

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT OF FACULTIES IN SELECT HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTES IN SOUTH INDIA

Joseph Regy* Dr. D.H.Malini**

**Research Scholar, Department of Management studies, Pondicherry University Karaikal center, India.*

***Assistant Professor, Department of Management studies, Pondicherry University, Karaikal center, India.*

ABSTRACT

The indian education industry is growing by leaps and bounds. India in trying to improve its global standing in both technical and non technical higher education is creating more IITs and IIMs to meet the growing demand based on rise in population. The demand for good credible faculties to join these colleges is there but the dearth of qualified faculties with requisite industrial experience is putting a burden on existing faculties . People with qualifications from good institutes and industry experience, due to huge difference in salary structure in the industry and academia till now have stayed away from academics. So existing faculties have always faced the brunt of being burdened with teaching multiple subjects and handling administrative roles. This has caused huge burnout among them causing engagement issues. In order to be successful an institute should know what makes it faculties happy ,what they want and how to retain them..The present paper is based on empirical work to find out current engagement levels among existing staff of select higher educational institutes in select colleges of south india.

They were evaluated on seven sub scales viz: measuring hygiene factors, policy factors, motivational factors, people factors, self related factors, manager related factors, organization related factors. Data analysis was done on various independent parameters such as gender, age, work experience with the above mentioned - engagement factors. The objective of the study is to measure engagement level, investigate the factors which contribute to the retention of staff and to understand the major challenges in retaining the faculties in higher education. The results showed positive connection between conducive work environment and engaged workforce.

Key Words: - Faculty, Employee Engagement, Monotony ,Enrichment ,Research

INTRODUCTION

Employee Engagement refers to the deep involvement physically, mentally in the work roles by the employees of an organization so that they feel deeply satisfied with their jobs.

In a country like USA also around half of the workforce are either not fully engaged or disengaged (Johnson 2004) which means that a lot of loss in productivity and lost profits. With more and more computerization at the work place and standardizations of processes in organizations, companies are increasingly searching for ways to increase the engagement of employees in different sectors to maintain their bottom line. Today if employees are dissatisfied with their work they will shift to a different companies due to many alternatives. Hence retaining them with different engagement initiatives is the need of the hour .

When the term engagement was used first in relation to work is not clear but Gallup organization is given the credit for coining the term. In their book *First, break all the rules* by Buckingham and Coffman (1999), Gallup's "survey done for a long time from 1988 on over 100000 employee was summarized under the theme strong workplaces . The employees idea of workplaces was measured with 12 questions called Q12.

Lots of changes was happening in the workplaces which needed the adaptation of the employee both physically and mentally to perform their work. With workplaces becoming more complex huge demands were placed on the employees .So instead of their bodies employees bring their whole self to the workplaces and employees contribution became more important as business started to get more output with less employees so engaging not only the physical self but also the mental self became the order of the day.

The main scholar article on the term employee engagement was published in the Academy of management titled “ Psychological conditions of personal engagement and disengagement at work”(Kahn,1990) His article was primarily based on the sociological text ,“The presentation of self in everyday life ”by Goffman,1961.Kahn had hinted that “people act out momentary attachments and detachments in role performances”

Why is Employee Engagement needed for organisation

Before the industrial age, a worker used to do a task in its entirety. But after due to industrialization and the subsequent division of labour an employee who used to use multiple faculties to perform his job , is reduced to doing a small part of the job he used to do earlier. Doing the same small role continuously day in and dayout has increased monotony and mechanical performance of the job. The worker does not have any say or autonomy to do the work as the process is already defined by his superiors or managers.

This has led to job dissatisfaction and detachment towards work leading to disengagement in extreme cases. The level of disengagement is rising in all sectors including teaching. The worker has to be engaged to give the best of his abilities to his workrole. So there is a need to study engagement of workers to not only improve performance but also to maintain it.

