

A Slant Of Employee Engagement: Drivers That Augment Work Involvement And Foster Discretionary Work Efforts

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Abstract

The real quest has aroused among the contemporary business era to create a workforce that is passionate and engaged. There remains a question what actually engagement tends to do for an organization. Though the business of Human Resource Management deals with the process of determining and designating the right employee for the right Job, it is important for the HR Professionals to consider whether the manpower remains engaged towards their work. The paper explores the evidences of how engagement enhances the work environment, output and success of the organization from the perspective of employees in IT Sector. Factors based upon William Khan's Engagement theory (1990) and other determinants of engagement were deliberated and analysed. The IT sector has been contemplated for the research. The key factor Job Importance was perceived to influence the engagement levels to a considerable extend. The study cognized that Better the engagement, better will be the productivity, higher the productivity, higher will be the profit and success of the organization.

Keywords: Employee Engagement, Increased Output, Discretionary Efforts, Reduced Employee Turnover.

INTRODUCTION AND JUSTIFICATION

The manpower management is the most crucial managerial strategy that defines the triumph of any organization. Unlike the concepts of Sales, Marketing, bargaining and tax paying the notion of manpower management was not considered important in the late centuries. Later on the awareness about the significance of human resources remarked that manpower as one of an inevitable asset of an organization. The contemporary business world and HR professionals are in the pursuit of increasing the engagement level of the employees as it can foster and escalate the performance and the productivity scale of the organization. Though the business of Human Resource Management deals with the process of determining and designating the right employee for the right Job, it is important for the HR

Professionals to consider whether the manpower remains engaged towards their work. William Kahn (1990) was the first academic researcher to discover the Engagement theory which revealed that Psychological conditions determine one's Engagement or Disengagement towards their work.

Employee engagement propounds the range of positive involvement, enthusiasm and both physical and mental commitment that an employee feels towards his work and organization. It is a two way process which builds a relationship between the organization and its employees. An engaged employee will put his 'Discretionary or voluntary effort' and expected to be more productive and involved in his job which tends to increase the organizational productivity and reduced employee turnover. The corporate sector in the recent years has been one of the major contributors of economic development. The higher level of employment has been perceived due to the arrival of increased number of MNC's in India. The corporate world is mere different in nature. The employees working nature, time, and other aspects seems to be different. The employees work at different time shifts either its day or night rather than normal working hours. Though the corporate world seems to be a place for broad exposure and attractive salary benefits it is also a place where work accounts other than all else.

The employees will be teamed up to fulfill a certain project target. The urge to complete the target and the role of being as a member of group for teamwork etc., can create a pressure among the employees. Though the employees in order to retain their job and to attain performance appraisal tend to carry out their work at their highest potential level. Even though there remains a question whether these employees are actually engaged at their work. There is a vast difference between an engaged employee and a normal employee.

An engaged employee will undertake discretionary efforts and will be enthusiastic towards his work. Such an employee will be more productive and helpful in the upliftment of the organization. The employee engagement is something beyond the satisfaction or contentment level of the employees. Thus the paper aims at identifying those factors that influences the engagement level of employees in corporate and how it can enhance work rate and output.

FACTORS ENHANCING ENGAGEMENT

The study tries to concentrate on the factors that contribute engagement. Ten factors that augment engagement have been chosen; among them the factor **Importance of the job** indicates that the feel of belongingness and one's involvement towards his work determines engagement. The organization can make the employees realize their job roles and responsibilities and how it facilitates the organizational and their self-growth. The factor **Clarity of your expectation** reveals that employees with higher level of role clarity reflect higher level of effectiveness in their job, have increased purpose to stay in the organization and also tend to have higher satisfaction and productivity. Clarity is a way to attain chunk results. It is also observed that **Career advancement** can also be one of the ways to increase the engagement level of the employees. The employees can be given specific job roles and assignments that enable them to face challenges. This may help the employees to get motivated as the organization concentrates on their development. One of the leading factors that determine the degree of engagement of employees is the **Reward and Recognition** that they receive from the organization. The reward factor seems to be more influencing as the employees will feel loyal and committed to work for the organization that appreciates them. The organization must have a sound reward system that

