

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT IN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICES

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Abstract

The Information Technology sector has revolutionised the way citizens go about their professional and personal lives. Employees serving in such a tedious and pressurised atmosphere are subject to a lot of challenges. It is imperative that they remain enthused and motivated to sustain their career amidst myriad problems. Rewards and benefits for diligent work has always been a good financial motivator and the industry has been debating about what constitutes quality of work life. The current research analyses the extent of impact of these factors on employee engagement. The relationship between self-efficacy and employee engagement has also been assessed.

Keywords: *Information Technology, Services, Employee Engagement, Self-Efficacy, Rewards, Benefits, Quality of Work Life.*

Introduction

Services sector contributes the maximum to the Gross Domestic Product and also accounts for the maximum employment across the globe. Information technology services are an important component with far reaching applications. Technology is as dynamic as the changing servicescape and is a part of daily life. There is hardly anything where technology is not used.

While people enjoy these services, the service providers are under high pressure. They battle it out every day to design and test concepts, calibrate and redesign, produce and sell their applications. They work 24 x 7 with hardly any break. It is no wonder that there is a huge possibility of the workforce getting stressed and choked. Hence research was needed on aspects like rewards and benefits, quality of work life, employee engagement and self-efficacy.

Review of Literature

Employee Engagement: Bartlomiejczuk and Born (2015) assessed the role of software companies

in building employee engagement among its globally dispersed teams. The study revealed how complexity of multiple regions, different culture and habits, and different standard of living practices warrant employee engagement by mere virtual communication. The software organisations have their own norms in terms of employee management, welfare and work place culture, these practices assist in bringing all employees under one roof, irrespective of their designation, region and nation. Globally dispersed employee teams permit organisations to gather talent from around the globe, have high flexibility in operation, and source differently talented employee team for the organisation. It was concluded that unique human resource policies of software companies on employee salary package, welfare, promotion, and other workplace measures unites teams across nations and builds engagement.

Komala and Prabhu (2015) revealed the significance of employee engagement and also checked the influence of attitude towards employment as well as different demographic factors of employees on engagement. This study showed that there is a strong and significant association found between employee engagement and their attitude towards employment. This study forecasted that the positive attitude towards the employment would be a significant contributing factor in employee engagement. This study also asserted that women employees are more affirmative towards employment; similarly, engagement levels of women are relatively high. This study also stressed that the married workforce have more positive attitude towards the employment and possess high engagement. Likewise, employees in the executive level have significant positive attitude towards employment and engagement due to their higher salaries. It was concluded that all the demographic factors have significant association with positive attitude towards employment and employee engagement.

Lai et al. (2015) carried out seminal work to assess the factors that influence employee engagement, its association with training and development, and co-workers' supports on employee engagement. The findings showed that employee engagement has significant positive association with training and development and co-workers' support. The study revealed that the employees need more training and development measures to reinforce and motivate higher employee engagement. This study stressed that the human resource practitioners and executives should create better training and development initiative for its employees. The existence of good relationship among co-workers may develop both the employees and the organisation. Paying more attention to develop co-workers' relationship is best for organisational development. In conclusion, the findings confirmed that both training and development and co-worker support have significant positive association with employee engagement.

Ali and Yasir (2014) assessed the effect of work overload on job satisfaction, and effect of job satisfaction on employee performance and engagement. This study divulged that the work overload is the main problem for the employees and it has significant impact on job satisfaction.

Work overload can affect the physical and mental health of employees, which ultimately affects employee engagement and employee performance. The findings of the study implied that to reduce the problem of work overload and stress, the organisations should take various strategies like training, job rotation and reward system to its workforce. This study has also suggested measures so as to deal with the work overload like increased utilisation of advanced technology and work sharing which would diminish the workload of employees at the individual level. The organisations should recognise the need of its employees and afford best work place policies to them.

Deepa and Kuppusamy (2014) measured the impact of performance appraisal system on job satisfaction, employee engagement and organisational citizenship behaviour and productivity. The study checked the theoretical foundation of performance appraisal system and its association between the dependent variables. The findings showed that performance appraisal system assists both the employees and the organisation to increase productivity, which effects in increased organisational commitment and organisational citizenship behaviour of the employees. Job satisfaction of employees depends on the proper appraisal of their performance. Salary, increment, promotion and incentives should be planned based on the performance report of employees. This study confirmed that the employees are satisfied with the job, and then their engagement level is increased, which direct them to increased productivity. This study concluded that performance appraisal system motivates the employees to bring organisational commitment in order to enhance productivity. This study suggested that providing both financial and non-financial incentives induces the employees to motivate them to work efficiently.

