

FACTORS INFLUENCING THE ENGAGEMENT ON MANAGERS ON THE JOB: A DISSECTION OF PSYCHOSOCIAL IMPERATIVES

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Abstract

In a major boost to the 'Make in India' initiative, in the medical, automotive and telecom clusters the Government has received 57 investment proposals. Over Rs 19,000 crore (US\$ 3.05 billion) of which 30 proposals worth INR 6,500 Cr.(US\$ 1.04 billion) have been approved by the Union Ministry. There is an ambitious plan to locally manufacture as many as 181 products. While the corporate world is upbeat with these proposals, there is a clarion call for the management professionals to examine and reset the resources in the organizations to embrace the challenges ahead. Human Resources play a vital role in making use of all other resources in a productive manner to achieve organizational efficiency. It has proven beyond doubt that the people in organization are the prime movers who can manage money, material and methods in an efficient way and bring in more productivity of each of the resources. In order to get people contribute their best, we need to ensure that they are engaged on the job and not just employed in an organization.

Therefore it is important to improve people side of the management, the current people spectrum is typically tend to be large hierarchies with multiple layers of management in which a manager at middle level is with a profit/cost responsibility and also has the people responsibility. Managers can play a crucial role in translating organizational policies and strategies into practice and action. They have the potential to contribute significantly to the quality of implementation of organizational plans and promote excellence. Therefore their engagement on the job is significant to realise the plan. Employee engagement has become one of the most popular topics in the management science. In the last 10 years, there have been a number of studies published on employee engagement as well as on the factors influencing the engagement of managers in the job. But there is a debate on the factors influencing the engagement. However, there is unanimity on the view that among various factors, psychosocial factor which are intrinsic and extrinsic in nature plays a significant role in engaging the managers on the job. The premise is on this theory is propounded is basically that the psychosocial factors is fundamental to formation of value system which transcends as behavior of "do" and "act" in other words it is performance of the individual. The interest in the studies is mainly due to the belief that the engaged employees will contribute disproportionately for success of the organization when compare with the others in the organization and also they go extra miles in delighting the customer. However, there are continued debate on the factors, meaning, measurement, and theory of employee engagement. In this article, we review certain factors such as personal/demographic, value preference, wellbeing and relationship and its possible influence on employee engagement.

Personal & Demographic

Engagement levels are influenced by employee's personal characteristics. Many studies in quantitative research findings suggest that that demographic and job related factors can influence on employee engagement. Individual's factors such as age, gender, ethnicity and disability and I the job factors such as occupations, hours of work and pay are a few factors influencing the Employee Engagement. However, CPID survey (2006) cautions that these demographics variables should have not seen in isolations as predictors of performance or engagement. Therefore it should be looked at in the combination of others.

One of the most in-depth studies conducted by Robinson et al (2004) come out with the key findings regarding biographical characteristics that are mentioned below.

- a) Gender- women were found, in general, to be more engaged than men, but they also tend to be doing different kind of jobs.
- b) Employees of higher age are more engaged with their work than younger employees. Employees aged under 35 are significantly less engaged with their work than older workers.
- c) Engagement level go down slightly as employees get older.
- d) The high level of engagement levels expressed by experienced employees who may be considered to be approaching the end of their working lives, suggest an untapped source of potential in many organizations.
- e) Length of service-engagement levels go down as length of services increases -an indication to employers that they need to ensure that longer-servicing employees continue to be exposed to new and interesting challenges.
- f) Working pattern/hours -full timers are significantly more engaged than part timers, while employees who work full time are more engaged than their colleagues on shifts or on rotations.

Apart from above several factors influence engagement. Employees would engage differently, given their experiences of psychological meaningfulness, safety and availability in specific situations. Hence demographic variables play an important role in manager's engagement on the job.

It is difficult to generalize the above findings as the applicability of these parameters are more contextual than generic. This article discusses a framework that can be adapted for studying the contextual parameters while studying engagement on the job of any individual considering the psychosocial imperatives. The imperatives such as values of the individual, how he perceives the same, what he stands for and, the belief aspect of the person which stems out of his value manifest as the behavior or the performance. As a human being all of us are wired in unique way and behave in a different way. The study will explore different aspects such variables viz., gender, age, domicile, nature of family, financial status, no. of children and wellbeing and how those influences the value, beliefs, attitudes and ultimately behaviour of the individual. Fig 1:1

