
The Impact of Demographic Variables on Employee Engagement in Public and Private Service Sector in India

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ABSTRACT

Purpose – This paper aims at finding out the impact that the different demographic variables have on the engagement of employees in public and private service sector in India. The study was conducted in six major cities in India. For measuring employee engagement twelve different variables were identified after intense study of the previous researches and the composite of it was taken as dependent variables whereas demographic variables and public and private sectors were taken as independent variables.

Design/methodology/approach- The sample consisted of 480 respondents, 242 from public sector and 238 from private sector. Amongst the service sector three types of industries were selected such as Telecom, Banking and Insurance from both public and private sector. The interpretations and findings were measured by a self designed close ended questionnaire and the data was analysed using SPSS version 16.

Findings –Demographic variables have a very significant effect on engagement as the personal profile of an individual plays a very vital role in deciding the level of engagement and commitment an employee has towards its organisation but demographic profiles alone are not responsible, engagement drivers are also found to be effecting engagement to a large extent.

Research limitations/implications – The study is conducted in Telecom, Banking and Insurance service sectors in the selected six cities in India. More and more cities can be included in the survey as well as more organisations in service industry like manufacturing, hospitality etc. may be included. So, there is a scope of further research.

Practical implications –As the study focuses on the variation in level of engagement with respect to the marital status, age, length of service and the position at which a person is working in both public and private sector. So, it will provide an overview to the employers in deciding at what time and level they need to focus on engaging the workforce.

Originality/value – Earlier researches has been done either in public or in private sector otherwise in any one of the telecom, banking or insurance industry. Very few researches have been done in the field of comparing both the sectors and including these three industries along.

Keywords: Engagement, demographic, public sector, private sector, service industry.

INTRODUCTION

In this era of information technology and randomness, employers as well as employees all are facing tough competition and a sense of insecurity. In the post-liberalization phase, due to the emergence of private players, there is greater exposure of employees in terms of monetary and non-monetary benefits which are required for engaging the workforce in the organization. The biggest challenge in front of the organisations is the attraction and retention of the customers as well as of the employees. This has made the companies to think again on their customer service strategy by adopting an approach which is employee-centric. It is evident from the researches that, employee engagement has been recognized to be a key determinant for the ultimate success of service organizations. A practical comparison between a range of demographic segments, from job level (senior to lower) to industry category (non-profit, insurance, pharmaceuticals, hospitals, finance/banking and others) was carried out at Towers Perrin (2003), and found a pattern across the segments. The group of highly engaged respondents was very small, a slightly larger disengaged group, with the majority of people in the 'moderately engaged group'.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

Chaudhary *et al.* (2012) in his study used three-dimensional measurement of employee engagement that was developed by Schaufeli *et al.* (2002), and in accordance revealed that perceived human resource climate of the organization was positively and extensively correlated with the three dimensions of engagement, namely, vigour, dedication and absorption.

Jon Hellevig (2012, p. 35) discusses in his research that the leaders of a company should vigorously make efforts to generate a corporate culture of engagement and self-discipline, but he also supports the fact that the capability of people to engage differs from person to person. No matter the amount of effort, the actions may not bring the desired outcome. This should be taken into consideration while thinking about the outcomes of the actions taken for engaging employees.

Christensen & Laegreid (2011); Klausen (1996) questioned the applicability of existing engagement models in the public sector organizations, as the sector has been experiencing ever-increasing pressure to find ways of managing demographic changes while radically reducing costs.

Joshi Rama J. & Sodhi J.S. (2011), in their research tried to analyze organizational climate and its role in driving employee engagement in various Indian organizations. The study revealed that executives and non-executives were relatively more satisfied with their work and perceived a high sense of involvement and commitment in their work and with the organization. He also listed some drivers of engagement such as work life balance, job content, monetary benefits and team orientation for both executives and non-executives (supervisor and workers) along with some additional key drivers of engagement for executives that is 'scope for advancement' and 'top-management employee relations'. For the non-executives other three key drivers of engagement suggested were 'union/association management relations', 'recognition & rewards' and 'welfare

facilities’.

