

The Role that Organisational Identification plays in relation to Work Performance in the Maltese Workforce

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I would like to dedicate this thesis to:

My parents for their constant encouragement.

My support systems in Utrecht and in Malta, for constantly being a shoulder I could always rely on.

All those people whose career was negatively impacted due to the COVID-19 crisis.

Never give up, better times will come!

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Abstract

The aim of the current study is to gain more understanding about factors related to the work identity of the individual within the Maltese cultural context. For this purpose, the role that Organisational Identification (OI) plays in relation to Work Performance, with the possible interaction of Work Engagement, and the Relatedness need satisfaction, within the Maltese workforce is being investigated. The Motivational Process of the revised JD-R Model, and the Self-Determination Theory are used as theoretical framework. Mediation analysis is used to analyse the data of a sample of 198 participants from the Maltese working population. The results show a positive relationship between OI and work performance through the full mediation effect of work engagement. The satisfaction of the need for relatedness positively predicts OI, work performance, and work engagement respectively. Furthermore, the results show a partial mediating effect of organisational identification on the relationships between relatedness need satisfaction and work performance, and relatedness needs satisfaction and work engagement. These findings indicate that within the Maltese workforce, employees are driven to perform both through the fit between the values and goals of the organisation, and their personal values and aspirations, as well as a workplace that makes them feel as part of a community, in which they are able to build meaningful social connections with their fellow employees, and their employers.

Keywords: work identity, organisational identification, work performance, work engagement, relatedness, job demands-resources model, self-determination-theory, working population, Malta

1. Introduction

Malta is an island nation in southern Europe, and with an estimated population of 514,564, it is the least populated country in the European Union (NSO, 2020). Usually, Malta is mentioned when someone is planning their next summer vacation, and due to its favourable climate, the name of the country pops up in the conversation. However, this thesis will not be dealing with the beautiful beaches, and the clear blue sea that Malta has to offer to tourists. Instead, it will be delving into an area which is well studied in other European countries, as well as other continents, but unfortunately, not as much in Malta; Work Identity. Work identity is an area that researchers give importance to, as it holds a lot of implications with regards to organisational outcomes, both for employees, and also for organisations (Elsbach & Bhattacharya, 2001; Walsh & Gordon, 2008).

Walsh and Gordon (2008) refer to work identity as a "work-based self-concept" made up of occupational, organisational, and other different identities, that shapes the roles individuals take and the "corresponding ways they behave while performing their work in the context of their jobs and/or careers" (Walsh & Gordon, 2008, p.47). Even simply through reading this definition, one can realise that work identity is not a simple construct, but consists of multiple organisational constructs that together, shape the work identity of the individual. This study will have a look at a number of interrelated constructs that may be considered to be part of the employee's identity at work. The question that is being taken as a starting point for this research is "What role does organisational identification play in relation to work performance within the Maltese workforce?" Determining what causes employees to perform more at work is crucial for the success and the development of an organisation (Donohoe, 2019, retrieved from https://bizfluent.com/facts-7218608-employee-performance-

<u>definition.html</u>). Therefore, this study is of great importance to employers in Malta to have an overview of what motivates employees to be more productive at the workplace, and therefore, generate great results for the company.

Apart from organisational identification and work performance, the constructs of work engagement, and the relatedness need satisfaction at the workplace will also be observed in order to have a better understanding on their application within the workplace setting. Through the literature available about them, these constructs will be defined, and possible relationships between them will be investigated. Theoretical framework will also be used to explain probable relationships between these constructs.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1. The Relationship between Organisation Identification & Work Performance

According to Walsh and Gordon (2008), employees create their own work identity through a process called organisational identification. In this process, individuals first analyse the sense of identity that the membership within the group or organisation they work in gives them, and then, they determine the extent to which this identity resonates with them.

Therefore, organisational identification is a process that shapes the work identity of the individual as a self-concept that consists of the role and identity of the individual at work (Walsh & Gordon, 2008). In other words, organisational identification (OI) is the extent to which the individual identifies with the membership to the organization they work in (Dutton, Dukerich, & Harquail, 1994). Organisational studies have researched organisational identification and its relationship with other constructs in order to have a better understanding employee behaviour at the workplace. The purpose of the current study is to understand how

organisational identification impacts the employee's performance within the Maltese work setting.

Studying the relationship between organisational identification and work performance is important, because it would be beneficial for managers to know how they can make the most of the resources they have in order to maintain a productive workforce. Moreover, the overall employee performance has an impact on whether a business is a success or a failure (Donohoe, 2019, retrieved from https://bizfluent.com/facts-7218608-employee-performancedefinition.html). Therefore, it is essential for the employer to know what drives the employee to perform at work, and this study will aim to provide more insight about this, as an organisation's success heavily depends on how its employees perform. Work performance is a concept that refers to behaviours that employees engage in to contribute in the achievement of organisational goals (Viswesvaran, Schmidt, & Ones, 2005). Several studies have investigated the relationship between organisational identification and work performance in different parts of the world. A study conducted in Italy, about job security, organisational identification, and task performance, found a positive relationship between organisational identification and work performance (Piccoli et al., 2017). Moving on to a different continent, the same relationship was established in a previous study conducted in the USA (Efraty & Wolfe, 1988). Another study in South Africa also found organisational identification to be an antecedent of work performance (Bothma & Roodt, 2012). Evidently, research about the effects of organisational identification on work performance is abundant, as also confirmed by Riketta's (2005) meta-analytical study, which established a weak, but statistically significant positive relationship between organisational identification and in-role performance. Since other researchers both in Europe and in other parts of the world have established that organisational identification is a positive antecedent of work performance,

the current study will hypothesise whether this relationship is also present in a Maltese sample (*Hypothesis 1*; all hypotheses are specifically formulated and summarised in section 3 of the thesis. In section 2, reference is made to specific hypotheses where applicable, as done in this case). This relationship will also be tested in the presence of two other variables which refer to constructs that in research, have also been studied in relation to both organisational identification, and work performance.

