

# A STUDY ON THE GENDER DIFFERENCES IN EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT IN TELECOM SECTOR OF KOTTAYAM DISTRICT, KERALA

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**Abstract:** Employee engagement getting its momentum among the managers of various organisation to leverage its contribution towards the organisational performance at large. Managers view employee engagement as a tool to systematically direct the performance of their employees. On the other hand employees or non-managers view it as a means of exhibiting their commitment towards their organisations. However, the concept employee engagement is widely accepted among the managers and non-managers as it contribute significantly to the overall performance of the organisation. This paper examines the differences of opinion among the employees with regard to employee engagement and also analysing various factors that influence employee engagement at telecom sector. For this study 150 sample were considered from the employees working in the telecom sector in Kottayam District, Kerala.

**IndexTerms:** Employee Engagement, Communication, Performance Appraisal, Equal Opportunity, Welfare Benefits, Training and Development, Leadership, Telecom Sector

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Worldwide India is considered as the second-largest telecommunications market with a subscriber base of 1.20 billion. Apparently, mobile economy of India is also growing quickly and contributing significantly to India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), reported by GSM Association (GSMA) and the Boston Consulting Group (BCG). Indian government is expecting a hike in the revenues from the telecom equipment sector as US\$ 26.38 billion by 2020. The internet subscribers are also expected to double by 2021. In addition, the Indian Government is planning to invest on 100 smart city projects based on the features of IoT would play a vital role in development in the telecom sector. Therefore in this context the performance of telecom sector companies is very vital for the economic development of the country. Employee engagement is one of the importance aspect that determine the performance of employees. In this study the overall engagement level has been assessed along with the influence of factors such as communication, performance appraisal, equal opportunity, and benefits.

### 1.1 Significance of the Study and Research Problem Identification

It is highly essential to ensure great performance among the organisations in Telecom Sector as it is rapidly growing and contributing to Indian Economy. There are only very limited study in this sector especially with regard to gender differences in employee engagement and its drivers. This study will be beneficial to the stakeholders, researchers in the same field and other academicians.

### 1.2 Objectives

The overall objective of the study is to identify the differences in level of employee engagement based on gender differences. The secondary objects are as follows.

1. To identify the influence on the drivers of employee engagement.
2. To identify the gender differences of employee engagement.

### 1.3 Hypothesis

Following hypotheses have been set to achieve the objectives.

H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant difference between male and female with regard to all factors of employee engagement.

H<sub>02</sub>: There is no significant differences between employee engagement and all factors.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept engagement has its base in theories proposed by Elton Mayo's experiments with motivation. Over a period of time, all these theories have progressed through several reaffirmations like industrialization, total quality management, organizational development. Firstly, Pfeiffer (1998) recognized a connection between the effective management of human resource and business performance. The theorists of human capital management have identified engagement as a major contributor to business performance. Researches are formulating possible metrics on interventions to facilitate highly engaged workforce to leverage high performance.

Major contribution in the field of employee engagement is done by Kahn (1990). Kahn started his research in association with Goffman by proposing "people's attachment and detachment to their role varies" (Kahn 1990:694). Meanwhile Diamond and Allcorn (1985) stated the concept to ensure better organisational life is that "ongoing, emotionally charged, and psychologically complex" (Diamond and Allcorn 1985).

To gain further understanding of the varying levels of affection that individuals exhibited towards their job roles, Kahn (1990) extended his research to various disciplines. He found that psychologists, sociologists and group theorists (Goffman 1961, Merton 1957, Freud 1922, Slater 1966, Smith and Berg 1987) had all acknowledged the idea that individuals have the natural tendency to be hesitant to be a members of groups and systems. As a consequence they "seek to protect themselves from both isolation and engulfment by alternately pulling away from and moving towards their memberships" (Kahn 1990). Kahn (1990) used 'personal engagement' and 'personal disengagement', to define these standardisations which refer to the "behaviors by which people bring in or leave out their personal selves during work role performances" (Kahn 1990:694). These terms proposed by Kahn (1990) assimilate previous ideas in motivation theories such as self-expression and self-employment (Alderfer 1972, Maslow 1954).

In addition to this, May et al (2004) found that meaningfulness, availability and safety, were considerably contributing to engagement. In this study they found that job enrichment and role fit are the drivers of meaningfulness; paying coworker and supportive supervising were predictors of safety. On the other hand faithfulness to co-worker norms, participation in outside activities and self-consciousness had negative effect on engagement. General, meaningfulness was found to have relation to employee engagement. (May et al, 2004).