Pradeep et al (2011), suggested in his study that people look for more meaning in their routine work than they do in their personal lives. This implies that employers should try to make work more meaningful by targeting what matters to their employees especially since evidence suggests that meaningfulness impacts not only on the individual level, but also on the bottom line. In all suggesting a correlation between employee engagement and business outcomes, and the effect of individual differences on work performance, emotional factors, personal relationship, perception, personality and demographic factors.

Kong Ying (2009), in his study of demographic factors realised that job engagement between male and female employees differs, especially on the measurement of dedication. Female employees are more dedicated towards their jobs than male ones. Whereas male employees gained higher scores on the dimensions of vigour and absorption compared to their female ones, which can be to a certain extent explained by the fact that men are generally more vigorous than women. Also unmarried employees gained higher scores than married employees on all the three above stated dimensions, which can be easily explained by the fact that unmarried employees spend more time and energy at their workplace. Usually, the employees who have just begun their career have a fresh feeling towards their job, and are full of energy supporting the fact that employees with a length of working for 0-5 years gain higher scores as compared to those with a length of working for 6-10 years than those on all the three dimensions due to having a short time in working and feel refreshed when they work.

Kumar and Giri (2009) revealed in their study that besides organizational and personal factors, many other factors also play a significant role in influencing employee engagement. Results showed that employees with different academic and social background, gender and culture have different expectations influencing loyalty and engagement with the work place. These factors are experience of employees, age, gender and longer tenure in the present organization. The study found that there is a positive relationship between employee engagement and experience whereas earlier study by Abdulla and Shaw (1999) found a weak relationship between employee engagement and work experience; on the other hand organizational tenure was found to have a positive correlation with employee engagement.

Kumar & Priyadarshi (2003) found in their study that in public sector managers appeared to pay more emphasis on working condition, life style, peace of mind, prestige and autonomy whereas in private sector more stress is provided on ability utilization, physical activity, authority ,personal development and achievement .

Baldwin (1987) the researcher in his study identified a few distinguishing characteristics of public sector organizations and stated that while comparing the private sector, public sector organizations have: (a) vague, uncertain, or ambiguous goals and objectives; (b) repeated leadership turnover and (c) relatively less job security for tenured employees. Therefore the author suggested that in an effort to make politically effective decisions, public officials will often be in agreement with the goals that are ambiguous and conflicting.

OBJECTIVES AND HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

Objective 1: To study the demographic variables and their association with employee engagement in private & public sector.

H1₀: There exists an association between Employee Engagement and Demographic variables.

H1a: There exists no association between Employee Engagement and Demographic variables.

Objective 2: To determine & compare the level of employee engagement among the different levels of employees in both Public and Private Sectors.

H2₀: There is a significant difference in the levels of engagement among Top, middle and junior levels in Public and Private sector.

H2a: There is no significant difference in the levels of engagement among Top, middle and junior levels in Public and Private sector.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Sample

The sample consisted of 480 respondents, 242 from public sector and 238 from private sector. Basically service sector is chosen here among which three types of industries such as Telecom, Banking and Insurance are selected from both public and private sector. The industries are taken from different states of India like Rajasthan, Telangana, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Delhi and Gujarat as these states are the most preferred place for employees and employers in terms of working conditions. Data was collected through both primary and secondary sources so that the effect of demographic profiles of the respondents can be analysed in both the sectors. Primary data was collected with the help of structured questionnaires whereas secondary data was collected through published sources such as websites, journals and magazines.

Scales of Measures

For the purpose of collecting the data questionnaires were distributed personally as well as through mails in the selected organisations to the employees working at different levels. The first part contains the Demographic details of the respondents and the second part of the survey is the self designed Engagement Survey, containing the twelve drivers of employee engagement which are measured on the five point Likert Scale starting from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

Statistical Analysis

To explore the effect of demographic variables and sector on the level of engagement Two Way ANOVA was used. Also to measure the engagement at different levels (senior, middle and junior) in both the sectors Two Way ANOVA was used. In the study sector (public and private) and demographic variables were taken as independent variable whereas engagement (composite of

drivers of engagement) were taken as dependent variable. The analysis was done in SPSS version 16 in order to anticipate the relationship.

