

JOB ATTITUDES AND PERFORMANCE: THE SERVICES PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

Job Attitudes like employee engagement, involvement, commitment, citizenship behaviors etc, influences various individual and organizational outcomes. Organizations seek to increase the frequency of individual outcomes like employee motivation, performance, productivity, innovativeness, trust etc, among its employees. Also, organizational outcomes like service quality, image, profitability, etc, always form the top priority. Job attitudes have been a well researched construct in the management literature. However, constructs like job attitudes and service performance, has received scant attention in the past. The current study, would explore the influence of job attitudes like employee engagement and involvement on service performance of employees.

The participatory organizations were from insurance and postal sectors, of service economy of Kashmir region, from the state of Jammu and Kashmir. The Survey method was used for data collection purposes, where in data was collected, through combination of structured questionnaires followed by interviews. The sample size of 100 respondents were selected representing middle management, frontline, lower level employees and customers. The data were analyzed using SPSS software package, where in techniques like descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, correlation analysis) and multiple regression analysis, were utilized to analyze and interpret the given data. The results revealed significant positive relationships between employee engagement and service performance as well as between job involvement and service performance. The various antecedents leading to the enhancement of employee engagement and job involvement were also discussed in the current study.

KEYWORDS: Job Attitudes, Employee Engagement, Job Involvement, Service Performance, Jammu and Kashmir.

Introduction

Job attitudes or employee work attitudes refers to the behavior of employees at work, directed towards organizational goals and objectives. Job attitudes include employee engagement, involvement, satisfaction, performance, organizational commitment, citizenship behaviors, trust, etc. Job attitudes influence various favorable individual as well as organization outcomes. Individual outcomes include employee motivation, innovativeness, productivity, etc. Organizational outcomes include employee satisfaction, retention, loyalty, profitability, image etc. Antecedents like leadership support, rewards, grievance redressed, flexible working

schedule, cordial working relationships, etc enhances employee work attitudes and performance. Organizational policies, strategies, culture, shape employee work attitudes and influences performance, productivity, etc. The present study, would deal with the study of job attitudes like employee engagement and involvement and their influence on employee service performance. Also, various antecedents and consequences of job attitudes would form part of the study.

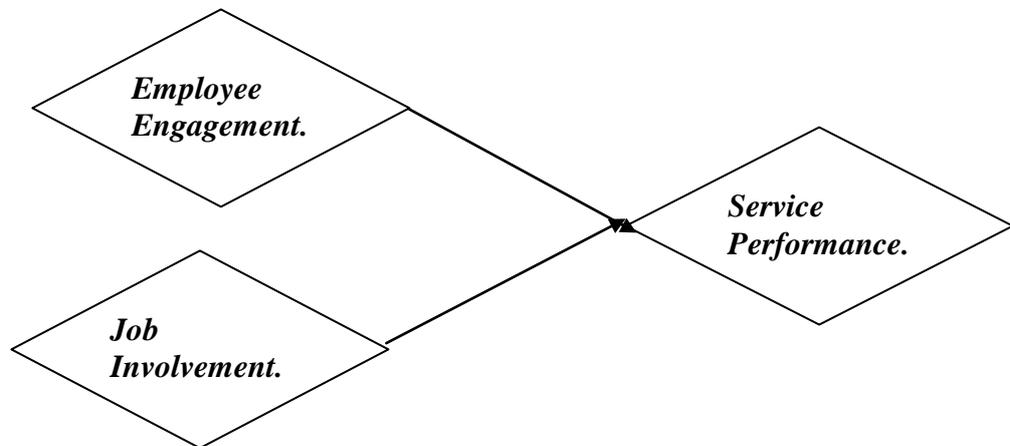


Fig 1: Influence of Job Attitudes on Service Performance of Employees Model. Rationale.

Employee performance in services sector influences performance of an organization, perception of service quality, customer satisfaction, loyalty, retention, profitability, etc. Service organizations across the globe, overhauling their systems, processes, designs, etc, to exceed competition and set standards of excellence while delivering services. However, employee performance has always been the key issue. Employee performance, an outcome of multiple factors like internal motives, needs, personality, working environment, job attitudes, leadership styles etc. Frontline employees in service organizations, acts as boundary spanning elements that link an organization with its prospected customers.

