

Impact of Employee Engagement on Organizational Performance: A Conceptual Framework

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Abstract

Employee engagement is when an employee is connecting emotionally with their organization and showing of great enthusiasm with passion in work and a deep sense of belonging to the organization. The relevance of this study lies in the fact that in any growing sector like IT or health sector where employees are already stressed for the continuous improved performance and the targets to be achieved on time and peer pressure and many more difficulties they will get benefited from this study because the problems highlighted and the suggestions concluding could improve their performance. This study also explores the topic employee engagement and makes it possible to categorize the employees as highly engaged, not engaged and highly disengaged. It takes effort to understand the importance of engaged employees on the organizational performance and relevance of employee engagement in long run. The studies conducted so far have focused on better working environment, organizational structure and better rewards and recognition system which increases the number of engaged and committed employees and thereby giving satisfactory results both for organization and employees.

Key words: Employee engagement, organizational performances, engaged employees, organizational effectiveness

Introduction

In past eight to ten years every sector has developed to a larger extent in many aspects irrespective of the boundaries that surround them whether its geographical or political. Our day to day life is changing very rapidly and to comply with, it requires coping up in the competitive world. Innovation and creativity are the two buzz word which can guide the organization with all possible outcomes. Despite all the valuable resource any organization can have, it's the human resource or knowledge capital that makes use of all the other resources. Earlier the employees came to work and returned with no plan regarding future self or other organizations to work for as their basic needs were fulfilled. Employee Engagement has been a buzzword and remained unexplored and wasn't a priority. Arrowsmith and Parker (2013), after analyzing a case finally attempted to make two important contributions of which first is that they suggested way that engagement initiatives to be effective requires political astuteness with commitment on the part of employees and secondly, they were of opinion that an effective purposive approach shall be developed for employee engagement that involves employees fundamental issues such as voice of employees, designed work and agency of management.

Getting paid on time and meeting all expenses led to increase in the commitment and engagement levels. Although, when we talk about a sudden rise of stress levels in employees at workplace has subsequently driven and the reason behind is the increased pressure of competition, technology promoting the fast-paced globally advanced economy and the reduction of boundaries between work and home life (Lockwood, 2007). In global scenario, organization were evolving in their own countries and were steadily adopting different measures for expansion, to enter international markets and give competition to domestic companies working in that country and competition level had extended up to that extent which required high amount of innovation for both of them the employee and the employer. Employers need to be responsible while promoting employees' work engagement and only they would be able in ensuring that employees are able to accept their organizations as supportive of their career resulting in increased level of affective commitment in employees' (Poon, 2013). This does not only concerns everyone about competition but it's a more of a matter of staying in the market and retaining customers of the organization and top management alone can't do this rather it needs the involvement of workers from the very lowest level and henceforth it becomes necessary for everyone to be fully and highly dedicated to the organization they are working so as to achieve heights of success.

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Employers are required to prioritize the development of adequate and challenging work conditions, HR practices and develop such an atmosphere where passion drives the engagement levels of employees leading to organizational effectiveness (Cesário & Chambel, 2017). All the efforts may get wasted, if employees are only trained technically regarding job they are presently working because as the world around them has changed they need more reasons to stay in the organization and do something great for it. If options are more and better ones from competitors they will definitely change their mind to move. Therefore, focus shall be on the experience of work done on the part of employees rather on managers delivering the work (Shuck & Wollard, 2008) and this will help organizations to retain the talent pool. HR department performs responsibility to find out the best one reason and provide meaningful training to every employee so that they get engaged and committed for the organization. The failure of providing better opportunities to employee leads to high turnover in any organization. Corporate cultures comprising of team work, pleasurable working conditions, nice treatment of employees, opportunities to grow with flexibility in work practices and good leadership in management leads to increased employee engagement (Devi, 2009). That is why it's better to focus all efforts in increasing the loyalty on the part of employees in return to which the company will get lots of profits and the reason to survive in the market and expand globally. The determinants of employee engagement is highly driven by healthy working atmosphere which can be easily reflected upon social impactful environment created by the organization and employees enjoying attention in terms of their determinants being addressed (Anitha, 2014). There are several factors influencing the behavior of the employee like how much an employee is satisfied with his work in the organization, how he maintains his relations with his colleagues and everyone present in the organization. Continuous surveys are required to classify the employees according to their needs and motivational tool to be adopted for them as some employees need monetary benefits and job security whereas some may be desirous of reward and recognition. The opportunity lies in capturing the importance of the mission and personalizing it to the contribution of each employee (Shuck & Wollard, 2008).

