

CRITICAL INVESTIGATION ON FACULTY ROLE AND CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS RAISING THE BAR OF HIGHER EDUCATION



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ABSTRACT

For any industry to survive and prosper in the economy, quality resources have to be utilized. Human Resources are the most important assets of an organization. The success or failure of any organization is highly dependent on the calibre of the workforce involved in the organization. For any organization, engaging customer is very important, but to engage the customers, the employees have to be engaged first. Engaged employees create substantial competitive advantage to the organization by retaining loyal customers who enhance profitability.

Now the question arises, is employee engagement confined only to organizations? If so, then what about the teaching professionals in higher education institutions? "Can Employee engagement be considered for them"? Yes, "Employee engagement is defined as an employee putting forth additional effort, being committed and loyal, remaining with the organization for a longer tenure", be it manufacturing sector or service sector or any other.

Hence, this paper makes an attempt to conceptualise about employee engagement and the factors influencing employee engagement in higher education institutions.

KEY WORDS: Employee Engagement, Higher Education, Engaged, Disengaged.

1. INTRODUCTION

In 1990s Kahn propounded the concept of employee engagement which refers to the extent of involvement and commitment an employee has towards his organization and its values.

An "engaged employee" is the one who gets fully involved and is also enthusiastic about his work, and aims towards achieving organizational objectives. Engaged employee works with colleagues to improve performance within the job for the benefit of the organization. Disengaged workers are also most likely to share their discontent with others (Penna, 2006; Gallup, 2006).

There are three dimensions of employee engagement

- Emotional engagement - Emotional engagement is being involved in one's work emotionally;
- Cognitive engagement - Cognitive engagement is being highly focussed on the work.
- Physical engagement - Physical engagement is willing to stretch oneself or at times working beyond the physical ability of an individual.

A survey report states that the engaged employee will go one step further and speak out as advocates of their organisation, in what they describe as a 'win-win' situation for the employee and the employer.

Highly engaged employees show greater level of commitment towards their organization, utilize their skills and knowledge in achieving organizational objectives and develop a sense of belongingness, align individual work values with organizational work values. Higher engagement levels will have positive impact on employee turnover, productivity, and financial performance (Baumruk, 2006). Higher engagement levels may help employers to attract and retain their best talents (Martin and Hetrick, 2006).

The levels of engagement can be categorized as:

- Intellectually engaged employees- Intellectually engaged employees are those who contribute for the success of the organization through their creative and innovative ideas.
- Emotionally Engaged employees -Emotionally Engaged employees always have pride of being associated with the organization and are passionate about the company.
- Behaviorally Engaged employees - Behaviorally Engaged employees show their willingness to overstretch themselves for the sake of their organization and the job they are assigned with.

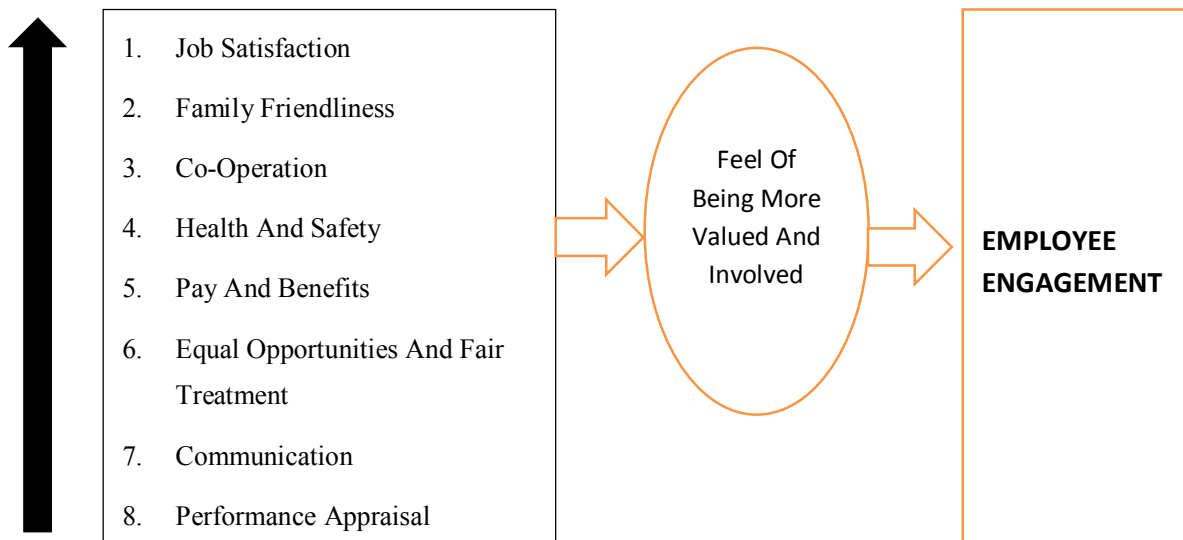
2. MODELS OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Many employee engagement models have been proposed by eminent scholars, few of the most popular ones are focused in this paper, they are as following

