
Role of Job Related Factors in Engaging Employees

- Mrs. P. Hima Bindu *

Abstract

The distinctive feature of employee engagement as an idea is that it pulls all of these positive job and work attitudes together under one umbrella and research clearly shows that when employee engagement is high, organisations do better. The present study aims to investigate the relationship between certain organizational, social and task related drivers which are in total termed as Engagement Drivers i.e. factors that drive engagement. The data was collected by administering a questionnaire to employees of a large FMCG company through mails. It identifies a number of job related factors that predict employee engagement and provides recommendations to improve employees' engagement levels. (JD-R) model of Demerouti et al was partially adopted as the framework of the impact of seven job resources on employee engagement. Correlation and Regression analysis was used to establish relationship between selected variables (assumed as engagement drivers) and employee engagement. Results of the analyses revealed that financial rewards and participation in decision- making in organizational level drivers; supervisor support in social drivers; job autonomy and performance feedback in task-level drivers are significant factors in shaping employees' job engagement.

Keywords: *Organizational, Social and Task related drivers*

1. Introduction

In recent years, there has been a great deal of interest in employee engagement. Along with enhanced technology and streamlined work processes, gaining employees' discretionary effort, so called engagement, may be one of the most effective ways to increase productivity and improve business results. In fact, many literatures have claimed that employee engagement predicts employee outcomes, organizational success, and financial performance.

As innovation, speed to market, and the need for ever-increasing efficiency define the competitive edge, organizations around the globe are counting on motivated workforces to help them and there is a deepening disengagement among employees worldwide today (Bates, 2004; Richman, 2006).

Unfortunately, much of what has been written about employee engagement comes from either the practitioner literature, consulting firms like Hewitt Associates, Gallup, and Towers Perrin or stress literature (e.g. burnout). There is limited research on employee engagement in the management literature (Robinson *et al.*, 2004). Besides, the concept of employee engagement

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(also referred to as “work engagement”) and its drivers or antecedents out of empirical research. Unfortunately, much of what has been written about employee engagement comes from either the practitioner literature, consulting firms like Hewitt Associates, Gallup, and Towers Perrin or stress literature (e.g. burnout). There is limited research on employee engagement in the management literature (Robinson *et al.*, 2004). Besides, the concept of employee engagement (also referred to as “work engagement”) and its drivers or antecedents out of empirical research were conducted primarily within western countries. Whether it may be applied to other national contexts remains to be fully examined

This study focuses on India and study of employee engagement drivers and its effect of employee engagement in an Indian context.

It's no wonder workplaces everywhere are obsessed with employee engagement – everything seems to link to it. Engaged workers are more productive, perform better, motivate others and, perhaps most importantly – *stay*. So it is also no surprise that in a labor market such as India where attrition rates of 20-30% are normal and 50% in industries such as IT not unheard of, serious questions about engagement are being asked. A recent Mercer survey highlights that no fewer than 54% of Indian workers are *seriously considering leaving* their jobs, and that figure spikes to 66% in the 16-24 year age bracket. And they're not kidding – other independent studies confirm the correlation between intention to leave and actual turnover. The really tricky part is that the people considering leaving are not even desperately unhappy. 76% of Indians surveyed reported satisfaction with their jobs and 75% with their organizations.

