

An Exploratory Study on Employee Engagement in A PSU

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Abstract: This article focuses on examining depth understanding of employee engagement in relation to organization context in a public sector. There is growing recognition about the need to evolve an engagement strategy to keep employees engaged and aligned with an organisation's mission. An employee's engagement survey was designed to identify how well employees are committed to their jobs and feel a part of the organization and to identify areas in which the organization can improve in fostering employee engagement. Employee engagement results in part from understanding the company's direction and the significance of an employee's role in helping the company reach its goals. The research will give a clear view of various factors affecting employee's engagement. It is important for an organisation to know what drives its employees as they are the ones that own the company's success. While a company may invest all its energy and resources in making it the best place to work, employee values and passion must be connected and aligned towards company goals to achieve organisational success. The key to achieving excellence lies in ensuring that every employee has a passion to excel. This article tries to examine relationship between levels of employee engagement and organisation success by conducting a engagement survey where some business success factors will be taken as independent variable and employee engagement will be a dependent variable. The research findings will be to profound to what extent engagement leads to business success and identify areas which needs improvement as well as to develop some strategies which organisation can implement to increase the level of employee engagement.

Keywords: Employees Satisfaction, Organization Effectiveness, Workforce Performance, Interpersonal relation, Growth and Prosperity.

I. INTRODUCTION

As organisations globalise and become more dependent on technology in a virtual working environment, there is a greater need to connect and engage with employees to provide them with an organisational identity. Especially in Indian culture, this becomes more relevant given the community feeling which organisations provide in our society. Employee engagement plays a greater role in the current era where every contribution by the employees counts. Employee engagement programs throw light into the success of the company in engaging its employees in productive activities. Employee engagement programs are important as they help to align the human activities to the company strategy. It measures the success of the organisational policies in assisting the realization of the organisational goals. Research evidence across most public sectors supports the notion that staffs who are engaged deliver higher productivity and organisational performance, increased operating and net profit, improved customer focus, lower levels of absenteeism and higher retention. Employee engagement also expects the management to nourish a healthy environment within the entity. The doors must be kept open within the organisation for the employees to explore various career opportunities for personal development through job rotation. Training and developmental programs must support the employees in augmenting their strengths and fighting against the weaknesses. The managers must take up the opportunity in encouraging and rewarding the excellence displayed by the employees in their work. Encouragement can motivate the employee to concentrate on more productive channels. A strong and supportive working culture can improve the employee satisfaction, thereby decreasing the opportunities for attrition. An Employment Engagement survey has been

done in Durgapur Steel Plant and it was designed to identify how well employees are committed to their jobs and feel a part of the organization and to identify areas in which the organization can improve in fostering employee engagement.

II. EMPLOYEES ENGAGEMENT

Engagement at work was conceptualized by Kahn, (1990) as the ‘harnessing of organizational members’ selves to their work roles. In engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances. The cognitive aspect of employee engagement concerns employees’ beliefs about the organisation, its leaders and working conditions. The emotional aspect concerns how employees feel about each of those three factors and whether they have positive or negative attitudes toward the organisation and its leaders. The physical aspect of employee engagement concerns the physical energies exerted by individuals to accomplish their roles. Thus, according to Kahn (1990), engagement means to be psychologically as well as physically present when occupying and performing an organisational role.

The second related construct to engagement in organizational behavior is the notion of flow advanced by Csikszentmihalyi (1975, 1990). Csikszentmihalyi (1975) defines flow as the ‘holistic sensation’ that, people feel when they act with total involvement. Flow is the state in which there is little distinction between the self and environment. When individuals are in Flow State little conscious control is necessary for their actions. Employee engagement is the thus the level of commitment and involvement an employee has towards their organization and its values. An engaged employee is aware of business context, and works with colleagues to improve performance within the job for the benefit of the organization. The organization must work to develop and nurture engagement, which requires a two-way relationship between employer and employee.’ Thus Employee engagement is a barometer that determines the association of a person with the organization.

