Chapter - 3

Employee Engagement: A Conceptual Framework

In the previous chapter, the researcher has discussed the review of available and published literature on the subject of employee engagement. The review has been presented in different sections such as meaning and concept of employee engagement, importance and factors influencing employee engagement, employee engagement in hospitality industry and impact of employee engagement on organizational performance.

The present chapter deals with the concept of employee engagement, nature and importance of employee engagement for an organization. Researcher also presented theories and models of employee engagement along with its various drivers and barriers. The chapter ends with antecedent and consequences of employee engagement and measures to improve the level of engagement among the employees in the organizations.

3.1 Introduction

Employee engagement has emerged as a popular organizational concept in recent years. It has become one of the most leading priorities of human resource practitioners and senior managers in the organization today in the corporate world (Bhatla, 2011). Employee engagement has generated great deal of attention among many human resource practitioners, business entrepreneurs and academic researchers across the globe (Larkin, 2009; Sharma & Anupama, 2010). Human resources are important assets of every organization. The success or failure of the organizations is largely dependent upon employees working in it (Khan, 2013). In this era of globalization and industrialization, where there is large scale competition in the market, it is necessary for the organization to have engaged workforce for the survival and smooth functioning of the organization. Employee engagement is considered as an important technique that is commonly used now a days in the corporate world, mainly in service industry. The term employee engagement was firstly used by the Gallup Consulting Firm. Later, it has been used by academia. Kahn (1990) was the first academic researcher to use the term employee engagement and defines that employee engagement is the level of dedication and involvement of the employees
towards their organization. Many organizations and consulting firms consider employee engagement as similar to other important work-related constructs like job satisfaction, job involvement, organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behaviour (Kumar & Swetha, 2011).

Today the business scenario is changing both in terms of the global nature of work and diversity of the workforce. Each and every organization across the globe wants to make the best utilization of its human resources in order to achieve competitive advantage in the market (Heaney, 2010). When employees are engaged in their work, they have good relationships with their co-workers and working environment becomes better. An engaged workplace encourages commitment and energy among the employees of the organization to improve production and business performance (Kumar and Swetha, 2011). High levels of engagement in domestic and global firms promote retention of talent, foster customer loyalty and improve organizational performance and stakeholder value ((Wilson, 2009; Markos & Sridevi, 2010). Engaged employees are not only happy in their job, but also translate that satisfaction into higher productivity and profitability of the organization (Larkin, 2009; Lee, 2012). It is a technique which can be used by the organization to handle uncertainty of business environment. The organization that understand the conditions which enhance employee engagement will have accomplished something that their competitors will find very difficult to imitate (Kumar & Swetha, 2011).

Engaged employee is almost three times more sincere toward his job in comparison to those employees who are actively disengaged (Kular, Gatenby, Rees, Soane, & Truss, 2008). Therefore the organization should focus on the aspect of employee engagement in order to improve organizational performance (Basbous, 2011; Sundaray, 2011). Employee engagement can be a deciding factor for organizational effectiveness. It does not only have the potential to significantly affect employee retention, productivity and loyalty, but also has a key link to customer satisfaction, company reputation and overall stakeholder value (Sundaray, 2011). Engaged employees provide a lot of benefits to the organization such as productivity, improved quality, customer care, cooperation among the employees, reduced employee turnover, reduced absenteeism and disputes (Wilson, 2009; Mortimer, 2010). In the present business environment, organizations across the globe are enhancing the level of engagement of their employees in order to gain competitive
advantage in the form of higher productivity, profitability, lower turnover and safety of the organization (Mani, 2011).

3.2 Definition and Concept of Employee Engagement

The term employee engagement was firstly used by the human resource practitioners and business firm, but in academic community the concept was rarely discussed. Kahn (1990) was the first academic researcher to define the concept of employee engagement. According to Kahn (1990) employee engagement is the level of commitment and involvement of the employees towards their organization and its values. While Perrin (2003) defined engagement “as willingness or enthusiasm that the employee holds to spend optional effort towards the job.” In a study about antecedent and consequences of employee engagement, Saks (2006) defines employee engagement as the extent to which an individual is attentive and absorbed in the performance of his/her roles. It is the positive feeling that employees have towards their jobs and also the motivation and effort they put into it.

Bakkar and Scheufeli, (2008) have defined the term employee engagement that “it is a psychological state where employees feel a vested interest in the organization’s success and perform to a high standard that may exceed the stated requirements of the job.” An engaged employee is aware of business context and works with colleagues to improve performance within the job for the benefits of the organization (Sharma & Anupama, 2010). It is a positive attitude held by the employees towards the organization and its values. The organization must work to develop and nurture engagement, which requires a two-way relationship between employer and employee (Robinson, Perryman, & Hayday, 2004). Apart from this, Baig (2010) argued that employee engagement is concerned with the individual contribution under healthy working conditions, promote individual development, encourage mutual confidence and understanding between the employer and the employee and between the employees themselves. According to Mortimer (as cited in CIPD, 2009), employee engagement is a combination of commitment to the organization, its values and a willingness to help their colleagues. Zinger (2010) defines that “employee engagement is the art and science of engaging people in authentic and recognized connections to strategy, roles, performance, organization, community, relationship, customers, development, energy and transform the work
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connections into final results.” Rashid, Asad, and Ashraf (2011) have highlighted that engagement is the capacity of the employees to work honestly, obligation and aspiration enduring in a business. While Wilson (2009) elucidates that an engaged employee is that who is fully energetic, emotionally connected with the organization in achieving the goals. Thus employee engagement is a barometer that determines the association of a person with the organization (Vazirani, 2007).