What seems to be the problem? It boils down to three key drivers of attrition in India: There's a *generational factor*. Indian millennials are no different from those elsewhere – they just have more opportunities in their buoyant market at present. Young Indians are looking to fast-track their learning experiences and their seniority, and job-hopping appears to be a good way to achieve both. A 2012 survey by Catalyst shows that 78% young Indians aspire to senior executive and/or CEO roles, and they're very impatient about getting there. *Market frenzy* thinking that a population of 1.2 billion with a workforce over 488 million must have plenty of talent to spare. With the world's youngest median age at 26.2 years (U.S. 36.9, Russia 38.7 and Japan 44.8), Indian educational institutions cannot cope with the quantity or quality of education required. Consequently only a very small percentage of Indians hold tertiary qualifications, and of these only an estimated 15% are of global standards. India needs an estimated 2,735 additional managers each year, and only 1,740 are in the pipeline. Employers are competing aggressively for their share: 88% of Indian employers say they are in the market for MBA graduates in 2012. *Bad management* The middleman must carry some of the blame for high turnover: Many employees are passively unimpressed by or actively disenchanted with their managers. In a market where higher pay remains the number one motivator for job change, one survey of Indian organizations attributes 48% of turnover to poor relationships between employees and their supervisors. *Improving engagement with the above realities creates a need for the present study. So the present study aims at identifying and studying variables that drive engagement.*

2. Review of Literature

In the limited research on the topic of employee engagement, there are three streams that provide engagement models. The first model by Kahn, In his study on the psychological conditions of personal engagement and disengagement at work, Kahn (1990) found that there were three psychological conditions associated with engagement or disengagement at work: meaningfulness, safety and availability.

The second model of engagement comes from the burnout literature which describes job engagement as the positive antithesis of burnout noting that burnout involves the erosion of engagement with one's job (Maslach *et al.*, 2001). In their so-called structural model, Maslach *et al.* In their so-called structural model, they hypothesized that the presence of specific demands (i.e. work overload and personal conflicts) and the absence of specific resource (i.e. control coping, social support, autonomy, and involvement) predicts burnout, which in its turn is expected to lead to various negative outcomes such as physical illness, turnover, absenteeism, and diminished organizational commitment.

The last model of the antecedents and consequences of job and organization engagement was recently developed by Saks (2006). The results indicated that there is a meaningful difference between job and organization engagement, which perceived organizational support predicts both engagement while job characteristics only predicts job engagement and procedural justice predicts organization engagement.

The relationship between resources and engagement can be explained by theories about health promotion and maintenance (e.g., Antonovski, 1987). Job resources refer to those physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects of the job that (a) are functional in achieving work goals, (b) reduce job demands and the associated physiological and psychological costs; or (c) stimulate personal growth and development (Demerouti, *et al.*, 2001). At the heart of Demerouti *et al.*'s (2001) JD-R model lies the assumption that whereas every occupation may have its own specific risk factors associated with burnout and disengagement (the opposite of engagement), these factors can be classified into two general categories (i.e., job demands and job resources), thus constituting an overarching model that may be applied to various occupational settings. The JD-R model assumes two psychological processes - the energy-depleting process of gradually wearing out (burnout) and the motivational process of personal development and goal attainment (engagement), which is well used in burnout and work engagement study.

3. Statement of the Problem

However, those worrisome findings might not be generalized to the entire Indian workforce. It is inconclusive whether the relatively low level of employee engagement is due to the ever-changing environment or is merely a company-specific issue. To gain practical understanding, further studies on engagement characteristics and employee-employer relationships at individual company level are warranted. Only then can employers understand the relative importance of the engagement drivers on a company-specific basis and execute effective engagement strategies. In

order to improve engagement, organizations must know what drives it - in other words, the leverage points with the greatest impact on employees' engagement in their work. Management can then proactively leverage resources of influence for changes to build an engaging work environment.

The current study is designed to find meaningful resources on a company-specific basis and execute effective engagement strategies. The current study is designed to find meaningful and practical guidance by looking into employee engagement at an individual Indian company.

4. Objectives of the Study

1. To investigate the relationship between employee engagement and factors that drive engagement(engagement drivers)
2. To test the relationship among these engagement drivers and employee engagement
3. To explore the implications that the findings may have for effective human resources management and practices.

