UNDERSTANDING THE LEVELS OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT: A STUDY OF A REPUTED ORGANISED RETAIL STORE IN HUBLI-DHARWAD

Ms. Preeti Nelogal

Student, Department of Management Studies
SDM College of Engineering and Technology, Dharwad
preetinelogal86@gmail.com

Prof. Prashant U Gujanal

Assistant Professor, Department of Management Studies,
SDM College of Engineering and Technology, Dharwad

Abstract:

The present study was carried out to understand the level of employee engagement at a reputed organised retail store. The Gallup's 12 questionnaire was used for the study. The present study is descriptive in nature and includes the employees working in the store. Purposive sampling method was used to collect data for the study. Primary data was collected using a structured questionnaire. The four levels that contribute to employee engagement namely Basic needs, Individual contribution, Teamwork and Growth were considered. Data was collected from 92 respondents. The statistical analysis of skewness and correlation using SPSS software was done to analyse the collected data. From the study we discovered that the employees of the company are happy with the teamwork and growth opportunities provided in the organisation, but there is still chance for improvements with respect to basic needs and individual contribution to improve the engagement level of the employees.

Keywords: Employees, employee engagement, Retail store etc.

1. INTRODUCTION

Employee engagement was explained by Kahn (1990, 1992) as a range of behaviours and modes employees expressed as satisfaction of the support and autonomy to authentically perform their work role. It refers to the emotional commitment employees have towards their organization and its goals. It goes beyond mere job satisfaction and includes the dedication and enthusiasm with which employees approach their work.

Engaged employees are motivated to contribute to the organization's success, often going above and beyond their basic job duties. They feel a sense of pride and ownership in their work and are more likely to stay with the company long-term. Factors that contribute to employee engagement include effective communication from management, opportunities for career growth, recognition

for achievements, and a positive work environment that fosters trust and collaboration among colleagues.

According to Albrecht et al. (2018), only those organizations that maintain work engagement increase work performance, which positively affects the company's growth. Employers are more willing to know what will engage workers and keep them energized and productive on the job and committed to the organization. Employees on the other hand want to know what the organization will do for them in terms of organizational rewards and favourable job conditions. The organizations need to execute specific engagement plans and create an inclusive environment to inculcate higher confidence level and enthusiasm to learn and innovate for successful job roles. The various parameters of assessing engagement can be level of job satisfaction, commitment, involvement, emotional attachment and feelings of empowerment.

The workforce comprises of four types of employees as far as employee engagement is concerned i.e. highly engaged (totally engaged), moderately engaged (nearly engaged), passive (nearly engaged, also nearly disengaged), actively disengaged (totally disengaged). The engagement of employee includes social, intellectual and emotional engagement in the work and work environment at large. These are the different dimensions through which shape of mentality, improvement in work satisfaction, perception and commitment etc. can be measured.In the process of engaging employees, management needs to take a proper assessment of attitude, behaviour and outcomes and address their concerns attentively. More of their capability and potential can be nurtured through a two-way communication process to motivate them towards their work.

The Indian retail industry has emerged as one of the most dynamic and fast-paced industries due to the entry of several new players. It accounts for over 10% of the country's gross domestic product (GDP) and around 8% of the employment. India is the world's fifth-largest global destination in the retail space. The retail sector in India is expected to reach a whopping US$ 2 trillion in value by 2032, according to the Boston Consulting Group (BCG). A total retail space of 23.25 million sq. ft is expected to become operational during 2023-25. As per Kearney Research, India's retail industry is projected to grow at 9% over 2019-2030, from US$ 779 billion in 2019 to US$ 1,407 billion by 2026 and more than US$ 1.8 trillion by 2030. India's direct selling industry is expected to be valued at US$ 7.77 billion by the end of 2025.

1.1. NEED FOR THE STUDY

Employee engagement is crucial for organizations as it directly impacts productivity, retention rates, and overall well-being. Engaged employees are more committed to their work, leading to increased productivity and efficiency. They are also more likely to stay with the organization, reducing turnover rates and the costs associated with hiring and training new staff. Additionally, engagement correlates with job satisfaction and well-being, lowering stress and burnout levels. A high level of engagement fosters a positive workplace culture, encouraging teamwork, collaboration, and support. Financial performance also improves due to the combined effects of increased productivity, better customer service, and reduced turnover costs. Organizations are increasingly recognizing the importance of employee engagement and well-being, yet many still struggle to effectively foster these within their workforce. Despite various initiatives and programs aimed at improving engagement, many companies face challenges such as high turnover rates, low productivity, and increased employee burnout. The lack of a supportive work environment, ineffective communication, and insufficient recognition and rewards contribute to disengagement. There is a pressing need for organizations to develop and implement comprehensive strategies that enhance employee engagement thereby improving both individual and organizational outcomes. The present study attempts to answer the following research Questions:

RQ1: What is the level of employee engagement at the retail store under study in Hubli Dharwad?