involves the four major aspects such as reward, recognition, compensation and benefits. **Feedback and Communication** system can make employees more committed and engaged as their opinions and views are respected, valued and the organization feels them as important. A proper communication channel helps to avoid conflicts and enhance engagement. **Interpersonal relationship** at workplace plays a very crucial role in determining the success of work and progress of one's career. Engagement level is also based on the interpersonal relationship that remains in the organization as an employee having a strong relationship with his co-worker and the management will never think of leaving the organization. The **Value** of an employee in the organization also influences the employee engagement levels. The organization must involve the employees in decision making aspects so that they'll consider that their role in the organization is much significant which induces them to be more engaged. One of the major factors by William Kahn (1990) in his research on the psychological conditions that promotes engagement of the employees is the sense of **Psychological safety** that an employee feels in his work. Safety as specified by Kahn defines the extent to which the employees perceive safe in presenting their full self to their work irrespective of the possibilities of pessimistic consequences. The other important factor highlighted by him is the degree of **Meaningfulness** that employees feel about their work. An employee's view regarding how his work in a particular organization benefits the society and the organization that he works determines the extent of meaningfulness that he has towards his work. He also accentuated the **Availability** extend of employees i.e. "harness their full selves" towards their job as one of the drivers of engagement. Availability refers to the physical and psychological capability to tackle a particular situation at a full self.

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT – A LITERARY REVISIT

The following literature reviews on the concept of 'Employee Engagement' has been cited by the researcher for the study.

Khan W. A. (1990) in the article entitled, "**Psychological conditions of personal engagement and disengagement at work**" revealed and demonstrated the three Psychological conditions- Meaningfulness, Safety and Availability and how these factors determines one's Engagement or Disengagement towards their work. Thus the conceptual Theory of Khan's model stated the level of employee's dedication and participation towards their work.

T.Suhasini& Dr.K. Kalpana (2018) in the paper on "**A Study on Factors Affecting Employee Engagement in Indian IT Industry**" stated the various factors of employee engagement at micro and macro levels. The study analyzed how these factors influence the employee retention rate and their performance level. It was found that employee engagement results in decrease of employee turnover and meanwhile increases the innovative behaviours related to work. Employee engagement cannot be achieved in short term as it is a long term process, thus the organization should attempt to develop training programmes which may enable the managers to create a supportive work environment with their employees that results in empowerment.

Dr. Pratima Sarangi& Dr. Bhagirathi Nayak (2016) in their paper "**Employee Engagement and Its Impact on Organizational Success – A Study in Manufacturing Company, India**" revealed the impact of employee engagement on the overall productivity and company's success on the basis of analyze made

on 10C's given by Gambler (2007). The results suggested that the employees' opinions and confidence levels differs, even though the employees agreed with the six parameters that have been chosen for study as a tool that promotes their engagement with the organization.

"Effects of an Information Sharing System on Employee Creativity, Engagement, and Performance" by Li, Xin and Sandino, Tatiana (2017) examined that most of the organization depend upon information sharing system to improve creativity of employees that facilitates engagement. Results suggested that the outcomes are not affected by the information sharing system, whereas it upgraded the quality of work creativity that creates engagement.

A report on **"The Broken Bridges of the Workplace, Employee Engagement Report (2017)"** by Tiny Pulse analyzed and found that a recent study reported that 48% of organization considers employee engagement as a significant part for the development of the organization. The study attempted to find out the factors that enhance or deprive employee engagement. The findings showed that work culture and the peer members cover a major part in promoting engagement. Meanwhile lack of employee recognition and opportunities regarding professional development has deprived the work culture. Furthermore the study identified that there remains a positive linkage between the performance level of the employees and employee engagement.

Dr. Gaurav Jaiswal, Dr. RavindraPathak, Dr. ShibKumari (2017) in their paper, **"Impact of Employee Engagement on Job Satisfaction and Motivation"**. The study covered the college teachers from a region in Gwalior. The results revealed that satisfaction level of employees had an influence upon the employee engagement whereas the motivation does not have a significant impact. It also explained that there remains a gender difference among the factors of employee engagement and employee motivation but job satisfaction remains irrespective of it.

