"Work engagement and leadership"

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Abstract: The objective of the research were to assess the level of work engagement and perceived style of leadership among bank employees, to, to assess the relationship between dimension of leadership and dimension of work engagement; and to assess the various factors in the organizational context affecting levels of work engagement and leadership. The mode of data collection was interview and thematic content analysis was used with verbatim.

Key words: leadership, work engagement,verbatim, bank employees.

Introduction

Work commitment and leadership

"Organizational behaviour is a field of study that investigates the impact that individuals, groups and organizational structure have on behaviour within the organization, for the purpose of applying such knowledge towards improving an organizational effectiveness".

The above definition has three main elements; first organizational behaviour is an investigative study of individuals and groups, second, theimpact of organizational structure on human behaviour and the third, the application ofknowledge to achieve organizational effectiveness. These factors are interactive in natureand the impact of such behaviour is applied to various systems so that the goals areachieved. The nature of study of organizational behaviour is investigative to establishcause and effect relationship.

OB involves integration of studies undertaken relating to behavioural sciences like psychology, sociology, anthropology, economics, social psychology and political science.Therefore, organizational behaviour is a comprehensive field of study in which individual, group and organizational structure is studied in relation to organizational growth and organizational culture, in an environment where impact of modern technology is great. The aim of the study is to ensure that the human behaviour contributes towards growth of the organization and greater efficiency is achieved.

Organizational behaviour is a study and application of managerial skills and knowledge to people in the organization to investigate individual and group behaviour. Various concepts and models in the field of organizational behaviour attempt to identify, not only the human behaviour but also modify their attitude and promote skills so that they can act more effectively. This is done scientifically; therefore, organizational behaviour field is a scientific discipline. The knowledge and models are practically applied to workers, groups and organizational structure that provide tools for improved behaviour and dynamics of relationship. The field of organizational behaviour also provides various systems and models for international relationship that are applied to organizations.

In the field of Organizational Psychology, there has been the emergence of many management thoughts in the form of theories which can be basically divided in three categories based on three particular phases of time.

Work Engagement

Work engagement is an individual's involvement with, satisfaction with, and enthusiasm for, the work she does. Highly engaged employees have a passion for their work and feel a deep connection to their company; disengaged employees have essentially checked out—putting time but not energy or attention into their work. Engagement at work has emerged as a potentially important employee performance and organizational management topic. A growing body of evidence supports the relationship between engagement of the employee at work and organizational outcomes, including those which are performance based (Harter et al., 2002)

Work engagement is the assumed opposite of burnout. Contrary to those who suffer from burnout, engaged employees have a sense of energetic and effective connection with their work activities and they see themselves as able to deal well with the demands of their job. Two schools of thought exist on the relationship between work engagement and burnout.

Engagement is a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption. Rather than a momentary and specific state, engagement refers to a more persistent and pervasive affective-cognitive state that is not focused on any particular object, event, individual, or behavior. Vigor is characterized by high levels of energy and mental resilience while working, the willingness to invest effort in one's work, and persistence even in the face of difficulties. Dedication refers to being strongly involved in one's work and experiencing a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge. Absorption, is characterized by being fully concentrated and happily engrossed in one's work, whereby time passes quickly and one has difficulties with detaching oneself from work. It defines burnout and work engagement as two distinct concepts that should be assessed independently(Schaufeli and Baker, 2004).

In 1990, William Kahn, with his work on personal engagement and disengagement at work, was the first to tackle the engagement construct and bring it into the workplace (Serrano &Reichard, 2011). "Personal engagement is the simultaneous employment and expression of a person's "preferred self" in task behaviours

that promote connections to work and to others, personal presence (cognitive, emotional and physical), and active, full role performances" (Kahn, 1990).

The focus toward work, or more specifically, tasks related to the immediate work of the employee; several researchers have pointed out (Maslach, Schaufeli, &Leiter, 2001; Rich et al., 2010; Shuck, Reio, et al., 2011; Shuck, Rocco, &Albornoz, 2011), although levels of engagement can be affected by a variety of organizational antecedents (i.e., job fit and psychological climate), employee engagement involves performance on immediate, work-related tasks, not attitudinal functions about or perceptions of the work environment; it can be assumed, however, that attitudes and perceptions about the work environment can and do affect levels of employee engagement in an intimate fashion. This does not downplay the utility of understanding antecedents to engagement although the two perspectives should be distinguished in research. The experience and interpretation of work during the ephemeral moment that work is underway is the focal point of employee engagement.

Antecedents and consequences of work engagement

The evidence regarding the antecedents and consequences of work engagement can be organized in an overall model of work engagement. In building this model, two assumptions from the job demands-resources (JD-R) model was made (Bakker and Demerouti, 2007; Demerouti et al., 2001). The first assumption is that job resources such as social support from colleagues and supervisors, performance feedback, skill variety, and autonomy, start a motivational process that leads to work engagement, and consequently to higher performance. The second assumption is that job resources become more salient and gain their motivational potential when employees are confronted with high job demands (e.g. workload, emotional demands, and mental demands). Thus, employees who score high on optimism, self-efficacy, resilience and self-esteem are well able to mobilize their job resources, and generally are more engaged in their work. job resources and personal resources independently or combined predict work engagement. Further, job and personal resources particularly have a positive impact on engagement when job demands are high. Work engagement, in turn, has a positive impact on job performance. Finally, employees who are engaged and perform well are able to create their own resources, which then foster engagement again over time and create a positive gain spiral.

