

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT: A STUDY ON FACTORS AFFECTING EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT

Today most of the organizations realize that each employee is not necessarily the ‘best’ employee in terms of loyalty, commitment and productivity. It is only an ‘occupied employee’ who is rationally and expressively bound with the organization, feels passionate about its ambition and is committed towards its values. commitment at occupation was explained by Kahn as the ‘harnessing of organizational members’ selves to their work roles but it has apposite impact on employee satisfaction and performance. Engaged employee always willing to put maximum effort to achieve organization targets and becomes a great contributor in organizational success. This study encompasses factors affecting employee engagement for the organizations and provides guidelines to the managers to maximum utilize their employees by engaging them in best possible manner.

KEYWORDS: Employee Engagement, Occupied Employee, Harnessing of Organizational Members

INTRODUCTION

Employee engagement is a key business driver for organizational success. Employee engagement is the willingness of employee to “go the extra mile” to achieve the organizational vision. Every organization desired to take a stand in competition by gaining a certain position over others and employee engagement is the best equipment for it. Before explaining the factors, there is a need to go through the meaning of employee engagement by various authors.

“Employee Engagement or employee involvement is a positive attitude adopted by the employee towards the organization and its values”. “It is an erroneous force that stimulated employees to higher (or lower) levels of performance.”

“Employee engagement is a psychological commitment the employee has towards the organization and its values”. It is the art of getting people to believe what you want them to believe. It is the emotional connection which people of the organization feels towards their employment which tends to influence their own behavior and behavior of others.

Perrin’s Global Workforce Study (2003) defines “employees’ willingness and ability to help their company succeed, largely by providing discretionary effort on a sustainable basis.”

Gallup organization explains employee engagement as the involvement with and eagerness for work.

Employee Engagement term first used in a 1990 Academy of Management Journal by William A. Kahn. Kahn’s article on the Psychological conditions of personal engagement and disengagement at work (PDF) shows the conditions at

work which contribute to engagement and disengagement.

High levels of engagement in always produce high level of talent, foster customer loyalty and increase organizational performance and stakeholder worth. Engagement is influenced by many factors such as company culture, organizational interactions and managerial styles to respect and dignity, leadership and company reputation. If employees are not efficiently and effectively engaged with their reputed organizations they cannot able to form an psychological connection with it.

If organizations need to expand themselves and believing in becoming more dependent on technology so there is a greater need to connect with their employees and try to provide them required identity. Engagement is related to job involvement which helps employees to work better in their organizational climate.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

This study will help executives to identify various factors which affect employee engagement and make them capable to modify their strategies accordingly. Objectives of this study are:

- To study the comprehensive framework of factors affecting employee engagement.
- To know the methods to measure employee engagement.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Kahn, (1990) defines employee engagement as the 'harnessing of Organizational members' selves to their work roles. In engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during their task performances. So Employee engagement is the level of involvement and commitment an employee has towards their organization and its values. Is engaged employee works with colleagues to improve performance within the job for the benefit of the organization. Organizations must work to develop and cultivate engagement, which requires a two-way relationship between employer and employee.

Schmidt et al. (1993) proposed a bridge between the pre-existing concept of 'job satisfaction' and employee engagement with the definition: "an employee's involvement with, commitment to, and satisfaction with work. Employee engagement is a part of employee retention."

Sandeep et al (1994) indicates that in the organization, there are more employees who are not engaged than there are engaged employees. This shows that how employee engagement been conceptualized, how to individual differences related to employee engagement and how does employee involvement relate to employee engagement. Personal relationships have also been found to impact work engagement. They have shown that there may be a connection between organization performance and level of engagement.

Holbeche and Springett (2003) argue if there is a need to achieve high engagement, a cure of shared sense of destiny and purpose is significant which links people at an emotional level and elevate their personal desire.

Purcell et al's (2003) study reveals a number of factors which are highly connected with high level of employee engagement. The one thing all of these factors had in common was that they were connected with an employee's involvement in a practice related to their work. For example, effective communications was found to be a factor as engagement levels were affected by the amount of information employees received about how well the company was

performing and how they contributed to the company achieving its business objectives.

The Gallup Organization (2004) reveals link between employee engagement, customer loyalty, business growth and profitability. They compared the scores of these variables among a sample of stores scoring in the top 25 per cent on employee engagement and customer loyalty with those in the bottom 25 per cent. Stores in the bottom 25 per cent significantly under-performed across three productivity measures: sales, customer complaints and turnover. Gallup cites numerous similar examples.