5. Hypotheses of the Study

With Regards to organizational level drivers:

Hypothesis 1a: Financial rewards are positively related to work engagement

Hypothesis 1b: Participation in decision-making is positively related to work engagement

Hypothesis 1c: Job security is positively related to work engagement

In relation to social drivers:

Hypothesis 2a: Co-worker support is positively related to work engagement

Hypothesis 2b: Supervisor support is positively related to work engagement

Pertaining to task-level drivers:

Hypothesis 3a: Job autonomy is positively related to work engagement

6. Research Methodology

6.1 Sample

The participants in this study are employees of a large FMCG company who are one of the giant corporate in India. The sample is restricted to FMCG sector of the corporate. The type of sample used is convenience sampling.

6.2 Survey Administration

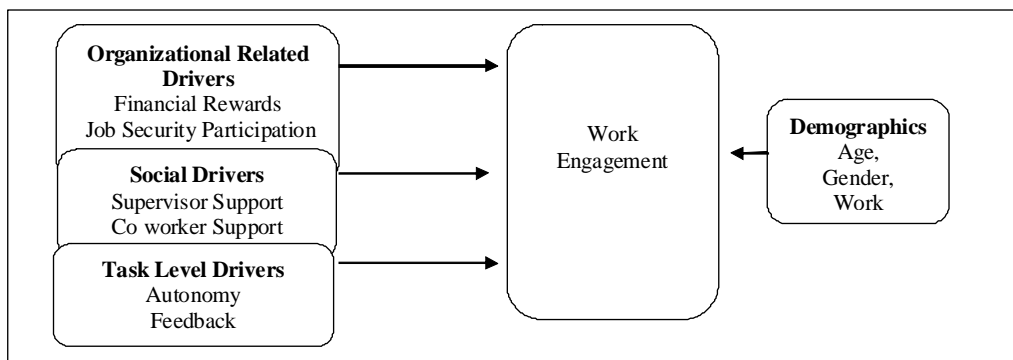
Study participants were directed to a web-based survey via an email invitation. A web-based survey was deemed the most efficient and effective method of data collection for this research due to the need for responses within a short time. As a result, a total of 46 employees (response rate = 92%) participated in the survey.

6.3 Questionnaire

The questionnaire consisted of three parts. Part A aimed to test participants' engagement level. Part B, containing 17 items, measured engagement drivers. Part C of the questionnaire asked demographic questions including gender, age, work experience and position. There was an open-ended question at the end of the questionnaire asking the employees to list the three biggest factors that influence their engagement level. The purpose of this open-ended question is to seek any additional factors to the proposed study model.

6.4 Study Model

In this study, Demerouti *et al.* (2001)'s JD-R model was partially adopted as the framework of impact of various job resources on the employee engagement and turnover intentions. The model is used since it has been used and tested in various countries and occupational groups recently and is proved to be a heuristic model that is applicable to various occupational settings, irrespective of the particular demands and resources. The proposed relationships in this paper are shown in Figure 1



bursting with energy”); Dedication (DE) (three items; e.g., “I am enthusiastic about my job”), and Absorption (AB) (three items; e.g., “When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work”). All items were scored on a 7-point frequency rating scale from 0 (never) to 6 (always).

6.5.2 Independent Variables

The independent variables are classified under three headings: organizational level drivers, social drivers and task level drivers (refer study model-figure 1).

Financial rewards were assessed using two items of scale developed by Van Veldhoven and Meijman (1994). The questions include “My performance is rewarded properly” and “I received sufficient pay for the work that I do”. Reliability was .82.

Job security was assessed using one question “the threat of losing this job is very low”.

Participation in Decision Making was measured by one question (“only the management decides what everybody has to do”) developed by Demerouti *et al.* (2001).

Co-worker support and *Supervisor support* were measured with a 4-item scale taken from Karaske's (1985) Job Content Instrument. The sample questions include "People I work with are competent in doing their jobs" and "My supervisor is helpful in getting the job done". Reliability was .61 and .82 respectively.

Job autonomy was measured with a short scale developed by Bakker *et al.* (2004). It includes three items particularly referring to decision authority (i.e., freedom of action in accomplishing the formal work task) based on Karasek's (1985) Job Content Instrument. Reliability was .32

Performance feedback was measured with a 3-item scale taken from Podsakoff and MacKenzie (1994). Sample question includes "My job provides me with feedback on how well I am doing". Reliability was .71.