Kulkarni et al. (2014) examined the compensation elasticity of employee engagement in Indian software industry. Software industry in India is better known for its well-paid remuneration and it has been the dream employment sector for mostly young job-seekers. This study revealed that from the employee standpoint, lesser the compensation, lesser is the chance of accepting the offer by most job seekers. This study divulged that better compensation induces employees to perform well, motivates them to achieve targets, and increases organisational performance. The degree of elasticity showed that the employees with lower rank have lower level of degree of elasticity, whereas the employees with higher rank have high level of degree of elasticity. During the period of better economic prosperity, the degree of elasticity of software employees was high and vice versa. It was concluded that the compensation elasticity of software employee engagement is widely dependent upon the prevailing employment opportunities.

Gayathri et al. (2012) revealed that employee engagement and retention practices in organisations direct to higher employee satisfaction and loyalty particularly in the ITES sector. This study revealed that the reasons that lead to employee engagement consists of pay benefits, better working atmosphere, flexibility in work, team co-operation, and friendly superior, better culture

and value for the organisation. Employee retention practices of an organisation includes good working culture, support of superiors, growth potential, satisfactory compensation, training and development, employee engagement activities, and conducive working environment. These factors are playing a significant role concerning employee's decision to stay with the present employment. In this way, rewards, work autonomy, and company image play the main role in employee retention. It was concluded that the agreement level on employee retention strategies is high among the employees working in BPO sector.

Self-Efficacy: Agarwal (2015) conducted research to observe whether stress is a main factor in contributing high attrition among IT sector employees. It was found that stress in the workplace affects the self-efficacy of employees and ultimately it effects in job satisfaction. Job satisfaction of an employee is derived from the role they perform in the organisation. Job satisfaction covers work and its content, and there are multiple issues connected with work and these have a significant effect on job commitment. Stress at workplace and job satisfaction are connected with each other; more stress can reduce job satisfaction and job commitment. Findings stressed that job dissatisfaction can lead to job burnout and create three outcomes like emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and diminished personal accomplishment. It was concluded that job stress, satisfaction, and commitment have significant influence on employee attrition in IT sector.

Giran et al. (2014) assessed the impact of self-efficacy towards motivation in the work place. The findings revealed the significant positive association with self-efficacy levels and motivation at the work place. It was also found that there was no connection between employees' age, educational level, gender, experience, designation, and work load with motivation. Self-efficacy level was contributed by many factors by way of considerable variation with motivation factors. These factors include variations in economic environment, high workload, alternate shifts, and long consecutive working hours. These factors also lead to stress, fatigue burnout, and high turnover rates among employees. This study also informed that higher levels of self-efficacy develop overall work performance and commitment. In summary, it was concluded that developing suitable work place policies can bring higher motivation among its employees.

Cherian and Jacob (2013) assessed the self-efficacy level of employees on motivation and performance. Findings of the study revealed that self-efficacy can be applied for work allied performance in terms of motivating various employee-based aspects in addition to organisational pursuits. Organisations should implement more motivational practices to boost employee performance. It was found that employee performance is positively affected by the overall self-efficacy. Similarly, complication of the work tasks as well as performance locus is found to moderate the connection involving self-efficacy and performance at workplace. Both these factors render a significant role in organisational settings as they have a tendency to deteriorate the link between self-efficacy and performance. This study suggested that the provision of relevant

information of the task assigned, solution to solve complex task, reduction in physical distractions, and improvement of self-efficacy level of employees can motivate the performance of employees.

