A STUDY OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT PRACTICES ADOPTED BY SELECTED TECHNICAL EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN KARNATAKA STATE

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Abstract:

Employee engagement is the degree to which employees invest their cognitive, emotional, and behavioural energies toward positive organizational outcomes. Though earlier employee engagement was considered important in manufacturing Industries, later on shifting its importance in IT and service industry, but it is now that a serious thought is given to satisfaction and engagement of people working in the field of higher education .This is so because with increase in education sector there is multi fold colleges increasing in private, government, autonomous and deemed universities. It is now a full-fledged industry in itself. The teaching faculties too play an equal and important role in an education system. Thus, studying their engagement practices becomes vital for this study. The present study is taken up by the researcher among the faculty members working with technical institutions in Karnataka state. An Online questionnaire was circulated, and due to low response rate offline questionnaires were also circulated which were analysed to understand engagement practices among teaching staff of technical education sector. Through analysis finding and suggestions are given to help institutions adopt better faculty engagement practices and also to improve current engagement levels.

Keywords: Employee Engagement, Technical Education, Teaching Faculties, Faculty Engagement

Introduction:

Employee engagement is a relatively new term in HR literature and really started come to prominence from the last decade. The concept of employee engagement has become more significant in present global business scenario where organizations are striving hard for their identity. Employee engagement is the extent to which employee commitment, both emotional and intellectual, exists relative to accomplishing the work, mission, and vision of the organization.

It is considered as a vital strategy for improving the productivity and also profitability in organizations. In order to compete effectively employers need to go beyond just satisfaction. Employers must do their best to inspire their employees to apply their full potential and capabilities to their work. If they fail in this accomplishment of task, then the valuable employees resources remains unavailable for the company (Bakker and Leiter, 2010). Therefore, modern organizations keep their employees in full enthusiasm to show high initiative at work, strive for high quality performance, and be energetic and dedicated to what they do. In other words, organizations want their employees be engaged to the full extent (Bakker and Leiter, 2010).

Employee engagement is the best tool in the company's efforts to gain competitive advantages and stay competitive (Rashid et al., 2011). Therefore, the construct of employee engagement has been an area of interest among many researchers and consultancy firms and received its recognition in the management literature and among practitioners (Ologbo and Saudah, 2011). Full-time employees spend a large part of their day and the majority of their lives in the workplace, and how they feel about their work are important to them. In a recent Gallup survey, 63 percent of American workers are not engaged in their work, while another 24 percent are "actively disengaged." Disengaged workers are more likely to look for other opportunities, or worse, drag down the productivity of the rest of the team.

The study of S.Kaur (2014) revealed that employee engagement is the best tool for any organization to stay competitive in business. It is precisely to end that employee engagement assumes significance because the engaged employees have proved in many research studies that they deliver high quality/committed service and successful results.

Meaning of Employee Engagement :

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Though the terms job satisfaction and employee engagement are used inter-changeably with employee engagement, the former refers to only indicates how happy or content your employees are and does not address their level of motivation, involvement, or emotional commitment.

For some employees, being satisfied means collecting a pay check while doing as little work as possible. Whereas employee engagement is defined as "the extent to which employees commit to something or someone in their organization, how hard they work and how long they stay as a result of that commitment."

Employee engagement is the extent to which employees feel passionate about their jobs, are committed to the organization, and put discretionary effort into their work. An engaged employee is well aware of business scenario, and works with team members to enhance and improve the performance within the job for the benefit of the organization.

Gallup - Engaged employees as those who are involved in, enthusiastic about and committed to their work and workplace. Aon Hewitt - Employee engagement is "the level of an employee's psychological investment in their organization." Hence, engaged employee is optimistic, team oriented, goes above and beyond, solution oriented, selfless, shows a passion for learning and passes along credit but accepts blame.

An engaged employee has thus in all cognitive engagement, i.e., focus on work, emotional engagement or connection with the work and physical engagement in the sense that he/she is willing and able to display discretionary behaviour, to go the "extra mile" and work beyond your contract terms In the current scenario, Indian higher education sector faces certain obstacles and needs reforms.

Teaching-Learning aspect is being given importance, autonomous and private colleges are booming, deemed universities are popping up, students are being taught in the traditional classrooms as well on various online platforms, the demands of students are diverse and increasing and they are being thought of as customers. Various administrative activities too are required to be done by teachers. Demands on teaching faculty are increasing. It is a clear sign that the time is ripe for considering a major restructuring of the education system in India and finding modern ways to engage workforce. It is worrying that we are struggling with teacher hopping from one college to another, especially in case of temporary staff and disinterest in colleges and universities; this needs to be immediately resolved. This thought opens the doors of enquiry into the vast domain of employee engagement.

