Approaches for engaging employees and its outcome theoretical construct

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Introduction

All over the world. The organizations are plagued by number of concerns such as rising cost, cut-throat competition, and job insecurity and employees dissatisfaction due to several reasons. While attractive remuneration packages and perks are vital to retain employees, it may not necessarily motivate them to give their best to the organizations, if there is no sense of emotional engagement/ownership towards the organization.

There is an old joke in which a CEO was asked, how many people work in his company and he responded, "About half of them". It is also often said that Man has 'Capacity to work' but no willingness to work , the Manager must also know that he can buy a man's time, he can buy a man's physical presence at a given place, but he cannot buy his initiative and loyalty. The organization which are not able to provide good treatment for their employees, will loose their talented people. In this situation engaged employees may be a key to competitive advantage and a remedy to all human resource problems, Organization that understand the conditions that enhances employees engagement will have accomplished something that competitors will find very difficult to imitate

Employee engagement has emerged as a popular organizational concept in recent years. It is the level of commitment and involvement of an employee towards the organization and its values. An engaged employee is aware of business context, and works with collegues to improve performance within the job for the benefit of the organization. Employee engagement develops a positive attitude among the employees towards the organization.

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT: LITERATURE REVIEW

Employee engagement is a complex, broad construct that subsumes many well researched ideas such as commitment, satisfaction, loyalty and extra role behavior. An engaged employee extends themselves to meet the organization's culture and values, is in the flow, and shares the value of the organization, stays focused and vigilant and belives that he/she can make a difference. In practice organizations typically defines engagement as being a part of the organization, having pride and loyalty in the company, being committed, and going "above and beyond the call of duty". Kahn (1990) defines employee engagement as ' the harnessing of organization 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 organization, 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 organization 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 organizational role.

Most often employee engagement has been defined as emotional and intellectual commitment to the organization (Baumruk, 2004; Richman, 2006; and Shaw, 2005) or the amount of discretionary effort exhibited by the employee in their job (Frank et al. 2004). Robinson et al. (2004) defined engagement similar to the established constructs such as 'organizational commitment' and 'organizational citizenship behavior' (OCB). It is a desirable condition. Has an organizational purpose, and connotes involvement, commitment, passion, enthusiasm, focused effort, and energy, so it has both attitudinal and behavioral components (Erickson, 2005). Brown (2006) viewed engagement as progressive combination of satisfaction, motivation, commitment and advocacy resulting from employees' movement up the engagement pyramid. Engagement is the measure of an employee's emotional and intellectual commitment to their organization and its success. It is an outcome of employees' organizational experiences that are characterized by behaviors that are grouped into three categories: Say, Stay and Strive (Hewitt, 2005).

 Employee engagement can be considered as cognitive, emotional and behavioural. Cognitive engagement refers to employees' beliefs about the company, its leaders and the workplace culture. The emotional aspect is how employees feel about the company, the leaders and their colleagues. The

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behavioural factor is a value added components reflected in the amount of effort employees put into their work (Lockwood, 2007). Mone and London (2010) defined employee engagement is a " a condition of employee who feels involved, committed, passionate, and empowered and demonstrates those feelings in work behaviour". Employee engagement is 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.

FACTORS OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

There are some important factors which lead to employee engagement. These factors are common to all organisations, regardless of sectors. These factors create a feeling of valued and involved among the employees .but the component of feeling valued and involved , and the relative strength of each factor are likely to vary depending on the organisation. The factors which lead to employee engagement are;

▪ **Career Development Opportunities:** organisation with high levels of engagement provides employees with opportunities to develop their abilities learn new skills, acquire new knowledge and their potential. When companies plan for the career paths of the employees and invest in them in this way. Career development influence engagement for employees and retaining the most talented employees and providing opportunities for personal development.

▪ **Leadership**: Employees need to feel that the core values for which their companies stand are unambiguous and clear. Successful organization show respect for each employee's qualities and contribution regardless of their job level. A company's ethical standards also lead to engagement of an individual

▪ **Empowerment**: employees want to be involved in decisions that affect their work. The leaders of high engagement workplace create a trustful and challenging environment, in which employees are encouraged to give input and innovating ideas to move the organisation forward.

▪ **Equal Opportunities and Fair Treatment**: The employee engagement level would be high if their superiors provide equal opportunities for growth and advancement to all the employees. Employees feel that they are not discriminated in any aspects within the organisation.

▪ **Training and Development Opportunities**: Redundancy of skills has been cited as one of the reasons for employee turnover, thereby indicating the necessity for training, re-training and multi-skill training. Much value is attached by employees to the availability of training opportunities which would prepare them for future roles.

▪ **Performance Appraisal**: Fair evaluation of an employee's performance is an important criterion for determining the level of employee engagement. The organisation which follows an appropriate performance appraisal technique will have high levels of employee engagement.