Bhatla (2011) has explained that the engagement is all about having a psychological commitment toward the assigned task, which is clearly reflected in his/her dedication towards the work. Mani (2011) has noted that an engaged employee is fully aware with the business environment and works with the help of other employees to improve the performance within the job for the benefits of the organization. Engaged employees put their all efforts and enthusiasm towards their work and also care about the future of the organization (Mani, 2011; Sundaray, 2011). By making the employees involved in organization’s business, the HR manager will have to motivate them to contribute in the business and productivity success and at the same time, it increases their sense of well-being (Swarnalatha & Sureshkrishna, 2013). Employee engagement and job satisfaction play an important role in increasing the morale of the employees. The managers have to play active role in building satisfaction among the employees and make them engaged in their work. While Cattermole and Johnson, (2014) opine that employee engagement is a workplace approach designed to ensure that employees are committed to business, its values and goals. Chandhok and Bhavet, (2014) perceived engagement as a passion and commitment of the willingness to devote oneself and expand one’s discretionary effort to contribute towards achieving the goals and objectives of the organization as a whole. Thus employee engagement is the extent to which employees think, feel and act in ways that represent high levels of commitment to their organization.

Kahn (1990) says that in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively and emotionally during their role performances. The ideas of each and every employee differs from each other and every employee should be given freedom to express their views and thought. This kind of activity increases the morale of the employees, hence the employees are motivated and engaged towards their work and increases the productivity of the organization. He further describes that lack of connection with the organization, emotional absence, passive and incomplete role
causes disengagement among the workers. In the views of Robinson, Perryman, and Hayday (2004) employee engagement is closely related with feeling and perception of the employees and the key driver of the employee engagement are effective leadership by the top management, two way communication among the workers of the organization, well designed human resource policies and organizational development of employees. Anand (2011) opines that employee engagement plays a crucial role in the hotel because it affects everything from retention and productivity to profitability and safety. There is an intrinsic link between employee engagement, customer loyalty and profitability. Kahn (1992) has highlighted that fully engaged employees lead to the success of the organization. There are many dimensions which makes the employees engaged towards their job. These are continuity in the organization, connected with other staff members, integrated and focussed in their job. Saradha and Patrick, (2011) have discussed that employee engagement activities significantly improve the overall performance of an organization. It is a technique for the successful functioning of the organization and improvement in performance of the employees.

### 3.3 Types of Employee Engagement

According to the Gallup, the Consulting Organization, there are mainly three types of engagement that occur in the organization. All are different in terms of involvement and their role in the organization. Types of employee engagement are shown in figure 3.1:

![Figure 3.1. Types of Employee Engagement](source: Author’s own observation based on literature survey)
Engaged Employees

An engaged employee is considered as the base of the organizational development. Such kind of employees carry the organization in positive direction. They not only perform their work but also play an important role in achieving the organizational goals and objectives. Engaged employees want to use their talent and strength at work every day. They perform with passion, drive innovation and move their organization forward through their performance (Vazirani, 2007).

Not Engaged

These kind of employees care only about their work not any other things like goals, objectives and development of the organization. They do not have energy and enthusiasm in their work (Reilly, 2014). These categories of employees do not have cooperative relationship with their colleagues as well as the employers also. Their contribution is little in the success and development of the organization.

Actively Disengaged

Actively disengaged employees do not perform their work in a proper manner and do not complete their work timely. Their contribution is almost negligible in the success and development of the organization. They are unhappy at work and look after the work of the other member of the organization. Such kind of employee carry the organization in the negative direction and organization suffers in achieving its goals and objectives (Vazirani, 2007).

3.4 Characteristics of Engaged Employees

According to Robinson, Perryman, and Hayday (as cited in IES, 2003) an engaged employee has the following characteristics:

- Engaged employees have emotional attachment with their job as well as the organization.
- They have trust in the employers of the organization.
- Engaged employees are more committed towards their work as well as organization also.
- Create healthy working environment and respect other employees of the organization.

- Cooperate with their colleagues to perform effectively.

- Engaged employees perform beyond the expectation of the employers.

- Perform their work in view of goals and objectives of the organization.

- Engaged employees make necessary change as per requirement and keep update with the knowledge in their field.

3.5 Ten C’s of Employee Engagement

Crim and Seijts, (2006) have discussed how leaders can engage employees’ heads, hearts and hands. They summarize these as Ten C’s of employee engagement. These are shown in Figure 3.2:

![Ten C’s of Employee Engagement](image)

Figure 3.2. Ten C’s of Employee Engagement

**Connect:** The managers should value the employees. Employee engagement is positively related with the behaviour of managers with the employees. Therefore employers should properly connect with their employees (Crim & Seijts, 2006).

**Career:** The manager should provide the opportunity for growth and development of the employees. Proper training and induction programme are very important for the career advancement of the employees.

**Clarity:** The managers must communicate the goals and objectives of the organization. The success of the organization is largely depends upon clarity of goals and objectives among the employees (Crim & Seijts, 2006).

**Convey:** The managers should discuss the expectation which they want from the employees and provide feedback on the performance of the employees. Effective leaders work daily to improve the performance of the employees.

**Congratulate:** The employees are getting feedback in the area where they are lacking behind and at the same they should also be rewarded and recognized on their excellent performance.

**Contribute:** The employees feel happy and motivated if their works contributes in achieving the organizational goals in a meaningful way. Therefore the managers must discuss the role of the employees in achieving goals and objectives of the organization. Effective leaders help employees to see and feel that how they are contributing to the organization success and future (Crim & Seijts, 2006).

**Control:** Control is very important function of management. It is process to check whether organization is running in desired direction or towards its goals and objective. The leaders should have the quality to control the organization.

**Collaborate:** When employees work in group and have trust and cooperation of their group members, they perform best. Good leaders are team builders, they create an environment that fosters trust and collaboration.

**Credibility:** Leaders should struggle to maintain organizational image and show high ethical standards. People want to be proud of their jobs, performance and organization (Crim & Seijts, 2006).
**Confidence:** Good leaders help to create confidence in the organization by developing high ethical and standards performance.

### 3.6 Importance of Employee Engagement

Employee engagement is decisive to any organization that seeks to retain their valued employees. It is very important for effective utilization of human resource and smooth running of the organization. Without employee engagement, an organization cannot survive for a long period of time. As opined by Kang (2014) engaged employees strengthen the organizations’ competitive advantage and generate favourable business environment. Neeti and Leekha, (2011) have reported that engagement is one of the important and powerful strategy to attract, nurture, retain, respect and manage the manpower of the organization. They have also pointed out that married employees tend to have a higher level of engagement than those who are unmarried.