2.2. The Revised JD-R Model & Work Engagement

Work engagement is one of these constructs. It is regarded as an intrinsic motivational concept, which implies the use of inner, personal resources as sources of energy that drive the individual to perform at work (Qadeer, Ahmad, Hameed & Mahmood, 2016). Work engagement is a positive work related mind set, and refers to the extent to which the employee is dedicated, vigorous, and absorbed in their work (Schaufeli & Taris, 2014), and its relationship with work performance and organisational identification is often studied in many different cultural contexts. Several studies have established a positive relationship between work engagement, and organisational identification and work performance respectively (Karanika-Murray, Duncan, Pontes & Griffiths, 2015; Bothma & Roodt, 2012). Researchers have also used the Revised Job Demands-Resources model to study the relationship between work engagement and work performance (Bakker, Demerouti & Verbeke, 2004; Hakanen, Schaufeli & Ahola, 2008).

In the motivational process of the revised Job Demands–Resources model, organisational outcomes, one of them being work performance, are linked with work engagement. Moreover, work engagement fully mediates the positive relationship between

job resources and work performance as an organisational outcome (Schaufeli & Taris, 2013). The motivational process of the JD-R model will also be used in this study as theoretical framework. The motivational effects of organisational identification and work engagement will be studied, and also the relationship between work engagement and work performance implied by the model. Given that a direct relationship between organisational identification and work engagement (*Hypothesis 2*), and a direct relationship between work engagement and work performance (*Hypothesis 3*) has already been established in research, this study will be hypothesising that both relationships are also present in the Maltese sample. More specifically in the revised JD-R model, work engagement plays a mediating role between job resources and work performance (Schaufeli & Taris, 2013). Therefore, due to the mediation role that work engagement has in the JD-R model, and also since research has found links between work engagement and organisational identification and work performance respectively, a mediation effect of work engagement between organisational identification and work performance will also be assumed in the current study (*Hypothesis 4*).

2.3. The Self-Determination Theory & Relatedness Need Satisfaction

The current Maltese study focuses on another relevant construct with respect to OI. This construct may play a relevant role with regards to the hypothesized relationships with engagement and performance. This construct is the need for relatedness at the workplace. This construct has to do with the need of people for experiencing a sense of community at work and develop meaningful relationships with others (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). This need is relevant to the individual's self-determination, which is an important concept that refers to each person's ability to make choices and manage their own life. This ability plays an important role in performance and also in psychological health and well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2003). Before turning into the specific role of the need of relatedness in this study we

elaborate on the SDT. The SDT gives a theoretical framework for linking the need of relatedness to OI and performance.

Ryan and Deci's (2003) Self-Determination theory (SDT) refers to self-determination or 'self-concept' in terms of motives and goals that are based on one's identity (Ryan & Deci, 2003). The extent to which a person's goals are reached can be taken as the performance of the individual. As a matter of fact, one of the self-motives of the individual according to the self-determination theory is referred to as the 'efficacy motive', which is the motive for an individual to change one's environment (Soenens & Vansteenkiste, 2011). This efficacy motive is based on the individual's identity, and therefore, given this theory, it can also be hypothesised that a person's work performance can be based on the extent to which a person identifies to their work, a hypothesis that has been studied in previous research (Riketta, 2005; Efraty & Wolfe, 1988). As such, the SDT gives a rationale for the link between OI and performance, as in this case, the change in environment which is explained by the efficacy model, is the increase in work performance. Gagné and Deci (2005) do link work motivation with the self-determination theory. In their study, they also link the SDT with work performance (Gagné & Deci, 2005), and therefore, it would be fitting to use the SDT to support the hypothesis that organisational identification, which is the extent to which the individual identifies to the organization they work in, does have a positive relationship with work performance.

The SDT further proposes that people need to feel the following in order to achieve psychological growth and consequently perform in work: Competence, Autonomy and Relatedness (Soenens & Vansteenkiste, 2011). In this study we focus on relatedness, the reason why people want to be with others within the work context. According to SDT a sense

of belongingness is critical in the development of self-determination. Forging close, affectionate relationships with other people can improve self-determination. As such there can be assumed to be a link between the need for relatedness and performance. In fact, in a meta-analytic study that reviews the Self-Determination Theory and the three basic needs at work, a positive relationship between the three basic needs and performance measures at work was established (Van den Broeck, Ferris, Chang, & Rosen, 2016). The satisfaction of the three basic needs also plays a role in making employees more engaged at their place of work. When autonomy, competence, and relatedness are satisfied at the workplace, work engagement is more likely to occur (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). As such, the literature suggests a relation between need for relatedness, engagement and performance. As already discussed, the satisfaction of relatedness has been found to predict an increase in OI, work performance, and work engagement in several studies. Therefore, this research in Malta will specifically focus on the impact of the basic need of relatedness, and its interaction with all the other variables in this study.

Given the above, one may wonder about the conceptual difference between the need for relatedness and OI. Organisational identification has been defined as the sense of "oneness" between the organisation, and the person who works in the organisation (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). This definition is quite similar to the way that the need for relatedness is referred to. Relatedness is defined as the need to be connected with others, and to form part of a group (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Regardless of the similarity, they both measure distinct factors; Organisational identification is a measure of how much the person feels part of the organisation they work in, and how much the organisational goals and values are in line with the personal goals and values (Ashforth & Mael, 1989), while relatedness is the extent to which the person feels part of a group, on a social level, within the context they are

in, in the case of this study, the work context (Baumeister & Leary, 1995).

This conceptual link has also been addressed by researchers who attempted to investigate a possible relationship between relatedness and OI. Kumar and Jauhari (2016) in a sample consisting of 365 professionals within different work backgrounds in India, found that the more the need for relatedness was satisfied, the more the professionals identified with their organisation. The positive relationship between relatedness and OI was statistically significant (Kumar & Jauhari, 2016). Since research indicates a relationship between relatedness and OI (Hypothesis 5), relatedness and work performance (Hypothesis 6), and relatedness and work engagement (Hypothesis 7) respectively, this study will test whether these three relationships occurs in the sample which is being investigated for this thesis. Additionally, another inference from the above description of the SDT would be that hypothetically, organisational identification mediates the relationship between relatedness and work performance (Hypothesis 8), and relatedness and work engagement (Hypothesis 9) respectively. The hypothesised mediation effect of organisational identification is attributed to the positive relationship that relatedness needs satisfaction has with organisational identification (Kumar & Jauhari, 2016), and also because relatedness and organisational identification have been found to be predictors of both work engagement (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004) and work performance (Van den Broeck et al., 2016).

