

Employee Engagement – A Study with Special reference to Postal Employees in Rural Areas of Thanjavur

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Abstract

Employee Engagement is a significant factor which is influencing the organization to achieve its target. Emotional and psychological attachment of an employee in a work environment are closely associated with an organisation. There are no. of factors contributing toward Employee Engagement. The researchers have identified certain factors to study the level of Employee Engagement among the employees of India post from selected rural brances. **Objectives:** The objectives of the study are to study the association between demographic factors and Employee Engagement; to understand the certain independent factors which are influencing Employee Engagement and to identify the relationship between Employee Engagement with its outcome factors. **Method/Analysis:** By applying structured questionnaire, primary data were collected from 120 respondents. The statistical tools such as Chi square test, one-way ANOVA and regression analysis were adopted for analysis purpose. The study factors such as demographics, Individual factors and few outcome factors. **Findings:** There is an association between certain demographic factors with the Employee Engagement. The Individual factor do not vary with the demographic factors viz. age, gender, marital status, position and experience of the respondents. There are significant effects of individual factors viz. Job, Growth and Development, Discretionary Efforts, Role Clarity, Emotional Energy, Learning Behaviour and Person - Organisation fit on Employee Engagement. Hence, there is significant effect of individual factors viz. Job, Growth and Development, Discretionary Efforts, Role Clarity, Emotional Energy, Psychological Feeling, Person-Organisation fit on Employee Engagement. The researcher found that there is a significant relationship between Employee Engagement and career satisfaction and retention as outcomes. **Applications/Improvements:** The current study portrays factors which affect the Employee Engagement of postal employees from rural areas. The study results will facilitate the organisation to strengthen the best practices towards Employee Engagement with positive outcome results.

Keywords: Discretionary Effort, Employee Engagement, Growth and Development, Productivity, Role Clarity

1. Introduction

Employee Engagement is psychological involvement in the working place. It takes a major role to attain the objectives in right time. Employee Engagement can be measured by “the extent to which employees put discretionary effort into their work, in the form of extra time,

brainpower and energy”¹. Employee Engagement defines that “it is a measurable degree of an employee’s positive and negative emotional attachment to their colleagues, job and organization that profoundly influences their willingness to learn and perform at work”. ²Employee Engagement can be achieved through the organisational environment and culture and whereas positive emotions

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such as involvement, acknowledgment and congratulate are promoted, resulting in improved organisational performance and better turnover³.

2. Study Variables

2.1 Demographic Variable

Age, Gender, Marital Status, Monthly Income, Employment level and Years of experience.

2.2 Individual Variable

Job, Growth and Development, Psychological Feeling towards Job, Emotional Energy, Discretionary Efforts, Role Clarity, Personal Attachment, Person-Organisation and Learning Behaviour.

2.3 Employee Engagement (Gallup 12 Q)

"Expectations, Progress and Learn, Materials and equipment, Opportunity to do what I do best, Recognition for good work, Best friend, Someone at work cares about me, Encourages my development, Opinions count, Mission/Purpose, Associates committed to quality and grow which were developed by Gallup Organisation⁴".

2.4 Outcome Factors

Career Satisfaction and Retention.

3. Conceptual Frame Work

The researcher has selected the factors and developed a model as shown in the given Figure 1.

3.1 Statement of the Problem

Manpower planning plays a very significant role in public sector especially in service industry which contribute to economic development of a nation. Without the involvement of the employee, a service cannot be delivered with 100 percent perfection. In the present situation, Employees are struggling to work, though the lot of resources and facilities are available in the organization, so how the employees are using the resources with meticulous manner towards fullest commitment. With this, the researchers have made an attempt to study the level of Employee Engagement. The postal department was selected from the service sector, to study the Employee Engagement. The researchers have selected

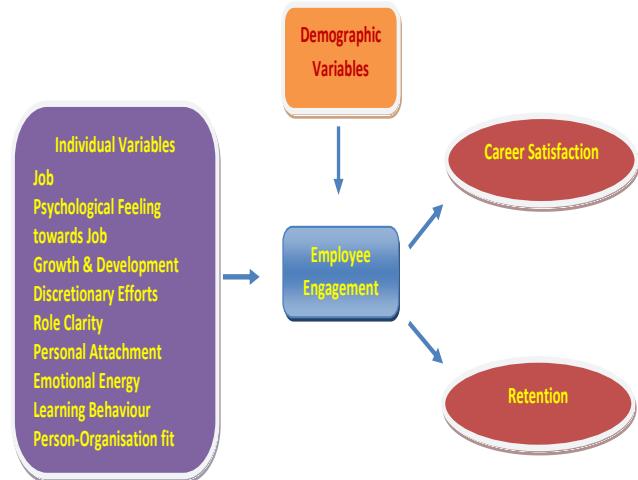


Figure 1. Employee Engagement – conceptual framework.

