

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT: A STUDY OF HPSEB EMPLOYEES

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ABSTRACT

Employee engagement has become an important determinant of the success of the organisations in the terms of quality, efficiency, productivity, etc. It has become important for the organisations to create a work culture where the employees become passionate, absorbed and committed for their work and contribute whole heartedly towards the organisational goals. The present study has investigated the level of engagement among the employees towards the job and the organisation. The study has also examined the difference in level of engagement among the employees with respect to demographic variables. Further the relationship between antecedents of employee engagement and job and organisation engagement has been studied. The study has been conducted in the Himachal Pradesh State Electricity Board (Hamirpur), Himachal Pradesh and opinions have been collected from 149 respondents. The results revealed higher level of job and organisation engagement among the employees. The mean difference has been found to be significant only in case of educational qualification for both job as well as organisation engagement and in case of income for job engagement only. Further the factors such as job characteristics, perceived organisational support and perceived supervisors' support has shown significant positive correlation with the job as well as organisation engagement. The implications of the study have been discussed.

Keywords: *autonomy, demographics, engagement, feedback, financial success, job characteristics, supervisor' support*

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INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

The present organizations are complex, heterogeneous and boundaryless made up of diverse workforce comprising workgroups from different cultures, races, nations, regions and religion. Every individual has its own abilities, feelings, knowledge, skills, perceptions and attitudes. Today the companies are competing for talent people who have high performance and high competence in workplace. There is lot of expectations not only from the employees but vice versa. The main challenge for the HR practitioners is not only to effectively manage this diverse workforce but engage them in work, create feeling of belongingness, so that they wholeheartedly contribute towards the attainment of goals, and stay in the organizations for longer.

In recent years, there has been a great deal of interest in employee engagement. Kahn (1990) proposed that in order for individuals to fully engage with their job, three psychological conditions must be met in the work environment: meaningfulness (workers feeling that their job tasks are worthwhile), safety (feeling as though the work environment is one of trust and supportiveness), and availability (workers having the physical, emotional, and psychological means to engage in their job tasks at any given moment). Thus according to Kahn (1990, 1992), engagement means to be psychologically present when occupying and performing an organizational role. The fact that active use of emotions in addition to the simple use of cognition while completing work tasks strengthens employee engagement was also suggested by (May, Gilson, & Harter, 2004). Rothbard (2001) has added two components i.e. attention and absorption which entails employee engagement where attention referred to “cognitive ability and the amount of time one spend thinking about a role” while absorption “means being engrossed in a role and refers to the intensity of one’s focus on a role.” (Mone and London, 2010) defined employee engagement as “a condition of employee who feels involved, committed, passionate, and empowered and demonstrates those feelings in work behaviour”. Engagement means an individual’s sense of purpose and focused energy, evident to others in the display of personal initiative, adaptability, effort, and persistence directed toward organizational goals (Macey et al., 2009). In one of the studies it was reported that fully engaged workers are those who are physically energized,

emotionally connected, mentally focused, and feel aligned with the purpose of the agency (Loehr & Schwartz, 2003).

The employees who are more engaged form a bond with the organisation. A growing body of research has brought forward that engaged workers has brought benefits to the organisations in terms of increased efficiency, higher levels of customer satisfaction, higher productivity, and lower turnover rates (Buhler, 2006), customer satisfaction (Salanova et al 2005), financial returns (Xanthopoulou et al 2008), organizational success, and financial performance (Bates 2004; Baumruk 2004; Harter et al. 2002), customer satisfaction and loyalty, profitability, productivity, employee turnover, and safety ((Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes 2002), employees who are more productive, profitable, safer, healthier, less likely to turnover, less likely to be absent, and more willing to engage in discretionary efforts (Buchanan, 2004; Fleming and Asplund 2007; Wagner and Harter 2006). Further studies have shown that engaged employees average higher customer satisfaction ratings and generate increased revenue (Vance 2006; Wagner and Harter 2006), discretionary efforts and lesser intention to turnover (Shuck, 2010), reduced turnover (Robertson and Markwick, 2009). A direct employee engagement–profit linkage (Ketter, 2008) has been suggested in one of the studies.

The studies have reported that employee engagement is declining (Bates, 2004). A survey conducted by DDI observed that only 19 percent of the employees were noted to be highly engaged (Wellins, et al). The declining engagement among the employees is a matter of serious concern which turns the attention of researchers, practitioners and academicians to examine and study the factors that determine employee engagement.