Participants were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with each statement using the same 5-point scale (1=totally disagree, 5=totally agree).

6.6 Data Analysis

SPSS was used to calculate descriptive statistics, and to compare means using t-test analysis. SPSS was also used to conduct both regression analysis (to determine whether the job resources factors predict employee engagement) and correlation analysis (to identify the inter-relationship between the job resources factors, employee engagement).

7. Descriptive Analysis

Table 1: Demographics

Category	Total	Percent age
Gender of respondents		
Female	24	52%
Position		
Internship	10	22%
Part-timestaff Supervisor and above	29	16%
	07	15%
Age		
20-24	14	30%
25-29	26	57%
30 years and above	06	13%
Work Experience		
0-3 years	16	35%
4-7 years	24	15%
8 years and above	06	32%

Source : Study

The summary of survey is presented in Table 1. From the 46 questionnaires received (representing a 92% response rate), 52% of the participants are females and the remaining 48% are males. In terms of position, 63% of the participants are staff employees and 22% are either part-time employees or interns, the rest 15% are management. In terms of age, participants range from 20 to 40 years old with a mean of 26 years. And the work experience varies from one to ten years with an average of 4 years working experience.

Table 2 summarizes the means, standard deviations, correlation and reliability coefficients, where applicable, for all study variables. The reliabilities for the multi-items scales were generally very good with most alphas greater than .70 except for co-worker support at .61. Values of Cronbach's alpha exceed .70 is traditionally used as a rule of thumb to measure reliability (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). These results demonstrate that the questions used to measure each variable are being answered in a consistent matter.

The lowest reported level of satisfaction among job resource factors was participation in decision-making (mean=2.96), which is the only factor scored less than neutral. The highest was co-worker support (mean=3.73) and supervisor support (mean =3.59), the two social resources factors, implying that social support was in good order in the company.

The engagement score (mean=3.42) demonstrated that on average participants were positively engaged to their work. Out of the 46 respondents, 16 people, representing 35% of the sample, had the engagement score higher than 4, which can be interpreted as "highly engaged". On the other end, only 4 people (less than 9%) scored less than 2, which is an indication of "disengaged". The rest 56% or 26 respondents with scores ranging from 2 to 4 were categorized as "moderately engaged". The results imply that the company has a relatively highly engaged workforce and a positive working environment. However, it is also important to note that none of the job factors scored at or above a mean of 4.00, which indicates that there is still room to improve engagement levels by increasing various job resources.

8. Correlation Analysis

An examination of the correlations between the independent variables (engagement drivers) and the dependent variables (engagement) provides useful information in determining which variables are likely to impact the employee engagement

As shown in Table 2, financial rewards, supervisor support and job autonomy had the strongest relationship with employee engagement among the job resources variables. Out of remaining four variables, constructive feedback and participation in decision-making also reported significant relationship with employee engagement. At p50.05 level, five out of seven job resources factors were positively related to employee engagement.

According to the correlation statistics between employee engagement and the individual job resources variables, financial rewards, supervisor support, job autonomy and constructive feedback factors seemed to be more relevant than participation in decision-making, co-worker support and job security. However, since the co-worker support factor had a relatively high surveyed mean

(3.73) and was mentioned a few times in the open-ended question, it is surprising to see the less than average correlation coefficient between co-worker support and engagement in light of prior findings. One explanation could be attributed to the measure scales. Co-worker support was the only variable that shows Cronbach's Alpha less than .70 ($r = .61$). This less satisfying internal reliability indicates that the questions to measure the variable do not fully capture what they are supposed to measure. Besides, the overall high score of co-worker support may indicate that the sample has a restricted range which reduces the correlation.

9. Regression Analysis

Table 3 shows the results of the regression analysis between job resources and employee engagement.

