI	0.71	> 0.9	Unfit
RMR	0.042	< 0.05	Fit
AGFI	0.62	> 0.9	Unfit
PGFI	0.54	> 0.9	Unfit
NFI	0.93	> 0.9	Fit
NNFI	0.93	> 0.9	Fit
PNFI	0.78	> 0.9	Unfit
CFI	0.94	> 0.9	Fit
IFI	0.94	> 0.9	Fit
RFI	0.92	> 0.9	Fit

It is clear from the table that several criteria of fit model were met, as seen from GFI, NFI, NNFI, CFI, IFI, and RFI which are indicated as fit. The model t-test is illustrated in the following figure.

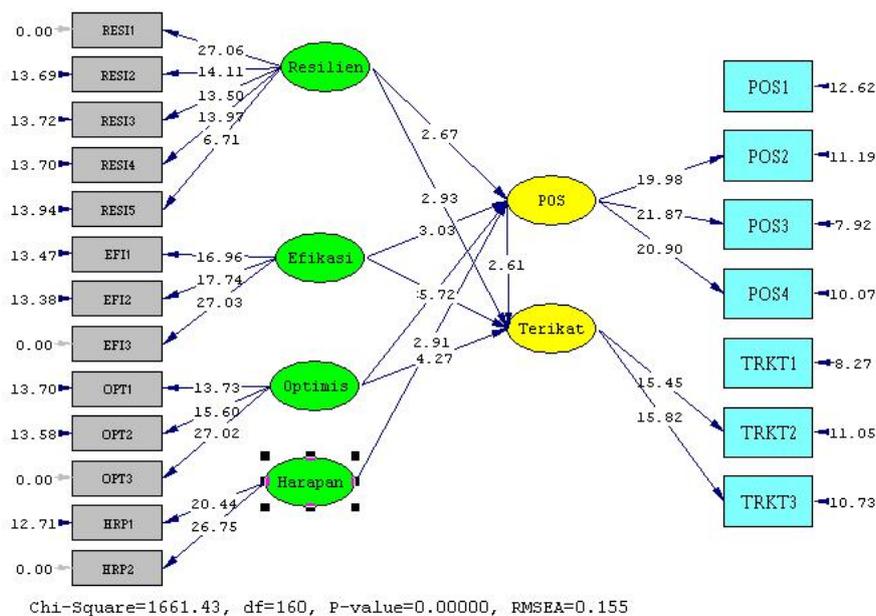


Figure 1. T-test Model

Hypothesis

1. There is a positive influence of perceived organizational support on work engagement with t-value of 2.61. Therefore, the higher the perceived organizational support, the higher the lecturers' work engagement. Hypothesis 1 is accepted.
2. There is a direct positive influence of self-efficacy on work engagement, indicated by t-value of 5.72. Therefore, the higher the self-efficacy, the higher the work engagement. Hypothesis 2 is accepted.
3. There is a positive influence of self-efficacy on work engagement through perceived organizational support as a mediator. The t-value between self-efficacy and perceived organizational support is 3.03. Meanwhile, the t-value between perceived organizational support and work engagement is 2.61. These findings indicate that perceived organizational support acts as a good mediator between self-efficacy and employees' work engagement.
4. There is a direct positive influence of optimism on work engagement with a t-value of 4.27, indicating that the higher the optimism is, the higher the employees' work engagement. Hypothesis 4 is therefore accepted.
5. There is a positive influence of optimism on work engagement through perceived organizational support as a mediator. The t-value between optimism and perceived organizational support is 5.72. Meanwhile, the t-value between perceived organizational support and work engagement is 2.61. Thus, perceived organizational support is a good mediator between optimism and employees' work engagement. Hypothesis 5 is therefore accepted.
6. There is a positive influence of hope on work engagement through perceived organizational support as a mediator. The t-value between hope and perceived organizational support is 4.27. Additionally, the t-value between perceived organizational support and work engagement is 2.61. It signifies that perceived organizational support contributes as a good mediator between hope and work engagement. Hence, hypothesis 6 is accepted.
7. There is a positive influence of resilience on work engagement through perceived organizational support as a mediator. The t-value between resilience and perceived organizational support is 2.67. Meanwhile, the t-value between perceived organizational support and work engagement is 2.61. It implies that perceived organizational support is a good mediator between hope and work engagement. Therefore, hypothesis 7 is accepted.

8. There is a direct positive influence of resilience on work engagement with t-value of 2.93. Hypothesis 8 is therefore accepted.

The categorization of research data is shown by the below table:

Table 2
 Data categorization

Variable	Categories				
	Very low	Low	Medium	High	Very high
Work engagement	0	1 (0.25%)	16 (4.07%)	217 (55.22%)	159 (40.46%)
POS	1 (0.25%)	2 (0.51%)	65 (16.54%)	210 (53.44%)	115 (29.26%)
Self-efficacy	0	2 (0.51%)	69 (17.56%)	203 (51.65%)	119 (20.28%)
Optimism	0	0	25 (6.36%)	212 (53.94%)	156 (39.70%)
Resilience	0	0	15 (3.82%)	143 (36.38%)	235 (59.80%)
Hope	0	0	23 (5.85%)	193 (49.11%)	177 (45.04%)

Table 2 reveals that most of the highest mean scores of the variables fall under the ‘high’ category: work engagement (N= 217; 55.22%), POS (N= 210; 53.44%), self-efficacy (N= 203; 51.65%), optimism (N= 212; 53.94%), and hope (N=193; 49.11%). Meanwhile, the only variable that has its highest mean score in the ‘very high’ category is resilience (N= 235; 59.80%).

Discussion

In this study, we considered several theoretical constructs related to work engagement, one of which is psychological capital. Psychological capital is defined as the positive psychological state of an individual, characterized by self-efficacy upon task-completion, optimism, hope, ability to survive, and resilience (Luthans et al., 2007). Our findings supports Schaufeli & Bakker (2003), emphasizing that work engagement is influenced by job demand-resources (JD-R) model and psychological capital. The former involves several aspects such as physical, social, and organizational environments, salary, career opportunities, supervisor’s and partners’ support, as well as performance feedback. Meanwhile, the latter covers self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience.

Sweetman & Luthans (as cited in Bakker & Leiter, 2010) reported that there is a positive relationship between efficacy, optimism, hope, resilience, and work engagement. Efficacy is widely known to be derived from four main sources, proposed with regard to employees' engagement. Individuals with high efficacy are commonly characterized by their persistence to survive, which is motivated by their confidence in future success. Low efficacy exists to predict the presence of burnout, the counter to engagement. Therefore, it is believed that the higher an individual's self-efficacy, the higher employee engagement will be. In addition, Saks & Gruman (2011) emphasized that self-efficacy is important to maintain individuals' work engagement. They discovered that there is a positive relationship between job fit perceptions, positive emotions, self-efficacy, and new employees' engagement. Individuals with strong self-efficacy who joins a new organization tend to feel more secure and psychologically willing to engage in their new role (Saks & Gruman, 2011).

In connection with optimism, our findings are in line with Seligman (Seligman & Schulman, 1986) who regarded optimism as an attribute measured based on explanatory style. Optimistic individuals will usually act (I can succeed from one scope to another), consistently (I can always succeed), and internally (I am the one who created this success). They will act specifically, inconsistently, and externally when they encounter failure. Further, Carver & Scheier (2003) also stated that optimistic individuals tends to hope that the best things will happen to them, effecting their attitude and cognition. It is important to know that psychological capital determines value based on realistic optimism, because unrealistic ones could lead to negative results (Seligman, 1998). Optimistic individuals are responsible for their performance and tends to hope for positive results. Good psychological availability will improve engagement (Kahn, 1990). All in all, the psychological capital components of optimism are directly associated with dedication and work engagement components of absorption. In relation to educational institutions, our findings indicate that optimism is needed ensure the progress and development of educational institutions. Human resources in the institutions are expected to have optimism.

The last component of psychological capital is resilience. It refers to the positive psychological capacity 'bounce back' from adversity, uncertainty, conflict, failure, or even *positive* change, progress, and increased responsibility" (Luthans, 2002). Unlike self-efficacy, hope, and optimism, resilience is more reactive in nature compared to being proactive when individuals deal with change, failure or

uncertainty (Block & Kremen, 1996). Approaches to research on resilience, both in terms of its' variable and individuals, have been carried out (Masten, 2001). Resilience is a part of a snapshot of life which emphasizes on positive poser to rebound. Individuals with resilience can adapt well in bad and challenging situations, allowing them to exceed their limits. This implies that they not only adapt but also make use of such situations to motivate them to improve their abilities and work performance. Lecturers need to have resilience in order to constantly adapt with the shifts in educational dynamics, having to keep up with new techniques and materials for the students. To conclude, lecturers' high resilience acts as an indicator of good work engagement.

Conclusion

The research results reveal that the model is considered fit with the inclusion of perceived organizational support as a mediating variable. The perceived organizational support will present as a meaningful variable in the development of lecturers' work engagement. Our findings are in accordance with Eisenberger et al. (1986) who indicated that perceived organizational support can increase employees' emotional viscosity to the organization. In their research, Eisenberger et al. (1986) defined perceived organizational support as the employees' "*beliefs concerning the extent to which the organization values their contribution and cares about their well-being*". Employees with a fulfilled socio-emotional needs prove to commit to an organization more easily compared to those with unfulfilled socio-emotional needs.

The findings of the research prove that the research model can refine the previous model proposed Sweetman & Luthans (as cited in Baker & Leiter, 2010). They highlighted that positive emotion mediates psychological capital and work engagement. The present research discovers that positive emotion includes perceived organizational support. Perceived organizational support enables lecturers with good psychological capital to maintain better work engagement.

1. Perceived organizational support is a good mediator between self-efficacy, optimism, hope, resilience and lecturers' work engagement.
2. The higher the self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience, the higher the lecturers' work engagement.
3. The findings are expected to respond to controversy and worry about theories found in the psychology literatures related to work engagement.

4. Problems related to lecturers' professionalism and certification are of concern. Therefore, they could be an interesting topic to be further explored through research. The findings reveal that lecturers' work engagement will improve when the organization provides support for the development of their performance.

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