Analysis and Interpretations

H₀₁: There is a significant difference between the level of employee engagement in public and private sector with respect to gender.

- The descriptive shows that there are in total 308 males and 172 females in the sample of 480 respondents.
- From public sector there are 160 male respondents and 148 female respondents and in private sector there are 148 male respondents and 90 female respondents. In both the sectors the number of male respondents is greater than female respondents.

Table 1. Tests of Between-Subjects Effects WRT Gender

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	45126.736 ^a	3	15042.245	22.682	.000
Intercept	2.411E7	1	2.411E7	3.636E4	.000
GEN	14.790	1	14.790	.022	.881
ORG	34934.655	1	34934.655	52.676	.000
GEN * ORG	1861.643	1	1861.643	2.807	.095
Error	315680.345	476	663.194		
Total	2.668E7	480			
Corrected Total	360807.081	479			

a. R Squared = .125 (Adjusted R Squared = .120)

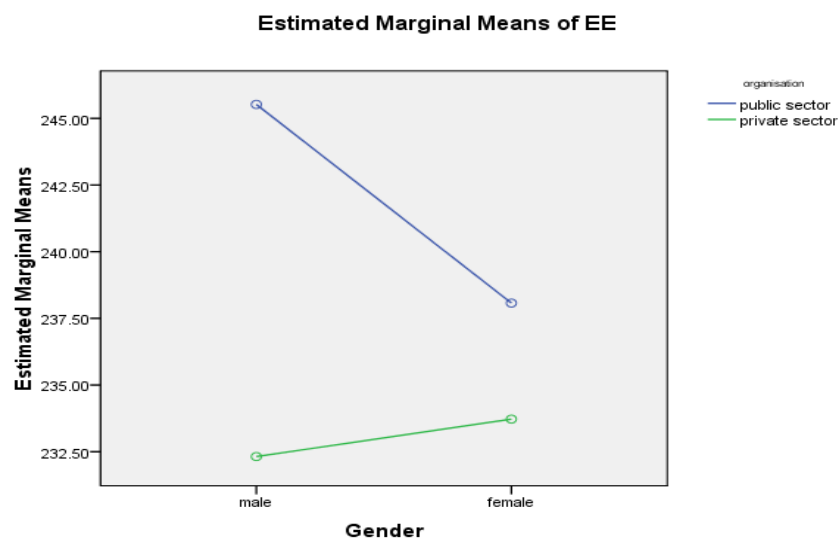


Fig 1.

- The two way ANOVA results shows that there is no significant difference in the level of employee engagement with respect to gender as ($p=.881$ and $F=.022$). This is supported by the Institute for Employment Studies (IES) (as analysed by Robinson et al 2004) which analysed attitude survey data of > 10000 questionnaire. The study showed that the difference in engagement between male and female was not significant suggesting that males and females respond in a similar fashion to the environment prevailing in organisation but according to CIPD 2006c the findings are contradictory revealing that females are generally more engaged than males.
- It is also clear from the analysis shown in table 1 that there is a significant difference in the level of employee engagement when compared among sectors as ($p=.00$ and $F=52.676$). Fig 1. Shows that public sector employees show more engagement as compared to private sector employees. Males shows higher engagement ($M=2.450$) in public sector when compared in ($M=2.406$) private sector. But in Private sector females shows more engagement ($M=2.260$) than in public sector ($M=2.231$) which is in line with earlier researches showing differences in gender affect the engagement level. Evidence shows that women tend to be more engaged than men (Johnson 2005), although there is no evidence that this finding can be generalised across the globe as different industries require different skills and have different work culture.
- Tests of Between-Subjects Effects shows that the collective effect of organisation and gender on employee engagement is not significantly different as ($p=.095$ and $F=2.807$) showing that the **hypothesis 01 is rejected**.

H₀₂: There is a significant difference between the level of employee engagement in public and private sector with respect to marital status.