2.4. The Maltese Context

For the purpose of this study, a Maltese sample was chosen to establish a comparative element between possible results in this research, and findings in other countries and continents, such as Bothma and Roodt's (2012) study in South Africa, Karanika-Murray et al.'s (2015) study among employees in the UK, Piccoli et al.'s (2017) study conducted in

Italy, and Riketta's (2005) meta-analytical study. This can help in identifying whether the same findings apply in the Maltese context.

Since this study will focus on the Maltese working population, it is important to first aim at gathering an understanding about the Maltese identity, and what constitutes it. Due to its strategic position right between northern Africa and southern Europe, Malta has passed under the wing of several ruling entities, such as the Roman Empire, the Arabs and the Normans. During the past 490 years, Malta was ruled by the Order of the Knights of Saint John, the French during the reign of Napoleon Bonaparte, and most recently the British Empire, which Malta gained independence from on the 21st of September, 1964. On the 1st of May 2004, Malta became a member of the EU (Abela, 2005). According to Abela (2005), the Maltese not only possess a national Maltese identity, but also hold a European and Mediterranean sense of belonging, endorsing values that are synonymous to these respective regions, such as strong family values, similar to other Mediterranean cultures, as well as a strong work ethic, similar to other European counterparts. This mixture of values from both Mediterranean, as well as European cultures, can be attributed to the different civilisations have occupied the islands over the years (Abela, 2005).

Catania and Randall (2013) found that the Maltese workforce is generally more motivated by intrinsic factors rather than extrinsic factors. This means that Maltese people are more likely to feel motivated and engaged at work because they find the job interesting and satisfying, rather than due to external factors such as salary benefits (Catania & Randall, 2013). Motivation is definitely a factor that effects employee performance at work, and has been associated and linked with work engagement in previous studies. In fact, Kahn (1990) refers to work engagement as a motivational concept (Kahn, 1990). In their research

conducted about motivation at work in the US, Putra, Cheo and Liu (2015) found a significant positive relationship between intrinsic motivation, and work engagement (Putra et al., 2015).

The current study about the Maltese workforce will not directly investigate motivation as a variable, but will be analysing how organisational identification, work engagement, and relatedness needs satisfaction at the workplace, might stimulate employees in performing more at work. According to the European Union Statistical Office, Malta is the country with the least unemployed people per capita in the European Union (Eurostat, 2020). Given this quantitative information about the employment statistic in Malta, one can say that when compared to other European countries, companies and entities based in Malta arguably face little to no problem in attracting employees to their organisations. However, research about work identity, and organisational psychology in general is lacking in Malta, and this study will aim to determine factors that would encourage people who work in Malta to perform more at work, and compare the findings within the Maltese population with those in other cultural settings. This research also aims to serve as reference for employers in Malta to have a better understanding about the organisational climate in the country, and use this acquired understanding to ameliorate the work setting for employees, and to generate more success for their companies. Moreover, it also aims to serve as a starting point for further research about work identity in the Maltese context.

3. Hypotheses and research model

Based on the literature findings which were previously discussed, the following hypotheses were formulated for the Maltese sample being tested in this study, as also shown in Figure 1:

Hypothesis 1: There is a positive relationship between Organisational Identification and Work Performance.

Hypothesis 2: There is a positive relationship between Organisational Identification and Work Engagement.

Hypothesis 3: There is a positive relationship between Work Engagement and Work Performance.

Hypothesis 4: Work Engagement mediates the relationship between Organisational Identification and Work Performance.

Hypothesis 5: There is a positive relationship between the Satisfaction of the Need for Relatedness and Organisational Identification.

Hypothesis 6: There is a positive relationship between the Satisfaction of the Need for Relatedness and Work Performance.

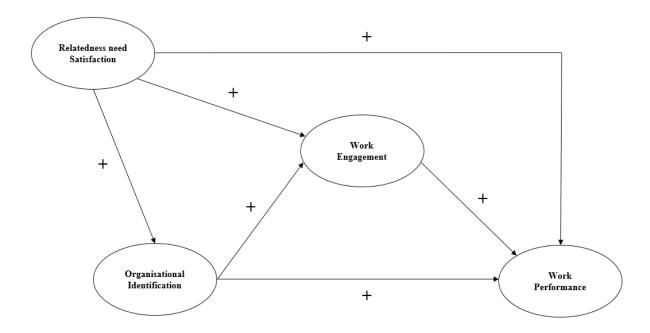
Hypothesis 7: There is a positive relationship between the Satisfaction of the Need for Relatedness and Work Engagement.

Hypothesis 8: Organisational Identification is a mediator in the relationship between the Satisfaction of the Need for Relatedness and Work Performance.

Hypothesis 9: Organisational Identification is a mediator in relationship between the Satisfaction of the Need for Relatedness and Work Engagement.

Figure 1

Proposed model for the relationship between the variables in this study



4. Method

4.1. Procedure

Before the survey was distributed to potential participants, an ethics form was filled in with details of the research, most specifically about data collection, and the form was submitted online to the Faculty Ethics Review Board

(https://fd21.formdesk.com/universiteitutrecht-fsw/fsw-lijst-student-projecten). Furthermore, an introductory letter of consent was sent to the potential participants of the survey to inform them that the information they provide will only be used for the purpose of this research, hence, ensuring confidentiality. Participants were asked to confirm whether they do consent to give the necessary information (Appendix A), and were not asked to disclose their name and surname during the survey.

