ABSTRACT

The Employee Engagement construct is gradually receiving the attention of academic scholars. Companies that understand the conditions that enhance Employee Engagement will have accomplished something that competitors will find very difficult to imitate. In the light of past research studies, this paper is an attempt to operationalise the definition of Employee Engagement & to discuss various outcomes of Employee Engagement, to differentiate Employee Engagement from other constructs, to analyze the measurement issues of Employee Engagement, to present an overview on researching Employee Engagement and to conclude and recommend for better Employee Engagement in organizations.

Keywords: Employee Engagement; Measuring Employee Engagement; Job Satisfaction; Organizational Commitment

INTRODUCTION

Employee engagement has become a management’s hot topic in recent years and one which has quickly absorbed into the HR agenda. It is a key challenge which is capturing the attention of executives and HR professionals alike (Soldati, 2007; HR Focus, 2006) and, increasingly, the acceptance of academics. Today, hardly we find publications in the HR management without some mention of engagement and how to enable it. Till date there is lack of clarity on the clear and agreed definition of engagement and many researchers and practitioners describe the term in different ways (Soldati, 2007). Nevertheless, there is an increasing awareness that employee engagement is pivotal to successful commercial and business performance, where engaged employees are the ‘backbone of good working environments where people are industrious, ethical and accountable’ (Levinson, 2007a; Cleland et al, 2008). Engagement can affect employees’ attitudes, absence and turnover levels and various studies have demonstrated links with productivity, increasingly pointing to a high correlation with individual, group and organizational performance, a success measured through the quality of customer experience and customer loyalty (Hemsley Fraser, 2008, cited in The HR Director, 2008; The Conference Board, 2006). Organisations with higher engagement levels tend to have lower employee turnover, higher productivity, higher total shareholder returns and better financial performance (Baumruk, 2006). By building a culture that enables employees to engage in their work, organisations may benefit from staff who are willing to go the extra mile and achieve better financial performance (Baumruk, 2006). Over recent years there has been a significant shift in the employee-employer relationship. With increasingly competitive markets, globalization, volatile
economic environment, demands for constant change, organisations face significant challenges in their pursuit for business success.

OBJECTIVES

This research paper is an attempt to achieve the following specific objectives:

1. Define Employee Engagement and to discuss various outcomes of Employee Engagement.
2. To differentiate Employee Engagement from the similar constructs such as Job satisfaction, Job involvement and Organizational commitment.
3. To analyze the issues involved in measuring Employee Engagement.
4. To conclude and recommend measures for improving and enhancing Employee Engagement in organizations.

Employee Engagement: Definition Operationalised

Understanding what engagement is, is an important yet complex challenge, and there remains a great deal of scope for discussing the various approaches. Kahn (1990), one of the first to theorize about work-related engagement, described engaged employees as being fully physically, cognitively and emotionally connected with their work roles. Macey et al. (2009) defined employee engagement as “an individual’s sense of purpose and focused energy, evident to others in the display of personal initiative, adaptability, effort, and persistence directed toward organizational goals” (p. 7). Perhaps the most widely cited definition of engagement is that offered by Schaufeli et al. (2002, p. 74), who defined engagement as “a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption”. Schaufeli et al. (2006) emphasized the diffuse and state-like (versus trait-like or momentary emotion-like) nature of engagement, arguing that engagement is a “more persistent and pervasive affective–cognitive state that is not focused on any particular object, event, individual, or behavior” (p. 702).

