EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT: A CRITICAL REVIEW OF LITERATURE

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ABSTRACT: *This article contributes to employee engagement literature by clarifying what exactly engagement is; how it can be measured, and the different theories that support in conceptualization of employee engagement construct. This article also includes the expected benefits that can be enjoyed by employees and the organization. With claims that disengagement of employees costs the organization in many ways, this article summarizes the existing literature on employee engagement as defined by academicians and by the practitioners. Further objective of this article is to examine the current state of employee engagement and provide recommendations for future research.*

Keywords: employee engagement; outcomes; performance; relationship.

INTRODUCTION

From past two decades, employee engagement is gaining popularity in various organizations. Researches show that there is a positive correlation between employee engagement and organizational performance as employee engagement predicts employee outcomes, organizational success, and financial performance (Bates, 2004, Baumruk, 2004, Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002; Richman, 2006). The purpose of this review is to provide a better understanding of employee engagement and to add further knowledge in the existing literature of employee engagement.

This review is academic in nature and evaluates literature articles gathered from various journals like the *Academy of Management Journal*, *Human Resources Development Review* and those published by Emerald, Springer, Proquest. However, in this review only those articles have been included that were peer reviewed and those that specifically deal with the term "employee engagement." The review will mainly cover the following areas:

- Meaning of engagement
- How it is different from other constructs?
- Evolution of the concept of employee engagement
- What employee engagement is?
    - as defined by academicians
    - as defined by practitioners
- Theories of employee engagement
- Measures of employee engagement
- Conclusion
- Future scope for research

It is interesting to note that what has been written about employee engagement in its initial period can be found in the practitioner literature and consulting firms. As noted by Robinson, Perryman, and Hayday (2004), there has been surprisingly little academic and empirical research in this area. But slowly and gradually employee engagement is capturing the attention in academic context also. Different concepts of employee engagement have been conceptualized for more than two decades. Although there is much

interest in employee engagement, there is also much confusion. Various definitions of employee engagement are not consistent and it has been operationalized and measured in many ways. Nevertheless, there is one common factor in the diverse definitions of employee engagement, that is, it has a positive impact for the employees and the organizations as shown by both academicians and practitioners. Most of the literature employs a multidimensional approach to defining employee engagement, where the definition encapsulates several elements required to achieve true engagement.

Literal Meaning of Engagement

The *Oxford English Dictionary* (2011) defined engagement as: "a formal agreement to get married, an appointment, a fight or battle between armed forces, the action of engaging or being engaged."The *Cambridge Dictionary* (2011) defined engagement as: "an agreement to marry someone."

These definitions are interesting as they clearly mention engagement as a formal agreement to get married, meaning putting together both the mind and the heart and then forming a relationship and this relationship prevails for a longer term because it is based on the emotions, and if emotions are not present there will be a break up in the relationship. A marriage takes place when there is an engagement with involvement of mind and heart with your partner. Now this can also be applied to the organizational context as engaging means putting the mind and the heart to have long-term partnership between the employees and the employers. As Campbell (1989) stated, "the mission (or goal) is an issue which involved both the culture (heart) and the strategy (minds) of the organization, requiring commitment and enthusiasm among employees."

Employee Engagement and Other Constructs

There is a great deal of confusion between the established constructs and employee engagement in the organizational behaviors literature, but there are evidences which show the difference between the employee engagement and other constructs. It appears that there are significant and sufficient grounds for arguing that engagement is related to, but distinct from, other constructs in organizational behaviors (Saks, 2006). Robinson et al. (2004) state that

"*... engagement contains many of the elements of both commitment and OCB but is by no means a perfect match with either. In addition, neither commitment nor OCB reflects sufficiently two aspects of engagement – its two-way nature, and the extent to which engaged employees are expected to have an element of business awareness.*"

Table 1- DIFFERENCE BETWEEN EE AND OTHER CONSTRUCTS

• Organizational commitment It refers to a person's attitude and attachment toward their organization.	• Employee engagement It is not merely an attitude; it is the degree to which an individual is attentive to their work and absorbed in the performance of their role.
• Organizational citizenship behavior It involves the voluntary and informal behaviors that can help coworkers and the organization.	• Employee engagement It is focused on one's formal role performance rather than voluntary behavior.
• Job involvement It is defined as a cognitive or belief of psychological identification.	• Employee engagement It also encompasses emotions and behaviors. It is concerned more with how an individual is emotionally attached.