Employee Engagement

Out of all the resources available in an organization we all know that human resource is the most valuable one and also no work can be carried out in the unavailability of this resource. Now, when the circumstances have changed and considerate factors play their important role in increasing the motivation in an employee. Employee engagement remains one of the primary goals to be achieved by each and every organization and many efforts are taken just to retain the talented pool of the organization. Despite not being a new concept a lack of useful studies fail to define employee engagement (Saks & Gruman, 2014) and further it is more difficult to make causal conclusions about the antecedents and consequences of employee engagement due to number of limitations. The continuous research in this area has provided the fact that if each employee is given individual importance in the form of reward and recognition then employees' work with their full potential towards the vision and mission of their organization. A reasonable improvement at the level of employee engagement could possibly be done among frontline personnel in organized retail industry wherein a positive relationship does definitely exist between extraversion and conscientiousness which are personality traits and employee engagement (Handa & Gulati, 2014). The role of employee has increased to such a level that no employer wants to take a risk of losing even a single satisfied engaged and committed employee.

Employee Engagement as a Concept

Since employee engagement was to be established and separated as discipline from its earlier concepts like organizational commitment, job involvement, job satisfaction etc. therefore in this regard many authors gave different definitions but Kahn (1990) also regarded as the father of employee engagement contributed towards the definition of engagement. He classified engagement into two parts as 'personal engagement' and 'personal disengagement'. According to author "personal engagement as the harnessing of organization member's selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances whereas, personal disengagement refers to the uncoupling of selves from work roles; in disengagement, people withdraw and defend themselves physically, cognitively, or emotionally during role performances" (Kahn, 1990, p. 694). People need to have both expression of self and self-employment in work to get engaged easily (Alderfer, 1972; Kahn, 1990; Maslow, 1954). Employee Engagement can be understood as physical and psychological presence of an employee in the job role and high level of emotional connection for the organization. Three basic things for required for engagement in an employee viz. psychological meaningfulness, safety and availability and additionally if the three requirements mentioned are fulfilled then chances of getting the employees engaged gets increased. Engagement consists of two forms 'attention' and 'absorption' (Rothbard, 2001, p. 656), an employee is engaged when he is totally attentive in thinking about the role knowing what to do in work and so much absorbed in work that he remains focused in work always doing what shall be done. Alternatively, Robinson et al. (2004, p. 8) suggested that employee engagement is different from its earlier constructs like Organizational Citizenship Behavior and Organizational Commitment that may seem to be related to it but

