



AN ATTEMPT OF THREE 'E's TO ACHIEVE THE FOURTH 'E' -A STUDY ON WOMEN EMPLOYEES IN PRIVATE SECTOR ENTERPRISES

Ms. K. Kanchana

Assistant Professor, Chevalier T. Thomas Elizabeth College for Women, Chennai.

Abstract

In today's competitive and challenging business environment, Employee engagement has become a global issue. Employees are the foremost important resources who can efficiently utilize the other resources with the support and guidance of the organization. Only, employees can move any organization forward. So, it becomes inevitable duty of the organization to promote employee engagement through various innovative approaches. This study attempts to understand the importance of employee engagement, innovative approaches which the management can adopt, from the employees' perspective and possible outcomes of the engagement. For this study, convenience sampling was adopted to select only women employees from various professions and the results were analyzed through Pearson's correlation coefficient. Conclusively, certain suggestions have been quoted for the management to achieve and sustain engaged workforce.

Keywords: Employee Engagement, Innovative Approaches, Workaholism and Burnout.

Introduction

In today's competitive and challenging business environment, Employee engagement has become a global issue. We can clearly find differences in the nature of all organizations, differences in their workforce which obviously brings a difference in the feel or actual level of engagement. Many research studies have been done in this area and the results convey that engaged employees are those who fully focused on their work and on the work outcomes desired by their organization. So, it becomes a challenge for any management of today to integrate employees' head (cognitive), heart (emotional) and hand (physical). It also becomes mandatory for the organization to follow strictly the technique of MBO (Management by Objectives) for deciding the strategies to enhance employee engagement. In this direction, this study attempted to identify a few innovative approaches for employee engagement, from the perspectives of employees. The responses given by the employees are broadly classified under three categories namely to educate, to empower and to entertain. This study is an attempt to update the previous research studies.

Methodology of the Study

For this study the following methodology was applied:

- Research design: Partly descriptive and partly conceptual.
- Sample Size: 100 (includes employees from various professions in North Chennai City).
- Sampling Method: Convenience (to avoid low response rates)
- Sampling Error: Response-100, Non-response - 12.
- Primary Data: Semi-structured questionnaire.
- Secondary Data: Journals, Magazines, Books, Websites.
- Data analysis: Percentages analysis and Pearson's Rank correlation.

Objectives of the Study

1. To understand the importance of Employee Engagement in recent competitive business world, and
2. To identify a few innovative approaches such as educate, empower and entertain the employees for creating an Engaged workforce
3. To find the positive and negative possibilities of engagement from the employees' perspective.

Limitations of the Study

1. The sample size is limited to only 100, which is small to represent the whole population.

2. The study faced time constraint in collecting the required data.
3. The information provided by the employees may not be completely reliable due to their hesitation in disclosing the true facts.

Objective 1: To understand the importance of Employee Engagement in Recent Competitive Business World

A General Understanding on Employee Engagement

Employee engagement is defined generally as a strong desire to be part of the value an organization creates. Engaged employees exhibit the key characteristics as follows:

- Exhibit a strong emotional and intellectual bond with their organization,
- Exert discretionary effort that helps the organization realize better outcomes for their organization,
- Take co-ownership of their own engagement and commit to improve,
- Are committed to making the organization a success,
- Are enthusiastic about, involved in and satisfied with their job,
- Want to stay with the organization,
- Are willing to talk positively about the company,
- Are willing to go the 'extra mile', etc.

In short, engagement can be thought of as the degree of employee-organization alignment. Engagement means "sustainable employee involvement". Involvement to me means the employees are involved to the degree that you request/require them to be. But, employee engagement means they are actively engaged / interested in improving the operation without being pushed in to it.

Table:1 Demographic Profile of the Respondents

OCCUPATION	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Bank staff	20	20
IT Professional	20	20
Teachers and College Lecturers	20	20
Entrepreneurs	20	20
Other Pvt. Co. Staff	20	20
Total	100	100
AGE		
< 30 years	24	24
30 to 40 years	42	42
> 40 years	34	34
Total	100	100
MARITAL STATUS		
Married	62	62
Unmarried	38	38
Total	100	100
EXPERIENCE IN THEIR PROFESSION		
< 3 years	26	26
3 to 10 years	38	38
> 10 years	36	36
Total	100	100