100 employees of postal departments from rural areas of Thanjavur viz. (Thiruvaiyaru, Ayyampet, Papanasam and Vallam). Employee Engagement facilitates the organisation towards employees' performance and their speedy services in a better manner. If the Postal departments want to build a good position and sustain them by comparing with private courier services, they have to give much importance to certain factors which were dealt in this study.

4. Objectives of the Research

To study the association between demographic variables of respondents and Employee Engagement.

To understand the variation between the individual factors and Employee Engagement of postal employees of rural areas.

To study the effect of individual factors on Employee Engagement.

To study the relationship between Employee Engagement and career satisfaction, as the outcome variable.

To understand the effect of Employee Engagement and career satisfaction and retention as the outcome variable.

5. Limitations of the Research

This study is restricted to postal employees India Post in selected rural branches. 100 samples have been chosen from selected rural post offices of Thanjavur area.

The results may vary according to the perceptions and opinions of the respondents.

6. Research Methodology

This research is based on the analytical in nature. The primary data were collected through the structured questionnaire with the sample size of 100 by adopting simple random sampling and snow-ball method. The statistical tools such as chi-square test, ANOVA and Regression analysis were applied to meet out the study objectives. The study variables have been chosen in three dimensions viz. demographic variables, individual variables, Employee Engagement by applying Gallup 12 Q statements (Gallup, 2006) and Career satisfaction and Retention as outcome variables. The data reliability value (Cronbach's alpha Test) is 0.073 (73%) which is a advisable for analysis.

7. Hypothesis Statements

- There is no association between the demographic factors and Employee Engagement.
- Individual factor does not vary with the demographic characteristics of the respondents.
- There is no significant effect of individual factors on Employee Engagement.
- There is no relationship between Employee Engagement and outcome variables.

The research factors were chosen with the help of careful investigation of the following literature reviews. The impact oriented relationship between customer and engaged employees relationship which is a major influencing factor for success of the organisation⁵. The paper explored the employee workplace relationship and the level of Employee Engagement. It also focused the impact of employee relationships towards organisation and the development of the Employee Engagement. The authors have studied the relationship variables such as workplace climate, co-workers and opportunities for learning⁶.

The authors have focused that how the leadership is contributing to effective Employee Engagement and productivity. The result cleared endorsed the leadership behavior is playing vital role in the organization in promoting Employee Engagement. The study also focused the leadership styles with the impact of Employee Engagement⁷. The authors have focused that how the transformational leadership is playing a vital role in the

Employee Engagement. It endorses the earlier review with reference to leadership styles. The researchers have studied transformational leadership as a major variable with Employee Engagement. The study concludes that Employee Engagement is based on the traits of the leader and leadership styles which are otherwise called trait engagement⁸.

The personal engagement which means the "harnessing of organization members'selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively and emotionally during role performances". Personal disengagement refers to "the uncoupling of selves from work roles; in disengagement, people withdraw and defend themselves physically, cognitively or emotionally during role performances⁹".

"Employee Engagement strategy plays a vital role in motivating the performance levels of the workforce. A motivated employee will seek out ways to accomplish a task" The level of engagement, burnout and disengagement. In the organization a particular employee who wants to withdraw from their task/job both physically and emotionally which is known as disengagement/disengaged employee. Burnout is result of employee job demands in the organization¹⁰.

The authors focus that the energy, involvement and efficiency are the dominating factors of Employee Engagement. Fleming, Coffman, and Harter (2005). According to Gallup study, 20% of U.S. employees are disengaged, 54% are neutral about their work and 26% are actively engaged¹¹.

The connectivity of the work environment, people and emotional level towards the goal achievement as Employee Engagement. Sharing together the organizational members and job involvement is described as engagement¹². By applying the "Servant-leadership" philosophy, managers and leaders can make the environment "effectively engaged". Higher degree of Employee Engagement will be result in the increased employee optimism which leads to better employee performance. It clearly shows that close association is between Employee Engagement and employee performance¹³. The research results depicted that there is positive association between leadership and Employee Engagement in the organization. Further this study focused the team work based behavior and the level of effective Employee Engagement¹⁴. The authors concluded about the drivers such as work environment, empowerment, effective recognition, fair rewards, equitable treatment and personal value are influencing

the effective Employee Engagement consistently¹⁶. The emotional and intellectual involvement that leads to organization and its success is called as Employee Engagement. The authors concluded that work environment, employees' level of discretionary efforts which are described as Employee Engagement¹⁵.