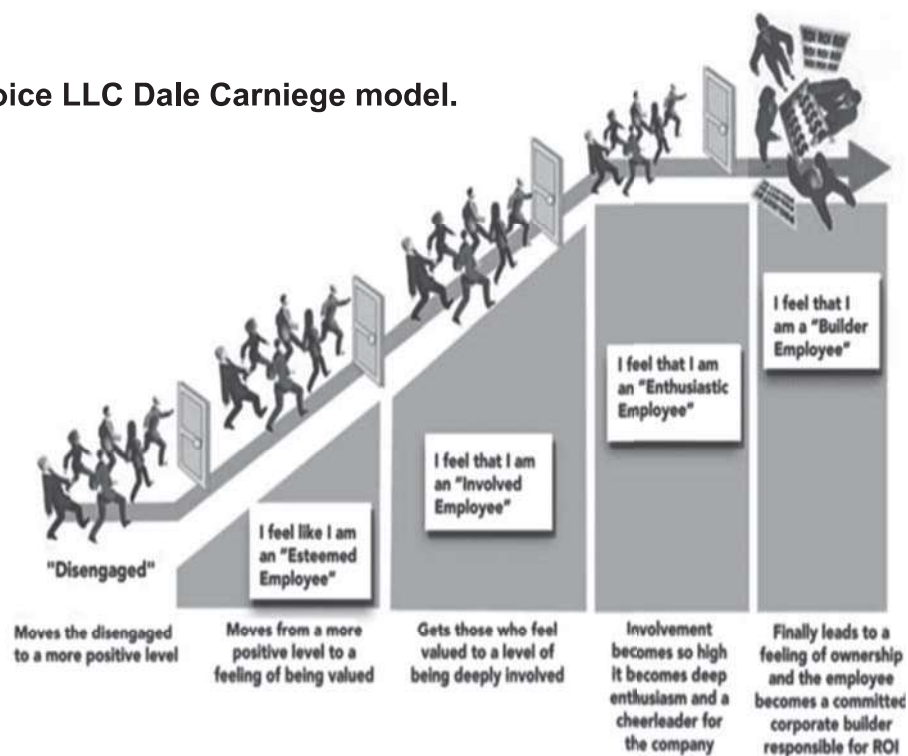
differ in terms of level of commitment and awareness. Further, as the literature moves forward it is observed that employee engagement is an emotional connection with organization and that too in a formal way and engaged employees are always ready to do something good for the organization every minute. Engaged employees are more or less concerned about the mission and vision of organization above their individual. Variables like commitment, involvement, Organizational Citizenship Behaviour are also important to have an overall view of engagement in employees as they act as an antecedent to the engagement.

The concept of engagement had always been an important topic of discussion for academicians from business schools and personalities from the corporate world. But it is not a new concept; and is like an old wine in a completely new bottle (Saks, 2006) as earlier it was used as synonymous for the other constructs. In so many years the increase in competition level, rise of opportunities in every sector, demand of high intellectual ability individuals, workforce diversity have become a global concern for every organization and having more of engaged employees in the workforce becomes the prime importance as this is the only thing which cannot be copied by the competitors. Organizations now do measure the engagement level in employees and are in an attempt to increase the same with an objective of improving the productivity, profitability, turnover and safety (Little & Little, 2006). The situation in present scenario is that every deserving employee wants a global exposure, career development, increase in every level of management, financial stability, job security are the terms which no one will ignore and this is the reason why an employee quits the present organization for better future growth. The more engaged employees an organization has, the more financial soundness is there in the organization. To maintain employee engagement level the positive predictors like job satisfaction, resources availability, empowering employees etc. must be increased and negative predictors like misbalance in working environment, unfriendly relations with management and colleagues, must be reduced. Factors like employee welfare, empowerment, growth and interpersonal relationships can be regarded as the first predictors of employee engagement (Mani, 2011). Alternatively, predictors of overall employee performance show traits like negative effect on employee engagement and job satisfaction (Dalal et al., 2012).

Engaged Employee as an Asset

The engaged employees can be classified in three categories. Firstly, Highly engaged, kind of employees who are an asset to organization, very energetic and passionate about their job and working environment in which they work. They are always keen to take their organizations higher and consider their organization's success as their individual success. They have a deep belonging with their organization and always come to their work with a positive energy and thoughts which include how good they can contribute to the organization as a whole. They are adaptive to the changes introduced in organization and follow the rules and regulations of organization and consider it as their family. Secondly, not engaged

Figure 1. Social Voice LLC Dale Carnegie model.



employees are easily known by their slow efforts that they make in their work also, their routine involves coming to organization work in the working hours, take lunch, involve in some gossips and then move to their home. It is not easy for them to adapt changes as they are used to work in a continuous systematic manner. They are not able to connect to organization but their efforts help organization to achieve the targets on time as they are dedicated to their work. But the absence of innovative ideas and creativity in the work makes their work a boredom and less enjoyable. They forget that if they change their mind-set everything will change. And lastly, Highly disengaged are the ones who are great threat to any organization, employees who develop a kind of negative attitude towards the organization and are busy in humiliating everyone in organization.