Employee engagement is very important for hotel industry because hotel industry has a diversity of workforce and greater number of employees work in a single organization. Ncube and Jerie, (2012) have highlighted the contribution of employee engagement to competitive advantage in hotel industry. Hotels which have high level of employee engagement enjoy a competitive advantage over the hotel having lower level of employee engagement because the engaged employees are highly committed towards the job. Therefore it is a challenging task for human resource managers to create and maintain a healthy work environment that motivate the employees in their work and select the right employees at right place. Some of the advantages of employee engagement are given below:

- Employee engagement is an innovative thought that enhances positive attitudes among the employees towards their job (Robertson, 2012).
- Engaged employees work with passion and enthusiasm to get the job done (Ference, 2009).
- Employee engagement builds passion, commitment and alignment with the organizations’ strategies, goals and objectives.
• Engaged employees put their all efforts and enthusiasm towards their work and also care about the future of the organization (Mani, 2011).

• Engaged employees understand the value of ensuring a positive customer experience and are more likely to demonstrate their commitment by delivering high quality products and services (Haid & Sims, 2008).

• Engaged employees act in a way that reflect the greater level of commitment to the organization and contribute his/her skills and abilities for the betterment of the organization. It increases the level of trust and reduces the problem of turnover of the employees (Hamid & Farooqi, 2014).

• Engaged employees are not only happy with their job, but also translate that satisfaction into higher productivity and profitability of the organization (Larkin, 2009).

• Engaged employees are less likely to feel exhausted and make the organization a success in this competitive era.

• Employees with higher work engagement have higher level of confidence and a high quality relationship with their employers (Saks, 2006).

• Engaged employee is optimistic, highly focused towards the work, energetic and willing to work for the sustainable development of the organization (Jose & Mampilly, 2012).

• An engaged employee is more productive, has greater level of customer satisfaction and loyalty towards the organization that leads to the success of the business (Cook, 2008).

• Engaged employees will normally perform better and are more motivated than other employees working in the organization.

• It creates a sense of loyalty in a competitive environment and provides a highly energetic working environment.

• It boosts business growth and makes the employees effective brand ambassadors for the organization.
3.7 Factors Influencing Employee Engagement

In the present business scenario, employee engagement has become one of the most leading priorities for human resource practitioners and senior managers in any organization. Garber (2007) succinctly says that engagement is just like a muscle that continuously requires exercise to grow and develop. Engaging the employees will keep them motivated and skilled in their works. If the organization does not use those skills regularly, they will be diminished. Therefore, to develop engagement among the employees, human resource managers should create positive relationship among the employees and clear, honest and reliable communication within the organization. Chanania (2012) emphasized that employee engagement is the top priority for every organization’s human resource manager’s agenda. HR managers are constantly developing innovative and effective ways to engage the employees in a better way. There are various factors which influence employee engagement. These factors are common to all organizations and create a feeling of value and involvement among the employees. But the components of feeling valued and involved and the relative strength of each factor are likely to vary from organization to organization. The factors which influence employee engagement are shown in figure 3.3:

![Figure 3.3. Factors Influencing Employee Engagement](image)

**Source:** Author’s own observation based on literature survey
Recruitment and Selection

Recruitment is one of the important functions of human resource department. Human resource is the most important asset for every organization. The success of the organization largely depends upon the employees working in it. Recruitment is concerned with attracting and encouraging the peoples to apply for a job in the organization, whereas the selection is related with choosing the suitable employee for a particular job (Khan, 2013). It is the process of omitting unsuitable applicants and to choose the most suitable applicants. Selection of suitable employees from a group of people is a very challenging task for human resource managers. It is the process of putting the right candidate at the right place at the right time. Recruitment is directly related with employee engagement. As opined by Swathi (2013) the recruitment and selection process involves identifying potential employees, making offers of employment to them and trying to persuade them to accept those offers. Recruitment and selection play an effective role in improving the organizational performance. By recruiting employees for desirable jobs, organizations enhance their engagement and commitment. To enhance engagement, organizations identify those candidates who are best suited to the job and organizational culture (Swarnalatha & Prasanna, 2012).

Recruitment directly affects the organizational performance. Therefore, a poor recruitment decision may affect the organizational goals and objectives. The organization which fails to select suitable candidates suffers a lot in achieving its goals.

Job Designing

Job design is concerned with the type of job for which a particular employee is recruited. If the job design is according to the choice of the employee, definitely it will engage the employee (Sundaray, 2011). Swathi (2013) perceived that “Job characteristics encompassing challenge, variety and autonomy are more likely to provide psychological meaningfulness and conditions for employee engagement. Job becomes meaningful and attractive to employee as it provides him/her variety and challenge, thereby affecting his/her level of engagement.”
Career Development Opportunities

Career development opportunity plays an effective role in engagement of the employees and retaining them in the organization. The organization should check that the job given to the employees matches with their career goals. If it is so, then the employee will be satisfied and engaged (Mutunga, 2009). Organizations with high levels of engagement provide employees with opportunities to develop their abilities, learn new skills, acquire new knowledge and realize their potential. Career development influences engagement of employees, retaining the most talented employees and providing opportunities for personal development (Vazirani, 2007).

Employees’ career advancement is a phenomenon which is formalized, organized and it is a planned effort to accomplish the balance between requirement of organization’s workforce and individual career needs (Mutunga, 2009). The rapidly rising awareness makes it evident that employees can give leading edge to the organization in market place. It is a challenge for today’s HR Managers to identify the organization’s development strategies which increase employee commitment to the organization’s vision and values, motivate the employees and to help the organization to gain and sustain the competitive advantage.