The authors described about the employee's sense optimistic emotions over their job, real worth and meaningful to work, comfortable work load and self confidence lead to Employee Engagement¹⁶. The level of Employee Engagement which impacted employees' performance results organizational success and organisations' financial performance¹⁷.

The level of Employee Engagement which is a crucial factor in the success of the organization. It has linked with the drivers such as attrition, productivity and profitability. The engaged employee is clear in his goal which leads to organisational profitability¹⁸. The authors studied that the non-financial rewards play vital role in the impact of Employee Engagement¹⁹.

The external environmental factors and good working conditions are the influencing parameters in the Employee Engagement²⁰. The authors studied about the task place environment, work atmosphere in the organization which leads to employee stay and Employee Engagement²¹. The level of Employee Engagement and burnout of employees have been delt in this work²². The authors examined in his study, higher level of work performances and practices can shoot up the optimistic beliefs and attitudes that

linked with the Employee Engagement which leads to effective employee performance²³. The effective organisational environment and job interest in the minds of low and middle level employees according to their capacity and ability. This will retain the effective engagement among the employees²⁴.

The study about emotional experiences (factors like personal satisfaction and sense of inspiration) and well-being are two eyes of an Employee Engagement. An engaged employees are revealing their discretionary behavior. It has close link with personal feelings, perception and enhanced performance of employee²⁵.

Based on the various research reviews, researcher identified the unique variables that create an impact of Employee Engagement and the novelty of the study.

8. Data Analysis and Discussion

The Table 1 depicts that 30% of respondents were in the age group of 36-40 years. The table also shows that 72% of respondents were male and the rest of the respondents were female. 61% of respondents were married and the rest of the respondents were unmarried. 34% of respondents were in the monthly income group of Rs. 10,000 to Rs. 20,000.

Table 1 also depicts that 43% of respondents were in the middle level of employment position. The majority of the respondents (39% and 35%) has more experience such as 1-5 yrs and 6-10 yrs categories.

Table 1. Demographic profile of the respondents

| S.No | Age (Yrs) | Demographic Factors | | | |
|------|------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|----------------|--------------|
| | | 26-30 | 31-35 | 36-40 | Above 41 |
| 1. | 19 | | 24 | 30 | 27 |
| 2. | Gender | Male | Female | | |
| | | 72 | 28 | | |
| 3. | Marital Status | Married | Unmarried | | |
| | | 61 | 39 | | |
| 4. | Monthly Income (Rs.) | 10,000 – 20,000 | 21,000 – 30,000 | 31,000– 40,000 | 41,000 above |
| | | 34 | 28 | 16 | 22 |
| 5. | Employment Position | High | Middle | Low | |
| | | 36 | 43 | 21 | |
| 6. | Experience Level (Yrs) | 1-5 | 6-10 | 11 and Above | |
| | | 35 | 39 | 26 | |

Source: Primary Data

Hypothesis (H_0): There is no association between demographic factors of respondents and the Employee Engagement.

From the Table 2 it was found that null hypothesis is rejected ($p<0.05$) and it was concluded that there is an association between the demographic factors viz. age, gender, monthly income, employment level and the experience of the respondents with the Employee Engagement. The researcher also concluded that there is no association between the marital status of the respondents and the Employee Engagement, since the null hypothesis is accepted.

Hypothesis (H_0): "Individual Factor" does not vary with the demographic characteristics of the respondents.

From the Table 3, the researcher found that the Individual factor do not vary with the demographic factors, namely gender, age, marital status, position and experience of the respondents at 5% significance level ($p>0.05$). Further, it is also concluded that the factor 'Value system' do vary with the income of the respondents.

Hypothesis (H_0): There is no significant effect of individual factors on Employee Engagement.

The Table 4 that the predictor variables viz. Job, Growth and Development, Discretionary Efforts, Role

Clarity, Emotional Energy, Psychological Feeling, Person-Organisation fit ($p<0.05$) are statistically significant determinants towards Employee Engagement. The table also shows that the rest of the variables viz. Psychological Feeling towards job and Personal Attachment are not significant ($p>0.05$), since the p value is greater than 0.05. The table also depicted the R and R^2 values of the model. The R value represents the simple correlation and is 0.897, which indicated a high degree of correlation between the individual factors and Employee Engagement. The R^2 value indicated that 80.4% (0.804) of variance in dependent variable "Employee Engagement", is explained by the independent variables.

