

Literature Review on Employee Engagement

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Abstract

Employee engagement is very important for any industry including healthcare and hospital because it has a diversity of workforce and greater number of employees works in a single organization. In this era of globalization and industrialization, where there is large scale competition in the market, it is necessary for the organization to have engaged workforce for the survival and smooth functioning of the organization. Employee engagement is considered as an important technique that is commonly used now a day in the corporate world, mainly in service industry. Employee engagement is decisive to any organization that seeks to retain their valued employees. Hence, it is very important for effective utilization of human resource and smooth running of the organization for all these industries. Without employee engagement, an organization cannot survive for a long period of time.

Keywords: Workaholism, Burnout, Human Resource Management (HRM), Job Demand Resource (JD-R) theory, Job crafting, Return on Investment (ROI), AYUSH (Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, Homeopathy)

Introduction

Employee engagement has become a hot topic in recent years. Although there is a great deal of interest in engagement, there is also a good deal of confusion. At present, there is no consistency in definition, with engagement having been operationalised and measured in many disparate ways. Employees are asset to an organization as they are the intellectual capital of the organization. Using this intellectual capital has become a vital source of competitive advantage for any organization (Arthur, 1994). By nurturing employee engagement, organizations can successfully navigate these challenges and capitalize on their intellectual capital. A statement of Kroth and Boverie, (2013) cited by Swathi, S., (2014) engaged employees are passionate about the work they do. Passion is always accompanied by excitement, enthusiasm and productivity. As cited by Salimath & Kavitha (2016), engaged employees are committed, motivated, energetic and enthusiastic about problem solving. They are absorbed in their work, put their heart into their jobs, are excited about doing a good job, exert energy in their work and are a source of competitive advantage for their employees (Katzenbach, 2000). A highly engaged employee will consistently deliver beyond expectations (Wright and Cropanzano, 2000). High levels of employee engagement are inextricably linked with high levels of customer engagement, good performance appraisal and a safe working environment (Shaw, 2005).

Methodology

It is a review based study which used mainly secondary data obtained from various sources. Especially the articles published particularly related and focusing on employee engagement were reviewed.

Defining Employee Engagement

Shuck & Wollard, (2009) cited and explain in his work that the first published use of the term employee engagement was made by Kahn in 1990, who described it as being different from other employee role constructs such as job involvement, commitment or intrinsic motivation, asserting that it focused on how psychological experiences of work shape the process of people presenting and absenting themselves during task performances (Kahn, 1990). Since then the term has been variously defined by scholars. Like Marcey & Schneier (2008) says that employee engagement is the positive feeling that employees have towards their jobs and also the motivation and effort they put into it. Engagement goes beyond satisfaction and commitment. To be fully engaged is to be involved in and enthusiastic about one's work (Falcone, 2006). Schaufeli and Bakker (2003), and Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez Roma and Bakker (2002), who view engagement at work as an anti-pole to burnout, define work engagement as engagement is a positive, fulfilling, work related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption. Where, vigor is characterized by high levels of energy and mental resilience while working, the willingness to invest effort in one's work, and persistence even in the face of difficulties. Dedication, refers to being strongly involved in one's work and experiencing a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge. Absorption, is characterized by being fully concentrated and happily engrossed in one's work, whereby time passes quickly and one has difficulties with detaching oneself from work' (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003). The three dimensions of Vigor, Dedication and Absorption together make up the construct of employee engagement, that may however be distinguished from Workaholism, in that the former also brings the association of positive attitudes at work, positive mental health and good performance (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003). Employee engagement has been reported to belong on the continuum of stress, as the antithesis of burnout (Halbesleben & Buckley, 2004). It has also been considered on the time continuum, as measured by the time spent on a job (Goddard, 1999). Employee engagement has been said to be a measure of job involvement (Harter, Schmidt & Hayes, 2002). Employee engagement has also been associated with commitment (McCashland, 1999) According to Wellins and Concelman (2005) engagement is "an amalgamation of commitment, loyalty, productivity, and ownership". To be engaged is to be emotionally and intellectually committed to one's organization (Bhatnagar, 2007).

