

**EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT OF MANAGERIAL STAFF IN HOSPITALS
-AN INDIAN PILOT STUDY**

J.Swaminathan, Dr.S.Aramvalarthan

ABSTRACT

Employee engagement is a state of emotional and intellectual involvement that employees have in an organization. An engaged employee is aware of business context, and works with colleagues to improve performance within the job for the benefit of the organization. It is a positive attitude held by the employees towards the organization and its values.

This study focused on how employee engagement is an antecedent of job involvement and what should the management of hospitals do to make their managers engaged. This study conducted was to find out the levels of employee engagement, the drivers of it, which includes Employee Empowerment, Communication, Team Work, Training and Development, Recognition, Leadership Quality, and Work Life Balance to analyze their impact and to offer suggestions to improve the same. The study adopted non-probability sampling using systematic method to collect primary data. The samples of the study constituted 100 managerial staff from various hospitals in Nagapattinam District, Tamil Nadu, India. Anova, Chi square and Paired t-test were employed in the analysis of data.

The results of the study indicated that the Employee Engagement of Managerial Staff in Hospitals of Nagapattinam District is moderate and Recognition helps to attain Employee Engagement.. The hospitals should concentrate on dimensions like Recognition and Team work to improve Employee Engagement of the hospitals.

Key words: Employee empowerment, Team work, Recognition, Communication, Work life Balance

Citation: J.Swaminathan, Dr. S.Aramyalarthan, “ Employee Engagement of Managerial Staff in Hospitals – an Indian Pilot Study”, (2013), Journal of Business & Management (COES&RJ-JBM), Vol.1, No.3, pp 166-174.

INTRODUCTION EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Employee Engagement is a state of emotional and intellectual involvement that employees have in an organization (Laurainne Theogaraj, 2007). Engagement is much more than satisfaction. It is one of the HR interventions that are being used in many organizations to know the extent to which people value, enjoy, and believe in what they do.

Engaged employees are seen to be productive members of an organization who are psychologically committed to their role in the organization. They are likely to stay longer in their organization, advocate its products and services and contribute to the overall success of an organization.

Identifying what enables employee engagement is difficult, because within the literature, a multitude of definitions and drivers of engagement are suggested. Research conducted by IES in 2004 (Robinson et al., 2004) found considerable variation in the views of authors in what drives engagement and pointed out that ‘there is no easy answer as far as engagement is concerned’. (p. 26). The levels of engagement and its drivers vary according to the organisation, employee group, the individual and the job itself (Robinson, 2004). There is ‘no definitive all- purpose list of engagement drivers’(CIPD, 2007).

Employee engagement is likely, therefore, to be influenced by many interrelated factors. The Conference Board (2006) found that 26 different drivers of engagement were proposed in 12 major studies of engagement. The most commonly reported drivers of engagement are Employee Empowerment, Communication, Team Work, Training and Development, Recognition, Leadership Quality, Decision-Making, Decision-Making, Work-Life Balance, etc.(The Conference Board, 2006). Numerous studies such as these have proposed a variety of different drivers of engagement. According to GALLUP consultancy, the Engaged employees are those who “work with passion and feel profound connection to their hospitals, drive innovation and move the organization forward”. Some of the drivers used in this study are explained.

Employee Empowerment: It means giving the employees the authority to make decisions and providing them with financial resources to implement these decisions.

Communication: An effective organization is one that has open and transparent communication channels which allow free flow of information, both horizontally as well as up-and-down the organizational hierarchy.

Team Work: Employees, encouraged to work in teams are actively involved in solving day-to-day problems of the organization and share responsibility to achieve the goals of their department.

Training and Development:The provision of adequate facilities for training and overall development of the employees.

Recognition:The practice of recognition and appreciation of employees who come up with creative ideas or those who are honest, sincere and hardworking.

Leadership Quality: The most important part of the role of a leader is not what he does Himself but what he causes other people to do.

Decision-Making: An organization that empower and supports people down-the-line to take independent decisions within the sphere of their job responsibilities can, through such actions, create employee engagement.

Work-Life Balance: When the demands of work hamper the pursuit of other life interest, it is likely to create a crisis and the resultant stresses and strains among the employees.

Relevance of Employee Engagement:

In 2006, the Conference Board published “Employee Engagement, A Review of Current Research and Its Implications”. According to this report, twelve major studies on employee engagement has been published over the prior four years by top research firms such as Gallup, Towers Perrin, Blessing White, The corporate Leadership Council and others.

