

Relationship between Employee Engagement and Organisational Culture of the Educational Institutions: An Empirical Analysis

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ABSTRACT

Engagement is a consistent characteristic depicted by the employee that can strengthen the organisation by means of regular commitment, advocacy, dedication and discretionary effort. It is shown through the optimal use of talents and furnishing support towards the accomplishment of organisation's goals and values. Engaged employees inculcate a sense of belonging to their organisation. Such employees invest themselves completely in their work role together with the organisation as a whole. Employee engagement is a pertinent factor in determining the success of an organization in terms of its profitability, productivity, and brand image etc. The purpose of this study was to ascertain the relationship between organizational culture (as conceptualised on OCTAPACE dimensions) and the employee engagement across the employees of educational institutions. The study also explores the impact of various demographic and organizational variables on employee engagement. It uses a cross-sectional research design with a questionnaire survey for data collection on a sample of 600 respondents. The findings indicate that the OCTAPACE dimensions such as trust, collaboration, openness, authenticity and confrontation impact the employee engagement along with the demographic and organizational variables such as employees' family type, experience in the organization, caring responsibilities and educational qualification.

Keywords: Employee Engagement, OCTAPACE, Organizational Culture, Educational, Institutions

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INTRODUCTION

The education sector is usually considered to be stable sector. However there is a drastic change in the policy environment mainly with the new education policy introduced recently. The new regulatory environment with restructuring of the sector and strict vigil over promotions and government funding has posed several challenges before the educational institutions in the country. The education sector involves together the interests of diverse group of stakeholders including the students, management and employees. Besides, the increasing international competition in the global scenario has added new challenges and complexity. During these challenging times, employee engagement as strategic vision and an efficient mechanism of people management might offer them an opportunity to attract, develop and retain the dynamic human resources. Employee engagement has a critical role in determining organisational success and yields better competitive advantage & organizational effectiveness (Albrecht et al., 2015; Ruck et al., 2017, Saks & Gruman, 2014; Rich et al., 2010; Macey et al., 2009). The development of a supportive culture that accentuates employee engagement has therefore become a necessity. Research scholars have examined the model comprising organizational culture and employee engagement along with other variables (Bayasgalan & Chantsaldulam, 2017; Tsogtsuren, B., & Ravdansuren, 2017; Tsogtsuren & Tugsuu, 2016). Yet it is important to note in this regard that the impact of the differences in contexts cannot be overlooked (Shuck & Wollard, 2010). Despite the increasing awareness among organizations regarding employee engagement, there is an ambiguity regarding the conditions for prospering the employee engagement (Pech & Slade, 2006). And hence it becomes pertinent to empirically determine the impact of organizational culture and demographic on employee engagement when the context changes as in the case of employees working in educational institutions.

The precise objective of this study is to study the relationship between organizational culture (overall as well as its individual dimensions of OCTAPACE model) with employee engagement among the employees of educational institutions within study area. It also examines the impact of demographic variables in determining the employee engagement of these employees along with organizational variables.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Employee engagement is defined as “an individual employee’s cognitive, emotional, and behavioural state directed toward desired organisational outcomes” (Shuck & Wollard, 2010, p. 103). It conceptualises employee engagement in terms of three dimensions; the present study uses it to measure the construct of employee engagement. The existing literature acknowledges that the employees who are well-engaged exhibit greater productivity and higher profitability (Khodakarami & Dirani, 2020; Shuck and Wollard, 2010). Also the engaged employees couple their cognitive, emotional and behavioural aspects with their work thereby enhancing their performance along with showcasing themselves in their job roles (Saks & Gruman, 2014). Scholars and practitioners in the past have identified elements that boost employee engagement in terms of the various constructs, strategic activities and conditions having a bearing on employee engagement (Khodakarami & Dirani, 2020; Saks, 2019; Saks & Gruman, 2014; Rich et al., 2010). Barriers that pose an impediment to successful improvement in engagement have also been located (Saks, 2019). Employee engagement involving absorption of employees in their job roles with dedication and vigour is seen as an antithesis of burnout dimensions such as cynicism, exhaustion and inefficacy (Crawford et al., 2010). The level of engagement among employees depicts variations according to their biographical and personality traits (Rich et al., 2010). The evidence shows that when the employees join the organization they may be positive which gradually changes as years pass. Similarly, the employees who are adaptable and highly extravert, show better engagement. According to Saks (2019), the disengaged employees exhibit cognitive, emotional and physical withdrawal while they perform their job roles and they alienate themselves from their work performances too. With respect to the organizational factors, it has been ascertained that seniority of the employees, nature of occupation and experience in an organization may impact the employee engagement (Saks, 2019). The evidence has shown that seniority level of an employee enhances the engagement. For example, the employees serving as the Managers or Presidents tend to exhibit greater engagement than the support staff. However, the situation may vary across different organisations.