Employee performance, antecedents include employee relationships, management support, rewards, recognition, feedback, communication, trust, employee satisfaction etc, that results in consequences like customer loyalty, satisfaction etc. Employee performance and its relationship with various job attitudes like organizational citizenship behaviors, organizational commitment; etc has been well researched in recent past. However, employee performance and its relationship with job attitudes like employee engagement, involvement etc, especially in insurance and postal service sectors, have received least or no attention at all. Therefore, the current study would be an Endeavour to explore the influence of job attitudes like employee engagement and involvement on employee performance in insurance and postal service organizations operating in Kashmir region of the State of Jammu and Kashmir.

Review

Employee engagement refers to the attachment of an employee, cognitive as well as emotional with his work and organization's values. Employee engagement, also referred as positive, work related state of mind, characterized by vigor, dedication and absorption (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004). Vigor (high levels of energy and mental resilience while working), dedication (sense of significance, enthusiasm, pride), absorption (engrossed in one's work), .Employee engagement is in itself a process, supported by various factors like supervisory communication, support, empowerment etc.

Employee engagement, is affected by role benefit (employee's perception of career opportunities and growth), job autonomy (freedom and independence) (Slatten and

Mehmetcglu, 2011) and goal setting, influences employee engagement and enhances creativity and innovative behavior of employees. Supportive supervisors creates climate where in employees feel engaged. Supervisory feedback, perceived autonomy, coaching etc, leads to employee engagement. Goal setting and strategic plan formulation to achieve goals could engage employees to take ownership of the work. Decision making or co-ordination, enhances employee engagement Working life like working hours, co-workers and management support etc, influence engagement of employees. Emotional well-being of employees, also have bearing on employee engagement. Management involvement, trust and empowerment acts as antecedents to employee engagement (Rosas-Gaddi, 2011).

Organizational practices like trainings, empowerment, etc, influences engagement of employees, leading to increase in performance and productivity. Highly engaged employees are more customers focused and show higher levels of discretionary effort and affective commitment (Shuck and Reio, 2011). Employees who are engaged in their work, are more productive, and profitable, influences working of co-workers as well, putting their best efforts at work and show persistence, while facing difficulties, analyses the business environment, competitive forces and strives for the success of an organization. Engaged employees, act as ambassadors of an organization, communicates and maintains a differential image in the minds of its target audience and performs extraordinary as well as discretionary tasks.

Job Involvement

Job Involvement refers to the work attitude of an employee, that defines employee's engagement, concern, relationship, with his immediate work activities (Brown, 1996). Job involvement represents whole sum attitude of an individual that define his personality, inculcation of values about the goodness of work in the worth of an individual. Job involvement comprises of various elements like attachment, willingness to work hard to meet organizational goals and objectives.

Work culture influence job involvement and get enhanced, when an employee feels that work culture allow some control over his work, provides social support from co-workers and superiors. Factors like employee motivation, training, job autonomy; skill variety also enhances one's job involvement. Personality traits like extroversion and agreeableness also influences employee's job involvement (S. Eswaran, 2011).

Highly involved employees focus their attention on their jobs and scores low on absenteeism rate. Job involvement is inversely related to turnover intentions, but has positive relationship with job satisfaction. Job involvement promotes organizational citizenship behaviors (performing tasks outside job contract voluntarily, acts as antecedent to various favorable individual outcomes like employee commitment, motivation. Job involvement influences employee energy levels, so to make more efforts in their work and leads to enhancement of job performance. Involved employees put substantial efforts to achieve organizational objectives and are more loyal towards their organizations (Kanungo, 1979).

Service performance

Service performance has been defined as a behavior driven towards organizational goals and objectives (Campbell et al., 1993). Service performance of employees involves tasks that formalized (mentioned in a job contract) as well as informal (extra) that are beyond one's job contract. Service performance; get enhanced across work cultures that encourage participation in decision making, flexibility in working hours. Management practices like fair procedures for rewards, promotions, incentives have positive influence on service performance. Leadership practices like delegating authority, responsibility improve performance of employees.

Service performance, create favorable perceptions among customers and develop long term profitable customer relationships Customers, witnessing superior service performance, repeat their purchases from same service organization, leading to customer retention (Johnson, 1996) and loyalty (Reynierse and Harker, 1992).