Engagement is characterized by energy, involvement and efficacy. Engaged employees have a sense of energetic and effective connection with their work activities and they see themselves as able to deal completely with the demands of their job {Maslach & Leiter (1997)}. It also refers to an individual’s involvement and satisfaction with as well as enthusiasm for work {Harter, Schmidt & Hayes (2002)}. Lockwood (2007), states that employee engagement is a key business driver for organizational success. Some definitions assert that employee engagement is something that is produced by aspects in the work place {McCashland, 1999; Miles, 2001; Harter, Schmidt & Keyes, 2003}, while others assert that it is something that the individual brings to the workplace {Harter, Schmidt & Hayes, 2002; Goddard, 1999. What perhaps can be generalized at the very least is that some researchers seem to follow Kahn (1990) and assert that Employee Engagement is a combination of workplace contexts and aspects that are mediated differentially by people’s perceptions and experienced cognitively and emotionally. Common to many definitions offered by researchers and practitioners is the idea that engagement is a positive work-related psychological state (Reflected in words like enthusiasm, energy, passion and vigor) and that engagement is also a motivational state reflected in a genuine willingness to invest focused effort toward organizational goals and success. Bakker et al. (2008), for example, argued that engagement is best conceptualized and characterized by “a high level of energy and a strong identification with one’s work” (p. 189). As already noted, Macey et al. (2009) argued that engagement is best characterized as “purpose and focused energy . . . directed toward organizational goals” (p. 7). Definitions of engagement, however cast, might therefore usefully reflect these two essential qualities: (i) a positive and energized work-related motivational state, and (ii) a genuine willingness to contribute to work role and organizational success. Although there is a great deal of interest in engagement, there is also a great deal of confusion. At present, there is no consistency in definition, with engagement having been operationalised and measured in many disparate ways.
Outcomes of Engagement: A Review

Work engagement is a positive experience in itself (Schaufeli et al., 2002 cited in Sonnentag, 2003). ‘Employee engagement is a hard-nosed proposition that not only shows results but can be measured in costs of recruitment and employee output’ (Johnson, 2004 P.1). As the latter quote suggests there are numerous outcomes of investing in improving employee engagement and there is a fair amount of consistency in the practitioner and academic literature regarding the benefits of doing so. Incorporate a Para/line, meeting the deficiencies; however an effort has been made to review the results/outcomes of Employee Engagement. Some of the organizational and individual outcomes of employee engagement are listed below:

Organizational Outcomes

Customer loyalty: Levinson (2007a) suggests that employees who are happy in their work are more likely to create loyal customers. Engaged employees tend to have a better understanding of how to meet customer needs (Right Management, 2006) and, as a result, customer loyalty tends to be better in organizations where the employees are engaged (Pont, 2004).

Employee Retention: Levinson (2007a) suggests that employees who are happy in their work are more likely to stay in the organisation, and Demourouti et al. (2001, cited in Sonnentag, 2003) found that work engagement is indeed positively related to organizational commitment. Blessing White (2008) reports that 85 per cent of engaged employees plan on sticking around compared to 27 per cent of disengaged employees.

Employee productivity: Engagement affects employee performance (Kahn, 1990). ‘Engaged employees work harder, are more loyal and are more likely to go the ‘extra mile’ for the corporation’ (Lockwood, 2007, p. 3) Watson Wyatt’s (2007) survey of 946 companies across 22 countries found that employees who are highly engaged are more than twice as likely to be top performers then are other employees.

Advocacy of the Organisation: Engaged employees are more likely to advocate the organisation as a place to work and actively promote its products and services’ (Scottish Executive Social Research, 2007 p.23).

Manager self-efficacy: Research has shown that self-efficacy is positively linked to work performance, in that individuals with higher self-efficacy are more likely to be proactive in initiating work, and show sustained effort and determination in their pursuit to achieve the task, even when problems occur (Bandura 1986, 1997, cited in Luthans and Peterson, 2002). The reverse may also occur whereby manager self-efficacy can lead to enhanced employee engagement. Therefore, both engagement and manager self-efficacy can have a positive effect on one another to lead to more effective managers and employees (Luthans and Peterson, 2002).

Organizational Performance: In 2000 and 2002, Harter and colleagues’ meta-analysis of 7,939 business units in 36 companies found a relationship between employee engagement, customer satisfaction, productivity, profit and employee turnover (Harter et al., 2002; Harter, 2000). They concluded that increasing employee engagement and building an environment to support this can significantly increase the likelihood of business success.

Bottom-line profit: The appeal of employee engagement to management is its proven links to bottom-line results’ (People Management, 2008). Gallup found that employees are more productive and contribute more financially to the organisation if they feel involved in, and are committed to the organisation (Gallup cited in Levinson, 2007a). Hewitt Associates (2004) also identified a relationship between engagement and profitability through higher productivity, sales, customer satisfaction and employee retention.
Employee outcomes

Clarifying expectations: Engagement may offer a solution for the individual seeking greater fulfillment from his employment by providing him with the opportunity to invest himself in his work. ‘The combination of employing and expressing a person’s preferred self yields behaviours that bring alive the relation of self to role’ (Kahn, 1990 p. 700). Indeed, an increase in an employee’s sense of self efficacy has also been suggested to be an outcome of employee engagement (Seijts and Crim, 2006).

