

EXAMINING THE FACTORS AND EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT MODEL DESIGN FOR A NEW-AGE HYBRID WORK CULTURE

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Abstract: *The research studies available on the employee engagement models seem difficult to follow in the pandemic situation. Today, if your employee is loyal or actively engaged is difficult to analyse. In the current emerging industry, employee loyalty is important, since human talent is crucial to establishing market uniqueness and competitive advantage. A high degree of commitment among global and domestic companies fosters customer loyalty, promotes talent retention, and enhances organisational performance. Considering a relationship between employee engagement and productivity in this unprecedented situation, this study is focusing on the key drivers, which if provided to the employees will increase the engagement factor. In general, authors are considering eight factors to analyse the responses of the employees from across sectors. The factors are transparency in approach, continuous feedback, creating engaging activities, recognising employee victories, employee connect, encouraging team work/collaboration, focusing on everyday employee experience, and finally, strengthening the atmosphere of trust. This study is focusing on creating an engagement model which will prove helpful for the new-age hybrid offices.*

Keywords: *Employee Engagement, COVID-19, Engagement Model, Hybrid Environment, Employee Retention, Continuous Learning*

INTRODUCTION

“We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence then, is not an act, but a habit” – Aristotle

It is always said that employees are the biggest asset of any organisation, and the organisation should strive hard to retain its assets. To retain the employees of any organisation, one should try to engage them first. Engaged employees are productive assets. The willingness to be present, concentrated, and motivated are described as the criteria for engagement. What it does, though, is perhaps more intriguing. Engaged employees go above and beyond what is expected of them because they see themselves as part of something bigger. The purpose is the basis of engagement; it is the essential component that enables an engaging enterprise, and is the first step towards developing an engaged community. Further, Maslach and Leiter (1997) stated, “Engagement, as an opposite of burnout, is characterised by energy, involvement, and efficacy. Engaged employees have a sense of energetic and effective connection with

their work activities and they see themselves as able to deal completely with the demands of their job.” Rothbard (2001) explained employee engagement as the “psychological” presence including attention, or the cognitive availability of the employee spending time in thinking about a role and his intensity of focus on the role.

Employee participation entails more than just sports, games, and gatherings. Employee commitment is the driving force behind success. Employees who are engaged look at the whole organisation and consider their purpose, where they fit in, and how they fit in. As a result, better decisions are made. Organisations of committed employees outperform their competitors. They gain more per share and rebound faster from recessions and financial losses. When it comes to development and creativity, engagement is a crucial differentiator. An employee engagement survey is important for a better understanding of the organisation’s needs. This is not the same as a study of satisfaction. In addition, workforce priorities have changed. Mobile professional professions are much more traditional than “jobs for lifers”. Top talent retention is more complex than ever before. An

organisation with a strong employee participation plan and a highly motivated staff is more likely to retain top employees and recruit new talent. Organisations that are effective are value-driven and have employee-centric cultures.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Kumar (2021), in his research, has proposed a V-5 model of employee engagement during COVID-19 and post lockdown. The V5 model of worker engagement contains five important factors of worker engagement. These are: value, voice, variety, virtue, and vision. Where value and voice factors are mentioned in the context of the employees, the other three are mentioned in the context of the organisation. Each V element is a factor that is affected by related variables. Value refers to how employees are valued as an important asset to the organisation; their efforts, loyalty, and commitment are equally valued. Voice refers to the organisations' ability of giving opportunities to its employees, to raise their opinions for a better and higher degree of creativity and innovation. Variety states how the organisation designs the job role of the employees, so that they optimally use all their skills and ability, and challenges its employees by reducing psychological distress and raising engagement. Virtue refers to the organisations' virtue clusters, such as empathy, trust, justice, and harmony, which can create a more humane work atmosphere in which workers are more engaged. Lastly, vision refers to the clear and comprehensive organisational goals that are defined to achieve success; this also plays a role in engaging the employees. These five important factors affect employee engagement in any organisation, as per the researcher.

Purushothaman and Kaviya (2020) conducted a study to find the factors of engagement, levels of satisfaction, organisational inputs, and to identify measures for the enhancement of employee engagement. The findings of the study show the factors under employee engagement, such as working conditions, superior's support, organisational support, co-workers' support, rewards and recognition, and career growth. The study also emphasised on identifying the satisfaction level of employees, which leads to employee retention. Researchers gave a recommendation on how to motivate and retain the employees.

