WORK ENGAGEMENT AND TURNOVER INTENTION: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY

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Abstract

Work Engagement is the concern an employee has for his organisation because an individual devote most of his time at his workplace. This encourages the employer also to make his employees satisfied and always motivated. Not only the employees, employer also face a lot of pressure in the highly competitive environment to retain their working assets. This in turn means that employers now need to pay special attention in the areas that help in retaining the high performing employees through various means like appropriate rewards, appreciation for the efforts, a defined professional growth and so on. This paper highlights the relation in both the concerns - work engagement and turnover intention.

1. INTRODUCTION

Increasing aspiration and dynamic environment are creating a lot of challenges in this digital era. The Capability Maturity Model (CMMi-SEI) studied People, Technology and Processes, the 3 pillars of any business organization. People play a very vital role in the organisation to help it achieving the vision. Right technology and well defined proven processes provide the necessary power to employees to perform at their best. With the advent of Information Communication and Technology (ICT) , educational institutions have to use the blend of technology to improve the teaching quality this enforces teachers learn & use the new technology to achieve the quality parameters of performance as set by the institute. In order to perform at their best and meet the institute’s standards, teachers need to be provided a conducive working environment wherein they can work freely without any hesitation and hindrances. A healthy interaction between employees and managers is must for the organisations to achieve its goals. According to Chandrasekar (2011) employees will be more productive resulting in enhanced profits provided organisations focus attention on working environment.

A working environment that improves organizational performance is the contribution of work engagement (Sonntag, 2008). Work engagement is an barometer of organizational
health as it significantly influences the performance of employees, job satisfaction, turnover intention, customer satisfaction (Harter, Schmidt, & Keyes, 2004). Vigour, dedication, and absorption are dimensions of work engagement (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Work engagement is a motivational concept that motivates the employee to accept challenges goals and succeed. The employee performance is directly related to work engagement.

Passion for work, Positive feelings about job as well as eager to go extra mile to accomplish the results are the basic ingredients of work engagement. True engagement is employees' willingness and ability to contribute to company success. The power of inherently feeling positive and being able to leverage that positive mindset derives an organization’s success whilst keeping them competitive (Luthans, 2002). An output of this organizational behaviour concept takes the authors to the idea of work engagement.

If employees are happy with the job and the factors such as managers, colleagues, and work infrastructure they will be more engaged (Joo & Lee, 2017). Happiness is positively realted to long life. Efforts of organisation to increase an individual’s extrinsic happiness such as wealth and other sensual pleasures and also intrinsic happiness helps the organisation in smooth operation (Tasnim, 2016). Employees happy at work are less likely to withdraw from work.

Kahn, (1990) developed the personal engagement and personal disengagement theory as, “the harnessing of organization members’ selves to their work roles. In engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances”. He concluded during a research in an architect firm that people occupy roles. The self-in-role calibrations determine personal engagement and personal disengagement. The behaviours affect individuals by way of physical involvement, cognitively and emotionally through interaction with others. Preferred-self is personal engagement (Kahn, 1990). The cognitive aspect of work engagement concerns employees’ beliefs about the organisation, working conditions & its leaders.

Positive work-related state of mind consists of three dimensions: vigour, dedication, and absorption are work engagement. Vigour means high levels of energy and mental resilience and persistence during engagement in work. Enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenges are the ingredients of dedication. Absorption means full involvement, engrossment in work (Wilmar B. Schaufeli, Marisa Salanova, 2002). The characteristics of an engaged employee as someone who feels involved, committed, passionate, and empowered, exhibit these feelings in work behaviour. From organizational perspective higher performance from employee is outcome of employee engagement.

In turnover model (Mobley, Horner, & Hollingsworth, 1978) defined turnover intention as intent of quitting job and an feeling to look for another job. Breach of relationship between
employees and the organization is the outcome of turnover intention to leave the organization.

Costs like recruiting, selection and training are directly related to employee turnover in any organization. Ability to compete in world market, productivity and performance gets disrupted due to employee turnover. Organisations use different ways and means to engage and ensure retention of current. Salary, Incentive and promotion, conducive environment at workplace some of the means. Turnover rates have been very high and costly in higher education institutions. According to Jo, (2008) 68 million dollars is spent as a result of turnover in the workplace and on an average an employee changes jobs seven times in his lifetime career. The study by Timms et al., (2015) revealed the importance of a supportive organisational culture in arresting or reducing employees’ intention to quit. The study also revealed that working long hours have a direct relationship with turnover intention.