Some of the studies have pointed that the engagement has a lot to do with how employee feels about the work experience and how he or she is treated in the organization (Vazirani, 2007). Many employees feel that their working experiences are not recognized by company fairly. Moreover they will feel really disappointed when the company treats them discriminately in equality of growth, training and development and performance appraisal. DDI's research concluded that engagement comprises individual value, focused work, and interpersonal support. It was put forth by (Febriansyah, 2010) that employee engagement is endorsed by current career intention, equal opportunity and fair treatment, and communication. The research study by (Saks, 2005) reported that factors

such as perceived job characteristics, supervisors support, organisational support, rewards and recognition, procedural and distributive justice predicted job and organisation engagement while job and organization engagement predicted job satisfaction, organizational commitment, intention to quit, and organisation citizenship behaviour. The effect of job characteristics, intrinsic and extrinsic rewards, perceived supervisor support, perceptions of procedural and distributive justice on employee engagement was further confirmed (Ram and Prabhakar, 2011).

The role of leadership and two-way communication in increasing employee engagement has been emphasised in one of the studies conducted by 4-consulting and DTZ Consulting and Research. According to (Robertson and Markwick, 2009) the nature of the work, work that has transparent meaning and purpose, development opportunities, receiving timely recognition and rewards, building respectful and assertive relationships, having open and honest two-way communication and consultation systems and having inspiring leadership are the drivers of employee engagement. Higher importance of situational factors than personal attributes of employees in influencing employee engagement is reported by (Sharma and Raina, 2010). The study conducted to examine the contribution of demographic and work life variables such as gender, office location, job title, and years of service contributed to their levels of engagement indicated no differences in engagement scores for males and females, for individuals working in rural versus urban office environments, or for years of service in the agency (Wilson, 2009).

The above literature reveals that employee engagement has become very important construct and the engaged employees are found to be more enthusiastic, motivated, energised, committed and passionate. Such employees have led to increased revenues, customer satisfaction, increased efficiency and productivity, lesser absenteeism, reduced turnover, organisational success. However the need of the hour is to know as to what makes the employees engaged in their job or towards the organisation. Thus the present study has been conducted with the following objectives.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the level of employee engagement among the employees.
2. To study the relationship between job characteristics and employee engagement.
3. To study the relationship between perceived organizational support and employee engagement.
4. To study the relationship between supervisor support and employee engagement.

HYPOTHESES

H₁: Employee engagement differs significantly with respect to demographic variables

H₂: Job characteristics and employee engagement are positively related.

H₃: Perceived organizational and supervisors' support are positively related with employee engagement.

PARTICIPANTS

The present study has been conducted in HPSEB Ltd. Hamirpur (Himachal Pradesh). The employees working in different sections are taken as research population. The data for the present study has been gathered from total of 149 employees, employed in different sections of the organization under the study. The questionnaires were distributed to 150 respondents but one questionnaire was not included because of incomplete information given by the respondent.

METHODOLOGY

The perceptions of the respondents were collected with the help of well structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was divided into two parts. Part A was designed to seek the information on the demographic variables such as name, designation, age, gender, background, marital status, education qualification, experience, and remuneration per month. Part B consisted of close ended questions. In this the perception of the respondents about the job engagement and organization engagement was collected with the help of the questionnaire used by (Saks Alan M., 2006).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 1 Level of employee engagement

	Mean	S.D.
Job Engagement	3.49	0.61
Organizational Engagement	3.61	0.61

Table 1 exhibits the overall engagement level of the employees. The findings indicate that the level of employees' job engagement as well as organizational engagement is more than average with mean values ($\bar{X} = 3.49$) for job engagement and ($\bar{X} = 3.61$) for organizational engagement. Thus it can be said that the employees are highly engaged in the job as well as with the organization.

Table 2 Mean difference analysis of level of employee engagement with respect to gender

	Male		Female		t
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	
Job Engagement	3.49	0.59	3.48	0.91	0.058
Organizational Engagement	3.59	0.60	3.95	0.81	-1.621

** p < 0.01

* p < 0.05

Table 2 shows the engagement level of the employees with respect to gender. It is evident from the results that male employees were found to be slightly higher engaged to the job ($\bar{X} = 3.49$) as compared to the female employees ($\bar{X} = 3.48$). Further the organizational engagement is found to be higher among the female employees ($\bar{X} = 3.95$) as compared to the male employees ($\bar{X} = 3.59$). Also it is revealed that employees are found to have more engagement level to the organization as compared to the job. However, the effect of gender on mean difference has been found to be non significant in engagement level of employees to the job and organization.