Yadav et al. (2020), in their research study, tried to understand the influence of the virtual workplace on employee engagement. They stated that working in the virtual environment has reduced the level of employee interaction, expression, and development. Working from home does not feel like the actual office environment, which is making it difficult for employees to adjust. New employees find it difficult to bond with their team members as there is

no physical interaction. On the other hand, productivity has increased, as the travelling time is saved, which is utilised for other activities. The paper also found that employee engagement in a virtual environment is highly influenced by the employee's family equation. Employees who live with their family find the virtual environment more engaging as they get more time to spend with their family members; however, employees who are unmarried or are living away from their families find it difficult and monotonous to work in a virtual environment. The study also stated that the percent of learning and development has also increased, as companies started providing learning courses for their employees in virtual spaces. The ways of recognising the employees have also changed, as companies cannot have a physical set-up for such celebrations or achievement events; everything is virtual.

Kaushik and Guleria (2020) conducted a study about employee relations and engagement, which have been affected by COVID-19. The research paper stated that to maintain a healthy employee relationship, the company should strive hard to reduce the communication gap and avoid any misunderstandings. The organisation should take the help of the latest technologies, as face-to-face communication is only possible through the virtual medium. In a virtual workspace, it is important to maintain the employee's morale, as it will directly affect productivity. Managers should try to boost the morale of their teammates. High morale will lead to employee engagement. Team coordination is something that is affected the most in a virtual workspace; managers and and teammates should have regular interactions. The researchers highlighted the importance of sharing views and opinions, for any decision-making, by all the teammates, as this will promote the feeling of belongingness among all the employees.

The research study by Rawat and Dadas discussed Aon Hewitt's engagement model. The study says that Aon Hewitt is the leading consultant firm for human capital. The employee engagement model of Aon Hewitt is divided into six major engagement drivers. These drivers are stated as the major action areas over which which the company has its control. The drivers are summarised as follows:

- The work an employee does
- The organisation/brand an employee works for
- The benefits he gets by working for that brand
- The superiors an employee has
- The practices which the company follows/Company culture
- The quality of work life that is fulfilled

According to Aon Hewitt, employee engagement is defined by three factors, including the degree to which employees:

Say – Talk favourably about the company to co-workers, prospective staff, and clients.

Stay – Have a strong sense of identity and a strong desire to be a member of the organisation.

Strive – Are inspired and put in effort to achieve results at work and with the business.

Employees must be actively involved in all three of these areas.

The research paper of Mohanthy and Choudhury (2018) talks about the Zinger model of employee engagement. David Zinger, a management consultant based in Canada, inspired the development of this concept. He sheds light on different aspects of employee commitment, loyalty, and interest in this model. This model proposes 12 distinct factors for increasing employee participation. The proposed drivers are as follows: (1) Achieve success by careful planning and execution, (2) Craft strategies that consider both individual and organisational needs, (3) Enliven roles by eliminating the boredom element from the job, (4) Excel at work by encouraging hard work, which builds employee self-esteem, (5) Connect with the company as well as the employee, (6) Be authentic by responding genuinely when answering an employee's issue and doing justice, (7) Live appreciation, (8) Producing truly committed workers with a strong mentality that employees are their greatest assets, (9) Serving consumers by practicing culture and tradition, (10) Personal development through capability enhancement where needed, and (11) Achieving satisfaction through productive workers.

According to the Gallup organisation, there are three specific types of engagement: deliberately disengaged, engaged, and not engaged. Employees who are deliberately disengaged are those who are constantly disappointed and disperse their discontent around the company. They are the epicentre of the problems, spreading derogatory remarks that can affect the motivation level of other workers. However, these types of employees do not leave the company, remain for a longer period, and try to advance in their careers by eliminating other perceived rivals. The second kind of employees are known as engaged employees, and they can be characterised by terms such as creativity, zeal, and commitment. Not engaged are the third type. They are fifty percent present in organisations. They are only instruction followers, do only what is asked to be done, and are not proactive.

RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

Most nations are under lockdown due to the COVID-19 outbreak. As a result of this challenging situation, most companies have adopted work-from-home policies. In these tough times, a work-from-home regime can be difficult for businesses and individuals. Considering this issue, businesses need to engage their employees in more nuanced ways using a variety of employee engagement techniques. This research study will determine an employee engagement model specifically designed for hybrid and virtual work structures, so that the organisations are able to engage their employees and retain their talent for a longer duration, even in the pandemic period.

GAP IN LITERATURE REVIEW

The previous studies undertaken by the researchers focused more on the employee engagement problems arising out of the work-from-home environment. Some professionals also stated the factors affecting employee engagement in a physical environment, and various models of employee engagement that work well if implemented in the physical workspace.

In this paper, authors are trying to analyse if the factors, i.e., culture, transparency, employee recognition, trained leadership, employee connect, reinventing appraisal system, and feeling of security, are followed by the organisations it will boost their employee engagement level. They are also analysing the interrelationship between these factors and proposing a new employee engagement model which can be followed if the organisations are continuing to work in a hybrid as well as a physical environment. The authors are also focusing on the engagement outcome which the company will have if the proposed model is implemented.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the study are as follows:

- To analyse how companies are handling employee engagement in a work-from-home environment.
- To understand whether the existing employee engagement models are efficient to handle a hybrid, as well as physical environment, and proposing a new model for the same.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

Hypotheses of the study are as follows:

Hypothesis 1

H0 – There is no significant relation between the organisations being positive and realistic in providing information, and sustaining the culture in an unprecedented situation.