According to the report, employee engagement is a very big deal. There is clear and mounting evidence that high levels of employee engagement keenly correlates to individual, group and corporate performance in areas such as retention, turnover, productivity, customer service and loyalty.

IMPORTANCE OF MANAGERS

Any manager can influence significantly the engagement levels of employees from the moment people are recruited into the organization. ‘Employee engagement research shows that the right managers can have a direct impact on bringing people into the organisation who are committed to doing quality work and facilitating a fun and caring atmosphere, which can nurture friendships among employees.’ (Ott et al, 2007)

‘The quality of the relationship that an employee has with his or her immediate manager is one of the most influential factors driving engagement and satisfaction.’(Dulye, 2006) backed up by a number of sources. A study by Kenexa Research Institute found that managers are critical to engagement (Kenexa, 2008). Also individual performance was closely tied to satisfaction with one’s supervisor (Judge et al. 2001). Initially management style and process as a key source of employees feeling psychologically safe in their work environment as a contributor to employee engagement was identified by Kahn (1990). A strong link between employees’ self- reported engagement and perceptions of supportive supervisor relations was found by May et al. (2004).

Many of the factors that influence employee engagement and retention are factors directly or indirectly within the manager’s control.’(Towers Perrin, 2006). Blessing White (2008) report had a major concern that managers are not effectively recognising and rewarding achievements, and not effectively encouraging the use of their talents. ‘The immediate manager influences many aspects of working life, leading ultimately to higher or lower engagement levels.’ (Robinson et al., 2007). ‘The line manager clearly has a very important role in fostering employees’ sense of involvement and value.’ (Robinson et al., 2004)

So we may conclude that the managers has an important role in influencing employee engagement and it means if managers can enable their staff to feel involved and valued in their work, with freedom and support, then they play a very important role in nurturing engagement.

PROBLEM DEFINITION

Employee Engagement is the energy, passion or fire that employees have towards their work and the organization. The major reason for disengagement is the absence of appreciation or ‘positive stroke’. Knowing the current level of Managerial Engagement in Private Hospitals will also enable to uncover actionable findings by identifying the prime “Drivers” of employee engagement. It also helps to identify the productive managers of the organization, who are psychologically committed to their role in the organization. Sometimes the intelligent, capable managers also disengage when they do not get support from their management for the good work they did or sometimes, they loose their confidence about Top management’s credibility.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- To ascertain the level of employee engagement among managerial staff of private hospitals.
- To identify the key factor among the drivers of employee engagement.
- To give suitable suggestions for improvement.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research is descriptive, with non-probability sampling using systematic method. In the research 100 samples have been taken from the total population of 136 Employees, from 21 Private hospitals of Nagapattinam district. Primary Data was collected through structured questionnaires containing 20 multiple choices questions during April - June 2012.

TOOLS USED

In order to analyse the data the researchers used statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) by using the tools

- ? Anova
- ? Chi square
- ? Paired t-test

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

(Table 1 to Table 5 may be inserted here)

Table 1: Demographic data of respondents.

Demographic Variable						Total
Gender	Male	Female				
	53	47				100
Age	20-25	25-30	30-35	35-40	40 & Above	
	12	17	38	15	18	
Education	High School	Diploma	Arts / Science Degree	With Management Qualifications	Engineering Degree	
	1	5	20	55	19	100
Marital status	Single	Married				
	47	53				100
Monthly Income	< 10000	10K – 15K	15K-20K	20K-25K	Above 25K	
	15	39	41	9	5	100
Experience	Freshers	Less Than 1 Year	1-3 Years	3-5	Above 5 Years	
	4	10	41	15	30	100

Table 2: Combined responses

Variables	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Wt Avg
Opinions seem to count	24	55	15	1	5	78.4
Opinions implemented	15	30	30	18	7	65.6
Been successful	10	31	23	30	6	61.8
Satisfied with Information provided by	26	60	13	0	1	82
Satisfied with Level of Trust on The	26	59	14	1	0	82
Satisfied with Supportiveness of the team	30	63	7	0	0	84.6
Satisfied with Training program provided	18	44	26	7	5	72.6
Satisfied with Training program update	34	47	11	5	3	80.8
Satisfied with Rewards for excellent	20	31	28	18	3	69.4
Satisfied with the recognition system	20	59	12	5	4	77.2
Satisfied with the Kind of Supervision	6	13	60	14	7	59.4
Satisfied with Supportiveness of	26	59	13	1	1	81.6
Satisfied with Festivals celebrated in	37	54	7	0	2	84.8
Satisfied with Stress Relief Programs	16	25	10	1	1	27.6
	Average					72.0
Are you Engaged	16	57	25	0	2	
	Average					77