Employee Engagement and Service Performance

Employee energy level effect creativity of employees and lead to more effort, productivity, performance, satisfaction by. Organization policies, procedures focused at addressing employee concerns regarding growth, development, enable them to enhance dedication, commitment (Showkat, et al., 2012). Employee engagement reported positive association with employee satisfaction, customer satisfaction, customer relationship building (Southard, 2010). Employee engagement, having dimensions like vigor, dedication and absorption, we, therefore, propose that employee engagement has a positive influence on employee service performance.

H1: Employee Engagement positively influences employee service performance.

Job Involvement and Service Performance

Employees having clarity of individual goals, aims, perform with enthusiasm, motivation, dedication to meet and break the highest standards of excellence (Paullay, et al., 1994). Internal forces among such employees always keep them, a head of competition and emerge as best performers in every aspect of their job. Loyalty with one's job ensures superior performance (Kahn, 1990). Employees having willingness to work hard reported significant performance at their tasks. Job involvement being associated with elements like intrinsic motivation, willingness to work hard, loyalty, we, therefore, propose that job involvement has apposite impact on employee service performance.

H2: Job Involvement positively influences employee service performance

Methodology

Data Collection Method and Sample Size

The data collection method for the present study includes survey method. Techniques like structured Questionnaires followed by face to face interviews were used, while conducting surveys. Structured Questionnaires, were returned by middle management employees, while interviews facilitates, data collection in circumstances like time scarcity, busy working schedule, busy customers, uneducated lower level employees, customers, etc. The sample consists of middle management employees, frontline employees, lower level employees and customers. The sample consists of 100 respondents from Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) and Department of Posts (Post Offices).

Measures

Employee Engagement

Employee engagement is measured by using Schaufeli and Bakker's (2003) 9-item Utrecht Work and Well being Survey (UWES) with a five-point Likert scale ranging from 0 (never) to 4 (always). Dimensions like vigor, dedication and absorption are being measured by UWES. Cronbach's alpha ranging from .80 to .90 for a study of about 32,000 employees (Schaufeli, 2006) provides acceptable level of internal consistency reliability (Rurkkhum, 2010). However, in the present study, the Cronbach alpha was estimated at .67 (the composite score of all three dimensions).

Job Involvement

Job Involvement is measured by Kanungo, (1982) 10 item scale. Cronbach's alpha for studies (Chen, 1998) ranged from .76 to .84 and validity examined (Leong, Huang and Hsu, 2003). Responses were recorded on five points Likert Scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The 10 items were summed up to provide total involvement score, two of which are

negatively phrased and thus are reverse scored. However, in the present study Cronbach alpha was estimated at .68.

Employee Service Performance

Employee Service Performance is measured by using a composite of scales like empathy and excellent job performance scales with 3 items each based on SERVQUAL empathy scale (Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry, 1988) and Service Provider Performance Scale (Price, Arnould and Tierney, 1995). Internal consistencies i.e. Cronbach's alphas were .89 for empathy and .88 for excellent job performance. Items were scored on five point rating scale ranging from 1- completely agree to 5- completely disagree. Global internal consistency of composite of both subscales (i.e. performance) was .88. However, for current study, Cronbach alpha was estimated at .74.

Data Analysis And Results

Engagement of employees was found significant with mean score of 3.26 for all three dimensions (vigor, dedication and absorption) of employee engagement presented in table 1 below. Involvement of employees with their jobs also on positive side with mean score of 3.76. Service performance of employees represents good picture as well with mean score of 3.58 for two dimensions (empathy and excellent service performance).

TABLE 1.

Descriptive Statistics, Inter item Correlations and Alpha Values of the Variables.

Sino.	Variables.	Mean.	Standard Deviation.	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
1.	Vigor.	2.89	0.723	1				
2.	Dedication.	3.62	0.987	.18	1			
3.	Absorption.	3.28	0.8103	.24	.19	1		
4.	Job Involvement.	3.76	0.673	.26	.38	.37	1	
5.	Service Performance.	3.58	0.805	.21	.26	.32	.37	1
	Cranach's alpha.			.59	.69	.74	.68	.74

*All Significant from $< .01$ to $< .05$; Source: Data collected by Scholars for the study.