Table 3 Mean difference analysis of level of employee engagement with respect to marital status

	Married		Unmarried		t
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	
Job Engagement	3.49	0.63	3.47	0.42	0.101
Organizational Engagement	3.61	0.63	3.63	0.42	-0.122

** p< 0.01

* p< 0.05

Table 3 illustrates marital status wise engagement of employees with the job and organization. The results indicate that married employees are found to be more engaged to the job ($\bar{X} = 3.49$) as compare to unmarried employees ($\bar{X} = 3.47$). On the other hand unmarried employees are found to be more engaged to the organization ($\bar{X} = 3.63$) as compare to the married employees ($\bar{X} = 3.61$). However more engagement is shown to the organization as revealed by the mean value. The results further reveal that mean difference between the married and unmarried groups for job as well as organization engagement is found to be non significant.

Table 4 Mean difference analysis of level of employee engagement with respect to background

	Rural		Urban`		t
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	
Job Engagement	3.46	0.62	3.58	0.56	-0.917
Organizational Engagement	3.58	0.64	3.72	0.52	-1.137

** p< 0.01

* p< 0.05

Table 4 exhibits the engagement level of employees with respect to background. The findings indicate that employees belonging to urban area are found to be more engaged with their job ($\bar{X} = 3.58$) and with organization ($\bar{X} = 3.72$) than the employees belonging to rural area. It is also observed that employees with rural as well as urban background have

shown more engagement to the organization as compared to the job. It can be noted that the mean difference of employee engagement between rural and urban groups is found to be non significant for both job and the organization

Table 5 Mean difference analysis of level of employee engagement with respect to age

	25-35 years		35-45 years		45-55 years		Above 55 years		F
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	
Job Engagement	3.49	0.48	3.39	0.67	3.53	0.59	3.46	0.68	0.33
Organizational Engagement	3.60	0.42	3.68	0.73	3.65	0.59	3.46	0.63	0.82

** p< 0.01

* p< 0.05

Table 5 shows the mean difference analysis of level of employee engagement with respect to age. The findings show that employees of age group (45-55 years) are found to be most engaged to their job ($\bar{X} = 3.53$) comparatively. Whereas employees of age group (35-45 years) are noted to be least engaged to the job ($\bar{X} = 3.39$). Further employees of age group (35-45 years) are found to be more engaged to their organization ($\bar{X} = 3.68$) while employees of age above 55 years are least engaged to their organization. But overall higher engagement can be noticed to the organization as compared to the job. However, the effect of age on mean difference has been found to be non significant in engagement level of employees to the job and organization.

Table 6 Mean difference analysis of level of employee engagement with respect to experience

	0-5 years		5-10 years		10-15 years		15-20 years		More than 20 years		F
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	
Job Engagement	3.33	0.50	3.62	0.64	3.42	0.57	3.39	0.71	3.52	0.60	0.454
Organizational Engagement	3.50	0.37	3.92	0.54	3.59	0.51	3.46	0.86	3.62	0.58	1.010

** p < 0.01

* p < 0.05

Table 6 examines the employee engagement with respect to their experience. It has been observed that employees with 5-10 years experience are found to be more engaged with the job ($\bar{X} = 3.62$) and with the organization ($\bar{X} = 3.92$). Further it can be said that the employees with 0-5 years experience have shown least engagement to their job ($\bar{X} = 3.33$) and employees with 15-20 years experience have shown least organizational engagement ($\bar{X} = 3.46$). However employees are found to have more engagement level to the organization as compared to the job. Further the results indicate that mean difference of employee engagement among experience groups have been found to be non significant.

Table 7 Mean difference analysis of level of employee engagement with respect to educational qualification

	Matriculation		Higher Secondary		Any Diploma		Graduate		Post Graduate		F
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	
Job Engagement	3.22	0.61	3.63	0.76	3.62	0.55	3.64	0.54	3.30	0.55	3.85**
Organizational Engagement	3.36	0.65	3.69	0.71	3.72	0.58	3.69	0.43	3.72	0.54	2.65*

** p < 0.01

* $p < 0.05$

Table 7 examines the engagement level of employees with job and organization with respect to education qualification. It is evident from the results that graduate employees are found to be most engaged to the job ($\bar{X} = 3.64$) while the employees with matriculation as the qualification are least engaged to their job ($\bar{X} = 3.22$). Further it can be said that more engagement level to the organization has been shown by the employees belonging to the post graduate group ($\bar{X} = 3.72$) and the employees belonging to the matriculation group of qualification has shown least engagement to their organization ($\bar{X} = 3.36$). While post graduate employees have shown lesser engagement to the job ($\bar{X} = 3.30$), they have shown highest engagement level to their organization ($\bar{X} = 3.72$). Also the employees belonging to the matriculation group of qualification are found to be least engaged to the job ($\bar{X} = 3.22$) as well as organization ($\bar{X} = 3.36$). It can be noted that the mean difference of employee engagement is found to be significant for both job ($F = 3.85$; $p < 0.01$) and the organization ($F = 2.65$; $p < 0.05$) among the different qualified groups of employees.