The Hawthorne study conducted at Western Electric Company highlights the importance of work environment and relates it to social theory. Every organisation is characterized by its unique working culture comprising of distinct beliefs, ideologies, principles and values (Solke,

2013). Organizational culture is an important study area ever since 1930s. It can be interpreted in several ways. According to Mintzberg (1989) it is defined as the “soul of the organization, belief and values and their manifestation”. It is the binding force that keeps various organizational entities together and furnishes the necessary life force to the organization. The knowledge of organizational culture helps in enhancing organizational effectiveness and fosters its development. It provides the entities “shared meaning, assumptions, beliefs, values and norms” to hold them together and diminish human variability (Sanaria & Singh, 2019). It dictates the way people interact in and outside the organisation. Besides, it is essential for the growth and success of the organization as it controls and shapes the organizational behaviour of employees (Tsogtsuren & Ravdansuren, 2017). The present study utilizes the set of eight OCTAPACE dimensions to enumerate organizational culture; including Openness, Confrontation, Trust, Authenticity, Proaction, Autonomy, Collaboration, and Experimentation. OCTAPACE culture yields team spirit, free communication flow and better organizational growth.

Table 1: OCTAPACE Model for Organizational Culture

Dimension	Description
Openness	Freedom to express, share and interact without any hesitations
Confrontation	Facing the problems/challenges squarely and boldly, without shying away from them
Trust	Having belief in each other and maintaining the confidentiality of shared information
Authenticity	Speaking the truth in a fearless manner and fulfilling the promises made; having congruity between what one feels and says
Proaction	Taking initiative and exploration on the part of employees including the preplanning and taking preventive action
Autonomy	Enjoying the freedom to plan and choose what one wants to do in the way one wants to do
Collaboration	Spirit of sacrifice for the sake of larger goals, free exchange of help among team members
Experimentation	Use of encouraging innovative and creative ideas for problem solving; characterizes risk taking culture

(Source: Solkhe, 2013)

The importance of OCTAPACE Culture in the organization can be comprehended from the fact that it promotes organizational harmony by uniting diversified workforce. It directs employees regarding their work responsibilities as well as the way they need to perform it. It also helps in creation of positive organizational brand image. The element of Openness in OCTAPACE indicates the ease of opinion flow and feelings among the employees; it implies that they are free to share their voices. It is important element as when the employees feel that they are being listened to, their performance improves. The second element of confrontations implies that the employees are exposed to different situations thereby strengthening them for every situation. It prepares them for facing various kinds of work challenges. The third element of trust has been an indispensable part of organizational culture and an integral aspect of performance appraisal system. The belief of the employees in their superiors and their decisions is a pertinent factor in enhancing their support. In addition to this, it also motivates them to work in alignment of these decisions and achieve them too. The next element of authenticity is the basic premise for building trust enabling employees for self-acceptance and relating well to others. Being authentic is the imperative for nurturing long term relationships. The fifth element of Proactive means indicate readiness for future based on the employees' understanding of study environment and strategies to meet the inherent challenges. The next element of Autonomy implies the extent of freedom for acting and fulfilling the work responsibilities in an independent manner. Autonomy yields a sense of self-confidence among employees and furnishes growth opportunities. The seventh element of collaboration implying working together indicates that through collaborative efforts in the organization the performance enhances. The last element of Experimentation enables the employees to use innovative ways for enhancing their work performance.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH

The present research study aims to determine the relationship between the various dimensions of organizational culture and employee engagement for locating the dimensions that ensure high employee engagement in the context of employees of educational institutions in Semi Urban areas of Central Uttar Pradesh including outskirts of Lucknow and neighbouring areas of Kanpur and Unnao. The conceptual model for the study also incorporates the different demographic and organizational variables to comprehend employee engagement better.