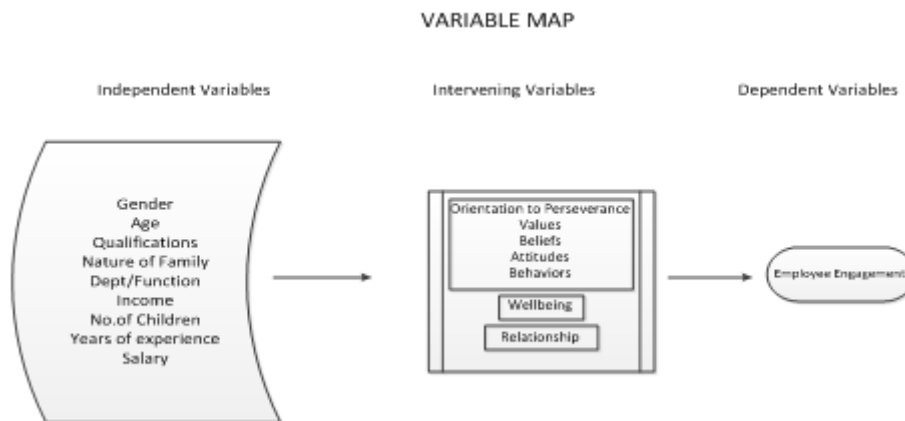


Figure 1

Value Perseverance and General Belongings of the Individual

If we examine the behavior of a group of persons in a work situation, we may find some glaring differences the way people organize their efforts and do their jobs. Some perform their task in a much better way and more efficient manner than others meaning they are more engaged and involved and put in their best efforts. The possible explanation offered by the social scientists for such behavior differences are the individual's ability and their level of motivation which is influenced by certain factors. It is agreed that the individual's behavior patterns and performance are governed by their level of engagement. If a person have a positive orientation to the perseverance if he believes, perseverance leads to a result and he has a high value for the results. Further on the subject, it has been reported (Eg: Rao and Moulik,1979) that one significant factor in the success of entrepreneur is perseverance, that is the tendency to persist with the effort in achieving a goal inspite of various difficulties. McClelland's concept of "activity inhibition" is quite close to the concept of perseverance. Perseverance is reflected in several ways at work: in a person's obsession with a goal, his not giving up the goal despite various problems, the large amount of time spent in the effort to reach the goal, hard work, focusing attention on the task until it is completed and so on. Orientation to perseverance can be measured by taking these dimensions into account, viz., value preference and general belief of the individual (Udai Pareek,2002). If the value preference is achievement of goal the general belief is don't give up inspite of difficulties. If the value preference is independence the general belief is to achieve real independence one will try in different ways. The conceptual frame work developed by Dr.Udai Pareek and the VP survey and GB inventory supports the view that behaviour is resultant of value preference. He further states that attitude (determines the behavior/performance) is value X belief)

When an individual's values are different from those in his or her immediate social environment (such as work team or Organisation) and the person is strongly resistant to change those values, the values of the social environment may influence what the person says but this may not translate into actual behavior (Meghino and Ravlin, 1998) pg45. and task of doing. Therefore the manager's performance may suffer due to value preference. In the other words the manager's value preference is perseverance and even the environment is totally different, the manager will pursue his goals thereby his performance will not suffer due to environment distraction and disturbances.

This is because the values lie at the core of any individual behavior. The values which are inherently inculcated in an individual's personality from the family, which is their primary community and the school, friends and social acquaintances, which form the secondary and tertiary communities. Thus the values lead to almost permanent beliefs that guide an individual attitude towards an object or situation in his or her life. The way the values and beliefs interplay towards an object or situation triggers the behavior and that becomes the influencing factor on an individual's motivation and involvement towards various aspects of his or her life. This has evoked interest among many social scientists to do research studies on Job Satisfaction, Employee Motivation and Employee Engagement.

Value Perseverance is thus an important measurement of individuals' adapting their values as belief, which explains how the values pursued result in attitudes and behaviors. Value Preferences and Perseverance in a work environment influences their involvement on the job as they are likely to get more engaged on the jobs that suit their values and vice-versa.

Wellbeing of the Managers in the Organisation

Today threats from the organization's task -environment, target pressure from the client are increasingly impinging the industrial environment today. Generally in sun rise industries the pressure work and unusual shifts timings, creates stressful situations to the managers. Researchers at the Black Dog Institute have been involved in measuring workplace satisfaction and the impact of a range of variables (e.g. depression, gender, occupational level, length of time employed) on this. Job satisfaction is a widely researched topic, but there are few accurate measures available. A recent study at the Institute helped develop the Workplace Well being construct, a self-report measure of wellbeing in the workplace. Over a time, they have built up a database of scores that allows people to compare themselves to others (i.e. in different occupations, across genders, etc). The results indicate where an individual sits on the four areas of workplace wellbeing: Work satisfaction, Organizational respect for the employee, Employer care, Intrusion of work into private life.