• Flow It is primarily the cognitive involvement of the individual in an activity on a momentary basis and is defined as the holistic sensation that people feel when they act with total involvement.	• Employee engagement It is for longer term and more holistic involvement in work task.

Although employee engagement shares strong characteristics with each concept, it appears that employee engagement is more than commitment and/or OCB on their own. Rafferty et al. (2005) draws the distinction on the basis that employee engagement is a two-way mutual process between the employee and the organization. In Sharpley's (as cited in Harrad, 2006) definition of engagement there must be a mutual feeling of support between the employee and the organization. According to Frank, Finnegan, and Taylor (2004), employee engagement is the amount of discretionary effort exhibited by employees in their jobs. Employee engagement creates mutually beneficial solutions to the challenges the organizations and the employees face. However, engagement has hints of a new wine that provide (Christian, Garza, & Slaughter, 2011) "incremental validity over job attitudes in predicting performance." Further Robinson and Hayday (2003) report that past research focused on employee satisfaction, motivational approaches and commitment, whereas Employee Engagement encompasses all of these including an individual's emotive states. This therefore, distinguishes Employee Engagement from job satisfaction surveys due to the emphasis placed on psychological experience (emotions) of individuals within the work contexts.

Evolution of the Concept of Employee Engagement

The theoretical apparatus for employee engagement has been presented by Kahn (1990) illustrating how "psychological experiences of work and work contexts shape the processes of people presenting and absenting themselves during task performances." Kahn grounded his conceptual framework in empirical and existing theoretical frameworks. Conceptually, Kahn (1990) started with Goffman's work (1961), who suggested that "people's attachment and detachment to their roles varies." However, Kahn explains that Goffman's work focused on fleeting face-to-face encounters, while a different concept was needed to fit organizational life, which is *employee engagement* "ongoing, emotionally charged, and psychologically complex" (Diamond & Allcorn, 1985).

To gain further understanding of varying levels of attachment individuals expressed toward their roles, Kahn examined several disciplines: "psychologists (Freud, 1922), sociologists (Goffman, 1961; Merton, 1957), and group theorists (Bion, 1961; Slater, 1966; Smith & Berg, 1987) have documented the idea that people are inherently ambivalent about being members of ongoing groups and systems" and "seek to protect themselves from both isolation and engulfment by alternately pulling away from and moving towards their memberships. These pulls and pushes are people's calibrations of self-in-role, enabling them to cope with both internal ambivalences and external conditions" (Kahn, 1990). The terms Kahn uses to describe these calibrations of self-in-role are personal engagement and personal disengagement. "They refer to the behaviors by which people bring in or leave out their personal selves during work role performances" (Khan, 1990). These terms developed by Kahn integrate previous ideas that people need self-expression and self-employment in their work lives as a matter of course (Alderfer, 1972; Maslow, 1954). In his research, Kahn analyzed each moment of engagement as if there were a contract between person and the role (cf. Schein, 1970).

DEFINING ENGAGEMENT: WHAT EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT IS?

Employee Engagement as defined by academicians

The review of literature presents views on employee engagement as presented by different researchers. The different approaches highlight an emerging trend toward a more active role of employee engagement. Also defined active role of employee engagement toward the Organizations. Engagement mainly focuses on

positive psychology of employees which aims to enhance employee's positive work experiences. Positive psychology means "the scientific study of human strengths and optimal functioning." It is positive in terms of both the outcomes and interventions. So the aim is to help people to lead to full and rich lives, building on their own personal strengths, interests, and competencies. This may be viewed in opposition to traditional psychology, which is often regarded as having a focus on mental illness instead of mental wellness (Bakker, Schaufeli, Leiter, & Taris, 2008; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010).

