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ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT AS AN OUTCOME OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT: A SOCIAL EXCHANGE PERCEPTIVE USING A SEM MODEL

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ABSTRACT

Employee engagement is gaining a pre-dominant edge in the field of HRM at existing epoch because of its significance in the corporate world. The rationale behind this is, engagement plays a crucial role as an antecedent towards employee performance, efficiency, competitive advantage, commitment and so forth. This research paper is intended towards identifying the various factors contributing to employee engagement and its association with the organizational commitment among Indian Information Technology (IT) Professionals. The present study tries to explore the correlation existing if any, between employee engagement variables with three dimensions of organizational commitment as affective, continuance and normative, with the theoretical base of Social Exchange Theory. The study adopted cross sectional research with 750 software Professional as respondents from 12 IT Companies. This study confirms employee engagement has a significant positive impact on all the three organizational commitment starting with normative, affective and continuance commitment.

Keywords: Antecedents, Employee Engagement, Organizational Commitment

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Social Exchange Theory (SET)

SET is one amongst the most

prominent theories for understanding work
place behavior highlighted on the
psychological side. Homans (1958) introduced
SET in his book "Social Behaviour as

Exchange". The two forms of exchanges according to him are economic and social. As stated by (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005), SET is one of the significant theoretic outline to understand work place behavior and the fundamental principle of this theory is social associations advances due to mutual trust, joint responsibilities and commitment based out of this employees formulate their decisions about perceived costs and benefits, therefore each party abide to the rules of exchange. Employee's feels obligated towards the organization when they perceive organization is supporting them and they feel a sense of strong identification with their organization, thereby improving the organizational commitment (Armeli *et al.*, 1998). Saks (2006) states, SET is most extensively accepted theory because of its underlying hypothetical support for the studies of employee engagement as it states, the support provided by the organization can be repaid by employees by being actively engaged. Kahn (1990) emphasized on aspects of "societal and monetary exchange of resources". This state's if employees are bestowed with required resources by the organization, they acknowledge with higher engagement levels.

1.2. Employee Engagement

Employees are the key resources for service sector firms. In the times of intense

competition and survival of the fittest the companies always strive for hiring and retaining the best knowledge workers compared to obtaining clients. The capability to effectively develop relationship through a cohesive manner and a collaborative environment with employees is the major deciding factor for long term market gains. A series of report at the global level suggests low levels of employee engagement. Sterling, 2008 found in his study actively disengaged employees usually prove fatal to the organization by creating a climate of anguish and developing a negative impact on engaged subordinate. The recent study by (Gallup Institute 2017) stated mere 15% of workforces were fully engaged whereas 85% remained unengaged or actively disengaged. But surprisingly the good news is well managed work groups are 41% less absent from the work thus leading to 17% enhanced productivity rate and 59% are committed to stay with the same organization, then the disengaged group. The Corporate Leadership Council (2004) states by enhancing engagement levels, chances are 20% of performance of employee may go up and 87% probability is sought for them stay committed with the organization.

1.3. Organizational Commitment

Mowday *et al.*, (1982), distinct states

organizational commitment as employee's strong desire and willingness to be associated as a member of organization along with it accept the organizational goal, values and exert considerable effort to accomplish it. Meyer & Allen (1991) accredited organization commitment with three dimensions. The first dimension is proposed as affective commitment wherein the employees are emotional attach and they actively participate in the organization. The second dimension is continuance commitment; it is the costs related with quitting the organization. The third dimension is normative commitment, it represents obligation to stay with the organization. Organizational commitment is utmost important for the success in any organization. In this context Meyer & Allen (1997) employees who are committed towards the organization will stay loyally through thick or thin, effortlessly perform their daily task will not abstain from job and consistently work, they will also share values and goals of companies. Put it in a layman's language the committed employees take pleasure putting in the hard work, acknowledge the appreciation and contribute to their organizations tactical objectives. As commitment calls for investment of time along with mental and physical exertion, most of the employees expect reciprocation from the opposite entity

in the form of value addition. That's the reason many high performing firms recognize and admit employee commitment, which aids as a major contributing factor towards adding value and creating organizational long term success. The same was supported by (Agyemang & Ofei, 2013) it was found in their study committed employee enhances firms performances by reduced turnover and rising employee efficiency.