2.1 IES Model of Engagement (2003)

Based on the survey of IES in 2003, there are ten factors of employee engagement, which makes the employee feel more valued and involved and thus leads to employee engagement, they are job satisfaction, family friendliness, Co-operation, health and safety, pay and benefits, equal opportunities and fair treatment, communication, performance Appraisal training, development & career and immediate management. Robinson Model of Employee Engagement (2004) also is designed on the similar means.

Importance



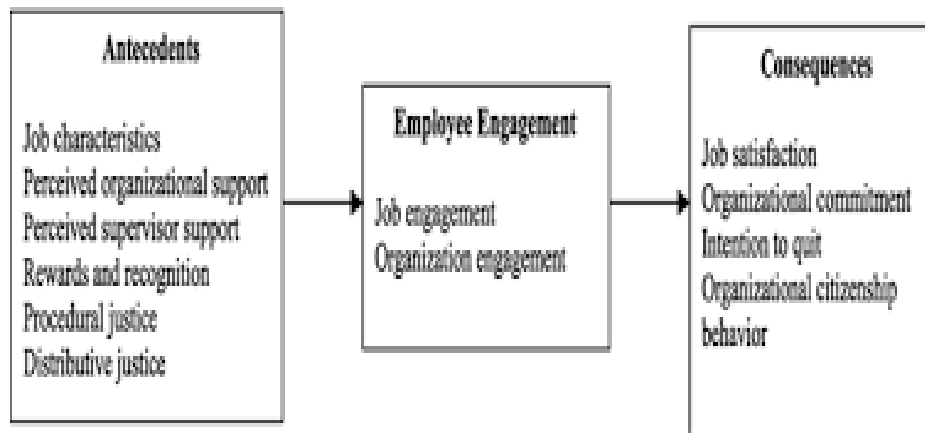
2.2 SCHMIDT MODEL OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT (2004)

According to Schmidt Model of Employee Engagement (2004), employee engagement is based on the recruitment and retention policies of the organization. If the organizations emphasize on recruiting the right kind of people who can adhere to the prevailing organizational culture and strive for organizational growth and retaining the competent employees with adequate compensation, providing them with health, safety and wellness leads to workplace well-being , employee engagement can be achieved which results in high levels of organizational performance.



Source: Schmidt (2004)

2.3 SAKS MODEL OF THE ANTECEDENTS AND CONSEQUENCES OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT



(Source : Saks, A.M. (2006))