'Qualtrics', which is an online survey tool, was used to collect and record the responses. The use of online surveys is a very efficient data collection method, as it ensures that data from a relatively high number of participants, on a larger number of items, when compared to other data collection methods. This cross-sectional study made use of snowball sampling to collect responses from participants. Snowball sampling is a cost-efficient sampling method, and it ensures that data is collected quickly (Johnson, 2014). Facebook was mainly used to contact potential participants, and these participants were encouraged to distribute the survey to their networks. The participants were also asked for their age and gender in this survey (Appendix B). This demographic information was used to generate descriptive statistics for the sample, but was not controlled for, as gender and age are not part of the variables in the research model of this study.

4.2. Population Sample

A power analysis was conducted using G*Power 3.1 (Faul, Erdfelder, Lang, & Buchner, 2007). Since the proposed research model studies the mediating effects of several variables, a linear multiple regression power analysis was conducted. A medium effect size (*p* = .3) was used, as most studies yield a medium effect size. The result showed that a sample size of one hundred and nineteen participants was needed to achieve a power of .95. Since 198 responses were collected, a post-hoc power analysis for (N=198) participants was then conducted. This test resulted in a relatively high effect size of .998.

Initially, 241 participants filled out the questionnaire. After deleting the responses that provided no information about the relationships that are being studied in this research, 198 responses were left. Out of the 198 participants, there were 123 female. 74 male, and 1

participant that identifies with another gender category. To ease the process of data recording for demographic variables, age groups were classified into 5 categories; 18-24 years, 25-34 years, 35-44 years, 45-54 years, and 55 years and over. All participants are members of the Maltese working population. Most of the participants were aged between 25 and 34 years (n=94, 47.5%). The age category which recorded the least responses was that consisting of participants who are 55 years and over (n=14, 7.1%).

4.3. Questionnaire

Ashforth and Mael (1992), which analyses the extent to which an individual identifies with the organisation, and feels a sense of belongingness towards it (e.g. 'When someone criticizes the organisation or agency I work for, it feels like a personal insult.'). The Chronbach's α recorded in Ashforth and Mael's article = .81 (Ashforth & Mael, 1992). The scale is intended to be used in any organisation or company, as stated by the researchers themselves, and was used as for the purpose of the study, Ashforth's and Mael's definition for Organisational Identification, which is the extent to which the person feels part of the organisation, in terms of common goals and values, is used (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). In the present study; Cronbach's α = .78, Average inter-item correlation = .38. All items in the distributed survey were assessed on a 7-point Likert scale, with 1=strongly disagree, and 7=strongly agree (see Appendix C).

Work Engagement was measured using Schaufeli and Bakker's Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) (2004), which asks questions aimed at measuring Vigour (e.g. 'At my work, I feel bursting with energy'), Dedication (e.g. 'I find the work that I do full of

meaning and purpose') and Absorption (e.g. 'Time flies when I'm working'). This scale was mainly used in this study due to its practicality, as the researcher can measure work engagement both as a single, unitary factor, and also as three separate dimensions; Vigour, Dedication and Absorption (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Another reason as to why it was used for the current study, as Karanika-Murray et al. (2015) used it in combination with Ashforth's and Mael's (1992) 6-item organisational identification scale, which was also used in the current study to measure organisational identification within the Maltese sample. The UWES Scale in Karanika-Murray et al.'s study yielded a Cronbach's α of .94 (Karanika-Murray et al, 2015). For the purpose of the research model in this study, work engagement will be analysed as one single factor, as both the hypotheses, and the mediation model used for this study, refer to work engagement as one single variable. In the present study; Cronbach's α = .92, Average inter-item correlation = .45. All items in the distributed survey were assessed on a 7-point Likert scale, with 1=strongly disagree, and 7=strongly agree (see Appendix D).

Work Performance was measured using Williams' & Anderson's (1991) In-role performance scale, which analyses to which extent does the individual's performance at work is in line with the requirements in the job description (e.g. 'I adequately complete assigned duties'). Williams and Anderson reported a Cronbach's α of .89 (Williams & Anderson, 1991). This scale was used for this study as it has items through which the participants can self-assess their performance at the workplace. In the present study; Cronbach's α = .79, Average inter-item correlation = .42. All items in the distributed survey were assessed on a 7-point Likert scale, with 1=strongly disagree, and 7=strongly agree. (see Appendix E).

Relatedness Need Satisfaction was measured using a selection of items from the 'Work-related Basic Needs Satisfaction scale' (Van den Broeck, Vansteenkiste, De Witte, Soenens & Lens, 2010). This scale originally constitutes of questions related to all the three basic needs; autonomy, competence, and relatedness, but for the purpose of this research, only the 6 items that measure relatedness (items 11-16) were included in the questionnaire (e.g. 'At work, I feel part of a group'). The standardised scale compiled by Van den Broeck et al (2010) yielded a Cronbach's α of .76 for the Relatedness sub-scale (Van den Broeck, Ferris, Chang & Rosen, 2016). In the present study; Cronbach's α = .87, Average inter-item correlation = .52. All items in the distributed survey were assessed on a 7-point Likert scale, with 1=strongly disagree, and 7=strongly agree (see Appendix F).

4.4. Statistical Analysis

The data was analysed using Statistical Program for Social Sciences (SPSS), version 26. Following data collection, a total of one hundred and ninety-one responses was analysed. Two items from the Work Performance Scale; "I neglect aspects of the job I am obligated to perform" and "I fail to perform essential duties", and three items from the Relatedness scale; "I don't really feel connected with other people at my job", "I don't really mix with other people at my job" and "I often feel alone when I am with my colleagues" were reverse coded, due to their negative phrasing. Following these steps, data analysis was then conducted.

First, the variables were tested for normality to test for the null hypothesis of normal distribution. The null hypothesis for normal distribution was rejected for all variables presented in this research model, thus, the data was not normally distributed. Data analysis was proceeded with, and the fact that normality was violated was taken into consideration in

the discussion section. A series of tests were then conducted to generate descriptive statistics for the sample. Frequencies of gender and age were measured. Using the Pearson correlation analysis, the correlation between all variables in the study was measured. Following descriptive statistics, the hypotheses of this study were then tested.