Wellbeing is an important aspects of engagement, the wellbeing is not just the welfare of the workforce. It is also how the managers perceive the employer brand and what it stands for. In general the organizations ethos, culture and belief vis-v-vis how those aspects are practiced and implemented influences the perceived notion of the employees.

Work Satisfaction

As far as measurement of satisfaction is concerned, most of the studies reviewed by Herzberg et al (1957) have employed a general or global morale measure, disregarding specific factors of jobs satisfaction (Hulin and Smith, 1965). In the last 15 years such measures as Job Satisfaction Index, and Porter Need Fulfilment Questionnaire have been extensively adopted. Mass (1966) has indicated that previous investigators have failed to differentiate between the evaluation and description of a job when composing questions to measure job satisfaction.

Of late Porter (1961) Needs Satisfaction Questionnaire (PNSQ) has been widely used. The scoring consist of taking the discrepancy between expected and actual fulfilment (c/-score) for 13 items classified in Maslow type need hierarchy, and answered on a seven point scale. Some methodological issues have been raised particularly by Imparato (1972), in relation to the meaning of (/ - Scores. A person who indicates 3 on expected and 1 on actual fulfilment gets a rf-score of 2. Another person who indicates 7 on expected and 5 on actual also gets a d-score of 2. The question is either these two t/- scores mean the same.

In defining job satisfaction, the needs of an individual, the importance of these needs to him and what is available are to be taken into account. Locke (1969) suggest that job satisfaction is a result if the interaction of percept, need, and need value. These three components broadly equate in the meaning to the terms actual, expected and importance as stipulated by Porter (1961). To explain an employee's satisfaction with his present salary, one would have to look at the discrepancy between his actual and expected salary and the degree of importance he attaches to it. The satisfaction level is determined by how the gap is narrowed between his percept, need and actual in reality.

Organizational Respect to Employee

According to the Organizational support theory (Eisenberger et al. 1986; Shore & Shore 1995) in order to determine the organization's readiness to reward increased work effort and to meet socio-emotional needs, employees develop global beliefs concerning the extent to which the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being. Perceived organizational support (POS) is also valued as assurance that assistance will be available from the organization when it is needed to carry out one's job effectively and to deal with stressful situations (George et al. 1993). Psychological safety involves a sense of being able to show and employ the self without negative consequences (Kahn 1992). An important aspect of safety arises from the extent of care and support

employees' perceive to be provided by their organization as well as their direct supervisor. Kahn (1990) found that supportive and trusting interpersonal relationships as well as supportive management promoted psychological safety. Employees felt safe in work environments that were characterized by openness and supportiveness. Supportive environments allow members to experiment and to try new things and even fail without fear of the consequences (Kahn 1990). In their empirical test of Kahn's model, May et al. (2004) also found that supportive supervisor relations was positively related to psychological safety.

Employee Care

Believing that you are being dealt with in a fair manner leads to a climate of openness and respect. Treating employees fairly is about making sure that every aspects of the employee journey is based on best practice, so that if the employee looks outside the organization to compare it with the other businesses, they will see that they are being treated fairly and with respect. Fairness manifests itself in business practices and therefore the employees are involved and committed.

Social support is also one of the conditions in the Maslach et al. (2001) model and study by Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) found that a measure of job resources that includes support from colleagues predicted as Inter-disciplinary to the engagement of the manager. (*Journal of Research in Business Vol. 1, Issue. 3, March 2011(pp.47-61)*). A lack of social support has also consistently been found to be related to burnout (Maslach et al. 2001). Two variables that are likely to capture the essence of social support are perceived organizational support (POS) and perceived supervisor support (PSS). POS refers to a general belief that one's organization values their contribution and cares about their well-being (Rhoades and Eisenberger 2002). The basic premise of organizational support research is Social Exchange Theory (SET). According to Saks (2006), a stronger theoretical rationale for explaining employee engagement can be found in SET. Employees' who have higher POS might become more engaged to their job and organization as part of the reciprocity norm of SET in order to help the organization reach its objectives (Rhoades et al. 2001). In other words, when employees believe that their organization is concerned about them and cares about their well-being, they are likely to respond by attempting to fulfill their obligations to the organization by becoming more engaged. Further, because employees tend to view their supervisor's orientation toward them as indicative of the organization's support (Rhoades and Eisenberger 2002), PSS is also likely to be an important predictor of employee engagement.