Need and significance of the study

With the 6th pay commission being implemented in government colleges ,there was a huge interest among young professionals to enter the academic field .With many colleges putting an emphasis on faculty research ,many professionals are entering the teaching field to do research and share their valuable industrial experience with young students. With not much avenues for doing good research these professional will go abroad and do their doctoral courses and teach abroad . But with the indian higher education sector giving equal chances to do research young indians faculties are coming in droves to occupy faculty position giving a good exposure to young Indian students. The number of publications in top journals have gone up in the past few years ,the amount of collaborative research with abroad institutes have also gone up increasing the importance of Indian faculties. With many colleges having faculty exchange programmes with abroad universities, the Indian faculties gets exposure to the research environment abroad which increases his chances of publications in good journals. With many colleges vying with each other to get good faculties with research credentials, retaining a faculty is a challenge. Hence there is a need to study engagement of Indian faculties in higher education sector.

With the government putting special emphasis on higher education by opening of more IITs and IIMs,Central universities and specialized institutes catering to specific centers like plantation sectors, securities sectors to train manpower for the huge demand for employees with specific skills sets. The private sector on its part to cater to the demand for newer courses have created new departments and courses tailor made to the requirement of the industry like retail,big data,robotics. The demand for online courses from universities have also increased to satisfy the need for ever changing skillsets with people from middle level to senior levels taking online certification courses to be more relevant to the workplaces of their own sectors.

This has led to more people doing doctoral courses for academic and industrial arena the demand for faculties with industrial experience catering to niche segments have increased manifolds .With demand for faculties increasing and supply taking its time ,the faculties teaching in multiple institutes have only risen. Hence the need to keep the faculties engaged in their work is all the more important. This empirical study is a step towards it.

OBJECTIVES

- 1.To measure employee engagement levels of faculties.
2. To find out the factors which contribute to engagement of faculties.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In the academic literature, a number of definitions have been provided for the term employee engagement. In his qualitative paper "Psychological conditions of personal engagement and disengagement at work" Kahn (1990, p. 694) defines personal 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." Personal disengagement refers to "the uncoupling of selves from work roles, in disengagement, people withdraw and defend themselves physically, cognitively, or emotionally during role performances" (p. 694). Thus, according to Kahn (1990, 1992), engagement means to be psychologically present when occupying and performing an organizational role.

Rothbard (2001, p. 656) also defines engagement as psychological presence but goes further to state that it involves two critical components: attention and absorption. Attention refers to "cognitive availability and the amount of time one spends thinking about a role" while absorption "means being engrossed in a role and refers to the intensity of one's focus on a role."

Douglas May tested Kahn's theory in the paper "the psychological conditions of meaningfulness, safety, availability and engagement of human spirit at work" in 2004 of the effects of the three psychological conditions psychological meaningfulness, physiological safety and psychological availability on employee engagement. His research proved that these three conditions impacted on employee engagement in varying ways. In the results meaningfulness displayed the strongest relation. The work role fit and job enrichment positively linked to psychological meaningfulness. The reward and supportive supervisor relations were positively linked to psychological safety. Self consciousness and adherence to co-worker norms negatively affected psychological safety while resources availability were positively related to psychological availability. Participation in outside activities negatively related to psychological availability.

Schaufeli et al. (2002, p. 74) define engagement "as a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption." They further state that engagement is not a momentary and specific state, but rather, it is "a more persistent and pervasive affective-cognitive state that is not focused on any particular object, event, individual, or behavior" (p. 74).

Alan M. Saks in 2006 in the paper titled "Antecedents and consequences of employee engagement" perceived organizational support, perceived supervisor support predicts both job and organization engagement, job characteristics predicts job engagement and procedural justice, distributive justice predicts organization engagement. Higher job and organization engagement led to job satisfaction, organizational commitment, reduced intentions to quit and organizational citizenship behavior.

In the article "The Meaning of Employee Engagement" in 2008 William Macey, Benjamin Schneider have proposed the term is used at different times to refer to psychological states, traits, and behaviors as well as their antecedents and outcomes.

