



ANTECEDENTS OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND ITS IMPACT ON EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

R.Nagaraj

Scholar, Department of Business Administration, Madurai Kamaraj University, Madurai.

Abstract

The antecedents of employee engagement represents the factors leading to employee engagement at the manufacturing units. It is imperative to study these factors for some future policy implications. The present study has also made an attempt to examine the linkage between the antecedents of employee engagement and the level of employee engagement in the units.

Keywords: *Organisational Performance, Employee Engagement, Leadership, Empowerment, Customer Loyalty, Employee Well Being.*

Introduction

Antecedents of Employee Engagement

There are some critical factors which lead to employee engagement, which are common to all types of organizations. These factors create a feeling of valued and involved among the employees. The factors which influence employee engagement are:

1. Recruitment & Selection

The recruitment and selection process involves identifying potential employees, making offers of employment to them and trying to persuade them to accept those offers. While recruiting employees for desirable jobs, organizations enhance their engagement by maximizing the person-job fit and commitment by providing growth and advancement opportunities to employees in return for their loyalty.

2. Job Designing

Job Characteristics encompassing challenge, variety and autonomy are more likely to provide psychological meaningfulness, and a condition for employee engagement. Job becomes meaningful and attractive to employee as it provides him variety and challenge, thereby affecting his level of engagement.

3. Career Development Opportunities

Organizations with high levels of engagement provide employees with opportunities to develop their abilities, learn new skills, acquire new knowledge and realize their potential. Career development influences engagement for employees and retaining the most talented employees and providing opportunities for personal development.

4. Leadership

Employees need to feel that the core values for which their companies stand are unambiguous and clear. Successful organizations show respect for each employee's qualities and contribution regardless of their job level. A company's ethical standards also lead to engagement of an individual.

5. Empowerment

Employees want to be involved in decisions that affect their work. The leader of high engagement workplaces create a trustful and challenging environment, in which employees are encouraged to give input and innovative ideas to move the organization forward.

6. Equal and Fair Opportunities

The employee engagement levels would be high if their superiors provide equal opportunities for growth and advancement to all the employees. Employees feel that they are not discriminated in any aspects within the organization.

7. Training and Development

It is another important area which contributes to employee engagement. Redundancy of skills has been cited as one of the reasons for employee turnover, thereby indicating the necessity for training, re-training and multi-skill training. Through training will help new and current employees acquire the knowledge and skills they need to perform their jobs.

8. Performance Management

Performance management processes provide conditions for employee engagement. Performance management encourages managers to have a focus on roles and responsibilities of employees and to include them in the goal-setting process. It promotes acceptance of challenging objectives, and also recognizes and encourages contributions that exceed expectations.



9. Incentives and Compensation

Compensation is said to have a major influence on the employees' conceptions of their employment relationship. Compensation consists of financial elements but may also include non-financial elements or perks, such as on site day care, employee assistance programs, subsidized cafeterias, travel discounts, company picnics and so on. The organization should have a proper compensation management system so that the employees are motivated to work in the organization.

10. Health and Safety

Research indicates that the engagement levels are low if the employee does not feel secure while working. Therefore every organization should adopt appropriate methods and systems for the health and safety of their employees.

11. Job Satisfaction

Only a satisfied employee can become an engaged employee. Therefore it is very essential for an organization to see to it that the job given to the employee matches his career goals which will make him enjoy his work and he would ultimately be satisfied with his job.

