AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT WITH REFERENCE TO IT SECTOR IN CHENNAI

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ABSTRACT

Employees who are engaged in their work and committed to their organizations give companies crucial competitive advantages including higher productivity and lower employee turnover. This research investigated the practices followed in the organization to engage employees. The objective of the study was to measure level of commitment, employee perception towards their job and support from top management in IT industry. This study adopted a descriptive survey design in the investigation of the employee engagement. Simple random sampling technique was used to select the sample from the organization. The study used both primary and secondary data. From the study it is evident that support given by the employer and recognition would work towards building of trust between employees and management. The organization encouraged sharing of information, knowledge and resources; and provided opportunities for employees to learn and grow thus influencing employee engagement. Employee commitment is evidenced by good reward programs, approaches that show interest in employee career development. It can be concluded that the allowing people to make their own decisions about work, to control their work, and to achieve their goals may help employees become more engaged in their jobs. Further to this it is recommended that managers within organizations involve employees more in setting goals. Organizations also need to formulate ways of recognition of contribution by employees that would help define what determines employee engagement in order to enhance commitment levels.

Key words: Employee, Engagement, IT industry, organisation.


1. INTRODUCTION

Employee Engagement is a workplace approach resulting in the right conditions for all members of an organization to give their best each day. Employee Engagement is based on trust, integrity, a two-way
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commitment and communication between an organization and its members. It is an approach that increases the chances of business success, contributing to organizational and individual performance, productivity and well-being. Engaged employees are perceived to form a part of an organization’s brand and an engaged, happy workforce can have a knock-on effect on customer retention, recruitment of key talent and the ability to attract new customers in a world where a company's values are crucial to the consumers.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Gennard and Judge (2014), Engagement which goes to the heart of the workplace relationship is key to overcoming obstacles that employees find difficult to perform at their peak.

Armstrong (2012), an expert in HR describes employee engagement as that willingness to go that extra mile. This coincides with employees giving more than they are asked to an organization by working harder and longer than they intentionally have to.

According to Abraham (2012), engaged employees tend to be more dedicated, giving greater customer service. An engaged employee therefore possesses the qualities that an organization needs to reach the next level giving the organization that edge in the market. Several theorists assume that employers want an employee to be engaged because they offer several benefits that can go further than just being committed and motivated.

Bijaya Kumar Sundaray (2011), focused on various factors which lead to employee engagement and what should company do to make the employees engaged. Proper attention on engagement strategies will increase the organizational effectiveness in terms of higher productivity, profits, quality, customer satisfaction, employee retention and increased adaptability.

Susi & Jawaharrani (2011), examined some of the literature on Employee engagement, explore workplace culture & work-life balance policies & practices followed in industries in order to promote employee engagement in their organizations to increase their employees’ productivity and retain them.

Mone and London (2010), defined employee engagement is “a condition of employee who feels involved, committed, passionate, and empowered and demonstrates those feelings in work behaviour”. It is thus the level of commitment and involvement an employee has towards their organization and its values.

Shuck and Wollard (2010), defined engagement as “an individual employee’s cognitive, emotional, and behavioural state directed toward desired organizational outcomes”.

Robbins, Judge and Campbell (2010), describe it as “an individual’s involvement with, satisfaction and enthusiasm for the work they do”.

Lawson, McKinsey and Company (2009), have defined an engaged employee as “committed and will go above and beyond, passionate and takes ownership for the quality of their work, paints a positive image of the organization and recommends it and its products, services to others, understands how their work results in meaningful outcomes and vigorously pursues the organizations goals.”

Schaufeli(2009), defined engagement as “a persistent, positive affective motivational state of fulfillment in employees that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption.

Gebauer (2008), simply describes the phenomenon as “the extent to which employees “go the extra mile” and put discretionary effort into their work contributing more of their energy, creativity and passion on the job.”

The University of York (2008), suggests that „employee engagement is a combination of commitment to the organization and its values plus a willingness to help out colleagues. Employee Engagement goes beyond job satisfaction and is not simply motivation”

The Civil Service (2008), sees being engaged as „more than just being satisfied or motivated. Engaged employees have a sense of personal attachment to their work and organization that means they want to give of their best to help it succeed. Engaged employees tend to speak positively about their organization and have an active desire to stay.
Mckay, Avery, and Morris (2008), Employees who feel empowered have a sense of belonging and excitement about their jobs; they feel engaged at an emotional level and are willing to give their best all the time.

Macleod and Brady (2008), state that “engagement is a tool to be used to make your organization function better, not primarily to make your employees feel better”.

