

Passion or Occupation: An Empirical Study on Engagement and Commitment of Teachers towards Teaching and Occupation in General

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Abstract:

Purpose: This study plays a very impressive role in bridging the gap between theory and practice by providing the management of academic institutions, important inputs that can be used to bring about newer and better working models and develop a more positive work culture to channelize the goals and objectives of the employees in line with the organizational goals and make a beginning to a new era of knowledge, experiences and values that would elevate the individual as well as societal well-being.

Approach: The technique of stratified random sampling is taken. This study makes use of chi-square tests for establishing the correlation between the factors.

Findings: It is evident from the study that there does exist notable correlation between age and the engagement of the individual towards their work, which, act as an input for conclusive decisions for right mix of employees in the organization whereas gender has no bearing towards employee engagement. On the other hand, personal factors like marital status and professional experience exhibit notable contribution to the teaching commitment as well as occupational commitment.

Originality: This study tries to bring about the nature of relationships between personal profile, engagement of the employees and their commitment towards teaching as well as that towards the occupation in general.

Keywords: Employee engagement, teaching commitment, occupational commitment, stress management.

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Paper Type: Empirical

Introduction

Employee engagement and commitment: Engagement and commitment are the words doing rounds in organizational behavior context and call for a great deal of thought and investigation both individually as well as taking a holistic approach in combining them to achieve organizational effectiveness by elevating individual motivation and morale.

Engagement: Engagement of the employees is something that is calling for attention in almost all the sectors in all the economies. Lot of studies have been conducted in this direction, and all of them assert that engagement is the physical, mental, psychological and emotional internalization of an employee towards the objectives of the organization that drives him to work with zeal to achieve the individual as well as organizational objectives. According to Agarwal and Bharagava (2013), it is such engaged and committed workforce that lead to the survival and growth of the organizations in the modern competitive environment. Such organizations ultimately cater to the needs of the customers in better way and turn out to be more productive thus leading to profit maximization (Harter *et al.*, 2003).

In the recent times, where we talk of knowledge-based organization and there is a transnational culture leading to diversity and ever increasing competitiveness, it the engaged workforce that act as an advantage to the firm over its competitors (Schwartz, 2010). Though there is no universally accepted definition of engagement but most of the studies indicate the fact that engagement is the cognitive, emotional and behavioral dimensions of the employee towards the achievement of the organizational goals effectively and efficiently (Shuck and Wollard, 2010). The practitioner's definition of engagement, indicate that engaged employees contribute more towards the organization in terms of time as well as group cohesiveness (Dell, 2006). Similarly, engaged employees exhibit a sense of relatedness towards their job as well as their workplace and have a strong urge to stand by the organization (Civil Service, 2008).

The academic definition of engagement, states that engagement is the yardstick with which we measure the link of the individual towards his organization (Sarkar, 2011). Employee engagement is a psychological and behavioral state of self fulfilment and dedication towards ones' job (Schaufeli and Leiter, 2001; Hallberg and Schaufeli, 2006).

Commitment: The roots to research in commitment scales down to the era of 60s where commitment was measured in terms of loyalty towards the organization and was described as affective commitment (Kaur and Sharma, 2015). Later studies tried to understand its behavioural aspects as well (Clercq and Rius, 2007). According to Abidin *et al.*, (2010), whenever this commitment towards the organization is missing among the people in the organization. Of late there has been numerous studies on employee commitment, the reason being the fact that employees are the most important assets of the organization and are responsible not only for the survival of the organization but also for its future growth and development (Brayfield, 1968; Julius, 2000).

Moreover, the studies off Li *et al.*, (2012) found that the employee's commitment towards his organization leads to better employer-employee relationship based on mutual trust. Allen and Myer (1990) were the pioneers to talk about the three dimensions of commitment-Affective Commitment, Continuance Commitment and Normative Commitment.

The present study tries to understand commitment from two dimensions namely-commitment towards teaching and commitment towards occupation. The area of study is educational institutions in and around Greater Hyderabad City. The academic set up is taken for the study because though lot of research has been done in the field of commitment and engagement, still there is a dearth of research in the field of academics. According to Garrison, Liston, 2004, it is only those people who relate themselves to this teaching occupation have a sense of internalization towards teaching. Such passionate teachers spend a lot of time in value addition to their existing knowledge, continuously scan the internal and

external environment for changes and are empathetic towards the students and their queries and concerns that raise in due course of their interaction with the external world (Fried, 2003).

Study Hypothesis

H1: There is no significant association between personal characteristics and employee engagement and commitment

H2: There is no significant association between employee engagement and teaching commitment

H3: There is no significant association between employee engagement and occupational commitment.

Design

Participants: A structured questionnaire was administered to 150 teachers of different educational institutions in and around Greater Hyderabad City out of which 8 were rejected due to incomplete responses or inconsistent responses. Part A of the questionnaire had personal profile and the second part assessed employee engagement whereas the third part was designed in such a way so as to assess the commitment towards teaching and that towards the occupation

Results

Personal characteristics, engagement and commitment (hypothesis results)