Leadership

Traditionally, leadership has been defined as "the heroic individual, often charismatic, whose positional power, intellectual strength, persuasive gifts motivate followers" (Luthans, 2011). But with globalization and consequent changes in the organizations, leadership has been defined as "the ability to influence a group toward the achievement of a vision or set of goals" (Robbins & Judge, 2013). The source of this influence may be formal, such as that provided by managerial rank in an organization. But not all leaders are managers. Just because an organization provides its managers with certain formal rights is no assurance they will lead effectively. Non-sanctioned leadership— the ability to influence that arises outside the formal structure of the organization—is often as important as or more important than formal influence. In other words, leaders can emerge from within a group as well as by formal appointment. Leaders can emerge from within a group as well as by formal appointment. Organizations need strong leadership and strong management for optimal

effectiveness. We need leaders today to challenge the status quo, create visions of the future, and inspire organizational members to want to achieve the visions. We also need managers to formulate detailed plans, create efficient organizational structures, and oversee day-to-day operations.

Method

Participants

The age of the participants ranged from 20-55 years. The demographic details of the participants are given in Table 1.

Table 1: Demographic details of participants

Demographic Details	Participant 1	Participant 2
Gender	Male	Female
Educational qualification	MBA from IIM pune	Graduate
Age	43	42
Marital status	Married	Widow
No .of Dependents	3	2
Type of Organisation	Private sector bank	Private sector bank
Designation/position in the organization	Vice manager	Business affluent
Tenure	10 years	6 years 5 months
Duration of reporting under the same supervisor /manager	5 years	1years 5 months

Semi-structured Interview Schedule

A semi-structured interview is a method of research used in the social sciences. While a structured interview has a rigorous set of questions which does not allow one to divert, a semi-structured interview is open, allowing new ideas to be brought up during the interview as a result of what the interviewee says. The interviewer in a semi-structured interview generally has a framework of themes to be explored. In the interview, the researchers had some predetermined questions from which the participants were asked to answer and the researcher had some liberty to change and add some questions according to the flow of the interview. The questions for the interview was based on the literature review and keeping in mind the suggestions of all the researchers, 18 questions were pooled in. Any item that was ambiguous or researcher conducted the study on one male and one female participant ranging between 20-55 years. The demographic profile sheet was prepared in a way that it can give the researchers information about one's age, gender, educational qualification, Tenure, years of experience, no of dependents supervisor's name and years of reporting. Various mangers of either private or the public banking sector were approached and once when the

permission was given by the concerned authorities' i.e. the manger, the introductory letter was handed over to the officials so that the researchers can form a rapport with their respective participants. The researchers shared some information about herself like her name, the institution she belongs along with information about what the research holds. The researcher's informed the participants that the purpose of the study was to understand the working in an organizational setup better , Once the consent of the participant was given, they were made assure of confidentiality clause which protects their information.

After that, the semi structured interview was finally conducted by giving out clear instructions to the participants and the questions were further probed to have a rich data for analysis. After which the questionnaires were handed over to them, to be filled. In case due to prior work commitments, if the participants were not available, according to their convenience another date was finalised were the researchers and participants could meet for the same purpose. In the end the participants were thanked for their valuable contribution.

The data obtained through semi structured interview was subjected to directed content analysis. The goal of a directed content analysis is to validate or extend conceptually a theoretical framework or theory. Existing theory or research can help focus the research question. It can provide predictions about the variables of interest or about the relationships among variables and thus helping to determine the initial coding scheme or relationships between codes. This has been referred to as deductive category application (Mayring, 2000).

Objectives

To seems the various factors in the organizational context affecting levels of work engagement and leadership.

Result

Sl. No.	Categories	Key Ideas	Verbatim
1	**Leader Behavior**	Formal relation	"*I have a formal relationship with my supervisor but I have many good friends and informal relations with many people here.*"
2	**Antecedents of Work Engagement**	Competitive and challenging	"*I feel I am competent and have necessary skills for my work – related Tasks. I like everyday challenges and feels enthusiastic to come to office To complete everyday's tasks and to new learning.*"

3	Consequences of Work Engagement	Discuss with the leader.	"*Here all the employees sit and discuss for long with the Supervisors for planning.*"
4	Impact of Leadership Styles on Work Engagement	-	-
5	Any other	-	-

Table : Qualitative Data Analysis for participant 1

Table : Qualitative Data Analysis for participant 2

Sl. No	Categories	Key Ideas	Verbatim
1	Leader Behavior	Good relation	"*i have good relationships with everyone around and even my supervisor.*"
2	Antecedents of Work Engagement	Motivated towards place; learn new things daily	"I *feel enthusiastic to come to office for the motivation this place provides and the work we do here helps us to grow and learn Something new every day whether it is profession related or personal.*"
3	Consequences of Work Engagement	Discuss with leader	"*Here all the employees sit and discuss for long with the supervisors for planning.*"
4	Impact of Leadership Styles on Work Engagement	Indulge more in professional work.	"I *and my supervisor mostly have formal interaction only there are only few informal ones otherwise its always professional.*"
5	Any other	-	-

Discussion

The objective of the research were to assess the level of work engagement and perceived style of leadership among bank employees, to, to assess the relationship between dimension of leadership and dimension of work engagement; and to assess the various factors in the organizational context affecting levels of work engagement and leadership.