H1 – There is a significant relation between the organisations being positive and realistic in providing information, and sustaining the culture in an unprecedented situation.

Hypothesis 2

H0 – There is no significant relation between your managers listening to your views before giving feedback and you approaching your managers without hesitation.

H1 – There is a significant relation between your managers listening to your views before giving feedback and you approaching your managers without hesitation.

Hypothesis 3

H0 – There is no significant relation between the organisations taking feedback from its employees to address concerns and the organisations trying to sustain its core culture in unprecedented times.

H1 – There is a significant relation between the organisations taking feedback from its employees to address concerns and the organisations trying to sustain its core culture in unprecedented times.

Hypothesis 4

H0 – There is no significant relation between the employees getting constructive feedback from managers and the managers recognising employees' achievements/victories.

H1 – There is a significant relation between the employees getting constructive feedback from managers and the managers recognising employees' achievements/victories.

Hypothesis 5

H0 – There is no significant relation between the employees feeling highly connected to their teams and having the right number of virtual contacts with their colleagues on a daily or weekly basis.

H1 – There is a significant relation between the employees feeling highly connected to their teams and having the right

number of virtual contacts with their colleagues on a daily or weekly basis.

Hypothesis 6

H0 – There is no significant relation between the managers being inclusive and respectful towards employees' opinions and the company trying to sustain its core culture in an unprecedented situation.

H1 – There is a significant relation between the managers being inclusive and respectful towards employees' opinions and the company trying to sustain its core culture in an unprecedented situation.

Hypothesis 7

H0 – There is no significant relation between the employees' trust on the appraisal system for performance evaluation and the managers' recognition on achievement and victories.

H1 – There is a significant relation between employees' trust on the appraisal system for performance evaluation and the managers' recognition on achievement and victories.

Hypothesis 8

H0 – There is no significant relation between the employees' faith in the company's decision-making for employee well-being and employees feeling secure in the organisations.

H1 – There is a significant relation between the employees' faith in the company's decision-making for employee well-being and employees feeling secure in the organisations.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY**Sources of Data**

The data collection for the research is done with the help of both primary and secondary sources.

Primary – The data for this research study is primarily collected from the employees working from home, as well as those who have an experience of working in a hybrid work environment during the pandemic period.

Secondary – The data collected from the journals and websites that state the recent studies on employee engagement during the pandemic period is used as a reference in this study.

Sample Technique, Sample Size, and Development of Instruments

The purpose of the present study is focused more on the employee engagement models that best suit the physical working environment and how companies are dealing with employee engagement in work-from-home or a hybrid work structure. There are no such studies that will provide a model specifically for the hybrid work structure. So, in this research study, we are proposing a model that will suit the hybrid work structure.

Researchers adopted random sampling method for data collection. A Likert scale-based questionnaire was designed by the researchers and the same was pilot tested on a few employees. Based on the reviews of the pilot testing, a few enhancements in the questionnaire were made and the same questionnaire was distributed among 120 employees, out of which 101 responses were received.

Proper attention has been given to the selection of the sample population. The questionnaire was distributed to the employees across varied industries, who are working in a hybrid work structure. The IT industry was our focus, as during the pandemic this was the industry that shifted almost 90% of its employees to a virtual setup; this was also the industry which was affected by a greater number of resignations.

Research Design

The research design adapted in this study is exploratory in nature.

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Descriptive Statistics

The demography of the responses is based on all genders, wherein 48.5% respondents are female and the remaining 51.5% are male; age group ranges from 22 to 60 years. Researchers gathered responses from employees who have

work experience ranging from one month to 23 years. The highest designation recorded is of a general manager and the lowest is of an intern. A total of 101 responses were recorded; 67% of the responses are from the IT sectors and the remaining 33% are from sectors such as education, retail, and other service industries where employees were working in a virtual environment.

Tools Used for Analysis

The analysis of the data is done with the help of SPSS software. SPSS stands for Statistical Package for Social Sciences and is used by various researchers to analyse complex statistical data. The SPSS software package is created for the management and statistical analysis of social science data. It was first released by SPSS Inc. in 1968 and was acquired by IBM in 2009.

SPSS is useful for both qualitative and quantitative data. Both data sets have the same values. About 85% of research scientists use quantitative data for further analysis, so non-specialists find SPSS software more useful for quantitative data than qualitative data. There are several quantitative data analysis software on the market, but SPSS is preferred over others.