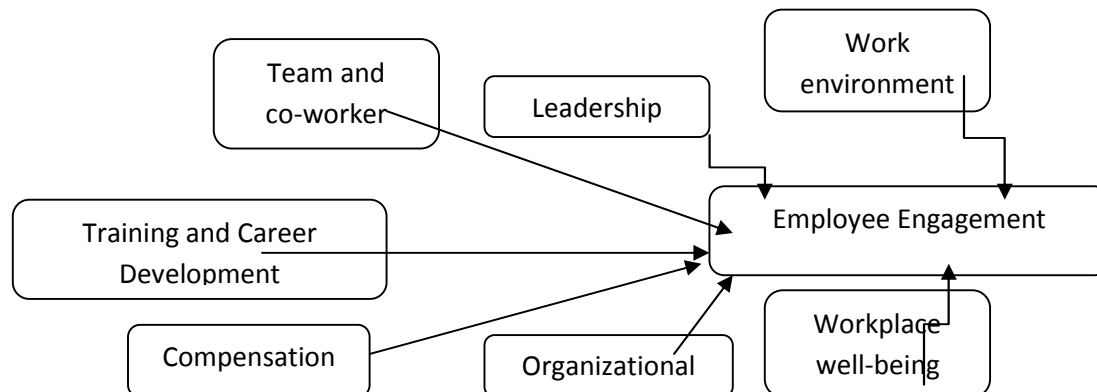
12. Communication

The organization should follow the open door policy. There should be both upward and downward communication with the use of appropriate communication channels in the organization. If the employee is given a say in the decision making and has the right to be heard by his boss then the engagement levels are likely to be high.

Six management functions emerged in order of importance as critical determinants of employees' engagement according to Joshi and Sodhi (2011), namely, Job Content (autonomy, challenging opportunities for learning), Compensation/ Monetary Benefits (attractive salary vis-à-vis qualifications and responsibility, adequate compensation for the work and intra-organization parity), Work Life Balance (appreciative of personal needs, able to spend time with family), Top-Management Employee Relations (approachability of top management, their values and ethical conduct, equality in treatment, respecting the views of subordinates, providing an environment of working together), Scope for Advancement and Career Growth (well designed policy, adequate opportunities for career growth and advancement, clearly laid down career growth paths; implementation of the promotion policy in a fair and transparent manner, help to the employees in achieving growth) and Team Orientation/Team Work (importance, cooperation in inter and intra department teams). They also found that seven policies and practices have emerged as the drivers of employee engagement for the non-executives, supervisors and workers of which four of them i.e. Work Life Balance, Job Content, Monetary Benefits and Team Orientation are similar to those of the executives. Three other drivers of engagement for the non-executives comprises Union/Association Management Relations (working together, sorting disputes in an amicable manner, appreciating each other's point of view, constructive contribution of unions/ associations), Recognition and Rewards (reward for honest, sincere hard work, policies administered in a fair manner, creative ideas rewarded) and Welfare facilities (facilities for rest and recreation, working conditions, similar in similar companies).

Taking the perspectives from above literature and more, this study consolidated a number of factors that contributed towards Khan's psychological conditions of employee engagement and employee engagement in general. Various factors that facilitate these three dimensions of employee engagement were identified and were empirically tested and found to be valid antecedents of employee engagement. The factors are represented in Figure 1.

Figure 2.1, Factors Facilitating Employee Engagement





Work Environment

It is one significant factor that was identified in this study that determines employee engagement. Studies (McCashland 1999¹, Miles 2001² and Harter et al., 2002³, Holbeche and Springett, 2003⁴) prove that employee engagement is something that is produced by aspects in the workplace. According to Deci and Ryan (1987)⁵ management which fosters a supportive working environment typically displays concern for employees' needs and feelings, provides positive feedback and encourage them to voice their concerns, develops new skills and solve work related problems. According to Robinson (2006)⁶, employee engagement can be achieved through the creation of an organisational environment where positive emotions such as involvement and pride are encouraged, resulting in improved organisational performance, lower employee turnover and better health. Similar view was given by May et al., (2004)⁷. Therefore a meaningful workplace environment that aids employees for focused work and interpersonal harmony is considered to be related to employee engagement.

Leadership

It was the second main factor identified to be a fundamental factor to imbibe employee engagement. Effective leadership is a higher-order, multi-dimensional construct comprising self-awareness, balanced processing of information, relational transparency, and internalized moral standards (Gardner et al., 2005⁸, Walumbwa et al., 2008⁹). Research (Wildermuth and Pauken, 2008¹⁰, Wallace and Trinko, 2009¹¹) shows that engagement occurs naturally when leaders are inspiring. Employees feel engaged when their work is considered important and meaningful. The task of leadership is therefore to ensure that employees see how their specific task contributes to the overall business success. Authentic and supportive leadership is theorized to impact employee engagement of followers in the sense of increasing their involvement, satisfaction and enthusiasm for work. The leadership factor comprised indicators on effective leadership and perceived supervisor support.