Drivers of employees Engagement:

Career Opportunities: Employees’ perceptions of a favorable set of circumstances for their future in the organization, including growth and advancement and including perceptions of the processes and fairness of decisions regarding employees’ opportunities.

Recognition: Employees’ perceptions of the acknowledgement and favorable notices they receive from others for their contributions and accomplishments in their work.

Organization Reputation: Employees’ perception that the organization is regarded as a good place to work by those outside the organization.

Communication (practices): The extent to which communication is effective across the organization; often includes the perception that employees have the information they need to do their jobs well.

Managing Performance: Employees’ perceptions that the organization’s formal performance management processes provide feedback and guidance to improve performance.

Pay: Employees’ perceptions of the appropriateness of their pay, relative to their performance and contributions; pay can be defined to refer to both fixed and variable pay.

Innovation: Employees’ perceptions that the organization looks for and accepts new ideas from its employees.

Brand Alignment: The consistency between the promises an organization makes to its employees about working at that organization and the employee work experience.

People/HR Practices: Employees’ perceptions of the extent to which a company’s formal policies and informal practices create a positive work environment.

Career Aspiration: Ability to accomplish something that is either personally rewarding or acknowledged by others as a major achievement.

2.1. Types of Engagement:

2.1.1. Intellectual engagement: the extent to which individuals are absorbed in their work and think about ways performance can be improved.

2.1.2. Affective engagement: the extent to which people feel positive emotional connections to their work experience and thus with the company.

2.1.3. Social engagement: the extent to which employees talk to colleagues about work related improvements and change.

2.2. Levels of Engagement:

2.2.1. ACTIVELY ENGAGED "*Engaged*" employees are builders. They are more committed to the organization. They are naturally curious about their company and their place in it. They perform at consistently high levels. They want to use their talents and strengths at work every day. They work with passion and they drive innovation and move their organization forward. They are less likely to leave the organization.

2.2.2. NOT-ENGAGED *Not-engaged* employees tend to concentrate on tasks rather than the goals and outcomes they are expected to accomplish. They want to be told what to do just they can do it and say they have finished. They focus on accomplishing tasks vs. achieving an outcome. Employees who are *not-engaged* tend to feel their contributions are being overlooked, and their potential is not being tapped. They often feel this way because they don't have productive relationships with their managers or with their co-workers.

2.2.3. ACTIVELY DISENGAGED The "*actively disengaged*" employees are the "cave-dwellers." They are "consistently against virtually everything." They are not just unhappy at work; they are busy acting out their unhappiness. They sow seeds of negativity at every opportunity. Every day, actively disengaged workers undermine what their engaged co-workers accomplish. As workers increasingly rely on each other to generate products and services, the problems and tensions that are fostered by *actively disengaged* workers can cause great damage to an organization's functioning. They increase the cost of the organization by low quality, customer satisfaction, and missed opportunity.

Relevant Terms:

Job satisfaction: It refers to how employees feel about their compensation, benefits, work environment, career developmental and relationship with the management. It is a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences.

Employee involvement: It is seen as a central principle of 'soft' HRM, where the focus is upon capturing the ideas of employees and securing their commitment. employees have a degree of choice and discretion over how they perform their tasks and responsibilities (Robinson 2006).

Job engagement: job engagement is defined as a person's enthusiasm and involvement in his or her job. People who are highly engaged in their jobs identify personally with the job and are motivated by the work itself. They tend to work harder and more productively than others and are more likely to produce the results their customers and organizations want.

Organisation Citizenship Behaviours: Organ's definition of OCB includes three critical aspects that are central to this construct. First, OCBs are thought of as discretionary behaviors, which are not part of the job description, and are performed by the employee as a result of personal choice. Second, OCBs go above and beyond that which is an enforceable requirement of the job description. Finally, OCBs contribute positively to overall organizational effectiveness.