BT (2008), believes employee engagement is “a combination of attitudes, thoughts and behaviors 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”.

The NHS National Workforce Projects (2007), sees engagement as “a measure of how people connect in their work and feel committed to their organization and its goals. People who are highly engaged in an activity feel excited and enthusiastic about their role, say time passes quickly at work, and devote extra effort to the activity.

Lockwood (2007), the emotional aspect is how employees feel about the company, the leaders and their colleagues. The behavioural factor is the value added component reflected in the amount of effort employees put into their work.

Beardwell and Claydon (2007), found that Employee involvement is seen as a central principle of soft’ HRM, where the focus is upon capturing the ideas of employees and securing their commitment.

Penna (2007), presents a hierarchical model of engagement. This model indicates that staff is seeking to find "meaning" at work. Penna defines "meaning" as fulfilment from the job. Fulfilment comes from the employee being valued and appreciated, having a sense of belonging to the organization, and feeling as though they are making a contribution, and is matching with the underlying theoretical framework of Robinson. Penna states that the organization becomes more attractive to new potential employees and becomes more engaging to its existing staff.

Konrad (2006), in his work of conceptualization of engagement stated that self and role exist in some dynamic, negotiable relation in which a person both drives personal energies into role behaviours and displays the self within the role. He further said that such engagement serves to fulfil the human spirit at work.

Masarech (2006), states that employee engagement requires more than committed employees doing the work they like to do, satisfying their personal motivators at work, and enjoying their colleagues’ company. If the workforce is disconnected from the organization’s strategy, not feeling part of a whole and not seeing how their day today tasks drive the company forward, employee engagement will be almost impossible to sustain.

Lawler and Worley (2006), for a high-involvement work practice to be effective and for it to have a positive impact on employee engagement, employees must be given power.

Macey (2006), Employee engagement is a complex, broad construct that subsumes many well researched ideas such as commitment, satisfaction, loyalty and extra role behaviour. An engaged employee extends themselves to meet the organization’s needs, takes initiative, reinforces and supports the organization’s culture and values, stays focused and vigilant, and believes he/she can make a difference.

Saks (2006), defines the engagement phenomenon as “not an attitude; it is the degree to which an individual is attentive and absorbed in the performance of their roles.”

Brown (2006), viewed engagement as a progressive combination of satisfaction, motivation, commitment and advocacy resulting from employees’ movement up the engagement pyramid. Employee engagement can be considered as cognitive, emotional and behavioural.

Crim and Gerard (2006), Regular feedback and dialogue with superiors is the key to giving employees a sense of where they’re going, but many organizations are remarkably bad at giving it.
Truss et al (2006), also mention that engaged workers are passionate, energetic, committed, immersed and dedicated to their work. The clearest way to define an engaged employee in the view of the researcher would be to describe the individual emerging as one whom talks positively about the organization, a key member of staff, a long term employee and one whom performs effectively each day.

Seijts and Crim (2006), employee engagement means a person who is fully involved in, and enthusiastic about, his or her work. Engaged employees care about the future of the company and are willing to invest the discretionary effort to see that the organization succeeds.

Robinson (2006), employee engagement can be achieved through the creation of an organizational environment where positive emotions such as involvement and pride are encouraged, resulting in improved organizational performance, lower employee turnover and better health.

Purcell et al. (2005), highlighted that employee engagement is only meaningful if there is a more genuine sharing of responsibility between management and employees over issues of substance. Their study also revealed that involvement in decisions affecting the job or work to be an important factor, which was strongly associated with high levels of employee engagement thus demonstrating it, is an important driver.

Frank et al (2005), Employee engagement has been defined as emotional and intellectual commitment to the organization and or the amount of discretionary effort exhibited by employees in their job.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study primarily is to know the various practices that exist in the organization to engage employees. It tries to find out the ways in which the company try to engage employees and the other support that is given by the organization like development opportunities, personal health scheme etc., A study on employee engagement in Information Technology sector which helps us to know about different practices existing in the IT industry to engage their employees. Descriptive research is used to describe characteristics of a population or phenomenon being studied. It is used to obtain information concerning the current status of the phenomena to describe what exists with respect to variables in a situation, by asking individuals about their perceptions, attitudes, behaviour or values. Both primary and secondary data has been used to obtain the required information pertaining to this study. The questionnaire contains two sections the first contains questions on respondent’s personal data; the second contains questions related to level of commitment and practices to engage employees. A Likert Scale is a scale used to measure the responses of the respondents. The respondents for the study have been chosen using simple random sampling. Analytical tools used for data analysis are percentage analysis, ANOVA and independent T test.

