

Job Engagement: A Theoretical Foundation for Enhanced Perspective

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Abstract

Employee engagement has a crucial place in the practical aspect of human resource management. But there is a lack of consensus and common opinion regarding the concepts, theories, and definitions of engagement. This research paper aims to summarize and review different definitions of engagement provided by previous research papers published from 1990 to 2021. This study utilized secondary data, collected by visiting different scientific journals, websites, and books. Three components of definitions are touched on in this review. Companies consider engagement as an outcome as a result of an employee's attachment, dedication and loyalty to the organization, academic definition described it as the mental state of being involved, focused energise vigor etc. while the consultancy and research institute definition focuses on something over and above the definition provided by both companies and academicians, it believes that organizational internal environment can act as a facilitator in building an engaged workforce.

Keywords: - Job Engagement, Employee Engagement, Work Engagement

1. Introduction

Mike Johnson, in his book namely "The new rules of engagement, 2004" wrote that capability to engage employees is becoming one of the hardest battles to overcome in the next ten years. Nowadays, Employee engagement is a leading topic of management that has rapidly engrossed the HR agenda. It is a crucial challenge that emphasizes on the attention of HR professionals and executives (HR Focus, 2006; Soldati, 2007). In fact, in these times, it is an occasional moment to find management or HR Press without a hint of engagement in it. Moreover, numerous researchers & companies delineated engagement in very different ways as there is still a scarcity of a clear & agreed definition of job engagement (Soldati, 2007). However, the awareness regarding the pivotal role of engagement is increasing in the performance of organizations, where engaged employees are the 'backbone of good working environments where people are industrious, ethical and accountable'. (Cleland et al., 2008; Levinson, 2007).

Engagement can be a leading factor to constitute employees' attitude, employees' turnover level, and thus employees' performance at work. Several studies have given the idea that Higher engagement can be linked with greater lever of productivity, lesser employee turnover, higher customer loyalty, and better overall performance of an organization (Ray Baumruk, 2006). Thus creating a culture within the organization that facilitates employee engagement will be beneficial for the organization as the potential of engaged employees who are ready to go above and beyond the call of duty can be utilized in a more effective way.

Thus, understanding the holistic concept of job engagement is crucial for the organization nowadays so this study is an attempt to diagnose all the available viewpoints of different scholars and organizations.

2. Objective

To understand the concepts of Employee Engagement by accumulating an exhaustive list of relevant literature, institutional definitions, etc., and reviewing them.

3. Methodology

The central point of methodology is to explore and systematically analyze the literature that conceptualizes employee engagement. Both national and international literature published between 1990- 2021 were reviewed by using online databases of various scientific publications such as (SAGE publication, emerald, web of science, etc.) The process of searching academic literature is carried out by using the keywords such as job engagement, engagement at the workplace, employee engagement, etc. in above mentioned databases and institution definition of the term is taken from different websites of the different companies.

4. Definitions by Scholars

Table 1: Definitions by Scholars

S.No.	Author	Year	Definitions
1.	Kahn	1990	The harnessing of organization members' selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances
2.	Maslach et al	2001	Energy, participation, and effectiveness, correspond with three features of burnout: exhaustion, cynicism, and reduced professional efficacy, and engagement and burnout are two ends of a continuum.
3.	Harter et al	2002	The individual's involvement and satisfaction with as well as enthusiasm for work
4.	Schaufeli et al	2002	A positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind and proposed that an engaged employee has a strong sense of vigor towards, dedication to, and absorption in work activities
5.	Shirom	2003	Feelings of strength and emotional energy in the workplace
6.	Tritch	2003	The relative strength of an employee's involvement in and enthusiasm about his or her work
7.	Dvir et al	2004	High level of activity, initiative, and responsibility
8.	Frank et al	2004	Amount of discretionary effort exhibited by employees in their job
9.	May et al	2004	How the organization's members devote themselves to work including not only cognition but also the flexible application of emotions and behaviors
10.	Robinson et al	2004	One step up from commitment'
11.	Tasker	2004	A beneficial two-way relationship where employees and employers "go the extra mile" for one another
12.	Kim & Mauborgne	2005	Involving individuals in the strategic decisions that affect them by asking for their input and allowing them to refute the merits of one another's ideas and assumptions
13.	Shaw	2005	Intellectual and emotional commitment to an organization. OR Translating employee potential into employee performance and business success
14.	Wellins & Concelman	2005	Passion, extra effort, commitment, the illusive force that motivates employees to higher levels of performance
15.	Zeng & Han	2005	Having a long-lasting, positive emotional and motivational state of awakening their work, ready to devote themselves to work at any time, and are accompanied by pleasant, proud, and encouraging experiences during work
16.	Gibbons	2006	A construct that requires a high-level of connection is established between the employee and the organization