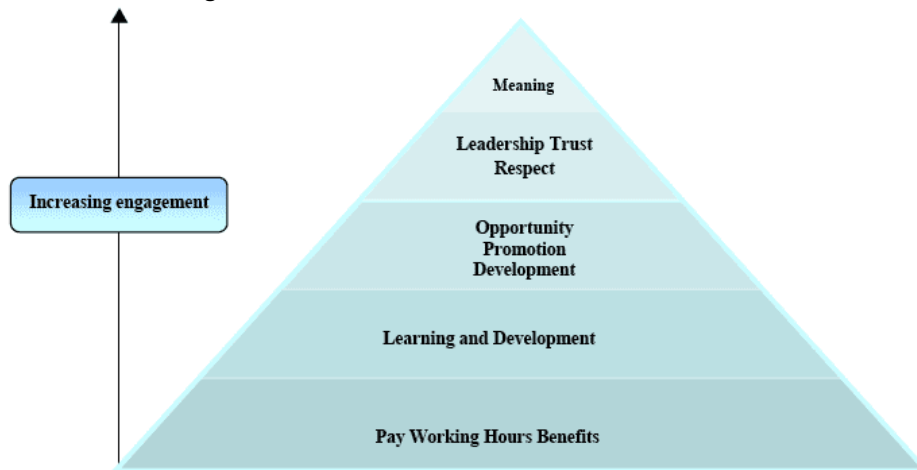
The results of Saks (2006) study demonstrated that job and organization engagements are related but distinct constructs. Participants’ scores were significantly higher for job engagement compared to organization engagement. In addition, it was found that neither the psychological conditions that lead to job and organization engagements are the same nor the consequences of both types of engagement are the same.

2.4 PENNA'S MODEL OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT (2007)

Penna proposes a hierarchical model of engagement factors, comprising of

1. Basic Working Conditions
2. Learning And Developing
3. Promotion Opportunities for Career Growth
4. Leadership, Trust and Respect
5. Meaning of the job to an employee.

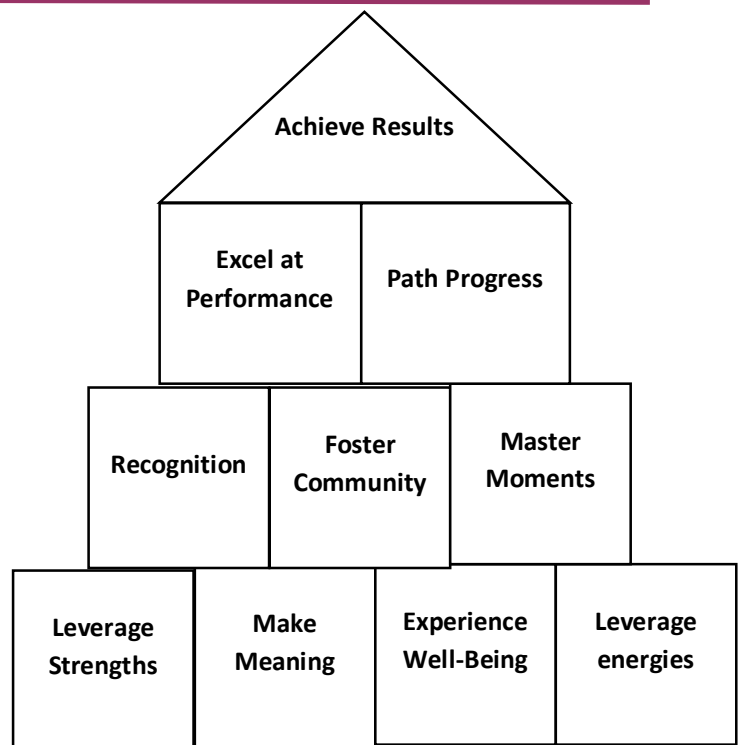
This model depicts the impact of each of these factors on engagement and retention of employees in an organization. The most fundamental factor for employee engagement is compensation, working hours and working conditions, followed by learning and development, career growth opportunities, leadership trust and respect, the ultimate factor is meaning of the job to an employee. Penna (2007) defines meaning at work as the situation where a job brings fulfilment for the employee, once the meaning of the job is achieved, employee engagement can be derived. It means that unless and until an employee feels the relevance of his job to his individual growth and the organizational growth, sense of belongingness will never arise, he will never be committed and employee engagement cannot be achieved. Similarly the employers should also realize the worth of the employees' contribution to the organization. As per the model, as these factors are taken care by the top management of the organization, employee engagement will also increase, thus attracting to new talents also.



Source: Bhatla (2011)

2.5 ZINGER MODEL OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT (2009)

The David Zinger (2009) proposed a zinger model of employee engagement in the form of a pyramid. The pyramid has 4 levels, the bottom most or the fourth layer comprises of 4 blocks: **Leverage Strengths**, **Make Meaning**, **Leverage energies** and **Experience Well-Being**. The third layer comprises of 3 blocks: **Master Moments**, **Foster Community** and **Recognition**; The second layer comprises of 2 blocks: **Path Progress** and **Excel at Performance**; The first layer comprises of 1 block: **Achieve Results**.