Hayes PROCESS tool (2018), which contains a series preprogramed mediation and moderation models, was used to test the research model. Model 4 was used, as it fits the paths of this particular research model. The whole model was broken into two parts, both corresponding to Model 4 of the macro; the first part was the hypothesis of the relationship between organisational identification and work performance, with work engagement as a mediator (*H1- H4*) (See Figure 2, section 5). The second part tested *H5-H9*, which refer to the direct relationships between relatedness and; OI work performance and work Engagement respectively with OI acting as a mediator in the relationships between relatedness and work performance, and relatedness and work engagement (See Figure 3, section 5).

4.5. Principal Component Analysis

While observing the items of the different scales used for this study's questionnaire, slight similarities between items of the different subscales. Taking a look at the conceptual definitions of the variables, relatedness for instance, is the need for a person to feel welcome within a group, and enjoy the feeling of being part of it (Baumeister & Leary, 1995), and organisational identification is a measure of how much the person feels part of the organisation they work in, and a measure of "oneness" between the employee and the organisation (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Even though they are different concepts, they both refer to belongingness to a bigger group; relatedness is the need to belong to a group on a

social level, and OI is the feeling of belonging to an organisation which endorses similar goals and values to the ones the person working in the organisation has. Similarities between items in the work engagement and the organisational identification sub scales was also present. One of the items in the UWES scale for instance, quotes "I am proud on the work that I do", which is very similar to an item in the organisational identification scale that measures "This organisation's successes are my successes."

Correlations between items of the different scales were expected, especially due to the fact that all the items are measuring organisational constructs that can be considered to share associations, and at times, they might have similar factors. Given their similarities however, they are supposed at the conceptual level to measure distinct organisational concepts. Harman Single Factor test, and a Principal Component analysis, were conducted to measure the correlation between the different scales, and thus, determine whether there is a common method bias in the compiled questionnaire. Common method bias is an inflation in the correlation result between different variables, which is caused by the nature of the items of the questionnaire itself, rather than by the predispositions of the respondents. In this case, a common method bias was analysed by looking at the similarities in items between the different subscales: the Harman Single Factor test (Podsakoff et al., 2003). A PC analysis was run for the scales and one component was extracted. A total variance of 28.16% resulted from this Harman Single Factor test. Correlations between the different items of relatedness, OI, and work engagement was found, but since the total variance is well under the 50% threshold that determines common variance between the items of the different variables, there is no threat for common method bias to occur (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

5. Results

In this section, the results that were generated after data collection and analysis will be presented and explained. The main focus will be the descriptive statistics and correlations between all variables to have a better understanding of the characteristics of the sample, and the results of the mediation tests which were used to see whether the hypotheses presented in the model are supported.

5.1. Descriptive statistics and correlations

Table 1 shows descriptive statistics and correlations of all the variables in this study. All items were responded to by (N=198) participants, apart from relatedness, which had (N=189) respondents. This is because, out of the 198 participants who answered the questionnaire, nine participants did not answer the sub-scale that measures the satisfaction of the need for relatedness. One can observe that the mean scores for all study variables are all high; Relatedness (M = 5.34), organisational identification (M = 5.24), work engagement (M = 5.10) and work performance (M = 6.01). The mean age of the sample was relatively low (M = 2.32). This means that the mean age was in the '25-34 years old' age category. With regards to the correlations, it can be seen in Table 1 that organisational identification is positively related to relatedness needs satisfaction (r = .20, p < .01) work engagement (r = .44, p < .01) and work performance (r = .19, p < .01) respectively, with all relationships being highly significant. Apart from being positively related to OI, relatedness has a highly significant positive relationship with work engagement (r = .36, p < .01), and work

performance (r = .32, p < .01). Work Engagement is also positively related to work performance (r = .40, p < .01). This means that all study variables that are presented in the model of this research are positively related to each other, with a high statically significant relationship. It can also be noted that organisational identification is positively correlated to age (r = .27, p < .01). The other variable that has a significant positive relationship with age is work engagement (r = .27, p < .01).

 Table 1

 Correlation between variables

Measure	M	SD	Correlations					
1. Age Category ^a	2.32	1.16	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
2. Gender Category ^b	1.38	.50	04					
3. Relatedness Need Satisfaction	5.34	1.25	.09	14*				
4. Organisational Identification	5.24	.97	.27**	10	.20**			
5. Work Engagement	5.10	.99	.21**	05	.36**	.44**		
6. Work Performance	6.01	.74	.11	20**	.32**	.19**	.40**	

Notes: M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation

$$N = 198$$
, *p < 0.05 ** p < 0.01

^aAge Category: 1 = 18-24 years, 2 = 25-34 years, 3 = 35-44 years, 4 = 45-54 years, 5 = 55 years and older ^bGender Category: 1 = Female, 2 = Male, 3 = Other

5.2. Testing the hypotheses

5.2.1. Testing Hypotheses 1-4

To test for the hypotheses of this particular research model, mediation analysis was conducted using Hayes' PROCESS (2018). The mediation effect of work engagement on the positive relationship between organisational identification and work performance was first analysed in order to test *Hypothesis 1*, which predicts a direct positive relationship between organisational identification and work performance, and *Hypothesis 2* and *3*, which predict a direct positive relationship between; organisational identification and work engagement (*H2*), work engagement and work performance (*H3*), and also a mediating effect of work engagement in the direct positive relationship between organisational identification and work performance (*H4*)

The result of the regression analysis for the relationship between OI and work performance, in the presence of work engagement as a mediator, indicated that the direct relationship between organisational identification and work performance is not statistically significant; Therefore, $Hypothesis\ I$ was rejected. A significant positive relationship between OI and work engagement was established; b=.45, t(196)=6.89, p<.01. Work engagement was also confirmed to be a positive predictor of work performance; b=.30, t(195)=5.39, p<.01. Hence, $Hypotheses\ 2$ and 3 were accepted. The indirect positive effect of OI with work performance, in the presence of work engagement, is statistically significant; b=.13, BCa CI [0.067, 0.212], confirming the mediating effect of work engagement, as seen in Figure 2. Since the hypothesis for a direct effect between OI and work performance was not accepted.