![Fig.5: Conceptual model source](Alshammari, Ayed, Qaied, Al-mawali, & Matalqa, 2016)

Alshammari at el. (2016) explained his conceptual model as shown in Fig.5, where in organisation attractiveness, organisation support & pay satisfaction influence job satisfaction, job involvement & person-organisation fit that lead to employee turnover. In his study of 371 participant employees of various companies, analysis yielded significantly negative relationship between job satisfaction and turnover. He attributed this to job demand for talented resources.

Different scholars often have conflicting ideas about organisational engagement and commitment. Some argue that both concepts are closely related. More often than not, the terms “commitment” and “engagement” are often used interchangeably in the context of organisation management (Armstrong., 2006). Work engagement has been often been used as synonymous to job involvement. Job involvement indicates a state of self-engagement in the job. Work engagement has been equated with job engagement and employee.
2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Work Engagement

The review established that engagement is a concept of interest and unique. There is a lot of debate if work engagement is synonymous to job satisfaction, commitment, job involvement and workaholism, research has revealed it is different. A number of scales for measuring work engagement were studied. “Gallup Workplace Audit or Q12”, “Maslach Burnout Inventory”, “Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (OLBI)” and “Utrecht Work Engagement Scale” are well cited in research for measuring the work engagement. There are a number of factors researchers have found that affect work engagement. The review revealed that there are factors that predict work engagement, these factors can be classified as job characteristics, personal resources, interpersonal relations and organizational support. Some studies revealed that it is a multi-dimensional concept also her behavioural phenomena. Extant research studies revealed a job crafting as one of the factor affecting work engagement. Work-life balance i.e. employees carrying positive feeling from their work life to personal life and vice versa are more engaged in work. Review also revealed that Work engagement and organizational commitment are positively related, work engagement and work stress are inversely related. Engaged employees are more dedicated, creating and generate positive feeling among co-workers.

According to Oswald, Proto, & Sgroi, (2015), the study at Warwick University found that worker in neutral emotion control groups and in positive emotion treatment groups demonstrate greater productivity without significant declines in quality. In fact it was found that happiness at work is the pivot which leads to increase the productivity by 12%, while unhappy workers were 10% less productive. Positive emotions significantly predicted job satisfaction, work motivation and individual performance.

According to Andrew (2011), feeling pride develops sense of identity, recognition their relevant community and respect for the stature of that community. In addition, fairness, being valued, trust, meaning, utilization, Autonomy, positive emotion, work enrichment, work relationship, work-life-balance, workplace leadership, work reward and work recognition as other factors of workplace happiness. Employees treated fairly are happy at work that encourages them to put in extra effort or get more engaged resulting in success of the organisation.
According to War’s Vitamin model (Warr, 1987), the effect of job characteristics to increase the productivity of employees is similar to vitamins for nourishment of human body. However, the appropriate amount depends on the individual and many external factors, like location and the types of resources available.

Bakker & Demerouti, (2008) proposed Job Demands and Resources Model (JD-R Model). According to this model work engagement is a function of job resources and personal resources. Job resources like performance feedback and job control significantly contribute in accomplishing work goals and personal growth. As per the model, employees put in focused efforts due the resources energize. The factors or components of job demands are work overload, time & target pressure and bureaucracy.

According to Bakker, (2009) highly engaged workers are more positive and involved in their jobs, respect their co-workers, improve work efficacy of others, improve work-related skills, are highly active and exhibit in- and extra-role performance. In a study on happiness, work engagement among supports staff in South Africa, researcher concluded there is positive relationship between happiness at work and work engagement (Field & Buitendach, 2011).

2.2 Turnover Intention:

Turnover intention increases and tenure get shorter of employees if they are not satisfied with their job and there is lack of trust between organisation and employees (Jeffrey, 2007). Turnover is classified as voluntary turnover and involuntary turnover. When employee is sacked or fired by employer it is said to be involuntary turnover, on the other hand voluntary turnover is when the employees quit willingly.