Leadership

Mutunga (2009) argued that effective leadership is very important for smooth functioning of the organization. Organizational environment is directly influenced by the quality of leadership in human resource managers. A leader should have the quality to increase the level of engagement among the employees and without effective leadership, an organization cannot survive for a longer period of time. Leaders need to actively demonstrate the organization’s values and goals. They need to align themselves with the corporate values and create an open and fair work environment for employees within the organization (Mortimer, 2010).

Empowerment

Empowerment is also a leading factor for engagement of the employees. If the employees are invited in decision making process, then they will be motivated towards their work and will try to increase their engagement (Basbous, 2011). Sundaray (2011) is also of the same opinion and reported that the leaders of highly
engaged workplaces create a trustful and challenging environment, in which employees are encouraged to give input and innovative ideas to move the organization forward.

**Equal Opportunities and Fair Treatment**

Fair evaluation of employees’ performance is important for determining the level of employee engagement. It should be transparent and unbiased. The organizations which follow an appropriate performance appraisal technique will have high levels of employee engagement than any other organization (Mutunga, 2009). If the organization is having the policy of equal treatment for each employee, such kind of policies attract the employees and motivate them towards their works. Employee engagement levels would be high if the organization provides equal opportunities for growth and advancement to all the employees working in the organization and employees feel that they are not discriminated in any aspects within the organization (Bhatla, 2011).

**Training and Development**

It is another important area which contributes to employee engagement (Sundaray, 2011). Learning new skills may trigger renewed interest in such aspects of the job which had not been meaningful earlier. Through training, new recruited and current employees acquire knowledge and skills to perform their jobs in the most effective way. The employees who enhance their skills through training are more likely to engage fully in their work, because they derive satisfaction from mastering new tasks (Swarnalatha & Prasanna, 2012). According to Khan (2013) training and development activities are now equally important like other HR functions. It is concerned with imparting knowledge and skills for a particular job. Training provides the opportunities to raise the profile of development activities in the organization. Training and development help the employee to perform their work well and hence training is useful to reduce the problem of attrition. If an employee is recruited for a particular job, he/she should be provided proper training according to the work for which he/she has been recruited. Lack of skills has been cited as one of the reasons for employee turnover, thereby indicating the necessity for training, re-training and multi-skill training.
Performance Management

According to Heathfield (n.d.) performance management is the process of creating a work environment in which employees are capable to perform their best knowledge, skills and abilities. Performance management is entire work system of an employee that starts with appointment of the employees and ends with employees leaving the organization. Performance management system includes selection of suitable employees, providing effective training and orientation, compensation and recognition system and providing promotional as well as career development opportunities to the employees.

Performance management process provides conditions for employee engagement. It encourages managers to have a focus on roles and responsibilities of employees and to include them in the decision making process. It promotes acceptance of challenging objectives and also recognizes and encourages contributions that exceed expectations of the employers. It creates a feeling of being valuable to the organization which in turn helps in engaging the employees (Sundaray, 2011).

Compensation

According to Khan (2013) sound compensation policies motivate the employees towards their job. Compensation is considered to have a major influence on employee engagement. Compensation consists of financial elements, but may also include nonfinancial elements such as employee assistance programmes, subsidized cafeterias and travel discounts. The organization should have a proper compensation management system so that the employees can be motivated towards the work in the organization. Mutunga (2009) has highlighted that effective compensation policy reduces the problems of attrition and reduce the cost of recruitment. By raising the pay and benefits, the organizations make their employees motivated towards the job. She also argued that to increase the level of engagement of the employees, the organizations should provide certain compensation and benefits.

Health and Safety

According to Mutunga (2009) organizations should care the health and safety of their employees in order to motivate and engage them in their work. It is the
responsibility of HR managers to look after the health and safety of each and every employee of the organization. The engagement levels of the employees will be low if the organizations do not pay proper attention on the health and safety of the employees. The employees should feel that they are secure while working in the organization. Therefore every organization should develop and implement appropriate methods and systems for the health and safety of their employees (Swathi, 2013).

**Job Satisfaction**

According to Kang (as cited in Locke, 1976) job satisfaction is “a positive or pleasurable emotional state resulting from one’s own appraisal of the job or of one’s own work experience.” Job satisfaction represents the employees perceptions about job and different aspects of their jobs. High levels of job satisfaction increase the job performance and job commitment of the employees. Job satisfaction is most influencing factor of employee engagement. If an employee is not satisfied with his job, he will never be engaged. Only a satisfied employee can become an engaged employee. Therefore it is very essential for an organization to look that the job for which the employee has been recruited matches with his career goals. If the job is according to the interest of the employees then he/she would ultimately feel satisfied with his/her job and will be engaged towards their work in achieving the organizational goals and objectives (Swathi, 2013).

**Communication**

Communication is very important for the retention and engagement of the employees. Without proper communication, employee retention is far away. Open, responsive, two way communication and employee participation in decision making play a vital role in engagement and retention of talented employees (Lochhead & Stephens, 2004). Communication covers a range of both tangible and intangible ways to share information (Mortimer, 2010). It is very essential for smooth running of the organization and also an influencing factor to motivate the employees. The organization should follow the open door policy. There should be both upward and downward communication with the use of appropriate communication channels in the organization. If the employee is given chance to participate in the decision making process and has the advantage to be heard by his boss, then the engagement levels are likely to be high (Mutunga, 2009). While Ranjan (2014) candidly reported that a
relationship between an employee and employer can only grow and remain strong if there is continuous flow of communication from both side. Internal communications play an effective role in the engagement of employees. Understanding the modes of capturing employee feedback and analysing them to act on engagement drivers are important steps in enhancing employee engagement. He further describes that an organization cannot afford to neglect internal communication as a critical area, if it wants to grow and keep its customers and employees engaged and happy. Therefore the manager should encourage meaningful relationship with the employees and internal communication within the organization. Effective internal communication engages the employees towards the works and finally increases productivity, retention and profit for the organization (Zajkowska, 2012).