From the Table 4, it can be inferred that there are significant effects of individual factors viz. Job, Growth and Development, Discretionary Efforts, Role Clarity, Emotional Energy, Learning Behaviour and Person - Organisation fit on Employee Engagement. Hence, there is significant effect of individual factors viz. Job, Growth and Development, Discretionary Efforts, Role Clarity, Emotional Energy, Psychological Feeling, Person-Organisation fit on Employee Engagement.

The significant individual factors with predictors' values towards Employee Engagement are shown in the given Figure 2

Table 2. Chi-square test between demographic factors and Employee Engagement

| S.No | Factors | χ^2 Value | Sig. | Decision |
|------|---------------------|----------------|-------|----------|
| 1. | Age | 28.36 | 0.00 | Reject |
| 2. | Gender | 3.862 | 0.04 | Reject |
| 3. | Marital Status | 0.283 | 0.52* | Accept |
| 4. | Monthly Income | 23.14 | 0.00 | Reject |
| 5. | Employment level | 36.28 | 0.00 | Reject |
| 6. | Years of experience | 17.03 | 0.00 | Reject |

(* = H_0 accepted at 5% significance level)

Table 3. Individual factors and the demographic characteristics of the respondents – One way ANOVA

| S.No. | Demographic Factors | F | Sig. | Decision |
|-------|---------------------|-------|--------|----------|
| 1. | Gender | 2.276 | 0.058* | Accept |
| 2. | Age | 0.212 | 0.917* | Accept |
| 3. | Marital status | 1.532 | 0.134* | Accept |
| 4. | Income | 2.421 | 0.028 | Reject |
| 5. | Position | 1.201 | 0.245* | Accept |
| 6. | Experience | 1.329 | 0.173* | Accept |

(* H_0 accepted at 5% significance level)

Hypothesis (H_0): There is no significant relationship between the Employee Engagement and career satisfaction as outcome factor.

The Table 5 shows that significance of the chi-square values are less than 0.05, hence the null hypothesis is rejected and it is found that there is a significant relationship between Employee Engagement and career satisfaction and retention as outcomes

Hypothesis (H_0): There is no significant effect of Employee Engagement on career satisfaction.

The Table 6 shows that the R value which represents the simple correlation and is 0.793 which indicated a high degree of correlation between the individual factors

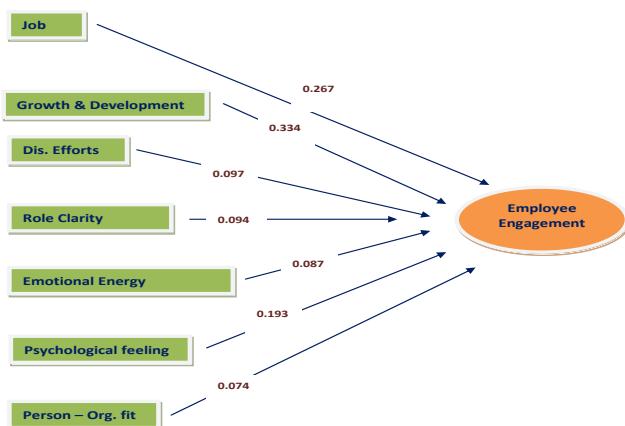


Figure 2. Regression model - individual factors and Employee Engagement.

Table 4. Unstandardized coefficients of regression model – Individual factors and Employee Engagement

| S.No | Predictors | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Sig. |
|--|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------|--------|
| | | B | Std. Error | |
| | (Constant) | 0.054 | 0.057 | 0.000 |
| 1. | Job | 0.267 | 0.023 | 0.000* |
| 2. | Psychological Feeling towards job | 0.193 | 0.019 | 0.000* |
| 3. | Growth and Development | 0.334 | 0.016 | 0.000* |
| 4. | Discretionary Efforts | 0.097 | 0.021 | 0.003* |
| 5. | Role Clarity | 0.094 | 0.014 | 0.024* |
| 6. | Personal Attachment | 0.031 | 0.017 | 0.083 |
| 7. | Emotional Energy | 0.087 | 0.013 | 0.000* |
| 8. | Learning Behaviour | 0.027 | 0.018 | 0.702 |
| 9. | Person-Organisation fit | 0.074 | 0.016 | 0.000* |
| R = 0.897 R² = 0.804 | | | | |

* = significance at 5% level

* (If the sig. of p is less than 0.05, and it indicates that the concerned factor is significant in the model)

and Employee Engagement. The R^2 value indicated that 62.8% (0.628) of variance in dependent variable “Career satisfaction” is explained by the independent variable viz. Employee Engagement.

