
Work Engagement: A Better Productivity Enhancement Tool than Job Satisfaction

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Abstract

To get a competitive and satisfied employee in the turbulent global business environment is a tedious task. Productive workers may not be satisfied with the culture of the organization where as the employees who are satisfied with the environment may not be productive. Organizations have been forced to redefine the definition of employee satisfaction. There are conflicting statements made by HR professionals and managers on whether happy employees are productive also. Productivity is linked with commitment to the organization which can be brought by work engagement. Although there is a great deal of interest in engagement, there is also a good deal of confusion regarding this concept. This paper has concentrated on how scenario has been changed from job satisfaction to work engagement, used descriptive statistics to study the work engagement in the organization. Overall it was found that there was work engagement in the organization which was a good factor for the organization. Also few suggestions have also been incorporated to understand how work engagement can be improved for better productivity.

Key words: Job satisfaction, work engagement, Productivity, Gallop's questionnaire

INTRODUCTION

The success of every sector depends more on human assets than on physical or financial assets. If employees are satisfied with the culture of the organization, provided satisfaction is linked with the employee engagement, there are chances that they are more productive and would contribute well towards the growth of the organization. Today organizations are stressing more on creating a suitable environment at the workplace where employees are enthusiastic and more committed to their work. They are doing this because of the fact that if a person is not satisfied, organizations suffer losses both in terms of tangible and intangible costs since human capital is the most valuable asset having lot of potentials and they can act as a source of competitive advantage for the organizations. The good hope is hard to find, is even truer these days than ever before because the job market is becoming increasingly tight. One of the outcomes is job satisfaction and it is defined as the extent to which people like their jobs either on the whole or with respect to particular conditions or rewards (Spector, 1997).

Today the scenario is that when there is more work pressure, people leave the organization and those who are in the job are not interested to perform their duties diligently. They perform them just for the sake of performing and there is a lack of employee engagement. In order to bring employee engagement, efforts must be done in order to make the employees satisfied and then only engagement can be expected from them.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

To know about the concept of work engagement.

To understand the relationship between Job satisfaction and work engagement.

To find out work engagement in employees.

To suggest how work engagement can be enhanced.

CONCEPTUALISATION:

Job satisfaction constitutes a very popular concept not only in psychological but also in economic research activities for at least two reasons. Firstly, it has an impact on various organizational success factors such as commitment or intention to quit. Secondly, employers can influence job satisfaction by various human resource management (HRM) practices such as feedback, job design, participation or autonomy.

The most-used research definition of job satisfaction is by Locke (1976), who defined it as “a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one’s job or job experiences”. The importance of both affect, or feeling, and cognition, or thinking has been in this definition. When we think, we have feelings about what we think. Conversely, when we have feelings, we think about what we feel. Cognition and affect are thus inextricably linked, in our psychology and even in our biology. Thus, when evaluating our jobs, as when we assess most anything important to us, both thinking and feeling are involved. Over the past several years, many organizations have focused on reigning in key financial indicators. By searching the global labor market for the most efficient resources, creating process improvements, and using technology to speed up operations, companies have improved financial performance and created competitive advantages. But downsizing, outsourcing, and off-shoring will soon reach upper limits on their ability to improve organizational performance. In addition, these actions are available to all competitors – making them, at best, temporary sources of competitive advantage.

HISTORY OF JOB SATISFACTION:

There are conflicting views on how the concept of job satisfaction developed. One of the famous study related to job satisfaction was the Hawthorne study which was conducted by Elton Mayo of the Harvard Business School. He tried to find the effects of illumination on workers’ productivity. These studies concluded that creating new changes in work conditions can only increase productivity temporarily (called the Hawthorne Effect) and people work for some aim in the organization but not for pay. All this led to the creation to investigate other factors creating job satisfaction.

Another name which comes in the mind while talking about job satisfaction is Frederick Winslow Taylor, who, in his book, *Principles of Scientific Management*, argued that there was a single best way to perform any given work task. This principle helped industries to increase their productivity but for the same, workers were forced to work at a faster pace. Later on, they became dissatisfied, thus surprising researchers with new questions related to job satisfaction.

Maslow’s need-hierarchy theory, also laid the foundation for job satisfaction theory. It concentrated on five specific needs in life – physiological needs, safety needs, social needs, self-esteem needs, and self-actualization needs. This theory proved as a good basis to develop job satisfaction theories.

Work engagement: Engagement is more than simple job satisfaction. It can best be described as a harnessing of one’s self to his or her roles at work. In engagement, people express themselves cognitively, physically, and emotionally while performing their work roles (Kahn, 1990). Truss et al (2006) define employee engagement simply as ‘passion for work’, a psychological state which is seen to encompass the three dimensions of engagement discussed by Kahn (1990), and captures the common theme running through all these definitions. These different definitions makes employee engagement difficult to determine as each study has its own protocols to examine employee engagement. Furthermore, whilst it is acknowledged that employee engagement has been defined in many different ways, it is also argued the definitions often sound similar to other better known and established constructs such as ‘organisational commitment’ and ‘organisational citizenship behaviour’ (OCB) (Robinson et al 2004). Thus Robinson et al (2004) defined engagement as ‘one step up from commitment’. As a result, employee engagement has the appearance of being yet another trend, or what some might call “old wine in a new bottle”.