Family Friendliness

Family life also influences the working life of employees. Organizations should care about the family benefits of the employees and should offer the chances to the employees to spend time with their family that will lead to commitment towards their work (Mutunga, 2009). When an employee realizes that the organization is considering his/her family benefits, he/she will have an emotional attachment with the organization which leads to engagement. Family targeted offerings help management get along well with employees. HR managers’ effort to involve employees’ families creates a feeling of belonging and goodwill for the organization. Such kind of strategies helps in increasing motivation, commitment and satisfaction that finally leads to the employee engagement (Chanania, 2012).

3.8 Theories and Models of Employee Engagement

3.8.1 Social Exchange Theory

Saks (2006) has proposed social exchange theory about employee engagement. This theory provides a hypothetical basis to discuss why employees become more or less engaged towards their works. The proposal of social exchange theory is that obligations are made through a series of interactions between parties who are in a state of reciprocal interdependence. It is give and take relationship and perceived fairness between the two parties which dictates how successful the relationship is. As discussed by AbuKhalifeh and Som, (2013) the basic rule of social
exchange theory is that the relationship grows over time into trusting, loyal and mutual understanding as long as the parties stand by certain rules of exchange. Therefore one effective technique for an employee to pay their organization is through their level of engagement towards their work.

Saks (2006) argued that the level of engagement of the employees is largely dependent upon the facilities and resources which they receive from their organization. By making full involvement towards their works and dedicating higher amount of cognitive and emotional and physical resources is an important way for every employee to respond to the organizational action (AbuKhalifeh & Som, 2013). When the employees receives resources from their employer, they feel they "owe" the organization by becoming more engaged and bring themselves more into their works effectively to repay their organization. When an organization fails to provide these kinds of resources, employees are more likely to withdraw and disengage themselves from their work. Therefore all of the resources; cognitive, emotional and physical which an employee brings to their works are provisional on the resources which they receive from their organization (Kahn, 1990). Thus employee engagement consists of psychological and emotional connection between employees and organization that leads to positive or negative performance at work (AbuKhalifeh & Som, 2013).

Saks (2006) study also suggested that there is a meaningful distinction between job engagement and organization’s engagement and he was the first of the academic theorists to separate both types of engagement into related, but distinct constructs.

3.8.2 Kahn Model of Employee Engagement

Kahn (1990) was the first academic researcher who used the term employee engagement and define the term employee engagement as “the simultaneous employment and expression of a person’s “preferred self” in task behaviours that promote connection to work and to others, personal presence and active full role performance.”

Kahn (1990) has developed the first grounded model of personal engagement and personal disengagement. Kahn's work conceptualised employee engagement and is therefore considered a seminal work on the topic and contributed significantly to
developing the concept further. According to Kahn model of engagement, employees can be engaged on three different levels that are physical, emotional and cognitive. These three levels are affected by three different psychological conditions such as meaningfulness, safety and availability. These conditions influence the performance of employees at their works Sakovska (as cited in Kahn, 1990).

Kahn (1990) has also found that workers were more engaged at work in situations that offer them more psychological meaningfulness and psychological safety and when they were more psychologically available. He also looked at why the three psychological conditions of meaningfulness, safety and availability are important to fully understand why a person becomes engaged in their work. He defined meaningfulness as the positive "sense of return on investments of self in role performance", safety as the ability to show one's self "without fear or negative consequences to self image, status or career" and availability as the "sense of possessing the physical, emotional and psychological resources necessary" for the completion of the work. All these psychological conditions show positive connection with the engagement of the employees (May, Gilson, & Harter, 2004).

An empirical test of Kahn model (May, Gilson, & Harter, 2004) found that meaningfulness, safety and availability have significant influence on employee engagement.
Figure 3.4. Path Analytic Framework of Engagement

Source: Adapted from May, Gilson, and Harter (2004).

Kahn (1990) has reported that job enrichment, work role fit and co-workers relation were positive indicators for meaningfulness. Rewarding co-workers and supportive supervisor relation enhance safety and self consciousness, resource availability and outside activities were positive signs for psychological availability.

3.8.3 Saks Model of the Antecedent and Consequences of Employee Engagement

Saks (2006) conducted a study to test a model of the antecedents and consequences of job engagement and organization engagements. This model was based on social exchange theory. Saks found that the variables which lead to job engagement and organization engagement are different. He also reported that consequences of job engagement and organization engagement are also different. The findings of tests done by Saks showed that:
There is meaningful difference between the constructs of job engagement and organization engagement.

There are number of variables which predict job engagement and organization engagement such as job characteristics, perceived organizational and supervisor support, rewards and recognition, procedural and distributive justice.

Support provided by an organization is a positive predictor of both job and organization engagement.

Job characteristics significantly predict job engagement.

Procedural justice is an important predictor of organization engagement.

Job engagement and organization engagement are related to individual consequences.

Job engagement and organization engagement are significant predictors of job satisfaction, organizational commitment, intentions to quit and organizational citizenship behaviour.

Job engagement and organization engagement mediate the relationship between antecedent variables and consequences of employee engagement.

**Figure 3.5.** Saks Model of the Antecedents and Consequences of Employee Engagement

**Source:** Adapted from Saks (2006).
Saks (2006) has also asserted that employee engagement is an emerging field of research and should be studied more. There are other variables which are important for both job and organization engagement such as human resource practices like flexible work arrangements, training and development programmes.

3.8.4 Zinger Model of Employee Engagement

David Zinger is a Canadian management consultant. Based on his extensive and thorough work on employee engagement, he has developed his own model of employee engagement that throws light on various aspects of employee involvement, determination and engagement. The model is called Zinger model of employee engagement. Zinger has developed fourteen aspects that a manager should follow in order to achieve good business results.

Figure 3.6. Zinger Model of Employee Engagement

Source: http://www.davidzinger.com/zinger-model/

Achieve Results: Employers of every organization want to get higher levels of engagement among the employees. The managers as well as the subordinate should
work in a planned way to achieve the organizational goals and objectives (Zinger, 2010).