RQ2: What are the determinants fostering engagement at the store?

1.2. OBJECTIVES

1. To study the levels of employee engagement at a reputed retail store in Hubli Dharwad.
2. To understand the determinants that foster employee engagement.
3. The study will also attempt to understand the influence of age on employee engagement among the employees at the store.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Employee engagement is seen as a function of working conditions, specifically the job demands, job resources and the control which the employee has over his work (Bakker, 2011). Engagement

should be viewed as an important strategy involving all the levels of organization (Frank et al 2004). Proper communications, continuous and consistent encouragement (Truss et al 2006) are keys to establish good relations with employees and enhance their satisfaction level and belief in the organisations decision making process. Langelaan et al. (2006) focused on finding the influence of individual differences resulting in 'burnout' and 'engagement'. The findings suggested that 'personality' and 'temperament' as two personality traits that can help in classifying employees as 'burn-out sensitive' and 'engagement-sensitive'. The study revealed that people who score high for 'neuroticism' were more prone to feel 'burn-out' and employees who had 'extraversion' as personality trait were found more favourable for 'work engagement'. Saks (2006) in his work brought out the difference between organization engagement and job engagement. The work brought in a relationship between antecedents and the consequences of engagement. The findings revealed that job characteristics, along with organizational policies, practices and support enhanced engagement. Engagement, in turn results in increased job satisfaction, commitment, citizenship behaviour and reduced intention to quit. The research leaves a scope for further study on employee engagement from individual differences perspective.

A comprehensive review on employee engagement by Kular et al. (2008) gives the evolution of the concept of 'employee engagement'. The article describes the process under three major heads the definition, connect with individual differences and relationship between employee involvement and engagement. The review summarizes that the findings are split as far as 'individual differences' are concerned. There was not one common theory which was universally accepted neither for the 'definition: nor on the literature with respect to individual differences. Another interesting inference the review brought out was that engaged employees stay longer; it has also been found that longer stay reduces engagement levels. The authors also suggest that the future research should be based on interviews to understand the holistic process of engagement. In addition, the review says, individual personality traits should be considered as variables to see the influence on engagement. Job fit, affective commitment and psychological climate were found to be antecedents and discretionary effort of employee engagement in his (Shuck, 2010) non-experimental correlation doctoral theses. A framework on how concentrating on engagement can be more beneficial than focusing on performance was developed by Gruman & Saks (2011). This theory suggests that the engagement begins when goals are decided jointly by the manager

and subordinate. This ensures the basic platform for engagement. Shuck & Rocco (2011) studied engagement using qualitative approach. It was a case study. The study generated a conceptual framework relating individual's attributes with that of external aspects. The organization was chosen based on the claim that it was one of the 'most sought-after places to work for'. Therefore, the focus was on how employees share their experiences of engagement. This study insists that engagement should be viewed from the lens of an individual and as an organizational construct. The study also sketched implications for HR development and practice.

Shuck & Rose (2013) felt the need of studying engagement from how to create external parameters that takes care of the meaning and purpose from employee perspective. The authors argue that most of the literature on the engagement is focused on the outcome of engagement rather than engagement as outcome. The authors, therefore, feel the need to incorporate such practices in HRD that has the potential to create engagement. Since, heightened performance is the natural consequence of engaged employees, they focus on outcome as a futile exercise and warn that it may lower the intensity of the whole construct and may be replaced by some other construct in the times to come. Further, they associate 'meaning' with 'contribution', 'reward' and 'influence'. The authors argue that purpose results because of meaningful activities. They say the responsibility rests on HR team to ensure communication in such a way that the original intention (the purpose) is transferred without any distortion. In this work, Keating (2015) shares the influence of mindset that the employees hold on their engagement. The authors give a conceptual framework showing connections among the influence of self, managerial and organizational culture on the mindset and the resulting behavioural areas of self-development and interpersonal interactions. This finally impacts engagement. They argue that minds can be worked on to move away from fixated ideas of capability.

Alagaraja & Shuck (2015) highlight the importance of verifying the connect between alignment of employee with the organization and the resulting impact on performance in their review article. They were also guided by the question how engagement impacts individual performance. Alignment creates the platform for involvement based on meaning and purpose. The authors insist that the organizations should continuously monitor to keep the flame of engagement on. They conclude by saying that engagement and alignment cannot be demanded but can be cultivated.