Table 4.31 Tests of Between-Subjects Effects WRT Marital Status

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	16092.327 ^a	3	5364.109	9.036	.000
Intercept	1.058E7	1	1.058E7	1.782E4	.000
ORG	13098.605	1	13098.605	22.064	.000
MS	1831.095	1	1831.095	3.084	.040
ORG * MS	3600.957	1	3600.957	6.066	.014
Error	282580.504	476	593.657		
Total	2.748E7	480			
Corrected Total	298672.831	479			

a. R Squared = .054 (Adjusted R Squared = .048)

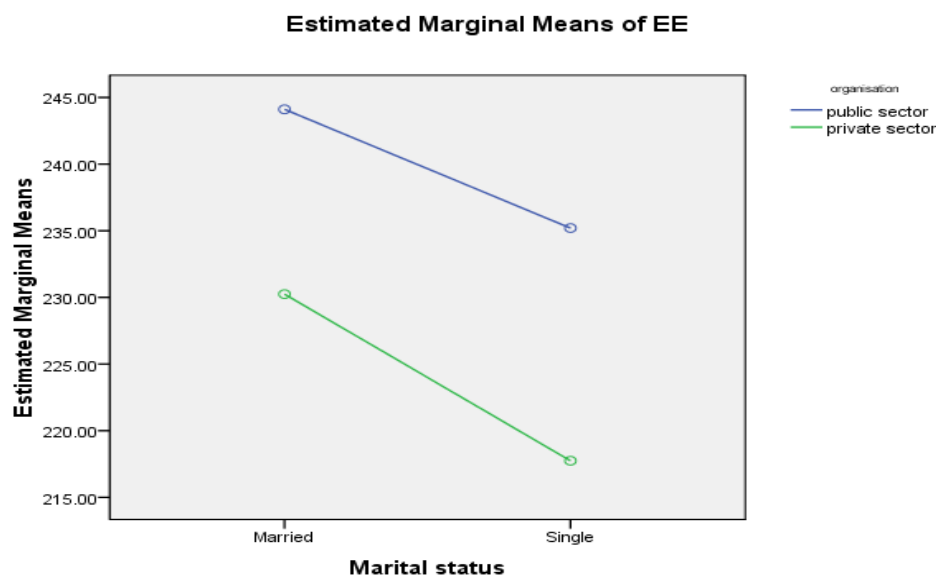


Fig 2.

- The descriptive shows that among the sample of 480 respondents 357 are married and 123 are single. In the public sector married respondents are 227 and single respondents are only 15, showing a large gap whereas in private sector married respondents are 130 whereas single ones are 108, quite close to each other.
- ANOVA results in table 2 clearly depicts that married people are more engaged both in public ($M=2.441$) and in private sector ($M=2.302$) as compared to respondents who are single ($M=2.352$) in public and ($M=2.177$) in private sector. This might be due to the fact that married people have more responsibilities towards their families, so they are more serious about their job and shows more engagement when compared with single ones as young workforce see many comparable jobs elsewhere and this perception has contributed to the low level of employee engagement. This was also supported by Gallup researches where it was observed that there is a difference between employees who are single and those who are married stating that married employees tend to have a higher level of engagement than those who are single. Suggesting that married employees have come to the point where they are more settled in both their personal and professional lives.
- The table 2 shows that there is a significant difference in the level of employee engagement with respect to organisation ($p=.00$) and with respect to marital status ($p=.04$).
- The intercept of ORG*MS shows that there is a significant difference in the level of engagement in public and private sector ($p=.014$) with respect to marital status, thus **accepting the hypothesis H₂₀**

H₀₃: There is a significant difference between the level of employee engagement in public and private sector with respect to age.

- The descriptive shows that among the sample of 480 respondents, 49 employees are below the age of 25, there are 113 between the age 25 to 30 years, 131 between 31 to 40 years, 101 employees between 41 to 50 years and 86 employees are above the age group of 50 years together in both the sectors.