Table 2: Level of Engagement

Level of Engagement	Frequency	Percentage
HIGH	64	64
MODERATE	25	25
LOW	11	11
TOTAL	100	100

Proposed Research Framework for the Study

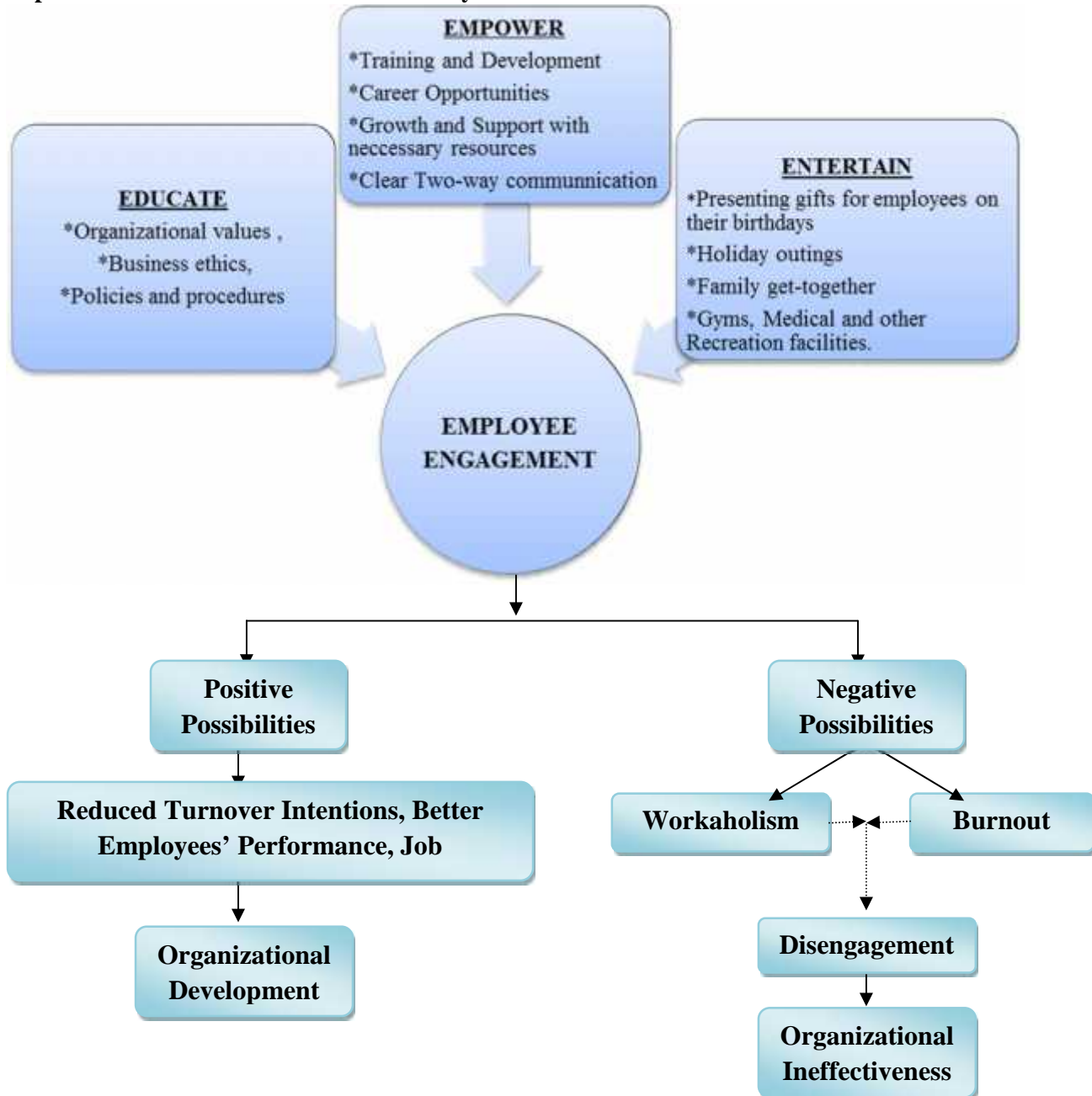


Figure:1: Source: Author's Work

Table: 3: Objective 2: To identify a few innovative approaches such as educate, empower and entertain the employees for creating an Engaged workforce.

