



STUDY ON EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AMONG IT SECTOR EMPLOYEES

Strategic study with reference to Kerala

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ABSTRACT

Employee engagement has been an area of interest among many researchers and it had received a greater recognition among consulting firms. Employee engagement is the state in which employees feel passionate about their jobs, are committed to the organization, and put discretionary effort into their work. It has been observed that modern organizations are emphasizing a lot on practicing employee engagement looking at the benefits earned by having 'high engaged employees' in their organizations. It is therefore, important to identify the low engaged employees and replace them with high engaged employees in order to develop the employees and organization as a whole. This article presents an assessment on the level of employee engagement among IT sector employees in Kerala. This study helps to understand the various concepts of employee engagement as it reinforces previous literature on the construct of engagement followed by analysis, discussion and conclusion.

Keywords: Employee Engagement, Commitment, Job Engagement and Organisational Engagement

1.0 INTRODUCTION

IT industry has always been facing the challenge of extremely high employee turnover. Companies take a deep interest in their employee turnover rate because it is a costly part of doing business. High employee turnovers imply low employee commitment towards the organization. This study is an attempt made to examine the relationship of employee engagement with organisational commitment of IT (Information & technology) sector employees in select organisations in Kerala. For identifying the general antecedents of employee engagement, literature as well as models developed by consulting organisations were reviewed. Since the employee engagement construct is still relative recent, both literature and consulting models are examined so as to gain insights and obtain contributions from practice, in addition to the academic data.



2.0 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To ascertain the extent to which employee engagement (both job and organisational) relates to organizational commitment among select IT companies in Kerala.
- To determine the level of employee engagement by demographic variables (age, gender, work experience and educational qualification).

3.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

Employee engagement has become the new buzzword and obsession of HR departments. Yet, the term "*engagement*" has been used quite inconsistently by the various research institutes, consulting companies, and their clients. It has been used in reference to a variety of employee attitudes, for example employee satisfaction, trust, motivation, willingness to work, Organizational commitment etc. One of the problems with the construct is that many of the definitions of employee engagement invoke existing constructs, such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behaviors and job involvement, but they do not demonstrate the relationship of employee engagement to those other constructs.

According to Kahn (1990) a dynamic, dialectical relationship exists between the person who drives personal energies (physical, cognitive and emotional) into his or her work role on the one hand, and the work role that allows this person to express him or herself on the other hand.

Schaufeli et al. (2002) define engagement as a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterised by vigour, dedication, and absorption. Rather than a momentary and specific state, engagement refers to a more persistent and pervasive affective-cognitive state that is not focused on any particular object, event, individual or behaviour.

Robinson et al. (2017) consider work engagement as a positive attitude held by the employee towards the organization and its values. They opine that an engaged employee is aware of the business context, works with colleagues to improve performance within the job for the benefit of the organization. Engagement is a two-way relationship between employer and employee. It overlaps with commitment and organizational citizenship behavior, but it is two-way relationship and is "one step up" from commitment.

Social Exchange Theory (SET) provides a stronger theoretical rationale which can be used to support Kahn's views on engagement. The foundation of SET is that these relationships develop over time leading to trust, loyalty, and mutual commitment. In order to achieve this desirable stage, both parties must follow specific 'rules of exchange'. These 'rules of exchange' involve reciprocity in such a way that the actions of one side create a response or repayment actions by the other side. The level of engagement will vary based on the resources they receive from their organizations. Saks concludes that resources – economic, social and emotional – provided by the organization will dictate the quantum of physical, cognitive and emotional energy an individual will bring to his work.



4.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The data for this study was collected from employees of IT sector companies in Kerala. Research participants (N=60) was selected based on a convenient sampling process. Data was collected through online questionnaire from 60 employees each from IT sector organisations in Kerala irrespective of their current position. The study analysed the 60 responses out of 75 responses collected, which were useful and complete and the rest 15 unfilled were left out. A three section online questionnaire was used for data collection. The first section of the questionnaire consisted of 5 items inquiring about demographic characteristics of respondents such as employees' gender, age, educational qualification, and work experience. The second section consisted of questions related to measure employee engagement (job and organisational). The third section consisted of questions related to measure organisational commitment.

5.0 MEASURES

Both job engagement and organization engagement was measured by two six-item scales used by Saks (2006). Items were written to assess participant's psychological presence in their job and organization. A sample item for job engagement is, I really "throw" myself into my job" and for organization engagement". Being a member of this organization is very captivating". The scale demonstrated an internal consistency (alpha) reliability of .713 for organisational engagement and .696 for job engagement in the current study. Organisational commitment of the respondents was measured using the six-item affective commitment scale by Rhoades et al (2001). A sample item for commitment in this study is, "I feel a strong sense of belonging to my organization". The cronbach's alpha value for organisational commitment scale was .884, which is highly reliable. Participants indicated their response on a five-point Likert -type scale with anchors (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree.