Table 8 Mean difference analysis of level of employee engagement with respect to salary

	Rs 10000-20000		Rs 20000-30000		Rs 30000-40000		Rs 40000-50000		Above 50000		F
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	
Job Engagement	3.21	0.61	3.32	0.66	3.78	0.54	3.61	0.60	3.56	0.51	4.149**
Organizational Engagement	3.41	0.66	3.53	0.64	3.74	0.62	3.61	0.63	3.75	0.50	1.683

** $p < 0.01$

* $p < 0.05$

Table 8 depicts income wise engagement level of employees with job and organization. The results reveal that among different salaried groups the employees with salary of Rs 30000-Rs 40000 are found to be most engaged to the job ($\bar{X} = 3.78$) while the least salaried employees (Rs 10000-Rs 20000) have shown lowest level of job engagement (\bar{X}

= 3.21). The employees with salary above Rs 50000 have shown highest organizational engagement ($\bar{X} = 3.75$). On the other hand the employees belonging to lowest salary group (Rs 10000-Rs 20000) has shown lowest level of organizational engagement ($\bar{X} = 3.41$). The employees with salary of Rs 40000- Rs 50000 have shown same engagement level to the job and to the organization ($\bar{X} = 3.61$). It can be said that employees with higher salary have higher engagement level. The effect of income on mean difference among the different salary groups has been found to be significant for job engagement ($F = 4.149$; $p < 0.01$).

The results for the mean difference analysis of employee engagement with respect to different demographic variables indicated no differences in engagement scores for males and females, for married and unmarried employees, for individuals belonging to rural versus urban areas, for age and for different experienced groups. However the mean difference of employee engagement is found to be significant for both job and the organization in case of different qualified groups of employees. Job engagement has been found to differ significantly among different salaried group of employees. Thus we can say that the income and education of the employees predicts the engagement among the employees for the job and organisation. We can say that the hypothesis:

H₁: Employee engagement differs significantly with respect to demographic variables; is partially accepted.

Table 9 Relationship of job characteristics, perceived organizational support and perceived supervisors' support with the employee engagement

		Job Engagement	Organizational Engagement
Job Characteristics	Pearson Correlation	0.299**	0.256**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.002
Perceived organizational Support	Pearson Correlation	0.385**	0.345**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000

Perceived Supervisors' Support	Pearson Correlation	0.357**	0.341**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 9 depicts the relationship of the job characteristics, perceived organizational support and perceived supervisors' support with the job engagement and organizational engagement. The results reveal that each of the variable i.e. the job characteristics, perceived organizational support and perceived supervisors' support were significantly positively related to the job engagement and organizational engagement. It can be said that job characteristics were positively related to job engagement ($r = 0.299$; $p < 0.01$), and organizational engagement ($r = 0.256$; $p < 0.01$). Perceived organizational support was significantly positively related to job engagement ($r = 0.385$; $p < 0.01$) and organizational engagement ($r = 0.345$; $p < 0.01$). And perceived supervisors' support was also significantly positively related to job engagement ($r = 0.357$; $p < 0.01$) and organizational engagement ($r = 0.341$; $p < 0.01$). Thus on the basis of the above findings we can say that hypotheses,

H3: Job characteristics and employee engagement are positively related, is accepted.

H4: Perceived organizational and supervisors' support are positively related with employee engagement, is accepted.

CONCLUSIONS

On the perusal of above results it can be said that job characteristics contributes to job engagement, and organizational engagement. If there is feeling among the employees that their jobs provided variety, independence, identity and proper feedback the employees get more absorbed and engaged in their work thereby leading to more quality, productivity and efficiency. Perceived organizational support was significantly positively related to job engagement and organizational engagement. Thus, if the employees are aware that the organisations value their contributions and cares about their welfare,

higher will be the engagement to the job and organization. Further perceived supervisors' support was also significantly positively related to job engagement and organizational engagement. The employees' have shown higher engagement to the job and organization may be due to presence of supervisors' supportive work environment which displayed concern for employees' needs and feelings, provided positive feedback, encouraged employees to voice their concerns, and readiness of the supervisors to solve the problems of the employees.

The present study will prove to be helpful in providing insights to the HR practitioners to understand and identify the factors that make the employees more engaged towards their work and design such practices and policies that improve the employee engagement level so as to increase the efficiency, enthusiasm, morale and motivation of the employees leading to more stability and lesser employee turnover, increased profitability and productivity.

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