Variables	Weight (x)	SA (5)	A (4)	N (3)	DA (2)	SDA (1)	Total (15)	Weighted Average ($\frac{fx}{x}$)	Rank
EDUCATE									
Organizational values	Frequency (f)	61	28	11	-	-	100	4.5	1
	Fx	305	112	33	-	-	450		
Business Ethics	Frequency (f)	42	35	18	5	-	100	4.14	3
	Fx	210	140	54	10	-	414		
Policies and Procedures	Frequency (f)	60	30	8	2	-	100	4.48	2
	Fx	300	120	24	4	-	448		
EMPOWER									
Training & Development	Frequency (f)	56	32	12	-	-	100	4.44	2
	Fx	280	128	36	-	-	444		
Career Opportunities	Frequency (f)	64	20	16	-	-	100	4.48	1
	Fx	320	80	48	-	-	448		
Growth & Support	Frequency (f)	55	28	17	-	-	100	4.38	3
	Fx	275	112	51	-	-	438		
Required resources	Frequency (f)	42	40	12	8	-	100	4.22	5
	Fx	210	160	36	16	-	422		
Two-way Communication	Frequency (f)	50	32	12	5	1	100	4.30	4
	Fx	250	128	36	15	1	430		
ENTERTAIN									
Gifts on special days	Frequency (f)	34	42	12	4	4	100	3.86	3
	Fx	170	168	36	8	4	386		
Holiday outings	Frequency (f)	51	36	13	-	-	100	4.38	1
	Fx	255	144	39	-	-	438		
Family get-together	Frequency (f)	31	32	25	10	2	100	3.8	4
	Fx	155	128	75	20	2	380		
Gyms & other recreation facilities	Frequency (f)	47	38	10	5	-	100	4.27	2
	Fx	235	152	30	10	-	427		

Educate + Empower + Entertain = Engagement.

Objective 3: To find the positive and negative possibilities of engagement from the employees' perspective.

Positive Possibilities of Engagement

An organization's effectiveness in today's competitive business environment is highly relying upon the attitudes of employees towards the organization. As the expectations and working attitudes are tend to change drastically day by day, it becomes a great challenge for any organization to find for innovative approaches to make their employees engaged, to ensure sustainable organizational effectiveness. The responses expressed by the samples in our study can be taken as the synonyms of management's strategies for achieving employee engagement. Many researches done so far have proved in many ways that employee engagement is directly correlated with organizational performance and business results. Employees expressed in their response to the interviews undertaken that 1. The management should take steps to bring alignment between personal and organizational

values and management itself should articulate in their day-to-day action the values that they propose, 2. Organizational policies and business ethics should be properly inculcate in employees mind and heart, 3. Proper design, deliver and deployment of training would help in reap good returns in employee engagement, 4. Management should think of multiple channels of communications to stay in touch with their employees, 5. The organization should priority to their internal population, for the open positions, 6. Make sure all required resources are made available at the right time to carry out the work without any hindrances and also extend supportive hand for the growth of the employees and 7. Management should understand the expectations of employees to boost them up by way of holidays, gifts, family get together, etc. When employees feel satisfied with working environment, they tend to show higher productivity, higher commitment and higher job satisfaction. As per our study, 64 employees feel Engaged and have positive attitude towards the management and possess a lower or show no intention to leave, lower absenteeism rates, etc. Engaged employees can spread their positive emotions or moods among the co-workers and thus help in achieving unit-engagement. Hence, engagement can produce positive work outcomes such as better employees performance, reduced intention to quit, lower absenteeism, high employee morale, job satisfaction, etc. which in turn lead to overall development of the organization.

Negative Possibilities of Engagement

Workaholism

Employees feel that they become a workaholic when they fully involved in work which they cannot fail to carry over to home. Workaholic as the dictionary says is “a person who compulsively works excessively hard and long hours”, “a person obsessively addicted to work”.. Though work gives a sense of identity in the society and in the family, Workaholics should remember that their organizations will not hesitate to send them at the time of recession and economic crisis, after all every organization’s primary motive is to earn profit. Workaholic derives more satisfaction from his or her work than from family life and seems much addicted to the work. They are much addicted to their work which makes them to exhibit greater levels of perfectionism compared to their colleagues. The study identified that aspire to be a perfectionist will also a sign of workaholism, the failure of which after an extent will make the employee to burnout. This fails them to align with their working style of colleagues and often gains their hostility or goes neglected by them. They seem less willing and more difficult to delegate authority and responsibilities to others. Since they are so immersed and attached to their work, they are easily prone to stress and burnout. As the science and technology has advanced to greater heights, the employees are made accessible and accountable for 24x7, which is not like usual Nine-to-Five Job, particularly for IT professionals. The sad part in this is that most of the organizations today encourage workaholism which make the employees to take their work regularly to home and work for 55 to 60 hours per week. This makes them to forget their personal life. But, according to our study women employees expressed that they are less prone to workaholism compared to men employees.