Work engagement represents positive work experience and affect in organizational life which produces various benefits to the organization. Engagement with work involves high levels of energy and identification

with one's work. As a rather new concept work engagement reflects the recent trend towards positive psychology where attention is paid to employee's well being (Tim et al.,2011).

Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) identified three dimensions of engagement- vigor, dedication and engagement. Vigor is characterized by high levels of energy, willingness to invest effort into the work and is viewed as the opposite concept of exhaustion. Dedication is assessed as a sense of significance, enthusiasm and pride. Absorption means when a person is being fully concentrated into one's work. Personal traits due to their motivational potential are, considered to be important antecedents of work engagement.

Thus we can say that Job satisfaction is a positive emotional state that occurs when a person's job seems to fulfill one's needs. It is not always related with the money factor-because some people also work to satisfy their urge to work whereas Engaged workers are those who approach their work with energy, dedication, and focus -- are more open to new information, more productive, and more willing to go the extra mile. Moreover, engaged workers take the initiative to change their work environments in order to stay engaged.

RELATIONSHIP OF JOB SATISFACTION WITH WORK ENGAGEMENT:

1. Job satisfaction as an engagement area: when Job satisfaction is taken as an engagement area. They shared a common theme: self-interest, meaning that employees from these lower-performing companies were constantly thinking of themselves and their close relationships at work, whereas organizations with the highest levels of engagement showed a much higher organization-interest. In simple words, it would be a personal engagement driver that employees control fully which means our satisfaction depends on how we allow ourselves to be a part of it. In this case, it is just like happiness, which is a personal choice to be made determining your engagement level.

2. Employee satisfaction is functional, as opposed to employee engagement, which is emotional: Employee satisfaction is functional which means the output depends on the input which an employee is putting into it. It is a measure of an employee's happiness with a company, their particular job, or their co-workers among other factors where as Employee engagement is an emotional aspect. Employees, who are engaged in their job, speak positively about their organization, are more committed to work and are motivated by their organizations' culture to contribute to business success."

3. Employee satisfaction can also lead to buy-in commitment: Overall we can say that the two are identical. Employee satisfaction is just another way of quantifying the commitment/buy-in of that employee towards the company they work for also known as engagement. In that case, they both are emotional. How you feel about your job versus how you feel about the company you're working for.

There could be many factors leading to either a small or a huge difference between these two but one aspect which is sure is that work engagement would definitely create a strong bond between the individual and the organization which is always in favour of the organization.

DATA ANALYSIS: A questionnaire was given to the employees which had been pilot tested with a similar group of employees before its use in this study. The reliability of the instrument was also tested where reliability coefficient was found to be 0.753 which was acceptable.

Eight questions were given to the employees where Question No. one, three and five was to measure meaningfulness. Question No. two, four and seven for measuring the condition of safety and Question no. six and eight measured availability. The employees were given six choices as: strongly disagree, disagree, slightly disagree, slightly agree, agree, and strongly agree. Strongly disagree was coded as one point, whereas strongly agree was coded as six points. Therefore, the minimum score possible was eight and the maximum score possible was 48. Scores ranging from 32 to 48 would indicate a greater degree of engagement than those ranking below 32. The majority of the respondents reported themselves to be engaged with their jobs ($M = 39.39$, $SD = 4.75$). Table I describes the sample responses to each of the eight items on the engagement scale, and Table II describes the sample's overall engagement score.



Table I: Descriptive Statistics – Engagement Scores

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
Q1. I have received recognition for doing my job well.	100	5.00	1.00	6.00	5.236
Q2. My supervisor seems concerned about my welfare	100	5.00	1.00	6.00	4.765
Q3. The mission of the agency makes me feel like the work I do matters	100	4.00	2.00	6.00	5.101
Q4. I have friends at work	100	4.00	2.00	6.00	4.653
Q5. While on the job, my ideas and opinions are taken seriously	100	5.00	1.00	6.00	5.078
Q6. The materials, tools and equipment that I need to do my job are supplied by the agency and made readily available to me.	100	5.00	1.00	6.00	4.325
Q7. The people I work with do a good job.	100	5.00	1.00	6.00	5.921
Q8. I will still be employed here two years from now	100	5.00	1.00	6.00	4.275

Source: Primary Data

Table II : Participant’s Total Engagement Score:

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
Total Score	100	16.00	48.00	39.394	4.75406

Source: Primary Data

FINDINGS:

It was found that in all the eight questions, the mean score was more than 4 which indicated that there was work engagement in the organization. Even the total mean score was more than 32 which indicated that there is a good environment in the organization and people are engaged towards the organization.

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS:

Overall it was concluded that in order to have productivity in the organization, work culture of the organization should be made according to the needs and aspirations of the employees so that they feel at home and instead of job satisfaction, work engagement can be brought up in the organization. Employees should be encouraged to work as a team, employers should be there as mentors, reward should be given to them for better performance, help employees move forward in their career and education, be flexible and create a unique office environment where people can grow and become more innovative. All this would definitely enhances better environment and increases productivity.

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