Reliability and Normality Test

Cronbach's Alpha – Test for Reliability

Cronbach's alpha is the most used metric of internal consistency ('reliability').

Table 1: Reliability Statistics

Reliability Statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha based on Standardised Items	N of Items
.932	.935	17

Cronbach's alpha should be $\geq .70$ to prove that the data collected from the survey is reliable; here, from our data, we can see that the reliability value is 0.935, which indicates a high level of internal consistency for our scale.

Table 2: Inter-Item Correlation Matrix

Inter-Item Correlation Matrix																	
	1 Transparent Information	2 Positive Approach	3 Sustain Culture	4 Manager Listen Views	5 Regular Feedback	6 Open Door Policy	7 Value For Your Feedback	8 Virtual Fun Work	9 Recognize Your Efforts	10 Recognize Team Efforts	11 Productivity Tools	12 Connection With Team	13 Frequent Virtual Team Meet	14 Inclusive Managers	15 Trust Appraisal Process	16 Faith In Company Decision	17 Feel Secure In Org
1 Transparent Information	1.000	0.776	0.505	0.343	0.523	0.263	0.349	0.394	0.419	0.381	0.475	0.379	0.346	0.541	0.447	0.470	0.441
2 Positive Approach	0.776	1.000	0.591	0.370	0.555	0.272	0.444	0.386	0.420	0.431	0.362	0.380	0.344	0.530	0.413	0.471	0.471
3 Sustain Culture	0.505	0.591	1.000	0.432	0.490	0.466	0.455	0.392	0.435	0.492	0.291	0.368	0.299	0.418	0.409	0.520	0.534
4 Manager Listen Views	0.343	0.370	0.432	1.000	0.687	0.600	0.291	0.342	0.609	0.397	0.351	0.371	0.450	0.623	0.375	0.453	0.552
5 Regular Feedback	0.523	0.555	0.490	0.687	1.000	0.540	0.429	0.400	0.663	0.490	0.317	0.422	0.490	0.570	0.527	0.516	0.464
6 Open Door Policy	0.263	0.272	0.466	0.600	0.540	1.000	0.311	0.351	0.543	0.386	0.334	0.372	0.419	0.492	0.346	0.395	0.506
7 Value For Your Feedback	0.349	0.444	0.455	0.291	0.429	0.311	1.000	0.443	0.507	0.598	0.340	0.405	0.372	0.470	0.407	0.496	0.522
8 Virtual Fun Work	0.394	0.386	0.392	0.342	0.400	0.351	0.443	1.000	0.443	0.428	0.404	0.292	0.317	0.405	0.387	0.472	0.583
9 Recognize Your Efforts	0.419	0.420	0.435	0.609	0.663	0.543	0.507	0.443	1.000	0.681	0.318	0.369	0.456	0.549	0.591	0.617	0.632
10 Recognize Team Efforts	0.381	0.431	0.492	0.397	0.490	0.386	0.598	0.428	0.681	1.000	0.382	0.483	0.499	0.399	0.460	0.514	0.547
11 Productivity Tools	0.475	0.362	0.291	0.351	0.317	0.334	0.340	0.404	0.318	0.382	1.000	0.501	0.431	0.475	0.300	0.325	0.405
12 Connection With Team	0.379	0.380	0.368	0.371	0.422	0.372	0.405	0.292	0.369	0.483	0.501	1.000	0.739	0.456	0.412	0.454	0.341
13 Frequent Virtual Team Meet	0.346	0.344	0.299	0.450	0.490	0.419	0.372	0.317	0.456	0.499	0.431	0.739	1.000	0.495	0.403	0.528	0.399
14 Inclusive Managers	0.541	0.530	0.418	0.623	0.570	0.492	0.470	0.405	0.549	0.399	0.475	0.456	0.495	1.000	0.402	0.531	0.591
15 Trust Appraisal Process	0.447	0.413	0.409	0.375	0.527	0.346	0.407	0.387	0.591	0.460	0.300	0.412	0.403	0.402	1.000	0.803	0.607
16 Faith In Company Decision	0.470	0.471	0.520	0.453	0.516	0.395	0.496	0.472	0.617	0.514	0.325	0.454	0.528	0.531	0.803	1.000	0.801
17 Feel Secure In Org	0.441	0.471	0.534	0.552	0.464	0.506	0.522	0.583	0.632	0.547	0.405	0.341	0.399	0.591	0.607	0.801	1.000

The inter-item correlation matrix shows the correlation between each of the Likert-scale questions and with itself. The positive values for each scale indicate that the data is positively correlated, and the responses have a positive correlation with each other. The larger the value and the closer to 1.000, the stronger the correlation. The items which have a perfect correlation, i.e., 1.000, are the ones which are correlated with itself and are supposed to be ignored.