In the present study, two participants working as vice managers and business affluent in the Axis Bank were approached. The first participant was a 43 year old male working at the designation of a vice manager in the bank. He has pursued B.tech from IIT Delhi and has done MBA from IIM Pune. He is married and has been working in the same organization for almost 6 years now. He has been working at the same designation for about 4 years. The participant looked very comfortable during the administration. He seemed to be quite confident and had a positive personality. He also seemed to have a good social interaction with the other employees in the organization. The second participant was a 42 year old female working as a Business Affluent. She has pursued graduation from Bengal and she is widow. She has been working in the present organization since 2years 6 months years and at the current designation for about 1 year. The female participant had a very warm and confident personality. She seemed to be satisfied and content with her work. She has a socializing work in the Bank. During the administration she was constantly smiling while she was being interviewed. She was also quite expressive and opens up her emotional bond with the bank.

A study of the relationship between leadership and employee engagement, was done by Ori Eyal&RonikKark (2008). We it was hypothesized that transformational leadership can promote a "vigorous entrepreneurial strategy". That encourages radical change, whereas monitoring entrepreneurial strategy." Because passive-avoidant leadership restricts organizational entrepreneurship to the boundaries of existing constraints, mainly using a "conservative strategy".

Work engagement can be proved through adopting certain workshop behavioural health practices that addresses supervisory communication, job design, resource support, working conditions, cooperate culture and leadership style (Attridge. M, 2009). It is more difficult to implement changes in public organization work settings but that organizational performance can be improved more readily in public organizations (Robertson, PJ., 1995).

The male participant's work engagement can also be inferred from his interview as he shared that he believes he is good at the skills which is needed for his work and the necessary motivation he gets from his place of work as he said " *I feel enthusiastic to come to office for the motivation this place provides and the work we do here helps us to grow and learn something new everyday whether it is profession related or personal*." For him, if an employee is engaged, he/she will be doing fair quality of work and will have commitment with his or her work. He also believes that if the working conditions are neat and clean and equality is present and also proper incentives are given, then an employee will be engaged in work as he said "*that the physical environment here is neat and clean, fairly equal, all facilities are equal for all and incentives are proper so for this and to grow I would keep engaged in my work*." He also reiterated that "*i have good relationships with everyone around and even my supervisor.*" His interactions are formal mostly with his supervisor as he recollected that " *I and my supervisor mostly have formal interaction only there are only few informal ones otherwise its always professional.*" Everyone becomes a part of decision making in the organisation, he had shared that "*here all the employees sit and discuss for long with the supervisors for planning.*" So basically

his leader has formal relationship with employees but does involve employees in decision making about the bank.

The female participant feels that she is highly competent for the work she is assigned and has the skills to do it as she said that "*I feel I am competent and have necessary skills for my work – related tasks. I like everyday challenges and feels enthusiastic to come to office to complete evryday's tasks and to new learning.*" For her the workis inspiring as well. For her, the traits of an engaged employee are "*interested in the work one does, engrosement in the work to do quality work and deal with all challenges.*" "*The neat and clean environment, proper incentives, equality, motivation, good working conditions*" are the aspects that are positive in the environment in her organisation according to her. Her relationship with her supervisor is very formal but with some employees it is highly informal as she said that "*I have a formal relationship with my supervisor but I have many good friends and informal relations with many people here.*"Everyone becomes a part of decision making in the organisation, he had shared that "*here all the employees sit and discuss for long with the supervisors for planning.*" So basically her leader has formal relationship with employees but does involve employees in decision making about the bank.

Overall the result indicates positive relation between leadership styles and work engagement and the good leaders can promote it also.

Implications, Limitations, Suggestions

The implications of the present study could be that it can be used to tap the different factors affecting the organizational commitment of an employee in his/her organization. More focus could be given to the components of organizational commitment. The idea could be to understand both demographic and organizational variables that influence the employees affective, continuance and normative commitment. All this could further help to understand the areas where the employee requires motivation so as to increase both personal and organizational growth.

Coming to the limitations of the present study, the sample was limited and hence the findings cannot be generalized. Along with this, there is also a possibility that the participants might have given socially desirable answers in order to not reveal the personal information about the organization.

Suggestions for how future researches can be done include a larger sample for a better analysis. The sample could be kept consistent by keeping only a specific organization as the target. The variables being assessed could be understand in the light of many other factors such as gender, tenure and designation.

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