Team and Co-worker Relationship

It is another aspect that emphasises explicitly the interpersonal harmony aspect of employee engagement. Macey and Schmider (2008¹²) found that supportive and trusting interpersonal relationships as well as supportive team promotes employee engagement. Organizational members felt safe in work environments that were characterized by openness and supportiveness. Supportive environments allow members to experiment and to try new things and even fail without fear of the consequences (Kahn, 1990¹³). According to May et al., (2004¹⁴) relationships in workplace was found to have an impact on meaningfulness, relates to engagement. Thus if the employee is having good relationship with his co-workers, his work engagement is expected to be high. Locke and Taylor (1990)¹⁵ recognised the relatedness needs individuals possess, arguing individuals who have rewarding interpersonal interactions with their co-workers also should experience greater meaning in their work.

Training and Career Development

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It is another important dimension which is to be considered in the process of engaging employees that helps the employees in concentrating on focused work dimension. According to Paradise (2008)¹⁶, Training and development is an important factor for improving employee engagement. Training improves service inaccuracy and thereby impact service performance and employee engagement (Keaveney, 1995)¹⁷. When the employee undergoes training and learning development programmes, his confidence builds up on the area of training that motivates him to be more engaged in his job. Alderfer (1972)¹⁸ emphasized the importance of the chance to grow, as rewarding people. He emphasised that 'satisfaction of growth needs depend on a person finding the opportunity to be what he or she is most fully and become what he or she can'. Employee should have the feeling that there is an environment where he can see himself in better role in future. The role of management in this is critical. If employee gets timely opportunities for growth and development then the level of engagement is expected to be high.

Compensation or Remuneration

It is an indispensable attribute to employee engagement that motivates an employee to achieve more and hence focus more on work and personal development. It involves both financial and non-financial rewards. Compensation is most impressively delivered through a combination of pay, bonuses and other financial rewards and also through nonfinancial rewards like extra holiday, voucher schemes. A study by Saks and Rotman (2006)¹⁹ revealed that recognition and rewards are significant antecedents of employee engagement. When employees receive rewards and recognition from their organisation, they will feel obliged to respond with higher levels of engagement (Saks and Rotman, 2006)²⁰. Kahn (1990) reported that people vary in their engagement as a function of their perceptions of the benefits they receive from a role.

Organizational Policies

It is the procedures, structures and systems decide the extent to which employees are engaged in an organization. Most researchers agree that congenial organizational policies and procedures are extremely important for employee engagement and the ultimate achievement of the business goals. Important policies and procedures include fair recruitment and selection and flexible work life practices. Studies (Vance, 2006²¹ and Schneider et al., 2009)²² show that the recruitment policy of an organisation conveys certain messages that attract future employees' engagement and commitment. According to Richman et al., (2008)²³ an organisation's flexible work-life policies have a significant positive impact on employee engagement. Various other research (Pitt-Catsouphes and Matz-Costa, 2008²⁴, Woodruffe, 2005²⁵, Rama Devi, 2009²⁶, Pollitt, 2008²⁷) have emphasized the importance of organisational policies and procedures that best supports them in balancing their work and home environments are more likely to have engaged employees. To have higher level of engagement, organization should also follow policies which provide flexible work arrangements.

Workplace Well-being

It is one more important measure that enhances employee engagement. Gallup's global data suggest that there is no metric that captures more variance in human behavior than wellbeing. When defined as "all the things that are important to how we think about and experience our lives," wellbeing becomes the most important measure for gauging the influence organization has on employees. The importance of well being is further reinforced by researchers at Towers Perrin (2003) who find that the most important driver of engagement was senior managements' interest in employee well being.