Health and well-being: Gallup (Crabtree, 2005, cited in Lockwood, 2007) reported increased health and well-being in engaged employees, with 62 per cent of engaged employees reporting a positive effect of work upon their physical health.

There is remarkably little literature that reports the costs attached to engaging a workforce. One of the few organizations to approach a cost-benefit analysis of engagement is Cambridgeshire County council, described in the Scottish Executive Social Research (2007). Although significant costs were attached to their engagement initiatives, Staff Survey results showed considerable improvement. Overall, they concluded that engaging employees had benefited the organization.

The work of Britt (2003), who examined the engagement of U.S. Army rangers and discovered that those who were the most engaged with their work, ‘the ones who ranked work relevant values as the most important’ (p. 16), also reported being the most demoralized when they were faced with obstacles to high performance. It is suggested as a result that such individuals are actually more prone to leave the organisation in question as these blocks in the way of them engaging with their work are of the organization’s own making, and so outside of the employee’s control. This may be the same as the ‘Almost Engaged’ to which Blessing White (2008) refers.

As such, it appears that there are both financial cost and possibly costs to Employee retention from engaging the workforce, but the balance of the limited data available suggests that engagement remains a desirable aim for organizations. This section has explored the current thinking and evidence of the potential outcomes of Engagement, the next section will explore the various tools available to measure Employee Engagement in organizations.

Methods of Measuring Employee Engagement

Measures of engagement need to have a clear theoretical underpinning, should be clearly consistent with an associated definition, need to have published statistical evidence in support of their validity and reliability, and need to be of practical utility in organizational contexts (Macey & Schneider, 2008). There are numerous employee attitude surveys in use currently, many developed in-house by organizations’ HR departments with the aim of measuring engagement levels in the company. However, because of the diversity in the definition, assumptions and use of employee engagement, and the differing requirements of every organisation, there is likely to be a wide variation between all such measures in what is actually measured and organisations are advised to benchmark their engagement scores with caution (Balain and Sparrow, 2009). Organisations are therefore left with a dilemma when choosing how to go about measuring engagement.

The most often used scientifically derived measure of engagement is the Utrecht work engagement scale- UWES (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010; Schaufeli et al., 2002). The UWES includes a subscale for each of the three engagement dimensions—vigour, dedication, and absorption—and has been validated in several countries in Europe, and also in North America, Africa, Asia, and Australia (Bakker, 2009). The scale is available in long and short form (17 or 9 items). The UWES-9 has been shown to have good construct validity, suggesting high correlation to the theorised construct of engagement (Seppälä et al., 2008). Tests have shown that the three scales have good internal consistency and test-retest reliability, indicating that the scale is reliable (Schaufeli et al., 2002; Schaufeli et al., 2006). Schaufeli et al. (2006) found that the tool is a suitable measure in studies of positive organizational behaviour.
Another scale for measuring engagement is Gallup workplace Audit (q12) and is based upon the work of Buckingham and Coffman (1999), who derived 12 questions to measure employee engagement from thousands of focus groups across 2,500 business, health-care and education units (Luthans and Peterson, 2002). The questions address issues such as understanding what is expected of you at work, having the resources to perform well, recognition and praise, encouragement to develop, being listened to and friendships at work (Bates, 2004). Responses to these questions have been linked to business outcomes such as bottom-line profit, productivity, employee retention, and customer loyalty and engagement.

To measure and benchmark organizations’ engagement levels, and identify what may drive engagement in a given organisation, and where organizations can intervene Towers Perrin Rapid Engagement Diagnostic Survey is developed from work undertaken with 40,000 employees in northern America. (Towers Perrin, 2003; Towers Perrin, 2005). The survey is grounded in nine factors that Towers Perrin propose ‘truly define’ engagement. According to Towers Perrin, the advantage of this survey is that it is faster and cheaper than more traditional measures of engagement (Towers Perrin, 2005).