Burnout

The employees also come across circumstances when they feel Burnout and is on the rise in modern society due to increasing workloads, longer work hours, lack of sleep, and pressure to balance work, family and a social life. Our respondents often feel due to pressure from their superiors, they are forced to extend their working time beyond the standard time, which makes them exhausted. **Burnout** is a psychological term that refers to long-term exhaustion and diminished interest in work. Job burnout, is a negative state of physical, emotional or mental exhaustion combined with doubts about their competence and the value of their work. The consequences of burnout are potentially serious for staff, clients and the larger institutions in which they interact. Maslach (1993), who describes burnout as a three dimensional construct that consists of: (1) exhaustion (i.e. the depletion or draining of mental resources); (2) cynicism (i.e. indifference or a distant attitude towards one’s job); and (3) lack of professional efficacy (i.e. the tendency to evaluate one’s work performance negatively, resulting in feelings of insufficiency and poor job-related self-esteem) and this could occur when employees are not in control of how they carry out your job, when they are working toward goals that don’t resonate with them, and when they lack social support. Employees are suggested to tailor and prioritize their responsibilities, or at least take a break once in a while, you could face a mountain of mental and physical health problems. Burnout could lead to deterioration

in the quality of care or service that is provided by the staff. It correlates with various self-reported indices of personal dysfunction, increased use of alcohol and drugs, and marital and family problems. Managers suffering from burnout could hurt the organization because they spread it to their subordinates. Furthermore, it appears to be a factor in job turnover, absenteeism, low morale and job dissatisfaction. All these are clearly expressed in the below model,

Disengagement

The very next stage after burn-out will be disengagement, where the employees exhibit negative emotional attachment or emotional detachment to their job, co-workers and organization. Disengaged employees (11, as per our study) are at the lowest level of engagement and can hurt the organizations. Main reason behind this found to be imbalance between women's family care-giving responsibilities and work responsibilities. They fail to meet even the minimum standards set by their organization and also distract their co-workers. The disengaged are proven to have a very negative impact on retention, performance and engagement. Declination in engagement level may lead to calculable drop in productivity and greater rates of absenteeism and inclination to quit. Disengaged employees are often display lack of awareness of policies, procedures and more importantly the direction that the organization is headed. Disengaged employees might be physically present but cannot be identified with the organizational goals. Organizations neither need such disengaged employees and nor the employees want to stay in such disengaged state of mind.

Implications and Conclusion

Educate and Empower are formal approach, while entertain has a shade of informal approach. Organizations expect employees' discretionary efforts, in reciprocity employees expect their employers to entertain them so that they will neither become disengaged nor workaholic towards the work in which they are engaged. A majority of Indian employees are performing intensely and their work engagement level is highest in the world, a new study says. At the same time, six out of ten Indian employees are not working to their full potential while the younger employees are constantly on the lookout for a new job. According to BI Worldwide, an employee engagement solutions provider, 51 per cent of Indian employees is performing intensely, making them globally the most engaged in their work. In our study we approached the employees from all the categories i.e., nine to five, workaholic, burnout and finally disengagement. Only through proper management strategy in consideration of the employees' interests can result in high employee engagement and move the organization forward.

References

1. Maslach, C., Schaufelli, W.B. and Leiter, M.P. (2001). "Job burnout", Annual Review of Psychology, Vol. 52, pp.397-422.
2. Kahn, W. A. (1990). Psychological conditions of personal engagement and disengagement at work. *Academy of Management Journal*, 33(4), 692-724.
3. Manavi Pathak (2011) "Workaholics are peak performers", Human Capital, pg.6-7.
4. Anita Sinai Guha (2013) "Resolving engagement dilemmas", Human Capital, pg.16-20.
5. Wilmar B. Schaufeli, Toon W. Taris and Willem van Rhenen (2008), "Workaholicism, Burnout, and Work Engagement: Three of a Kind or Three Different Kinds of Employee Well-being?", *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, 57(2), 173-203.