Table 3. Tests of Between-Subjects Effects WRT Age

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Squared	Eta
Corrected Model	23986.470 ^a	8	2998.309	5.141	.000	.080	
Intercept	2.081E7	1	2.081E7	3.569E4	.000	.987	
ORG	6812.864	1	6812.864	11.682	.001	.024	
Age	6615.177	4	1653.794	2.836	.024	.024	
ORG * Age	1492.403	3	497.468	.853	.465	.005	
Error	274686.362	471	583.198				
Total	2.748E7	480					
Corrected Total	298672.831	479					

a. R Squared = .080 (Adjusted R Squared = .065)

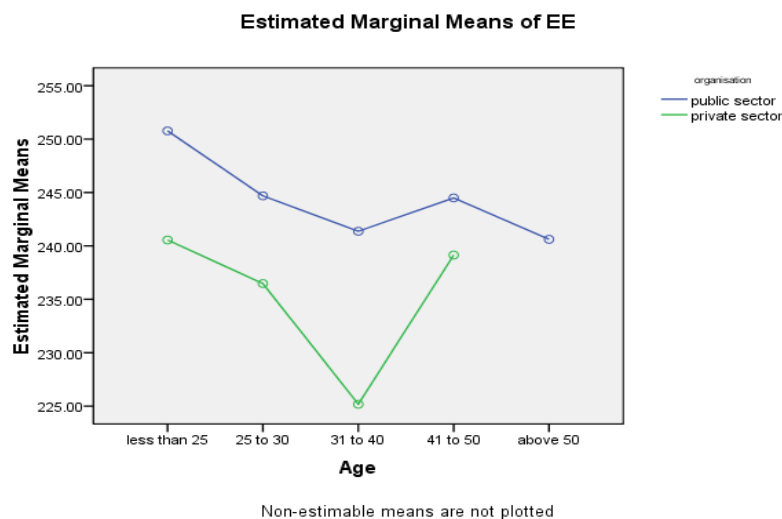


Fig 3.

- Tests of Between-Subjects Effects in table 3 shows that there is a significant difference in the level of engagement when compared in the sectors as (p=.024) also in the level of engagement with respect to age (p=.024).
- The graph in Fig.3 shows that in public sector initially the engagement is high but with the increase in age till 30 years the engagement level goes down, this might be due to the fact that in the starting years of their job as they do not have much workload they try to find

another better government sector opportunities, since they come in favorable age limit bracket (generally <30) for appearing in other public sector exams. The findings are supported by NHS results where it was found that engagement levels go down as age increases, suggesting that as the time passes employees feel bored with the work and do not feel any attraction towards their job. But after the age of 30 years they try to settle down in their current field and prefer to be stable in their job.

- In private sector the same pattern follows as with the increase in age till 30 years the engagement level goes down because the young workforce is known for the ability to multitask, less loyalty, enjoy freedom at work and dislike formality with standard work station (Smola & Sutton, 2002). They keep on looking for better remuneration resulting in switching their job after every 2 or 3 years but after 30 years it shows a drastic increase due to the reason that at senior level employees find their work more important and more meaningful, their responses on communication and involvement are much more positive. Also due to possible family expansion they try to stick to one job for a stable career.
- When compared within sectors, public sector employees depicts higher level of engagement than private sector as mostly the workforce in public sector is more educated and white-collar than the private-sector workforce and it is also older too. This is an advantage in building engagement. Due to the fact that government organisations provide life time security and benefits for health and insurance, so they feel more attached towards their job as their age proceeds.
- The intercept results of organisation and age shows that there is a strong difference in the extent of engagement in public and private sector with respect to age, **hence hypothesis H₀₃ is accepted.**

H₀₄: There is a significant difference between the level of employee engagement in public and private sector with respect to experience.

- Descriptive shows that there are 92 respondents with total experience of 0 to 5 years, 112 with 6 to 10 years, 94 with 11 to 20 years, 86 with 21 to 30 years and 96 above 30 years of experience showing almost even distribution of sample.