"Cross-Border Acquisitions and Employee-Engagement" by Liang, Hao and Renneboog, Luc and Vansteenkiste, Cara (2017) explored how a company's employee engagement behaviour may be a influencing factor in home countries and cross border accessions. The study found that domestic acquisitions had an impact upon employee's performance behaviour whereas there has been observed an inverse effect in foreign takeovers. Thus the firm or shareholders must not consider employees benefits when it comes under acquisition across cross borders.

Preeti Thakur (2014) in her **"A research paper on the Effect of Employee Engagement on Job Satisfaction in IT Sector"** tried to discover the relationship between employee engagement level of employees and job satisfaction. The results revealed that there remains a positive relationship between the engagement and satisfaction level of employees. Furthermore motivation has been observed to increase the accountability and authority at administrative level workers and at the clerical stage rewards were observed to improve involvement in the job.

FOCUS OF THE STUDY

The paper focuses on the following objectives:

Primary Objective:

1. Understanding the level of perception of corporate employees towards the concept of employee engagement based on certain factors.

Secondary Objectives:

1. To analyze the relationship between socio demographic factors such as Age, Domicile, Educational Qualification, Income, Marital status and Gender of employees and the factors of employee engagement.
2. To understand the priority factor among the various factors taken that has adverse impact in facilitating engagement to great extent.

HYPOTHESES FORMULATED FOR THE STUDY

The research design has been formulated with following Hypotheses:

Null Hypothesis:

The perception of the respondents on the factors of employee engagement does not vary significantly in accordance with their socio demographic factors (i.e., Age, Residence, Gender, Educational Qualification, income, marital status).

Research Hypothesis:

The perception of the respondents on the factors of employee engagement does vary significantly in accordance with their socio demographic factors (i.e., Age, Residence, Gender, Educational Qualification, income, marital status).

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study has been carried out with a view of analyzing the level of perception on the EmployeeEngagement among the employees of MNC's in Chennai. The study analyses the degree of extent of engagement based on the major chosen factors of employee engagement. The major ten factors have been chosen on the basis of Kahn's Theory and other related drivers of employee engagement. The survey has been conducted for a time period of 6 Months from January 2021 to June 2021. The study has been drafted in such a way to be useful to the corporate in promoting the engagement level of their employees.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The Methodology of the study is based upon the sound principles of research. The research design consists of:

- I. Universe
- II. Sample
- III. Data
- IV. Statistical tools used

I. Universe:

The population of this study is the Employees of Corporate of Chennai City. The universe of the study is infinity as the researcher has chosen the corporate employees of Chennai city in general.

II. Sample:

The sample size of 180 respondents has been chosen with simple random sampling from the universe of the study.

III. Data:

The study is based upon both Primary and Secondary Data. For primary data, the questionnaire has been drafted in Google forms and circulated via Mail and other link sharing Medias. The collected responses have been converted into processed data for further analysis. The secondary data has been collected from Books, journals, publication reports, databases.

IV. Statistical tools used:

The researcher has applied relevant statistical tools such as percentage test, Chi Square test, ANOVA, Independent T – test to analyze the collected data.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study may endure from the following limitations.

The study area was confined only with the corporate employees of Chennai City which may restrict the common application of the results obtained. The time constrain arises as the study covers only a period of Six months. The factors used for the study has been restricted by the researcher, there may be other factors which also may influence employee engagement.

FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION

The research findings of the study revealed the following outcomes:

TABLE – 01 ASSOCIATION BETWEEN AGE AND THE LEVEL OF PERCEPTION ON THE FACTORS OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Level of perception	Age					Statistical Inference
		Below 30	30 – 45	Above 45	Total	
High	No. of Respondents	80	18	28	126	$\chi^2=6.615$ Df=2 $.037<0.05$ Significant
	Percentage	76.9%	54.5%	65.1%	70.0%	
Low	No. of Respondents	24	15	15	54	
	Percentage	23.1%	45.5%	34.9%	30.0%	

Source: Field Data.

The Table – 01 reveals that there is significant association between age of the respondents and their overall Impact towards the level of perception on the factors of employee engagement. Hence, the

calculated value (0.037) is less than table value ($p < 0.05$). The research hypothesis is accepted and the null hypothesis is rejected.