Research on turnover intention highlights the contribution of both individual and workplace characteristics. At the level of the individual the two strongest predictors of turnover intention are job satisfaction and organizational commitment. According to Mamun & Hasan, (2017), younger and qualified employees are less satisfaction in their jobs and lower commitment to the organization due to negative attitudes are subjects of turnover intention.

In a study of private sector employees in Malaysia, Chan Yin-Fah, Sok Foon, & Chee-Leong (2010) observed turnover intention is higher among younger employees compared to older employees and younger employees are less stressed than the older employees. The study of college teachers in Malaysia by Jusoh (2012) revealed negative relationship between transformational and transactional leaderships and turnover intention.

According to Chris Perryer, Catherine Jordan, Ian Firns (2010) the study conducted at Western Australian and South Australian employees (436) of a Federal Government organisation revealed significant relationship between affective commitment and turnover
intention. This study also provided evidence of moderating role between perceived organisation support and affective commitment. The scales used for Organizational commitment was measured using the scale developed by (Jaros, 1987) and three items adapted from the “Michigan Organizational Assessment Questionnaire” was used for turnover intention.

In a study of 228 employees working in diverse industries Gupta & Shaheen, (2017) stated work engagement has a negatively related to turnover intention. According to Bothma, (2011), there is significant cost and adverse consequences for the organisation due to turnover intention. Withdrawal from a company because employee can no longer identify with the work is an important dependable variable. Engaged employees get attached to job that leads to reduced intention to leave the organisation. A study of part-time employed students revealed that emotional exhaustion was not a significant predictor of turnover intention. Engagement significantly predicted turnover intention.

A hierarchical model of engagement factors as shown in Fig. 3 defines five level of engagement starting with “Pay, working hours “ at the lowest level to “Learning and development” to “Promotion Opportunities” to “Leadership, trust & respect” to ultimately “Meaning of work” at the top level. This model describes the impact each level will have on the attraction, engagement and intention to quit (Penna, 2006). “Meaning of work” is like self-actualisation in Maslow’s motivational model. At this level employee has a sense of fulfilment

![Image](image.png)

**Fig.3: Penna’s hierarchical model source Bhatla (2011)**

According to Hewitt (1979) drivers of engagement (Fig. 4) are divided in two categories namely “Foundation” and “differentiators”. Foundation consists of the “person basic” that include Benefits, job security, Safety, work engagement & work-life balance, “The work”
consists of collaboration, empowerment or autonomy & work task and “company practices”. Differentiators addresses Brand, Leadership and Performance. Aon defines engagement as “The psychological state and behavioural outcomes that lead to better performance. Employee performance and well-being that directly correlates to positive and tangible business outcomes”.

![The Aon Hewitt Employee Engagement Model](image)

**Fig. 4: The Aon Hewitt Employee Engagement Model (Aon Hewitt, 2015)**

Involvement in decision making is addressed by “feeling valued and involved” in the first dimension of Drivers of Employee Engagement model, the degree of freedom employees feel to express ideas and managers listen to these ideas, the extent to which the organization is concerned for employees’ health and well-being (Robinson D, Perryman S, 2004).

Based on the review of 265 abstracts, forty two antecedents were identified at individual and organisational level that impact on the level of employee engagement (Wollard & Shuck, 2011). These are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Individual-level and organizational-level antecedents of employee engagement**
Study done in the Northern Cyprus 5-star hotels revealed that training and rewards do not significantly influence work engagement and empowerment boost work engagement. Customer orientation acts as a moderator between challenge stressors and work engagement and turnover intention (Babakus, Yavas, & Karatepe, 2017).

**Conclusion and Future Scope**

The extant literature throws light on work engagement, job involvement, job embeddedness and well-being but is silent on the inter relationship between work engagement and turnover intention. After review of literature it is found that a major gap exists in context to co-relation in both the factors. Hardly any study has been conducted on the two constructs namely work engagement and turnover intention. Hence the present study proposes to describe the relationship between the identified variables. In order to achieve the stated objectives, the research instruments needed, can be produced after analysing the information requirements.

**References**