Although POS has been found to be related to a number of favorable outcomes like job satisfaction, organizational commitment, performance, (Rhoades and Eisenberger 2002), no previous study has related it to employee engagement. In fact, a lack of support from supervisors has been found to be an especially important factor linked to burnout

(Maslach et al. 2001). In addition, first-line supervisors are believed to be especially important for building engagement and to be the root of employee disengagement (Bates 2004; Frank et al. 2004). Therefore the employee care in work place significantly impacts the commitment, influence and performance of the managers.

Work Life Balance

Work life balance is essentially an individual's ability to strike equilibrium between one's professional and personal life. Stewart Friedman gave the concept of "Total Leadership" in which he advocated the idea of individuals emerging as 'Total leaders' based on their ability to balance four important quadrants i.e. Work, Family, Community/Society and Individual (self). Such balance, no doubt, will be difficult to attain. At the same time lack or absence of work life balance can rattle the most resilient and in the long run can have an impact on the performance and longevity of an individual in an organization. This is why we consider this to be an 'engagement' issue. Work-family conflict has been related with job satisfaction (Kossek & Ozeki, 1998), the well-being (Allen, Herst, Bruck & Sutton, 2000) and engagement (Richman, Cuvian, Shannon, Hill & Brennan, 2008).

Managing the boundaries between work and home and integrating these two domains has become an increasingly compelling and pressing issue for both the organizations and employees. Work and family demands are often mutually incompatible and integrating them can be problematic and fraught with tensions. Lack of Work-Life Balance (WLB) can also undermine manager with employee performance and customer loyalty' (mulki, Bardhi, Lask, Nanavaty-Dahl-2009)

Relationship

Team relationships, and the focus on relationships placed by leadership, affect individual mental health outcomes. In many occupations, interpersonal relations are the most frequent source of workplace problems and stress, particularly if indicative of workplace bullying. Social support in the workplace, as well as perceived support from the organization as a whole, appears to have a protective effect against mental health difficulties.

In the panorama of the engagement, we can't underestimate the pivotal role of the relationship, the individual have their line manager. Although it is often not acknowledged by the employees, the quality of this relationship, employees have with their boss is key in promoting the high level of the employee engagement. To simply put in "People join organizations and leave the bosses". Frontline managers are responsible for the majority of the companies employees and most of its day to day dealing with customers. Without their effort and commitment, business performance of us the blessing while study on the engagement shows that the employees who know their managers "well" or "Very well"

trust them a lot more, have more pride in their organization and are willing to go a extra mile.

Although employees do not always admit openly to this, studies show that their direct line manager has an enormous impact on the degree to which employees are committed to the workplace. It is true that individuals are more likely to feel part of the organization if they trust and have a good relationship with their immediate line manager. Yet in 2006 Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development survey one in three employee said their line managers rarely or never discussed their training and development needs with them and one in four did not give them feedback on how were performing, or make them feel that their work counted. A further US survey found that they only one-tenth would turn to their immediate boss for workplace advice. In contrast, one quarter of respondents would turn to a colleague in their organization for help an around one in six to another senior person at work, a friend outside work or a mentor or coach.

Discussion

This paper examines the role of variables such as Demographic, values, beliefs, attitudes, behavior, wellbeing and dimension of wellbeing such as work satisfaction, care, work life balance & relationship in managers (employees) engagement on the job. Though there is a debate and disagreement on the set of variables or the dimension of the variable impacting the manager's engagement on the job. But there is a universal agreement on these variables are playing a significant role in manager's employee engagement on the job. It is worth considering vary across occupations, industries and globally, much of the available international evidence come from Gallop which has conducted employee engagement index survey in many countries. We would argue that across national comparisons of level of employee engagement should be treated with some caution due to cultural and definitional differences. This support our hypothesis, the demographic factors such as age, domicile, origin, family type, place, marital status et al, plays a significant role in the values and behavior. A useful comparison between range of demographic segments, from the job level (Sr. Executive, Director/Manager, Supervisor/Foremen, Specialist/Professional, Non-Management Salaried/Non-management hourly) to industry category (Non-profit, Hi-Tech, Heavy manufacturing Insurance, Pharmaceutical, Hospital, Finance/Banking) was carried out by researchers Towers Perrin (2003), who found a pattern across the segments. Each group had only a small group of highly engaged respondents, a slightly larger disengaged group, with the majority in the 'moderately engaged group'.