Theoretical underpinning of employee engagement

The concept of employee engagement is mostly explained by social exchange theory. But I argue that Motivation-Hygiene theory of Herzberg is the more apt for explaining the concept of employee engagement of faculties in higher education in south India.

Herzberg theory of two factors states that in the work place certain aspects should be there. If they are absent it causes a huge dissatisfaction to employees and presence of certain factors acts as a huge motivation in the workplace.

Motivators like chance to do something meaningful, recognition of one's hardwork, challenging work, chance to be involved in decision making, sense of pride being a part of the organization give a huge satisfaction to the

employee. Hence for a faculty chances of setting up a research lab, or organizing a conference or recognitions for his research activities are huge motivators.

Hygienic factors like work conditions, competitive salaries, status, job security does not increase motivation of an employee but their absence causes huge dissatisfaction. They include policies, supervisory practices, pay scales etc.

METHODOLOGY

Data Collection: The present research is a cross sectional descriptive study and is based on primary data. The primary data has been collected from colleges having branches in south India.

A structured questionnaire was adopted for collecting primary data as also the literature and interview has been conducted with faculties of different educational institutes.

Secondary sources include information from the practitioners' articles, journals, periodicals, magazines.

The Tool: A detailed questionnaire is designed keeping in view the objectives of the study and administered among sample respondents. The questionnaire has two sections, with five point Likert rating scale, ranging, 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=can't say, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree.

The questionnaire consisting of 12 questions was made after referring to Gall Q12 questions on employee engagement.

Section A: Personal information of respondents was sought. It constitutes age group, experience, gender, government or private sector of the respondents.

Section B: This section is regarding factors of nurses' retention, questions were designed on seven sub scales viz: measuring hygiene factors, policy factors, motivational factors, people factors, self related factors, manager related factors, organization related factors.

Sample Size: Samples of 111 responses were included for this study although questions were sent to 250 respondents. Hence response rate was 44%. All the employees of the company were sent an online questionnaire through Google Docs and some were collected through hard copy of the questionnaire.

Sampling Method: Simple random sampling method was adopted. It is a probability sampling technique. Respondents considered for data collection were at various positions at senior, middle and at entry level of the educational sector.

A personal visit to all the colleges located in different cities in south India was made by the researcher meeting the faculties explaining the idea behind the survey.

Afterwards interaction with dean academics and select heads of department hard copy of the questionnaire was distributed for filling on the spot.

DATA ANALYSIS

Gender: Table 1.1: showing the frequency of gender

Gender of respondents	Numbers	(%)
Male	75	67.5%
Female	36	32.5%
Total	111	100%

Experience

Table 1.2: showing the frequency of experience in current organization

Work Experience in organization	0-5 year	5-10 yrs	10-15 years	15-20 yrs	Total
Number	34	28	30	19	111
(%)	30.6%	25.20%	27%	17.11%	100%

Designation

Table 1.3: showing the designation

Designation	Numbers	(%)
Associate Professors	14	12.6%
Assistant Professors	41	36.9%
Senior lectures	32	28.8%
Junior Lectures	24	21.6%

Government or Private sector

Table 1.4: showing the sector

	Numbers	(%)
Government	26	23.4%
Private	40	36%
Semi government	45	40.5%
	111	100%

Table 1.5 Descriptive statistics for Hygiene factors, Policy, Motivational, People, Self, Managerial, Organizational factors.

Items	Total(111)	Mean	SD
Descriptive statistics for Self			
1) Do you know what is expected of you at work?	3.69	2.09	
Descriptive statistics for Hygiene factors			
2) Do you have the materials and equipment to do your work right?	3.91	1.148	
Descriptive statistics for Policy factors			
3) At work, do you have the opportunity to do what you do best every day?	3.30	2.060	
12) In the last year, have you had opportunities to learn and grow?	3.82	2.40	
Descriptive statistics for Managerial factors			
4) In the last seven days, have you received recognition or praise for doing good work?	2.88	2.16	
5) Does your supervisor, or someone at work, seem to care about you as a person?	3.47	2.03	
Descriptive statistics for People factors			
6) is there someone at work who encourages your development?	3.23	2.116	
9) Are your associates (fellow employees) committed to doing quality work?	3.33	2.10	
10) Do you have a best friend at work?	3.53	2.190	
11) In the last six months, has someone at work talked to you about your progress?	3.10	2.56	
Descriptive statistics for Motivational factors			
7) At work, do your opinions seem to count?	3.18	2.12	
Descriptive statistics for Organization			
8) Does the mission/purpose of your company make you feel your job is important?	3.57	1.99	
*number in brackets denotes the number of respondents			