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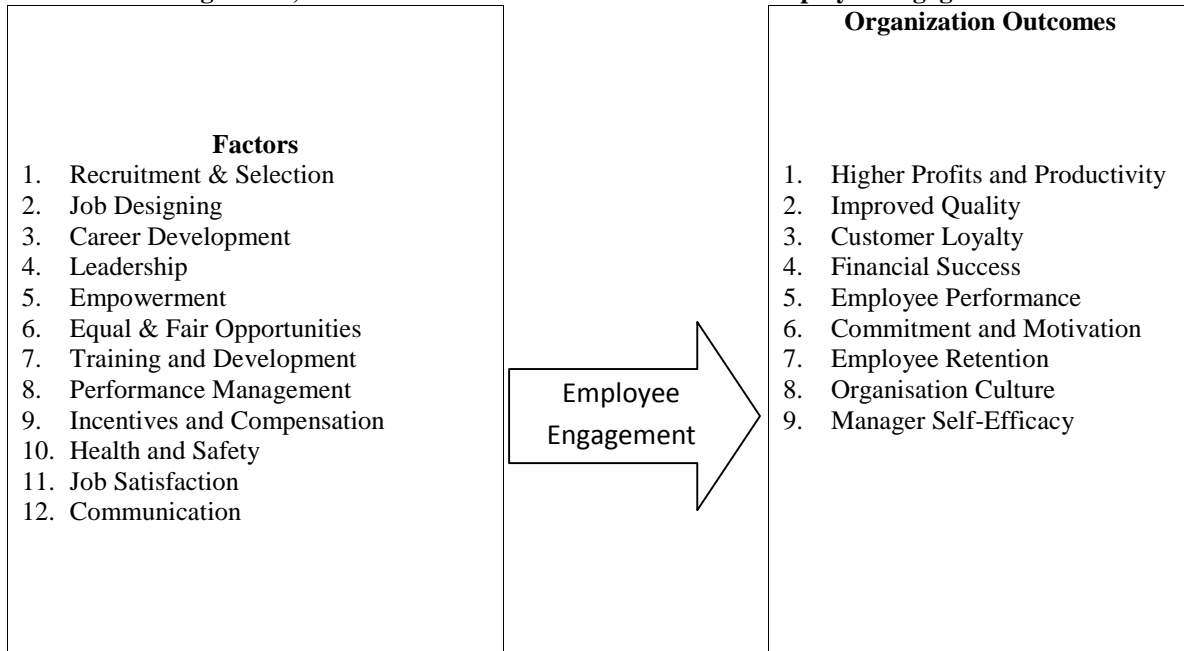
TABLE 2.2, Variables in Antecedents of Employee Engagement (AEE)

Sl. No.	Variables in AEE	Sl. No.	Variables in AEE
1.	Recruitment and Selection	7.	Training Provided
2.	Job designing	8.	Performance Management
3.	Career Development Opportunities	9.	Incentives and Compensation
4.	Leadership	10.	Job Autonomy
5.	Empowerment	11.	Development Support
6.	Equal and Fair Opportunities	12.	Internalized Moral Standards
13.	Supervisors Support	23.	Team work
14.	Learning and Development Programmes (TCD)	24.	Trusting Interpersonal Relationship
15.	Work Environment	25.	Flexible work life policies
16.	Health and Safety	26.	Relational transparency
17.	Job Satisfaction	27.	Inspiring Leaders
18.	Communication	28.	Mutual Help
19.	Regular Meeting	29.	Non Financial Rewards
20.	Information sharing	30.	Safety Provisions
21.	Clear objectives	31.	Organizational Development Activities
22.	Managers ability		