The concept of employee engagement originated in academic literature in the 1990s with the work of Kahn (1990), who conceptualized employee engagement in terms of employees who put a great amount of effort into their work because they feel some type of identification with the work itself or the work roles. He defines employee engagement as "harnessing of organizational member's selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances." Kahn also defines that the concept of employee engagement is a multi-faceted construct. He further defines personal disengagement as "the uncoupling of selves from work roles, in disengagement, people withdraw and defend themselves physically, cognitively, or emotionally during role performances." Thus, according to Kahn (1990, 1992) engagement means to be psychologically present when occupying and performing an organizational role. Kahn (1992) proposed that engagement leads to both individual outcomes (i.e., the quality of people's work and their own experiences of doing that work) as well as organizational-level outcomes (i.e., the growth and productivity of organizations). The particular salient feature in this definition is the involvement of self in the work roles.
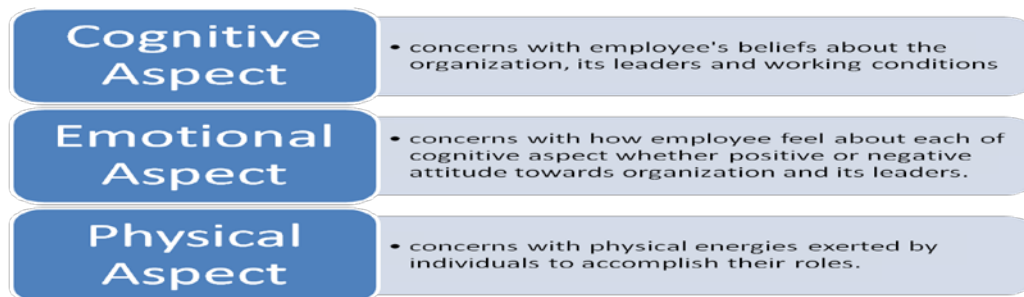
Fig 1. THE THREE ASPECTS OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT (as defined by Kahn, 1990).

Further, Truss et al. (2006) defines employee engagement simply as "passion for work" and 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. Engagement is defined as a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption (Figure 2) (Schaufeli, Bakker, & Salanova, 2006). This means that engaged employees have a sense of energetic and effective connection with their work activities.

Fig 2. ENGAGEMENT AS DEFINED BY SCHAUFELI et al. (2006)

Rothbard (2001) derived another perspective of employee engagement from the work of Kahn and defines employee engagement as psychological presence, but goes further to state that it involves two critical components: attention and absorption. Attention refers to "cognitive availability and the amount of time one spends thinking about a role" whereas absorption "means being engaged in a role and refers to the intensity of one's focus on a role."As noted by Nelson and Simmons (2003), employee engagement has been defined more completely as when employees feel positive emotions toward their work, find their work to be personally meaningful, consider their work could to be manageable, and have hope about the future of their work. May, Gilson, and Harter (2004) further defined to include a refined three-dimensional concept of work engagement as shown in Figure 3.

Fig 3. THREE COMPONENTS OF WORK ENGAGEMENT

The three components are cognitive component (e.g., "Performing my job is so absorbing that I forget about everything else"), emotional component (e.g., "I really put my heart into my job"), and physical component (e.g., "I exert a lot of energy performing my job"). Furthermore, as studied by Baumruk (2004), Richman (2006), Shaw (2005), most often employee engagement has been defined as emotional and intellectual commitment to the organization. As Harter et al. (2002) examines, there is a general belief that there is a connection between employee engagement as an individual-level construct and as business results.

Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) studied that engaged employees are likely to have a greater attachment to their organization and a lower tendency to leave their organization. Engagement entails the active use of emotions and behaviors, in addition to cognitions. Further they found that engagement was negatively related to turnover intention and mediated the relationship between job resources and turnover intention (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004; Sonnentag, 2003) Engagement has been found to be positively related to organizational commitment and negatively related to intention to quit and is believed to also be related to job performance and extra role behavior. Britt, Adler, and Bartone (2001) found that engagement is meaningful work that can lead to perceived benefits from the work. Similarly, Schmidt (2004) also defines engagement as bringing satisfaction and commitment together. While satisfaction addresses more of an emotional or attitudinal element, commitment brings in the motivational and physical elements. He also contends that while satisfaction and commitment are the two key elements of engagement, neither one alone is enough to guarantee engagement.

Right Management (2006) defines true engagement as every person in the organization understanding and being committed to the success of the business strategy and that this goes beyond more than just simple job satisfaction and incorporates aspects of commitment, pride, and advocacy about the organizations products and proud while the one is in the organization to manage communication effectively to involve employees and align them with the organization, this clearly requires input and feedback from employee as well to make the process work. It is a win–win situation for both employee and employer. Employees who are mentally and emotionally (Czarnowsky, 2008) invested in their work and in contributing to their employer's success are defined as engaged. For much of the people who are tied up in their working lives

(Chalofsky & Krishna, 2009), employee engagement suggests that work can be a place of motivation, commitment, success, and even self-actualization. Macey, Schneider, Barbera, and Young (2009) provide a working definition of engagement as the employee's sense of purpose and focused energy that is evident to others through the display of personal initiative, adaptability, effort, and persistence directed toward the organizational goals. In much of the literature the definition of engagement is illustrated as the behavior of good-practice employers and the characteristics of engaged employees. Gebauer and Lowman (2009) describe employee engagement as having a deep and broad connection with the company that results in the willingness to go above and beyond what is expected to help the company succeed; they also offer a framework for building engagement based on "knowing growing, inspiring, evolving, and rewarding employees and within that framework recommend actions for senior leaders, managers, human resources professionals, and employees themselves." Mone and London (2009), based on a limited study, define an engaged employee as someone who feels involved, committed, passionate, and empowered and demonstrates those feelings in work behavior. Further, McCashland (1999) defined employee engagement as commitment or engagement – an emotional outcome to the employee resulting from the critical components of the workplace. As Macey and Schneider (2008) noted, "Common to these definitions is the notion that Employee Engagement is a desirable condition, has an organizational purpose, and connotes involvement, commitment, passion, enthusiasm, focused effort, and energy so it has both attitudinal and behavioral components." According to Schaufeli and Bakker (2010), there is no universal consensus on how the concept of work engagement should be defined. At first glance, it seems possible to identify a distinction between definitions of work engagement on the grounds of academic research and business. More recently, employee engagement has been defined (Shuck & Wollard, 2010) in the HRD literature as "an individual employee's cognitive, emotional, and behavioral state directed toward desired organizational outcomes."

Employee engagement has been defined as "a positive, two-way relationship between employee and their organization where both parties are aware of their own and the other's needs, and support each other to fulfill these needs." Engaged employees and organizations go the extra mile and both reap mutual benefits (Daniel, 2004). Similarly, employee engagement has also been defined as "the bond employees have with their organization, that when employees really care about the business, they are more likely to go the extra mile" (Lanphear, 2004). It is important to keep in mind that employee engagement is not just purely driven by employees' personal needs but also by the social needs accomplished by the organization. This shows that employee engagement is a two-way process but so far researches have been conducted only on one part, that is, employee but not the other way, that is, organization engagement toward its employees. Further research is required to define the two-way nature of employee engagement.