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Statement of Problem:

Over the period teaching and research has evolved as prime most responsibilities of the faculties. The common perception was that faculties who were highly involved in teaching engages the students that results in better learning. However, it is not so in reality. It is vital that faculty's work is motivated and in turn motivates the students to enhance the performance of faculties and universities and colleges need to engage the faculties to enhance the student learning process. All this has to be seen from a new perspective. All these require a fresh answer as well as standard model for further study. Fostering teacher's engagement at work is vital as earlier research has shown that teacher's attitudes and motivation levels are seen in students. Hence, an attempt is made to study the faculty engagement among college teachers and suggest better ways to take it to new level.

Review of Literature:

Employee engagement is derived from studies of morale or a group's willingness to accomplish organizational objectives which began in the 1920s. The value of morale to organizations was matured by US Army researchers during WWII to predict unity of effort and attitudinal battle-readiness before combat. In the post-war mass production society that required unity of effort in execution, (group) morale scores were used as predictors of speed, quality and militancy. With the advent of the knowledge worker and emphasis on individual talent management (stars), a term was needed to describe an individual's emotional attachment to the organization, fellow associates and the job. Employee engagement is an individual emotional phenomenon whereas morale is a group emotional phenomenon of similar characteristics.

According to Kahn (1990), employee engagement is the harnessing of organization members' selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively and emotionally during role performances.

Employee engagement has three related components: a cognitive, an emotional, and a behavioral aspect. The cognitive aspect of employee engagement concerns employees' beliefs about the organization, its leaders, and working conditions. The emotional aspect concerns how employees feel about each of those three factors and whether they have positive or negative attitudes toward the organization and its leaders. The behavioral aspect of employee engagement is the value-added component for the organization and consists of the discretionary effort engaged employees

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bring to their work in the form of extra time, brainpower and energy devoted to the task and the firm.

Merre (2005) describes three levels of engagement:

a)   **Engaged –** These are of employees who work with passion and feel a profound connection to their organization. They drive innovation and move organization forward.

b)   **Not engaged –** Employees who attend and participate at work but are time serving and put no passion or energy into their work and

c)   **Disengaged –** Employees who are unhappy at work and who act out their unhappiness at work.
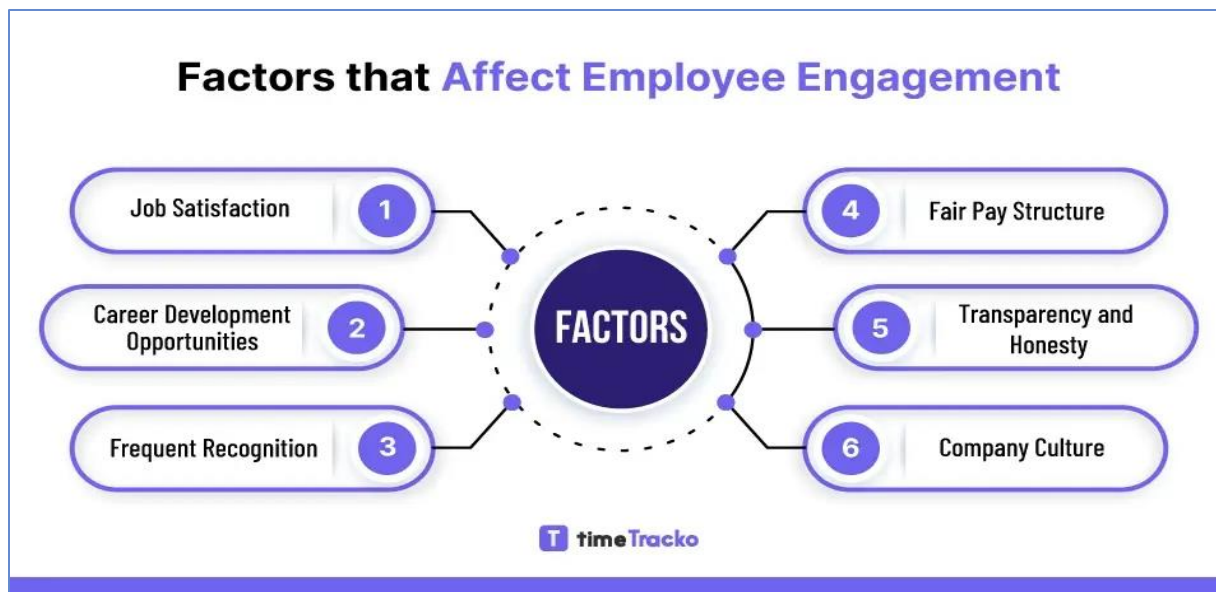
➢ **Drivers of Engagement**

While it is possible to measure engagement itself through employee surveys, this does not assist in identifying areas for improvement within organizations. There are a range of factors, known as drivers that are thought to increase overall engagement. By managing the drivers, an organization can effectively manage engagement levels of its employees.