According to Zinger employee engagement is possible only if it is from all the three layers of management top management (Organization), middle level management (Superiors) and low level management (Employees), all three should strive in coordination for achieving employee engagement.

The role of an organization in employee engagement is: encouraging employee empowerment, employee recognition, employee grievance redressed and career planning.

The role of superiors in employee engagement is: setting standards to self, motivating employees, employee mentoring and encouraging team work.

The role of employees in employee engagement is: Individual growth through organizational growth, accountability, innovativeness and involvement.

- a. **ACHIEVE RESULTS**-Every employee in the organization should be communicated about the results to be achieved and how to achieve them.
- b. **EXCEL AT PERFORMANCE**- When there is clarity about goals to be achieved, employees will focus towards the goals and enhance their performance to achieve the set goals. Thus resulting in excellence in performance.
- c. **PATH PROGRESS**- Employees are to be made aware of career growth in the organization, career planning of employees plays a vital role in motivating employees to perform better as well as in retention of employees. There should be clarity about growth of employees in the organization.
- d. **RECOGNITION** - Recognition and rewarding the high performance employees always motivates the self and others also to strive for better employees. It boosts their morale, makes them feel more valued and inspires them to work with more commitment and sense of belongingness.
- e. **FOSTER COMMUNITY**- The focus on team work and harmonious relationship among the employees by adopting conducive work culture and congenial working atmosphere enhances team bonding, develops inter personal relationships and makes employees emotionally stronger.
- f. **MASTER MOMENTS**-This block focusses on cherishing the present moment, giving the best and making the moment more successful, which implies that every moment of our life is equally important and to get the best of it, we should work for perfection by giving our complete mind and soul for every task we do.

- g. **LEVERAGE STRENGTHS**-Every Employee of an organization should do his own SWOT (Strength, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats) analysis and work towards rectifying them and take necessary action. There will be certain positive aspects which are to be identified by the individual, strengthen them further and at the same time, weakness should also be identified and rectified. The same has to be done by the superiors–appreciate strength and correct weaknesses of employees.
- h. **MAKE MEANING**- Once the meaning of the job is achieved, employee engagement can be derived. It means that unless and until an employee feels the relevance of his job to his individual growth and the organizational growth, sense of belongingness will never arise, he will never be committed and employee engagement cannot be achieved
- i. **LEVERAGE ENERGIES**- Theressources /assets of the organization should be utilized properly, employees also being the vital assets should be motivated and directed towards achieving the organizational goals.
- j. **EXPERIENCE WELL-BEING**- The foundation of employee performance is job satisfaction, if employees enjoy their work, organization culture and the organization, they will have better employee engagement leading to organizational growth.

3. INFLUENTIAL FACTORS OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Based on the literature review and the study conducted by researchers, there are various factors which initiate employee engagement namely- employee empowerment, career growth of employees in present organization, welfare of employees, recognition of employees, work life balance, rewards, conducive working environment, performance appraisal, safety and security, leadership and many more.

a) **EMPLOYEE EMPOWERMENT** is enabling employees to make decisions with a greater degree of flexibility relating to work. Empowerment is the process of permitting or authorizing an individual to do his job in autonomous ways. It is the state of feeling confident to take control of one's own destiny (Heathfield, 2007). Wilkinson (1998) identified five types of empowerment: information sharing; upward problem solving; task autonomy; attitudinal shaping; and self-management. For employees to perform well they have to be enabled through skills development and conducive environment for learning and development (Wright, 1998). Govindarajan and Natarajan (2009) indicated that employee empowerment means encouraging and allowing individuals to take personal responsibility for improving the way they do their jobs and contribute to the achievement of organization's goals.