The LLC model (Figure 1) of Dale Carnegie shows that people at the lowest level are always disengaged as they are busy in releasing a negative energy to the working environment in which they work and are busy in leg pulling and de-motivating their colleagues. It becomes responsibility of the organization to make them and their attitude positive so that it is beneficial for both organization and an individual as a whole. Further, when the efforts are made towards making the employees positive they move a step ahead towards engagement and feel valued for their work. After being esteemed and valued the employees who were disengaged will now become involved in working with more enthusiasm and zeal and improving his performance. Finally, in highest level engagement when an employee becomes the builder of their organization, contribute to the highest level of success. They are busy in creating innovative ideas and developing plans for the organization and helping it to grow in a positive and healthy competitive environment.

In employees there lies a great potential for achieving heights both in their own career and future growth for the organization, but the working environment, colleagues from different cultures and many more such factors if affect him negatively then it can divert their mind to less useful things and thereby leading to bad consequences in the organization. Therefore it is very much important to identify their mind situation at earlier stage and help them to achieve individual goals and then connect themselves with organization's overall goal. Employees may be in both category not engaged and disengaged but to make them highly engaged should be the priority of the organization.

Literature Review

Two important types of employee engagement are job and organization engagement (Saks 2006). Antecedents and consequences which affect engagement are of prime concern and the study indicates that the difference between the job and organization engagement results from different outcomes. Job engagement is high when the job characteristics are of higher level and it gives more recognition to employee according to his role performed whereas, if an employee has good relations with employer and having less intentions to quit the present organization then this is the prediction of his organization engagement and this study is recognized as first in this regard to make job and organization engagement as different constructs.

Employee engagement as a construct affects almost all parts of human resource management practices in such a manner that if it's not addressed properly by organization, full engagement of employees is not possible. The foundation of this concept is built on earlier concepts like job satisfaction, employee commitment and organizational citizenship behavior (Markos & Sridevi 2010) where employee engagement is viewed as a different construct and helps managers by suggesting the ways to drive and increase engagement in the organization and direct the employees' behavior towards the accomplishment of both organizational and individual goals. Almost 60% of employees require opportunities to grow and be satisfied in their job with good manager-employee relationship working as a crucial ingredient in the employee engagement White (2006) with higher retention ratio in organization. The loss occurred due to disengaged employees is a matter of great concern as it highly affects the productivity and efficiency of employees. Employees' retention, job satisfaction will increase more number of engaged employees in the organization if right policies are adopted. Employee engagement is a two-way communication, between employer and employee and possibly the drivers in an engagement could be a feeling valued by management, as a matter of concern of the well-being of employees and giving more opportunities to grow when acted in a positive way. The fact that employee engagement has been studied in a very limited way with less interpretation of the cost and benefits associated with it and only its importance and strategies to be adopted are discussed so this implication to be taken up thoroughly.

Employee engagement and its association with employee commitment, attachment and citizenship is very narrow as employees' psychological well-being has been neglected (Robertson & Copper, 2010) "full engagement" in relation to two different constructs employee engagement and their psychological well-being together. Narrow engagement which also means strong commitment and good citizenship is valuable for organization but from employee's point of view it loses its value but if its added with engagement it becomes full engagement which is very important to attract new talent and retaining the existing talent (Robertson & Copper, 2010). Accordingly individuals having higher level of psychological well-being tend to behave differently in ways which is expected to lead them to higher levels of engagement and this research adds a new aspect to increase and develop the understanding of engagement.