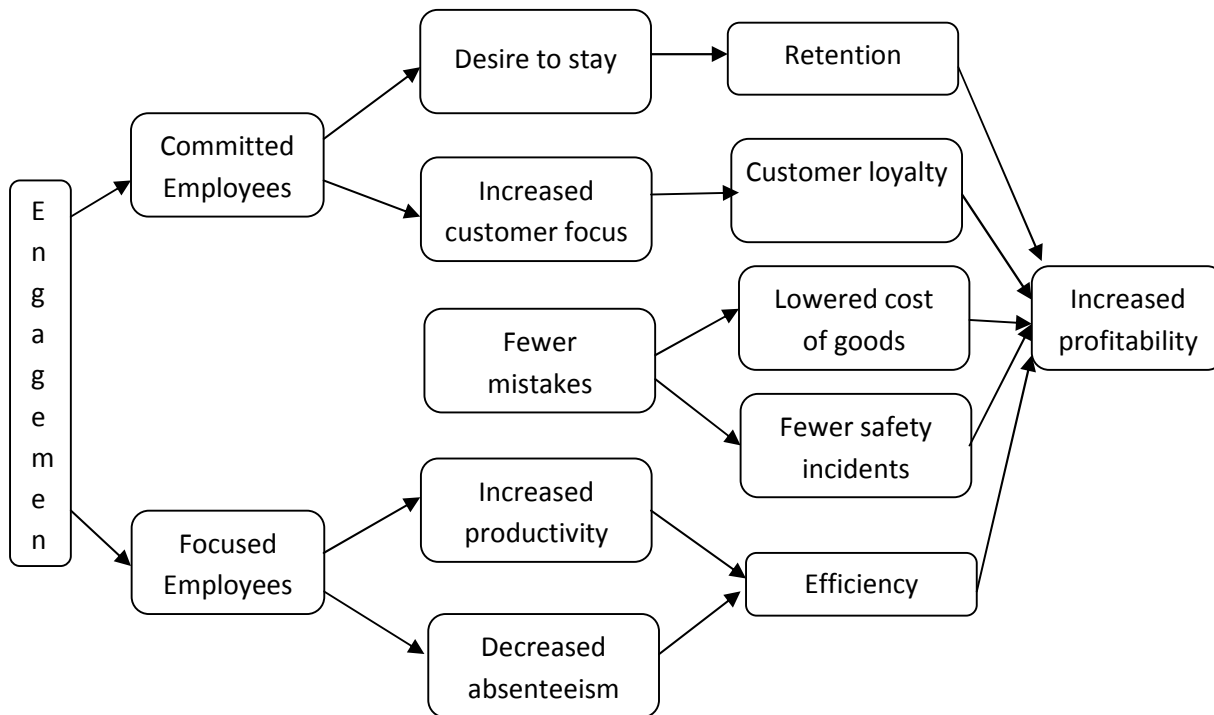
Organizational Outcomes of Employee Engagement

Employee engagement is a critical part of organizational success. Employee engagement predicts the employee outcomes, organizational success, and financial performance. The impact of engagement or disengagement can manifest itself through productivity and organizational performance, outcomes for customers of the organization, employee retention rates and organizational culture. A framework of the factors influencing employee engagement and the organizational outcomes of employee engagement is shown in Figure 2.2.

Figure 2.2, Framework of Factors and Outcomes of Employee Engagement



Employee engagement has a number of implications for an organisation's financial performance. This impact of is largely indirect. Through improving retention, customer loyalty, productivity, and safety; organisations are able to keep their bottom line healthy while engagement strengthens all of these factors. The diagram below illustrates this relationship.



It has been found that organisations enjoy 26 percent higher revenue per employee when employees are highly engaged. Furthermore, it was found that organisations with highly engaged employees earned 13 percent greater total returns to shareholders (Taleo Research, 2009)²⁸. Furthermore, a meta-analysis (Agarwal et al, 2002)²⁹ showed that businesses in the top 25 per cent for employee engagement (of those studied) produced up to four percentage points in profitability.

Research by De Wall (2007)³⁰ indicates that the more engaged employees at an organisation are the more likely it is to exceed the industry average in one-year revenue growth. Specifically, there is a trend showing that highly engaged employees work for organisations that had revenue growth at least one percentage point above the average for their industry, while the organisations of the most disengaged employees work for companies where revenue growth falls one or two percentage points below the average (Kular, et al., 2008)³¹. However, it should be noted that there is probably another factor at work here, in that organisations that are performing better may be more likely to attract more engaged people.