b) **CAREER GROWTH OF EMPLOYEES IN PRESENT ORGANIZATION** Career planning of employees enable them to be more career oriented and reduce attrition. If the jobs are in alignment with the expectations and skills of employees then career planning is said to be appropriate and leads to employee satisfaction and employee engagement (Mutunga, 2009). Organizations which focus on employee engagement, will encourage employee learning and development. Career development influences engagement of employees, retaining the most talented employees and providing opportunities for personal development

c) **WELFARE OF EMPLOYEES** According to Debashish Sengupta (2007), welfare schemes in the organizations are to be designed for the well-being of employees. Mukul, G. Asher (2009) opines that, "major objectives of any social security system are consumption smoothing over an individual's life time, insurance against longevity and inflation risks, income redistribution for society as a whole and poverty relief". Welfare measures of an organization should focus on improving the intelligence, morality and standard of living which will result in improved efficiency and productivity of employees, Poongavanam (2011).

As per Committee on Labour Welfare (1969), labour welfare is provision of facilities and amenities like canteens, rest and recreation facilities, sanitary and medical facilities, travelling arrangements, housing facility, including social security measures as contribute to conditions under which workers are employed". Brikend (2011) opines that job satisfaction is influenced by factors like nature of work, remuneration, Salary, career growth, employer, Work groups and Working conditions. Employee welfare, level of satisfaction and engagement has direct impact on organizational performance Ekta(2013).

d) **SAFETY and SECURITY** Employees who feel safe and secured in the organization will be more productive than other employees. According to Geoffrey James, job security has a significant effect on the overall performance of the team as well as on the organization's performance (James, 2012). The organization with

low job security cause people to lose faith in their future which consequently affect performance. He affirmed that the more an employee enjoys a high job security the more he is likely to effectively engage in the tasks which is reflected in the overall performance of the organization.

e) **WORK-LIFE BALANCE** Personal life for any individual is the dominant aspect of one's life. An individual should be able to balance both his personal as well as professional life (Work-life balance). If an individual has good Work life balance, he can focus towards his job with more commitment and can also have job satisfaction. When the organizations provide opportunities for Work-life balance, a sense of accomplishment in an employee gets enhanced.

f) **REWARDS** Employee Engagement increases when employees receive extrinsic rewards for positive performance. Employees need to be rewarded if they are expected to more productive,. When employees feel appreciated for their efforts and positive performance, they are more likely to continue putting forward commitment and positive results. When employees continually perform at a high level and their efforts are not recognized, their motivation reduces. This could negatively impact their engagement in their work and organization. Connecting job-related positive performance to rewards and recognition will assist in encouraging repeated behaviour and possibly lead to increased engagement. "One of the strongest prescriptions for influencing motivation is to tie job-related outcomes to job effort and/or performance" (Kouzes & Posner, 1995).

g) **CONDUCTIVE WORKING ENVIRONMENT**, According to Smith, the organizations should emphasise on the optimistic working atmosphere, foster workers' skills and appraise job satisfaction to enhance employee engagement. Employees engaged in their work, develop good relationships among fellow employees, maintain industrial harmony and contribute for industrial peace and productivity. Kumar and Swetha (2011) opine that, an engaged workplace encourages commitment and energy among the employees of the organization to improve production and business performance.

h) **PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL** ,Performance appraisal is important for defining the level of employee engagement. It should be transparent and unbiased. Organizations following suitable performance appraisal technique will have high levels of employee engagement (Mutunga, 2009). Equal treatment policy for all employees motivates towards improved productivity and increases employee engagement levels. Equal opportunities for growth and development to all the employees provides emotional security and they feel that they are not discriminated in any aspects within the organization (Bhatla, 2011). Hauck (2011) states that improper performance appraisal and lack of skills in the managers are barriers of employee engagement. Macey, Schneider, Barbera, & Young (2009), propose that key determinant of performance is employee engagement. Mone and London (2010) opine that, the performance management process which is designed to improve employee engagement will lead to higher levels of performance.

i) **LEADERSHIP** Leaders and managers who motivate self-reliance among employees, give them autonomy to make decisions and accountability, are considered to be engaged employees. Organisational processes must give managers the flexibility to instil this in employees and adopt a collaborative management style. The actions and integrity of leaders and line managers are vitally important in enabling engagement (Macey and Schneider, 2008a). A great organisation needs not just a great leader, but people with leadership skills. This stimulates good performance, boosts creativity and eases succession planning.