Table 4. Tests of Between-Subjects Effects WRT Experience

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	69291.653 ^a	9	7699.073	12.413	.000
Intercept	1.254E7	1	1.254E7	2.021E4	.000
ORG	8734.130	1	8734.130	14.082	.000
TE	21531.587	4	5382.897	8.679	.000
ORG * TE	1945.450	4	486.363	.784	.536
Error	291515.428	470	620.246		
Total	2.668E7	480			
Corrected Total	360807.081	479			

a. R Squared = .192 (Adjusted R Squared = .177)

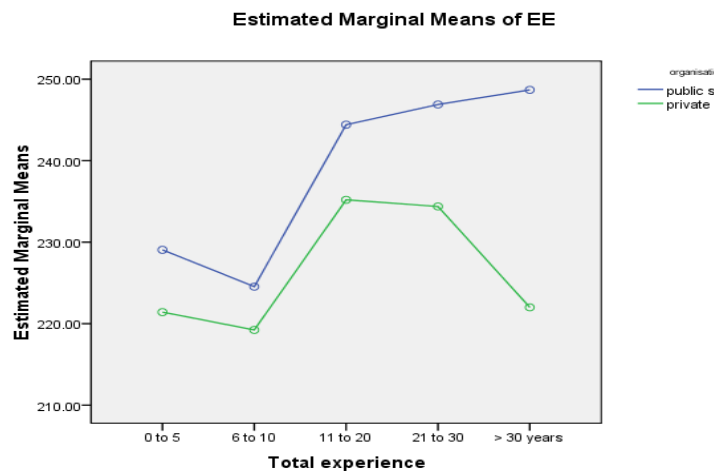


Fig 4.

- The analysis in table 4 shows that there is a significant difference in engagement when compared in both the sectors ($p=0.029$). It also revealed that engagement significantly differs when compared with respect to total experience ($p=0.049$).
- Fig 4 clearly shows that in Public sector during the initial years of their job the engagement is low due to the monotony as they have to perform same kind of job but after having 10 years of experience as they grow in the organisation with performance, they become more responsible towards their team and their organisation, thus enhancing engagement in them. Also with the increase in experience the benefits and flexibility provided to the employee increases thus making the employee feel more engaged and satisfied. Both NHS and CIPD 6c surveys find that workers older than 50 years are more engaged as they develop a feeling of family with their organisation.
- In private sector also the engagement is low in the initial years as they wish to work in organizations that allow them to perform their work on their own with freedom and

autonomy, own pace and own time (Martin, 2008) but after around 10 years they come at senior level, at that point they have to show stability and responsibility in their job resulting in engagement. The results show that after having 30 years of experience the engagement level shows a declination, this is in line with the findings of the researchers at Gallup (Brim 2002) and Truss et al (2006) where the degree to which an employee is satisfied by his or her job, and the length of service. Brim (2002) suggested that this might be due to the fact that for most employees, the first year on the job is their best and thereafter it is 'downhill'. So, the employers are required to find ways of renewing employees' engagement levels as the length of service increases.

- From the table 4 the intercept of organisation and total experience clearly shows that there is a strong difference in the level of employee engagement in both the sectors with respect to experience revealing the fact that in the initial years of their job employees are new and do not feel any attachment towards organisation but if they spend around 10 years in the same organisation, the employee gets more attached (M=2.44, S.D=21.05) towards the organisation.
- Statistics shows that the level of employee engagement is high in public sector as compared to private sector with respect to total experience in the organisation, thus **accepting the hypothesis H₀₄**.

H20: There is a significant difference in the levels of engagement among Top, middle and junior levels in Public and Private sector.

- Among 480 respondents 109 are senior level with experience more than 20 years of experience, 173 are middle level employees with experience between 10 to 20 years and 198 are lower level employees with experience less than 10 years.