--	--	--

Interpretation: The first question in the table shows the responses of respondents on factors related to self. Most of the respondents feel that their department employees know what to do at work with (mean=3.69).

The second question in the table show the responses of respondents on factors related to Hygiene factors. Respondents are happy that the company has the materials and equipments. (mean=3.91).

The third question in the table indicates the responses for policy factors. The respondents strongly agree that they have the opportunity to do what they do best every day with (mean = 3.30). The respondents strongly agree have you had opportunities to learn and grow with (mean = 3.82).

The table show the responses of respondents on managerial factors **in question fourth and fifth.** In the last seven days, have you received recognition or praise for doing good work. Respondents are happy that the company has given them recognition or praise for doing good work with (mean=2.88). Respondents strongly agree that their supervisor, or someone at work, seem to care about you as a person with (mean= 3.47)

The **sixth question** in the table indicates response for people factors. The respondents do agree that there is someone at work who encourages your development with (mean= 3.23). Respondents also agree that their associates (fellow employees) committed to doing quality work with (mean= 3.33). Respondents agree that the do you have a best friend at work with (mean=3.53). Respondents agree that in the last six months, has someone at work talked to you about your progress with (mean 3.10).

The seventh question in the table indicates the responses for motivational factors. The respondents strongly agree At work, do your opinions seem to count with (mean = 3.18).

The result of the **eighth question** indicates the responses of all the respondents on organizational factors. Respondents strongly agree that the mission/purpose of your company make you feel your job is important (mean= 3.57).

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

Our empirical study of select educational institutes of south india as an example has confirmed it that conducive work environment, fair treatment by supervisor, good relations with colleagues and proper facilities to do the work goes a long way in improving engagement of faculties. Many of the faculties were happy with the work environment in their colleges.

With many colleges becoming research oriented, the management has taken steps to send faculties to latest training workshop related to research like SEM, SPSS, doctoral conferences. In some cases the colleges have started their own research programmes with financial concessions for their own faculties to improve the level of enrolment in doctoral programmes. The cost of attending conferences national and international is also being funded by the colleges to improve the research output among faculties along with reduction in teaching workload. Such kind of faculty friendly policies have to be continued to get good output.

In case of any problem, the supervisors and colleagues would discuss and solve the issues which help in promoting a congenial work environment.

Many of the faculties have been provided with laptops and access to popular databases like Ebsco, Proquest and WGSN to improve the level of updation to the latest trends in research in their own fields. That has increased the motivation and commitment of faculties to their jobs and led to the increase in publications of articles in good journals.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The researcher was able to take responses from faculties from select colleges in south india. It is assumed that the respondents have provided genuine inputs and reflect true experience. The engagement levels of male and female faculties have not been analysed separately.

SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The different branches of select colleges in south india was considered for survey but other players in the education industry also can be included. More areas across india can be considered for the survey to increase the sample size . In this study faculties from all streams like arts, science, management and engineering were considered. But other areas like biotechnology, medical, nursing can be considered for broad generalisations. This study can be done age wise to include the engagement of faculties in pure teaching or pure research. Detailed analysis with more statistical tools can be done to find more conclusions .