Work engagement: Work Engagement. Like employee engagement, work engagement is a relatively new concept coming from organizational psychology that only recently has been given theoretical definitions and instruments for assessment (Hallberg, 2005). One such instrument is the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES), which measures three dimensions: vigor, dedication, and absorption. Vigor is described as, "being fully charged with energy and resilient in one's work even during a regular 'dull' day when nothing particular happens." Dedication is, "being proud of one's work and convinced that what one performs is significant." Finally, absorption is the concept of, "being carried away by work, forgetting everything in one's surroundings, looking at your watch and finding that you have missed your coffee break without even noticing." The construct validity of UWES was established early on and has shown good factorial validity across occupational groups, countries, and cultures (Hallberg, 2005)

Organisation Commitment: Organizational commitment is most commonly defined in terms of an individual's identification with the organization's goals and values, willingness to exert effort for the organization, and desire to continue as part of the organization.

2.3. Benefits of Employees Engagement to an organization:

2.3.1. Increased productivity - employees return refreshed and inspired. Line managers report greater productivity in returning employees.

2.3.2. Improved employee competency - the experience can build 'soft skills' that simply cannot be taught in a training room environment. Participants report an increase in confidence across all aspects of their lives, making them more effective at their jobs. Improvements are common in areas such as team building, communication, analytical thinking, leadership, diplomacy, flexibility, conflict resolution, readiness to change, problem solving, and listening.

2.3.3. Recruitment - research indicates that if faced with a decision between two equal companies, highly qualified staff will opt for the one with the better environmental performance/stance.

2.3.4. Retention - Demonstrating commitment to corporate citizenship is likely to be a string factor in retaining staff. Aligning individual's personal values with those of the company is a powerful motivator.

2.3.5. Enhanced corporate pride - through demonstrating a commitment to sustainable development, partners engender a feeling of corporate pride amongst their employees. Investing in the program also sends a clear message that staff development is high on the organisation's agenda.

2.3.6. Integrate fellowship into HR practice - when programs are embedded in the partner's HR strategy, they can become an important part of professional development plans.

2.3.7. Motivational driver - placements can be used as a reward for employees in a way that pay does not.

2.3.8. Identify internal champions for change - employee engagement programs help management practitioners to identify and develop internal 'champions' who can be a driving force for change within the organization

2.4. Benefits of Employees Engagement to an individual

2.4.1. Learning about sustainability - discover more about the challenges that the natural world faces and learn what sustainability means to you and your workplace.

2.4.2. Professional development - enhanced by learning and applying new skills.

2.4.3. Broadening perspectives - meet people from different nationalities, backgrounds and cultures and form lifelong bonds.

2.4.4. Lead the way - first step to becoming an internal environment champion within your organisation.

2.4.5. Be part of the solution - enjoy a hands-on, pro-active experience, rather than hearing about the issues through the news.

2.4.6. See something different - a refreshing and stimulating change of scenery for desk bound employees.

III. WHAT PRODUCES AN ENVIRONMENT CONDUCTIVE TO EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT?

Employees are more likely to become truly engaged and involved in their work if workplace provides these factors:

3.1. Employee engagement must be a business strategy that focuses on finding engaged employees and then, keeping the employee engaged throughout the whole employment relationship.

3.2. Employee engagement must focus on business results. Employees are most engaged when they are accountable and can see and measure the outcomes of their performance.

3.3. Employee engagement occurs when the goals of the business are aligned with the employee's goals and how the employee spends his or her time. The glue that holds the strategic goals of the employee and the business together is frequent, effective communication that reaches and informs the employee at the level and practice of his or her job. Engaged employees have the information that they need to understand exactly and precisely how what they do at work every day affects the company's business goals and priorities.

3.4. Employee engagement lives when organizations are committed to management and leadership development in performance development plans that are performance-driven and provide clear succession plans.

