

# Employee Engagement: A Shared Practice in Varied Organizations

Dr Parveen Prasad

Associate Prof, MU College of Commerce

**Abstract-** Employee Engagement is an important driver in an organization to achieve its goals. Engagement is known to be manifested in an employees' deep interest in the organization's principles and in an inculcation of a sense of job satisfaction and commitment. In a work context, the value of employee engagement as a continuous activity to work jointly with collectively discussed inputs is known to produce positive outcomes in an organization in terms of efficiency, productivity and innovation. This research paper attempts to identify the factors as constructs and examine the relationship between various factors influencing the characteristics of employee engagement. In this research work, 153 respondents working in varied organizations formed a sample to measure the various variables and their relationship to understand the need for employee engagement consciousness in organizations today. In this research work, factor analyses and correlation analyses have been incorporated.

**Index Terms-** employee engagement, innovation, organization principles

## I. INTRODUCTION

Employees are known to make a critical difference when it comes to innovation, organizational performance, competitiveness and organizational success. It has been established that today, organizations expect their employees to be proactive, show initiative, collaborate with others, take responsibility for their own career development and be committed to a high quality of performance standards. In order to achieve this from the employees, organizations are known to be conscious in creating a work context, where characteristics of employee empowerment, talent management practices, flat hierarchical structure, development of employee centric relations, extension of challenging assignments, leading to the environment of learning from the employees at various levels, and taking their inputs, are being actively adopted. Lincoln and Kalleberg (1990) in their primary research hypothesized that difference in organization's commitment of Japanese and American workers are due to differences in organization structures and strategies of Japanese and American firms rather than to cultural differences in attitudes towards work. They found support that organization commitment accounts for much of the difference in organization behavior and is facilitated by differences in organization structures and practices. These features are related to characteristics of the working context in an organization.

## II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Ulrich (1997) writes in his seminal book, "Human Resource Champions" how employees' contribution becomes critical business issues because in trying to produce more output with less input, companies have no choice but to try to engage not only the body but also the mind and soul of every employee (p 125). A positive organizational behavior (POB) focuses on a wide range of positive behaviours of engaged employees in flourishing organizations.

Luthans (2002) contention is how POB is "the study and application of positively oriented human resource strengths and psychological capacities that can be measured, developed and effectively managed for performance improvement in today's workplace (p 59). POB studies individual positive psychological conditions and human resource strengths that are in one way or the other, related to employee well being or performance improvement. POB studies examine the role of states like self efficacy, optimism, hope and resilience. "Psychological Presence" or to be fully there is a concept that emerged from role theory and is defined as an experiential state that accompanies "personally engaging behavior" that involves the channeling of personal energies into physical, cognitive and emotional labour. (Kahn, 1992). Kahn presents a comprehensive theoretical model of psychological presence. Maslach and Leiter (1997) assumed that "engagement is characterized by energy, involvement and efficacy, which are considered to be direct opposites of burnout dimensions. Engaged employees are known to have a sense of energetic and effective connection, with their work activities and they see themselves as able to deal completely with their demands of their job. Absorption was found to be a relevant aspect of engagement after 30 interviews were carried out. (Shaufeli et al, 2001). Engagement is defined as a positive, fulfilling, work related state of mind that is characterized by vigour, dedication and absorption. Engagement refers to a persistent and pervasive, affective/ cognitive state characterized by vigour, dedication and challenge. Involvement is described as a psychological integration with one's work or one's job. (Kaningo, 1982; Lawler and Hall, 1970). Dimension of engagement and absorption is characterized by being fully concentrated and deeply engaged in one's work, where time passes quickly and one has difficulties in detaching oneself from work. Work is established to be powerful potential to fulfill other important roles and needs of the individual such as self esteem, fulfillment, identity, social interaction and status. Other findings show that highly involved employees tend to spend more time and effort on the job than workers who are less

involved. They also tend to be more committed to work and to contribute more to their organization. (Manheim et al, 1997).