Studies by Asadi et al. (2008) and Eker et al. (2004) show that demographic variables like gender, age, designation, education, marital status and numbers of years in organization of the employees are vital in determining the satisfaction of employees. Age of the employee is an important paradigm of individual difference. Career adaptability, as a personal resource, relates specifically to the agency of the employees to manage their own careers, make career decisions and have the confidence to adapt to changing work environments (Bakker, 2011). A higher level of career adaptability is witnessed in early career workers (Rostami, Abedi, Bagnhan and Savickas, 2012). Career adaptable individuals are also likely to have strong feelings of attachment towards their organisation and are more likely to engage in self-development activities that will enable them to take advantage of opportunities in their job or career (Ferreira, 2012). According to Ferreira (2012), age relates to explaining the sense of control (self-discipline in conscientious and responsible decision making). Ng and Feldman (2013) in their study highlighted the need for exploring various mechanisms through which age affects work-related outcomes. Studies by Rossier Zecca, Stauffer, Maggiori, and Dauwalder (2012) have found that career adaptability seems to be uninfluenced by age in general. This is in contrast with the vocational maturity development models which suggest an increase in maturity with age, confirming the appropriateness of career adaptability as a construct in the changing world of work (Rossier et al., 2012). The resulting contradiction in studies led to the following hypothesis.

H_0: *Age of the employee influences employee engagement.*

H_1: *Age of the employee does not influence employee engagement*

Gallup's Q^{12}:

The present study employs the Gallup's Employee Engagement survey also known as the Q^{12} survey. The Survey has 12 questions which measure the 12 needs the managers of any organisation need to meet to improve productivity. The Gallups employee engagement framework is based on a hierarchy of employees' development needs and each of the 12 employee engagement survey questions, or items, fits into one of the four levels within that
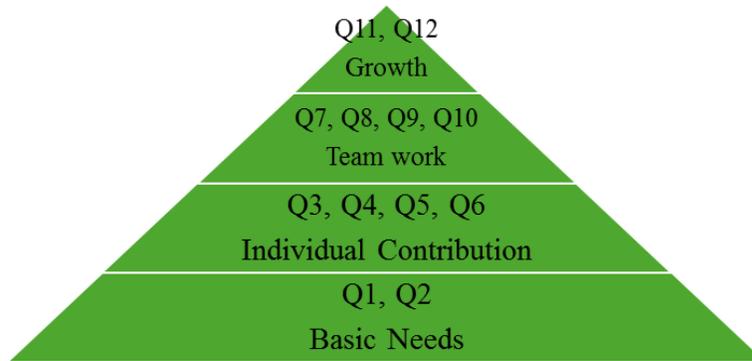
Figure 1: Gallup's levels of Engagement

hierarchy. Each level represents needs that a manager must ensure that they are met. First group of questions are on the basic needs that are to be met. The questions relate to the employees clarity of the job responsibilities he has to fulfil and of the material he is provided to do his job efficiently. The second level has questions on opportunities at work and appreciation and encouragement he receives for doing the work efficiently. The third level has questions about team work and the work quality of work followed by the employees and the fourth level has questions on the learning and progress the employees have made in their work.

These levels provide a road map for managers to motivate and develop their team members and improve team members' performance, with each level building on the previous one. Meeting the needs in the three foundational levels creates an environment of trust and support that enables managers and employees to get the most out of the top level, personal growth.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study is descriptive in nature as it attempts to understand the level of employee engagement at a reputed organized retail store in Hubli Dharwad. The study encompasses the employees working in the store. Purposive sampling method was used to collect data for the study.

The data for the study was collected from the employees using a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was created in the google forms format and circulated among the respondents and the responses were collected in person from the respondents. The Gallups 12 questionnaire on Employee engagement was used as the basis for framing the questions and Likert's 5-point scale was used for the responses. The questionnaire had two sections. Section 1 focused on collecting

demographic data of the respondents and section 2 consisted of questions on four levels namely Basic needs, Individual contribution, Teamwork and Growth. These four levels majorly contribute to the employee engagement. A total of 92 responses were collected. The statistical analysis of skewness and correlation analysis using SPSS software was done to analyse the collected data.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

The demographic characteristics of the respondents in Table 1 indicated that 75% of the respondents are male, 25% of the respondents are female. The sample is skewed as majority of