IV. WHY ARE ORGANIZATIONS SO BAD AT EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT?

If employee engagement is so critically important to an organization's success, why do organizations pursue employee engagement so ineffectively? The answer to the question is that incorporating a business strategy such as employee engagement is hard work - work that many employers cannot see affecting their bottom line immediately.

A succession of such strategies has garnered the attention of managers and organizations over the past twenty years. Employee involvement, employee empowerment, continuous improvement, management by objectives etc all had the same fatal flaw in implementation. Most organizations implemented them as a program that was ancillary to the actual business. By thinking about employee engagement, as a planned business strategy with expected and measured business results, perhaps employee engagement can escape the onus of just another HR program.

With this in mind, employee engagement takes effective managers who are committed to:

- **measuring employee performance** and holding employees **accountable**,
- providing the **communication necessary to align** each employee's actions with the organization's overall business goals,
- pursuing the **employee development** necessary to ensure success, and
- Making a **commitment** (time, tools, attention, reinforcement, training, and so forth) to keeping employees engaged over the long haul because they fundamentally believe and understand that no other strategy will produce as much success – for both the business and the employees.

V. ADDITIONAL CRITICAL FACTORS TO ENSURE EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

These factors also influence the willingness of employees to stay engaged and contributing.

- An effective **recognition and reward** system: in a recognition system that promotes employee engagement, recognition is available, frequent, and recognizes actions that are truly worthy of recognition. Effective recognition always involves verbal or written acknowledgement from the employee's manager in addition to any physical reward supplied.
- **Frequent feedback**: the downside of the standard employee performance appraisal is that it is a one-time deal. Effective performance feedback takes place every day, minimally, weekly for employees who need less interaction with their manager. Effective feedback focuses on what the employee is doing well and what needs improvement. It is clear and specific and reinforces the actions that the manager wants to see the employee regularly perform. **Shared values and guiding principles**: engaged employees thrive in an environment that reinforces their most deeply held values and beliefs. Employees are most successful in an organization in which their personal values are in sync with the organization's stated values and guiding principles.
- Demonstrated respect, trust, and emotional intelligence on the part of the employee's direct supervisor: managers who **relate effectively with employees**, who demonstrate that they are personally interested in and care about their employees, and who elicit employee input and opinions, are golden.
- **Positive relationships with coworkers**: engaged employees need to work, not just with nice people, but with coworkers who are equivalently engaged. Coworkers who demonstrate integrity, team work, a passion for quality and serving customers, and who are passionate about what they do at work, make ideal coworkers in a workplace that fosters employee engagement.

VI. EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM

Employee engagement programs are important as they help to align the human activities to the company strategy. It measures the success of the organisational policies in assisting the realization of the organisational goals.

Organisation offers a range of employee engagement activities to boost the morale of your workforce:

- Health and Wellness Programs
- Sports Events
- Cultural Activities/ Foundation Day Celebration/ Annual Day Celebration
- Party Planning

- Food Festival
- Corporate Social Responsibility related activities
- Team building activities
- Team outing and group holidays
- Special Day Celebrations
- Rewards and Gifting
- Complementary Events (Sponsored events)
- Super deals or your employees

VII. EMPLOYEES ENGAGEMENT SURVEY

EES is undertaken to evaluate the levels of engagement in an organization and to examine its impact on the business success.