**Craft Strategies:** Crafting appropriate strategies is the first step to achieve higher levels of employee engagement. It requires planning and considerations of employee as well as organization also. Managers should consult professionals to craft strategies (Sourabh et al., n.d.).

**Connected:** There should be an effective communication within the organization, so that the employees may share their views and problems before the manager and may get suggestions to achieve their target.

**Authentic:** Managers should be effective leaders and should concern towards the problems of employees and to help in reducing their problems.

**Recognition:** The organization should recognize the employees performance in front of each and every employee. Recognising the efforts of employees in front of everyone not only boosts their morals but also encourages them to stay with the organization and perform their best.

**Engage:** The desired results can be achieved in the fastest possible way only if employees are fully engaged. Therefore the manager should implement the strategies to engage the employees.

**Enliven Work Roles:** The managers should assign the task to the employees according to their area of interest. If it is so then definitely the employees will be engaged (Sourabh et al., n.d.).

**Maximize Performance:** The managers should maximize the performance of the employees by providing rewards and recognitions on their excellent performance in order to motivate them towards the job.

**Esteem Organization:** Employees will stay in the organization for longer period of time if employees feel that they are a part of the organization. They should feel proud to work for their organization. Management should understand that the employees are their most important assets without whom organizational goals cannot be achieved (Zinger, 2010).
Foster Community: A strong key of employee engagement is our link to relationships and community. The medium of these relationships and community can be personal and social media. The heart of work is relationships and community. Organizations which do not transform themselves into communities are in danger of becoming mistreated (Zinger, 2010).

Serve Customers: Engaged employees can serve the customers in the best possible way. Making employees aware of tradition and culture of the organization from time to time may help the employees to provide best services to the customers (Sourabh et al., n.d.).

Develop Career: The organization should not only focus on achieving its goal but also on the development of employees by providing training and orientation programmes. The organization which cares about the development of its employees, employees of that organization are emotionally attached to their works and make their best in order to achieve the organizational goals.

Leverage Energies: Higher level of energy is important for engagement of employees. Powerful engagement involves mastery of physical, mental, emotional and organizational energy.

Experience Well - Being: The employer should develop a kind of environment which makes the employees happy and satisfied because happy and satisfied employees are the most important assets of an organization. The success of the organization largely depends upon happy and satisfied employees.

3.8.5 Kang Model of Employee Engagement

On the basis of social exchange theory, Kang (2014) has developed his own conceptual model of employee engagement. According to the Kang model of employee engagement, psychological capital and perceived service climate influence the level of employee engagement in the organization. He further explained that level of employee engagement within the organization influences their level of satisfaction, organizational citizenship behaviour and the turnover intention. Employees’ levels of satisfaction also influences the organizational citizenship behaviour and turnover intention of the employees.
3.8.6 Sirota’s Three Factor Model of Engagement

According to Sirota model of engagement, an engaged employee performs in a way that reflects greater level of commitment. They contribute their best knowledge, skills and abilities in achieving the organizational goals and objectives. Sirota three factors model suggests that engagement is achieved through the satisfaction of three primary engagement factors:

**Achievement:** To pay recognition to the employees after completing their works, such kind of activities increases the morale of the employees. Hence the employees get motivated towards their works after getting recognition.

**Camaraderie:** The organization should consider each employee as a family member so that employees feel that organizational works are their own works. There should be cooperation among the employees in the organization.

**Equity:** The employees should be treated honestly in relation to the basic conditions of employment with respect to others in the organization as well as minimum personal and social standards (www.sirota.com).
According to Sirota’s Model, when these three factors are achieved by the organization, employees are highly engaged. Engaged employees tend to:

- Perform their works most effectively and efficiently than the expectation of the employers.
- Encourage and help for assignment to the employees as well as employers also.
- Motivate and help the other employees of the organization to improve their performance.
- Welcome the changes which are required for the development of the organization rather than opposing the change.
- Develop greater level of customer satisfaction to increase the organization’s reputation.

### 3.9 Drivers of Employee Engagement

Researchers have identified different drivers of employee engagement:

- According to Mani (2011) there are four drivers of engagement such as employee welfare, empowerment, employee growth and interpersonal relationships.
• Robinson, Perryman, and Hayday (2004) have identified different drivers like leadership, relationships at work, total reward, recognition, work life balance and work itself that leads to the engagement of the employees.

• According to Bhatla (2011) organizational culture and effective communication in the organization are important drivers of employee engagement.

• Crim and Seijit, (2006) have identified the 10 C’s of employee engagement. These are: connect, career, clarity, convey, congratulate, contribute, control, collaborate, credibility and confidence.

• A study conducted by Bedarkar and Pandita, (2014) has observed that leadership, communication and work life balance are important drivers of employee engagement.

• According to Clapon (n.d.) engagement is driven by several factors like management/leadership, meaningful work and professional growth.

• Soni (2013) says that culture of respect where good work is appreciated, feedback, counselling and mentoring, fair reward, recognition and incentive scheme are important driver of employee engagement.

Heaney (2010) has explained that there are various drivers that make the employees engaged. These are:

• Senior management interest in welfare of the employees.
• Participation of employees in decision making process.
• Career advancement opportunities for the employees.
• Organization brand image as a good employer.
• Reward and recognition on excellent performance of the employees.
• A clear vision from senior management about future success.

Sourabh et al. (n.d.) have discussed that working environment, reward and recognition, learning and training opportunities, performance management and effective leadership are important drivers of employee engagement.

Ezell (2013) has highlighted that there are six drivers which can help to enhance the level of engagement in the organization. These drivers are shown in figure 3.9:
Ezell (2013) has described that the managers should clearly communicate the core values and belief of the employees. There should be transparency about the goals and objectives of the organization. The line managers should also care about personal life of the employees and support their health and well-being. The organization should assign the job according to the area of interest of the employees. Growth opportunity and trust on employees are important for the engagement of the employees.

Weaver (2013) has reported that role conflict, effective training, personal autonomy and manager abilities are effective drivers of employee engagement.

