Models of Employee Engagement: Catering Different Needs of Different Businesses

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Abstract: The paper titled "Models of employee engagement: Catering different needs of different businesses" is a review paper. Based on the thoughtful study of literature, the researcher concluded that employee engagement has become an important topic in recent years. Researches based on employee engagement carried out all over the globe, unanimously concluded that it is employee engagement which predicts financial gains, better performance, increased profits and overall organizational success. In each and every organization there exist various factors that determine engagement of employees in their jobs. The engagement levels of employees in any organization are identified by individual as well as organizational factors. The factors leading to engagement or disengagement are very well illustrated by models of engagement. These models demonstrate the factors which help to identify whether an employee is engaged in his/her work or not, if is engaged, then to what extent engagement is there and if there is lack of engagement, then how the gap can be mended.

Keywords: Employee Engagement, Models of Employee Engagement, Drivers of Employee engagement, Employee Engagement: an HR practice, Employee Engagement Models, Engaging Workforce, Human Resource Management, Benefits of Employee Engagement. Researches based on employee engagement carried out all over the globe, unanimously concluded that it is employee engagement which predicts financial gains, better performance, increased profits and overall organizational success. Renowned researchers, Hewitt Associates claimed to establish a convincing and definite relationship between increased sales, productivity, customer satisfaction and engagement. In each and every organization there exist various factors that determine engagement of employees in their jobs. The engagement levels of employees in any organization are identified by individual as well as organizational factors. The factors leading to engagement or disengagement are very well illustrated by models of engagement proposed by significant researchers. These models demonstrate the factors which help to identify whether an employee is engaged in his/her work or not, if is engaged, then to what extent engagement is there and if there is a lack of engagement, then how the gap can be mended.
Let's get an understanding of the concept first.

I. INTRODUCTION

The concept of employee engagement is defined from time to time. Some researchers call it a whole new dimension whereas some refer to it as an "old wine in new bottle". Employee engagement is in existence as a concept since 1990. Kahn introduced the term for the first time and since then much has been said and written about it. The late management guru, Peter Drucker once said that in any organization the most powerful and the most influential word is "people'. For any company, the people working for it are of great significance. Employees of an organization act as catalysts in its growth in terms of increased productivity, customer satisfaction, and increased profits. Therefore, it is very important to keep employees involved in their jobs, and this involvement is engagement. The Corporate Executive Board of United States defined engagement as "the extent to which employees commit to something or someone in their organization, how hard they work and how long they stay as a result of that commitment".

The concept of employee engagement gained popularity once the fact that an organization can gain competitive advantage through people was highlighted. Without a doubt, renowned researchers argued that people are the most potent source of competitive advantage for any organization. In the present scenario, Employee engagement has emerged as a notable need for businesses.

II. THE ENGAGEMENT MODELS

Though, the models of engagement are put forward by a number of researchers all over the world, however, models proposed by Schmidt, Penna, Robinson et. Al, Alfes et. Al, Aon Hewitt, and IES appear to be more realistic.

2.1. Jonnie De Lacy's Three dimensional model of engagement

Jonnie De Lacy (2009) identified three dimensions namely cognitive, affective and behavioral of engaging an employee in any organization. Based on the three dimensions, De Lacy proposed a three dimensional model of engagement, through

which employees in an organization can be cognitively, affectively and behaviorally engaged.

The three dimensions by Lacy are:

Figure 2.1: Three Dimensional Construct of engagement

Cognitive Engagement:
Lacy argued that cognitive engagement takes in goal and role clarity which refers to having a clear sense of job meaning. Employees understand the goal, objectives of the organization and are also well aware of the roles and responsibilities to be taken care of by them. For HR professionals, it is very important to align employees with the strategic objectives of the firm, claimed Lacy.

Affective Engagement:
Lacy considered affective engagement as a step after cognitive engagement i.e. occurring after cognitions have taken place. Affective engagement is witnessed as a different term and experience, a term different from organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and job involvement.

Behavioral Engagement:
According to Lacy, the combination of elements namely organizational citizenship behavior and extra role behavior result in behavioral engagement. She stated that behavioral engagement is of direct and great significance for organizations as it takes in the intention of employees to remain with an organization for a longer period. De Lacy's model of engagement takes inspiration from Macey and Schneider's (2008) behavioral construct.

2.2. Employee engagement and engagement drivers' model by Aon Hewitt
As per Aon Hewitt, the state of emotional and intellectual involvement of employees which encourages them to work in the best possible manner is employee engagement. Supporting the definition, Hewitt proposed a model of engagement in which employee's engagement level and organizational antecedents are imbibed.
ENGAGEMENT = Individual behavior + psychological state
Hewitt argued that an engaged employee regularly exhibit three general behaviors as the Three S,
Say,

When employees are fully engaged, they speak positively about overall organization to co-workers, outsiders (not working in the same organization), customers, and potential employees. In a way, they act as advocates for their organizations.

Stay,
The retention rate of engaged employees is higher i.e. engaged employees stay with their respective organization for a longer period of time as compared to disengage employees.

Strive,
Employees go the extra mile; put extra efforts to achieve organizational goals resulting in an enhanced individual as well as organizational performance.
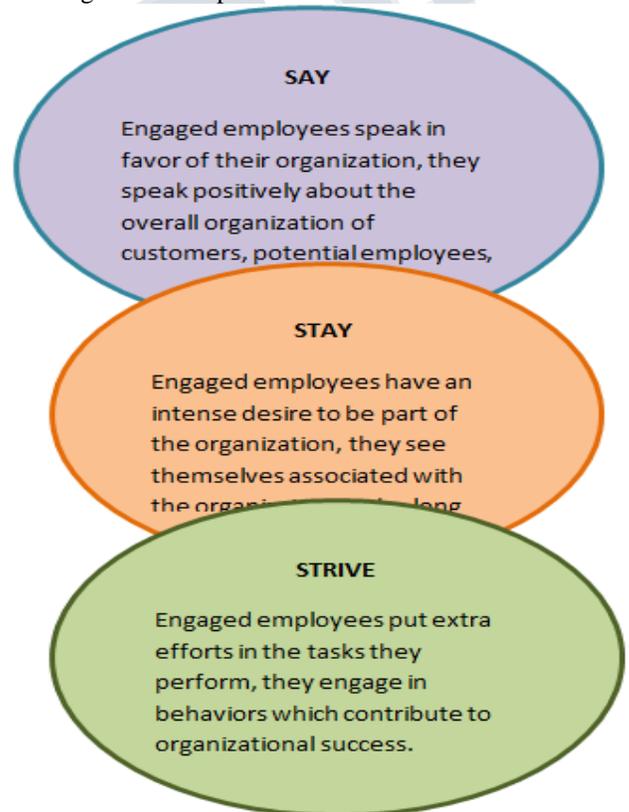

Figure 2.2.1: Aon Hewitt's Employee Engagement Model

Along with engagement model, Hewitt also proposed engagement drivers model based on extensive research. He identified certain (twenty-one) areas that can potentially drive engagement and termed the same as Engagement Drivers.
The twenty-one areas identified by Aon Hewitt are:
i. Senior leadership

ii. Direct manager
iii. Co-workers
iv. Valuing people
v. Benefits
vi. Pay
vii. Recognition
viii. Managing performance
ix. Company reputation
x. Brand alignment
xi. Work activities
xii. Sense of accomplishment
xiii. Resources
xiv. Autonomy
xv. Processes
xvi. Career and opportunities
xvii. Training and development
xviii. Work life balance
xix. Physical work environment

Hewitt argued that the engagement drivers do not operate when separated, but are interrelated. The given model reaches beyond measuring people's satisfaction, prioritizes the aspects of improvement.

It is important to learn about the needs of the workforce, with the identification of these engagement drivers, an employer can get a better understanding of the needs of the workforce and the means of meeting those needs. Identification of needs leads to focus on improvement of those lacking areas so that business results and engagement could be increased. The Hewitt study defines various dimensions that help in engaging employees.

The following figure illustrates engagement model by Aon Hewitt:

Figure 2.2.2: Figure showing Engagement Drivers as identified by Aon Hewitt

2.3. Model of engagement driver by Alfes et. al

Alfes et.al (2010) successfully put forward an engagement model after identifying the drivers which lead to engagement. The drivers as suggested by Alfes et. al are:
- Meaningfulness of work
- Being able to voice views upward
- Senior management communication and vision
- Supportive work environment
- Person-job fit
- Line management style

Each driver is important to achieve expected engagement; however, there are certain drivers which are of great importance. All the six drivers are related and play a significant role in establishing engagement among employees. The strongest engagement driver is meaningfulness i.e. creating meaning for employees at the workplace in their roles and responsibilities.

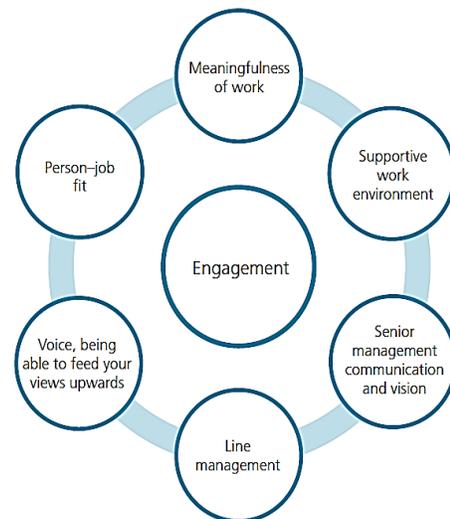The figure below showcases engagement model proposed by Alfes. Et. al.

Figure 2.3.1 Engagement model given by Alfes et.al.

Alfes et al argued that when the drivers of engagement are combined together they create engagement process which in turn is clearly associated with high levels of performance. In the first place, it is important to understand the workforce so that ultimately engagement levels can be increased. Further, it was identified that senior management's vision and communication is strongly related to engagement.

2.4. Penna's hierarchical model of engagement

Penna (2007) identified a number of factors responsible for higher levels of engagement and introduced an engagement model based on these factors. The hierarchical model of

engagement was introduced at different levels of management. According to Penna, engagement is fulfillment from job and fulfillment is achieved by giving a sense of belongingness to employees, being valued and valuing their contribution, workforce being appreciated for each effort they put towards the realization of organizational goals.

Given below is Penna's hierarchical model of engagement. In the model, as the hierarchy goes up, the employer meets engagement factors successfully.

Figure 2.4.1: Penna (2007) model of Hierarchy of engagement

In the hierarchical model, the upward movement signifies that the organization attracts new potential employees and engages its existing staff as well. The model highlights that workforce of an organization seeks to find meaning at work.

2.5. Two construct model of engagement by Right Management

The Two Construct Model of employee engagement was proposed by Right Management. The model works on (i) job engagement as first construct and (ii) organization engagement as the second construct. The two constructs, when combined together, help in identifying engagement levels that of an employee. The involvement employees have towards their profession, career is job engagement, whereas organization engagement refers to the level of engagement workforce have towards their current organization.

Job and organization construct work hand in hand in establishing highest involvement in any organization. Both constructs work on the following aspects;

i. Commitment
ii. Satisfaction
iii. Pride
iv. Advocacy

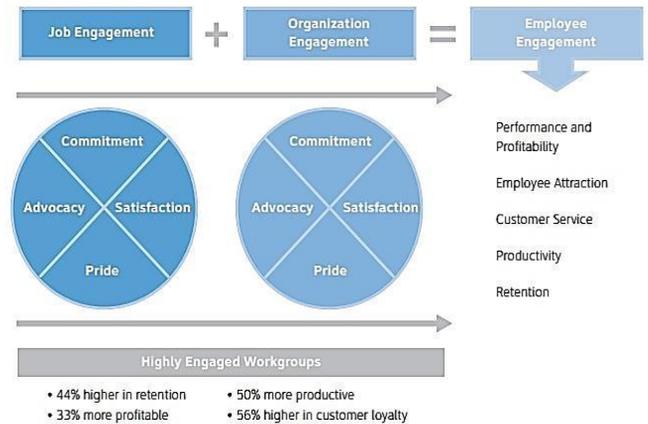Given below is the model of Engagement by Right Management:

Figure 2.5.1: Right Management's Employee Engagement Model

The model used behavioral and emotional aspects of engagement including commitment, satisfaction, pride, and advocacy. Right Management argued that employees are more likely to be committed, satisfied and feel proud when they positively evaluate their experience of the job they are doing in any organization. And once that feeling of belongingness and satisfaction is there among the employees, they become advocates of their organization and ultimately get involved in behaviors which enhance job as well as organizational performance. In order to achieve enhanced levels of engagement, it is of great significance that employees are engaged towards their job and organization in equal proportions. If employees are engaged in their jobs only and not to the organization then their performance can never be aligned with organizational goals and strategies. On the other hand, if employees are engaged in their organization only and not to their job, then also it would be difficult to bring excellence and efficiency in their actions and job. Engagement can only be achieved when employees put their minds and hearts in alignment to their jobs as well as the organization.

2.6 Model of engagement by Corporate leadership Council

According to Corporate Leadership Council, employee engagement is defined as the extent to which people commit to something in their organization and how long they stay and how hard they work as a result of that commitment. With prime focus on business outcomes, CLC proposed an engagement model.

The Council conducted a study titled "Driving Performance and Retention through Employee Engagement" in which more than 47,000 participants working in 59 international organizations were surveyed.

According to CLC, engagement drivers can be divided into rational and emotional drivers. Findings of the study stated that emotional drivers are four times more effective in producing an enhanced performance as compared to rational drivers. Also, the finding of the study suggests is that there is a direct connection between both retention and performance.
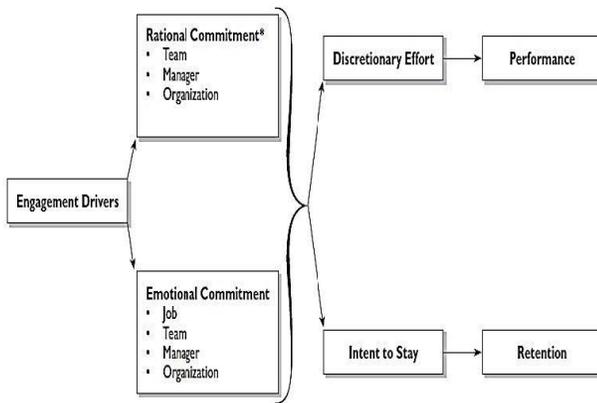

Figure 2.6.1: Corporate Leadership Council's {CLC) model of engagement

The Council research demonstrates that increased discretionary efforts are a direct predictor of enhanced performance.

2.7 INSTITUTE OF EMPLOYMENT STUDIES' MODEL OF ENGAGEMENT

Institute of Employment (IES) (2003) conducted an attitude survey in 14 organizations and based on the results of the survey proposed a model of engagement drivers. Findings of the study concluded that there is a strong link between feeling valued, involved and engagement. IES refers to the model of engagement as a diagnostic tool which can be used to derive organization-specific drivers as every organization is different. Given below is the model of engagement given by IES. The model illustrates that when certain aspects concerning an employee including training and development, performance appraisal, open communication with immediate management, fair opportunities, job satisfaction, health and safety, benefits and pay are given due importance, then it produces the feeling of involved and valued among employees. The feeling of values ultimately results in engagement.

Figure 2.7.1: Showing drivers of employee engagement as identified by Institute for Employment Studies (IES)

Employees are more likely to stay with their organization if they are made to feel valued and important as it gives them a sense of belongingness which finally results in an enhanced individual as well as organizational performance.

IES's diagnostic tool suggests that a number of drivers leading to employee engagement will be the same to almost all organizations regardless of the sector and nature of the organization. However, some variability is likely to be dependent upon the type of organization studied.

III. CONCLUSION

Based on the thoughtful study of the models of engagement, the researcher concludes that the models of engagement proposed by the renowned researchers and professional bodies are based on the unique findings of the researches carried out in different-different organizations. There are certain drivers of engagement which can be applied to any organization but there are certain which are organizations specific. Based on the needs and nature of any organization the employee engagement drivers are identified and when are worked upon in constructive manner results in achieving organizational goals including enhanced individual and organizational performance, increased customer satisfaction, higher financial gains and retention of talent.

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