

**EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND WORKPLACE HAPPINESS – AN EMPIRICAL  
STUDY ON INDIAN ORGANISATIONS**

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**Abstract:** To attain happiness is beyond attaining satisfaction. To deal with employee happiness levels is very much needed to every organisation. To deal with all generations and to generate happiness among all employees is very much needed. This is possible when an employee is himself happy with in the organisation with his employment. Happiness levels of employees have to be measured by organisations periodically . Workplace happiness often being perceived as another way called as job satisfaction has to be understood in the right way. The factors considered for measuring employee engagement are vigour, dedication and enthusiasm. Various individual factors are measured against organisational factors like challenging jobs, dedication towards job. The cross-cultural working environments IT, Academic, BPO are considered to measure workplace happiness. Workplace happiness is found to have positive relationship with Employee engagement, hence proving null hypothesis is accepted. This paper aims to explore the factors that generate happiness among employees.

**Design/methodology/approach:** Convenience purposive sampling method was used to obtain data through self-administered survey questionnaire based on a five-point Likert scale, delineating the research purpose and assurance of confidentiality. For data analysis, two way anova is used to understand the variance of each independent factor and multiple regression is used to measure impact of Employee Engagement on workplace happiness. The size of sample is 75, which comprises of 30 academicians, 25 IT employees and 20 BPO employees.

**Identification of Gap :** The study on modern concepts of HR are becoming more significant in implementing the practices in the organisations. Studies and Practices on employee engagement are also given more importance in recent times. Referring to the studies, this study understands its high time to foster and practice of implications of those studies. This study aims at measuring fostering Employee Engagement in different sectors.

**Findings:** After analysing the factors of workplace happiness among cross cultural sectors, considering the p value above 0.05 it is interpreted that employees feel happy when challenging jobs are given, employees likes the jobs which upgrades their skill and knowledge and employees are always positive towards upgraded skill set required. They would work in such organisations which provides right opportunities and environment.

**Key words:** Employee Engagement, IT employees, Work place happiness, academicians, BPO employees.

**Introduction:**

Happiness is subjective. Longman's dictionary (2005, p. 634) defines happiness as "state of being happy", means a feeling of gratification, i.e. something is fine or correct, as being satisfied with something, not apprehensive or about being fortunate and doing well. Work place happiness is usually considered as next form of job satisfaction. Happiness is subjective well being of psychological state of employees. Work place happiness is a continuous process that aims at bringing positive emotions and strategies. Unlike job satisfaction, workplace happiness have positive consequences like intrapreneurial behaviour, increase in employee productivity, change in leadership style. Employees beyond satisfaction when they are happy, they are more productive and creative. It results in increasing individual performance as well organisation's performance. automatically generate interest only when employees are feeling happy at work place. Being happy is the key to productivity (Djoen and Hewagamage, 2016), and it has considerable relationship with performance (Michael, 1989). Employers also look forward to a high-performing employee who in turn gives high productivity, to attain organizational goals.

Employee Engagement has been defined as emotional and intellectual commitment to the organisation (Baumruk 2004, Richman 2006 and Shaw 2005) or the amount of discretionary effort exhibited by employees in their job (Frank et al 2004). Although it is acknowledged and accepted that employee engagement is a multi-faceted construct, as previously suggested by Kahn (1990), Truss et al (2006) define employee engagement simply as ‘passion for work’, a psychological state which is seen to encompass the three dimensions of engagement discussed by Kahn (1990), and captures the common theme running through all these definitions. The existence of different definitions makes the state of knowledge of employee engagement difficult to determine as each study examines employee engagement under a different protocol. In addition, unless employee engagement can be universally defined and measured, it cannot be managed, nor can it be known if efforts to improve it are working (Ferguson 2007). This highlights the problems of comparability caused by differences in definition. Furthermore, whilst it is acknowledged that employee engagement has been defined in many different ways, it is also argued the definitions often sound similar to other better known and established constructs such as ‘organisational commitment’ and ‘organisational citizenship behaviour’ (OCB) (Robinson et al 2004). Thus Robinson et al (2004) defined engagement as ‘one step up from commitment’. As a result, employee engagement has the appearance of being yet another trend, or what some might call “old wine in a new bottle”.

Employee engagement is considered as most major factor to measure workplace happiness. Workplace happiness to be perceived as another name of job satisfaction has to be understood broadly. The first major article to appear in the management literature on employee engagement was Kahn’s (1990) article based on his ethnographic study of personal engagement and disengagement. Since the emergence of employee engagement in the management literature, two key themes have emerged. First, employee engagement has been lauded by many writers as the key to an organization’s success and competitiveness. (Crawford, LePine, & Rich, 2010; Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002). Kahn (1990) defined engagement as “the harnessing of organization members’ selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances” (p. 694). 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 (physical, cognitive, and emotional), and active, full role performance” (p. 700).