However, in each case there was one exception to the pattern that is worth noting; senior executives were found to be more highly engaged than any other group and were less likely to be disengaged. Cynics might suggest this may be linked to income level and, while this certainly emerged as important in this study, it was not the only contributory factor. More important were role characteristics, such as challenge, authority, autonomy,

stimulation, access to information, resources and growth opportunities, that research has shown are linked to high levels of engagement. The lowest levels of engagement have been found among hourly workers, who arguably have the least control or influence over their jobs and work experience.

Across industries, engagement is substantially higher in the non-profit sector than in every other sector looked at by Towers Perrin (2003). This would appear logical, given that people tend to be drawn to this sector through a sense of mission, rather than from any prospect of high pay or wealth accumulation. This finding is also consistent with the numerous definitions and views surrounding engagement, which identifies a 'passion for work' as being a key component factor (Truss et al 2006, Brim 2002 and Holbeche and Springett 2003). Indeed, the fact that the sector is traditionally not a high-paying one, relative to the others studied, emphasizes the fact that it is not possible to 'buy' engagement in the conventional sense by offering better than average monetary awards. Conversely, in another study comparing the public and private sectors, Truss et al (2006) found that group in the public sector had a more negative experience of work, they reported more bullying and harassment than those in the private sector, and were less satisfied with the opportunities they had to use their abilities. This reinforces the findings of previous studies and underlines the scale of the challenge facing public sector managers in particular, and the negative impact that bullying and harassment have on employees and their levels of engagement (Emmott 2006).

Here, we turn our attention to how engagement levels may be linked to individual differences by examining literature from the psychology field.

There are various and conflicting definitions of employee engagement in the psychological literature. Some definitions claim that employee engagement is something that is produced by aspects in the workplace (as suggested by McCashland 1999, Miles 2001 and Harter et al 2003), while others assert that it is something that the individual brings to the workplace (as suggested by Harter et al 2002 and Goddard 1999). Extraneous variables such as individual differences may not be trivial and could have significant effects (Ferguson 2007).

There is much evidence in the literature to support the notion that individual differences impact on work performance. Kahn (1990), for instance, argued that psychological differences may impact on individuals' ability to engage or disengage in their role performance, just as they shape a person's ability and willingness to be involved or committed at work. Accordingly, people would engage differently "given their experiences of psychological meaningfulness, safety and availability in specific situations" (Kahn 1990:718). For example, when people experience situations as unsafe, it is a matter of individual difference what coping strategies they deploy, and the extent to which they engage or disengage (Portello 1996).

It has also been argued that employee engagement is related to emotional experiences and wellbeing (May et al 2004). Despite this, studies of organizations often overlook the effects on behaviour of feelings and emotions. Emotions are a natural feature of our psychological make-up and affect not only individuals' personal lives but also their behaviour at work. Wilson (2004:99-100) argues that "feelings connect us with our realities and provide internal feedback on how we are doing, what we want and what we might do next.

Conclusion

It is concluded that there is an agreement among the researchers that demographic factors such as age, gender, domicile, education etc., the factors which are family related Eg: Type of family ,number of children and spouse's employment status and also the organisational related issues such as relationship with the boss and the peers,the organisational care, WLB are play a significant role on the engagement of employees responsible for value formation in turn the behavior of the individual tend to follow a pattern or showing as a performance in the organization. To support this Kahn's (1990) and Maslach et al's (2001) models indicate the psychological conditions or antecedents that are necessary for engagement, but they do not fully explain why individuals will respond to these conditions with varying degrees of engagement. According to Saks (2006), a stronger theoretical rationale for explaining employee engagement can be found in social exchange theory (SET). SET argues that obligations are generated through a series of interactions between parties who are in a state of reciprocal interdependence. A basic principle of SET is that relationships evolve over time into trusting, loyal, and mutual commitments as long as the parties abide by certain 'rules' of exchange (Cropanzano and 6 Mitchell 2005). Such rules tend to involve reciprocity or repayment rules, so that the actions of one party lead to a response or actions by the other party. For example, when individuals receive economic and socio-emotional resources from their organisation, they feel obliged to respond in kind and repay the organisation (ibid). This is consistent with Robinson et al's (2004) description of engagement as a two-way relationship between the employer and employee. Saks (2006) argues that one way for individuals to repay their organisation is through their contribution to the success of the organisation.

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