### 3.10 Barriers of Employee Engagement

Researchers have observed that there are certain barriers which inhibit employee engagement. Hauck (2011) reported that improper performance appraisal and lack of skills in the managers are barriers of employee engagement. Sales Benchmark Index
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(2014) has candidly discussed that income inequality, job insecurity and work life imbalance are major barriers of employee engagement. The typical pay for performance policy is also a barrier of employee engagement (Hauck, 2011). Other key barriers of employee engagement may be as follows:

- Poor leadership and ineffective management of manpower in the organization is major cause of turnover or absenteeism of employees. Hauck (2011) has reported that employees do not leave organization they leave their managers.
- Unhealthy working environment within the organization.
- Improper communication or lack of proper communication also contributes to a negative work environment in the organization.
- Lack of cooperation among the employees and employer also.
- Lack of support from the employers or organization.

3.11 Employee Engagement Approaches

Employee engagement approaches are categories into two sections. First section deals with the approaches for new employees while the second section discusses the approaches for all employees. The feature of each are differ from one another (Bhatla, 2011).

3.11.1 Employee Engagement Approaches for New Employees

It is the responsibility of HR managers to introduce best practices in recruitment and selection stage with:

- Recruitment of right person and giving them a realistic job according to the area of interest of that employee (Swarnalatha & Prasanna, 2012).
- A strong induction and orientation programme should be organised for the new employees so that they can do their work easily. It helps the new employees to interact with the employees already working in the organization and learn acceptable behaviour within the organization (Khan, 2013).
- Rigorous training and development programmes from technical to soft skills to leadership should be provided to the employees (Sundaray, 2011).
• Development programmes should be organized by the human resource department of the organization.

• Regular technical/soft-skill updates should be discussed in the organization.

• Certification programmes to drive people towards excellent performance should be conducted.

3.11.2 Employee Engagement Approaches for all Employees

As discussed by Bhatla (2011) beyond initial recruitment and induction, employee engagement activities can be broken into a number of groups. These include:

• Communications activities within the organization.
• Proper reward schemes on excellent performance.
• Activities to build the culture of the organization.
• Team building activities.
• Leadership development activities.

3.12 Antecedent of Employee Engagement

Saks (2006) has made an attempt to study various antecedent and consequences of employee engagement. According to Saks (2006) there are various antecedent of employee engagement which are as follows:

Job Characteristics

Saks (2006) openly showed that job characteristics provide the opportunity for individuals to work effectively and to become more engaged. Job characteristics are those tasks that provide challenging work, variety, use of different skills and opportunity to make important contributions (Kahn, 1992). It provides individuals with the room and incentive to bring more of themselves into their work or to be more engaged.

Perceived Organizational Support

Saks (2006) found that employees who receive higher level of organizational support are more engaged towards their job. Perceived organizational support is now getting an important attention in industrial/organizational literature. According to
Rasheed, Khan, and Ramzan (as cited in Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002) perceived organizational support is also seen as a promise that the organization will help the employees when they need any aid to run their jobs and tasks effectively. Organization should also support the employees from every aspect such as safety and security. Health and moral value of the employees should also be maintained by the organization.

**Perceived Supervisor Support**

According to Saks (2006) leadership style is considered as an important antecedent of employee engagement. The relationship between supervisor and worker plays effective role in employee engagement. If supervisor is supportive, open communicative and has good relationship with employees, then turnover intention is likely less and more engaged with organization (Saks, 2006). According to Clifford (as cited in Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002) the level of supervisor support that an employee receives is also indicative of organizational support that could help to determine the level of engagement of the employees.

According to Rasheed, Khan, and Ramzan (as cited in Kottke & Sharafinski, 1988) perceived supervisor support is defined as the view of employees that how much the supervisor gives importance to employee’s performance, well-being, interest and benefits of employees. Supervisor’s perform just like an agent for the organization, with the duty of guiding the employees and evaluating their performance. The employees also examine whether supervisor is providing them with effective leadership and guidance.

**Reward and recognition**

Saks (2006) argued that employees will be more likely to be engaged towards the job to the extent that they receive the amount of rewards and recognition on their job performances. The organization should have good reward and recognition system and provide certain compensation and benefits to improve the level of engagement among employees (Vazirani, 2007).

The literal meaning of the word “reward” is that it is something that is offered by the organization to the workers in response of their performance and contributions which are expected by the workers. A reward may be intrinsic or extrinsic and it can
be in form of cash or bonuses. Reward can be in form of recognition/certificate such as commendation certificate or worker of the month. In business environment, rewards are offered in several forms such as recognition, cash bonuses, awards, free trips and free merchandise. However, reward is the thing which is offered by the organization in any form in response of employee’s contribution, to make employees motivated for doing well with positive behaviour in future (Khan, 2013).

Distributive Justice and Procedural Justice

Saks (2006) has discussed that distributive and procedural justices are “the degree to which an organization was predictable and consistent in the distribution of rewards and the procedures used to allocate them.” He found that positive procedural justice is a good sign for the engagement of employees and employees who perceived higher levels of procedural justice are more engaged towards their works. Saks (as cited in Rhoades, Eisenberger & Armeli, 2001) has reported that if employees did not feel that justice and rewards are being fairly distributed in the organization, they become disengaged from work.

According to Rasheed, Khan, and Ramzan (as cited in Landy & Conte, 2007) distributive justice is “the fairness in the allocation of resources, benefits and rewards of the organization among the employees.” Distributive justice is related to outcomes when employees are treated with unfairness regarding any particular outcome, it affects the employees emotions and intentions such as guilt, happiness, pride or anger. When employees are treated fair, the employees feel satisfied in all respect and their loyalty is increased and they are engaged toward the work of the organization. They further discussed that the procedural justice relates to the methods and procedures through which these rewards and outcomes are divided. Procedural justice level is high when members feels that they have a right to give opinion in the procedures or the processes. These include the characteristics just like flexibility, correctness, ethicality, consistency and lack of biasness (as cited in Leventhal, 1980). The organization must give significant value to determine whether procedural justice is encounter to employees or not.
3.13 Consequences of Employee Engagement

Employee engagement has positive consequences on the organization (Saks, 2006). Some of the consequences are as follows:

**Job Satisfaction**

According to Wang (as cited in Davis, 1981) job satisfaction is the feeling of happiness or unhappiness experienced by employees working in an organization. According to Clifford (as cited in Wright & Davis, 2003) job satisfaction is “the representation of employees and their work environment by comparing what they expect to receive versus what actually employees received.” Employee engagement is directly related with the job satisfaction. If an employee is engaged towards the work, definitely he/she will be fully satisfied with the job. Basbous (2011) said an engaged employee is a satisfied employee. Therefore it is very important for the organization to make their employees engaged by providing various financial and non financial incentives and assign the task according to their area of interest. This will make the employee more appreciative of his job and satisfied with his career.