HYPOTHESES

H₁: There will be a significant positive correlation between organizational culture and employee engagement in the context of educational institutions in the study area.

The above hypothesis is examined for the individual dimensions of OCTAPACE also.

H₁₁: There will be a significant positive correlation between openness dimension of organizational culture and employee engagement among the employees of educational institutions of study area.

H₁₂: There will be a significant positive correlation between confrontation dimension of organizational culture and employee engagement among the employees of educational institutions of study area.

H₁₃: There will be a significant positive correlation between trust dimension of organizational culture and employee engagement among the employees of educational institutions of study area.

H₁₄: There will be a significant positive correlation between authenticity dimension of organizational culture and employee engagement among the employees of educational institutions of study area.

H₁₅: There will be a significant positive correlation between proactive dimension of organizational culture and employee engagement among the employees of educational institutions of study area.

H₁₆: There will be a significant positive correlation between autonomy dimension of organizational culture and employee engagement among the employees of educational institutions of study area.

H₁₇: There will be a significant positive correlation between collaboration dimension of organizational culture and employee engagement among the employees of educational institutions of study area.

H₁₈: There will be a significant positive correlation between experimentation dimension of organizational culture and employee engagement among the employees of educational institutions of study area.

H₂: There will be a significant correlation between the various demographic factors and employee engagement in the employees of educational institutions of study area.

This hypothesis is also examined for the different demographic and organizational variables such as gender, age, highest educational qualification, and marital status, experience in the organization, family type, caring responsibilities and location of work.

METHODOLOGY

The population for the study comprises of employees working in various educational institutions in the Semi Urban areas of Central Uttar Pradesh

including outskirts of Lucknow and neighbouring areas of Kanpur and Unnao, including the teaching as well as the non-teaching staff. The study employed multi-stage random sampling to procure the necessary sample size of targeted 600 respondents. The multi-item questionnaire comprising of items on organizational culture, employee engagement as well as demographic and organizational variables was administered on the respondents using face to face interviews and electronic employee survey. The constructs of organizational culture and employee engagement were measured on 5-point Likert scale whereas demographic and organizational variables were enumerated on nominal scale. The raw data was subjected to data preparation and processing and after editing and coding it was transcribed into MS Excel for cleaning. SPSS 20.0 was used to analyse the processed data.

The exploratory statistical technique of dimension reduction called factor analysis was performed on the pilot data to discern the robustness of underlying factors of organizational culture scale across the sub-groups generated on the basis of different control variables. Since the findings procured over different sub-samples were robust and similar across the bifurcated control variables hence the analysis was performed for the whole sample. To ascertain the appropriateness of data for factor analysis and examine if the partial correlations among variables were meagre or not, the sampling adequacy test was performed through Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) statistic. The KMO value above 0.6 is considered adequate (Kaiser and Rice, 1974). In this case, the KMO value of 0.721 was acceptable and established the appropriateness of factor analysis. The second statistical tool, Barlett's Test of Sphericity examines the congruence between the correlation matrix and identity matrix; if the test is significant it means that factor analysis can be used. In this case, Bartlett's test with significant value implies that non-zero correlations existed at the significance level of 0.000. The results indicate an adequate basis for proceeding with the factor analysis.

Table 2: Factor Analysis Results

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		0.721
Barlett's Test of Sphericity	Approximate Chi-square	2436.34
	df	276
	Significance	0.000

The Principle Components method for extraction of factors was used with the Varimax Rotation. The rotation converged in six iterations. Using the scree plot graph and retaining the factors with Eigen values greater than one, an eight factor model that explained more than 70% of total variance was discerned (Hair et al., 1998). The communalities derived from the application of factor analysis were reviewed again to establish the appropriateness of factor structure; all being relatively large (greater than 0.5, falling in the range 0.65 to 0.82) suggest that the data is appropriate for the analysis. The final version of this multi-item scale that comprises of forty items was used for the study. Reliability of this scale was estimated using the measure of internal consistency called Cronbach alpha coefficient. Cronbach's alpha has the 0.6 as the cut-off point (Hair et al., 1992). Nunally, 1978 suggested that coefficient alpha being greater than 0.7 imply that the measure is acceptable. In this case, the Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the different dimensions range in between 0.783 and 0.812. All being greater than 0.7 indicate that the reliability of the overall scale is fairly good.