### III. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

In this study, I sought to examine the factors of Employee Engagement through a cross sectional survey of personnel in varied manufacturing and service industries around the industrial hub of Pimpri - Chinchwad areas in Pune. Specifically, the study aimed at understanding the structure of the Employee Engagement scale and an identification of constructs or factors related to employee engagement and their correlations between them. The examination of factors related to engaging employees at the work place is significant in several ways. The study will showcase the strengths of various strategies, considered to be generic, which implies they are best for all companies, to be adopted by organizations as it is believed that this can bring about improvement in innovation among personnel, enhance their retention and job satisfaction with learning.

Field research was guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the factors related to employee engagement?
2. How are these factors interrelated to produce desirable outcomes?

### IV. STUDY METHODOLOGY

A cross sectional design was used by the study. The target population of the study consisted of personnel working in the manufacturing and service industries in the industrial township of Pimpri Chinchwad areas. The sample, based on judgemental method, consisted of 153 personnel. In this research, a questionnaire was used as instrument to collect data. The first section consisted of questions related to personal details of the respondents, namely name, age, name of the organization and designation. The second section was adapted from an anonymous survey instrument titled "Engagement Survey" purported to be conducted before the introduction of a performance management

in order to establish trends. It consisted of 20 statements, mentioned in first person, related to areas of employee engagement. In order to answer the research questions on the factors related to employee engagement, the following sample items were presented, to which the respondents were guided by a 5 point Likert scale( fully agree to strongly disagree).

- . I am very satisfied with the work I do
- . My job is interesting
- . I know exactly what I am supposed to do
- . My job is challenging and so on. There were 20 items in all.

### V. DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

The researcher assured all respondents of confidentiality. All the questionnaires administered were returned after being fully completed. Initially the item analyses for the 20 items of the employee engagement scale were carried out. The item remainder correlations for all items were satisfactory and statistically significant. The cronbach Alpha too was quite high at 0.89 , which implies the internal consistency of items.

#### Factor Analysis of the Employee Engagement Scale:

In order to understand the structure of the Employee Engagement scale, the factor analysis of this scale was carried out. The correlation matrix was visually scrutinized for its suitability for factor analyses. Bartlett's test of sphericity was also computed which yielded a test statistic of ( chi square 825.616, ,df= 190) indicating that the obtained correlation matrix significantly departs from the identity matrix, thus indicating its suitability for factor analysis. Kaiser Meyer Olkin measure of sampling adequacy has also been calculated which turned out to be 0.816

The correlation matrix was subjected to Principal Component Analysis (PCA) and a varimax rotated six factor solution was obtained. The six factor solution was found to be more interpretable and the same is reported in the following Table No 2. Table 1 reports the descriptive statistics and the item remainder correlations.

**TABLE 1: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS AND ITEM REMAINDER CORRELATIONS**

#### Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
ee1	78.42	86.930	.534	.823
ee2	78.58	89.600	.429	.827
ee3	78.58	89.034	.372	.829
ee4	78.67	91.066	.276	.833
ee5	78.82	85.585	.470	.824
ee6	78.72	92.638	.015	.863
ee7	78.59	87.361	.482	.825
ee8	78.71	85.262	.559	.821
ee9	78.88	86.807	.444	.826
ee10	78.84	86.107	.473	.824
ee11	78.63	86.104	.505	.823
ee12	78.93	86.140	.493	.824

ee13	78.79	86.101	.482	.824
ee14	78.71	87.759	.418	.827
ee15	78.75	87.793	.417	.827
ee16	78.81	86.615	.495	.824
ee17	78.92	84.236	.538	.821
ee18	78.69	88.069	.407	.828
ee19	78.58	87.574	.457	.825
ee20	78.39	90.240	.376	.829