			and that makes him exert a greater and more discretionary effort in work.
17.	Hallberg & Schaufeli	2006	Being charged with energy and fully dedicated to one's work
18.	Saks	2006	A distinct and unique construct that consists of cognitive, emotional, and behavioural components that are associated with role performance'
19.	Stairs et al.	2006	The extent to which the employees thrive at work, are committed to their employer, and are motivated to do their best, for the benefit of themselves and their organisation
20.	Truss et al	2006	Passion for work', a psychological state which is seen to encompass the three dimensions
21.	Xie	2006	A sense of professional responsibility, including hard work, dedicated to the company, loyal to the boss, and self-confidence
22.	Cha	2007	Employee's active involvement in work and the state of full physiology, cognition, and emotion that accompanies the work engagement, including the three dimensions: work engagement, organizational recognition, and sense of work value
23.	Sanchez	2007	An outcome of how employees perceive their work, leadership of their organizations, the recognition and rewards they receive, and the communication ethos of the organization
24.	Cook	2008	Personified by the passion and energy employee have to give of their best to the organisation to serve the customer. It is all about the willingness and ability of the employees to give sustained discretionary effort to help their organisation succeed
25.	Gebauer et al	2008	An employees' sense of purpose and focused energy that is evident to others through the display of personal initiative, adaptability, effort, and persistence directed toward the organization's goals
26.	Galpin et al	2008	A positive feeling about the job as well as being ready to put more effort to make sure that the given job is accomplished to the best of the employee's ability
27.	Hughes & Rog	2008	A heightened emotional and intellectual connection that an employee has for his/her job, organization, manager, or co-workers that in turn influences him/her to apply additional discretionary effort to his/her work
28.	Macey & Schneider	2008	A wide-ranging term which contains different types of engagement (traits engagement, psychological state engagement, behavioral engagement)
29.	Storey et al.	2008	A set of positive attitudes and behaviors enabling high job performance of a kind which is in tune with the organization's mission.
30.	Truss et al.	2009	Creating opportunities for employees to connect with their colleagues, managers and wider organisation. It is also about creating an environment where employees are motivated to want to connect with their work and really care about doing a good job
31.	Zigarmi et al	2009	An individual's persistent, emotionally positive, mean-based, state of wellbeing stemming from reoccurring cognitive and affective appraisals of various job and organizational situations that results in consistent, constructive work intentions and behaviors
32.	Chalofsky	2010	A construct which requires a high-level of connection that is established between the employee and the