Test of Normality

Most parametric tests are reliable and it is assumed that the data are approximately normally distributed (normative distribution). As the name suggests, a normal distribution has its highest points in its middle and symmetry about the mean. For tests to be reliable, the data does not have to be dispersed in a totally typical way.

Table 3: Inter-Test of Normality

Tests of Normality						
	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	Df	Sig.	Statistic	Df	Sig.
Transparency Approach	.246	101	.000	.838	101	.000
Core Values	.253	101	.000	.800	101	.000
Continuous Feedback	.126	101	.000	.941	101	.000
Engaging Activities	.197	101	.000	.892	101	.000
Recognise Employees	.129	101	.000	.916	101	.000

	Tests of Normality					
	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	Df	Sig.	Statistic	Df	Sig.
Appropriate Tools	.254	101	.000	.818	101	.000
Team Work	.190	101	.000	.883	101	.000
Everyday Experience	.243	101	.000	.846	101	.000
Trust Atmosphere	.153	101	.000	.921	101	.000

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Two well-known tests of normality are included in Table 3, namely the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and the Shapiro-Wilk test. Small samples (50 samples) are better suited to the Shapiro-Wilk test; however, it can also be applied for up to 2,000 samples. We have taken the Shapiro-Wilk test as our numerical method for determining normality.

Here, we can conclude that our data is not normally distributed; the same is indicated by the Sig values for each parameter. The Sig value should be $\geq .050$ to prove that the data is normally distributed; however, we can see here in the Shapiro-Wilk model that each item is $< .050$, which means our data is not normally distributed. Hence, researchers used non-parametric tests to prove the hypotheses.

As we can see that the data is not normally distributed, Spearman's Rank Correlation is used. Spearman correlation is a non-parametric measure of rank correlation (a statistical relationship between the ranks of two variables). It evaluates how well a monotonic function can describe the relationship between two variables.

For the above reason, researchers have used Spearman's Rank Correlation to test the correlation between the null and the alternate hypothesis.

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis 1

H0 – There is no significant relation between the organisation being positive and realistic in providing information, and sustaining the culture in an unprecedented situation.

H1 – There is a significant relation between the organisation being positive and realistic in providing information, and sustaining the culture in an unprecedented situation.

Table 4: Spearman's Correlation for Hypothesis 1

Correlations				
			2 Positive Approach	3 Sustain Culture
Spearman's rho	2 Positive Approach	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.592**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	101	101
	3 Sustain Culture	Correlation Coefficient	.592**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	101	101

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

The Sig. (2-Tailed) value in Table 4 is 0.000. Thus, we can conclude that there is a statistically significant correlation between the organisation being positive and realistic in providing information, and sustaining the culture in an unprecedented situation. The correlation value, i.e., 0.592, states that there is a positive correlation between the two factors. We accept the alternate hypothesis.

Hypothesis 2

H0 – There is no significant relation between your managers listening to your views before giving feedback and you approaching your managers without hesitation.

H1 – There is a significant relation between your managers listening to your views before giving feedback and you approaching your managers without hesitation.

Table 5: Spearman's Correlation for Hypothesis 2

Correlations				
			4 Manager Listens to Views	6 Open-Door Policy
Spearman's rho	4 Manager Listens to Views	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.603**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	101	101
	6 Open-Door Policy	Correlation Coefficient	.603**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	101	101

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

The Sig. (2-Tailed) value in Table 5 is 0.000. Thus, we can conclude that there is a statistically significant positive correlation, i.e., 0.603, between managers listening to your views before giving feedback and you approaching your managers without hesitation. We accept the alternate hypothesis.

Hypothesis 3

H0 – There is no significant relation between the organisation taking feedback from its employees to address concerns and the organisation trying to sustain its core culture in unprecedented times.

H1 – There is a significant relation between the organisation taking feedback from its employees to address concerns and the organisation trying to sustain its core culture in unprecedented times.

Table 6: Spearman's Correlation for Hypothesis 3

Correlations				
			7 Value for Your Feedback	3 Sustain Culture
Spearman's rho	7 Value for Your Feedback	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.465**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	101	101
	3 Sustain Culture	Correlation Coefficient	.465**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	101	101

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

The Sig. (2-Tailed) value in Table 6 is 0.000. Thus, we can conclude that there is a statistically significant correlation between the organisation taking feedback from its employees to address concerns and the organisation trying to sustain its core culture in unprecedented times; however, a score of 0.465 indicates that this correlation is weak. Therefore, we accept the alternate hypothesis.

Hypothesis 4

H0 – There is no significant relation between employees getting constructive feedback from managers and managers recognising employees’ achievements/victories.

H1 – There is a significant relation between employees getting constructive feedback from managers and managers recognising employees’ achievements/victories.