**TABLE 2: VARIMAX ROTATED FACTOR ANALYSIS**

**Rotated Component Matrix<sup>a</sup>**

	Component					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
ee19	.681	.488	-.167			
ee17	.678		.289	.232		
ee18	.626			.252	.130	-.137
ee7	.564	.208	.161		.348	
ee1	.533	.217	.528			.144
ee13	.457	.139	.174		.378	.252
ee20	.106	.681		.226		-.133
ee9		.621	.263	.159	.185	.154
ee3	.133	.571	.292	-.183	.245	
ee14	.289	.542		.139		.100
ee2		.134	.820	.265		
ee12	.200		.552		.341	.337
ee8	.359	.385	.457		.231	
ee16	.160	.208	.116	.694	.202	
ee10	.402		.237	.648		
ee15		.392		.609	.162	.201
ee4				.159	.811	-.147
ee5	.275	.106		.387	.561	.157
ee6						.846
ee11	.285	.342	.214	.216		.464

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.  
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.  
a. Rotation converged in 12 iterations.

Using 0.35 as cut off point, it is noted that each of the Factors is defined by the following items:

**Factor 1: Enhancing Commitment and Job satisfaction**

- 19.I am happy about the values of this organization(0.681)
- 17. I believe I have a good future in the organization (0.678)
- 18. I intend to go on working for this organization (0.626)
- 7. I get plenty of opportunities to work on this job(0.564)
- 1. I am very satisfied with the work I do(0.533)
- 13. I have no problems in achieving a balance between my work and my private life(0. 457)
- 10. My contribution is fully recognized (0.402)

**Factor 2: Leadership**

- 20. I believe that products provided by this organization are excellent (0.681)
- 9. I get excellent support from my boss(0. 621)
- 3. I know exactly what I am supposed to do(0.571)
- 14. I like working for my boss (0.542)

**Factor 3: Positive Working Conditions**

- 2.My job is interesting(0.820)
- 12. It is easy to keep up with the demands of my job (0.552)

- 8. The facilities/equipment provided are excellent (0.457)

**Factor 4: Employee Centric Relations**

- 16.I think this organization is a great place to work with (0.694)
- 10.My contribution is fully recognized (0.648)
- 15. I get on well with my work colleagues (0.609)

**Factor 5: Challenging Assignments**

- 5. My job is challenging(0.561)
- 4. I am prepared to put myself out to do my work (0.811)

**Factor 6: Learning Focus**

- 6.I am given plenty of freedom to decide how to do my work(0.846)

The variance explained by the factors was 58.903%.

The study has a validity construct. The six factors extracted from factor analyses are fairly in general agreement with the body of literature that mentions employee engagement constructs similar to the findings. It also appears to have content validity as the study fairly measures the theoretical construct that it was designed to measure. The construct validity of each factor was evaluated using a factor analyses as explained above (Hair et al, 1992).