Another method of measuring engagement is JD-R Model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Bakker, Demerouti, De Boer, & Schaufeli, 2003a; Bakker, Demerouti, Taris, Schaufeli, & Schreurs, 2003b; Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001) and was introduced as an alternative to other models of employee well-being, such as the demand-control model and the effort-reward imbalance model. The authors of the JD-R model argue that these models “have been restricted to a given and limited set of predictor variables that may not be relevant for all job positions” Therefore, the JD-R incorporates a wide range of working conditions into the analyses of organizations and employees. Furthermore, instead of focusing solely on negative outcome variables (e.g., burnout, ill health, and repetitive strain) the JD-R model includes both negative and positive indicators and outcomes of employee well being.

For any organisation wishing to understand their levels of engagement, they need to consider how the results will be translated into action. To achieve employee confidence and trust in the survey, actions that will be taken as a result of the survey feedback need to be transparent. Employees also need to be aware that actions taken will be directly related to the feedback received, so they feel listened to and that what they say counts (Ayers, quoted in Bates, 2004).

This section has given a snapshot of some of the measures of engagement currently available and in use by organizations. The next section will explore the overlap between engagement and other concepts.

Employee Engagement and Related Constructs

Whilst many definitions of engagement exist, it is important to show if and how the concept is distinct from other similar constructs with which it may be confused (Rotter, 1990). This is particularly important as questions have been raised over whether engagement is indeed a unique concept or whether it is a re-branding of an existing construct (Macey and Schneider, 2008a). Therefore, it is necessary to explore areas of overlap between engagement and the existing concepts of job satisfaction, commitment and job involvement, the psychological contract and motivation, with a view to understand how the concept is distinct. We take a different approach and contend that the distinctions between Engagement and these related constructs are important particularly because these related constructs might be antecedents or outcomes of Engagement.

a) Job Satisfaction and Employee Engagement: Job satisfaction is defined as a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one’s job or experience (Locke and Henne, 1986). It is positively related to organizational commitment, job-involvement, organizational citizenship behavior and mental health. A recent survey by Gallup showed that the more a customer is satisfied with their bank’s services, the more they are engaged with the bank. Extremely satisfied
customers were up to 15 times more likely to be engaged with the bank than less satisfied customers (Gallup, 2008, cited in Scarborough, 2008). By the same token, they also propose that employee engagement may be the ‘ultimate expression’ of employee satisfaction (Koscec, 2003): the more satisfied they are, the more engaged they are with the company. However, whilst Gallup see a connection between the concepts, they also see a clear distinction between them in their relationship to performance. They argue that satisfaction is often not directly related to performance and business outcomes, whilst engagement can predict satisfaction and other business outcomes (Bizzard, 2004). Young suggests that engagement, not satisfaction, is a strong predictor of organizational performance. However, in contrast to this view Blessing White (2007, cited in Crush, 2007) suggest that engagement comes from ‘Matching maximum satisfaction with maximum contribution’ (p. 41). In addition, Koscec (2003) suggests that a difference exists in relation to the measurement of both concepts, and claims that satisfaction is a passive employee state, whilst engagement is an active state. Macey and Schneider (2008a) similarly indicate that although someone may be satisfied with their job, this does not necessarily mean they are engaged. Although there may be room for satisfaction within the engagement construct, engagement connotes activation, whereas satisfaction connotes satiation (Erickson, 2005). Harter et al. (2002) explicitly referred to their measure (The Gallup Workplace Audit) as ‘satisfaction-engagement’ and defined engagement as ‘the individual’s involvement and satisfaction with as well as enthusiasm for work’. Engagement, in contrast, is about passion and commitment—the willingness to invest oneself and expend one’s discretionary effort to help the employer succeed. Overall, findings from existing research suggest two possibilities:

1. Satisfaction at work is actually a relatively minor outcome of, or even completely absent from, a state of engagement. As such, whether an employee derives fulfillment and satisfaction from an action may be down to other factors, like whether they get a sense of fulfillment from completing a piece of work. This is consistent with the assertion of Macey and Schneider (2008a) and Frese (2008).