Table 1

S. No	Variables	Chi-square	Df	P=
1	Age Group Vs. Teacher Engagement	14.11	4	<0.05
2	Age Group Vs. Teaching Commitment	13.69	4	<0.05
3	Age Group Vs. Occupational Commitment	27.53	4	<0.05
4	Gender Vs. Teacher Engagement group	4.07	2	>0.05
5	Gender Vs. Teaching Commitment	4.04	2	>0.05
6	Gender Vs. Occupational Commitment	1.44	2	>0.05
7	Marital Status Vs. Teacher Engagement group	3.69	2	>0.05
8	Marital Status Vs. Teaching Commitment	18.36	2	<0.05
9	Marital Status Vs. Occupational Commitment	37.46	2	<0.05
10	Experience in present job Vs. Teacher Engagement	18.03	4	<0.05
11	Experience in present job Vs. Teaching Commitment	10.87	4	<0.05
12	Experience in present job Vs. Occupational Commitment	13.19	4	<0.05
13	Experience in previous job Vs. Teacher Engagement Group	3.48	4	>0.05
14	Experience in previous job Vs. Teaching Commitment	11.39	4	<0.05
15	Experience in previous job Vs. Occupational Commitment	15.05	4	<0.05

Table I A. Engagement and Commitment -Hypothesis Results

1	Teacher engagement Vs. Teaching commitment	7.74	4	>0.05
2	Teacher Engagement Vs. Occupational Commitment	13.46	4	<0.05

Discussion

As is evident from the above table, there is significant association between age and teacher engagement (Chi-square=14.11, df=4, $P<0.05$). This is consistent with the studies conducted by Robinson *et al.*, (2004). The employer should employ a judicious mix of people of all age group in the organization so that there can be optimum utilization of experience which the senior members have as well as new and up-to-date skills, new thought processes, more technology enabled methodology that the young people have for the effective realization of the organizational goals. Similarly, there is a significant association between age group and commitment towards teaching (Chi-square=13.69, df=4, $P<0.05$).

It has been found that majority of the employees in the middle age group had moderate levels of commitment towards teaching hence it is suggested that the institutions should invest in training programs and faculty development programs at various levels to equip them with new practices and pedagogy in teaching and elevate their engagement and commitment levels towards teaching. It is also found that there is a significant association between age and occupational commitment (Chi-square=27.53, df=4, $P<0.05$). It is clear that majority of the respondents have moderate occupational commitment in the young age bracket but as they grow older they are found to be more committed towards their occupations.

The next demographic factor that the researcher tried to test was the relationship between gender and the teacher engagement. It was found that there is no significant association between gender and teacher engagement (Chi-square=4.07, df=2, $P>0.05$). Similarly no relationship could be established between gender and teaching commitment (Chi-square=0.04, df=2, $P>0.05$) and gender and occupational commitment (Chi-square=1.44, df=2, $P>0.05$). It clearly indicates that the policies in the organization should be just and fair and there should not be any sort of gender discrimination at the workplace. Equal opportunities for men and women would lead to better engagement and commitment towards teaching and the occupation as such.

The researcher tried to establish the relationship between marital status and teacher engagement and found no significant association between them (Chi-square=3.69, df=2, $P>0.05$). However there was significant association between marital status and It was concluded that there was no significant association between marital status and commitment towards teaching (Chi-square=18.36, df=2, $P<0.05$) and marital status and commitment towards occupation (Chi-square=37.46, df=2, $P<0.05$). It has been found that unmarried teachers have low commitment towards teaching as well as the occupation in general. Hence better engagement practices should be designed for them and at the same time counseling and guidance from the superiors can help elevate the engagement and commitment levels towards teaching and occupation.

The chi-square test showed association between experience in the present job and teacher engagement (Chi-square=18.03, df=4, $P<0.05$). Similarly, there was a significant association between experience in present job and teaching commitment (Chi-square=10.87, df=4, $P<0.05$) and experience in present job and occupational commitment (Chi-square=13.19,

df=4, $P < 0.05$). It was found that teacher with more than 4 years of experience in the same organization had high levels of commitment towards teaching and occupation as well. Hence the organization should provide the faculty members with conducive work environment, opportunities of growth and development, fair appraisal system and effective communication and feedback system which will go a long way in increasing the engagement levels in the organization and will create an interest and expertise in teaching and the occupation as well.

Implications

This study has remarkable implications for both the school management as well as the educational system of the country. But, there is room for more elaborate studies that would empirically evaluate various other dimensions of engagement and satisfaction microscopically. Another alarming concern for any industry with educational institutions being no exception is the need for management of stress related to engagement. It is a known fact that reasonable amount of stress within the tolerable threshold limits, stimulates desirable engagement, but if the stress builds up over the safety limits, it may be detrimental to the individual as well as to the organization. Thus, the optimum level of stress that is desirably needed and the curvilinear relationship between stress and engagement needs to be studied in further research.

Limitations

No study is all pervasive. The results of this study are based upon the responses of teachers across various educational institutions in the Greater Hyderabad city and hence cannot be generalized to the entire service sector. The responses of the subjects in question may have some bias because of the influence of their perception, halo effects and stereotyping. The innate cold attitude of the respondents towards such surveys could not be ignored.

Conclusion

The findings of this study contribute to the scarcely available literature on commitment of teachers towards their occupation and its relationships with engagement contrary to the belief that it is in line with explicit issues. It tries to throw light on the association between commitment of the teachers towards teaching as well as the occupation as a whole and the influence of teachers' intrinsic notions and value system and perception of the teachers that help them to fit into the framework of educational system as a whole. Though the teachers are motivated by the external factors such as rewards, recognition, better pay structures and ergonomics, still commitment towards the occupation is clearly manifested in their behavior, work ethics, moral values and more importantly their passion towards teaching thus helping in laying a path for a better society. The results of this study indicates that:

- ✓ One cannot undermine the relationship between employee engagement and different dimensions of commitment.
- ✓ There are measurable differences between teaching commitment and occupational commitment.

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