Table 7: Spearman’s Correlation for Hypothesis 4

Correlations				
			5 Regular Feedback	9 Recognise Your Efforts
Spearman’s rho	5 Regular Feedback	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.631**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	101	101
	9 Recognise Your Efforts	Correlation Coefficient	.631**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	101	101

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

The Sig. (2-Tailed) value in Table 7 is 0.000. Here, we can see a strong positive correlation with the value of 0.631. Therefore, we can conclude that there is a statistically significant correlation between employees getting constructive feedback from managers and managers recognising employees’ achievements/victories. We accept the alternate hypothesis.

Hypothesis 5

H0 – There is no significant relation between the employees feeling highly connected to their team and having the right amount of virtual contact with their colleagues on a daily or weekly basis.

H1 – There is a significant relation between the employees feeling highly connected to their team and having the right amount of virtual contact with their colleagues on a daily or weekly basis.

Table 8: Spearman’s Correlation for Hypothesis 5

Correlations				
			12 Connection with Team	13 Frequent Virtual Team Meet
Spearman’s rho	12 Connection with Team	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.715**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	101	101
	13 Frequent Virtual Team Meet	Correlation Coefficient	.715**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	101	101

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

The Sig. (2-Tailed) value in Table 8 is 0.000. The value 0.715 shows that the correlation between the two factors is highly positive. Thus, we can conclude that there is a statistically significant correlation between the employees feeling highly connected to their team and having the right amount of virtual contact with their colleagues on a daily or weekly basis. We accept the alternate hypothesis.

Hypothesis 6

H0 – There is no significant relation between managers being inclusive and respectful towards employees’ opinions, and the company trying to sustain its core culture in an unprecedented situation.

H1 – There is a significant relation between managers being inclusive and respectful towards employees’ opinions, and the company trying to sustain its core culture in an unprecedented situation.

Table 9: Spearman’s Correlation for Hypothesis 6

Correlations				
			14 Inclusive Managers	3 Sustain Culture
Spearman’s rho	14 Inclusive Managers	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.379**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	101	101
	3 Sustain Culture	Correlation Coefficient	.379**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	101	101

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

The Sig. (2-Tailed) value in Table 9 is 0.000. Thus, we can conclude that there is a statistically significant correlation between managers being inclusive and respectful towards employees' opinions, and the company trying to sustain its core culture in an unprecedented situation. The value of 0.379 indicates a weak positive correlation between the two factors. We accept the alternate hypothesis.

Hypothesis 7

H0 – There is no significant relation between the employees' trust on the appraisal system for performance evaluation and the managers' recognition on achievement and victories.

H1 – There is a significant relation between the employees' trust on the appraisal system for performance evaluation and the managers' recognition on achievement and victories.

Table 10: Spearman's Correlation for Hypothesis 7

Correlations				
			15 Trust Appraisal Process	9 Recognise Your Efforts
Spearman's rho	15 Trust Appraisal Process	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.561**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	101	101
	9 Recognise Your Efforts	Correlation Coefficient	.561**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	101	101
**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).				

The Sig. (2-Tailed) value in Table 10 is 0.000 and the correlation coefficient score of 0.561 indicates that there is a positive correlation between the two factors. Thus, we can conclude that there is a statistically significant correlation between the employees' trust on the appraisal system for performance evaluation and the managers' recognition on achievement and victories. We accept the alternate hypothesis.

Hypothesis 8

H0 – There is no significant relation between the employees' faith in the company's decision-making for employee well-being and the employee feeling secure in the organisation.

H1 – There is a significant relation between the employees' faith in the company's decision-making for employee

well-being and the employee feeling secure in the organisation.

Table 11: Spearman's Correlation for Hypothesis 8

Correlations				
			16 Faith in Company Decision	17 Feel Secure in Org.
Spearman's rho	16 Faith in Company Decision	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.765**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	101	101
	17 Feel Secure in Org.	Correlation Coefficient	.765**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	101	101
**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).				

The Sig. (2-Tailed) value in Table 11 is 0.000; the score of 0.765 indicates a highly positive correlation between the factors. Thus, we can conclude that there is a statistically significant correlation between the employees' faith in the company's decision-making for employee well-being and the employee feeling secure in the organisation. We accept the alternate hypothesis.

THE EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT MODEL

Engaging employees who also stay loyal to the company in the long run is a difficult task to handle. There are various factors that are responsible for making an employee engaged in the workplace. In the physical workspace, the definition of these factors were different, and now, where the industries are shifting towards a hybrid work space, there is an alarming need to redefine the factors that will make the employee actively engaged.

The proposed model of employee engagement will be suitable for both hybrid work spaces, as well as the normal physical work environment. The research stated how various engagement factors are interrelated with each other, and have a positive correlation as well. The model is focusing on the following engagement factors: 1) culture, 2) transparency, 3) employee recognition, 4) trained leadership, 5) employee connect, 6) reinventing the appraisal system, and 7) feeling of security. The aim of this model is to improve engagement; the derived possible outcomes of engagement are: 1) higher productivity, 2) defined engagement, 3) change in employee attitude, 4) improvement in company image, and 5) satisfaction through experience.