this means that only the direct effect is present, and thus, work engagement fully mediates the relationship. *H4*, which states that work engagement mediates the relationship between organisational identification and work performance, can be accepted

Figure 2

Full mediation effect of Work Engagement between OI and Work Performance



5.2.2. Testing Hypotheses 5-9

To test *Hypotheses 5-9*, two separate mediation analyses were conducted on PROCESS. Firstly, *H5* predicted a direct positive relationship between relatedness and OI. A direct relationship between relatedness and work performance was hypothesised in *H6*. Subsequently, organisational identification was hypothesised to mediate the relationships between relatedness need satisfaction and work performance (*H8*).

The mediation results for OI in the relationship between relatedness and work performance confirmed the statistically significant positive relationship between relatedness and OI; b = .16, t(187) = 2.83, p = .01 (H5). A statistically significant positive relationship between OI and work performance was established; b = .11, t(186) = 2.07, p < .05. A significant positive relationship between relatedness and work performance was found in this mediation model; b = .18, t(186) = 4.19, p < .01 (H6). The indirect positive effect of

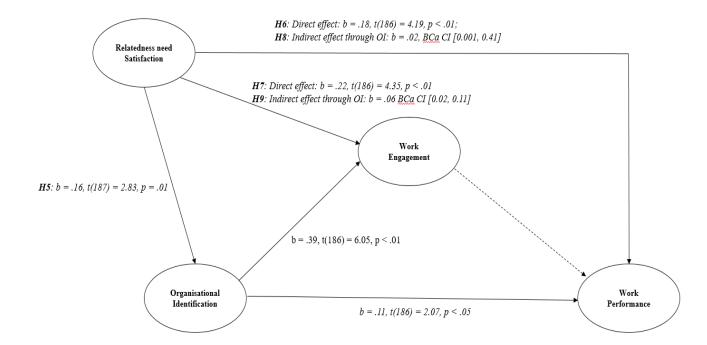
relatedness with work performance, in the presence of organisational identification, is statistically significant; b = .02, BCa CI [0.001, 0.41], confirming the mediating effect of OI (H8). The statistical significant direct relationship between relatedness and work performance confirms that OI is a partial mediator. Therefore, through this mediation analysis, H5, H6 and H8 were all accepted, as seen in Figure 4.

A final mediation analysis was conducted to test: *H7*, which states that there is a positive relationship between relatedness and work engagement, *H9*, which predicts the mediation effect of organisational identification between relatedness and work performance, and to confirm *H5*.

A statistically significant positive relationship between relatedness and OI was once again observed in this model; b = .16, t(187) = 2.83, p < .01 (H5). A significant positive relationship between relatedness and work engagement was also found; b = .39, t(186) = 6.05, p < .01 (H7). In this mediation model, the direct positive relationship between relatedness and work engagement was found to be statistically significant; b = .22, t(186) = 4.35, p < .01. In this case, a partial mediation also occurs through organisational identification, as confirmed by the statistically significant relationship between relatedness and work performance, and also by the confidence intervals in the indirect relationship controlled by organisational identification, which exclude zero; b = .06, BCa CI [0.02, 0.11] (H9). The statistical significant direct relationship between Relatedness and work performance confirms that OI is a partial mediator. Therefore, these results also confirm that H5, H7 and H9 can be accepted.

Following the regression analysis, it was confirmed that the following hypotheses can be accepted; Relatedness needs satisfaction positively predict organisational identification (*H5*), work performance (*H6*), and work engagement (*H7*). Moreovoer, OI acts as a mediator in the relationships between relatedness needs satisfaction and work performance (*H8*), and relatedness needs satisfaction and work engagement (*H9*) respectively (See Figure 3).

Figure 3Research model, showing the results of Hypotheses 5 – Hypotheses 9



6. Discussion & Conclusion

This cross-sectional study examined the influence of organisational identification, on work performance, in the presence of work engagement as a mediator in the Maltese working population. The relationship that the need for relatedness satisfaction has with organisational identification, work engagement, and work performance was also examined. Furthermore, it examined the mediating role that organisational identification has in the relationship between relatedness needs satisfaction and work performance, and relatedness needs satisfaction and work engagement respectively.

6.1. Interpretation of Results

6.1.1. Interpretation the Results for Hypotheses 1-4

In accordance with Riketta (2005), Karanika-Murray et al (2015), Bothma and Roodt (2012), Efraty and Wolfe (1988), and Piccoli et al. (2017) who conducted studies which investigated interactions between organisational identification, work performance, and work engagement, it was hypothesised that OI is a positive predictor of work performance (*H1*). Additionally, *hypothesis 2* anticipated that work engagement would be positively influenced by organisational identification. *Hypothesis 3* predicted that work engagement would be a positive predictor of work performance. The mediating role of work engagement on the relationship between OI and work performance was also hypothesised (*H4*). The rationale behind these hypotheses was given in sections 2.1. and 2.2. of the thesis. The *first hypothesis* of the present study was not accepted, as there was no significant relationship between organisational identification and work performance, in the presence of work engagement. On the other hand, *hypothesis 2*, *hypothesis 3*, and *hypothesis 4* are accepted. This means that in the proposed research model, organisational identification is only linked with work

performance, through the mediating effect of work engagement. Taking the correlation analysis results into consideration, organisational identification is actually linked with work performance (r = .19), a result which is in line with studies conducted in different cultural contexts (Piccoli et al., 2017; Efraty & Wolfe, 1988; Bothma & Roodt, 2012; Riketta, 2005).