At the beginning, the three control variables, age, gender and working experience, were entered into the regression equation for preliminary testing. Similar to the correlation analysis, none of the control variables were statistically significant in explaining the variation in employee engagement. Thus those variables were removed from any further analysis to preserve power.

The total nine-item engagement score was used as an overall measure of engagement instead of the three-factor model because of the following reasons. First, the correlations between the latent Vigour, Dedication, and Absorption factors were very high (average $r = .30$). Second, the internal consistency of the scores of the total nine-item version also appeared to be high (Table 2).

In order to test the hypotheses of relationship between various job resources and employee engagement, engagement was regressed on seven job resources variables. However, the preliminary equation showed high multicollinearity statistics (four out of seven resources had a tolerance score less than .20). By examining the correlation analyses (see Table 2), it was identified that some of the job resources variables were significantly related with each other. In some instances, the correlations were above $r = .50$ which indicated that multicollinearity may be a concern. As a consequence, instead of one regression, multiple regressions were conducted in which engagement was regressed separately on variables of organizational resources, social resources and task-level resources.

Table 2: Means, Standard Deviations, Reliabilities and Inter correlations of Study Variables

Control Variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Gender	0.5	0.5	(N/A)														
Age	26	0.8	0.42**	(N/A)													
Work experience	4	3.3	0.34*	0.96**	(N/A)												
Job Variables																	
Financial rewards	3.1	0.6	0.03	0.06	0.14	(.82)											
Participation	3	1	-0.04	0.05	0.16	.49**	(N/A)										
Job security	3.2	0.7	-0.07	0.22	0.26	0.06	-0.17	(N/A)									
Supervisor support	3.6	0.6	-0.01	-0.11	0.01	.85**	.45**	-.08	(.82)								
Co-Worker support	3.7	0.4	-0.04	-0.3	-0.24	.30*	.21	.32*	.31*	(.61)							
Job Autonomy	3.3	0.7	0	0.21	0.28	0.81**	.36*	.07	.73**	.32*	(.82)						
Performance Feedback	3.6	0.4	0.24	-0.04	-0.10	0.55**	-.11	.30*	.41**	.08	.54**	(.71)					
Dependent Variables																	
Engagement	3.42	0.93	-.10	.06	.13	.88**	.37*	.02	.85**	.25	.83**	.49**	(.93)				
Vigor	3.19	0.89	-.06	.13	.17	.83**	.31*	.03	.75**	.12	.77**	.48**	.92**	(.78)			
Dedication	3.72	1.03	-.09	-.07	.01	.82**	.39**	-.06	.85**	.31*	.74**	.51**	.92**	.73**	(.81)		
Absorption	3.33	1.07	-.14	.11	.18	.81**	.34*	.10	.77**	.26	.79**	.40**	.96**	.85**	.82**	(.85)	
	2.49	0.73	.05	-.02	-.12	.80**	-.53	-.04	-.74	-.36	-.64	-.37	-.77	-.68	-.72	-.74	(.88)

*p < 0.05, **p < .01
 reliabilities are in parentheses

Table 3: Results of Regression Analysis for Engagement

Independent Variables	Employee engagement Standardized Beta Values
Organizational Related Drivers	
1. Financial Rewards	.92***
2. Participation in Decision Making	.09
3. Job Security	.05
F	49.14***
R ²	.78
Adjusted R ²	.76
Social Drivers	
1. Supervisor Support	.85***
2. Co worker Support	.01
F	55.82***
R ²	.72
Adjusted R ²	.71
Task related Drivers	
1. Job Autonomy	.79***
2. Performance Feed back	.07
F	46.54***
R ²	.68
Adjusted R ²	.67
*p<=.05	
**p<=.01	
***p<=.001	

The results of the equations are shown in Table 3. In terms of measuring the usefulness of the equation, the adjusted R' which is the proportion of variation explained by the variables included in the regression equation were .76, .71 and .67. These measures indicated that a reasonable level of explanatory power was achieved. As Table 3 indicates, only financial rewards, supervisor support and job autonomy were statistically significant (at the 99.9% level) in explaining employee engagement. However, according to the study model (see Figure I), it was expected that all the job resources variables have an impact on employee engagement. In response to this expectation, it should be noted that the reason some of the job resources variables were not significant might be explained by their correlation with the variables that were significant and the multicollinearity issue that was raised earlier. As a result, the findings of regression analysis must be interpreted with caution and the conclusion should be drawn in a combination of correlation and regression analysis.