Elnaga and Imran (2013) checked the influence of training on employee performance. Training and development programs should be planned to provide vital knowledge; enhance skills and capabilities of employees in order to achieve higher productivity. Organisations should design the training and development initiatives with clear goals and objectives based on the needs of employees in particular and organisations in general. Training develops the self-efficacy level of employees. Self-efficacy leads the employees to decide and discharge their work responsibilities without any deviation. Efficient training is recognised to be a main factor for increased performance, as it can develop the employee's competency level and organisational productivity. Hence, effective training provides skill development, competency improvement, self-efficiency to finish work in time, and ultimately develops employee performance and productivity of the organisation. It was concluded that the training programs should be designed to attain needs and objectives of the organisation.

Chaudhary et al. (2012) analysed the influence of occupational self-efficacy on employee engagement. Findings clearly showed that occupational self-efficacy is positively associated and act as a main predictor of employee engagement. This study stressed that three aspects of employee engagement, that is, the association of dedication is found to be highest followed by vigour and absorption. This study divulged that the occupational self-efficacy covers six dimensions, such as, confidence, command, adaptability, personal effectiveness, positive attitude and individuality. It was found that amongst the six aspects of occupational self-efficacy, personal effectiveness had the highest association with employee engagement than confidence and adaptability. This study revealed that occupational self-efficacy beliefs in the employees are determined more by the fondness towards constant development, the confidence level and the capability to alter as compared to other aspects of command, positive attitude and individuality.

Dorner (2012) assessed the innovative work behaviour using employee expectations and its effect on job performance. It was found that the employees' innovative work behaviour is being greatly documented as a significant foundation of organisational success. A number of organisational and individual factors have been considered as significant determinants of innovative work behaviour. The study examined the different kinds of prospects as antecedents of innovative work behaviour. This study asserted that employees hold two different kinds of expectation with regard to innovative work behaviour. The expectations with regard to self-efficacy and outcome expectations are significant determinants of innovative work behaviour. Self-efficacy plays effective role in the development of employee skills sets and ability levels through the job performance. The study suggested that the determinants of innovative self-efficacy include the employee's salient individuality, organisational, professional, and department level factors. It was

concluded that self-evaluation aspects, support of innovation in the organisation, leadership, and exchanges between co-workers influence self-efficacy.

Sudha (2011) examined the association between employee perception and turnover intentions. This study revealed that employees who are happy, creative at the work place, and motivated to do their job have the highest self-efficacy. The organisation should also be mindful always about the compensation packages offered and it should be at par with the industrial standards to reduce employee turnover. Employee perception largely depends on the measures taken by the organisation to develop their skills, pay benefits, welfare measures, and better working atmosphere. This study revealed that the self-efficacy level of employees was high, which led to maintaining the perception of employees on a favourable position. In addition to that, organisations should implement retention measures to retain talented employees for the development of the company. It was concluded that organisation should offer all help to its workforce whereby they feel trust and sincerity of the organisation. It suggested that regular touch with its employees may avoid the turnover intentions.

Quality of Work Life: Jumbulingam (2015) assessed the relationship between demographic factors of IT professionals with quality of work life. Quality of work life is highly connected with the demographic aspects of employees, which includes, age, gender, education, experience, income and designation. Quality of work life covers elements like job satisfaction, sufficiency pay, work atmosphere, organisational culture, and employee value and welfare. If these elements are found at satisfactory level, the employees have the tendency towards better quality of work-life. Therefore, these factors have significant effect on employee performance, organisational productivity, employee turnover and absenteeism and retention of employees in the firm. In addition, the quality of work life is related with employee satisfaction, involvement, motivation, work place health, safety and welfare, knowledge and skill development, and balance in work and life. Findings showed that the demographic factors are positively associated with the quality of work life of IT professionals.

Kavitha et al. (2015) checked the quality of work life among IT sector employees, besides how employees balance their life and health determinants in work life of employees. This study assessed quality of work life based on health and safety, work atmosphere, job satisfaction, work place motivation, job design and team effectiveness. This study revealed that better quality of work life leads to higher employee morale and minimises absenteeism and attrition. Maintain good working environment in the company can enhance the brand image and encourage the entry of new talent into the company. Findings of the study revealed that work atmosphere, job involvement, job satisfaction, work place motivation are the four main factors which influences the quality of work life. It was concluded that quality of work life is the extent to which employees are able to satisfy their key individual needs while employed by the organisation.