The model simply defines that once the engagement drivers are served accurately, it will derive the desired outcomes for the company and will start establishing engagement among the employees.

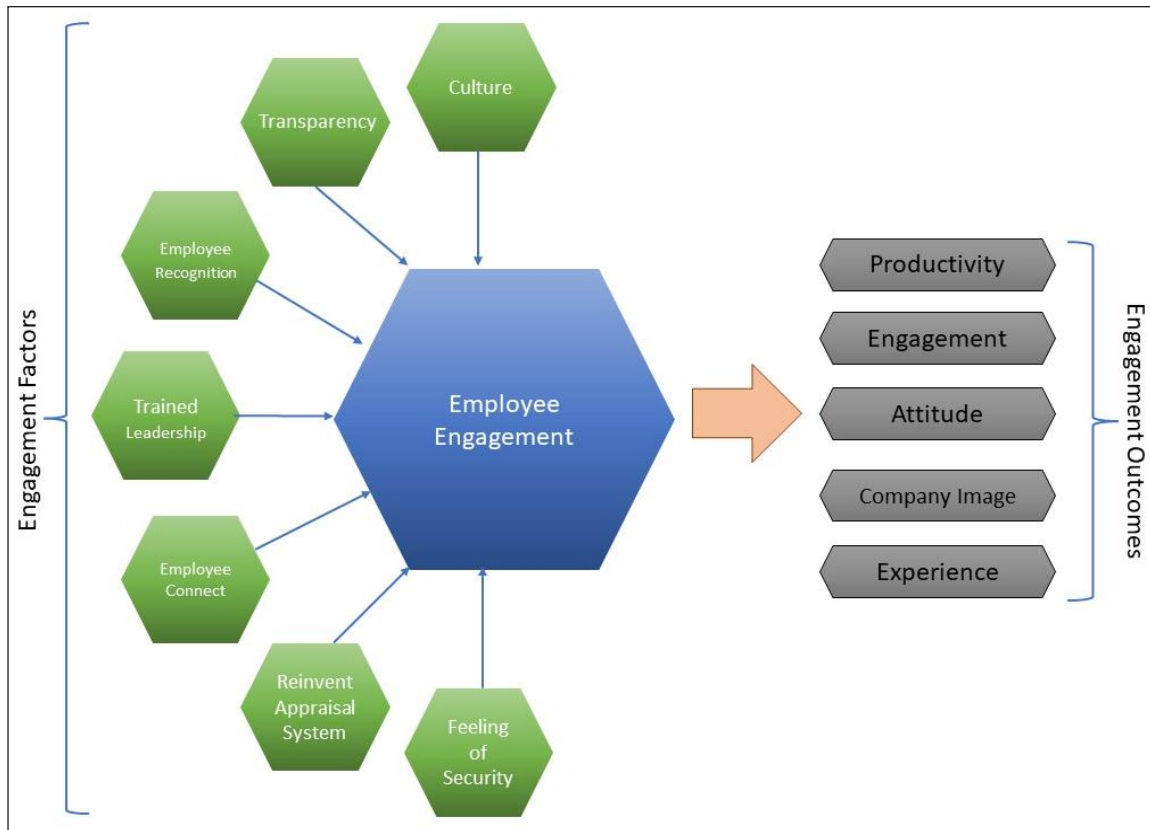


Fig. 1: Proposed Employee Engagement Model

ENGAGEMENT DRIVERS

Sustain Core Culture: Culture represents the strong belief on which a company stands. It is the company's culture that plays a major role in employee retention. Company culture is something that is to be sustained under any circumstances, may it be a pandemic or any economic crisis. The best way to sustain culture is to communicate and bring it into practice in day-to-day activities. A few things companies can follow to sustain their culture, even in a hybrid workspace are as follows.

- Make sure the employees are aware and follow the mission and vision of the company.
- Company should make sure that all the employees share and serve for the same purpose.
- “We care for you” approach should be practiced by the company.
- Introduce new technology that will help employees work effectively.
- Empower the employees with the required authorities; they should be given accountability for their work.

Transparency: Whether in a hybrid work environment or a physical workspace, the company should be transparent while communicating with its employees. When employees are working from home, the main thing that keeps them updated about the happenings in the company are the mailers, the company website, or the daily calls. Management should make sure that the employees are delivered the updates taking place in the company through these portals. Furthermore, just having transparency of information is not enough; companies should maintain a positive approach while delivering any unpleasant information. In this way the facts will also get delivered to the employees without hurting anyone's sentiments.