TABLE – 02 ASSOCIATION BETWEEN DOMICILE AND THE LEVEL OF PERCEPTION ON THE FACTORS OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Level of perception	Domicile					Statistical Inference
		Rural	Urban	Semi-Urban	Total	
High	No. of Respondents	14	100	12	126	$\chi^2=8.406$ Df=2 $.015 < 0.05$ Significant
	Percentage	70.0%	74.6%	46.2%	70.0%	
Low	No. of Respondents	6	34	14	54	
	Percentage	30.0%	25.4%	53.8%	30.0%	

Source: Field Data.

The Table – 02 reveal that there is significant association between Domicile of the respondents and their overall Impact towards the level of perception on the factors of employee engagement. Hence, the calculated value (0.015) is less than table value ($p < 0.05$). The research hypothesis is accepted and the null hypothesis is rejected.

TABLE – 03 INDEPENDENT SAMPLE T – TEST BETWEEN THE GENDER AND THE LEVEL OF PERCEPTION ON THE FACTORS OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Factors of Employee Engagement	Male (N = 90)		Female (N =90)		Statistical Inference
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Overall Impact	1.32	.470	1.28	.450	$T=0.648, Df=178$ $.518 > 0.05$ Not Significant

Source: Field Data.

The Table – 03 shows that there is no significant difference between gender of the respondents and their Overall Impact towards perception of factors of employee engagement. Hence, the calculated value (0.518) is greater than table value ($p > 0.05$). The research hypothesis is rejected and the null hypothesis is accepted.

TABLE – 04 INDEPENDENT SAMPLE T – TEST BETWEEN THE MARITAL STATUS AND THE LEVEL OF PERCEPTION ON THE FACTORS OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Factors of Employee Engagement	Married (N = 80)		Unmarried (N =100)		Statistical Inference
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Overall Impact	1.34	.476	1.27	.446	T=0.979,Df=178 .329>0.05 Not Significant

Source: Field Data.

The Table – 04 reveals that there is no significant difference between Marital Status of the respondents and their Overall Impact towards the level of perception on the factors of employee engagement. Hence, the calculated value (0.329) is greater than table value ($p>0.05$). The research hypothesis is rejected and the null hypothesis is accepted.

TABLE – 05 ONE-WAY ANOVA DIFFERENCE BETWEEN EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION OF THE RESPONDENTS AND THE LEVEL OF PERCEPTION ON THE FACTORS OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Educational Qualification	Mean	SD	SS	DF	MS	Statistical inference
Between Groups			10944.114	5	2188.823	F=3.267 .008<0.05 Significant
B.E (53)	138.96	29.031				
B.Tech (28)	150.86	15.570				
M.E (9)	162.67	3.500				
M.Tech (14)	151.00	18.998				
Diploma Courses (16)	151.88	20.152				
MBA (60)	157.02	30.619				
Within Groups			116566.086	174	669.920	

Source: Field Data.

The Table – 05 reveals that there is significant difference between Educational Qualification of the respondents and their Overall Impact towards the level of perception on the factors of employee engagement. Hence, the calculated value (0.008) is less than table value ($p<0.05$). The research hypothesis is accepted and the null hypothesis is rejected

TABLE – 06 ONE-WAY ANOVA DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MONTHLY SALARY OF THE RESPONDENTS AND THE LEVEL OF PERCEPTION ON THE FACTORS OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Monthly Salary	Mean	SD	SS	DF	MS	Statistical inference
Between Groups			1150.155	3	383.385	F=.534 .660>0.05 Not Significant
Below 50000 (99)	149.81	21.664				
50000 – 75000 (44)	152.23	39.530				
75000 – 100000 (9)	140.00	19.500				
above 100000 (28)	151.04	19.373				
Within Groups			126360.045	176	717.955	

Source: Field Data.

The Table – 06 reveals that there is significant difference between Monthly Salary of the respondents and their Overall Impact towards the level of perception on the factors of employee engagement. Hence, the calculated value (0.660) is greater than table value ($p>0.05$). The research hypothesis is rejected and the null hypothesis is accepted.