			organization and that makes him exert a greater and discretionary effort in work.
33.	Shuck & Wollard	2010	The individual cognitive, emotional and behavioural state of an employee directed at the desired organizational results"
34.	Bakker	2011	A positive, highly awakened emotional state with two features: energy, and involvement
35.	Christian	2011	A relatively lasting state of mind regarding the simultaneous investment of personal energies in a job experience or performance
36.	Crabb	2011	A positive attitude held by the employee towards the organization and its values
37.	Mone et al	2011	An employees' sense of purpose and focused energy that is evident to others through the display of personal initiative, adaptability, effort, and persistence directed toward the organization's goals
38.	Simon Sinek	2011	When people are financially invested, they want a return. When people are emotionally invested, they want to contribute.
39.	Soane et al	2012	A work-role focus, activation and positive affect
40.	Inoue et al	2013	As a positive fulfilling work-related state of mind characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption which can influence employee health
41.	Shuck & Reio	2013	As the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral energy an employee directs toward positive organizational outcomes.
42.	Witemeyer et al	2013	An attitude towards one's work in one's organization, comprising feelings of vigor, dedication, and absorption; cognitive appraisals of psychological empowerment; and motivation to act, both within role and extra role, in the service of the organization's goals.
43.	Xu et al	2013	Employees' organizational identity, work attitude, mental state, responsibility effectiveness
44.	Melanie	2014	The emotional commitment employees feel towards their organization and the actions they take to ensure the organization's success; engaged employees demonstrate care, dedication, enthusiasm, accountability and result in focus
45.	Taheri et al	2014	A state of being involved with and committed to a specific market offering.
46.	Xiao & Duan	2014	Employees' initiative, loyalty, effectiveness, recognition and commitment
47.	Ababneh	2015	A multidimensional construct that refers to passionate, energetic, enthusiastic, persistent, focused, and emotionally positive individuals who have their personal attributes, along with their cognitive and affective evaluations of job and organizational situations, to direct their task performance towards reaching the organizational objectives
48.	Myrden & Kelloway	2015	Represents an employee's enthusiasm, passion and commitment to their work and to the organization, the willingness to invest themselves and expand their discretionary effort to help the employer succeed
49.	Liu	2016	Employees' organizational identity, dedication, absorption, vigor, pleasant harmony
50.	Lalwani	2021	The emotional investment employees make in their organizations

5. Definitions by Companies/Consultancies

Table 2: Definitions by Companies/ Consultancies

S. No.	Companies/ Consultancies	Year	Definitions
1.	Hewitt Consulting	2001	The extent how employees are willing to stay in the company and work hard for the company, including three elements: say, stay and strive
2.	Towers Consulting	2001	Degree of willingness and ability of employees to help companies succeed, including rational and sensuous engagement
3.	PHRPS Research Committee	2002	Personal state of authentic involvement, contribution and ownership’.
4.	IES Consultation (Cited in Robinson et al, 2004)	2003	A positive attitude held by the employee towards the organisation 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 organisation. The organisation must work to develop and nurture engagement which requires a two-way relationship between employer and employee
5.	Towers Perrin	2003	Engagement involves both ‘emotional and rational factors relating to work and the overall work experience. The emotional factors tie to people’s personal satisfaction and the sense of inspiration and affirmation they get from their work and from being part of their organisation ... for instance ... having a strong sense of personal accomplishment from one’s job. The rational factors, by contrast, generally relate to the relationship between the individual and the broader corporation; for instance, the extent to which employees understand their role, and their unit’s role, relative to company objectives
6.	Corporate Leadership Council	2004	The extent to which employees commit to something or someone in their organisation, how hard they work and how long they stay as a result of that commitment’
7.	Readership Institute	2004	Defines fully engaged employees as ‘those who go beyond what their job requires, putting in extra effort to make the company succeed’
8.	The Conference Board	2006	Employee engagement is a heightened emotional and intellectual connection that an employee has for his/her job, organisation, manager, or co-workers that, in turn, influences him/her to apply additional discretionary effort to his/her work’
9.	The Gallup Organization	2006	Engaged employees as those who ‘work with a passion and feel a profound connection to their company and drive innovation and move the organization forward
10.	CIPD	2007	Passion for work and the willingness to go the extra mile
11.	Johnson & Johnson (Cited in Cateeuw et al., 2007)		The degree to which employees are satisfied with their jobs, feel valued, and experience collaboration and trust. Engaged employees will stay with the company longer and continually find smarter, more effective ways to add value to the organisation. The end result is a high performing company where people are flourishing and productivity is increased and sustained’
12.	Mercer	2007	A state of mind in which employees feel a vested interest in the company’s success and are both willing and motivated to perform to levels that exceed the stated