The 'burnout' literature, provides an alternative model of engagement that describes job engagement as the positive antithesis of burnout, noting that burnout involves the erosion of engagement with one's job (Maslach et al 2001). Maslach et al (2001), identified various dimensions of work-life that either lead to engagement or burnout such as rewards and recognition, control, workload, community or social support, perceived fairness and values. They state that job engagement is connected with feelings of choice and control, justifiable workload, suitable recognition and reward, fairness and justice, a compassionate work community and meaningful and valued work.

According to Holbeche and Springett (2003), employee's perceptions on workplace are inked to levels of engagement and, eventually, their performance. They argue that employees will continue to work only if they find meaning in what they are doing and organisation should provide the sense of meaning. Holbeche and Springett (2003) also claim that high levels of engagement can only be attained through shared sense of destiny and purpose. A model proposed by Kahn's (1990) and Maslach et al's (2001) proposes the psychological conditions or antecedents that are necessary for engagement. However, there is no sufficient explanations with regards to the individuals' response to various conditions that contributing to engagement.

Saks (2006), says that a theoretical justification on employee engagement can be found in Social Exchange Theory (SET). A basic principle of SET is that the connections develop over a period of time in terms of trust, loyalty, and commitments as long as the employees are put up 'rules' of exchange (Cropanzano and Mitchell 2005). Such rules incline to implicate mutuality or settlement rules, so that the actions of one party may lead to a response by the other party. This is also in consistent with the description of engagement as a two-way relationship between the employer and employee (Robinson et al, 2004).

According to Saks (2006) for an individual employee engagement is considered as a means to repay to their organisations in return of what they have been receiving from the organisation. Employees chose to be engaged in various levels depending on what they are receiving. Exhibiting cognitive, physical and emotional devotion in ones work role by an employee is a well insightful way of responding to an action. Thus employees level of engagement will always depended on the resources and benefits provided by the organisation (Joseph. T et al, 2018)

In a nut shell theoretical basis to clarify why the level of engagement among employees vary from employee to employee lies in SET theory. Moreover according to Kahn's (1990) definition of engagement, employees may feel obligation to be engaged as a repayment for the benefits and resources that they receive from the organisation. If the organisation failed to provide these resources and benefits, then employee may be disengaged themselves from their duties. Thus, the amount of physical, cognitive, and emotional, resources that an individual is willing to offer in the performance of their work role may be depending on the economic and socio-emotional resources received from the organization.

### 3. METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN OF THE STUDY

#### 3.1 Population

The population includes of all the employees working in the telecom sector Kottayam District. Population include both male and female.

#### 3.2 Sample Design

3.2.1 *Sampling Unit*: Employees working in selected telecom companies in Kottayam District.

3.2.2 *Sampling Size*: 150 respondents constituted sample size

3.2.3 *Sampling Design*: Purposive sampling technique was used to collect data

3.2.4 *Sample Area*: The area covered for the study is Kottayam District, Kerala State

#### 3.3 Data Collection

Both primary and secondary data have been used in the study. Primary data was collected through distributing questionnaire among the selected employees working in telecom sector. The Secondary Data collected was also collected from accessible information published in newspapers and industry journals, official websites.

#### 3.4 Data Analysis Tools

The reliability of factors of employee engagement have been analysed with chrome back alpha analysis and the alpha value is above 0.6 is obtained for all the factors. Further analysis was undertaken with the help of SPSS and Chi-Square analysis.

### 4. ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The collected data were systematically analysed to achieve the objective of the study. The results are given below.

#### 4.1 Demography of Gender

GENDER				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
MALE	94	62.6	62.6	62.6
FEMALE	56	37.3	37.3	100.0
Total	150	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.1

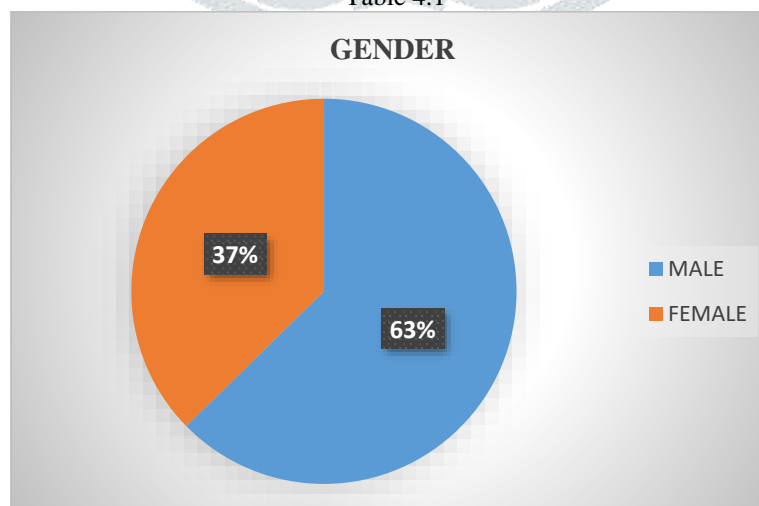


Fig 4.1

**4.2 Demography of Age**

Age				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Less than 30	31	20.7	20.7	20.7
31-50	89	59.3	28.0	28.0
Above 50	30	20.0	20.0	100.0
Total	150	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.2