Dimensions of Employee Engagement

Employee engagement has also been conceptualized as having two dimensions; first is Cognitive engagement the extent to which the worker is aware of his mission at work and his

role in the organization and second one is Emotional engagement or physical engagement the extent to which the worker empathizes with others at work and connects meaningfully with his or her co-worker (Kahn, 1990, 1992; Luthans & Peterson, 2002). High engagement on each dimension is predictive of high overall engagement for an employee (Kahn, 1990; Bhatnagar, 2007). According to Tim Rutledge cited by Seijts & Crim, (2006), truly engaged employees are attracted to, and inspired by, their work (“I want to do this”), committed (“I am dedicated to the success of what I am doing”), and fascinated (“I love what I am doing”).

Working Definition of Employee Engagement

As evidenced by the literature reviewed, several definitions of employee engagement exist. Although each represents unique perspectives of the time and field, the disjointed approach to defining employee engagement has lent itself to the mischaracterization of the construct and the potential for misinterpretation. Several definitions from both the practitioner and academic literature reviewed and listed below starting with the earliest specific definition and working forward in time.

- Personal engagement is the simultaneous employment and expression of a person’s ‘preferred self’ in task behaviours that promote connections to work and to others, personal presence, and active full role performances (Kahn, 1990).
- A persistent, positive affective motivational state of fulfilment in employees characterized by high levels of activation and pleasure (Maslach et al., 2001).
- Employee engagement refers to the individual’s involvement and satisfaction with as well as enthusiasm for work (Harter et al., 2002).
- A distinct and unique construct that consists of cognitive, emotional, and behavioural components those are associated with individual role performance (Saks, 2005).
- Engaged employees are mentally and emotionally invested in their work and in contributing to their employer’s success (Czarnowsky, 2008).
- Trait engagement is defined as the “inclination or orientation to experience the world from a particular vantage point” (Marcey & Schneider, 2008).
- Psychological state engagement is defined as an antecedent to behavioural engagement (encompassing the constructs of satisfaction, involvement, commitment, and empowerment). Behavioural engagement is “defined in terms of discretionary effort.

Here, in each of the definitions, several areas of consistency and inconsistency can be identified. First, being engaged is a personal decision; it concerns the individual employee, not the organization. Many definitions (Kahn, 1990; Marcey & Schneider, 2008; Saks, 2005) allude to this; however, Maslach et al. (2001) and Czarnowsky (2008) speak only of generalities, underscoring a primary misconception that employee engagement is about the organization. Employee engagement concerns the individual, not the masses.

Second, in several of the definitions, different types of engagement can be identified; like cognitive engagement, emotional engagement, and behavioural engagement each as separate, definable areas, although a few of the definitions only mention one type of engagement (e.g., Harter et al., 2002; Czarnowsky, 2008). The idea from both the literature reviewed as well as the definitions themselves is that each type of engagement builds on the next, which is consistent with the employee engagement framework (Alderfer, 1972; Maslow, 1970).

Third, employee engagement has no physical properties, but is manifested and often measured behaviourally (Kahn, 1990; Marcey & Schneider, 2008). Behavioural manifestation is understood inconsistently as an employee's role performance, an employer's success, or discretionary effort, but consistently understood as an internal decision manifested outwardly. Best conceptualized as a positive or forward moving emotive state (Maslow, 1970), employee engagement is rooted in the psychology of the employee and observed through behaviour.

Lastly, employee engagement is about adaptive behaviours purposefully focused on meeting or exceeding organizational outcomes. By synthesizing the definitions, we argue that employee engagement can be defined in an emergent and working condition as a positive cognitive, emotional, and behavioural state directed toward organizational outcomes..

Approaches to employee engagement: highlights

In any research attempt on management, it suggested to understand the approaches already prevailing in the field of study. Primarily there are three basic approaches in the field of employee engagement. The first one is model followed by Gallup, a leading consulting firm working in the field of engagement intensively for several years. The second one is Hewitt model by Hewitt associates, who are also a leading consulting firm working in this filed for several decades. The third is an approach by Andrew Brown which is called engagement pyramid.