Employee Engagement as Defined by Practitioners

Leading international business consulting companies, for example, the Gallup Organization (2004), Towers Perrin, International Survey Research (ISR, 2004), CIPD (2005), Kenexea, and many others, have developed their own proprietary survey tools and processes for measuring employee engagement that address the similar themes. Studies by the Gallup Organization showed that about 20% of US employees are disengaged, 54% are neutral about their work, and 26% are actively engaged (Fleming, Coffman, & Harter, 2005). It has also been estimated that due to disengagement in the United States, workforce has cost more than $300 billion in lost productivity alone. The most comprehensive studies in this area were done by Towers Perrin (2003, 2005, 2007). The results of this study have been compiled in a book (Gebauer & Lowman, 2009). The survey used data collected from more than 85,000 employees from 16 countries. This study found that overall 24% of employees worldwide were disengaged, 62% of employees were moderately engaged, and only 14% of employees were considered to be highly engaged (Towers Perrin, 2006). This study also showed, between different countries, a wide range in percentage of their workforce who were highly engaged, with Mexico (40%) and Brazil (31%) being on the higher end, the United States (21%) and Canada (17%) in the middle, and Europe (11%) and Asia (7%) at the lower end. The Gallup Organization found critical links between employee engagement, customer loyalty, business growth, and profitability. The Gallup Organization cites countless examples in its literature of such results of increased

corporate profitability due to increased employee engagement, and is helping a great many companies worldwide to improve their performance through improvement in employee engagement. The Gallup Organization describes three levels of engagement:

- Engaged: Employees who work with passion and feel a profound connection to their organization. They drive innovation and move the organization forward.
- Not engaged: Employees who attend and participate at work but are timeserving and put no passion or energy into their work.
- Disengaged: Employees who are unhappy at work and who act out their unhappiness at work.

The ISR firm also cites many examples of increased profit after increasing employee engagement for companies. The ISR examined the relationship between different levels of employee engagement and corporate financial performance, measured by changes in operating margins and changes in net profit margins. Comparing high-engagement to low-engagement companies over a 3-year period, the financial differences were substantial. ISR has found convincing evidence that organizations can only reach their full potential by emotionally engaging employees and customers (ISR, 2005). CIPD (2006a) defines employee engagement as a combination of commitment to the organization and its value, plus a willingness to help out colleagues. CIPD (2006b) defines engagement in terms of three dimensions of employee engagement:

- Emotional engagement – being involved emotionally in one's work.
- Cognitive engagement – focusing very hard while at work.
- Physical engagement – being willing to "go the extra mile" for your employer.

Theoretical Rationale for Explaining Employee Engagement

The focus of this section is on different theories that provide support for different definitions of employee engagement.

Psychological presence

The first theory in academic literature to define employee engagement was propounded by Kahn. He found three conditions for the engagement or disengagement of employees. According to him, people ask three basic questions related to engagement or disengagement:

(i)   How **meaningful** is it for me to bring myself into this performance?
(ii) How **safe** is it to do so?
(iii) How **available** am I to do so?

In Kahn's conceptualization, meaningfulness variable completed a circular model where employees added value and significance to the work they were doing as well as received feedback about their value and significance to an organization. Safety revolved around each employee's need to trust their working environment cognitively, emotionally, and behaviorally as well as the need to reasonably understand what was expected of them at work (i.e., job description, contingency plans, feedback from a supervisor, etc.). Tangibly, the availability of resources could be understood as items such as supplies, sufficient budget, and manpower to complete a task (Harter et al., 2002; Wagner & Harter, 2006). Intangibly, availability of resources could be understood as opportunities for learning and skill development (Czarnowsky, 2008), a reasonable degree of job fit (Resick et al., 2007), and commitment to the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1997). He found that workers were more engaged at work in those situations that offered them more psychological meaningfulness and psychological safety, and when they were more psychologically available.
Further, Kahn also showed the predictors of meaningfulness, safety, and availability:

(i)   Meaningfulness – job enrichment and role fitness

(ii) Safety – rewarding coworkers and supportive supervisor relations
(iii) Availability – resources were a positive predictor of availability.