Shaniba (2015) assessed the work life balance of women employees in software industry. Women in software sector is very essential part for the development of Indian software industry in the world. This study revealed that the prevailing quality of work life condition in the company allows them to balance their personal life with organisational life. Findings of the study stressed that the work life balance of women employees are perfectly associated with family atmosphere, personal commitments, income deficiency, childcare, family care and other factors. This study revealed that pay, family support, work place culture, colleague and boss support are significantly associated with work life balance of employees. It was suggested that women employees should develop their performance in different ways like quality, productivity and profitability.

Tewathia (2014) assessed the work life balance of employees in IT industry. The findings revealed that flexible working hours will improve work life balance of employees. Working at home was also another significant factor which was opted for by the employees and it was considered that it would improve the quality of work life. Female employees felt that child care activities should be accessible at the work place to ensure balance between work and life. The findings revealed that due to the over workload, the employees found it difficulty to spend time with their families and furthermore, work stress affected quality of work life. The results expressed that the employees are facing tough problems, if their spouse is also employed, organisations should take measures to enhance quality of work life of employees. The study concluded that the work life balance of employees in IT sector needs further improvement.

Anand Raja and Asokkumar (2013) investigated the quality of work life of employees. This study revealed that quality of work life indicates all the inputs of organisation, which desires at job satisfaction and improving organisational efficiency. The study revealed that there is a high level of job satisfaction amongst the employing relating to quality of work life. This study also expressed that sufficient pay, promotion, safety and welfare, healthier working conditions, career growth, employee integration, and employee value are the significant determining factors of quality of work life. Similarly, work place pride, flexibility in work, relevance of work, remedial measures for grievance and performance management also are significant determinants of quality of work life. It was concluded that the quality of work life of employees is largely relied on the initiatives of the organisation.

Preethi and Raju (2013) attempted to check the relationship among the factors of quality of work life. This study explored the association between quality of work life factors, which provides the measures to develop the quality of work life of IT professionals and organisational performance. This study disclosed that quality of work life is influenced by relationship between employees, nature of work, autonomy in work, job security, working atmosphere, social set up, psychological well-being, health level and high depression due to work. In addition to that, stress, family

interference on work, work interference on family, motivation, career growth, communication, organisational efforts, goals and self-efficacy influence quality of work life. This study showed that the majority of factors are correlated positively. The association between organisation, employee and peer have positive and significant impact in the quality of work life of the employees.

Sinha (2012) attempted to measure the factors affecting quality of work life of employees. The study found how organisations are taking measures to satisfy the employees' needs at the work place. This study stressed that improper work assignment, over workload, lack of flexibility, lack of leave and welfare facilities, and poor employee value have significant influence in quality of work life of employees. Understanding various needs of employees, organisation can spot the strategic gaps in the employee management and can take further essential actions to develop the quality of work life of employees. This may be supportive for an organisation to be successful and to realise its goals with a variety of attractive organisational effects, such as abridged rate of absenteeism, turnover, late arrival, stress elimination, and better job performance. It was concluded that job specific factors like superior agony, inadequate human resource policies, poor work culture have significant effect on quality of work life.

Rewards and Benefits: Murphy (2015) focused on the influence of reward systems on employee performance in the current work atmosphere, and how rewards lead to better job satisfaction and higher performance. This study also examined the different kinds of reward system that influence performance and recommended which reward system was more beneficial to the company. This study found that employee commitment, motivation, performance, and morale are positively associated with the rewards given by the company. Reward system influences more on employee performance in the modern work environment. Rewards are the real encouragement factor for the employees to achieve lot in the organisation and it ultimately leads to higher job satisfaction. The rewards and recognition depends on the professed value of the rewards to an individual employee or group of employees. It was concluded that performance and motivation are directly connected, but the rewards that oblige both of these may be different.

Wei and Yazdanifard (2014) aimed to examine the impact of positive reinforcement on employee performance. This study widely considered reinforcement theory; it is an instrument that decreases or increases the behaviour of employees in the organisation. This study was found that the positive reinforcement is observed to be the most efficient way of encouraging employees to perform well in the organisation. The employees can be motivated through adequate rewards and benefits based on their involvement. This study considered both extrinsic rewards and intrinsic rewards. Salary, incentive, bonus, monetary rewards, and fringe benefits are extrinsic rewards while praise, motivation, and empowerment are intrinsic rewards granted to employees. Employees feel satisfied when their effort is acknowledged and their hard work is appreciated. It was concluded that the organisations should develop suitable motivation policies to increase its

performance.