Employee Recognition: Acknowledging employees for their efforts will boost their morale. In a physical working structure, it was always possible to recognise employees in front of their peers, with various awards for their outstanding performance. However, when it comes to the hybrid or work-from-home environment, this process becomes difficult. The company can use the following ways to recognise its employees in a hybrid workspace.

Make use of digital recognition platforms, which will act as a bridging gap between the employees working on site and the employees working from home; this will help employees

in recognising their co-workers irrespective of their location.

Introduce peer-to-peer recognition programmes, where every employee will recognise their teammates for their work.

Recognise your hard-working employees with paid vacation once a year; this can act as a perk and will also ensure employee well-being.

Make sure you recognise your employees in monetary terms as well. Giving coupons or extraordinary performance bonuses will encourage company employees.

Trained Leadership: In a changing industry, the companies should hire dynamic employees who are skilled in modern technologies; similarly, the C-suits of the organisation should also be trained for the changing industry needs. The C-suits and the managers play a major role in establishing team dynamics and these are the employees who should reflect the company culture the most with their behaviour. The following are the ways leaders in the organisation can develop an open culture.

- Make sure you reflect inclusivity with your team and treat every member equally.
- Make sure the ideas of each employee are heard.
- Conduct conflict resolution without any biases.
- Try to develop an open-door policy with the team and the organisation as well.
- Hire people with diverse needs, not just people with diverse demographics.
- Make sure your employees feel valued.

Employee Connect: When workers operate in a hybrid or work-from-home environment, they are solely connected to their team members on a virtual basis; however, in a physical environment, employees may build informal bonds with one another during coffee breaks, lunch breaks, snack time, and so on. To maintain this informal bond even in hybrid work setups, managers can insist on having a team bonding meeting with employees. Companies can make the optimum use of technology to make sure that the employees are connected formally and informally with each other.

Reinvent Appraisal System: In a hybrid setup, the employees do not interact with their managers; neither do the managers get to know how efficiently every member of the team is performing. In such cases, the company needs to find new ways to manage and analyse employee performance for fair appraisal. The following are some ways companies can analyse employee performance.

Focus on the quality of work that is delivered, not when and how it was delivered.

For team deliverables, focus on what work is done by whom.

Use tools such as ‘Rally’ for daily work tracking of your team members.

Assign tasks with time frames.

Setup status calls to understand the pace.

Lastly, introduce a four-point rating scale in the appraisal system, where no employee can be rated as an average employee. In this way, employees who are not achieving their targets can be identified easily.

Feeling of Security: Employees who feel emotionally protected are more likely to speak up and communicate openly. They are not held back by the worry that expressing their opinions may expose them to criticism. Many organisations rely heavily on innovation and creativity, but when employees feel unable to openly share their thoughts and ideas, the organisations suffer tremendously. Employees who feel emotionally comfortable, especially around leaders, are more inclined to innovate and offer organisational improvements. The following are a few ways companies can make sure that their employees feel secure in the organisation.

- Ability to work remotely as per individual preferences.
- Flexibility in working hours.
- Reduced working hours.
- 4-day work week.
- Healthcare plans for employees and their families.
- Family engagement policies.

All the above stated factors are interrelated to each other. If the company strives to sustain the culture it will automatically strive to maintain transparency in providing information to its employees, and will also make sure that each employee is connected even in a virtual work setup. If the leadership is trained, they will make sure that their employees are recognised fairly and their appraisal system is as per the changing trends. All these factors will ultimately lead to employees feeling secure in the organisation, resulting in employee engagement.

ENGAGEMENT OUTCOME

With all the engagement drivers in place, the proposed model may have the following possible outcomes:

- *Productivity:* Engaged employees are productive employees. Employees will strive hard to achieve the as-

signed targets in the given time, resulting in improved productivity.

- *Engagement*: Like the other engagement model, the proposed model will also show that the employees are actively engaged, disengaged, or deliberately disengaged.
- *Attitude*: The attitude of an employee directly affects their action. Employees who are engaged are more likely to not only complete their tasks, but also exhibit organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB).
- *Company Image*: Engaged employees will result in achieving targets and building a better company image.
- *Experience*: An organisation that values its people and prioritises employee engagement will ensure that their employees have a positive working experience.

The model states that the engagement outcome is the dependent variable and the engagement factors are the independent variables. However, the relationship between these variables is not defined in this model. The researchers propose this gap as a reference for an elaborative future study.

FUTURE SCOPE

The employee engagement model for both hybrid and physical workspaces is described in the study report. A future study could be conducted to examine how organisations attempt to maintain these engagement practises if the organisation totally transitions to a virtual workplace. Follow-up research may be conducted to examine how various employees react to these engagement factors and what the engagement outcomes are. Researchers can also create a model customised to a specific sector. A comprehensive examination of how different engagement drivers and engagement outcomes are related to one another and if they have a direct or inverse relationship may be conducted.

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