Since a relationship through correlation analysis, without the presence of work engagement, was established between organisational identification and work performance, but not in the presence of work engagement, a possible explanation would be that as a variable, work engagement could have an overarching effect on both OI and work performance, due to a stronger relationship between work engagement and both OI and work performance respectively, than that between OI and work performance. In fact, through direct correlation analysis, it was established that organisational identification has a positive significant relationship with work engagement, with a correlation coefficient of .44, and work engagement has a positive relationship with work performance, with a correlation coefficient of .40. Therefore, the direct relationship between organisational identification and work performance is weaker than the relationships between organisational identification and work engagement, and work engagement and work performance. This dominant effect of work engagement on both OI and work performance could have overpowered the direct effect between OI and work performance in the mediation analysis. Even though literature discussing this overarching effect was not found, it could be a result of the weak positive relationship between OI and work performance, which is established in this study, and also in previous research (Riketta, 2005).

Theoretically, the above mentioned findings can be described using the revised JD-R model. According to the motivational process of the model, the abundance of job resources cause the employee to be more engaged at work. In turn, the more the employee is engaged, the more they perform (Schaufeli & Taris, 2013). In comparison to the motivational process of the JD-R model, Qadeer et al. (2016) describes work engagement as the use of personal resources in order to make oneself driven to perform at work (Qadeer et al, 2016). Within the Maltese sample, it was established that the employee is engaged through the ability for the individual to identify with the organisation they work for. There is no research that states that organisational identification is either a job resource, or a personal resource, but in this study, it has the same role that job resources and personal have in previous studies.

6.1.2. Interpretation the Results for Hypotheses 5-9

Relatedness need satisfaction were expected to be positively correlated with; organisational identification (*H5*), work performance (*H6*), and work engagement (*H7*) respectively. These hypotheses were based on studies related to the Self-Determination Theory, that link the relatedness need satisfaction with organisational identification (Kumar & Jauhari, 2016), work performance (Van den Broeck et al., 2016), and work engagement (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Relatedness was presented in the research model to be the main predictor of organisational identification, and organisational identification was hypothesised to mediate the relationship between relatedness satisfaction and; work performance (*H8*), and work engagement (*H9*). Both hypotheses were confirmed by the mediation results of this study.

Within the Maltese sample, OI has been found to positively affect work performance, through the presence of work engagement, a result which is no different than any of the findings within different cultural settings. The SDT states that the satisfaction of the three basic needs further facilitates the process of growth and identity formation of the individual (Soenens & Vansteenkiste, 2011). This study established a positive relationship between the satisfaction for relatedness and; OI, work performance, and work engagement respectively. Through the SDT, a possible explanation for this would be that when the person feels part of a social community at work, they are more likely to identify with their workplace, and therefore, they are more engaged to perform to their best abilities. Therefore, while OI, through the presence of work engagement, leads to an increase in performance, it is the satisfaction of the need for relatedness at the workplace further facilitates the process of organisational identification to occur. Catania and Randall (2013) argued that Maltese people tend to give importance to intrinsic factors more than extrinsic ones. The need to belong to a bigger group is intrinsic in human nature (Ryan & Deci, 2003). Therefore, the need for relatedness can be described as an intrinsic motivational factor, that when fulfilled, makes the individual identify more with the organisation, engage them more to their tasks at work, and as a result, increases their motivation to perform on those tasks.

6.2. Limitations & Future Research

In this study, the data was not normally distributed, and when histograms for the normality tests for each variables were generated, a right skewed histogram was apparent in all cases. The fact that the data was skewed to the right could be an indicator that a number of participants answered the survey in a socially desirable manner, and did not want to admit that they do not feel that they identify with their organisation, or that they feel that they do

not perform well enough at work. Social desirability bias can at times impact the validity of the findings, even though that conclusion cannot be drawn through the results of this study.

The fact that the data was gathered through snowball sampling is another limitation. This data collection technique is a form of non-probability sampling, and may create bias in the sampling (Sadler, Lee, Lim & Fullerton, 2010). Snowball sampling could have also led to a lack of heterogeneity in the job categories of the sample. The validity of this study could have potentially been effected, because if responses were gathered from a limited variety of workplace settings, this would have resulted in a less representative picture of the Maltese organisational climate. In order to have a more realistic view of the Maltese working population in general, it would have been ideal to ensure that the sample had participants from a wide variety of professions and work settings, to ensure that the sample includes a variety of people working in different work settings. In future research, this can be done through the use of stratified random sampling, which is a method through which random participants are selected from a variety of groups within the population (Brewster, 1999). In this case, the groups would be different work settings in Malta.

Work engagement is quite a complex construct. For the purpose of this study, it was measured as a single factor, to keep the model as simple as possible and to focus the study on a manageable number of variables. However, several researchers have studied it as 3 separate sub-dimensions; Vigour, Dedication and Absorption (Schaufeli & Taris, 2014). Future studies can either test the mediation effects that vigour, dedication and absorption have in the relationship between organisational identification and work performance within the same process model, or else, test them in separate process models to determine which of them has

the strongest mediating effect in the relationship. Based on the findings of this study, it is expected that separately, the 3 dimensions of work engagement have the same full mediating effect in the relationship between OI and work performance. However, future research can delve into more theoretical and empirical detail about vigour, dedication, and absorption, to determine whether this assumption stands to be correct.

A limitation which has already been mentioned in section 4.5. of this thesis, but will be further discussed here, is the similarity between items of the different subscales. The conceptual similarities between relatedness and OI, and OI and work engagement have already been discuss. According to the results of the Harman single factor test and Principal component analysis, correlations between the different items of relatedness, OI, and work engagement was found, but there was no threat for common method bias to occur within this study (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Even though the different variables being studied in this research have overlapping elements, as can be seen by their conceptual definitions, and by the inter-item correlations between the scales, they were used, as they empirically measure distinct organisational factors. In psychology, it is a very common occurrence that different concepts within the area have similar factors. However, as previously explained they study distinct factors. Therefore, as done in this case, it is important for the researcher to identify these similarities, and also to draw out the differences between the different concepts. The suggestion that is being given for future researchers, who intend to do further research the relationships studied in this thesis, is to conduct more tests that determine the empirical differences between the variables, to maintain the validity of the study.