TABLE – 07 DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS AND THEIR VARIOUS LEVEL OF PERCEPTION ON THE FACTORS OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Factors of Employee Engagement	Low	High	Min	Max	S.D	Median	Mean	Mean rank
Importance of the job	69(38.3%)	111(61.7%)	5	25	4.04	12	11.94	1 st
Clarity of your expectations	57(31.7%)	123(68.3%)	7	35	6.183	14.50	16.08	7 th
Career advancement	67(37.2%)	113(62.8%)	7	35	6.363	15	16.57	9 th
Reward and recognition	83(46.1%)	97(53.9%)	5	25	4.560	12	12.87	2 nd
Feedback and communication	56(31.1%)	124(68.9%)	6	30	4.966	13	14.04	4 th
Interpersonal relationship	131(72.8%)	49(27.2%)	5	25	5.477	16	16.06	6 th
Values	127(70.6%)	53(29.4%)	5	25	5.039	15	15.95	5 th
Safety	128(71.1%)	52(28.9%)	5	25	5.627	16	16.33	8 th

Meaningfulness	138(76.7%)	42(23.3%)	5	25	5.539	18	16.91	10 th
Availability	127(70.6%)	53(29.4%)	4	20	4.243	14	13.34	3 rd
Overall Impact	54(30%)	126(70%)	57	270	26.69	154	150.1	-

Source: Field Data.

From Table – 07 it is concluded that according to the overall mean value of perception computed towards the level of Employee Engagement on the basis of certain factors indicates that the factor Importance of Job (11.94) has secured the rank 1, the factor Reward and recognition (12.87) has secured the rank 2, the factor Availability (13.34) has secured the rank 3, the factor feedback and communication (14.04) has secured the rank 4 and the factor Values (15.95) have secured the rank 5 and perceived to have the highest level of perception as influencing factors of employee engagement whereas the factor Interpersonal relationship (16.06) has secured the rank 6, the factor Clarity of your Expectation (16.08) has secured the rank 7, the factor Safety (16.33) has secured the rank 8, the factor Career Advancement (16.57) has secured the rank 9 and the factor Meaningfulness (16.91) has secured the rank 10 and hence were perceived to have lower level of influence as drivers of Employee Engagement.

SUGGESTIONS

Employee engagement has major precedence of any corporate culture. The engaged workforce are the valuable commodity that contributes more towards the betterment of the organization. The following are certain suggestion that corporate can adopt to facilitate engagement.

1. The major factor of engagement that has been observed to have an adverse impact on the employees is the level of 'Importance towards their job'. Thus the organization can help employees to realize their actual work role by creating a flexible environment to work which enables them to be more engaged.
2. Rewards and recognition on the other hand plays a very prominent role in encouraging the employees. When their work has been accepted, valued and appreciated they tend to be more committed and enthusiastic to work.
3. The employees opinions, views and ideas must be heard and they have to be included in the decision making process which creates employee empowerment which makes them to think that the organization values them and hence they will never think of leaving the job.
4. The study revealed that there is lack of appreciation on the part of qualitative works and innovative ideas. Thus a word of appreciation and recognition can be the most important drivers that trigger engagement.
5. A flexible, positive, comfortable and relaxed work climate can be a created which can make them feel convenient to work.
6. A proper employer – employee relationship can help employees to be motivated, rightly directed and to pursue a good interpersonal relationship.
7. Self-development and learning can be induced which can promote to discover new ideas and skills that can facilitate to explore more opportunities that results in enthusiasm.

8. The work values also play a major role in impacting the employee's engagement levels, thus a proper value system can be framed and practiced.
9. Intensify Work life balance, as it is one of a major crisis that employees have to deal with. A balanced environment can promote a healthier concentration towards the work.

CONCLUSION

Engagement seems to be the real pursuit that organization has to be concerned with. "Happy employees are the valuable assets of an organization", thus it remains as a real challenge for the HR professionals to produce an engaged workforce. Employee engagement has a very significant impact on the productivity of the organization. It is not only a measurement aspect but it is a tool which enables both the organization and the employees to realize their potentials. In this modern world of Competition the recruiters need to be more crucial while hiring employees, even though the real difficult task is to produce engaged employee. An engaged employee will consider the organization more important than a work place and initiates development process. Thus the real success of each and every organization lies in creating the engaged manpower, as the manpower system serves to be one of the prior drivers of organizational development. Better the engagement, better will be the productivity, higher the productivity, higher will be the profit and success of the organization.

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