The factors considered to measure employee engagement are vigor, dedication and enthusiasm. Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Roma, and Bakker (2002), defined engagement as “a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption” (p. 74). Vigor involves high levels of energy and mental resilience while working; dedication refers to being strongly involved in one’s work and experiencing a sense of significance, enthusiasm, and challenge; and absorption refers to being fully concentrated and engrossed in one’s work. According to Schaufeli et al. (2002), engagement is not a momentary and specific state, but, rather, it is “a more persistent and pervasive affective cognitive state that is not focused on any particular object, event, individual, or behaviour” (p. 74). Thus, “engaged employees have high levels of energy and are enthusiastic about their work” and “are often fully immersed in their work so that time flies” (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008).

Extensive research is being encouraged by Organisations to make work environment happier. New practices and policies are being adapted to promote a positive attitude towards work with employees beyond earning salary. Cross cultural environments are considered to understand the practices of employee engagement in IT, BPO and academic sector. IT employees being globally working are perceived to have better HR policies and practices that enhance employee engagement. The major challenge of BPO employees is to coordinate the timings of different countries. Unlike the previous, physical presence of academicians is mostly demanded. Thus the levels of employee engagement is perceived to be different. The study aims at measuring employee engagement in different sectors. Happiness among academicians depends on right qualification, feedback of students, salary, results of students, organisational hierarchy, learning opportunities, personal achievements and many other. Happiness of IT employees is measured by interaction with clients, challenging job, The study does

not aim at comparing levels of employee engagement at different sectors. The same could be extended to scope of study. The study aims broadly at measurement of impact of various variables of employee engagement towards workplace happiness

### **Objectives:**

- To understand various factors influencing workplace happiness of employees
- To understand the impact of Employee engagement on workplace happiness among employees.

### **Hypothesis:**

H0: There is significant impact of employee engagement and Workplace happiness

H1: There is no significant impact of employee engagement on workplace happiness

### **Literature review:**

#### **Happiness:**

Ford et al. (2003) argued that happiness involves activities that convey a sense of pleasantness, happiness and positive well-being, that not only make working satisfied but also fun. In psychology, happiness is a relatively positive perception about self, but definitely not total absence of negative emotions (Diener and Satvik, 1991). Happiness at workplace has positive effects on performance. To make employees happy, companies must decide the factors that contribute to their happiness and pleasure at workplace. Workplace happiness and relationship between employees (individual or group) are, therefore, positively related to each other. Frey and Stulzer (2000) examined three factors of happiness, i.e. personality and demographic factors (work, income, community, value, religion, family, experience, education, gender and age), micro- and macro-economic factors (per capita income, employment, inflation) and third is institutional factors like democracy and federalism. Whereas, Graham et al. (2004) mentioned that happiness is subject to various changes and fluctuations; it is a part of our nature, inherent in us by our parents through genes.

#### **Employee Engagement**

Saks (2006) argues that organisational commitment also differs from engagement in that it refers to a person's attitude and attachment towards their organisation, whilst it could be argued that engagement is not merely an attitude; it is the degree to which an individual is attentive to their work and absorbed in the performance of their role. In addition, while OCB involves voluntary and informal behaviours that can help co-workers and the organisation, the focus of engagement is one's formal role performance rather than purely extra-role and voluntary behaviour. According to May et al (2004) engagement is most closely associated with the constructs of job involvement and 'flow' (Csikszentmihalyi 1990). Job involvement is defined as 'a cognitive or belief state of psychological identification' (Kanungo 1982:342). This differs from engagement in that it is concerned more with how the individual employs him/her self during the performance of his/her job. Furthermore, whilst the focus of job involvement is on cognitions, engagement, according to most definitions, also encompasses emotions and behaviours. One of the most influential studies of engagement was carried out by Kahn (1990). Conceptually, Kahn began with the work of Goffman (1961) who proposed that, "people's attachment and detachment to their role varies" (Kahn 1990:694). However, Kahn argued that Goffman's work focused on fleeting face-to-face encounters, while a different concept was needed to fit organisational life, which is "ongoing, emotionally charged, and psychologically complex" (Diamond and Allcorn 1985).

According to Holbeche and Springett (2003), people's perceptions of 'meaning' with regard to the workplace are clearly linked to their levels of engagement and, ultimately, their performance. They argue that employees actively seek meaning through their work and, unless organisations try to provide a sense of meaning, employees are likely to quit. The research findings suggest that many people experience a greater search for meaning in the workplace (70 per cent) than in life in general (ibid). There are numerous possible reasons for this, for example, it may be because people generally spend longer at work than on other parts of their lives. Holbeche and Springett (2003) argue that high

levels of engagement can only be achieved in workplaces where there is a shared sense of destiny and purpose that connects people at an emotional level and raises their personal aspirations.