1.4. Employee Engagement and Organizational Commitment in Indian Information Technology Sector.

IT sector operates in an unpredictable, indecisive, multifarious and uncertain kind of business environment and its sustainability is dependent upon quicker adaptation to ever varying technologies and generating undisruptive innovations. In the present state of affairs, it is unavoidable for IT firms to compromise on engagement and commitment levels of its employees towards their work effort at micro level and organizational exertion at macro level. The major source of competitive advantage in service organization is its human capital as they play a pivotal role in productivity, profitability and sustainability for any business in the global market. The IT industry is human resource intensive sector and the intrinsic focus is on the employees, thus individual involvement in delivering the

outcome lies solely on them. IT industry has transformed the perception of India in the international economic growth context and India takes pride in being the uppermost sourcing destination for IT companies across the globe. In the financial year 2018-19 it accounted for approximate 55% of market share of USA along with revenue of \$185-190 billion as its sourcing business. There are around 16,000 firms which have created 3.7 million jobs, with over 45% share in total services export and stand second in receiving an FDI \$35.82 billion as on March 2018-19. The export revenue from the IT industry is projected to nurture at a top pace, between 7-9% year on year, with expected growth up to \$350 billion by 2025. [NASSCOM, IT & BPM, IBEF Reports]

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Employee Engagement

Employee Engagement is employee's mental and emotional involvement towards their jobs in turn this contributes to organizational success. Many Academicians and consultants have explained the term employee engagement in different ways and made it a controversial one. The term employee engagement was initiated by (Kahn, 1990) shading the importance on "psychological presences" at workplace and differentiating it between engagement and

disengagement and stating that the engaged employees will "physically, cognitively and emotionally" immerse themselves in organization, while unengaged would be physically present in organization but will be psychologically absent, he also emphasized on conditions like "meaningfulness, safety and availability" for an employee to be engaged. In various literatures, the psychological presence at place of work is exhibited as behavior of personal contribution or engagement. The contrary construct was expressed by (Schaufeli *et al.*, 2002) they termed it as burnout antonym of engagement, with dimensions like "fatigue, absence of professional efficacy and cynicism". Salanova., & Schaufeli, (2000) formulated model of engagement with the three measurements namely "vigor, dedication and absorption" (Schaufeli and Bakker's 2004). Explained job engagement as optimistic fulfilling occupationally state of mind absorbed with "vigor, dedication and absorption". Welch (2011) specify engagement as a vigorous, dynamic emotional state that associates personnel to their firms, bring in noticeable 14 change in employees role performances articulated through "physical, cognitive and emotional state", and impacted by mostly by organizational internal communication. In 2000's, (Schaufeli *et al.*, 2002) emphasized solution to burnout was

engagement. In 2010, United Kingdom institutionalize “Engage for Success Initiative” and in 2020’s, Deloitte forecasts to enhance employee engagement, the organizations needs to provide more human experience to their employees rather than just the employee experience and align personal work for firms objectives from bottom up.

2.2. Antecedents of Employee Engagement

Engaged and committed employees are critical for competitive advantage for an organization for enhanced productivity and lower turnover. Employee engagement and organizational commitment can ideally give a makeover to the business outcomes for any organizations. The organizations should always strive on the antecedents, which motivates an employee’s to achieve active engagement in order to get commitment. Thus it becomes quite evident to understand the perceptions of employees towards the antecedents of employee engagement and also implications for employers. Top management needs to consider antecedents of employee engagement so as to develop suitable drivers to foster business competitiveness and have engaged and committed employees. Employee engagement is influenced by a range of factors, various engagement studies are conducted by the academic and consultants, emphasizing on antecedents associated with organization, task

and individual factors. The antecedent chosen for present study as state under

- **Intrapreneurial Behavior:** Intrapreneurship was first coined by (Susbauer, 1973) with a perceptive of bringing in the concept of entrepreneurship within the organization. Schaper & Volery (2007) stated organizations encourage intrapreneurship to expand business units, to develop new ventures, utilize and retain the talented employees in the business unit.
- **Job Crafting:** Job crafting is a technique whereby an employee crafts the job as one loves to do it with the assumption of being in the same role adding meaning to the job and not negotiated with the organization. Job crafting defined by (Tims& Bakker, 2010) asserted it as employee taken approach to adjust their work environment and do the required changes with prevailing job demand with available resources.
- **Employee Voice:** Marchington (2015) in his work expresses employee voice is a robust system, in which he identifies the yields the organizations reaps by involvement and participations of employees in day to day affair. Morrison (2014) elaborated employee voice as extra-role ‘upward communication behavior’

with an agenda to improve organizational effectiveness.