Baskar and Prakash (2013) checked the impact of rewards and recognition on employee motivation. This study also examined the effective means of rewards, behavioural difference of employees, and role of motivation in employee performance. This study showed that various factors influence employee motivation and job satisfaction, particularly, rewards and recognitions and benefits. This study asserted that the higher the level of motivation and satisfaction, the greater is the level of performance and productivity. The findings stressed the fact that employees with sufficient rewards tended to be highly motivated. The organisations could benefit a lot due to the implementation of rewards and recognition, which helps the organisation to retain its talented workforce. It was suggested that the organisations should employ different strategies to motivate its workforce, and it has different motivational impact on the employees.

Schreurs et al. (2013) investigated the connection between pay level satisfaction and employee outcomes and its moderating effect on employee involvement climate. Employee involvement climate includes information sharing and decision making environment. Employee outcome deals with job satisfaction, affective commitment and turnover intent. Pay is the real compensation for the work discharged by the employees. The organisations should develop better compensation policies to establish employee co-operation. The compensation policy of the organisation should include recognition, rewards and all monetary and non-monetary benefits. The findings disclosed that boost in pay level satisfaction strengthens job satisfaction, affective commitment and lessens turnover intention. This study also stressed that the employee involvement climate has varied impact on the association between pay level satisfaction and employee outcomes. It was concluded that pay level satisfaction among employees leads to better employee outcomes and employee involvement climate.

Vijayakumar and Subha (2013) aimed to check the impact of rewards and recognition on job satisfaction of employees. This study also attempted to discover whether there is any association between rewards and recognition, and employees' motivation and satisfaction. The study revealed that the improvements in level of rewards and recognition in the organisation, bring positive influence on employee motivation and job satisfaction. Therefore, reward plan plays essential role in improving the service delivered to the employees. It was found that many aspects of rewards, benefits and recognitions positively contributed to employee motivation and job satisfaction. In addition to that promotions, incentives, and recognitions showed that employees are motivated to a certain extent to perform well in the company. Therefore, it was concluded that rewards and recognition plans offered to employees has to be modified in order to motivate and satisfy them.

Donata (2011) examined the employee motivation techniques in terms of extrinsic rewards versus intrinsic rewards. This study stressed that employees are motivated by rewards, incentives, and

recognitions as to motivate them extrinsically whereas, employees who simply motivate themselves is called intrinsic motivation. This study indicated that employees are less motivated by financial rewards and recognition for achievement of their target or for extraordinary performance. This study stressed that motivation at the work place induces the employees to achieve more in terms of productivity. The findings of the study revealed that rewards and benefits should be based on objective criteria, which can be professed as reasonable. Motivational techniques are usually high among the medium and high cadre employees, whereas, low level employees mainly perceived the variations in salary, amenities and other benefits. It was concluded that designing standard motivation plan among all categories of employees will bring perfect motivation.

Danish and Usman (2010) endeavoured to discover the main factors that influence employee motivation and to ascertain the association between reward, recognition and motivation. This study revealed the association between various aspects of work motivation and satisfaction. This study expressed that superiors should motivate their junior employees with proper recognition and appreciation at the work place. Employees feel a high level of motivation, if they are rewarded perfectly for their achievement at the workplace. This study stressed that reward and recognition has direct and significant impact on employee motivation. The motivated employee works better and yields higher output in the organisation, which ends with increased job satisfaction. It was concluded that the reward and recognition at the workplace has positive association with job satisfaction and motivation. This study suggested that organisations should focus on establishing best rewards and recognition policies with a view to promote their employees to attain organisational objectives.

Methods and Materials

Information technology services' employees were surveyed with a structured questionnaire at Chennai city during 2016-2017. The estimated and actual sample sizes were 708 and 741 respondents respectively. Cluster sampling was undertaken and the IT and Tech Parks in Chennai were visited (web 1, web 2) at Ambattur and Rajiv Gandhi IT Expressway. Respondents were chosen at random from companies who gave permission.

Results and Discussion

The results of structural equation modelling are presented in Figure 1 and Tables 1 and 2.