Objectives of the Study

To study the practices followed in the organization to engage employees.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Age Wise Classification of Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Particulars</th>
<th>No. of respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20-25yrs</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-30yrs</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-35yrs</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-40yrs</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 40</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary data
Interpretation: It is observed from the survey that 16% of the respondents are between 20-25 years, 37% of the respondents are between 26-30 years, 27% of the respondents are between 31-35 years, 16% of the respondents are between 36-40 years, 4% of respondents are above 40 years.

Educational Qualification Wise Classification of Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Particulars</th>
<th>No. of respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UG</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary data

Interpretation: It is observed from the survey that 43% of the respondents answered diploma, 57% of the respondents are UG.
Marital Status Wise Classification of Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Particulars</th>
<th>No. of respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unmarried</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary data

Interpretation: It is observed from the survey that 53% of the respondents are married, 47% are unmarried.

Gender Wise Classification of Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Particulars</th>
<th>No. of respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary data
**Interpretation:** It is found from the survey that 91% of the respondents are male and 9% of the respondents are female.

**Income Wise Classification of Respondents**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Particulars</th>
<th>No. of respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rs 10000-15000</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rs 15001-20000</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rs 20001-25000</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25001-30000</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;30001</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>128</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary data

**Figure 5**

**Interpretation:** It is observed from the survey that 3% of the respondents are between Rs.10000-15000 salary, 13% of the respondents are between Rs.15001-20000 salary, 33% of the respondents are between Rs.20001-25000 salary, 38% of the respondents are between Rs.25001-30000 salary and 13% of the respondents are above Rs.30000 salary.

**Experience Wise Classification of Respondents**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Particulars</th>
<th>No. of respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Below 5yrs</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10yrs</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15yrs</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>above 15</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>128</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary data
Interpretation: It is observed from the survey that 36% of the respondents are below 5 years experience, 43% of the respondents are between 6-10 years, 12% of the respondents are between 11-15 years and 9% of the respondents are above 15 years.

5. CHI-SQUARE TEST

Ho: There is no significant association between top supportiveness and the employee perception towards job.

Significant association between top supportiveness and the employee perception towards job

Table 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>183.481*</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
<td>136.174</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary data

Interpretation: This table shows that significance level is 0.000, which is less than 0.05. Hence we accept alternative hypothesis and conclude that there is significant association between top supportiveness and the employee perception towards job.

ANOVA

H0: There is no significant difference between experience and employee perception towards job.

Significant difference between experience and employee perception towards job

Table 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>17.213</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.738</td>
<td>4.468</td>
<td>.005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>159.256</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>1.284</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>176.469</td>
<td>127</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary data
Interpretation: This table shows that significance level is 0.005 which is less than 0.05, therefore, there is significant difference between experience and employee perception towards job.

H0: There is no significant difference between educational qualification and development opportunities.

**Significant difference between educational qualification and development opportunities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>9.171</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9.171</td>
<td>5.496</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>210.259</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>1.669</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>219.430</td>
<td>127</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary data

Interpretation: This table shows that significance level is 0.021 which is less than 0.05 therefore; there is significant difference between educational qualification and development opportunities.

**Independent T-Test**

H0: There is no significant difference between gender and employee perception towards job.

**Difference between gender and employee perception towards job**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
<th>Mean Error</th>
<th>2-tailed Sig.</th>
<th>Std. Diff.</th>
<th>Std. Diff.</th>
<th>Lower</th>
<th>Upper</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employee Perception</td>
<td>.563</td>
<td>.454</td>
<td>1.835</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>-.053</td>
<td>1.405</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: primary data

Interpretation: Since 0.069>0.05, we accept the null hypothesis and conclude there is no significant difference between gender and employee perception towards job.

**7. CONCLUSIONS**

Employee engagement plays vital role for any organizations success. It is a positive attitude held by the employees towards the organization and its values. It is rapidly gaining popularity, use and importance in the workplace and impacts organizations in many ways. IT industry is working on all fronts right from increasing job experience by providing challenging and growing work culture, to the basic amenities and services required. Employees know what they have to do and they get excellent support from their superiors. Employees are actively involved and are ready to serve organization further. Based on the results from findings and data analysis of the research, it can be concluded that almost everyone feel proud to be associated with IT industry and employees are aware of their job role and well known about their responsibilities. However there is a need to make more efforts to those employees who are not engaged.
REFERENCES


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[33] University of York (2008), Employee Engagement, www.york.ac.uk/admin/hr/abouthr/strategy/employee_engagement.htm