Existing measures of employee engagement: highlights

Balain and Sparrow (2009) suggest that engagement surveys represent a mechanism for employee feedback which is used periodically as a gauge to show how well the organization is doing. Here are some existing measures of engagement as listed; Institute for Employment Studies Engagement Survey; Gallup Workplace Audit (Q12); Net Promoter; Roffey Park Institute's Engagement Diagnostic Service; Towers Perrin Rapid Engagement Diagnostic Survey; Utrecht Work Engagement Scale; and Workplace Insight Tool

Current trends in work engagement research

We see several trends in the work engagement literature. Probably one of the most important trends is that engagement is studied as a phenomenon that may fluctuate within persons across time and situations (Bakker, 2014; Sonnentag *et al.*, 2010). Daily work engagement (or weekly and episodic work engagement) is isomorphic, which means that its manifestation is usually the same when studied as a general phenomenon vs. as a fluctuating phenomenon. Daily engagement refers to daily levels of vigor, dedication, and absorption that may fluctuate as a function of daily

demands, resources, and proactive behaviours. For example, Xanthopoulou et al. (2009) have shown that daily work engagement is a function of daily job and personal resources. Specifically, Xanthopoulou et al. found that employees working in fast food restaurants were more engaged on the days they had access to many resources. Petrou et al. (2012) have shown that daily work engagement is a function of daily job crafting behaviours.

For organizational practice, it is important to know that employees experience fluctuating levels of engagement when performing their work. However, it is equally important to know what the general levels of engagement are, and whether these levels can be influenced by human resources practices. One trend in the literature is that human resource scholars have started to study the top down impact of Human Resource Management (HRM) systems and practices on employee work engagement. Albrecht et al. (2015), for example, drew from a number of theoretical frameworks to propose an integrated strategic engagement model that includes consideration of how organizational context factors, job context factors, and individual psychological and motivational factors influence engagement. Saks and Gruman (2017) have similarly proposed that engagement researchers might usefully draw from the ability motivation opportunity model to understand how HRM practices can influence engagement. Overall, there is a clear trend toward recognizing that HRM practitioners need to move beyond the routine administration of annual engagement surveys and need to embed engagement in HRM policies and practices such as personnel selection, socialization, performance management, and training and development (Albrecht *et al.*, 2015).

One other important trend in the literature is the link between leadership and engagement. Although quite a lot is known about the association between transformational leadership and engagement (e.g. Breevaart *et al.*, 2014; Ghadi *et al.*, 2013), leaders of contemporary organizations are increasingly realizing the importance of organizational cultures characterized by flexibility, agility, and responsiveness (Denning, 2013). As a consequence, researchers are beginning to look beyond designated, formal and role based sources of leadership, to instead look at a range of more inclusive leadership styles such as distributive, shared, collectivist, and adaptive leadership styles (Caulfield and Senger, 2017; Heifetz *et al.*, 2009; Yammarino *et al.*, 2012). Such leadership styles can potentially compliment the known benefits associated with transformational leadership, particularly in explaining the emergence and maintenance of engagement in dynamic team based working contexts.

In addition to organizational level and top down approaches to work engagement, recent research has shown that employees may also influence their own levels of engagement. One popular bottom up approach to work engagement is job crafting. Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) have defined job crafting as the physical and cognitive changes individuals make in their task or relational boundaries. Physical changes refer to changes in the form, scope, or number of job tasks or relationships at work, whereas cognitive changes refer to changing how one perceives the

job. Using the Job Demand-Resource theory (JD-R), Tims et al. (2012) have argued and shown that job crafting can take the form of proactively increasing job resources, increasing challenge job demands, or reducing hindrance job demands. They found that employees in various occupations (e.g. teachers, tax officers, general practitioners, consultants, chemical plant operators, nurses) all show job crafting behaviours and modify their jobs on a regular basis. Particularly job crafting in the form of increasing challenge job demands and increasing job resources is positively related to work engagement and task performance. In addition, recent job crafting interventions have shown that employees can learn to craft their jobs, resulting in more job and personal resources, higher levels of work engagement, and improved performance (e.g. Gordon et al., 2017; Van Wingerden et al., 2017). This means that job crafting is an effective bottom up strategy to improve work engagement, because it increases the meaning of work and the fit between person and organization. One of the most important trends in the engagement literature centres on the increased number of intervention studies that has been published in recent years. Although it is important that research continues to incrementally improve our understanding of the nature, causes, and consequences of engagement, it is also vitally important that the accumulated knowledge about engagement is translated into practical applications aimed at promoting individual, team and organizational health, well being, and performance (Guest, 2014; Schaufeli and Salanova, 2010). Steidle et al. (2017), for example, in a randomized controlled study, found that respite interventions helped employees replenish and build energy resources at work. Knight *et al.* (2017), using a non randomized, matched control group, pre-test, post-test design showed that a participatory action intervention increased work engagement in nursing staff. As noted above, several other studies have shown the efficacy of job crafting interventions for increasing employee engagement.