Mutunga (2009) opines that effective leadership is very important for smooth functioning of the organization. Organizational environment is directly influenced by the quality of leadership in human resource managers. A leader should strive to increase the level of engagement among the employees and actively demonstrate the organization's values and goals. If employees are given opportunities and encouraged to lead, their sense of value and contribution is increased, which may enhance their engagement in the organization and their work.

4. EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

In private higher education institutions, retaining talented faculty members and engaging them is a major challenge, as higher education institutions are more susceptible to losing their highly qualified staff to beneficial offers from other institutions. Higher education Institutions are expected to meet the expectations of students, faculties and also withstand international competition (HEFCE, 2010). With many foreign universities entering into Indian education field, there are new challenges to be countered with. As per a research, engagement levels of employees vary based on age, designation and years of service in the institution. Highly designated staff show more of employee engagement.

‘Effective performance management and high-quality leadership, governance and management are essential in forming the foundation of a successful, high-quality HE workforce.’ (HEFCE 2010). According to the study conducted by Cornerstone and Ellucian, the “2016 Employee Engagement and Retention in Higher Education”, though faculty have a major role in students’ success, the institutions as such do not provide any employee engagement initiatives such as leadership development, recognition programs or encouragement for research work, extensive development programmes.

According to a survey, common challenge faced by management education institutions is recruiting and retaining talented employees. Along with remuneration, work load, workplace culture and competition from other colleges and universities are major reasons of attrition.

There are few Higher Education Institutions which calculate financial effect due to Employee Turnover. Learning and Development Opportunities leads to employee loyalty towards the institution, thus resulting in less attrition rate. Faculty development programs have an effect over students’ success.

Higher Education Institutions are expected to meet the global competition along with the expectation of students, parents and corporate world (HEFCE, 2010). Apart from this, the main objective of every institution is to provide a complex and distinct range of services both internally and externally (Archer, 2005). According to Development Dimensions International (DDI), (2005),

Higher Education institutions that offer development opportunities to their employees are approximately as likely to have less turnover than those that do not. 80% see a correlation between staff engagement and retention, and 71% see a correlation between faculty engagement and retention.

Due to excess work pressure and constraints in MNCs, many Professional postgraduates are entering into teaching field after few years of industry to share their valuable industrial experience with students. Due to increased demand for faculties, visiting faculty number has also been rising,

With ongoing need for research activities, many institutions are enabling on faculty research by setting up their own research centres, deputing them to attend in research related programs, providing laptops, sabbatical for research work; thus encouraging many professionals to venture into academic field to do research. The number of research publications has increased, need and retention of faculties with research has become a challenge. This in-turn has led to rise in doctoral candidates.

2016 Gallup survey found that 52% of higher education faculty are not engaged in their work, the reasons being difficulty in recruiting and retaining quality teaching members, faculty would not prefer to do administrative tasks. According to Samantha Stainburn, in 1960, 75% of faculties were full-timers. By 2010 that number had dropped to 27% and continues a downward descent, the number of adjunct and visiting faculty has increased.

5. CONSTRAINTS OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Based on the study conducted by researchers, there are constraints which obstruct employee engagement. According to Hauck (2011), inefficient superiors, inappropriate performance management system, strained superior-subordinate relationship are great hindrances to employee engagement. Apart from these, inadequate compensation policies, improper work life balance, lack of career growth, unconducive working environment, dearth of recognition and at times even personal and psychological factors also obstruct employee engagement.

6. CONCLUSION

Employee Engagement is the degree to which employee commitment is present towards work, mission, and vision of the organization. Engagement is sense of belongingness among employees for contributing their best to the organization for individual as well as organizational growth. Institutions must look beyond commitment and strive to improve engagement, as it is engagement that defines employees' willingness to go above and beyond designated job responsibilities to promote the organisation's success. Faculty members enliven students' growth and institutions must provide them professional development opportunities and recognition for success of faculty members and students.

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