Table 2.8, Variables in Financial Performance (FP)

Sl. No.	Variables in FP	Sl. No.	Variables in FP
1.	Annual Profit	5.	Working Capital Management
2.	Market Share	6.	Debt Management
3.	Return on Investment	7.	Financial Leverage
4.	Return on Asset	8.	Financial Health

Productivity: It represents the study of the organization to produce maximum output at minimum cost with an determined quality (Harter et al., 2001)³². The productivity of the organization can be improved by the productivity of man, machine, material and money (Lock Wood, 2007)³³ with the help of effective management. In the present study, the variables in

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productivity are measured with the help of variables drawn from reviews (Sinha, 2011³⁴; Sundaray, 2011³⁵; Thomas, 2007³⁶). These are given below.

Table 2.9, Variables in Productivity (PY)

Sl. No.	Variables in PY	Sl. No.	Variables in PY
1.	Lower Absenteeism	5.	Assured outcome
2.	Higher focus	6.	Loan turnover
3.	Self motivation	7.	Committed work
4.	Smart work	8.	Higher production per employee

The respondents are asked to rate these variables at five point scale.

Table 2.10, Variables in Organizational Culture (OC)

Sl. No.	Variables in OC	Sl. No.	Variables in OC
1.	No biasness	5.	Learning environment
2.	Market knowledge	6.	Open mindedness
3.	Free environment	7.	Participative management
4.	Away from Dirty politics	8.	Consideration of quantity with quality

Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB)

Bateman and Organ (1988)³⁷ were the first who used the term OCB over the two and half decades earlier. Bernad (1938)³⁸ defined the OCB as the willingness to co-operate. Later it was redefined by Katz (1966)³⁹ as a rolebehaviour and by Podasakoff (2000)⁴⁰ as the extra role behaviour which were supported by George and Bettenhausen (1990)⁴¹, Van Dyne et al., (1995)⁴² and Graham, (1991)⁴³. Organ (1988)⁴⁴ noticed five important components of OCB namely Altruism, Conscientiousness, Sportsmanship, Courtesy and Civic virtue. The dimensions of OCB among the employees are identified with the help of 14 dimensions (Hamid, 2012⁴⁵) which consists of consciousness, sportsmanship, loyalty, altruism, courtesy, civic virtue, functional participation, advocacy, participation, social participation, protecting company, interpersonal harmony, self development, taking imitative and personable (Bolino et al., 2002⁴⁶; Chiaburu and Andrey, 2008⁴⁷; Cohen and Eran, 2000⁴⁸; Farh et al., 2004⁴⁹). In the present study, all the 15 dimensions are concluded to measure the OCB among the ank employees. The variables related to each dimension are drawn from the reviews (Smith et al., 1993⁵⁰; Williams and Anderson, 1991⁵¹). These are given in Table 2..11.

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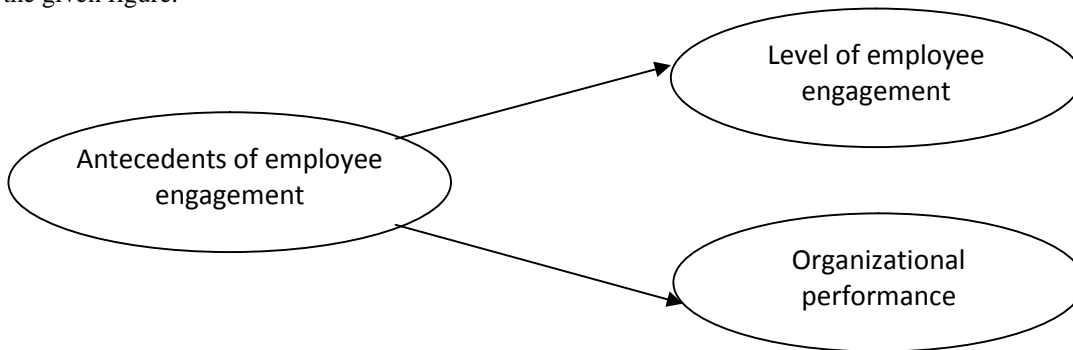


Table 2.11, Variables in OCB

Sl. No.	Variables in OCB	Sl. No.	Variables in OCB
1.	Helping new colleagues	7.	Ability to integrate all functions
2.	Freely giving time to others	8.	Solve the inter function problems
3.	Concern for the welfare of others	9.	Job dedication
4.	Extra role in organization	10.	Willing to protect the company
5.	Helps to solve work related problem	11.	Pride to be an employee
6.	Willing to participate in all other department	12.	Mental attachment to the company

The employees are asked to rate the above said sixteen and variables in OCB at five point scale according to the order of existence among them.