The measurement of engagement was achieved through employee survey and the sub scale reliability for this construct was 0.71.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Sample Summary

The study instrument was administered on the employees of the educational institutions in the Semi Urban areas of Central Uttar Pradesh including outskirts of Lucknow and neighbouring areas of Kanpur and Unnao, including the teaching as well as the non-teaching staff. The study targeted a sample of 600 employees across the different higher educational institutions from the Semi Urban areas of Central Uttar Pradesh including outskirts of Lucknow and neighbouring areas of Kanpur and Unnao. The total number of questionnaires that were obtained after the fieldwork was 575, out of which 547 were found to be complete in all aspects. It shows a good overall response rate of 91% approximately. Of these 547 completed questionnaires the distribution across the three areas of Lucknow, Kanpur and Unnao was 33%, 33.2 % and 33.6 % respectively.

Table 3: Sample Summary

	Lucknow	Kanpur	Unnao	Total
Targeted	200	200	200	600
Sample Obtained	195	190	190	575
Usable Responses	181	182	184	547
Response rate in region	97.5% (=195/200)	95% (=190/200)	95% (=190/200)	95.83% (=575/600)
Usable Response Rate in region	90.5% (=181/200)	91% (=182/200)	92% (=184/200)	91.17% (=547/600)

Demographic Profile of Employees

The demographic profile of the employees in the educational institutions of study area is presented as below:

Table 4: Demographic Profile of Employees

Demographic Variable	Total (Percentage)
Gender	
Male	294 (53.75%)
Female	253 (46.25%)
Highest Educational Qualification	
Below Graduation	36 (6.58%)
Graduate	91 (16.64%)
Post-graduate	40 (7.31%)
Professionals/ Higher	380 (69.47%)
Age	
21-30	48 (8.77%)
31-40	239 (43.69%)
41-50	183 (33.45%)
Above 50 years	77 (14.07%)
Experience in Organization	
Less than 1 year	12 (2.19%)
01 to 05 years	245 (44.79%)
06 to 10 years	112 (20.47%)
Above 10 years	178 (32.54%)

Relationship between Organizational Culture and Employee Engagement

To assess the nature of relationship between organizational culture and employee engagement scores and its significance i.e. hypothesis 1, Pearson's product-moment correlation was evaluated (Table 5.1). The result of correlation analysis indicates that the correlation between the two variables is significant ($r = 0.697$, $p < 0.000$); it is high, positive correlation (Hemphill, 2003; Cohen, 1988). Hence the first hypothesis is accepted.

Table 5.1: Correlation between Organizational Culture and Employee Engagement Scores

Relationship	Pearson Correlation, r	p-value/Sig. (2-tailed)
Organizational Culture and Employee Engagement	0.697	.000**
	178	178

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

When the regression analysis was performed taking employee engagement as the dependent variable and the OCTAPACE dimensions as the independent variables, using enter method, the model was found significant ($F = 93.127$, $p < 0.0005$). The value of adjusted R square for the model was determined to be 0.642 which shows that the model explains nearly 64.2% of the variance in the employee engagement. The dimensions that were found to be significant are shown below in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2: Regression Results with Employee Engagement as Dependent and OCTAPACE Dimensions as Independent Variables

Dimension/Predictor	Standardized Beta	P-value
Openness	0.246	$p < 0.0005$
Collaboration	0.317	$p < 0.0005$
Trust	0.456	$p < 0.0005$
Authenticity	0.189	$p < 0.0005$
Confrontation	0.090	$p = 0.031$

As the significant dimensions are analysed it is seen that employee engagement is influenced most by trust dimension of OCTAPACE followed next by collaboration, openness, authenticity and confrontation

in diminishing order. The remaining three dimensions of Experimentation, Autonomy and Proaction were not found to be significant predictors for employee engagement in this model.