Drivers such as communication, performance clarity and feedback, organizational culture, rewards and recognition, relationships with managers and peers, career development opportunities and knowledge of the organization's goals and vision are some of the factors that facilitate employee engagement. Some of popular drivers of engagement are presented below:

• **Compensation:** If compensation package is not competitive and productive, the talented employees will look for employers who are willing to offer more competitive compensation packages.

• **Work environment:** Other than compensation, the primary reasons why employees leave an organization is unorganized work environment. Every employee expects an organized positive work environment in which they have the necessary equipment to perform well. Positive work environment creates encouragement, open communication, honesty and trust between superiors, peers and customers. Employees are more likely to remain with a company if they have a good and positive work environment.

• **Communication:** The employees need to be clearly communicated expectations, goals, responsibilities and roles to be performed. Employee's likes effective communication with their management. Organizations have to communicate new policies or initiatives to all employees so that no employee feels that they are being left out of the loop. Management especially the

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frontline managers have to pay attention towards the feedback of the employees and also accept their suggestions which are of valuable.

- **Empowerment:** Empowered is a sense of responsibility, ownership and recognition. Work places that promote employee empowerment have enormous productivity results and less complaint. When employees think that they need their organization as much as the organization needs them, that need became best appreciated more than an attractive compensation package made them to stayed and remain at the organization for longer term.

- **Recognition:** Recognition of employee achievements by the management creates a positive impact to employees that they are valued. Management has to recognize employees who are productive and motivated, and make them feel part of the business family by recognizing personal achievements. Sending a card or gift, hosting a lunch, greeting on birthday are certain ways to make productive employees recognized. Employee recognition brings a positive reinforcement of desired behavior which makes them emotionally attach towards the organization.

- **Opportunities for growth and development:** Employees value and look for professional and personal growth opportunities. Organizations have to focus on small promotions, payment increase and advancement in career. The opportunity for growth and development is motivational for employees. As the perceived growth and development opportunities increase, employees prefer to remain in the same organization. Moreover, providing opportunities for employees helps to acquire new skills and knowledge useful to the organization.

- **Comprehensive Training:** Management systems that recognize the power of training invariably do well. Despite the fact that they practice selective hiring, successful organization know the importance of keeping their employees knowledge, Skills and Abilities current to suit to the changing needs of the enterprise. They focus both on technical and people related soft skills training.

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➢ **Employee Engagement Models**

There are many employee engagement models which exist in literature. Among those models some of the popular models of engagement are as follows:

• **Gallup Q12 Model Of Engagement**

Gallup organization is conducting research studies and surveys on employee engagement in various sectors throughout the world. Gallup organization (2004) devised twelve engagement factors which were accepted by most of researchers and organizations. The factors of Gallup organization were supported by Harley and Robinson (2005), Echols (2005) and Bates (2004).

Lee, Harley and Robinson (2005) also devised 12 statements that influence engagement which are similar to the Gallup study.

The research results of Gallup organization observed that employees who were staying for long duration were less engaged when compared with new employees in organization. The results further revealed that engaged employees were committed towards organization goals and had emotional attachment with organization. Many organizations across the globe are successfully practicing GallupQ12 model of employee engagement and yielding better results.

• **Robinson Model Of Engagement**

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Robinson et al(2004) model of engagement was consistent with Social Exchange theory. It explained engagement as mutual relation between management and employees in organization. This mutual relation between them generally involves rules of repayment for opposite actions.

- Cropanzano and Michell(2005) stated that if employees receive economic and socio resources from organization in turn they repay their contribution in terms of quality of work.

  Robinson et al(2004) illustrated a diagnostic model after analysis of survey study on 10,000 employees of NHS. He further recommended this model for organizations to improve their engagement levels.

- **Schimdt Model Of Engagement**

  Schmidt (2004) explained a model which consists of flow of dynamics. This flow of dynamics starts from recruiting the employee, providing health and safety measures, giving support at work place which results in delivery of the high level performance. This model further explains the process of dynamics which can be applicable to all organizations.

  This model was proposed by Schmidt in view of public sector. This model had shown significant difference in performance and widely accepted by many organizations in public sector. This model implies that engagement foundations lies in recruitment policies and retain the right workforce to promote health, safety and well-being.

  Research Methodology :

- ➢ **Objectives of the Study :**

- There is significant relationship between Rewards and recognition and Employee Engagement practices of faculties of selected technical educational institutes in Karnataka.