2. Satisfaction is related to employee engagement, but the behaviour that occurs as a result of stressors does not fall under the domain of engagement. It could be argued that an individual under pressure may display similar dedication and absorption, but it seems unlikely that they will experience the vigour and passion that tend to characterize engagement. Further research in this area is required to determine how the behaviour of individuals under stressors differs, if at all, from engaged employees. Similarly, the exact connection between satisfaction and employee engagement is yet to be defined.

**b) Organizational Commitment and Employee Engagement:** Engagement and commitment are often used interchangeably in some of the literature (e.g. Heintzman and Marson, 2006) and Gallup (2003, cited in Koscec, 2003) suggests that engagement may be an expression of employee commitment and other elements of satisfaction, however commitment lacks a number of the qualities commonly associated with engagement, such as absorption and self-expression. It refers to the degree to which an individual identifies with an organization and is committed to its goals. It is directly related to voluntary turnover. Researchers like Wellins and Concelman, (2004) suggests that engagement is an amalgam of commitment, loyalty, productivity and ownership. They suggested that ‘to be engaged is to be actively committed, as to a cause.’ Commitment is regarded as a psychological state of attachment (O’Reilly & Chatman, 1986) or binding force between an individual and the organization (Meyer, Becker, & Vandenberg he, 2004). McCashland (1999) refers to engagement and commitment interchangeably. A meta-analysis by Mathieu and Zajac (1990) found that demographic characteristics (e.g. age, sex, level of education), role states, job characteristics, group/leader relations, organizational characteristics, motivation, and job satisfaction can enhance organizational commitment. Overall, findings from existing research suggest that organizational commitment may be encapsulated within the concept of engagement, and may result from engagement. Alternatively, engagement may share some characteristics of organizational commitment but have distinct elements such as absorption and self-expression lacking in organizational commitment.
c) Job Involvement and Employee Engagement: Lodahl & Kejner (1965) define job involvement as “the degree to which a person’s work performance affects his self-esteem”. They also argue that employees who are highly concerned with their jobs also reveal high involvement in their organizations. Lawler & Hall (1970) defined job involvement as the level of importance of one's job to one's personality, which is consistent with Lodahl and Kejner (1965). On the other hand, Bass (1965) considered job involvement as the level to which an individual is vigorously participating in his or her job. However, Etzioni (1975) projected three types of involvement: moral, calculative and alienative. Engagement is closely associated with constructs of job – involvement (Brown, 1996). Harter et al. (2002) specifically equated engagement with both satisfaction and involvement. Within the broader research literature, Maslach et al. (2001) have proposed that engagement can be characterized by energy, involvement, and efficacy. According to W.H. Macey and B. Schneider (2008) Job involvement (including task engagement and job commitment) as traditionally conceptualized and assessed is an important facet of the psychological state of engagement. Furthermore, May et al. (2004) suggests that job involvement is conceptually different to engagement, as job involvement is a purely cognitive act, whereas engagement contains an emotional and physical element. Review of literature indicates that job-involvement is an integral part of employee engagement but not its complete synonymous, as an employee may be engaged due to reasons beyond one’s job and not merely because of it.

d) Organizational Citizenship Behavior and Employee Engagement: A review of the research literature by Barkworth (2004, cited in Robinson et al. 2004) defines the key characteristic of OCB as discretionary ‘extra-role’ behaviour. Podsakoff et al. (2000, quoted in Barkworth, 2004, cited in Robinson et al., 2004) classified definitions of OCB into seven key themes: helping behaviour in terms of helping others voluntarily, sportsmanship (having a positive attitude in the face of adversity and setting aside personal interests for the good of the organisation or team), commitment and loyalty through promoting the organisation to the outside world, organizational compliance through following the organizations rules, individual initiative i.e. going the extra mile over and above what is expected, civic virtue and self-development by voluntarily improving one’s own knowledge, skills and abilities in order to help the organisation. There is a very strong relationship between OCB and engagement, with both focusing upon going the extra mile beyond what is expected. Although engagement, therefore, may be a new term, it may not be a new concept, but rather a combination of organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behaviour (Meyer, 1997; Podsakoff et al., 2000, both cited in Burke and Cooper, 2009).