**Organizational Commitment**

Employee engagement is positively related to organizational commitment. Commitment refers to a person’s attitude and attachment towards their organization (Saks, 2006). An engaged employee is fully committed towards the job as well as organizational goals and objectives and gives complete loyalty to the organization (Kumar & Swetha, 2011).

**Intention to Quit**

According to Clifford (as cited in Kacmar, Carlson, & Brymer, 1999) intention to quit is the degree to which employees are considering leaving the organization. Intention to quit includes basically the reasons why employees are going to quit the job and what factors made the employee leave the organization. The engaged employees do not frequently quit the job, but stay in the organization for longer period of time (Swetha & Kumar, 2011).
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Organizational Citizenship Behaviour

According to Rasheed, Khan, and Ramzan (2013) employee engagement is also positively related with the organizational citizenship behaviour. It is concerned with voluntary and informal behaviours that can help co-workers and the organization. Clifford (as cited in Organ, 1988) defined organizational citizenship behaviour “an individual behaviour that is voluntary and not tied directly to any reward or recognition system that promotes the effectiveness of the organization.” Engaged employee performs the work politely and helps in making effective and sound working environment in the organization.

3.14 Measures to Improve Employee Engagement for Organizations

According to Smith (n.d.) the organization should focus on the positive working environment, develop workers’ skills and evaluate job satisfaction in order to enhance employee engagement. According to Reilly (2014) there are five strategies which the organizations can use to build engagement among the employees working in the organization. These are:

Use the Right Employee Engagement Survey: When organization asks its employees for their opinions, those employees expect to implement their opinion and suggestion, but organization often makes the mistake of implementing that survey. Employee survey data must be specific, relevant and actionable for any team at any organizational level.

Focus on Engagement at the Local and Organizational Levels: The organization should follow the engagement policy at local level and organizational levels because change in organization occurs at local work group levels. Managers and employees must feel empowered to make a significant difference in their immediate environment.

Select the Right Managers: An effective leader understands the organizational goals and objectives and cares about the employees working in the organization. They seek to understand each employee’s strength and provide every opportunity to use their strengths in their job. Effective managers empower their employees, recognize and value their contributions and actively seek their ideas and suggestions.
Trained Managers: Gallup research has found that managers are accountable for the engagement of the employees. Therefore the organization should provide training and orientation to the managers to take active role in building employee engagement.

Define Engagement Goals in Realistic, Everyday Terms: Leaders must make engagement goals meaningful to employee’s day to day experiences. Managers should discuss employee engagement at weekly meetings, in action-planning sessions and meetings with employees to weave engagement into daily interactions and activities and to make it part of the workplace.

Markos and Sridevi, (2010) have discussed that in order to engage employees in any organization, managers need to look at the following ten points. They named these points as “tablets” because it is believed that they will cure employee disengagement diseases. These are as follows:

- Start it on the first day for newly recruited employees.
- Start it from the top management to every employees of the organization.
- Enhance employee engagement through two-way communication among the employees of the organization. Create an environment where people can ask questions, provide opportunities to talk to other functions, face to face communication and open door policies.
- Give satisfactory opportunities for development and advancement of the employees.
- Ensure that employees have all the resources which they need to do their jobs.
- Give employees appropriate training to enhance their knowledge and skills.
- The organization should have strong feedback and performance appraisal system.
- The organization should provide financial and non-financial benefits to the employees in order to engage them towards the job.
- Create healthy work environment within the organization.
- Focus on top performing employees and what they are asking in order to reduce the turnover of high performing employees.

Mathis (2013) has discussed three strategies of employee engagement and these are affinity, affiliation and autonomy. He further explained that without affinity,
affiliation and autonomy, employee will present physically at work but not mentally. Giving workers participation opportunities creates a feeling of belonging towards their work and opportunities of participation gives them pride, ownership and a deep sense of fulfilment that motivates them towards their work.

3.15 Summary

The present chapter has been drafted to elaborate the present scenario of employee engagement. Employee engagement has become an important subject in recent years among consulting firms and in the popular business organizations. However, in academic literature it has rarely been studied and relatively little is known about it. Employee engagement has become one of the most leading priorities for HR practitioners and senior managers in the organizations. The foregoing discussion concludes that the employee engagement is a good indicator for success of any organization. The organizations should focus on employee engagement to boost their growth and to get a competitive advantage. An engaged workplace encourages commitment and energy among the employees of the organization to improve production and business performance. High levels of engagement in domestic and global firms promote retention of talent, foster customer loyalty and improve organizational performance and overall stakeholder’s value. It is concerned about maximum utilization of organization’s assets in order to gain competitive advantage in the market. There are various factors which influence the level of engagement such as recruitment and selection, training and development, communication, leadership style and performance management. While relationships at work, total reward and recognition, work life balance and work itself are important drivers of employee engagement. The management should understand the importance of employee engagement because highly engaged workforce will definitely make an organization more successful in terms of financial and nonfinancial parameters. However, it can be said that engagement which has a positive impact on the organizational performance can be derived from a strong mutual relationship between the co-employees, their employer and the organization as a whole. Therefore the organization should focus on every aspect of employee engagement in order to gain competitive advantage by increasing their productivity, profitability and lower absenteeism.
References