The antecedents of employee engagement represent the factors leading to employee engagement at the manufacturing units. It is imperative to study these factors for some future policy implications. The present study has also made an attempt to examine the linkage between the antecedents of employee engagement and the level of employee engagement in the units. Since, the organizational performance may be influenced by these antecedents, the study also covers the impact of antecedents of employee engagement on the organizational performance. The discussion in the present chapter is presented in the given figure.



Antecedents of Employee Engagement

The factors influencing the employee engagement in the units at the present study are studied with the help of 31 variables. The employees are asked to rate these variables at five point scale. The mean scores of each variable in antecedents of employee engagement at large and small scale units have been computed separately. The 't' test has been administered to findout the significant difference among the employees view on the variables in antecedents of employee engagement at LSU and SSU. The results are given in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1, Employees View on Antecedents of Employee Engagement

Sl.No.	Variables in AEE	Mean scores in		't' statistics
		LSU	SSU	
1.	Recruitment and selection	3.4661	3.5141	0.1864
2.	Job designing	3.9884	3.4041	2.3886*
3.	Career development opportunities	3.8084	3.3996	2.5117*
4.	Leadership	3.7783	3.3845	2.2086*
5.	Empowerment	3.9117	3.2667	2.7896*
6.	Equal and fair opportunities	3.5088	3.6642	-0.2509
7.	Trainings provided	3.9091	3.3441	2.7089*
8.	Performance management	3.6117	3.4173	0.4082
9.	Incentives and compensation	3.4101	3.9296	-2.4117*
10.	Job autonomy	3.6843	3.9192	-1.1449
11.	Development support	3.6041	3.9338	-0.9232
12.	Internalized moral standards	3.8408	3.4117	2.1179*
13.	Supervisors support	3.9173	3.8045	2.1088*
14.	Learning programmes	3.8145	3.4011	2.2117*
15.	Work environment	3.9028	3.2441	2.8084*

*Significant at five per cent level.



The highly viewed variable in the first fifteen variables in AEE at the LSU are job designing and supervisors support since its mean scores are 3.9884 and 3.9173 respectively. At the SSU, these the variables are development support and; incentives and compensation since its mean scores are 3.9338 and 3.9296 respectively. Regarding the employees view on first fifteen variables in AEE, the significant difference at LSU and SSU have been noticed in the case of 10 out of 15 variables in ACC since its 't' statistics are significant at five per cent level.

The mean scores of last 16 variables in AEE among the employees at LSU and SSU have been computed separately along with its 't' statistics. The results are present in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2, Employees View on Antecedents of Employee Engagement

Sl.No.	Variables in AEE	Mean scores in		't' statistics
		LSU	SSU	
1.	Health and safety	3.8673	3.2117	2.7696*
2.	Job satisfaction	3.8551	3.3041	2.5471*
3.	Communication	3.5045	3.6886	-0.1918
4.	Regular meeting	3.5188	3.8084	-0.8964
5.	Information sharing	3.5644	3.9224	-1.5162
6.	Clear objectives	3.5708	3.9696	-2.1773*
7.	Managers ability	3.5224	3.9099	-2.0845
8.	Team work	3.8808	3.4117	2.1179*
9.	Trusting interpersonal relationship	3.8969	3.3902	2.4403*
10.	Flexible work life policies	3.5246	3.6117	-0.1998
11.	Relational transparency	3.6084	3.5044	0.2667
12.	Inspiring leaders	3.9117	3.5046	2.2674*
13.	Mutual help	3.9094	3.4011	2.5409*
14.	Non-financial rewards	3.4228	3.9708	-2.6696
15.	Safety provision	3.8409	3.4011	2.3917*
16.	Organizational development activities	3.8556	3.2117	2.7085*

*Significant at five per cent level.