Employee Engagement and Service Performance, was found to be highly correlated with coefficient of correlation ($r = .26$) and significance level of ($p < .01$ to $.05$). Also, employee engagement and its impact on service performance is analyzed and understood, using a specialized technique of data analysis i.e. multiple regression analysis, which is presented as: $Y_1 = bx_1 + bx_2 + \dots + bx_9$. Where 'Y₁' represents dependent variable i.e. service performance and 'x₁ to x₉' represent 9 items or statements of independent variable i.e. employee engagement.

The SPSS software package is used to implement multiple regression analysis technique, where in data related to 'Y₁' i.e. service performance were entered as dependent variable and data pertaining to 'x₁ to x₉' i.e. employee engagement were entered as independent variable. The results obtained are presented in Table 2 below. All items of employee engagement are positively influencing with service performance with item number 6, being the most influential with ($b = .39$, $p < .05$). Item numbers 5, 3, 8, 7, 1, 9 and 2 represents the decreasing order of influence on service performance with regression coefficients ($b = .37, .35, .35, .34, .31, .31$ and $.29$ respectively) with significance level of ($p < .05$). Item number 4, 12 representing the least influence among all items of employee engagement on service performance with regression coefficient i.e. ($b = .26$ and $p < .05$). The overall influence of employee engagement on service performance i.e. ($R^2 = .36$), reflecting a 36 % variation in the dependent variable. It evidences that there exists a positive relationship between employee engagement and service

performance, thus proving our first hypothesis i.e. employee engagement positively influences service performance of employees.

TABLE 2.

Regression Coefficients from Multiple Regressions between Employee Engagement and Service Performance.

Sino.	Independent Variable.	Dependent Variable.
	Employee Engagement (Items).	Service Performance.
1.	At my work, I feel energetic.	0.31*.
2.	At my job, I feel strong and vigorous.	0.29*.
3.	When I get up in the morning, I look forward to going to work.	0.35*.
4.	My job inspires me	0.26*.
5.	I am enthusiastic about my job.	0.37*.
6.	I am proud of the work that I do.	0.39*.
7.	I feel happy when I am working intensely.	0.34*.
8.	I am engrossed in my work.	0.35*.
9.	Time flies when I am working.	0.31
	R².	0.36

*All Significant at < .05; Source: Data collected by Scholars for the study.

Correlation Coefficient for Job Involvement and Service Performance ($r = .37$) reflects significant correlation between the given constructs with significance level of ($p < .01$ to $.05$), presented in table 1 above. Also, job involvement and its impact on service performance is analyzed and understood, using a specialized technique of data analysis i.e. multiple regression analysis, which is presented as: $Y_2 = bx_1 + bx_2 + \dots + bx_{10}$. Where 'Y₂' represents dependent variable i.e. service performance and x_1 to x_{10} represent 10 items or statements of independent variable i.e. job involvement.

The SPSS software package is used to implement multiple regression analysis technique, where in data related to 'Y₂' i.e. service performance were entered as dependent variable and data pertaining to ' x_1 to x_{10} ' i.e. job involvement were entered as independent variable. The results obtained are presented in Table 3 below. All items of job involvement are positively influencing with service performance with item number 4, being the most influential with ($b = .38$, $p < .05$). Item numbers 7, 8, 6, 5, 10, 1, 3, and 9 represents the decreasing order of influence on service performance with regression coefficients ($b = .36, .35, .34, .33, .31, .30, .29$ and $.29$ respectively) with Significance level of ($p < .05$). Item no 2, representing the least influence among all items of job involvement on service performance with regression coefficient i.e. ($b = .28$ and $p < .05$). The overall influence of job involvement on service performance i.e. ($R^2 = .35$), reflecting a 35% variation in the dependent variable. It evidences that there exists a positive relationship between job involvement and service performance, thus proving second hypothesis i.e. job involvement positively influences service performance of employees.

TABLE 3.

Regression Coefficients from Multiple Regressions between Job Involvement and Service Performance.