Table 1: Respondents Profile

Demography	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	69	75
Female	23	25
Age		
18-22	8	8.7
23-27	31	33.7
28-32	36	39.1
More than 32	17	18.5
Education		
SSLC	1	1.1
Diploma	11	12.0
PUC	15	16.3
Graduation	47	51.1
Post Graduation	18	19.6
Marital Status		
Single	53	57.6
Married	19	20.7
Married with Children	20	21.7
Experience		
0-2 Years	46	50.0
3-5 Years	44	47.8
6-8 Years	1	1.1
More than 9 years	1	1.1

Source: Primary Data

the respondents are male. 33.7% of the respondents are in the age group of 23-27 years, 39.13% are in the age group of 28-32 years and 18.48% are of more than 32 years of age. Of the 92 respondents 11.96 % are diploma holders, 16.30% have completed their pre university education, 51.09% are graduates and 19.57% are postgraduates. Majority of the employees 57.61% are bachelors, 20.65% of the employees are married and only 21.74% are married with children. Majority of the employees 50% have a work experience of 0-2 years,

47.38% have a work experience of 3-5 years and only 1.09% of the employees have a work experience of 6-8 years and more than 9 years respectively. We can observe that employees with 0-5 years of experience formed the major respondents in the study.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics

	N	Range	Min	Max	Mean		SD	Variance	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Stat	*Stat*	*Stat*	*Stat*	*Stat*	*Std. Error*	*Stat*	*Stat*	*Stat*	*Std. Error*	*Stat*	*Std. Error*
Basic Needs	92	2.0	2.0	4.0	2.984	.0412	.3954	.156	-.214	.251	.723	.498
Individual Contribution	92	1.75	1.00	2.75	1.9457	.04470	.42875	.184	-.429	.251	-.425	.498
Teamwork	92	1.75	1.50	3.25	2.2962	.04404	.42246	.178	.345	.251	-.677	.498
Growth	92	2.0	1.0	3.0	1.864	.0729	.6997	.490	.255	.251	-1.103	.498
Valid N	92											

From the analysis of skewness in Table 2, the basic need is negatively skewed with a statistical value of -0.214; individual contribution is also negatively skewed with a statistical value of -0.429. But teamwork and growth are positively skewed with a statistical value of 0.345 & 0.255 respectively.

Table 3: ANOVA[a]

	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	*Regression*	.258	1	.258	2.794	.098[b]
	Residual	8.295	90	.092		
	Total	8.552	91			

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Engagement
b. Predictors: (Constant), Age

The value of F-statistics in table 3 (F=2.794) which is greater than the significant value 0.098 indicates that the independent and dependent variables are significantly different from each other. This provides scope or further research in finding the relationship between the independent and dependent variable.

4.1. Hypothesis:

H_0: Age of the employees influence the employee engagement.

H_1: Age of the employees does not influence the employee engagement.

Table 4: Correlation Analysis

		Age of the respondent	Employee Engagement
Age of the respondent	Pearson Correlation	1	-.241[*]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.021
	N	92	92
Employee Engagement	Pearson Correlation	-.241[*]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.021	
	N	92	92

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

Correlation analysis has been used to understand the relation between the dependent and independent variables. Analysis in Table 3 shows the correlation of two variables that is age of the employees and employee engagement. The correlation of -0.241 indicates that there is negative correlation between the age group and employee engagement.

Table 5: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.174[a]	.030	.019	.304

a. Predictors: (Constant), Age

The R value with respect to age and employee engagement is 0.174. This indicates that the relationship between the variables of age and employee engagement is significantly weak.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The present study was undertaken to identify the determinants influencing the levels of employee engagement at a reputed organised retail store in Hubli Dharwad. Using the Gallup's 12 questionnaire we tried to understand the determinants influencing employee engagement at the store. The research data and analysis show that the employees of the company are happy with the teamwork and growth opportunities provided in the organisation, but there is still chance for improvements with respect to basic needs and individual contribution to improve the engagement level of the employees. The employees at the store are to be made aware of their respective roles and responsibilities clearly and the employees are to be facilitated with materials to do their jobs efficiently. Ample opportunities have to be provided to employees to carry out their

responsibilities successfully. The work of the employees needs to be appreciated and encouraged on regular intervals and their progress at work needs to be encouraged.

The study also attempted to determine the influence of age of the employee and its influence on employee engagement. Both the variables of age and employee engagement have inverse relationship, because of which we can conclude that age of the employee does not have any influence on employee engagement.

The study holds significance to both stake holders the employees and the organisations. The employees must be clear of their roles and responsibilities towards the organisation, utilize opportunities to learn and grow and be more productive at work. Onus of the organisation lies in providing the right tools for an employee to do his job, provide employees the right environment to do their jobs and appreciation or a job well done goes a long way in creating an engaged and a productive workforce.