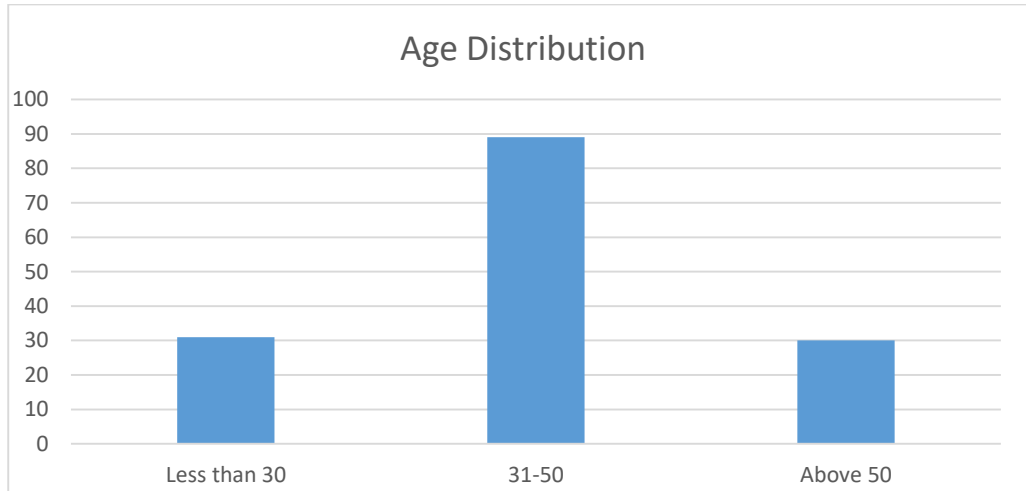


Fig 4.2

**4.3 Department wise classification**

Department				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Commercial Department	73	48.7	48.7	48.7
Operations Department	77	51.3	51.3	100.0
Total	150	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.3



Fig 4.3

4.4 Statistical Analysis of Data

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Communication	150	1	4	3.39	.741
Performance Appraisal	150	1	4	3.11	.713
Equal Opportunity	150	1	4	3.36	.760
Welfare Benefits	150	1	4	3.28	.703
Training and Development	150	1	4	3.45	.714
Leadership	150	1	4	3.28	.776
Valid N (listwise)	150				

Table 4.4

One-Sample Statistics				
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Communication	150	3.48	.741	.061
Performance Appraisal	150	3.22	.713	.057
Equal Opportunity	150	3.36	.760	.053
Welfare Benefits	150	3.36	.703	.056
Training and Development	150	3.36	.714	.054
Leadership	150	3.28	.776	.054

Table 4.5

Statements on Employee Engagement	Mean	Std. Deviation	P Value
Communication	3.39	.741	<0.001 **
Performance Appraisal	3.11	.713	<0.001 **
Equal Opportunity	3.36	.760	<0.001 **
Welfare Benefits	3.28	.703	<0.001 **
Training and Development	3.45	.714	<0.001 **
Leadership	3.28	.776	<0.001 **

Table 4.6

Group Statistics					
	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Total of All Factors of Employee engagement	Male	94	19.35	2.726	.295
	Female	56	20.64	2.383	.319

Table 4.7

Factors	Male		Female		t value	P value
	Mean	SD.	Mean	SD.		
Employee Engagement	19.35	2.726	20.64	2.383	2.46	0.014*

Table 4.8

## 5. FINDINGS

It was very evident from the study that the contribution of each factor of employee engagement is not equal to the average level of overall contribution. The results are substantially enough to prove the differences in the level of contribution of factors of employee engagement is significantly vary among the employees of telecom sector especially in Kottayam District. It was also found that there is a commendable difference between male and female with regard to the factors of employee engagement individually and collectively.

## 6. CONCLUSION

The concept employee engagement is having remarkable contribution in the field of management and it is an integral part of successful organisation. The necessity for fostering convenient environment that facilitate engagement has identified by the organisations and thriving hard to be distinguished from other organisations. This will eventually lead to better performance by both employees and organisation as a whole. The current study focused on Communication, Performance Appraisal, Equal Opportunity, Welfare Benefits, Training and Development and Leadership and its differences in contribution. It also analysed the gender differences collectively and individually on each factors of employee engagement. Results of the study proven that there is differences with regard to gender and level of contribution of factors of employee engagement to the average level of employee engagement. The reasons behind these differences have not come to the preview of this study leaves the space for further research in the same field. Moreover there are many other factors of employee engagement left out from the current study also provide further scope for researches to undertake investigation.

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