## VI. DISCUSSION

In Kahn (1990) conceptualization, we see engagement occurring when individual are emotionally connected to others and are cognitively vigilant. When they know what is expected of them, they have that they need to do their work, have opportunities to feel an impact and fulfillment, have a chance to improve and develop, they get immense fulfillment in their work. This is what we understand as an employee engagement. In talent management, the broadly defined constructs include job involvement (Lawler & Hall, 1970) and organizational commitment (Porter & Steers, 1982). The factors of job satisfaction and organizational commitment have received considerable attention from industrial and organizational psychologists, management scientists and sociologists. Lincoln & Kalleberg (1990) hypothesized that differences in organizational commitment of Japanese and American workers are due to difference in organization structures and strategies of Japanese and American firms rather than cultural differences in attitudes towards work. This mentions the importance of strategies and policies towards being more employee centric. Analysts often define job satisfaction with reference to the needs and values of individuals and the extent to which these needs and values are satisfied in the work place. The structure of the employee engagement scale mentions the importance of this value in one of its constructs. In order to further elaborate, the Job Description Index developed by Smith, Kendall and Hulin (1989) breaks out the overall measure of job satisfaction into satisfaction with the supervisor, satisfaction with the supervisor, satisfaction with the coworker, satisfaction with work, satisfaction with pay, satisfaction with promotion. Another commonly used measure job Diagnostic Survey of Hackman and Oldham (1985) maintains that job satisfaction is associated with five core dimensions: skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, feedback from others. Other findings show that highly involved employees tend to spend more time and effort on the job than workers who are less involved. They also tend to be more committed to their work and to contribute more to their organization. (Jans, 1984, Manheim et al, 1997). Thus achieving and maintaining a positive goal centrality should be a positive goal sought by an organization. Even in the key components of Total Quality Management (TQM) model as a framework suggested by Malcolm Balridge National Quality Award (MBNQA), leadership and people management issues, in a survey carried out in Australia among 102 manufacturing organizations, by Danny Samson and Militer Ziovoki (1999), were found to be the most important predictors of performance in organizations. Leadership element included individual development, organizational learning, management of the environment, and people management practices included sharing strategic directions, multiskilling of employees, empowerment of employees and flexibility.

## VII. CONCLUSION

This study will conclude by making some recommendations to organizations, as informed by the findings of the study. Organizations, in order to enhance their performance and develop competitiveness need to concentrate of employing practices and strategies that focus towards building career and future employability of the employees, train employees at all levels to accept challenging assignments, develop values among personnel, secure inputs of the personnel before designing the vision, mission and taking important decisions. These features are strongly interrelated as revealed in this study. Employee engagement practices of being transparent in communication, offering employees a work and life balance, following ethical principles in working, facilitating and creation of an environment of empowerment and freedom, all being interrelated are purported to surely go a long way in garnering a sense of commitment and job satisfaction, an urgent necessity in these times of vulnerability, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity (VUCA).

## REFERENCES

- [1] Hackman J.R and Oldham G.R.:1975: "Development of Job Diagnostic Survey", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 60(2), pp.159-170
- [2] Hair J. et al:1992. *Multivariate Data Analysis*. Macmillan Publishing: New York
- [3] Kahn W.A.:1990 "Psychological conditions of personal engagement and disengagement at work", *Academy of Management Journal*, 6(32), pp.692-724
- [4] Kahn W. A. :1992. "To be fully there: Psychological Presence at Work", *Human Relations*, 4(5), pp.321-349.
- [5] Kanungo R.N.:1982. "Measurement of job and work involvement", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 467, pp.341-349
- [6] Lincoln L and Kalleberg C.:1990. *Culture, Control and Commitment: A Study of work organization and work attitudes*. Cambridge University Press: New York
- [7] Lawler E.E and Hall B.T.:1970 "Relationship of Job characteristics to job involvement, satisfaction and intrinsic motivation." *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol 54, pp.305-312
- [8] Luthans F.:2002. "The need for and meaning of positive organization behavior" *Journal of Organization Behavior*, 26, pp.695-706
- [9] Malcolm Balridge National Award Criteria, 1995: United States of Commerce, National Institute of Standards and Technology.: Washington DC
- [10] Manheim J.J et al:1997. "Organization commitment, Career factors and Career life stage." *Journal of Organization Behavior*. 1989(110), pp.247-266
- [11] Maslach C and Leiter M.:1997. *The Truth about Burnout*. Jossey Bass: San Francisco
- [12] Porter R and S.Steers.1982. "Organization Commitment, Job satisfaction factors and turnover among psychiatric technicians". *Journal of Applied Psychology*. Vol 59, pp. 603-609
- [13] Smith P.C., Kendall L.M. and Hulin G.L.:1989. *The measurement of satisfaction in work and retirement. A Strategy for the study of Attitudes*: Chicago

## AUTHORS

**First Author** – Dr Parveen Prasad, Associate Prof, MU College of Commerce, Email: parvin\_prasad@hotmail.com