Figure 1

SEM Path Analysis

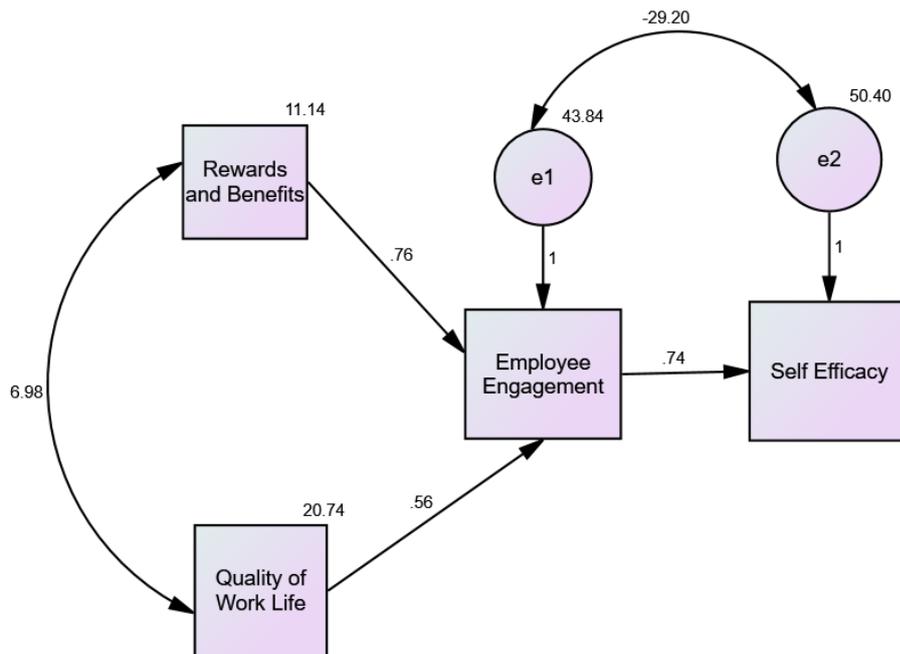


Table 1

Structural Model Path Analysis

Path			Unstandardised Coefficient	Standardised Coefficient	t	p
Employee Engagement	←	Rewards and Benefits	0.759	0.320	12.135	***
Employee Engagement	←	Quality of Work Life	0.563	0.323	12.259	***
Self-Efficacy	←	Employee Engagement	0.741	0.910	13.735	***

*** Significant at $p < 0.001$

The model fit summary is summarised in Table 2. Good fit was found to exist for the structural model as model values were in the acceptable range (Haier et al., 2009; Hooper et al., 2008; Steiger, 2007; Hu and Bentler, 1999).

Table 2**Model Fit Summary**

Fit Indices	Structural Model Values	Acceptable Values
CMIN/df	3.15	<3
GFI	0.997	>0.9
AGFI	0.970	>0.9
NFI	0.993	>0.9
CFI	0.995	>0.9
RMSEA	0.04	<0.06

H₀₁: Rewards and benefits does not have a positive impact on employee engagement.

The p value was significant at 0.1% and hence null hypothesis is rejected. The coefficient of Rewards and benefits was observed to be 0.759.

H₀₂: Quality of Work Life does not have a positive impact on employee engagement.

The p value was significant at 0.1% and hence null hypothesis is rejected. The coefficient of Quality of Work Life was observed to be 0.563.

H₀₃: Employee engagement does not have a positive impact on self-efficacy.

The p value was significant at 0.1% and hence null hypothesis is rejected. The coefficient of Employee engagement was observed to be 0.741.

Conclusion

Rewards and benefits as well as quality of work life have a positive impact on employee engagement. Rewards, financial and non-financial, have been at the fore front for ages but benefits have assumed a new meaning. Current benefits are especially targeted at employee wellness. Quality of work life has gained significance in recent years and encompasses main issues like work ambience, organisational citizenship behaviour, work-life balance and mindfulness.

For every 0.759-unit increase in rewards and benefits, there will be 1-unit increase in employee engagement. For every 0.563-unit increase in Quality of Work Life, there will be 1-unit increase in employee engagement. For every 0.741-unit increase in Employee engagement, there will be 1-unit increase in self-efficacy.

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