However, meaningfulness was found to have the strongest relation to different employee outcomes in terms of engagement. Meaning of work is based on people's perception linked to their levels of engagement and ultimately performance. Kahn (1990, 1992) argued that engagement culminates from a state called psychological presence – a state in which the authentic, true facets of the self can be fully expressed. In this state, individuals do not need to curb their beliefs, values, thoughts, feelings, inclinations, and relationships. All of these facets of themselves are manifested in the behavior at work. May et al. (2004) were the first to publish empirical research testing the Kahn's conceptualization of employee engagement. A study was conducted to examine the determinants of engagement. Consistent with these propositions, meaningfulness, psychological safety, and availability were all related to engagement, as demonstrated by a structural equation model.

Rich, Lepine, and Crawford (2010) also confirmed this theory. In particular, in their study, participants completed measures that represent the extent to which they feel the work aligns to their values, called value congruence, and their organization supports employees. Furthermore, a measure of core self-evaluations, comprising self-esteem, self-efficacy, emotional stability, and locus of control, was also administered. In addition, they completed the various measures of engagement. Value congruence, perceived organizational support, and core self-evaluations were indeed associated with engagement. These findings confirm the three antecedents of engagement that Kahn (1990, 1992) differentiated: meaningfulness, safety, and availability. Value congruence presumably represents the extent to which the job seems meaningful. That is, if individuals need to engage in roles that align with their aspirations and values, they perceive the job as more inviting, significant, and important. Second, perceived organizational support, arguably, represents the extent to which the environment is safe. That is, when the organization is supportive, individuals feel they are trusted and sense their well-being is respected. Third, core self-evaluations represent confidence, increasing the likelihood that individuals feel willing and prepared to invest themselves into the role called availability.

Employee Engagement and Burnout

Maslach, Schaufelli, and Leiter's (2001) work was the first major work on employee engagement after Kahn (1990) and is one of the two early developmental theories on employee engagement. Maslach et al. (2001) define employee engagement as the opposite or positive antitheses of burnout. Engagement is characterized by energy, involvement, and efficacy, which are the direct opposite of the three burnout dimensions of exhaustion, cynicism, and inefficacy. Exhaustion was defined as "being overextended and depleted of one's emotional and physical resources" and cynicism was defined as "a negative, callous, or an excessively detached response to various aspects of the job." Whereas ineffectiveness was understood to be the direct result of exhaustion and cynicism and was defined as feelings of incompetence and lack of achievement and productivity at work. Research on burnout and engagement has found that core dimensions of burnout (exhaustion and cynicism) and engagement (vigor and dedication) are opposites of each other (Gonzalez-Roma, Schaufeli, Bakker, and Lloret, 2006). Moreover, engagement was operationalized as the reverse of scores on the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI; Maslach & Leiter, 1997)

According to Maslach et al., six areas of work-life lead to either burnout or engagement:

- Workload
- Control
- Rewards and recognitions
- Community and social support
- Perceived fairness
- Values

However, job engagement relates to
- Sustainable workload
- Feeling of choice and control
- Appropriate recognition and rewards
- A supportive work community
- Fairness and justice
- Meaningful and valued work

Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Roma, and Bakker (2002) tested the Maslach et al.'s (2001) framework using the MBI and defined a slightly different dimension of engagement. Schaufeli et al. (2002) defined engagement "as a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption" and renamed the state of engagement (Kahn, 1990) as work engagement. Shirom (2003) examined the Maslach et al.'s (2001) and Schaufeli et al. (2002) models of engagement and proposed that engagement was a separate psychological state. He proposed several research questions around the psychological state of vigor.