In summary, although three out of the seven job resources variables demonstrated statistically significant relationships with employee engagement, the correlation analysis did suggest additional significant variables (e.g. participation in decision-making and performance feedback). Therefore, the reasonable conclusion from the regression analysis is that most of the variability in employee engagement was "explained" by financial rewards, supervisor support and job autonomy. And

since these variables are related to other job resources dimensions, there was not much variability left to be explained by the remaining four variables.

Based on these results, the following conclusions relate to hypothesis 1, 2 and 3:

With Regards to organizational level drivers

Hypothesis 1a: Financial rewards are positively related to work engagement - both correlation and regression results support this hypothesis.

Hypothesis 1b: Participation in decision-making is positively related to work engagement - correlation analysis supports this hypothesis while regression results do not support this hypothesis.

Hypothesis 1c: Job security is positively related to work engagement - this hypothesis is rejected by both correlation and regression analysis.

In relation to social drivers

Hypothesis 2a: Co-worker support is positively related to work engagement - this hypothesis is rejected by both correlation and regression analysis.

Hypothesis 2b: Supervisor support is positively related to work engagement - both correlation and regression results support this hypothesis.

Pertaining to task-level drivers:

Hypothesis 3a: Job autonomy is positively related to work engagement - both correlation and regression results support this hypothesis.

10. Summary of Open-ended Question

There were several comments in response to the open-ended question at the end of the survey when the participants were asked to provide the biggest three factors that influence their engagement level. The responses were very interesting and covered a broad range of job related factors; some were not included in the study model. The results of the content analysis of these responses are provided in Table 4.

As shown the Table 4, Pay and Benefits, social relationship and opportunities to learn and develop new skills made the top three factors to be engaged in the company. More than 75% of the respondents rated Pay and Benefits in their list, which means the fundamental financial reward is still a critical factor in employees' engagement level. This finding is also consistent with the results of correlation and regression analysis. As a matter of fact, most of the job related factors that were significantly related to employee engagement in the statistical analyses were also reflected in the answers of the open-ended question, such as supervisor and co-worker relationships, participation in decision-making and job autonomy. This gave us further assurance of the validity of the model.

Table 4:

Comments	No. of Responses	Percent age
Pay and Benefits	35	76%
Social relationship (e.g. supervisor support, good collaboration across units)	18	39%
Opportunities to learn and develop new skills	15	33%
Positive work environment (e.g. work-life balance)	8	17%
No Response	5	11%
Participation in decision-making	5	11%
Job content (job autonomy)	5	11%
Positive work environment (e.g. work-life balance, corporate culture)	3	7%
Management Recognition	2	4%
Challenging work	1	2%

Source: Study

11. Conclusion

This study aimed to investigate the relationship between employee engagement and various job related factors in of a large corporate, in FMCG sector. The seven job related factors tested in the study, which were categorized under organizational level drivers, social drivers, and task level drivers, which were partially adopted from Demerouti *et al.* (2001)'s Job Demand - Resource (JD-R) model. This model has been used and tested in various countries and occupational settings and is proven to be a heuristic model, thus the test directly addressed the validity of the model by examining the performance of the framework in the sample under study. Results of the analysis revealed that financial rewards, participation in decision-making in organizational resources, supervisor support in social resources, job autonomy, and performance feedback in task-level resources were significant factors in shaping employees' job engagement.

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