			job requirements. It is the result of how employees feel about the work experience – the organisation, its leaders, the work and the work environment
13.	NHS National Workforce Projects	2007	Measure of how people connect in their work and feel committed to their organisation and its goals
14.	Blessing White	2008	Maximum job satisfaction' and 'maximum job contribution
15.	BT	2008	A combination of attitudes, thoughts and behaviours that relate to satisfaction, advocacy, commitment, pride, loyalty and responsibility'. BT claims it is 'broader than the more traditional concept of employee satisfaction and relates to the extent to which employees are fully engaged with the company and their work.
16.	Barclays	2008	The extent to which an employee feels a sense of attachment to the organisation he or she works for, believes in its goals and supports its values
17.	Civil Service	2008	More than just being satisfied or motivated. Engaged employees have a sense of personal attachment to their work and organisation that means they want to give of their best to help it succeed. Engaged employees tend to speak positively about their organisation and have an active desire to stay.
18.	Dell	2008	Giving time and talent to team building activities
19.	Gebauer et al	2008	An employees' sense of purpose and focused energy that is evident to others through the display of personal initiative, adaptability, effort, and persistence directed toward the organization's goals
20.	Leeds Metropolitan University	2008	Refers to engagement through employees using their 'talents to the full wherever possible'
21.	Nokia Siemens Networks	2008	an emotional attachment to the organisation, pride and a willingness to be an advocate of the organisation, a rational understanding of the organisation's strategic goals, values, and how employees fit and motivation and willingness to invest discretionary effort to go above and beyond
22.	Roffey Park Institute	2008	Employees want stimulating and worthwhile jobs, to feel part of a successful organisation and for their work to contribute to their general happiness. Organisations benefit by employees being committed, motivated and "going the extra mile"
23.	The Work Foundation (Cited at IDeA, 2008)	2008	'employee engagement describes employees' emotional and intellectual commitment to their organisation and its success. Engaged employees experience a compelling purpose and meaning in their work and give of their discrete effort to advance the organisation's objectives'
24.	University of York	2008	'employee engagement is a combination of commitment to the organisation and its values plus a willingness to help out colleagues Employee Engagement goes beyond job satisfaction and is not simply motivation'
25.	Vodafone (Cited in Suff, 2008)		'an outcome "measured or seen as a result of people being committed to something or someone in the business – a very best effort that is willingly given"'.
26.	Best Companies	2009	'an employee's drive to use all their ingenuity and resources for the benefit of the company'.
27.	Quantum Workplace	2012	Employee engagement is the strength of the mental and emotional connection employees feel toward their places of work.
28.	Aon Hewitt (Cited in SHRM,		the level of an employee's psychological investment in their organization."

	2023)		
29.	Willis Towers Watson (Cited in SHRM, 2023)		Engagement is employees' willingness and ability to contribute to company success.

6. Conclusions

After taking various definitions and viewpoints of various companies regarding engagement, conclusively it can be said that it is an outcome such as loyalty toward the companies, attachment, and commitment to work and the sources of these outcomes are employees. Thus, it is the willingness of the employees to spend time and energy resources and add value while utilizing their potential in the best possible way.

As for companies' viewpoint of engagement, the academic definition of engagement also focuses on the outcome-related view of engagement. According to this definition, the results of engagement are commitment, dedication, advocacy, voluntary effort, loyalty, etc. Academicians defined engaged employees as completely focuses on their work, enthusiastic, full of energy, vigour, and dedicated. Thus, the academic definition of engagement is more or less similar to the definition provided by companies but has something to carve out concerning outcomes such as being adaptive, innovative, and working differently.

Consistent with academic and companies' views on engagement, consultancies and research institutes also described it as a psychological phenomenon having several outcomes for the organization but this definition also focuses on the internal environment like the culture and climate of the organization which ultimately facilitates employee engagement. All these inculcated definitions of engagement have something in common which indicates that it is a mental state of being focused, involved, committed, and enthusiastic and includes both behavioral and attitudinal aspects.

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