#### Measurement Model:

Employee engagement is independent and workplace happiness is dependent variable. Regression and Anova are used to analyse the data.

#### ANOVA MODEL

ANOVA							
Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit	
Rows	104.4952	34	3.073389	10.20082	2.67E-26	1.498671	
Columns	1.280952	5	0.25619	0.850316	0.515943	2.267299	
Error	51.21905	170	0.301289				
Total	156.9952	209					

To understand variance between two factors if critical value is less than F value. Thus showing there significance between each others. P value being more than 0.05 also signifies both values are significant.

#### REGRESSION MODEL

##### Regression Model

Individual Factors/ Org factors	Identification of skills and knowledge	Opportunities	New alternatives	Enhance knowledge	Innovative solutions	Communication with client	Workpolicies
New task	0.946211899	0.193605129	0.577999104	0.236034332	0.097315276	0.870979803	0.00333141
Energy	0.273360099	0.620701425	0.804550501	0.458764705	0.308482877	0.863750348	0.492166138
Challenging job	0.081015763	0.901705331	0.750743799	0.919243297	0.718165502	0.841497149	0.015235663
Skills and knowledge	0.34891983	0.681476519	0.771146334	0.857053119	0.727377201	0.55479255	0.832739969
Belongingness	0.333958306	0.744382437	0.108505761	0.10738811	0.832334445	0.656726938	0.005922071
Positive attitude	0.579805282	0.214663309	0.023854452	0.569712947	0.199446478	0.65396831	0.009454042
Timelines	0.085021454	0.781967207	0.896924203	0.690521508	0.532212052	0.404243296	0.221642293
Creative solutions	0.022993858	0.089885479	0.000444863	0.036086277	0.008588646	0.130937459	0.063961099
Recognition	0.314793226	0.775376896	0.469230033	0.760288017	0.805462213	0.272032322	0.928737689
New solutions	0.235626221	0.251181238	0.845000689	0.887915293	0.049971836	0.650225131	0.120051968
Accomplishment of Tasks	0.057326191	0.047654625	0.777454833	0.065605554	0.000217632	0.001631569	0.032291534

The data is analysed and compared against standard values of  $r$ ,  $p$  and  $F$ . The standard values of  $r$  lying between  $-1$  and  $+1$  and the data being positive shows independent values. The value of  $r$  obtained is  $0.6$  signifies the employee factors and organisation factors are completely independent. The Work place happiness and individual factors of employee engagement are completely independent. The standard value of  $f$  value is less than  $0.05$ . The interpreted value of  $f$  is  $0.03$  which signifies the regression model. The standard value of  $p$  to be less than or equal to  $0.05$ , the values being observed are  $0.11, 0.23$  consequently. The over all observations are falling under standard values which signifies the null hypothesis is being accepted. The null hypothesis states that there is significant impact of employee engagement on work place happiness. From the above regression table the interpretation of  $p$  value for new task ( $0.19$ ), positive attitude towards day to day activities ( $0.21$ ), creative solutions ( $0.08$ ), new solutions ( $0.25$ ), accomplishment of task ( $0.04$ ) are below standard value. There is no much impact of employee factors to organisational factors. The opportunities provided by organisations for BPO employees doesnot show much impact to create positive work environment.

The factors of happiness are converted to a numerical value through which the degree of performance can be ascertained. So, this regression model helped to quantify the qualitative factors of happiness. The regression model of above few variables of organisation factors, Dependent variable significantly shows all the  $p$  factors and  $f$  factors are matching the standard values. The variables are accepted. The Individual factors are measured with dedication, vigour and satisfaction. Workplace happiness- skill, innovativeness, positivity towards challenges. Employees of all sectors are considered and the factors affecting workplace happiness are positively related to each other.

### **Conclusion:**

The study clearly shows that all organisational factors are positively related to each other. The employees of all sectors and designations are considered as sample. Irrespective of designations and sectors the employees are happy with the efforts made by organisations to get their employees engaged and making the working environment happy. Organisation factors like opportunities for creating new solutions, designing better work policies for academicians could be enhanced by participative management. BPO employees are expecting more recognition while assigning job responsibilities. Employees expect more salaries to be more engaged and dedicated. Organisations have to meet expectations of employees. Over all implications replicate employees are happy working with the organisations and employees if provided more opportunities to participate in decision making, employees would be happier.

### **Implications of further scope of Study:**

Academicians, IT employees and few BPO employees were considered as sample. The size of sample considered is 75 employees. More accurate data could be analysed if the sample size is increased extending the research to each sector individually. In depth results could be analysed for a comparison study. The comparison study gives a clear understanding of impact of each factor with other sectors.

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