- **Employee Performance Appraisal:** Employee appraisal system, evaluates performance of employees to prior set goals, objectives for the days ahead, provides guidelines and training are provided to achieve the set objectives. Thorough performance appraisal management is able to identify the accomplishment and shortfalls in employee's performance and provides a framework for future improvements.
- **Training and Development:** Training contributes to the behavior change in the organization by enhancing employees Knowledge, Skill and Attitude (KSA), although development is far sighted approach to place employees in the strategic position in long term. Training and development leads an employee to be more productive at job, avoid negligence at work, and develop interpersonal relationship, contributing to employee engagement and other organizational outcomes Aguinus & Kraiger, 2009.
- **Perceived Organizational Support:** The knowledge intensive organizations rely on employees who are psychological obligated towards their organization, who are energetic proactively works and just

don't ponder upon job description to achieve high performance standards. This is a mutual affiliation between employer and employee, when an employer's cares, supports, rewards and recognize contribution, gives firsthand information and values wellbeing of employees. Rhoades & Eisenberger (2002) [105] POS thereby strengthen cognitive and emotional assessment of the job, thus boosting engagement.

2.3. Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment is a multidimensional concept based on behavior, attitude, normative and calculative notion. Porter *et al.*, (1974) viewed organizational commitment as an attitudinal concept and refers it to the employee's involvement and identification with their organization. Organizational commitment is a perception which an employee develops by associating, it towards organizational goals and values as their own individual goals and values, consequently it revolves around resolution of conflicts and towards decision of either to stay or quit the organization. In the literature review we find various conceptualizations of organizational commitment but the most cited work is of Meyer and Allen's (1991, 1997) they define it as a psychological state that determines employees bond with the firm and

based on this the employee decides to continue or discontinue his association with the organization. They stated three dimension of commitment. The employee with argue of affective commitment has a strong emotional attachment towards the organization, its goal and have a strong desire to stay with the organization. The second dimension is continuance commitment, this is associated with the perception based on the cost of staying or leaving the organization, the employee remains committed to the organization because he believes, if he leaves the organization the cost associated towards it would be high and he would have difficulties in finding the job. The third and the last dimensions of organizational commitment is normative commitment and it relates to the feeling of obligation and staying committed with the organization.

2.3. Employee Engagement and Organizational Commitment

To achieve the competitive advantage in today's vibrant business scenario with rapid advancement in the knowledge based sector and ample increase in the competition amongst the organizations, the corporate generally leverage upon the skills of their employees to gain a competitive advantage and the key driver towards this is an engaged and committed employee. Engagement and

commitment are critical to any organizations specifically at the onset of global recessions. Saks (2006) argues that organizational commitment varies from the concept of employee engagement and states commitment is attitude and attachment of an employee towards their organization, whereas engagement is not just attitude but an employee's focus and immenseness towards their job. Creating and nourishing employee engagement along with developing organizational commitment is an enduring task for corporate and these engaged and committed workforces are extremely vigorous and desirable by the management. Bhattacharya (2015) in his study found employee engagement and commitment leads to reduced absenteeism, higher retention, enhanced efficiency and customer satisfaction. The biggest challenge the organizations face today is hiring the best of talent, developing their skills and utilizing their full potential for mutual growth and this could happen only when the organizations have engaged and committed employees. Crafting and nourishing employee engagement is an enduring challenge for firms; along with this the additional challenge is building organizational commitment among employees.

3. OBJECTIVE & HYPOTHESIS

To Study the influence of employee

engagement on organizational commitment through structural equation model.

3.1. Hypothesis

There is significant influence between employee engagement and organizational commitment among employees

4. RESEARCH DESIGN

4.1 Questionnaire

A combined questionnaire in three parts was drafted to measure antecedents of employee engagement, employee engagement and organizational commitment. Employee engagement was scale developed using Gallup Q12 as the basis and the questionnaire items, antecedents of employee engagement statements were chosen from various reliable studies and organizational commitment scale was adopted from Allen and Meyer instrument with few changes were made as per the requirements of the IT sector after discussion with selected panel of experts from the similar industry. Based on their suggestions, the final questionnaire had 65 statements, apart from demographic variables. All the preliminary analysis like exploratory factor analysis, skewness and kurtosis, cronbach's alpha and confirmatory factor analysis were applied to check the reliability and validity of the questionnaires, and the same is found within the range, thus indicating that the internal reliability or consistency of items in a multiple

item scale is good.