5.1. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The present study has its own set of challenges. The study was restricted to a single store in the tier 2 city of Hubli and Dharwad. The sample size for the study is only 92 which is very small, and it limits our scope to generalise the results. The responses provided by the respondents may have an element of bias due to fear of repercussions of the management.

REFERENCES

1. Alagaraja, M., & Shuck, B. (2015). Exploring organizational alignment-employee engagement linkages and impact on individual performance: A conceptual model. *Human Resource Development Review*, *14*(1), 17-37.

2. Albrecht, S., Breidahl, E., & Marty, A. (2018). Organizational resources, organizational engagement climate, and employee engagement. *Career Development International*, *23*(1), 67-85.

3. Asadi, A., Fadakar, F., Khoshnodifar, Z., Hashemi, S. M., & Hosseininia, G. (2008). Personal characteristics affecting agricultural extension workers' job satisfaction level. *Journal of social sciences*, *4*(4), 246-250.

4. Chandani, A., Mehta, M., Mall, A., & Khokhar, V. (2016). Employee engagement: A review paper on factors affecting employee engagement. *Indian Journal of Science and Technology*, *9*(15), 1-7.

5. Eker, L., Tüzün, E. H., Daskapan, A., & Sürenkök, Ö. (2004). Predictors of job satisfaction among physiotherapists in Turkey. *Journal of occupational health*, *46*(6), 500-505.

6. Ferreira, N. (2012). *Constructing a psychological career profile for staff retention* (Doctoral dissertation, University of South Africa).

7. Frank, F. D., Finnegan, R. P., & Taylor, C. R. (2004). The race for talent: Retaining and engaging workers in the 21st century. *Human resource planning*, *27*(3).

8. Gallup's Q12 Employee Engagement Survey (2024). Retrieved from https://www.gallup.com/workplace/gallup-12-employee

9. Geethalakshmi, P. M., & Rodrigues, L. L. (2017). Exploring the nature of employee engagement. *Calitatea*, *18*(161), 87-98.

10. Jha, B., & Kumar, A. (2016). Employee engagement: A strategic tool to enhance performance. *DAWN: Journal for Contemporary Research in Management*, *3*(2), 21-29.

11. Kahn, W. A. (1990). Psychological conditions of personal engagement and disengagement at work. *Academy of management journal*, *33*(4), 692-724.

12. Keating, L. A., & Heslin, P. A. (2015). The potential role of mindsets in unleashing employee engagement. *Human resource management review*, *25*(4), 329-341.

13. Kular, S., Gatenby, M., Rees, C., Soane, E., & Truss, K. (2008). Employee engagement: A literature review.

14. Langelaan, S., Bakker, A. B., Van Doornen, L. J., & Schaufeli, W. B. (2006). Burnout and work engagement: Do individual differences make a difference? *Personality and individual differences*, *40*(3), 521-532.

15. Ng, T. W., & Feldman, D. C. (2013). A meta-analysis of the relationships of age and tenure with innovation-related behaviour. *Journal of occupational and organizational psychology*, *86*(4), 585-616.

16. Rossier, J., Zecca, G., Stauffer, S. D., Maggiori, C., & Dauwalder, J. P. (2012). Career Adapt-Abilities Scale in a French-speaking Swiss sample: Psychometric properties and

relationships to personality and work engagement. *Journal of Vocational behavior*, *80*(3), 734-743.

17. Rostami, Z., Abedi, M. R., Bagnhan, I., & Savickas, M. L. (2012). Toward career salvation's model, a primary study: case study. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Contemporary Research*, *4*(2), 1133-1139.

18. Saks, A. M. (2006). Antecedents and consequences of employee engagement. *Journal of managerial psychology*, *21*(7), 600-619.

19. Saks, A. M., & Gruman, J. A. (2011). Getting newcomers engaged: The role of socialization tactics. *Journal of managerial psychology*, *26*(5), 383-402.

20. Schaufeli, W. B., Salanova, M., González-Romá, V., & Bakker, A. B. (2002). The measurement of engagement and burnout: A two-sample confirmatory factor analytic approach. *Journal of Happiness studies*, *3*, 71-92.

21. Shuck, B., & Rose, K. (2013). Reframing employee engagement within the context of meaning and purpose: Implications for HRD. *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, *15*(4), 341-355.

22. Shuck, B., & Wollard, K. (2010). Employee engagement and HRD: A seminal review of the foundations. *Human resource development review*, *9*(1), 89-110.

23. Shuck, B., Reio Jr, T. G., & Rocco, T. S. (2011). Employee engagement: An examination of antecedent and outcome variables. *Human resource development international*, *14*(4), 427-445.