Variable	Source of variation	Sum of square	Mean square	Df	F-Ratio	Significance
At work Opinion is counted (Qualification* Opinion)	Between Group	206.8	51.70	4	1.749	Not Significant
	Within Group	591.20	29.56	20		
	TOTAL	798		24		
At work opinion is been implemented (Age* Opinion)	Between Group	206.8	51.70	4	4.633	Significant
	Within Group	223.20	29.56	20		
	TOTAL	430.00		24		
At work opinion is been counted (Experience* Opinion)	Between group	182.40	45.600	4	4.079	Significant
	Within group	223.60	11.180	20		
	Total	406.00		24		
At work opinion is been implemented (Experience* Opinion)	Between group	362.40	90.60	4	4.748	Significant
	Within group	381.60	19.08	20		
	Total	744.00		24		
At work opinion is been counted (Salary* Opinion)	Between group	206.80	51.70	4	1.215	Not Significant
	Within group	851.20		20		
	Total	1058.0	42.58	24		

Table 3: Anova for Opinion is Counted in the Organization

DISCUSSION

The major findings of the pilot study are summarized below.

60% of respondents are satisfied with the information provided by the organization, 59% of with the level of trust provided by their team and 63% with the support provided by their team members. 44% of respondents are frequently provided with the training program and 47% feel that training program is helpful to update knowledge and skills. 31% of respondents are frequently rewarded for their excellent performance.

59% of respondents are satisfied about the recognition and satisfied with the support provided by their superiors. 60% of respondents have Normal kind of supervision. 54% of respondents Agree that festivals are been celebrated in their organisation. Only 25% of respondents are

satisfied with the stress relief programs conducted by the organization. In total 57% of respondents are engaged in their job.

(Table 4 may be inserted here)

Table 4: Chisquare Analysis

Variable	χ^2 value	Df	At 5% significant level
At work opinion is counted* Marital Status	1.597	4	Sig
At work opinion is implemented* Marital Status	0.5512	4	NS
Marital Status * Employees Rewarded For Excellent Performance	12.067	4	Sig

The chi-square test showed the marital status has a significant impact on counting the opinion of managers but not so in implementing. Only 30% of respondents' opinion had been implemented. This shows that the implementation is purely based on the merit of the opinion suggested and 31% of respondents opinion had succeeded after implementing. But, rewarding of employees for excellent performance has a gender bias because most of the hospitals follow a pattern of awarding two employees at a time like one male and one female.

(Table 5 may be inserted here)

Table- 5 Paired t- Test

Variable	t-test	Df	5% significant level
At work opinion is been counted based on gender	0.5512	4	NS
Opinion succeeded based on marital status	0.000	4	N S
At work employees been rewarded for excellent performance	0.8615	4	NS

The Paired t- test shows that there is no significant association between the gender wise employees opinion counted at work, success of opinion or rewarding of employees for excellent performance.

The ANOVA test on the collected data shows that the opinion given by the managers are having significant differences among many variables. The qualification and the salary of the managers are not considered in selecting the opinions and suggestions given by the managerial staff. This difference is mainly because of the individual perceptions.

Finally the average score of Employee Engagement among the hospital managerial staff are 72 which is higher than the global average for all industries (Gallup and Towers Perrin Reports) which is a good sign. But when the employees are asked about their own engagement level and when included in the average score it increased by 5% (77) which is mainly because individuals perception about Employee Engagement which may be neglected.

SUGGESTIONS

? The hospitals shall consider the opinions of employees based on their experience and qualification and can implement their opinions to make them engaged at work.

? The management can create friendly environment by providing supportive superiors to make employees engage at work.

? The employees can be provided with training programs based on the qualification and performance to update the knowledge.

? The employees can be encouraged by providing reward for excellent performance based on gender and fair compensation to make them feel that they are getting worth of their input.

? The employees may be encouraged to get advice from other members in their team which will help them to approach work problem from variety of constructive angels and make them engaged at work.

? Recognition is the mediating factor to employee engagement, persons with creative ideas and those who are honest, hardworking and experienced need to be recognized and appreciated. Employees who do well need to be felicitated through public functions.

? Team Work is positively influencing Employee Engagement and hospitals can encourage team bonding between employees to complete any task.