May et al (2004) reveals that engagement is closely associated with job involvement. Job involvement is defined as 'a cognitive or belief state of psychological identification'. This differs from engagement in that it is concerned more with how the individual employs him/her self during the performance of his/her job.

West (2005) argues that when people feel positive emotions, they are capable to think in a more dynamic or open minded way. Those who have more positive emotions, likely to feel greater self control, have more cope up skills and be less defensive in the workplace.

Cawe (2006) reveals the various factors influencing employee engagement. This study shows that engagement culture, leadership, and management, talent mindset, communication and knowledge sharing are the important factors influencing employee engagement in South Africa.

Bakar (2013) and Men (2015) reveals that apart from factors which influenced directly employee engagement there are various factors that influences employee engagement indirectly.

Kangure, Wario and Odhiambo (2014) show the connection between job characteristics such as job clarity, job autonomy, job significance and job performance and employee engagement. This study revealed that above job characteristics have positive significant relationships with employee engagement. This study only focused on direct relationship between the variables under study.

FACTORS AFFECTING EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Literature review depicts various factors which affects employee engagement in an organization. This study reveals some factors which can enhance employee engagement. Below diagram shows the choosing factors from the literature review:

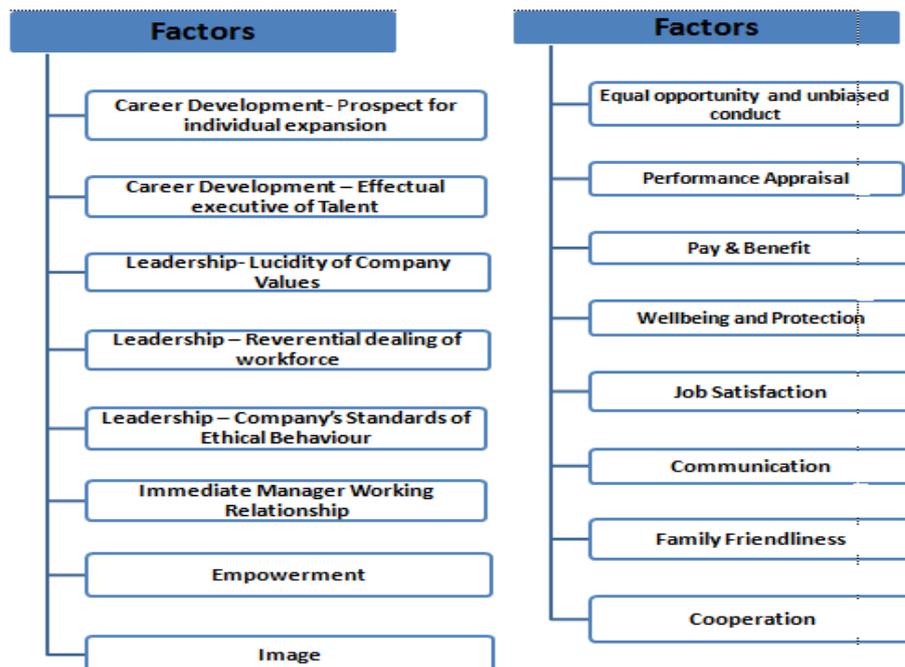


Figure 1

- **Career Development- Prospect for individual expansion**

Organizations with high levels of engagement provide employees with opportunities to enhance their abilities/capability, learn new skills, acquire new knowledge and realize their potential. Companies have to plan for the career opportunities/paths for employees and when companies plan for the career paths of their employees and endow in them. This way their people invest in them.

- **Career Development – Effectual executive of Talent**

Career development influences engagement for employees and retaining the most talented employees and providing opportunities for personal development. Retaining potential employees is the far most important function of successful organizations today.

- **Leadership- Lucidity of Company Values**

“Values are the principles or standards of behaviour; one's judgment of what is important in life.” Employees need to feel that the core values for which their companies stand are unambiguous. It should also be clear to all so work of the company should be done accordingly.

- **Leadership – Reverential dealing of workforce**

Respect and dignity are the intense wants of employees in the organization. In today’s scenario they are not only doing their job for money but they are working to gain self respect and dignity. Successful organizations show respect for each employee’s qualities and contribution – regardless of their job level.

- **Leadership – Company’s Standards of Ethical Behaviour**

Ethic is the branch of knowledge that deals with moral principles. Ethics are the fundamental principles of decent human conduct. A company’s ethical standards also lead to engagement of an individual

- **Immediate Manager Working Relationship**

Good management is known for the success of retaining and involving employees. Good People Managers are competent in informing employees of what is required and expected from them, providing feedback on their performance, providing opportunities for their development, delegating appropriate levels of responsibility and setting priorities. They are approachable, fair, good listeners and establish and maintain good relationships with their direct reports and other key colleagues.