Importance and Advantages of Employee Engagement

As opined by Kang (2014) engaged employees strengthen the organizations' competitive advantage and generate favourable business environment. Neeti and Leekha, (2011) have reported that engagement is one of the important and powerful strategy to attract, nurture, retain, respect and manage the manpower of the organization. They have also pointed out that married employees tend to have a higher level of engagement than those who are unmarried. Employee engagement is very important for any industry including healthcare and hospital because it has a diversity of workforce and greater number of employees works in a single organization.

Today the business scenario is changing both in terms of the global nature of work and diversity of the workforce. Each and every organization across the globe wants to make the best utilization of its human resources in order to achieve competitive advantage in the market (Heaney, 2010). When employees are engaged in their work, they have good relationships with their co-workers and working environment becomes better. An engaged workplace encourages commitment and energy among the employees of the organization to improve production and business performance (Kumar and Swetha,

2011). High levels of engagement in domestic and global firms promote retention of talent, foster customer loyalty and improve organizational performance and stakeholder value ((Wilson, 2009; Markos & Sridevi, 2010). Engaged employees are not only happy in their job, but also translate that satisfaction into higher productivity and profitability of the organization (Larkin, 2009; Lee, 2012). It is a technique which can be used by the organization to handle uncertainty of business environment. The organization that understands the conditions which enhance employee engagement will have accomplished something that their competitors will find very difficult to imitate (Kumar & Swetha, 2011). Engaged employee is almost three times more sincere toward his job in comparison to those employees who are actively disengaged (Kular, Gatenby, Rees, Soane, & Truss, 2008). Therefore the organization should focus on the aspect of employee engagement in order to improve organizational performance (Basbous, 2011; Sundaray, 2011). Employee engagement can be a deciding factor for organizational effectiveness. It does not only have the potential to significantly affect employee retention, productivity and loyalty, but also has a key link to customer satisfaction, company reputation and overall stakeholder value (Sundaray, 2011). Engaged employees provide a lot of benefits to the organization such as productivity, improved quality, customer care, cooperation among the employees, reduced employee turnover, reduced absenteeism and disputes (Wilson, 2009; Mortimer, 2010). In the present business environment, organizations across the globe are enhancing the level of engagement of their employees in order to gain competitive advantage in the form of higher productivity, profitability, lower turnover and safety of the organization (Mani, 2011). Therefore it is a challenging task for human resource managers to create and maintain a healthy work environment that motivate the employees in their work and select the right employees at right place.

The advantages of employee engagement are many for example; it is an innovative thought that enhances positive attitudes among the employees towards their job (Robertson, 2012). Engaged employees work with passion and enthusiasm to get the job done (FERENCE, 2009). Employee engagement builds passion, commitment and alignment with the organizations' strategies, goals and objectives. Engaged employees put their all efforts and enthusiasm towards their work and also care about the future of the organization (Mani, 2011). Engaged employees understand the value of ensuring a positive customer experience and are more likely to demonstrate their commitment by delivering high quality products and services (Haid & Sims, 2008). Engaged employees act in a way that reflect the greater level of commitment to the organization and contribute his/her skills and abilities for the betterment of the organization. It increases the level of trust and reduces the problem of turnover of the employees (Hamid & Farooqi, 2014). Engaged employees are not only happy with their job, but also translate that satisfaction into higher productivity and profitability of the organization (Larkin, 2009). Engaged employees are less likely to feel exhausted and make the organization a success in this competitive era. Employees with higher work engagement have higher level of confidence and a high quality relationship with their employers (Saks, 2006). Engaged employee is optimistic, highly focused towards the work, energetic and willing to work for the

sustainable development of the organization (Jose & Mampilly, 2012). An engaged employee is more productive, has greater level of customer satisfaction and loyalty towards the organization that leads to the success of the business (Cook, 2008). Engaged employees will normally perform better and are more motivated than other employees working in the organization. It creates a sense of loyalty in a competitive environment and provides a highly energetic working environment. It boosts business growth and makes the employees effective brand ambassadors for the organization. All this make employee engagement is the most important strategy and factor to be implemented in the organization to survive for the longer period of time in the industries.

