A Study on Work Engagement & Work Effort Among Employees

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Abstract

Every organization's performance is crucial to its success; when workers are effective, engaged, and motivated, they can more easily meet the goals the company set for them. An engaged employee is the one who is completely engrossed in & enthusiastic about their work and acts favorably to advance the standing & goals of the company. Work effort is understood to be the actual amount of energy invested by an employee on the job or the level of energy required to successfully do that job. The current research aimed to study Work Engagement & Work Effort among employees. A sample of 32 employees in the age 25 to 40 was collected. Standardized scales were used to measure Work Effort & Work Engagement among employees. The results found out that all the three dimensions of Work Engagement (Dedication, Absorption & Vigor) significantly positively correlated with all the three dimensions of Work Effort (Persistence, Direction & Intensity). It is suggested that managers receive training that will enable them to build exceptional teams that are committed to an organization's vision & mission. A strong organizational vision that is articulated & communicated by leaders can also boost worker productivity & engagement.

Keywords: Work Engagement, Work Effort, Employees

Introduction

Workplaces today are constantly evolving. The organization requires that employees be involved in the workplace on an intellectual, emotional & physical level. Setting up a healthy work environment is essential for developing and maintaining a high performing organization. Businesses that prioritize long term success must demonstrate their concern for all team members, whether they work on site, remotely or on a part time basis.

Healthy work environments include both psychological & physical safety. Great cultures emphasize supporting employee wellness & embracing people from all backgrounds. The leaders are open about the factors that influence decisions & recognize employees who consistently uphold the company's values.

The emphasis on employee engagement in the workplace was brought about by the evolving workplace & workforce, the emergence of positive psychology and the necessity to link work to the well-being of the employee. Employee engagement is defined as the interest and zeal that employees have for their jobs and workplace. Employees who are engaged are concerned about their work & the successes of the company & that their contributions matter. An engaged employee is in it more than just a paycheck and may believe that their performance & by extension their well-being is directly related to and essential to the success of their company.

Engaged workers are active agents who believe in themselves & generate their own positive feedback (Schaufeli et al., 2000). Wellins et al. (2011) asserts that work engagement is "the extent to which people enjoy and feel valued for doing it."

Researchers are interested in work engagement as it can drive performance & organizational outcomes (Macey & Schneider, 2008; Lee & Huang, 2019; De Carlo et al., 2020). The lack of employee engagement can be prevented by improved better job design, resource support, working conditions, corporate culture & an effective leadership style (Macik-Frey, Quick & Nelson, 2007).

Developmental Dimension International (DDI, 2005) suggests five things a manager should do to create highly engaged workers. These include, aligning efforts with strategy, empowering, promoting, encouraging teamwork & collaboration, helping people grow, provide support & give recognition where appropriate.

It is difficult to precisely describe and measure effort since it is an internal activity that is unstable, extremely subjective, hypothetical, and difficult to see. In the broader context, effort is the power applied to complete or achieve a task. In a work setting, it is the amount of energy individuals devote to their jobs.

Cicero et al. (2007) examined the level of employee effort as an individual outcome of leadership effectiveness in their study. Data was collected from 68 employees of a medium-sized organization, and the results demonstrated that team identification and leader group prototypicality had a substantial two-way interaction impact in predicting employees' work effort.

Work Engagement

Kahn (1990) first developed the thought of work engagement as the degree to which a person shows self-preference in job tasks to promote connections between self & job, which can increase role performance through cognitive, emotional & physical investment. Khan (1990) was convinced that employees feel engaged when three psychological needs are met, which is, personal feelings of meaningfulness, psychological safety & availability. Physical engagement refers to the extent to which employees expend their efforts both physically & mentally as they go about their jobs (e.g., I exert a lot of energy performing my job). Cognitive engagement refers to employees needing to know what their employer's vision and strategies are (e.g., performing my job is so absorbing that I forget about everything else) & lastly, Emotional engagement refers to the emotional relationship that employees feel with their employer (e.g., i really put my heart into my job).

Goetzel (2016) defined employee engagement as the intention of commitment with purpose and to "place in gear". Schaufeli et al. (2002), defined work engagement as a "positive, fulfilling work related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication & absorption.". Vigor is characterized as "high levels of energy & mental resilience while working, the willingness to invest in one's work." Dedication is characterized as a "sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride & challenge." Absorption is characterized as "being fully concentrated

& deeply engrossed in one's work, whereby time passes quickly & one has difficulties with detaching oneself from work."

Work engagement has been defined as when employees feel positively meaningful, consider their workload to be manageable and have hope about the future of their work (Nelson & Simmons, 2003).

Job resources such as social support from colleagues & supervisors, performance feedback, skill variety, autonomy & learning opportunities are positively related with work engagement (Schauefli & Salanova, 2007).

In a survey done by Gallup Organization (2004), crucial links were found between employee engagement, customer loyalty, business growth & profitability. Similar research done by International Survey Research (ISR, 2005) found favorable evidence that organizations can only reach their full potential through emotionally engaging employees & customers.

Perrin (2003) asserts that building engagement is a process that never ends, and it rests on a meaningful and emotionally enriching work experience.

Employee engagement can be achieved through modeling an organizational environment where positive emotions such as involvement and pride are encouraged, which leads to improved organizational performance, lower employee turnover and better health (Robinson, 2006).

Engaged employees are likely to have a greater attachment to their organizations and a lower tendency to quit (Schaufeli & Baker, 2004). Research done by Truss et al., (2006) upholds that overall engaged employees are less likely to leave their employer.

A study done by Kong (2009) on 182 male employees & 118 female employees, found that there exists a significant difference between male & female employees, especially on dimension of engagement, as male employees are higher on vigor & dedication. Further, results also found out that unmarried employees gained

higher scores than married employees and employees who have a work experience of 0 to 5 years are highly engaged as compared to employees who have a working experience of 6 to 10 years.

In a study by Kasinathan & Rajee (2011) done on 118 employees in Chennai, India found that there is a satisfactory level of the employee regarding various factors related to their commitment towards their company, i.e., a positive attitude has been found among employees and their engagement towards the company. The research further found out that 50% of employees agreed that when working, the company inspired & motivated them to perform their best abilities.

Work Effort

According to Blau (1993), Direction of effort is referred to as towards which behaviors the effort is directed, in other words, what behaviors individuals choose to perform to achieve an aim. Intensity refers to how hard a person works to execute a chosen behavior. Persistence refers to directed effort expended over a certain period.

Dewey (1913), an educational psychologist, may have been the first to define effort in its psychological context as "persistence, consecutiveness of activity, endurance against obstacles and hindrances." Bielby & Bielby (1988) defined work effort as "the amount of physical and mental energy devoted to work"

De Cooman et al. (2009) were the first to propose a work effort scale with these three basic dimensions: direction (the behavior a person chooses to perform in an organization), intensity (how hard a person works to perform the chosen behavior), and persistence (how hard a person keeps trying to perform the chosen behavior successfully).

Kim & Beehr (2020) through a study on 346 Full time US employees found Work effort to be positively correlated to psychological empowerment and Organization based self-esteem.

Rupietta & Beckmann (2018) explored how workers' work effort is affected by working from home. Their findings revealed that working from home had a considerable favorable impact on job effort. Furthermore, they discovered that the frequency of working from home is critical. The more frequently employees work from home, the greater their work effort.

According to research conducted by Türkmen (2016), on 240 Turkish and Azerbaijani employees, workplace ostracism reduces work effort.

Kacmar (2007) conducted a study on 1179 employees in two organizations in the southwestern United States and discovered that people who believe they have a poor relationship with their boss rate their work effort the highest when decision making is decentralized and the lowest when decision making is highly centralized.

Brockner et al. (1992) investigated the link between job uncertainty caused by a layoff and the work efforts of workers who survived the layoff. Work effort was shown to be larger at intermediate levels of job insecurity when perceived danger and perceived control were both high or low than at high or low levels of job insecurity.

Purpose

The purpose is to study Work Engagement & Work Effort among Employees.

Hypothesis

There will be a significant positive relationship between Work Engagement & Work Effort among employees.

Method

Sample

A total sample of 32 employees working in corporate in the age 25 to 40 years was collected from Panjab, India.

Measures

Work Engagement Scale: as developed by Schaufeli & Baker (2003), is a 17-item self-report measure of work engagement, measuring Vigor, Absorption & Dedication, on a 6-point scale from 0 (Never) to 6 (Always)

Work Effort Scale: as developed by De Cooman et al. (2009), is a 10-item scale on 7-point Likert, measuring work effort in three dimensions; persistence, direction & intensity.

Procedures

The participants were informed about the purpose of research & the questionnaires were filled through Google forms. Each participant was thanked for cooperation & their kind help. Standardized psychological tests were administered to the participants.

Analysis of Data

Results

Table 1: N, Mean & SD of Variables

	Persistence	Direction	Intensity	Dedication	Absorption	Vigor
N	32	32	32	32	32	32
Mean	18.19	19.34	24.50	21.25	24.63	23.81
Standard deviation	2.51	1.94	2.95	7.15	7.44	7.77

Table 2: showing correlation of all Variables

	Persistence	Direction	Intensity	Dedication	Absorption	Vigor
Persistence	—					
Direction	0.660***	—				
Intensity	0.640***	0.661***	—			
Dedication	0.557***	0.444***	0.414***	—		
Absorption	0.422***	0.399**	0.454***	0.418 *	—	
Vigor	0.491***	0.505***	0.555***	0.495**	0.399***	—

Note. * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Discussion of Results

The results found out that the dimension of Work Engagement i.e., Dedication is significantly positively correlated with all the three dimensions of Work Effort, i.e. with Persistence (r=0.557, p <.001), with Direction (r=0.444, p <.001) and Intensity (r=0.414, p <.001)

Another dimension of Work Engagement i.e., Absorption is significantly positively correlated with all three dimensions of Work Effort i.e., with Persistence (r=0.422, p<.001), Direction (r=.0399, p <.001) and Intensity (r=0.454, p <.001)

The third dimension of Work Engagement i.e., Vigor is significantly positively correlated with Persistence (r=0.491, p <.001), Direction (r=0.505, p <.001) and Intensity (0.555, p <.001). According to Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter (2001), vigor & dedication are direct opposites of core burnout dimension of exhaustion & cynicism respectively.

Employee engagement is related to emotional experience & well-being (May et al., 2004). Research also found that increased engagement leads to improved employee & customer satisfaction, safety & overall performance & profits (Hartar, Schmidt & Hayer, 2002; Hartar et al. 2018).

According to Mitchell (1997) motivation is a state of mind where the individual determines the level of desire, interest and energy that translates into action. Munchinsky (2003) asserts that organization wants employees that direct themselves to their work responsibilities. Furthermore, organizations want employees that are high on energy as they are often referred to as "self-motivated individuals" & finally employees want jobs that requires them to commit in large amount of energy.

Conclusion

The aim of the current research was to study Work Engagement & Work Effort among employees. A sample of 32 corporate employees in the age 25-40 years was collected. Standardized scales were used to measure Work Engagement & Work effort among employees. The results found out that all the three dimensions of Work Engagement (Dedication, Absorption & Vigor) significantly positively correlated with all the three dimensions of Work Effort (Persistence, Direction & Intensity).

The organization should implement different strategies that may help the employees feel more supported and inspired to perform highly in their roles on a day-to-day basis. A manager's main duty should be to engage their workforce. It is the responsibility of managers to make sure that workers are aware of the tasks at hand, to offer assistance and support required and to explain how their efforts contribute to the success of the company. High levels of engagement enhance stakeholder value, foster customer loyalty, and help organizations retain their best employees.

It is also suggested that to have a fully engaged team in both good & bad times, leaders must first set an example of the behavior they want to see in their team members.

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