? The employees can be provided with the stress relief program to make employees cope with pressures. The employees need to be provided with flexible working hours and there should be more frequent social get-togethers for employees and their families to make them meet their personal, family and social commitments.

CONCLUSION

The primary focus of the study was to ascertain the level of Employee Engagement of the managerial staff of hospitals. The Employee Engagement drivers are used to ascertain the level of Engagement at their work. One of the factors Recognition is the key factor to employee engagement and the Team work is most influential factor to the key factor recognition. Since the recognition is key to employee engagement, the hospitals should recognize their employee through considering their opinion according to their experience. The opinion may be implemented where ever possible. The employee should be rewarded when the implemented opinion succeeds.

The team work and empowerment of the employee are also the most influential factors to the key factor recognition. It is suggested that organization may encourage Team Work to make employees to be committed to the work which will result in increased employee engagement. The hospitals may identify the right kind of people for the right job and make them a group, and assign suitable task to the group, motivate them by providing training based on the performance to achieve their task within reasonable time bound. So that the empowerment can be enhanced and make the employee loyal to the organization.

If the hospitals concentrate over the other dimensions like Work life balance by conducting some games, celebrations to reduce work stress, Leadership Quality by providing supportive superiors, Training and Development by providing training based on the performance of the employees and Communication that employees are getting the information from superiors to do their job effectively and will make employees engage highly at work.

References

1. BlessingWhite (2008), The State of Employee Engagement, BlessingWhite
2. CIPD (2007), Employee Engagement, www.cipd.co.uk/subjects/empreltns/general/empengmt.htm?IsSrchRes=1
3. Conference Board (2006), Employee Engagement: A review of current research and its implications, The Conference Board
4. Dulye & Co (2006), 5 Ways to Keep New Hires Engaged, www.lmdulye.com
5. Gallup (2006), Gallup study: engaged employees inspire company innovation, The Gallup Management Journal, <http://gmj.gallup.com/content/24880/Gallup-Study-Engaged-Employees-Inspire-Company.aspx>
6. Harter JK, Schmidt FL, Hayes TL (2002), Business-unit-level relationship between employee satisfaction, employee engagement, and business outcomes: a meta analysis, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 87(2), 268–279
7. Judge TA, Thoresen CJ, Bono JE, Patton G K (2001), The job satisfaction-job performance relationship: a qualitative and quantitative review, *Psychological Bulletin*, 127, 376–407
8. Kahn WA (1990), Psychological conditions of personal engagement and disengagement at work, *Academy of Management Journal*, 33(4), 692–724
9. Kenexa (2008), Engaging The Employee: A Kenexa Research Institute World Trends Report., Kenexa Research Institute
10. Laurainne Theogaraj, HRM Review, ICFAI University Press, Dec-07: Page No:40
11. May DR, Gilson RL, Harter LM (2004), The psychological conditions of meaningfulness, safety and availability and the engagement of the human spirit at work, *Journal of Occupational and Organisational Psychology*, 77, 11–37
12. Ott B, Blacksmith N, Royal K (2007), Job seekers ask: who's the boss?, *The Gallup Management Journal*, <http://gmj.gallup.com/content/103114/Job-Seekers-Ask>
13. Robinson D, Perryman S, Hayday S (2004), The Drivers of Employee Engagement, Institute for Employment Studies Report 408
14. Robinson D, Hooker H, Hayday S (2007), Engagement: The Continuing Story, Institute for Employment Studies Report 447
15. Robinson D, Perryman S, Heyday S The drivers of Employee Engagement, Report 408, Institute For Employment Studies, April 2004
16. Swaminathan J “Essential Components of Employee Engagement – A Study with reference to TNSTC, Kumbakonam”, in “Advances in Management”, Vol-3(12), December 2010, pp 55-59
17. Towers Perrin (2006), Ten Steps to Creating an Engaged Workforce: Key European Findings, Towers Perrin HR Services

About the Author(s)

J.Swaminathan, Assistant Professor, Dept of Management Studies, A.V.C.College of Engineering, Mayiladuthurai, Research Scholar, Periyar Maniammai University, Thanjavur
Corresponding author Email: jsavce@gmail.com
Mobile +919488923659
Postal Address- Department of Management Studies,
A.V.C.College of Engineering,
Mannampandal, Mayiladuthurai, Pin 609305
Tamil Nadu, INDIA

Dr.S.Aramvalarthan, Professor & Head, Dept of Management Studies, Assistant dean SHSM, Periyar Maniammai University, Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu, India

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX