

# Indonesian Workers Require “Diuwongke” to be engaged

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**Abstract:** This research determines the impact of “diuwongke” on work engagement among plantation workers at an agriculture company in Indonesia. This is a quantitative correlational survey method with a cross-sectional design. 368 plantation workers voluntarily participated in this study who worked on several areas in North Sumatra, Indonesia. The instruments used to collect the data consist of Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) and “Diuwongke” Scale. While work engagement describes as employees’ positive psychological state toward their job, diuwongke is a local indigenous concept of Indonesia, developed by Rahmadani & Schaufeli (2022). A simple regression method with IBM SPSS Statistic Ver.25 was performed to analyze the data. The findings indicate that there is a positive and significant relationship between “diuwongke” and work engagement ( $r=0.449$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), moreover, “diuwongke” contributed to explaining 20.1% of the variance in work engagement. To summarize, the higher the level of “diuwongke” perceived by the plantation workers, the stronger their work engagement. This study emphasizes the importance of good relationships between leaders and followers in a country with a high power distance national culture. Leaders, who have power and authority, play a key role in creating leaders-followers positive work relationships through how they treat their followers.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

In 2019 the world was shaken by an outbreak of Corona Virus Disease (COVID-19) which worried the global community (Hasibuan & Ashari, 2020). On January 30, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) announced that the Corona Virus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) outbreak was declared a public health emergency that could disturb the world and this outbreak was declared a pandemic on March 11, 2020 (World Health Organization, 2020). As a result of the global spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, President Joko Widodo said that Indonesia's economy would be disrupted due to the corona virus (Irawati & Anisa, 2022). Plantation sector which tends to be labor intensive had a crucial effect. If the human resources are sick or physically lockdown at home, it can affect production activities which have a negative impact on the business side.

Apart from the business side, the effects of the emergence of this pandemic also affect health and safety issues for workers. According to Mungkasa

(2020) the increase in COVID-19 cases which have spread in various regions has made plantations with labor-intensive industries experience anxiety and most of them have an increased workload and feel stress (Chanana & Sangeeta, 2020). Meanwhile, the most important aspect in achieving the goals of a labor-intensive organization is human resources. Thus, efforts to retain employees and maintain the quality of human resources need to apply various appropriate strategies to run dynamically (Margaretha & Saragih, 2008).

The results of previous research indicate that an increase in organizational performance has a correlation with the work performance of its employees, if employees have a good level of psychological well-being (Cropanzano & Wright, 2000). Psychological well-being related to this work is described as work engagement, which is a positive, satisfying, and affective-motivational state characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption

(Bakker, et al., 2008). Marciano (2010) suggests the characteristics of engaged employees, namely: expressing new ideas at work, showing a passionate and enthusiastic attitude about their work, taking initiative, always looking for ways to improve and develop themselves, other people, and the company, consistently acting beyond the set goals and expectations of himself, having the nature of wanting to explore everything, being interested and always asking questions, supporting and encouraging group members, being optimistic and positive and smiling, overcoming obstacles and staying focused on tasks and persistent, committed to the organization.

Work engagement has a positive relationship to performance in an organization (Harter, et al., 2002). This can be achieved by increasing positive leadership such as transformational leadership and engaging leadership (Rahmadani & Schaufeli, 2022). In relation to superior-subordinate relationships, previous research found a unique Indonesian psychological phenomenon, namely "diuwongke" as a variable that moderates the relationship between engaging learning and work engagement among plantation employees in North Sumatra (Rahmadani & Schaufeli, 2022). Furthermore, "diuwongke" has a stronger correlation than engaging leadership based on Western theory. "Diuwongke" is a Javanese-Indonesian concept with a definition that refers to treating people with dignity and respect or humanizing humans (Rahmadani & Schaufeli, 2022). This study attempts to propose "diuwongke" as a unique Indonesian psychological phenomenon that refers to treating people with dignity and respect to increase work engagement in the workplace environment. This is because basically the industry needs good quality human resources, especially in terms of the well-being of employees needed during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## 2 METHODS

### 2.1 Participants and Procedures

This research involved 368 plantation employees in one of the Indonesian private companies. Researchers collected data by working with the HR division of plantation companies. The technique used in this research is convenient sampling. The data collection method was carried out using the research method with 2 variables studied in the form of a questionnaire. The questionnaire contains research instructions, informed consent and guarantees of

confidentiality. Researchers distributed questionnaires directly (paper & pencil survey) during working hours and participants collected questionnaires directly as well.

### 2.2 Measures

Measuring tools used in this study are two self-report scales with a summated rating model. The two self-report scales are the "Diuwongke" Scale and the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale. These scales are valid and published scales with all items to be translated into Indonesian and following the back translation procedure previously recommended by Brislin (Brislin, 1970).

#### 2.2.1 Work Engagement

Work engagement measured through the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES). This measuring tool was developed by Schaufeli and colleagues. In this study, researchers used UWES-9 which consists of 3 components namely vigor, dedication, and absorption. Each item of vigor (eg. "At my work, I feel bursting with energy"), dedication (eg. "I am proud of the work that I do"), and absorption (eg. "I get carried away when I'm working") rated on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (always), with higher scores indicating higher levels of employee's work engagement. In this research, the work engagement scale consists of three components represented by 3 items each. All items have high factor loadings between 0.71 and 0.86.

This value is in line with the reliability value of previous research, Cronbach's alpha in the 3 components of UWES-9 is 0.71 to 0.86 for the vigor component, 0.83 to 0.87 for the dedication component, and 0.75 to 0.83 for the absorption component (Schaufeli, et al., 2006).

#### 2.2.2 “Diuwongke”

“Diuwongke” was measured through the "diuwongke" Scale consisting 10 items. These items assess various perceptions of employees about being treated 'as human beings' by their leaders. Each item of “diuwongke”, is rated on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) with higher scores indicating a higher level of “diuwongke” employees. All items have high factor loadings from 0.71 to 0.88 with a reliability (Cronbach's alpha) of 0.95. This value is higher than previous study, factor loadings between 0.53 and 0.70

with a reliability (Cronbach's alpha) of 0.87 (Rahmadani & Schaufeli, 2022).

### 2.3 Data Analysis

A simple regression method with IBM SPSS Statistic Ver.25 was performed to analyze the data.

## 3 RESULT & DISCUSSION

Table 1. Model Summary of the Correlation between “Diuwongke” and Work Engagement

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.449 <sup>a</sup>	.201	.199	9.529

a. Predictors: (Constant), “Diuwongke”

Table 1 displays the R value which is the symbol of the correlation coefficient value. In the example above the correlation value is 0.449. Through this table, the value of R Square or the coefficient of determination is also obtained. According to the R square determination coefficient value, given in Table 1, 20.1% of variance in work engagement is explained by “diuwongke”.

Table 2. ANOVA<sup>a</sup>

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	8381.413	1	8381.413	92.31	.000
Residual	33230.316	366	90.793		
Total	41611.728	367			

a. Dependent Variable: Work Engagement

Based on Table 2, the impact of the “diuwongke” on work engagement, is valid (with  $F = 92.313$ ;  $p < .001$ ).

Table 3. Coefficient

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	19.549	2.361		8.281	.000
DW	.560	.058	.449	9.608	.000

Based on Table 3, the value of t count = 8.281 is obtained and Sig. = .000. Sig. value (.00) <  $\alpha$  (.05), thus  $H_0$  is rejected. Thus the "diuwongke" coefficient on work engagement is significant. The positive beta value show that the increase in

independent variable leads to an increase in work engagement, or a decrease in independent variables results in a decrease in work engagement. Accordingly; it can be said that “diuwongke” affect the work engagement positively.

The regression equation model is obtained from the constant coefficients and variable coefficients in the Unstandardized Coefficients B column. Based on this table, the regression equation model is obtained:

$$Y = 19.549 + 0.560X \quad (1)$$

Thus, it is confirmed that one of the typical Indonesian psychological phenomena, namely "diuwongke", can have a significant positive effect on work engagement among plantation workers. When employees are treated with dignity and respect and feel valued for their contributions, rather than simply being treated as incumbents, they tend to experience positive feelings and will be more willing to put effort into their jobs and contribute to their organizations.

Leaders in the organization are advised to treat their subordinates like dignified human beings even at the lowest level, because this affects their motivation and psychological well-being, namely, work engagement.

## 4 CONCLUSIONS

The researcher formulates the first hypothesis that there is a "diuwongke" effect on work engagement. To support this hypothesis, the researcher analyzed using a simple linear regression analysis technique using IBM SPSS statistics ver. 25. The results of this study indicate that there is a positive influence between "diuwongke" on work engagement ( $r = .449$ ,  $p < .05$ ). The "diuwongke" variable has a contribution effect of 20.1% on the work engagement variable.

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