- **Empowerment**

Empowerment is a management practice of sharing information, rewards, and power with employees so that they can take initiative and make decisions to solve problems and improve service and performance. Empowerment is based on the idea that giving employees skills, resources, authority, opportunity, motivation, as well holding them responsible and accountable for outcomes of their actions, will contribute to their competence and satisfaction

- **Image**

How much employees are prepared to endorse the products and services which their company provides its customers depends largely on their perceptions of the quality of those goods and services. High levels of employee engagement are inextricably linked with high levels of customer engagement. Employees will be more connected to their customers if they are being connected by the company itself.

Other Factors

- **Equal opportunity and unbiased conduct**

Superior must provide employees' opportunities for organizational growth and expansion as well as for employees' advancement. Conditions should be equal for all the employees and management conduct or treatment should not be partial for a particular class/mob.

- **Performance appraisal**

Performance appraisal is basically known as employee appraisal. It is a method by which the job performance of an employee is documented and evaluated.

Fair evaluation of an employee's performance is an important criterion for determining the level of employee engagement. The company which follows an appropriate performance appraisal technique (which is transparent and not biased) will have high levels of employee engagement.

- **Compensation and Benefits**

The company should have a proper pay system so that the employees are motivated to work in the organization. In order to boost his engagement levels the employees should also be provided with certain benefits and compensations. By making them sound from financial terms, a company can easily deal with the psychological problems of employees.

- **Wellbeing and Protection**

Research indicates that the engagement levels are low if the employee does not feel secure while working. Therefore every organization should adopt appropriate methods and systems for the health and safety of their employees.

This is already shown by Abraham Maslow in his need hierarchy model of motivation that employees actually feel motivated by achieving these factors.

- **Job Satisfaction**

Job satisfaction is the positive feeling of people from their work, task, job or organization.

Factors Affecting Job Satisfaction

- Working Conditions
- Opportunity for Advancement
- Workload and Stress Level
- Respect from Co-Workers
- Relationship with Supervisors
- Financial Rewards
- Salary
- Job security & safety
- Fringe benefits
- Employee motivation

A person who is satisfied from his/her job can be able to become involved employee. So leaders has to create new paths which stimulate employees to work better and achieve more for themselves and for the organizations.

- **Communication**

Company should clearly communicate plans & policies to the employees. If it kept secret from them then they feel de motivation and start shirking to put their best efforts. Organizations should avoid chain policy and adopt flat organizations with the help of smooth interactive atmosphere. There should be free flow of ideas or message from one place to another. Proper and adequate channel can help employees to engage themselves in a better way.

- **Family Friendliness**

A person's family life influences his wok life. When an employee realizes that the organization is considering his family's benefits also, he will have an emotional attachment with the organization which leads to engagement

- **Co-operation**

It is an act or instance of working or acting together for a common purpose or benefit. If the entire organization works together by helping each other i.e. all the employees as well as the supervisors co-ordinate well than the employees will be engaged. Cooperation is important because it allows people and groups to work together to achieve a common goal or derive mutual benefits.

What One Factor Affects Employee Engagement the Most?

Research indicates that the single most important factor to drive employee engagement and retention is the **Immediate Manager Working Relationship**.

HOW TO MEASURE EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT?

Careful Listening: Employers must adopt careful listening while interacting to his employees. Listening is always considered as continuous activity which always takes place when both (employers & employees) start interacting with each other. Employees actually require his worthiness in the organization. To gain importance they always tried hard to become favorite to their boss. Employer must provide employees their better space so that employees can discuss any matter with them without any space/gap.

Measuring actual performance of employees: Employers should measure their employees' current performance to keep an eye on their contribution towards organizational growth and success. This will show employers that how much effort their employees are putting on job.

CONCLUSIONS

The world's top- performing organizations understand that employee engagement is a force that drives business results. Research exhibit that engaged employees are more creative employees. They are more profitable, more customer - focused, safer, and more likely to withstand temptations to leave the company. Engagement of employees has a direct influence on productivity of employees. Involved employees always perform better and also beneficial for the whole organization. In the excellent organizations, employee engagement transcends human resources initiative-it is the way they do business in today scenario, managers of topical business houses required to focus upon above discussed factors which help them to engage their employees well and make them feel more satisfied. It is already said that emotional connection always stimulates employees to work effectively. It moulds the behavior of employees in a better way that affects whole organization including customer service and task achievement on actual job. A successful employee engagement helps to create a community at the workplace and not just workers.

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