Antecedents and consequences of employee engagement

Likewise in further studies the importance of communication or the impact of its role on employee engagement plays a vital role (Welch, 2011) to add new dimensions to view engagement as a construct. He tried to divide evolution of employee engagement into three categories viz. pre-wave, wave 1, wave 2 and wave 3 and the specialty in all the waves is that in every phase of engagement as a concept made its right place in the history and for the future which was unseen. The strategic view that employee engagement scholars have begun to consider is the definition of organization engagement as a dynamic, changeable psychological state linking employees to their organizations, manifest in organization's member role performances expressed in physically, cognitively and emotional form, also influenced by organizational-level internal communication and then adding an additional point that curiosity to gain new information increases the sense of belongingness towards organization in high emotionally engaged. It means that an engaged employee needs a full proof communication to remain engaged so that any chance of discrepancies gets reduced. An employee who is optimistic, highly focused in work, enthusiastic and is willing to sustainably contribute towards his organization is an engaged employee (Jose, 2012). The effective part of the study was that the matter of declining level of engagement was also discussed taking in consideration that the employee engagement is the lever of business success and an engaged employee delivers high productivity, lower absenteeism less turnover intentions, providing superior service quality more satisfied and loyal customers and increased OCB.

Saks Model (2006)

Saks (2006) also used the model of SET to relate it with engagement and the rule of SET is that there is a rule of exchange and reciprocity which means in response of benefits and facilities provided by the organization the employees do a repayment by being engaged in their daily routine work roles and expressing it in the form of showing positive behavior towards the colleagues and work environment. The conclusion was very relevant on the part that it insisted on the fact that to design effective HR practices for employee at every level and how these are perceived by the employees to elicit the proper behavior or the positive behavior is the responsibility and obligation of the top level management in the organization. Later on Saks (2019) revised and updated the model and added additional antecedents and consequences of the concept. The results of the study indicated towards organizations ability to provide social support, rewards and recognition, a better procedural and distributive fairness and good opportunities for enhanced learning and development will increase the employee engagement among employees.

Employees could be retained by addressing non-financial drivers of engagement like communication, recognition, manager or supervisor's support (relationship), work engagement team work and role's clarity (Balakrishnan, 2013). This clears the fact that even without incurring the financial expenditures an organization can retain its employees and enhance employee engagement. Factors like satisfactory work environment, career growth opportunities and job enrichment is responsible to design employee engagement effectively in an organization. When employees' individual growth and organization's growth is given due consideration then it helps employees to align their goals with organization (Kumar, 2013) as these are the drivers which differ from other companies. The policies framed for increasing employee engagement by one organization should always be done after conducting the engagement survey because if it is copied from the competitor's policies or business partner or may be the parent company of the same organization the results so obtained will neither be satisfactory nor so fruitful. Employees at higher level should be provided good resources, tools and overall workplace environments that support engagement and for the employees at lower level must be provided a supportive manager employee relationship so that they can stay connected with the organization as a whole. High employee turnover and lack of retention plans increases the organizational costs and to overcome that recruitment and selection, employee engagement, organizational culture and benefits, training and induction programs shall be planned in advance (Kumar, 2013).

An engaged employee is one who is fully absorbed and enthusiastic about his/her work and is willing to invest their talent for the fulfillment of organization's goal and this determines the level of commitment and involvement an employee has for the organizational values (Das et al., 2013) and this further leads to his Organizational Citizenship Behavior. These points lead to the requirement of measuring the level of employee engagement in the organization. The conclusion drawn in the study is very crucial regarding the engagement of the employees. First, the paper provides ten straight ways to increase the level of the engagement. Secondly, the sample surveyed gave a positive result about their engagement level. Third, the paper stressed on the fact that a happy employee is good for the organization but a happy and engaged employee is far better because he will continuously contribute towards the success and achievement of realistic goals of the organization. They characterized engaged employees as the employees who feel pride in working with the organization and enjoy their work and come to work very happily and feel the success of organization as their own responsibility. The best part is that they recommend their family members, friends and relatives too to work in the organization which shows their deep engagement and also they do not hesitate to do so. They work for their own satisfaction not for the monetary

benefits they get and they get so emotionally attached to the organization that automatically loyalty arises in their hearts for the organizations. These are good signs and prove that employees are aware of the employee engagement concept (Das et al., 2013). A meaningful work gets created through the provision of autonomy, influence and intrinsic rewards also including co-creation of work by employees.

