

Employee Engagement: An Imperative for Creating Job Satisfaction in Evolving Workplaces

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Abstract: *The concept of employee engagement is acquiring greater significance among academic and professionals in India. The literature on employee engagement has flourished over the last two decades, but there is relatively shortage of studies in the Indian context. The objective of the present study is to analyze the determinants of employee engagement which leads to job satisfaction. Organizations should realize that engaged employees play a crucial role in achieving sustainable success and competitive advantage. Engaged employees experience a pleasurable emotional state at work, indicating high level of job satisfaction whereas disengaged employees are disconnected from work, rationally, emotionally and motivationally. Disengagement results in job dissatisfaction, turnover and absenteeism in the work place. Therefore the present study tries to propose that employee engagement is positively related to job satisfaction. The study tries to identify the crucial role of employee engagement in creating job satisfaction. The contribution of the study is both academic and managerial as it explores the link between employee engagement and job satisfaction. The organizations can benefit through insights about how to improve employee engagement, thereby job satisfaction. The insights gained through the study explore the relationship in the Indian context.*

Keywords: *Employee Engagement, Job Satisfaction*

I. Introduction

Employee Engagement as an emerging human resource area of greater significance is widely discussed in the current research literature. Employee Engagement is a desirable condition and organizations realize that engaged employees play a crucial role in achieving the sustainable success of organizations. Engagement at work was first conceptualized by Khan (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.” Frank and Taylor (2004) defined employee engagement as the amount of discretionary effort exhibited by employees in their job. Organizations should have engaged employees rather than just satisfied employees, because it is an engaged employee who is more bonded with the organization emotionally and intellectually, who feels more passionately about its goals and who is more committed towards its values. In this article, the second concept described is job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is considered to be the measure of an employee satisfaction or contention with their work. Job satisfaction is a general attitude towards one’s job, the difference between the amount of reward workers receive and the amount they believe they should receive. A number of factors tend to affect a person’s level of job satisfaction. A few factors are growth opportunities, rewards, recognition, work atmosphere and supervision. The purpose of this article is to provide a review of literature on the concept of employee engagement as an imperative for creating job satisfaction in evolving workplaces.

II. Theoretical Background on Employee Engagement

Hewitt Associates (2006) defines employee engagement as those who say speak- positively about the organization, stay- desire to be an effective member and strive- continue to perform beyond minimal requirements for the organization. Gallup Organization (1999) suggests that engaged employees are more profitable, productive, focused, have fun and less likely to leave the company because they are engaged. Harter, Schmidt and Hayes(2002) commented that employee engagement is closely linked to employee turnover, customer satisfaction, loyalty, productivity, safety and profitability criteria .As Tower Perrin,USA(2003,2007) linked the same that there exists a close relationship between high levels of employee engagement and lower staff turn-over rate. It is also stated by Corporate Leadership Council (2004), engaged employees are less likely to feel exhausted and express cynicism towards the organization. Engaged employees are assets who will guarantee organizational success. However, looking in to various definitions it is stated that employee engagement is employees positive attitude towards organizational goals and values, employees passion and

enthusiasm to do the job, to help the organizations by completing the work and reach to heights. To be clear that engagement is the end result of both employee and employer. Here employees bring in capabilities, dedication and willingness which is supplemented by the employer by providing an atmosphere which is conducive to work.

Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) defined engagement as a positive, fulfilling work related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication and absorption. Vigor is characterized by high levels of energy and mental resilience while working, the willingness to invest effort in ones work and persistence in the face of difficulties. Dedication is characterized by a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride and challenge. Absorption is characterized by being fully concentrated and happily engrossed in ones work, whereby time passes quickly and one has difficulties with detaching oneself from work. Employee engagement is a good tool to help all organization to gain competitive advantage over other companies.

According to Baumruk (2004), people is one factor that cannot be duplicated or imitated by the competitors and is considered the most valuable asset if managed and engaged properly. Furthermore Gallup (2003) proposed that there are three types of employees commonly seen in organizations: Engaged employees, Not engaged employees and Actively disengaged employees. Engaged employees work with passion and feel a profound connection to their company. They drive innovation and move the organization forward. Not engaged employees are sleepwalking through their workday, putting time- but not energy or passion into their work. Actively Disengaged employees are dangerous individuals who not only do not perform well but also demotivate the performer in the organization.

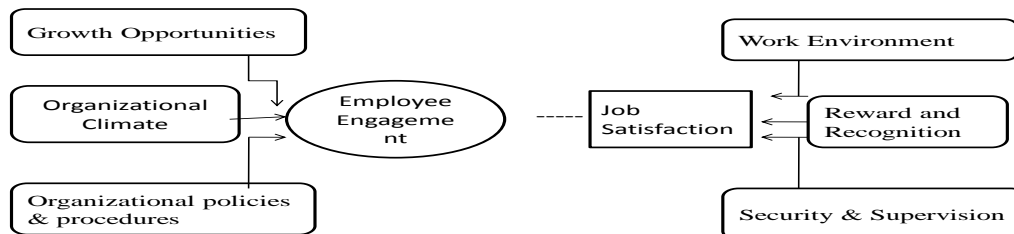
III. Importance of Engagement

Organizations have started to realize that a satisfied employee is not necessarily the best employee in terms of loyalty and productivity. Organizations should have engaged employees rather than just satisfied employees, because it is an engaged employee who is more bonded with the organization emotionally and intellectually, who feels more passionately about its goals and who is more committed towards its values. An engaged employee is always ready to walk that extra mile for realizing the organizational goals. Organizations derive the energy to drive the business from such employees. Therefore employee engagement becomes all the more critical in the modern business environment. Organization too is liable to provide the favorable organizational atmosphere for the successful performance of the engaged employees. Employees are engaged only when organizations have healthy work environment. There are various factors that contribute towards the employee engagement concept. Thus identify factors that influence overall employee satisfaction and engagement in the workplace. This information will provide insight on employee preferences and highlight key areas for organizations to consider as they develop and enhance initiatives for organizational improvement.