1. <https://q12.gallup.com/public>

2. *Likert scale is a scale commonly involved in research that employs questionnaire and is the most widely used approach to scaling responses in survey research*

3. <http://eprints.kingston.ac.uk/4192/1/19wempen.pdf>

4. www.ibef.org

REFERENCES

1. Andrew O.C. et.al. ,(2012). "Individual Factors and Work Outcomes of Employee Engagement", The 2012 International Conference on Asia Pacific Business Innovation & Technology Management, Pattaya, Thailand, Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences 40, 498 – 508.
2. Anitha J.(2013). "Determinants of employee engagement and their impact on employee performance", International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management Vol. 63 No. 3, 2014 pp. 308-323.
3. Bakker, A. B., Demerouti, E., & Schaufeli, W. B. (2005). "The crossover of burnout and work engagement among working couples", Human Relations, 58: 661–689.
4. Bhatnagar J,(2007). "Talent management strategy of employee engagement in Indian ITES employees: key to retention", Employee Relations Vol. 29 No. 6, pp. 640-663.
5. Gruman, Jamie et. al.(2011). "Performance management and employee engagement", Human Resource Management Review 21, 123–136.
6. May, D.R., Gilson, R.L. and Harter, L.M. (2004). "The psychological conditions of meaningfulness, safety and availability and the engagement of the human spirit at work", Journal of Occupational & Organizational Psychology, Vol. 77, pp. 11-37.
7. Markos, S et. al.(2010). "Employee Engagement: The Key to Improving Performance Solomon" International Journal of Business and Management Vol. 5, No. 12.
8. Kahn, W.A. (1990). "Psychological conditions of personal engagement and disengagement at work", Academy of Management Journal, Vol. 33, pp. 692-724. Kahn, W.A. (1992), "To be full there: psychological presence at work", Human Relations, Vol. 45, pp. 321-49.
9. Rich B.L.(2010). "Job engagement: antecedents and effects on job performance", Academy of Management Journal 2010, Vol. 53, No. 3, 617–635.
10. Robertson Ivan T et. al.(2009). "Full engagement: the integration of employee engagement and psychological well-being", Leadership & Organization Development Journal Vol. 31 No. 4, 2010 pp. 324-336.

11. Saks A.M. (2006).“ Antecedents and consequences of employee engagement “,Journal of Managerial Psychology Vol. 21 No. 7, 2006 pp. 600-619.
- 12.Schaufeli, W. B.(2013).”What is engagement?InC.Truss,K.Alfes,R.Delbridge,A.Shantz,&E.Soane(Eds.),Employee Engagement in theory and Practice,London:Routledge.
- 13.Schaufeli, W. B., & Bakker, A. B.(2003). UWES—Utrecht Work Engagement Scale: Test manual. Department of Psychology, Utrecht University.
14. Schaufeli, W.B. &Bakker, A.B. (2004). “Job demands, job resources, and their relationship with burnout and engagement: a multi-sample study”, Journal of Organizational Behavior, Vol. 25, pp. 293-315.
- 15.Schaufeli, W.B., Salanova, M., Gonzalez-Roma, V. and Bakker, A.B. (2002). “The measurement of engagement and burnout: a two sample confirmatory factor analytic approach”, Journal of Happiness Studies, Vol. 3, pp. 71-90.
16. Shuck ,M. B (2010).“Employee Engagement: An Examination of Antecedent and Outcome Variables”doctoral thesis submitted to Florida university .
- 17.Shuck ,M. B., &Wolland, K.K. (2009).“A historical perspective of employee engagement: An emerging definition”.In M.S. Plakhotnik,S.M. Nielsen,& D.M. Pane(Eds.),Proceedings of the Eighth Annual College of Education &GSN Research Conference(pp.133-139).Miami:Florida International University.http://coeweb.fiu.edu/research_conference/
- 18.2013-14, “Annual report”,Ministry of higher education,MHRD,GOI.
- 19 .Senthilkumar,N. & Arulraj,A.(2010). “SQM-HEI – determination of service quality measurement of higher education in India”,Journal of Modelling in Management,Vol.6No.1,pg67-78.
- 20.Venkatesh, U.& Datta,K.(2007). “ Balanced scorecards in managing higher education institutions: an Indian perspective”,International Journal of educational management,Vol.21 No1,pg-54-67.