Significance of Demographic Variables for Employee Engagement Scores

To assess the impact of various demographic and organisational variables on the employee engagement scores, t-test of equality of two means for independent samples was run for the demographic variable gender, family type, marital status and nature of duties whereas for all other variables such as age of employee, experience in organization , educational qualifications one -way analysis of variance F-test was employed for ascertaining the equality of several employee engagement mean scores across different categories. The average employee engagement scores were tested for all the employees across the different categories of the demographic and organizational variables and the results are summarized as under Table 5.3 and Table 5.4.

Table 5.3: Significance of Gender, Marital Status and Nature of Duties for Employee Engagement (Independent Samples t-test Results)

Hypothesis	Category	Mean Employee Engagement score	Standard Deviation	Total sample		
				t - value	df	P- value
Gender	Male = 294	3.51	.33	1.398	545	.163
	Female = 253	3.47	.420			
Marital Status	Single = 133	3.59	.32	1.252	545	.211
	Married = 414	3.55	.37			
Nature of Duties	Teaching = 416	3.55	.31	-.545	545	.586
	Non-Teaching = 131	3.57	.37			
Family Type	Nuclear = 304	4.02	1.03	-4.27	545	0.00*
	Joint = 243	4.28	.92			

* Significant at 0.05% level of significance

With respect to the demographic variable gender, it was revealed that there was no significant difference in the average employee engagement scores as perceived across males and females. Even in the case of marital

status and nature of duties sub groups, there were no significant differences between the respective groups. Further, the family type (joint or nuclear) indicates a significant impact on the average employee engagement scores.

Table 5.4: Significance of Educational Qualifications, Age, Experience in organization, location of work and caring responsibilities for Employee Engagement (ANOVA F-test Results)

Hypothesis	Total Sample	
	F value	P- value
Educational Qualification	18.22	.000*
Age	.50	.685
Experience in organization	5.98	.001*
Location of Work	1.44	.229
Caring responsibilities	13.776	.000*

* Significant at 0.05% level of significance

The findings across the age-groups and location of work also indicated insignificant differences in average employee engagement scores. However, with respect to the educational qualifications, experience in organization and caring responsibilities did indicate significant differences for the average employee engagement scores. Checking for differences in employee engagement scores across educational qualifications groups, the result revealed there were significant differences across the groups ($F_{(3, 543)} = 18.223$, $p = .000$). Similarly, the ANOVA results for differences in employee engagement scores among experience in organization categories for employees indicate significant difference across the groups ($F_{(3, 543)} = 5.98$, $p = .001$).

CONCLUSION

The study ascertains that trust, collaboration, openness, authenticity and confrontation emerge as significant predictors of employee engagement. Among the various demographic and organizational variables family type, educational qualification, caring responsibilities and experience in the organization emerge as significant variables that impact employee engagement among the employees of educational institutions in the study area.

STUDY IMPLICATIONS

The research emphasises the growing importance of employee engagement and addresses its determinants. The study furnishes evidence to suggest that there is a special need to direct effort on working environment in terms of building organizational trust and enhancing collaboration among team members so as to foster employee engagement. Also it highlights that the openness in the peer relationships can yield greater employee engagement. The study has a direct social implication because a healthy working atmosphere creates a social impact and has a direct bearing on employee engagement and builds a positive brand image. The evidence has shown that engaged employees are likely to stay longer with the organization. They also outperform their counterparts and are more productive than their colleagues. With the development and validation of the unique comprehensive model in the proposed settings this study is unique.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

The present study has examined the interrelationship between organizational commitment, employee engagement and different demographic and organizational variables. New models that incorporate more variables in the model adding to its complexity and meaning can be explored in future. The present study has examined the proposed relationships in the context of employees in educational institutions only; the same can be examined for other contextual settings as well across different type of respondents. Comparative analysis can also be made across the same variables across different type of educational institutions such as pure government institutions, government aided institutions and self-finance institutions.

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