Importance of Employee Engagement in Hospital sector

Employee engagement has a major impact on patient satisfaction, and when patients have a great experience at your facility, everyone wins! The importance of patient experience in the healthcare industry cannot be overstated. For hospitals whose patients report a favourable patient experience, organizations found that timeliness improves, mortality rates drop, the quality of care improves, and the bottom line increases! No one likes making a mistake at work, but when they happen in the healthcare industry, people can and do die! But when organizations take steps to engage their employees, mortality rates drop sharply. And when a company's employees are fully engaged, hospitals see a major Return on Investment.

Conclusion

Engaged employees are not just committed but passionate about their work. Employee engagement is the degree to which an employee is cognitively and emotionally attached to his work and organization. It reflects in the level of identification and commitment an employee has towards the organization and its values. As engaged employees affect an organization's bottom line (Marcey & Schneider 2008b) by reducing operational losses (absenteeism, turn-over, etc.) and increase profitability with more satisfied customers, they simultaneously improve the organization. Organizations that wish to improve employee engagement should focus on employees' perceptions of the support they receive from their organization (Saks, 2006). Employees are engaged when organizations have healthy work culture and communication practices, where they can get platforms to express their concerns and opportunities to grow and develop their potential. Today competitors can emulate the performance of the service provided but they cannot replicate the vigor, dedication and absorption of their employees at the place of work. Employee Engagement is conceptualized as the individual's investment of his complete self into a role (Kahn, 1990). Engagement is a positive attitude where an individual goes above and beyond the call of duty, so as to heighten the level of ownership, and to further the business interest of the organisation as a whole (Robinson, et al 2004). Employee engagement is inclusive of long-term emotional involvement and is an antecedent to more temporary generalities of employee sentiment, such as job satisfaction and commitment (Wagner &

Harter, 2006). Engaged employees come to work every day feeling a connection to their organization, have a high level of enthusiasm for their work (Buckingham & Coffman, 1999), and consistently produce at high levels (Meere, 2005). Engaged employees have also been found to stay with their company longer, thus reducing turnover and saving companies appreciably in recruitment and retraining costs.

Additionally, engaged employees have been found to have fewer accidents on the job (Wagner & Harter, 2006), Engaged employees also positively affect the experience of customers and co-workers. Having a higher proportion of engaged employees in an organization has been shown to have a positive relationship with a company's profit margin (Fleming & Asplund, 2007; Ketter, 2008; Wagner & Harter, 2006). There is evidence that lack of employee engagement is financially harmful for organizations throughout the world. Conversely, organizations that focus on developing engaged employees can achieve significant organizational benefits such as higher retention rates, improved productivity, and increased profit. Employee engagement is critical to any organization that seeks to retain valued employees. It is very important for effective utilisation of human resource and smooth running of the organization. Without employee engagement organization cannot survive for long period of time (Vazirani, 2007). Employees are the key assets to any organisation and if they are not given the right space and time to make a perfect blend of work and fun at workplace, then the sense of disengagement sets in the employees. Organizations are focusing on employee engagement as a promising strategy to increase retention and improve productivity (Lockwood, 2007); however, there remains a surprising shortage of research on employee engagement in the academic literature (Marcey & Schneider, 2008b; Saks, 2006). Literature shows that there are many studies conducted on employee engagement but very few on the area of healthcare sector. It also seen that, even though there is a very huge lobby of AYUSH graduates in India and they were working in the field of modern medical hospital no study were conducted on their engagement with the concern industry. Which supports the possible importance of measuring the employee engagement particularly on AYUSH graduates in India about how to measure employee engagement and what might be of doing so is remarkably undeveloped. This knowledge gap has created a void of information to guide further research and practice aimed at facilitating employee engagement in organizations.

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