- There is significant relationship between Employee Engagement practices and Demographic profile of faculties of selected technical educational institutes in Karnataka

- ➢ **Hypothesis of the Study:**

  Hypothesis 1:

- **Ho:** There is no statistical significant relationship between Employee Engagement practices and performance faculties based on 3 major characteristics **Vigor, Dedication and Absorption** of faculties of selected technical educational institutes in Karnataka

  Against,

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- **H1:** There is statistical significant relationship between Employee Engagement practices and performance faculties based on 3 major characteristics **Vigor, Dedication and Absorption** of faculties of selected technical educational institutes in Karnataka

Hypothesis 2:

- **Ho:** There is not statistically significant relationship between **Rewards and recognition** and Employee Engagement practices of faculties of selected technical educational institutes in Karnataka.

Against,

- **H1:** There is statistically significant relationship between **Rewards and recognition** and Employee Engagement practices of faculties of selected technical educational institutes in Karnataka.

Research Design:

i)Type of Research – Descriptive type of research method will be utilized in the study.

ii) Area of Research – The present study is taken up by researchers in select technical Education Institutes of Karnataka state.

iii) Sampling Technique – Convenient sampling method is used based on the convenience of the respondents.

iv) Sources of Data Collection –

a) Primary data – The study was carried out by taking samples of teaching staff belonging to different faculties working in diploma and engineering colleges of Karnataka State .

b) Secondary data – It is collected mainly through material available on websites.

v) Sample Size – The sample size consists of 150 respondents who were working in engineering and diploma colleges of Karnataka State.

vi) Method of Data Collection – Data collection for the study was carried out through online survey. Structured questionnaire is used in this research to collect data. All the items are assessed on Likert five-point scale were "1" represents "Strongly Agree" and "5" represents "strongly disagree" including questions related to job, co-workers, seniors and organization. Pre tested scales were used to assess their cognitive, emotional and physical engagement.

vii) Limitations of the Study –Since it is convenience sampling there could be bias involved and how truthfully the respondents have answered is not known though cross verification has to be done to the extent possible through a thorough interview of a few respondents

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viii) Analysis of Data –For the data analysis, researcher used the SPSS tools (Statistical Package for Social Science, 23.0 Version). For the hypothesis testing researcher used the chi-square test .

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Chi-Square **Test Statistics – Hypothesis 1**

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	At my work, I feel bursting with energy	At my job, I feel strong and vigorous.	I am enthusiastic about my job.	My job inspires me.	When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work.	I feel happy when I am working intensely.	I am proud of the work that I do.	I am immersed in my work	I get carried away when I am working.
Chi-Square	17.667^a	14.667^a	13.333^a	7.600^b	12.667^a	15.667^a	8.133^b	12.333^a	10.000^a
Df	4	4	4	3	4	4	3	4	4
Asymp. Sig.	.001	.005	.010	.055	.013	.004	.043	.015	.040

Interpretation:

- In the above table of chi-square test, researcher noticed that most of the Asymp. Sig. values are less than the smallest level of significance i.e. 0.05 so researcher may reject the null hypothesis H_0 and **accept the alternative hypothesis H_1**.

- It means that, There is statistically significant relationship between Employee Engagement practices and performance faculties based on 3 major characteristics **Vigor, Dedication and Absorption** of faculties of selected technical educational institutes in Karnataka

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Chi-Square Test Statistics -Hypothesis 2

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	A pay raise.	Job security.	A promotion.	More freedom and opportunities.	Respect from the people you work with.	Praise from your supervisor.	Training and development opportunities	More challenging work assignments	Some form of appreciation or public	recognition (e.g. faculty of the month).
Chi-Square	9.333^a	4.333^a	6.667^a	15.667^a	18.333^a	9.333^a	16.667^a	11.667^a	11.000^a	5.333^a
Df	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Asymp. Sig.	.053	.363	.155	.004	.001	.053	.002	.020	.027	.255

Interpretation:

- In the above table of chi-square test, researcher noticed that most of the Asymp. Sig. values are less than the smallest level of significance i.e. 0.05 so researcher may reject the null hypothesis H_0 and **accept the alternative hypothesis H_1**. Also average responses are agreed that there is positive association between employee engagement and monetary benefits received by them.

- It means that, there is statistically significant relationship between **Rewards and recognition** and Employee Engagement practices of faculties of selected technical educational institutes in Karnataka District

CONCLUSION:

Employee Engagement is a fairly new phenomenon that continues to gather attention and significance in organizations especially service sector such as education. Modern organizations have identified employee engagement as an important tool for increasing stakeholder's satisfaction and as a catalyst for enhancing the performance and productivity .The main findings of the study would help the policy makers in technical education to formulate effective policies which are progressive and pro-growth in the 21st century. Organisations have to take steps to

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improve engagement by making their job less stressful, leaving them to concentrate on their core job – teaching, involving faculty in decision making, and having a positive work environment culture of care, fairness and concern, transparency from seniors, organizing training programs to build social cohesiveness, support of one's superior, reducing the work overload, etc. to keep their faculty engaged.

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