6.3. Practical Implications

This study is particularly useful because it provides useful information about factors that drive people to perform more at the place of work. This information is useful to organisations, organisational psychologists, and consultancy firms, as it gives more light on factors which make employees perform more, thus, providing results at work. It can assist employers in developing and executing policies at work that facilitate a work environments which makes employees feel more at home, and welcome at the workplace, in order for them to be more engaged in what they do at work, and perform more in the process. Instead of directly demanding employees to perform more, an employer can create a work setting which employees who are currently employed within the setting can identify with.

A possible intervention that companies can adopt to help the employees identify themselves more with the company, and therefore, be more productive at work, is to be given a proper induction programme that focuses on the mission, vision, and values of the organisation. This certainly helps the new employee identify with the values of the organisation at a very early stage in his experience within the company. Companies can also consider organising social activities, through which employees in the company can get to know each other more. Such activities include; team dinners and team building activities such as quizzes, or sports activities. If employees consider their colleagues as friends, they would relate more with them, and therefore, identify more with the company. As a result, the person would be more engaged in their day to day tasks, and is motivated to perform more at work.

6.4. Conclusion

The present Maltese study shows a positive relationship between organisational identification and work performance through the full mediation effect of work engagement. The satisfaction of the need for relatedness positively predicts OI, work performance, and work engagement respectively. Furthermore, the results show a mediating role of organisational identification on the relationships between relatedness need satisfaction and work performance, and relatedness needs satisfaction and work engagement.

These findings indicate that within the Maltese workforce, employees are driven to perform both through the fit between the values and goals of the organisation, and their personal values and aspirations, as well as a workplace that makes them feel as part of a community, in which they are able to build meaningful social connections with their colleagues. For this purpose, organisations should implement human resources practices that help employees to identify more with the company, and to make them feel that they work in an environment with a group of people they not only consider as colleagues, but as a network of individuals they can relate on a social level.

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Appendices

Appendix A – Letter of consent to potential participants of the study



Welcome.

Survey - Identification to your Workplace

Hello and welcome to this research study!

My name is Andrew Camilleri and this research will be conducted for my Masters in Work and

Organisational Psychology at the Utrecht University. The purpose of this research is to understand how

people value their workplace, and how this effects their performance at work. This research will be

conducted among the working population in Malta. Therefore, if you currently work in Malta, you are kindly
being invited to participate by filling out the entire questionnaire.

As a participant, you have the right to ask for the final product of this research study! If you wish to receive the final product, please do not hesitate to contact me. I would be more than happy to provide you with the final results!

In this survey, you will be presented with statements that are relevant to your work. Please rest assured that **your responses will be kept anonymous** throughout the study. Your responses will only be accessed by the main researcher and will only be used for the purpose of completing this study.

Participant Information

To participate in this study, the only requirement is that you should currently be working in an organisation (both private organisation or civil/government) in Malta. Your organisation can either be a Maltese company, or also an international company based in Malta. You should try to respond to the statements below as honestly as possible. There are no wrong or right answers.

Filling in the questionnaire should take you around **10 minutes**. Your participation in this research is fully voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at any point during the study, for any reason, and without any prejudice.

By clicking the "I consent" on this page, you acknowledge that your participation in the study is indeed voluntary, you are at least 18 years of age, and that you are aware that you may choose to terminate your participation in the study at any time and for any reason.

The Role that Work Identity plays in relation to Work Performance

Please note that this survey will be best displayed on a laptop or desktop computer. Some features may be less compatible for use on a mobile device, however it is still possible to do so.

Contact Information

If you would like to contact the main researcher of this study, please email Andrew Camilleri with any questions / remarks about the study at a.camilleri@students.uu.nl

Thank you in advance for taking the time to participate in this study!

Your help is greatly appreciated! :)

Yes, I consent

No, I do not consent

Appendix B – Demographic Questions

What is your age?						
	O 18-24 years old					
	O 25-34 years old					
	◯ 35-44 years old					
	O 45-54 years old					
	Over 55 years old					
١	What gender do you identify with?					
	○ Female					
	O Male					
	Other Other					

Appendix C – Organisational Identification Scale

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
	When someone criticizes the organisation or agency I work for, it feels like a personal insult.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	2. I am very interested in what others think about my organisation, or my place of work.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	3. When I talk about this organisation, I usually say 'we' rather than 'they'.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	This organisation's successes are my successes.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	5. When someone praises this organisation, it feels like a personal compliment.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	6. If a story in the media criticized the organisation, I would feel embarrassed.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

The Role that Work Identity plays in relation to Work Performance

Appendix D – Work Engagement Scale

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
1. At my work, I feel bursting with energy	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2. At my job, I feel strong and vigorous	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3. When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
I can continue working for very long periods at a time	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5. At my job, I am very resilient, mentally	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6. I find the work that I do full of meaning and purpose	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
7. I am enthusiastic about my job	0	0	0	\circ	0	0	0
8. My job inspires me	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
9. I am proud on the work that I do	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
10. To me, my job is challenging	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
11. Time flies when I'm working	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
12. When I am working, I forget everything else around me	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
13. I feel happy when I am working intensely	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
14. I am immersed in my work	\circ	0	0	0	0	0	0
15. I get carried away when I'm working	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

The Role that Work Identity plays in relation to Work Performance

Appendix E – Work Performance Scale

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
1. I adequately complete assigned duties	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2. I fulfill responsibilities specified in job description	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3. I perform tasks that are expected of me	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4. I meet formal performance requirements of the job	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5. I engage in activities that will directly affect my performance evaluation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6. I neglect aspects of the job I am obligated to perform	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
7. I fail to perform essential duties	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Appendix F – Work-related Basic Needs Satisfaction Scale

Relatedness:

11. I don't really feel connected with other people at my job	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
12. At work, I feel part of a group	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
13. I don't really mix with other people at my job	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
14. At work, I can talk with people about things that really matter to me	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
15. I often feel alone when I am with my colleagues	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
16. Some people I work with are close friends of mine	0	0	0	0	0	0	0