Social Exchange Theory (SET)

Social exchange theory (SET), first promulgated by Emerson (1976), has been applied by Saks (2006) to explain the sources of engagement. According to SET, as individuals interact over time, they experience the need to reciprocate the support and assistance of the other person, called the norm of reciprocity (see Blau, 1983). For example, if one person helps a friend, this friend will experience an obligation to reciprocate at some time in the future, offering a form of assistance that is equal in magnitude. If this norm of reciprocity is fulfilled, a trusting and loyal relationship evolves (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Saks (2006) maintained that engagement in employees might represent a form of obligation to the organization. That is, if organizations offer support to their employees, these individuals feel obliged to become cognitively, emotionally, and physically engaged in their work role. They feel they should direct constructive behaviors, such as positive attitudes, toward the organization. Consistent with this perspective, when organizations do offer support and resources, employees do indeed report elevated levels of engagement (for a review see Saks, 2006).

In summary, SET provides a theoretical foundation to explain why employees choose to become more or less engaged in their work and organization. The condition of engagement in both Kahn's (1990) and Maslach et al.'s (2001) model can be considered economic and socio-emotional resources within Social Cognitive Theory.

Social Cognitive Theory (SCT)

Social cognitive theory (SCT) is the "belief in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainment." Quite interestingly, it seems that self-efficacy may precede as well as follow engagement. Self-efficacy fuels engagements, which in turn increase efficacy beliefs and so on. There is a positive correlation between self-efficacy and employee engagement (Bandura, 1997). Luthans and Peterson (2002) examined the relationship between employee engagement and managers' self-efficacy. Results indicated that managers' self-efficacy had a positive relationship with employee engagement. Further research can be done in this as employee engagement also promotes the employees' self-efficacy.

The Job Demands–Resources Model

The job demands–resources model assumes that job demands, such as elevated levels of pressure, undue expectations, and conflicting requirements, tend to provoke burnout. In this context, job demands represent

many facets of a role that demands sustained effort to accommodate or withstand difficulties. The effort that needs to be applied to accommodate these demands depletes energy, culminating in exhaustion (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).

In contrast, job resources, including autonomy, support, and feedback, can all foster engagement as well as mitigate the adverse consequences of undue job demands (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). By definition, resources facilitate work goals, curb job demands, or stimulate growth. Specifically, these resources can facilitate learning or elevate effort, which can temper the exhaustion that demands tend to provoke. Many studies have demonstrated that job resources promote engagement. As Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) demonstrated, constructive feedback, social support, and coaching from supervisors – all exemplars of job resources – were positively associated with three dimensions of engagement: vigor, dedication, and absorption. Similarly, in another study, supervisor support, appreciation, information, job control, innovation, and climate – six potential resources – were also related to engagement (Bakker, Hakanen, Demerouti, & Xanthopoulou, 2007). Other studies have also shown that job resources temper the effect of job demands on burnout. Specifically, as Bakker, Demerouti, and Euwema (2005) showed, job demands, such as work overload, emotional demands, and conflict between work and home responsibilities, usually culminate in exhaustion and cynicism. This relationship, however, diminished when resources, like autonomy, feedback, and support, were available. Thus, resources seemed to mitigate the deleterious consequences of demanding environments. Mauno, Kinnunen, and Ruokolainen (2007) demonstrated that resources at one time predict subsequent improvements in engagement. Resources such as current levels of job control predicted future engagement after controlling current engagement. This study verified that resources can affect subsequent engagement rather than merely represent the reverse direction of causality.

MEASURES OF ENGAGEMENT

Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES)

A measure that was constructed and validated by Schaufeli et al. (2002), called the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES), is often administered to assess engagement. They also proposed that engagement is a multidimensional construct consisting three dimensions. Employee engagement is operationalized with UWES, a self-reporting instrument that includes three dimensions:

(a) Vigor   (b) dedication (c) absorption

The original UWES (UWES-17) includes 17 items based on aforementioned three dimensions. The first subscale, vigor, is represented by six items and reflects elevated levels of energy, resilience, and persistence. A sample item is "I can continue working for very long periods at a time." The second subscale, dedication, is also represented by five items and corresponds to a sense of purpose, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge at work. A typical item is "My job inspires me." The third subscale, absorption, is represented by six items, the extent to which individuals are absorbed in their work. The UWES-17 has encouraging psychometric features. In addition to the UWES-17, a shortened version of nine items (the UWES-9) with three subscales of three items each shows similar encouraging psychometric features. It has also been developed by Schaufeli et al. (2006). Vigor is represented by three items, such as "At my work I feel bursting with energy." Dedication is represented by three items, such as "When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work." Finally, absorption is represented by three items, including "I am immersed in my work." Currently, 21 language versions are available and an international database exists that includes engagement records of nearly 80,000 employees. The test scores of these scales can be used as an indicator of employee engagement.

These three dimensions of engagement – vigor, dedication, and absorption – are similar to the facets of some other measures. May et al. (2004), for example, developed a measure that distinguishes three facets.

The first facet, physical engagement, represented by items like "I exert a lot of energy performing my job," is similar to vigor. The second facet, emotional engagement, exemplified by questions like "I really put my heart into my job," seems to overlap with dedication. The third facet, cognitive engagement, as illustrated by items like "Performing my job is so absorbing that I forget about everything else," corresponds to absorption.

Measures Derived from the Work of Kahn

Rich et al. (2010) developed a measure of engagement that more explicitly assesses the three dimensions of engagement that were defined by Kahn (1990, 1992): the investment of physical, emotional, and cognitive energy into the task at work. First, to represent physical engagement, Rich et al. (2010) adapted items from a measure of work intensity, developed by Brown and Leigh (1996). This subscale comprised six items, such as "I work with intensity on my job." Second, to represent emotional engagement, a set of items were derived from a measure that was utilized by Russell and Barrett (1999), entailing two dimensions: positive or pleasant feelings and a sense of energy or activation. In particular, each item refers to the extent to which individuals perceive their job as both pleasant and energizing. This subscale also comprised six items, such as "I am excited about my job."

Third, to represent cognitive engagement, items developed by Rothbard (2001) were adapted to assess the degree to which individuals felt both focused as well as engrossed in their work. One example of these six items is "At work, I am absorbed by my job."

Gallup Work Audit (GWA)

The employee engagement can be measured by The Gallup Work Audit (GWA) consisting of 12 questions such as: "Do I know what is expected of me at work?"; "At work, do I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day?"; and "At work, have I had the opportunities to learn and grow?." These GWA questions were derived through thousands of focus groups. The questions with a five-point Likert scale were then administered to over a million employees and factor analyzed to derive the 12 questions. They were then subjected to confirmatory analyses.

CONCLUSION

Research on employee engagement is scarce in academic context and researchers have conceptualized the concept differently or measured different aspects of it differently. Despite the differences in conceptualization and its measurement, the available studies indicate that employee engagement is associated with positive outcomes. As a result, many organizations share the belief that in an evolving international free-agent talent market, where knowledge is becoming an organizational commodity (Kroth & Keeler, 2009), employee engagement is an undeniable dominant source of competitive advantage at all levels (Schwartz, 2011).

FUTURE SCOPE FOR RESEARCH

Although several studies have explored the impact of employee engagement but what is the appropriate model for organizations still remains an unsettled issue. However, this study could assist researchers in their efforts to find ways to contribute in the existing literature.

The existing research in this area is in the developed economies and little examination is done in emerging economies. As research horizon is now expanding to all over world, the researches done in developed economies cannot be generalized to other economies. Further, research can be done in developing an employee engagement model which can be applied for different types of industry or there must be specific

model for specific type of industry. However, the construct still remains underdeveloped in (Shuck & Reio, 2011) the HRD landscape and further research can be done to close the gap between the theory and practice. Further, research can also be conducted on specific variables such as the role of work values, organizational culture, and the support of top management while preparing the employee engagement model. This will help to enhance the theoretical completeness to the employee engagement literature.

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