5.1 Hypotheses

H1: Organisational engagement is positively related to organisational commitment among employees in IT companies.

H2: Job engagement will be positively related to organisational commitment among employees in IT companies

H3: Job engagement will be positively related to organisational engagement among employees in IT companies

H4: There will be a significant positive relationship between demographic variables of the respondents and employee engagement among employees in IT companies



5.2 Hypotheses Testing

The hypothesis sought to investigate the extent to which job and organisational engagement is related with organisational commitment. The hypothesis was investigated using Pearson correlation coefficient. Summary of the results are presented in Table 1 below

TABLE 1. Correlations

		ORGCOMMITMENT	ORGENGAGEMENT	JOBENGAGEMENT
ORGCOMMITMENT	Pearson Correlation	1	.550**	-.158
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.228
	N	60	60	60
ORGENGAGEMENT	Pearson Correlation	.550**	1	.268*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.039
	N	60	60	60
JOBENGAGEMENT	Pearson Correlation	-.158	.268*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.228	.039	
	N	60	60	60

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Interpretation

From Table 2 above, in case of employees from IT sector, there is highly positive significant relationship between organisational engagement and organisational commitment [$r=.550^{**}$, $p<0.05$]. Hence we accept **H1**. There is no significant relationship between job engagement and organisational commitment [$r=-.158$, p is not less than .05]. Hence we reject **H2**. There is a significant positive correlation between job and organization engagements [$r=.268^*$, $p<0.05$]. Hence we accept **H3**.

TABLE 2 .INFLUENCE OF AGE ON EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

ANOVA

EMPLOYEEENGAGEMENT

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	4.519	4	1.130	4.483	.002
Within Groups	32.004	127	.252		
Total	36.523	131			

Source: Primary Data



TABLE 3. INFLUENCE OF WORK EXPERIENCE ON EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

ANOVA

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.879	3	.293	1.052	.372
Within Groups	35.644	128	.278		
Total	36.523	131			

Source: Primary Data

TABLE 4. INFLUENCE OF EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION ON EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

ANOVA

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	3.165	3	1.055	4.048	.009
Within Groups	33.358	128	.261		
Total	36.523	131			

Source: Primary Data

Interpretation

The one-way ANOVA was carried to find out if there is any influence on employee engagement by age, work experience and educational qualifications of the respondents and it is shown in Table 2, Table 3 and Table 4 respectively. From the tables mentioned above, it can be known that the demographic characteristics of the employees such as age (*since p=.002, p<0.05*) and educational qualification (*since p=.009, p<0.05*) has significant influence on the level of employee engagement among IT sector employees. But it was known that work experience has no influence on the level of employee engagement among employees in IT companies.

6.0 DISCUSSION

The study adopted a survey method to study employee engagement and organizational commitment. The data analysis was done using SPSS 21 version. The responses to this study were made up 88% of respondents comprising of the senior management, middle management and juniors. 60.6% of the respondents were male with 39.39% the respondents being female. The hypothesis that there will be a positive significant relationship between employee engagement (job and organisation) and organizational commitment was supported



by the analysis shown in Table 1. Pearson correlation coefficient was used to analysis the correlation between the study variables such as organisational commitment, job engagement and organisational engagement. This finding implies that employees who are given the necessary resources by their organizations to perform their tasks effectively tend to respond favourably to the organizations they are committed to. This finding is consistent with results from a study conducted by Saks (2006) when he established that engagement of employees mediated the relationships between the antecedents and job satisfaction, organizational commitment, intentions to quit the job, and organizational citizenship behaviour. From the analysis it was known that majority of the employees are properly engaged in their work and moderately committed. The findings of the study revealed a significant positive relationship between employee engagement and organisational commitment.

The One-way ANOVA analysis is used to determine there exists any significant and insignificant difference among the means of two or more independent groups. Table2, Table 3and Table 4shows one – way ANOVA and shows analysis results of variance of demographic variables with employee engagement.Results described that all demographic variables do show significant variation with employee engagement.Age and educational qualification of the respondents show significant influence on the level of employee engagement but work experience have no influence for their level of engagement towards either their job or their organisation.

7.0 LIMITATIONS

The research was limited to IT sector employees in Kerala only. The employees of this dynamic industry are ambitious and look out for better opportunities always. For future consideration this study can be extended to larger sample in order to identify other factors which affect performance of IT employees and if data is also collected from the other sector. In this regard, replicating this study in different settings would be worthwhile to establish the validity and generalizing of the present findings across different contexts



8.0 CONCLUSION

We can conclude that the importance of employee engagement in the organizational setting is undeniable. Prudent practices of engaging employees should be implemented in the organizations in order to enhance their commitment to the organization. Employees are the assets of any organization and organizations should adopt impeccable measures to engage their key performers to build a committed work force.

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