4.2. Sampling Technique

The study is based on survey method. The SEI CMMI Level 5, 12 software firms from Bengaluru, India with 750 software professionals as respondents. Data was collected from the respondents through a structured questionnaire. Employee participation in the survey was voluntary and no compulsion was adhered to participate in the survey. 900 respondents were identified to achieve the target and questionnaires were administrated to the respondents personally, out of which 800 respondents returned the questionnaire, and 750 were complete and useable for further investigation. Therefore the total of 750 respondents was used for further study

4.3 Data Analysis

Various preliminary analysis like, exploratory factor analysis, skewness and kurtosis, cronbach's alpha, confirmatory factor analysis were undertaken for confirming the psychometric properties of measures. All the preliminary analysis was found to be above threshold levels, as stated in various studies. Variables considered for the study were grouped as independent and dependent for the purpose of analysis. Personal antecedents of employee engagement such as interpreneurial behavior, job crafting, employee voice,

employee appraisal system, training and development and perceived organizational support act as independent variables whereas components of organizational commitment like affective, continuance and normative commitment as dependent variables.

5. ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Structural Equation Modelmodelwas

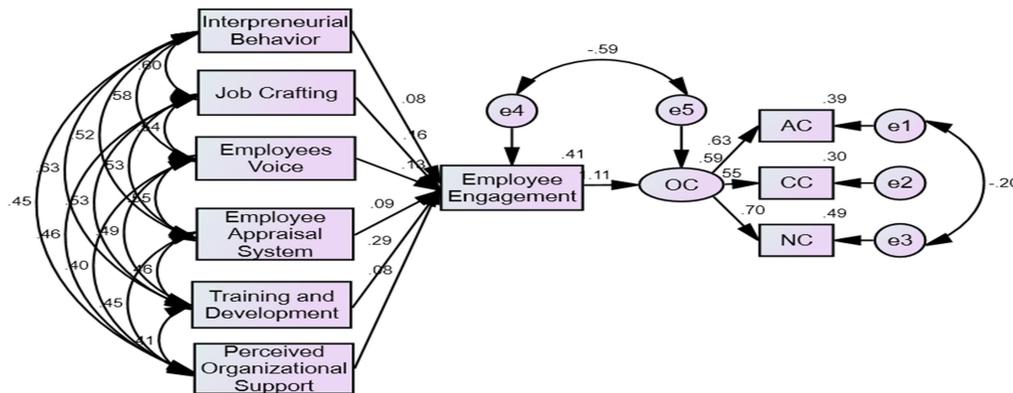


Figure 1: SEM based on Standardized Coefficient on “Employee Engagement and Organizational Commitment”

Table 1: Variables in the SEM Analysis

Variables		Unstandardized co-efficient(β)	Standard Error of β	Standardized co-efficient (β)	t value	P value
Employee Engagement	← Interpreneural Behavior	0.148	0.067	0.084	2.219	0.026*
Employee Engagement	← Job Crafting	0.229	0.051	0.160	4.529	<0.001**
Employee Engagement	← Employee Voice	0.213	0.058	0.126	3.656	<0.001**
Employee Engagement	← Employee Appraisal System	0.186	0.072	0.086	2.573	0.010**
Employee Engagement	← Training & Development	0.642	0.078	0.286	8.207	<0.001**
Employee Engagement	← Perceived Organizational Support	0.160	0.063	0.077	2.535	0.011*
Organizational Commitment	← Employee Engagement	0.320	0.021	1.108	15.489	<0.001**
Affective Commitment	← Organizational Commitment	1.000	-	0.627	-	<0.001**
Continuance Commitment	← Organizational Commitment	0.956	0.080	0.548	11.928	<0.001**
Normative Commitment	← Organizational Commitment	1.263	0.093	0.700	13.527	<0.001**

From the above Table 1, Unstandardized coefficient of interpreneural behavior had a significant positive direct effect on engagement (β= 0 .148, t = 2.219, p <0.026)

adopted in the study to find out whether the conceptual framework developed by researcher was good fit. In the present frame work total numbers of are fourteen, exogenous (independent) variables are ten and endogenous (dependent) variables are four. Figure 1, depicts Employee Engagement and organizational Commitment.

and this implies employee engagement would increase by 0.148 for every unit increase in interpreneural behavior. Job crafting had a significant positive direct effect on

engagement ($\beta= 0.229$, $t = 4.529$, $p <0.001$) and engagement would increase by 0.229 for every unit increase in job crafting. Employee voice had a significant positive direct effect on employee engagement ($\beta= 0.213$, $t = 3.656$, $p < .001$) and EE would increase by 0.213 for every unit increase in employee voice. Employee Appraisal System had a significant positive direct effect on engagement ($\beta= 0.186$, $t = 2.573$, $p <0.001$) and engagement would increase by 0.186 for every unit increase in Employee Appraisal System. Training and development had a significant positive direct effect on engagement ($\beta= 0.642$, $t = 8.204$, $p <0.011$) and engagement would increase by 0.642 for every unit increase training and development. Perceived organizational support had a significant positive direct effect on engagement ($\beta= 0.160$, $t = 2.535$, $p <0.001$)

and engagement would increase by 0.160 for every unit increase perceived organizational support.