e) Psychological Empowerment and Employee Engagement: Review of literature revealed that psychological empowerment is a pre-condition of employee engagement. The theory behind Kahn’s theory of personal engagement (Kahn, 1990) relates to the identification of three psychological conditions that impact on an individual’s engagement, namely psychological meaningfulness, psychological safety, and psychological availability. Psychological meaningfulness refers to ‘a feeling that one is receiving a return on investment of one’s self in a currency of physical, cognitive or emotional energy’ (Kahn, 1990). Psychological meaningfulness refers to the value of a work goal in relation to the ideals of an individual (Hackman & Oldham, 1980). The studies of May et al. (2004) and Olivier and Rothmann (2007) confirmed that psychological meaningfulness is a strong predictor of employee engagement. Joo and Shim (2010)’s study revealed that employees showed higher organizational commitment when they perceived high psychological empowerment and a high organizational learning culture.

Following a review of literature on employee engagement in the public sector, Scottish Executive Social Research (2007) suggested that whilst engagement may show shared characteristics with existing concepts, it is about more than these. As Macey and Schneider (2008a) suggest, the state of engagement is a blend of job satisfaction, organizational commitment, job involvement and feelings of empowerment, a concept that is greater than the sum of its parts.

Steps to improve Employee Engagement in Organizations

VOL. 3, ISSUE 6 (June 2014) 90 Online ISSN 2277-1166
There is nothing more damaging to employee morale than asking employees for their thoughts and opinions on an issue and then failing to take any action based on their input. It’s vital that employees understand that steps are being taken to improve employee engagement as a result of their responses. There is a need to enhance qualitative and quantitative measures which can meet the organizational challenges and help to pursue the organizational goals. The improvement could be brought by taking following steps:

**Define and Map the Strategy:** Organization leaders need to be clear on what they are trying to achieve before they communicate this to the organization. The Strategy needs to be converted into a Strategy Map. This Map is a pictorial representation of the Strategy showing dependencies and relationships of the major parts of the Strategy. Most people understand a picture far better and have much more information than from a complicated, written strategic plan.

**Define Values, Behaviors and Measurement Criteria:** The Executive and Management teams need to determine the values and behaviors they believe are important to the organization. These need to be clearly defined and unanimously supported, as well as clearly articulated so that they can be readily understood. Executive Management needs to define what part values and behaviors will play in employee evaluations or reviews.

**Conduct Strategy Mapping in Every Major Business Unit:** Each Department must complete a Strategy Map with each employee being allocated a part of the Strategy. Strategy mapping in each department or work unit helps employees to know their part of the plan, and thereby the first influencing factor of Employee Engagement – Job Importance is achieved. Each employee now knows what is important and his or her part of the plan.

**Create a Performance Management/Talent Management System:** An automated Performance Management and Development system needs to be set up, having the capability for regular feedback, at least monthly. This is the platform that will deliver the clarity of role and communications aspect of Employee Engagement. The Talent Management component should enable an objective way of short-listing potential candidates for promotion. This is also the platform that will deliver the Career and Succession Planning component of Employee Engagement.

**Link Incentive Compensation to the Outcomes of Performance Management:** To achieve the Reward component of Influencing Improvement and Reward, link compensation to Performance. Whether it’s a salary increment, bonus, or some other compensation consequence, there needs to be some linkage to compensation to achieve and satisfy this component.

**Foster Positive, Supportive Relationships:** This is a factor that is not as easily achieved by any single initiative except that improvements will have been made through Clarifying purpose, Setting Objectives and One-on-One meetings.

**Communicate constantly and consistently:** At every step along the way, employees must be clear on how they are connected to the organization strategy. They specifically need to know their part of the plan and they need to see that their part of the plan is important to the organization.