The highly viewed variables in last 16 variables in LSU are inspiring leaders and mutual help since its mean scores are 3.9117 and 3.9094 respectively. At the SSU, these two variables are dear objectives and non-financial rewards since its mean scores are 3.9696, 3.9708 respectively. Regarding the employees view on last 16 variables in AEE, the significant difference at LSU and SSU have been noticed in the case of 10 out of 16 variables since their respective 't' statistics are significant at five per cent level.

Important Antecedents of Employee Engagement (IAEE)

The score of all 31 variables in AEE have been included for Exploratory Factor Analysis in order to narrate the variables into factors. Initially, the validity of data for EFA have been tested with the help of KMO measure of sampling adequacy and bartlett's test of sphericity. Both these two tests satisfy the condition for validity of data for EFA. The executed EFA results in seven important antecedents. The results are presented in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3, Important Antecedents of Employee Engagement (IAEE)

Sl.No.	IAEE	Number of variables in	Eigen value	Per cent of variation explained	Cumulative per cent of variation explained
1.	Work place well being	7	5.4179	18.06	18.06
2.	Organizational policies	6	4.0882	13.63	31.69
3.	Management behaviour	6	3.8441	12.81	44.50
4.	Leadership	4	2.9096	9.69	54.19
5.	Team and co-worker relationship	4	2.5973	8.66	62.85
6.	Compensation	2	1.4172	4.72	67.57
7.	Training and career development	2	1.3996	4.66	72.23

KMO measure of sampling adequacy: 0.7804 Bartlett's test of sphericity: Chi-square value: 89.93*

*Significant at five per cent level.



The first two important antecedents of employee engagement are work place well being and organizational policies since its eigen values are 5.4179 and 4.0882 respectively. The per cent of varying explained by these two factors are 18.06 and 13.63 per cent respectively. The next three IAEE identified by the factor since its eigen values are 3.8441, 2.9096 and 2.5973 respectively. The per cent of variation explained by these three IAEE are 12.81, 9.69 and 8.66 per cent respectively. The last two IAEE are compensation; and training and career development since its eigen values are 1.4172 and 1.3996 respectively. The per cent of variation explained by these two IAEE are 4.72 and 4.66 per cent respectively. These seven IAEE are included for further analysis.

Variables in Work Place Well Being (WPWB)

The variables in WPWB are seven variables since their respective factor loadings are higher in this factor than in other factors. The score of all seven variables in WPWB have been included for confirmatory factor analysis in order to examine its reliability and validity. The internal consistency of variables in WPWB have been estimated with the help of cronbach alpha. The results are shown in Table 5.4.

Table 5.4, Reliability and Validity of Variables in Work Place well being (WPWB)

Sl. No.	Variables in WPWB	Standardized factor loadings	't' statistics	Composite reliability	Average variance extracted
1.	Empowerment	0.8441	3.3844*	0.7411	53.34
2.	Career development opportunities	0.8246	3.1789*		
3.	Job satisfaction	0.7808	2.8414*		
4.	Work environment	0.7511	2.7569*		
5.	Safety provisions	0.7089	2.5066*		
6.	Job designing	0.6814	2.4517*		
7.	Health and safety	0.6339	2.3843*		
Cronbach alpha: 0.7608					

* Significant at five per cent level.

The included seven variables in WPWB explain it to an extent of 76.06 per cent since its cronbach alpha is 0.7606. the standardized factor loading of variables in WPWB are greater than 0.60 which infers its content validity. The 't' statistics of the standardized factor loading of variables in WSWB are significant at five per cent level. The composite reliability and average variance extracted by WPWB are greater than its standard minimum of 0.50 and 50.00 per cent respectively. It shows its convergent validity. All these results indicate the reliability and validity of variables in WPWB.

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