Sino.	Independent Variable.	Dependent Variable.
	Job Involvement (Items).	Service performance.
1.	The most important things that happen to me involve my present job	0.30*
2.	To me, my job is only a small part of who I am. (Reversed).	0.28 *
3.	To me, my job is only a small part of who I am. (Reversed).	0.29*
4.	I live, eat and breathe my job.	0.38*.
5.	Most of my interests are centered on my job.	0.33*.
6.	I have very strong ties with my present job which would be very difficult to break.	0.34*.
7.	Usually I feel detached from my job.	0.36*.
8.	Most of my personal life goals are job-oriented.	0.35*.
9.	I consider my job to be very central to my life.	0.29*.
10.	I like to be really involved in my job most of the time.	0.31*.
	R²	0.35

*All Significant at < .05; Source: Data collected by Scholars for the study.

Limitations And Future Research

The Current study could be vulnerable to various discrepancies that may include issues like, data collection techniques, geographic reach, etc. Although, data is collected from companies like insurance and postal sectors. But, lack of representation from other fields like banking, health, tourism, hospitality, education, may limit the scope of application to these sectors of service economy. Also, geographic reach of current study is restricted to regional level only; participation of organizations from national as well as international destinations could have impacted the results in a different way. Research on job attitudes and service performance has not received much attention in the past; leading too little input as far as review of literature is concerned.

Influence of job attitudes on service performance, is least studied in insurance and postal service sectors. Future, research could focus on these sectors, to explore the given constructs. Also, antecedents of favorable job attitudes should be made part of future research studies, to be investigated in service sectors like insurance and postal. Scant, attention has been given to such important constructs. Future, researchers, could also investigate relationship between job attitudes and service performance, by using demographic variables like age, gender, ethnicity etc.

Findings

Employees have been found as highly engaged, involved and performing well in their jobs. Significant positive relationships have been found between job attitudes like employee engagement, job involvement and service performance. Pearson's correlation coefficient for employee engagement and service performance ($r=.26$), reflects positive and significant relationship between the given variables.

Multiple regression coefficient ($R^2=.36$), also represents a positive and significant relationship between employee engagement and service performance. Pearson's correlation coefficient for job involvement and service performance ($r = .37$), represents a significant positive relationship between them. Multiple regression coefficient ($R^2 = .35$), reflects a positive significant relationship between job involvement and service performance.

Recommendations

Organizational Practices like job autonomy, freedom in decision making etc, should be encouraged, to enhance engagement of employees. Training enhances technical and interpersonal skills of employees that lead to increase in efficiency and effectiveness and in turn employee engagement. Fair practices like rewards, recognition, etc, according to merit and performance, positively, influences employee engagement. Social support from management, supervisors and co-workers, increases engagement of employees. Work life factors like working hours, pressure, harassment etc at work, influences engagement of employees. Less working hours, supervision enhances engagement of employees. Goal setting, providing feedback about achievement of goals, communicating strategies to overcome challenges, improves engagement of employees.

Career development opportunities, increases employee engagement. Employee friendly work culture that encourages social interactions, job autonomy, job enrichment, should be promoted. Organizational support inters of resources, information, inculcates organizational commitment that leads to job involvement. Employees high on extroversion, agreeableness should be identified and selected, such employees score high on job involvement and form better customer relationships. Employee motivation through recognition, monetary rewards, etc, should be ensured as motivation enhances employee's job involvement.

Implications

Services, being intangible in nature pose a different challenge to employees as well as service organizations. Employees need to perform customer oriented service behaviors that are extra ordinary in nature. Employee job attitudes not only shape employee behavior but also influence various outcomes like service performance, customer satisfaction, retention, loyalty, image, profitability, etc. Organizations across Globe investing huge amounts on innovative breakthroughs, technology up gradation, marketing service products, creating delivery channels, recruiting personnel's, etc.

However, critical element like job attitude(s) has received least attention among all. Therefore, the current study would be of strategic importance to Managers or Practitioners in service industry to identify elements that could enhance employee job attitudes and performance. Practices like support from supervisors, co-workers, management; fair procedures for rewards, recognition, growth, and development; feedback, participation in decision making, job autonomy, flexible work schedule, etc, need to be promoted and encouraged by the top management of organizations. Elements like pay rise; incentives, sociable work culture, etc also need to be addressed to ensure intrinsic as well as extrinsic motivation of employees.

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