IV. Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experience(Locke,1976).It is an affective or emotional response toward various facets of one's job(Humbostard & Perry,2011).Job satisfaction represents an overall assessment of one's job and is a general indicator of the quality of one's work experience and is a subjective measure of individual well being(Berg,1991).Keith Davis(1992) stated that job satisfaction expresses the amount of agreement between ones expectations of the job and the reward the job provides.

Job satisfaction is an important aspect that organizations desire for their employees. The concept is linked to performance, organizational productivity, commitment and organizational citizenship behavior. The employees at organizations may be satisfied or sometimes get dissatisfied with their job. Satisfied employees are enthusiastic, willing to contribute their efforts, highly focused on work and committed. At the same time dissatisfied employees are prone to absenteeism and thus results excessive turnover. Dissatisfied employees is an adverse situation for any organizations and very few organizations seriously consider job satisfaction. In relation to this aspect, studies are conducted to examine the relationship between work engagement and job satisfaction. This paper also looks at the influence of employee engagement as an imperative for creating job satisfaction in workplaces.



V. The research model for this study is shown in Figure 1

Growth opportunities: (Pergamit & Venum, 1999) says that job satisfaction is strongly associated to opportunities for growth like, promotion. The positive relationship between job satisfaction and promotion is dependent on perceived equity by employees (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2001)

Organizational Climate: The importance of the climate is that it transcends individual satisfaction and hence has a greater impact on quantifiable outcomes.(Crane,1999).A climate of justice within an organization positively affects the structure and strength of interpersonal relations between employees which in turn increase firm performance(Benson 2013).Thus it is clear that employees attitude towards work is influenced by the organizational climate which in turn has an impact on employees(Popa,2011).Thus, when employers establish an organizational climate that is perceived as positive by their employees, this will result in better organizational performance and higher levels of commitment, motivation and job satisfaction.(Putter).

Organizational policies & procedures: The philosophy of management is expressed by policies, rules, regulations and, of course, by the actions of managers. The reaction of the employees and the degree to which they agree within management’s philosophy is critical to the development of a favorable condition. If management is able to match employee’s goals to organizational goals, it is most likely to put a positive influence on employee satisfaction. The management’s attitude towards employees is indeed a major determinant to the overall satisfaction.

Work Environment: Work environment plays a vital role which influences job satisfaction, as employees are concerned with a comfortable physical work environment that will ultimately renders more positive level of job satisfaction (Robbins, 2001)

Reward & Recognition: Pay is one of the fundamental components of job satisfaction since it has a powerful effect in determining job satisfaction. Individual has infinite needs and money provides the means to satisfy these needs (Arnold and Feldman 1996).However, Boggie (2005) says that poor pay and absence of recognition often leads to a problem with employee retention.

Security & Supervision: If the employees are satisfied and content with the job security they will automatically be committed and loyal to their organizations. An employee who is satisfied with his job security tends to perform better than the one who is not. Also the employees want supervisors who have a bond with them and who trust them, understand them and show fairness.

The above stated factors have got a direct influence on employee engagement as the factors /determinants of employee engagement and job satisfaction are more or less similar.

Link between Employee Engagement and Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is the affective orientation that an employee has towards his or her work (Price, 2001). It can be considered as a global feeling about the job or as a related constellation of attitudes about various aspects or facets of the job. The global approach is used when the overall attitude is of interest while the facet approach is used to explore which parts of the job produce satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Based on the review of the most popular job satisfaction instruments, Spector (1997) summarized the following facets of job satisfaction: appreciation, communication, co-workers, fringe benefits, job conditions, nature of the work itself,

the nature of the organization itself, an organization's policies and procedures, pay, personal growth, promotion opportunities, recognition, security and supervision.

Engagement is positively associated with job satisfaction, organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behavior, performance, psychological well being and discretionary effort and negatively related to turnover intention and burnout (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008; Saks, 2006; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Medhurst & Albrecht, 2011; Koyuncu, Burke & Fiksenbaum, 2006; Shuck, Reio & Rocco, 2011). Engaged employees experience a pleasurable emotional state at work, indicating high level of job satisfaction whereas disengaged employees are disconnected from work rationally, emotionally and motivationally. Disengagement results in job dissatisfaction, turnover and absenteeism in the workplace. An engaged employee is an employee who is deeply involved and invested in their work. The factors that drive employee engagement, however, are similar than that of job satisfaction. Engagement factors include Growth, relation with superiors, compensation, recognition and connection. Employee satisfaction is the foundation upon which employee engagement can grow and thrive. Therefore, based on the previous literature it is concluded that employee engagement is positively related to job satisfaction.

V. Conclusion

This study establishes the significance of relating employee engagement and job satisfaction. It was also observed that employee engagement is an imperative for creating job satisfaction in workplaces. Thus the present study therefore stimulates thinking about the importance of employee engagement in enhancing job satisfaction. Only a satisfied employee can become an engaged employee. Employee engagement is, of course, widely recognized as a critical driver of productivity. Therefore, it is very essential for an organization to look in to it that the job which is given to the employee matches his career goals and that will make him enjoy his work and he would ultimately be satisfied with his job.

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