Based on standardized coefficient, training and development on employee engagement (0.286) is most influencing path with regard to personal antecedents, followed by job crafting (0.160), employee’s voice (0.126), and employee appraisal system (0.086) and so on.

Unstandardized coefficient of employee engagement on organizational commitment is 0.320 represents the partial effect of engagement on commitment holding the other path variables as constant. The estimated positive sign implies that such effect is positive that commitment would increase by 0.320 for every unit increase in engagement and this coefficient value is significant at 1% level.

Table 2: Model Fit Summary

Indices	Recommend Value	Value
Chi-square value	-----	79.502
Chi-square value/DF	5.000 or below	4.417
Goodness-of-Fit Statistic (GFI)	0.900 or above	0.980
Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Statistic (AGFI)	0.900 or above	0.938
Normed-Fit Index (NFI)	0.900 or above	0.974
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	0.900 or above	0.980
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)	0.080 or below	0.068

The goodness of fit statistics is presented in the **Table 2**. The overall fit indicated a Chi-square value/DF value is 4.417 (<0.05). The absolute fit indices were standardized RMSEA= 0.068 (<0.80), GFI = 0.980 (>0.90), AGFI = 0.938 (>0.90). The comparative indices were NFI=

0.974 (>0.90) and CFI = 0.980(>0.90). Overall, the fit statics showed a good fit.

5. RESULTS & DISCUSSIONS

Engagement building is a continuous process and not a onetime activity, so the companies need to identify key factors driving

engagement among employees from time to time and must strategically implement intervention strategies and place policies and procedures in its place, to reap the consequences of having enthusiastic, committed and engaged employees who are willing to go an “extra mile” to achieve the organizational success. This study adopted six variables based on gap in literature review and experts’ advice in the related field was sought and following are drawn from the study. Based on multiple regression analysis results it is found that 41.6% of variation in employee engagement was explained by overall personal antecedents.

The major factor paving employee engagement in this study is training and development, followed by employee’s voice, employee appraisal system, job crafting, interpreneurial behavior, and perceived organizational support. Based on multiple regression analysis it was found 46.8% of organizational commitment variance was explained by employee engagement. The estimated positive sign implies positive effect and organizational commitment will increase by 0.704 for every one unit increase in engagement. The study also found the most influential path of employee engagement is normative commitment, followed by affective commitment & continuous commitment.

6. PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Empirical literature on the concept of employee engagement has been extended to established relationship with organizational commitment. This study added to SET (Blau, 1964) that employee receiving social and economic resources from organization will respond with positive attitude by being actively engaged, employees have a feeling of obligation to respond and pay back to the organization in some form or the other and increase their commitment levels. The study has provided empirical evidence to support SET and it shows that workforces who are actively engaged in their job and organization reported higher levels of commitment. These consequences are in tune with the study of Robinson *et al.*, (2004). Numerous studies have focused on single dimensions of organizational commitment, this study adds to the literature, stating all the three dimensions are positively associated. Even though this study mainly intended to test theoretically-developed hypotheses, the findings of the study do have practical implications, for the policy makers in IT sector and software professionals. Policy developers, human resource experts can craft and implement intervention strategy to surge engagement and commitment levels to accelerate the

organizational growth. The findings clearly state the IT professionals reciprocated for the resource, support and direct benefits received by the management and have obligation to stay engaged and committed towards their organizations. To conclude overall results of this study supports the existing arguments that a happy and emotionally attached employee exhibits active engagement and once engagement is accentuated in organization commitment follows which can eventually increase business outcomes and bring in decrease in attrition, absenteeism, turnover rates along with other withdrawal behaviors

7. LIMITATIONS

- This study is limited only to Indian Software Professions. In future studies could be undertaken by different nationality software professionals and comparisons could also be considered a subject of discussion. Apart from this engagement effect on commitment alone is analyzed whereas, various other outcomes like organizational productivity, organizational effectiveness, organizational climate, etc., could be taken as outcome variable.

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