▪ **Pay and Benefits**: The organisation should have a proper pay system so that employees are motivated to work in the organization. In order to boost his engagement levels the employees should also be provided with certain benefits and compensations.

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

▪ **Job Satisfaction**: Only a satisfied employee can become an engaged employee. Therefore it is very essential for an organization to see to it that the job given to the employees matches his career goals which will make him enjoy his work and he would ultimately be satisfied with his job.

▪ **Communication**: The organization should follow the open door policy. There should be both upward and downward communication with the use of appropriate communication channels in the organization. If an employee is given a say in the decision making and has the right to be heard by his boss than the engagements levels are likely to be high.

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

▪ **Co-operation**: Effective cooperation should be established between different departments and functions. And also between management and trade union. If the entire organization works together by helping each other, the employees will be more engaged.

APPROACHES FOR ENGAGING EMPLOYEES

▪ **Lead by example.** Don't just talk; act. If it's an environmental initiative, for example, be the first to ride your bike, and pay close attention to how you pack your lunch. Leading by example has a positive impact on relations with employees, business partners, customers and the community, but it also helps to encourage and motivate employees in your company.

▪ **Start at the top.** If a project is important, make sure to include senior management. Even if hands-on participation isn't possible, occasional briefings and updates can go a long ways to showing employees that their work has value.

▪ **Be socially responsible.** Corporate social responsibility is a commitment that businesses make to being shepherds of society and of the environment. It's not just about PR exposure, but is core to how the business operates. When your employees are confident that their employer isn't doing harm, they'll also be confident and committed in their work.

▪ **Put it in writing.** Policies help make corporate values explicit, clarify expectations, and help employees make better decisions. Write out your company's values, and be sure that they demonstrate your commitment to employee satisfaction and engagement. Share them with candidates, new employees, visitors, and the wider public.

▪ **Save energy when it saves money.** Adjust thermostats one degree closer to the outside temperature, reduce your paper consumption by printing less, and reduce energy consumption by turning off lights and electronic equipment when not in use (you can automate this). When employees see that your business' resources are precious, they'll treat them that way, too.

▪ **Create designated positions.** Who's responsible for engaging employees? Add employee engagement to the job descriptions of members of your HR team, executives, managers, and even rank-and-file employees.

▪ **Offer training.** Employees can only be engaged with your organizational goals if they understand them, and managers can only help to engage employees if they understand what that entails.

▪ **Focus on empowerment.** Allow for changes in the workspace, and allow for employees to take the lead in developing and implementing them. Policies and procedures are important, but they shouldn't be so rigid that it's not possible for them to change organically.

▪ **Assemble a team of champions.** Mobilize employees with varying degrees of seniority and from all levels of the company to *talk* about engagement issues. Employees are more likely to join programs that do not originate only from the top. Find employees who are passionate about various causes or social goals, and encourage them to become involved.

▪ **Encourage experimentation.** Encourage your employees to understand how they can change things, and let them try new ideas. It's okay to make mistakes. If someone has a new idea—even if it's not necessarily a great one—give them the resources to follow it through to fruition.

Teams need a supportive environment in order to be engaged and to develop great solutions. Once you've built the infrastructure for such an environment, the rest will come with only a tiny bit of prompting.

OUTCOMES OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Khan (1992) proposed that high levels of engagement lead to both positive outcomes for individuals,(e.g. quality of people's work and their own experience of doing that work), as well as positive organisational – level outcomes (e.g. the growth and productivity of organizations) . The Gallup organization (2004) found critical link between employee engagement, customer loyalty, business growth and profitability. Employee engagement also acts as a catalyst towards retention of staff. Hewitt Associates LLC, (2005) established a conclusive relationship between engagement and profitability through higher productivity, sales, customer satisfaction, and employee retention. Engaged employee not only contribute more but also are more loyal and therefore less likely to leave the organization.

Gallup research (2012) Q12 Meta Analysis examines that Employee engagement affects nine performance outcomes. Compared with bottom-quartile units, top-quartile units have:

• 37% lower absenteeism

• 25% lower turnover (in high-turnover organizations)

• 65% lower turnover (in low-turnover organizations)

- 28% less shrinkage
- 48% fewer safety incidents
- 41% fewer patient safety incidents
- 41% fewer quality incidents (defects)
- 10% higher customer metrics
- 21% higher productivity
- 22% higher profitability

CONCLUSION

Acquiring skilled workforce is just not enough at present, instead a lot needs to be done to involve, and make them committed to the organization and its goals. Thus engagement is a state where an individual is not only intellectual committed but has great emotional attachment with her or her job. An organisation should thus recognise employee more than any other variable, as a powerful contributors to its competitive position. It has been observed that organisation with higher level of employee engagement outperform their competitors in terms of profitability. Engage employees give their companies crucial competitive advantage including higher productivity, customer satisfaction and low employee turnover. Further, the relation between employee engagement and its outcome can be strong if better measures are used. Thus, an organisation needs to know how different approaches and factors affect strategic outcomes.

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