Table 5. Tests of Between-Subjects Effects WRT level in organisation

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	17880.798 ^a	5	3576.160	6.037	.000
Intercept	3505075.741	1	3505075.741	5.917E3	.000
LVL	2849.878	2	1424.939	2.405	.041
ORG	7436.089	1	7436.089	12.553	.000
LVL * ORG	4279.216	2	2139.608	3.612	.028
Error	280792.033	474	592.388		
Total	2.748E7	480			
Corrected Total	298672.831	479			

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	17880.798 ^a	5	3576.160	6.037	.000
Intercept	3505075.741	1	3505075.741	5.917E3	.000
LVL	2849.878	2	1424.939	2.405	.041
ORG	7436.089	1	7436.089	12.553	.000
LVL * ORG	4279.216	2	2139.608	3.612	.028
Error	280792.033	474	592.388		
Total	2.748E7	480			

a. R Squared = .060 (Adjusted R Squared = .050)

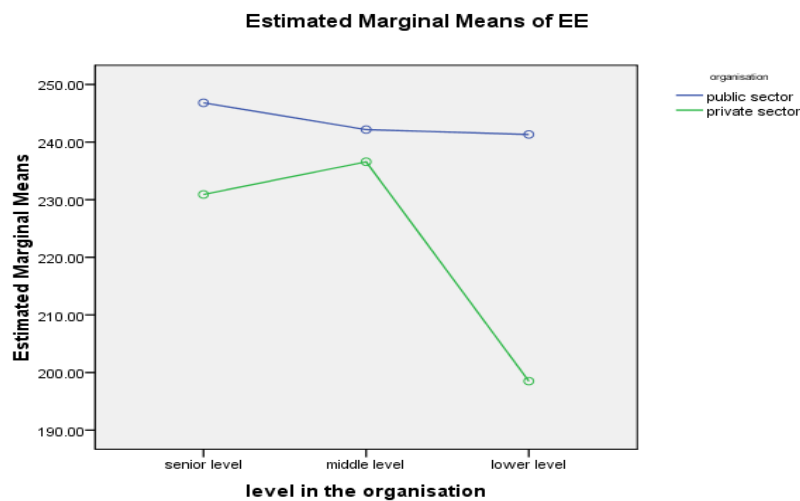


Fig 5.

- Looking at the statistics it is clear that at lower level engagement in public (M=2.308) is very high than in private (M=2.153) also found in other studies that 80% of the young employees in private “job hop” in order to meet their demand of frequent changes (Shaw & Fairhurst, 2010) and looking for new excitement (Smola & Sutton, 2002), at middle level in public sector (M=2.42) it is high as compared to private (M=2.36), also at senior level the engagement is very high in public (M=2.52) when compared to private sector (M=2.35).
- The intercept of level and organization in table 5 shows a strong relationship as (p=0.028).
- It is clear from Fig 5 that employee engagement is highest at senior level (M=2.511) and lowest at lower level (M=2.202) signifying that at senior level the employees have to play the role of a leader as well as a mentor, so they feel more responsible and committed towards their organisation whereas at lower level the employees feel less committed. This was supported by Towers Perrin (2003), where senior level executives were found to be

highly engaged than other group and were less likely to be disengaged may be due to income level but it was not the only contributory factor.

- The table 5 shows that there is a significant difference in the level of engagement in both the sectors ($p=0.00$) when compared at senior, middle and junior level. Thus **accepting the hypothesis H₀₂**.

CONCLUSION

The researches in the past and the present clearly focus the importance of demographic factors as they do play a significant role in the psychological engagement of an employee but demographic factors alone cannot predict an individual's inclination towards engagement. However, there are other more important things like the manner in which the human resource should be treated above all other assets in an organisation and how it is managed. Management style, employee views and job design along with many other variables have an impact on employee's level of engagement, regardless of demographic variables. Menefee and Murphy (2004) found in their studies that the main reason for young employees having a low engagement level is dissatisfaction with management and remunerations, inadequate opportunity for career-related skill development, dissatisfaction with benefits, a sore work environment and conflicting relationships with their manager or co-workers (Szamosi, 2006). Engagement is much more than attraction, retention and commitment. Hence, it is the foremost responsibility of an employee to take care of the needs and desires of an employee making him attached and loyal so that the employees have the freedom to make their job exciting and milieu having an engaged work life making a perfect blend of both work and fun.

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