**A way Forward to Future research into Employee Engagement**

Review of literature reflected that for tiding over challenges of globalization, immense competition, rapid and incessant change in the environment, organizations need to have engaged employees. This is more relevant in the service sector where employees directly impact customer engagement and play a more decisive role in ensuring profitability through growth. However review of literature revealed a dearth of extensive literature review in the service sector. There is a clear gap in the literature at the moment, which is the dearth of qualitative data. With few exceptions (e.g. Kahn, 1990), research to date on employee engagement has utilized a survey methodology, with the intention of aggregating the individual scores into overall trends. Qualitative data would offer a greater insight into the perspective of those experiencing engagement and a better understanding of its constituent parts. There is also a need for longitudinal studies of engagement, to demonstrate a clear link between engagement and
organizational performance, and also to assess long term outcomes and benefits. Much of the research to date has focused upon short term gains. Future research should attempt to flesh out the types of factors that are the most important for engagement such as flexible work engagements, training programmes, and incentive rewards in different roles, jobs, organizations and groups. Managers can attempt to maintain a high level of engagement, employees experience at the beginning of their employment throughout their period of employment by understanding clearly what predicts engagement for those individuals. Future research should create and actionable surveys, whereby the results indicate not just levels of engagement, but also where the problem areas lie and what, in an employee’s opinion, should be done to eliminate the barriers to engagement. Future research could also consider individual differences as variables that might predict employee engagement. Several personality variables, such as self-esteem, have been found to be related to burnout, so this might also be important for engagement.

Literature review also revealed absence of a holistic employee engagement model. Another research gap emerged in the area of accurately identifying dimensions and characteristics of engaged employees, particularly in India. Though studies have been conducted by researchers and consultants across the globe more in-depth studies could be undertaken in India. Extent literature review reflected that role of organizational culture and communication in shaping employee attitudes, feelings and behavior is evident. But no study had been undertaken to study the role of organizational culture and communication on impacting and predicting employee engagement. Both organizational culture and communication are multi-dimensional constructs, literature review also surfaced the need to identify the key dimensions. These would help business organizations envisaging on increasing employee engagement to focus on key variables and streamline their practices for enhancing employee engagement. The importance of the line manager in engaging employees has also been clearly established. As a sub-driver to engagement they potentially have the most impact on employees engagement levels (Robinson et al., 2007). At the same time, it is unclear exactly how the manager does this, and what distinguishes an engaging manager from their fellows. Further research might not only identify what these differences are, but potentially reveal what training managers could undergo to improve their ability to engage their staff.

Despite the proliferation in engagement related research, and despite enormous advances having been made about how best to understand and manage engagement, we believe that the notion of work engagement is not at something of a crossroads. Although one path might involve the ongoing proliferation of relatively disconnected research and practice using a diversity of models and measures, we believe the time is now ripe to agree some common ground, consolidate what we know, and leverage from this firm foundation additional research, which will redress fundamental issues that still require resolution. This literature review has revealed that Employee Engagement has been conceptualized in many different ways. There is no single agreed definition and research has shown that, however Engagement is defined; it is a multi-faceted construct (Kahn 1990).

However, there is growing consensus among the authors that the construct is distinguishable from related concepts in management such as employee commitment, organizational citizenship behavior and job satisfaction in such a manner that employee engagement clearly reflects the two-way exchange of effort between employers and employees, and it has stretched meaning beyond the aforementioned constructs. Research on engagement is still on its infancy, attempting to come up with more clear-cut and acceptable definition. The existence of various conceptualizations makes the state of knowledge around Employee Engagement difficult to determine, as each piece of research is undertaken under a different protocol, using different measures of engagement under different circumstances.

CONCLUSIONS

This research paper has revealed the existence of various conceptualizations of employee engagement, making the state of knowledge around employee engagement a little complicated to determine, as each individual research is undertaken under a different concept, using different measures of engagement.
under different circumstances. Although, there is no single agreed definition of employee engagement, research as shown that it is a multifaceted construct (Kahn, 1990).

There is a clear evidence in academic literature that engagement leads to improvement in employee retention, employee productivity and organizational performance and at the same time leads to increased health and well-being in engaged employees.

Further, the review of research shows, whilst engagement may show shared characteristics with similar concepts such as job satisfaction and job involvement; it is about more than these. As Macey and Schneider (2008a) suggest, the state of engagement is a blend of job satisfaction, organizational commitment, job involvement and feelings of empowerment, a concept that is greater than the sum of its parts.

This review of research also identified the need to identify the key dimensions of engagement. This would help business organizations envisaging on increasing employee engagement to focus on key variables and streamline their practices for enhancing employee engagement.

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