Employees' Engagement Survey:

- 1. Employee name:**
- 2. Designation:**
- 3. Department:**
- 4. Date of Joining:**

Please read each statement below. Indicate to what degree you agree with each statement using the following key:

- 5= Strongly agree**
- 4= Agree**
- 3= Neither agree nor disagree**
- 2= Disagree**
- 1= Strongly Disagree**

S.No	To what extent the following conditions exist in your organization	5	4	3	2	1
1	I am committed, enthusiastic and passionate about my job.					
2	I am provided with the necessary materials to accomplish my work.					
3	I am kept well informed about organization events and issues.					
4	The benefits package I receive is fair.					
5	My supervisor and I mutually agree on specific and measurable job expectations.					
6	I am trusted to do my job without interference					
7	When needed, I am willing to put in extra effort to get a job done.					
8	In the last thirty days, I have received recognition or praise for doing a good job.					
9	My associates or fellow employees are committed to doing quality work.					
10	I am included in the decision-making process.					
11	This organization champions and promotes work life balance.					
12	I have opportunities to grow and develop in my position.					
13	I receive regular feedback on my current performance from my supervisor.					
14	Employees are treated fairly across all units.					
15	My co-workers are encouraged to suggest new and creative ways to get the work done and to think "outside the box."					
16	The organizational culture encourages team spirit. .					
17	I have been given sufficient training to perform my job effectively.					
18	The mission/purpose of my organization makes me feel like my job is important.					
19	I intend to stay with this organization as long as I can.					
20	My organization supports continuous learning and development.					

VIII. CHALLENGES OF EMPLOYEES ENGAGEMENT

A survey had been done in a PSU. Employee engagement survey questionnaires had been distributed among 100 samples of various departments.

From individual responses following challenges had been identified:

- **Current Communications Vehicles** — Email, newsletters, Intranets and pamphlets are not effective. These vehicles can't reach every employee in an organization — nor can they quickly convey important content. The tools are cumbersome to use and the content is often not very timely. In fact these tools are often ignored by those with easy access to a computer.
- **Top-Down Communication / Thinking** — this could be listed as an issue with the current tools, but it is also partly philosophical. Today's employee communication is primarily top-down in nature. Employees need to be able to engage in a timely manner with peers, subordinates and superiors. Sharing innovation, resources and ideas is cumbersome today given the current tools, but impossible if the company does not actively implement ways for employees to share ideas and enthusiasm.
- **Non-White Collar Employees** — Not everyone in a company has ready access to a computer. Organizations face serious challenges reaching and engaging their non-white collar workers with strategic content — which can be significant for companies like retailers, manufacturers and package delivery companies, among many others. If you want to engage your workforce, you must be able to reach all of your employees.
- **Geography & Language Barriers** — Employees are not homogenous in today's multinational workforces. Enterprises face significant challenges in sharing information and concepts between employees that speak another language or are based in other countries. A shared goal or initiative that works well in one geographic region is often hampered in another due to language and cultural issues.
- **Employee Communications Needs a Leader** — the planning and implementation for these programs is usually centered in one of two places — Human Resources or Internal Communications. While workforce communications and internal communications teams are great places to start, both should be working together more cohesively. Each brings strengths the other lacks. Additionally, in order for these two groups to work effectively, they will need to draw on other resources that include the IT, marketing, social media and public relations teams.

If companies want to increase their performance and competitiveness, they need to improve how they engage with employees. If they can build employee engagement programs that, as a first step, address these five challenges, the content they curate and communicate will be more quickly consumed and ultimately deliver a higher return-on-investment.

IX. CONCLUSIONS

Engagement is a key buzzword in 21st century management. Strategic human resource management rests on the belief that people are the key to achieving competitive advantage. Employees need to be seen as assets to be developed, not costs to be controlled. Engagement is a key buzzword in 21st century management. Strategic human resource management rests on the belief that people are the key to achieving competitive advantage. Employees need to be seen as assets to be developed, not costs to be controlled. Human Resource Management should be seen as a strategic function of an organisation. It helps to build a competitive edge for an organisation by positively engaging its employees. Key ingredients of effective Human Resource Management are having in place an appropriate leadership style and effective two-way communications with employees. This creates an open and honest environment where employees feel that their ideas are being listened to and that they can make a contribution to decision making. Engaged employees are more likely to be proud to work for their organisation and therefore will believe in and live out the values of the organisation.

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