From the Table 6, it can be inferred that there is ($p<0.05$) statistical significant effect of Employee Engagement on career satisfaction.

Hypothesis (H_0): There is no significant effect of Employee Engagement on retention.

The Table 7 shows that the R value, which represents the simple correlation and is 0.801 which indicated a high degree of correlation between the individual factors and Employee Engagement. The R^2 value indicated that 64.1% (0.641) of variance in dependent variable “Retention” is explained by the independent variable viz. Employee Engagement.

From the Table 7, it can be inferred that there is ($p<0.05$) statistical significant effect of Employee Engagement on retention.

9. Results and Discussion

The researcher found that 30% of respondents were in the age group of 36-40 years. They also found that 72% of respondents were male and the rest of the respondents were female. 61% of respondents were married and the rest of the respondents were unmarried. 34% of respondents were in the monthly income group of Rs. 10,000

Table 5. Chi-Square test between Employee Engagement and outcome factors - Career satisfaction and retention

| S.No | Factors | χ^2 Value | Sig. | Decision |
|------|---------------------|----------------|------|----------|
| 1. | Career satisfaction | 16.02 | 0.03 | Reject |
| 2. | Retention | 15.04 | 0.01 | Reject |

(* = Ho accepted at 5% significance level)

Table 6. Unstandardized coefficients of regression model – Employee Engagement and career satisfaction

| S.No | Predictors | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Sig. |
|--|---------------------|-----------------------------|------------|--------|
| | | B | Std. Error | |
| | (Constant) | 1.291 | 0.074 | 0.000 |
| 1. | Career satisfaction | 0.837 | 0.032 | 0.000* |
| R = 0.793 R² = 0.628 | | | | |

Table 7. Unstandardized coefficients of regression model – Employee Engagement and retention

| S.No | Predictors | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Sig. |
|--|------------|-----------------------------|------------|--------|
| | | B | Std. Error | |
| | (Constant) | 1.436 | 0.101 | 0.000 |
| 1. | Retention | 0.749 | 0.046 | 0.000* |
| R = 0.801 R² = 0.641 | | | | |

to Rs.20,000. The results showed that 43% of respondents were in the middle level of employment position. The majority of the respondents (39% and 35%) has more experience such as 1-5 yrs and 6-10 yrs categories.

Chi-square test–results revealed that there is an association between the demographic factors viz. age, gender, monthly income, employment level and the experience of the respondents with the Employee Engagement. The researcher found that the Individual factor do not vary with the demographic factors, namely gender, age, marital status, position and experience of the respondents. The researcher found that there are significant effects of individual factors viz. Job, Growth and Development, Discretionary Efforts, Role Clarity, Emotional Energy, Learning Behaviour and Person - Organisation fit on Employee Engagement. Hence, there is significant effect of individual factors viz. Job, Growth and Development, Discretionary Efforts, Role Clarity, Emotional Energy, Psychological Feeling, Person-Organisation fit on Employee Engagement.

The researcher found that there is a significant relationship between Employee Engagement and career satisfaction and retention as outcomes. The result showed that there is the statistical significant effect of

Employee Engagement on career satisfaction. The results also revealed that there is statistical significant effect of Employee Engagement on retention.

10. Recommendations

Based on the study results, there is a positive relationship between individual factors and Employee Engagement. Out of the study factors, learning behavior and personal attachment are not contributing more. Hence the organisation has to prioritize and give much importance to rest of the factors which were highly contributing toward better performance. In the present competitive scenario, organization has to do something different as innovation, to attract internal customers towards more engagement which will get more productivity. The organization also has to give facilitative work environment to employees to exhibit their talents with fullest efforts.

11. Conclusion

Employee Engagement plays a vital role in the organisation to bring out the balanced productivity. Employee Engagement is an indicator to the organisation

stand whether they are sustaining or derailing from the competition. Rightly, this paper addresses the key factors and absolute relationship with its outcomes viz. career satisfaction and retention. So, Employee Engagement is the important driver to influence the organizational success more. If employee as internal customer of organisation gets more satisfaction, it leads to external customer who will also get higher satisfaction.

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