Evaluating organizational performance through engaged employees

An approach to employee engagement requires a sophisticated system of measuring and evaluating the likelihood of benefits of achievement. Characteristics of employee who are engaged can be represented by their work attitude and feeling of vigor and fulfillment in work, being enthusiastic, very much absorbed in work and highly dedicated to the organization (Eldor & Vigoda-Gadot, 2017) wherein the authors studied theoretical contribution of the relationship between employee and the organization. The findings suggested that engagement is different concept from psychological empowerment and contract.

A core element is a measure of the level of engagement as reported by employees, to understand the level in a given unit, which is also necessary to measure if the practices designed to enhance engagement are in place, implemented and actually experienced by employees along with valuation and would be necessary to measure unit level outcomes (Guest, 2014). Few core practices provided by the author were like selecting the staff with a propensity for engagement, training staff for engagement, redesigning their job, provide more organizational support, always two-way communication etc. to enhance engagement. He argued on a point that engagement should be more like a Human Resource system and this would be a great risk but this will be worth taking.

An engaged employee is aware of his responsibilities in the business goals and is also a motivator to fellow colleagues with great team spirit (Anitha, 2014) and goes beyond the call of duty to perform their role on excellence. Few studies (Sun & Bunchapattanasakda, 2019) reviewed the concept and theoretical background of the employee engagement and came out with a faceted and unitary construct. Sun & Bunchapattanasakda, tried to define some influential factors also which are divided into three categories such as organizational relating to style of management, second is job which includes work environment and task characteristics and at the end individual factors dealing with concept like physical energies, self consciousness etc. The authors found out at the end that engagement level of employees has a positive relationship with individual and organizational performance.

Some relevant determinants of employee engagement was also of prime concern viz. work environment, leadership, teamwork, well-being of employees, organizational policies, compensation provided for contribution done to the organization by employees. The effect of all these variables on engagement was separately studied and conclusion was drawn that each of these determinants together affects the level of engagement in an employee. This concludes that work environment and relationship with co-workers highly determine engagement and improves employee's performance thereby affecting employee's engagement levels positively.

Employee Engagement is a very complex concept with many issues influencing engagement levels and no single 'kit' is developed so far fitting all the organizations. Each company may define this concept in their own way but at last key to effective engagement of employees is rooted in the flexibility of approach most appropriately suited for each individual firm (Thakur, 2014). There exists a positive relationship between job satisfaction and employee engagement and for this work motivation should be improved by increased authority level and accountability at managerial level and in the end rewards and sanctions should be introduced to improve the effect of one over the other. It is proved by now that employee engagement should not be studied in isolation as employee engagement highly affects other variables and is also affected in return by a variety of other variables such as there is a very positive relationship between organizational justice and employee engagement (Gupta & Kumar, 2015) also if there is a fair justice in the organization employees will show a high level of engagement.

Conclusion

Dimensions like organizational commitment, job satisfaction, job enrichment, organizational citizenship behavior have played a very prominent role in the formation of the employee engagement. On the one hand they form the very basis of engagement but on the other hand they also differentiate themselves from the new construct of engagement by influencing it as outside variables thereby making it clear that engagement cannot be studied in isolation and these dimensions are required to be added as the influencers.

Organizations need to develop engagement activities in their respective departments in order to increase number of engaged employees and retain the talent. Since there are evidences that prove that one technique of improving the level of engagement will never fit to the other organization whether it is its own parent company, so every organization must carry out its own engagement surveys in a planned way and apply its results according to the needs and desires of the

employees. Having more numbers of engaged and organizationally committed employees in the organization will always give positive results as they keep their organization's goals, interests and achievements always above their own, also they regard the success of organization as their responsibility. The emotional connection with the organization will always help engaged employees to stay connected and be at the priority of the organization. To increase engagement level of the employee activities like right engagement survey, training managers for the engagement and making them accountable, making a plan of action, being positive about the results of survey done could be helpful. Motivational support to the employees who are categorized as not engaged or disengaged by redefining their jobs and making it more comfortable for them towards work environment increases engagement level within employees in long-run. Sometimes due to failure in recognizing good factors or positive things about the people organizations suffer a lot because many a times they forgot that business is not run on numbers it requires highly committed and engaged employees to carry on its activities and increase in terms of both growth and expansion in the graph of time.

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