INTRODUCTION

With the changing business environment competition has increased and organizations are striving towards finding various innovative ways to achieve and maintain competitive advantage. And to a great extent such competitive advantage can be maintained through the most important input of every organisation i.e. Man. So it becomes very important to maintain and retain talent of the organisation on which the success of every organisation is based. Insight into the employee’s psychology towards his work and work environment can provide much information which can be further used to maintain such advantage. In order to achieve objectives effectively the organisation must inspire his employees to use their capabilities to full extent and also develop the same from time to time. Also the organisations must develop committed workforce because the employees who are dedicated can make much contribution towards productivity of organisation (Bakker & Leiter, 2010)

Although the organisation develop the skills of his human resources, motivates them and give them humane treatment and ensures that they remain committed to the organization which is essential for the accomplishment of better output but then also sometimes fails to retain talent for longer period. We notice, especially youth generation are leaving their workplace at a faster pace reason being they want more out of their careers. For this managers work a lot to make their employees stick to their organizations because employee’s stability has a huge financial affect on productivity and profitability. And to achieve this, management adopts methods of connecting the personal development of its employees with the organizational growth. This connection is possible when employees are truly ‘engaged’

With the increasing competition, academics also face the problem of turnover. Faculty departure is inevitable because of many reasons. Professors who have strong credentials may have many job opportunities. Some may find higher income or good working environment that becomes the base of ‘Push factor’. Orientation of some faculties towards research or publication may be another aspect for departure. There are so many academic issues which lead to mobility of faculty from one institute to another. Institute view turnover or departure as a costly aspect of human resource management. Loss to the institute may be in terms of student’s career as well as the institute’s image. Also it represents serious institutional problems like faculty
dissatisfaction, loss of talent and poor working environment. The costs inculcated with departure are many such as recruiting expenses, discontinuities in departmental & student planning.

Organisations need to fulfill the aspirations of its employees and these aspirations are much beyond their salary expectations. Insight into their psychology towards his work and work environment can provide much information which can be further used to retain the faculties. In the vortex of changing business environment, various innovative ways have emerged which help the organisations gain more output from its resources (Bakker and Schaufeli, 2008; Burte & Cooper, 2005; Gratton, 2000; Lawler, 2003,2008; Luthans, et al.,2008). Among various ways one is “employee engagement” which has gained popularity & attention from various practitioners and researchers.

Present study is concerned with identifying the drivers of employee engagement present in working environment and impact of employee engagement on talent retention among academicians. Also the impact of each dimension (i.e. absorption, dedication and vigor) of employee engagement on talent retention was studied. Following section gives the conceptual framework of the variables used in this study.

1.1 Employee Engagement:

Employee engagement at work was conceptualized by William.A.Kahn (1990) as the “harnessing of organisational member’s selves to their work roles”. Research on this concept was started by academicians in 1990’s to define the concept of employee engagement more clearly (Kahn,1990; Maslach & Leiter,1997; Schufeli, Salanova & Gonzalez-Roma, 2002) Employee engagement was then described in academic literature by Schmidt et al.(1993). They described employee engagement as “an employee’s involvement with, commitment to and satisfaction with work.”

An engaged employee is involved in and enthusiastic towards his work. He cares about the organisation and its future. He is always willing to contribute his efforts towards the achievement of organizational goals. Engaged employee is emotionally bounded and committed to the organisation.
Employee engagement is the extent to which workforce is committed both emotional and intellectual exists relative to accomplishing the work and goals of the organization. Three words can be used for employee engagement:

1. Emotional attachment
2. Involvement with job
3. Commitment with organization.

Employee engagement is the means or strategy, by which an organization seeks to build a partnership between the organization and its employees, such that:

- Employees fully understands and is committed to achieve the organization’s objectives, and
- The organization respects the personal aspirations and ambitions of its employees.

It is seen largely the organization’s responsibility to create an environment and culture conducive to this partnership.

Global studies suggest that there are three basic aspects of employee engagement:

- On employee’s part they themselves and their own unique psychological framework and experience.
- On employer’s part they themselves and their ability to create the favorable working conditions that promote employee engagement.
- Interaction between employees at all levels.

Employee engagement creates greater motivation within employees for the work they do and increases their commitment to the organization. Engagement is about creating an enthusiasm for their roles, their work and the organization, and ensuring they are associated with the values of the organization.

According to Macey and Schneider, engagement is different from satisfaction or commitment. They identified two components of employee engagement:

- Feelings of engagement (focus and enthusiasm), and
- Engagement behavior (proactivity and persistence).
They argued that employees come to work ready to be engaged but organizations need to produce the conditions that will release that energy. They believe that employees feel and act engaged when managers create the right conditions for them. They also contended that fair treatment is an essential condition for feeling of engagement and which lead to a feeling of trust which further allows them to feel safe to be engaged.

Some author says that employee engagement is something that is reflected from the aspects in the workplace (McCashland, 1999; Miles, 2001; Harter, Schmidt & Keyes, 2003) while some says that it is something that individual carries with him (Harter, Schmidt & Hayes, 2002; Goddard, 1999).

Employee engagement is described in various ways by different authors. But most of the researchers commonly describe engaged employee as individuals who are highly energetic and involved in their job. Such employees reflect strong work involvement and commitment towards organisation. They shows keen interest in their work and involve themselves in their work without noticing that time passes (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).

Harter et al. (2002) from the Gallup organization defined employee engagement as “an individual’s involvement and satisfaction with as well as enthusiasm for work”. On the other hand Hewitt Associates says that employee engagement is the state in which individuals are emotionally and intellectually committed towards organisation (Wellins, Berthal, & Phelps). Another consulting firm, Towers Perrin (2003) defined engagement as the “extent to which employees put discretionary effort into their work beyond the minimum requirement to get the job done”.

Of the numerous studies on employee engagement, at least four main approaches emerged in academic context; Maslach & Leiter’s (1992) “Job Engagement”, Schaufeli & Colleagues (2002; 2006; 2007) “Work Engagement”, Shirom’s (2003) “vigor”, & Britt’s (1999) “Self Engagement”. Schaufeli et al (2002) defined Work Engagement as “a positive and work related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication & absorption” (p.24) Vigor is further characterized as highly energetic and high level of mental resilience while at work (Bakker and Demerouti, 2008). It is featured by willingness to make efforts in work. Dedication is
characterized as highly involved in work, strong identification with work and also include feelings of pride, enthusiasm (Chughtai and Buckley, 2008) while absorption means highly concentrated and happily immersed in work in which feeling that time passes quickly (Bakker and Demerouti, 2008). In the present study only Schaufeli’s work engagement approach was reviewed and formed the basis of present research.

The concept of work engagement and its relationship with other factors was theoretically studied through JD-R model. Specifically JD-R model has been used to study the antecedents and consequences of employee engagement in academic context (JD-R; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Meyer and Gagne, 2008; Jimmieson & Amiot, 2009; Allen & Mellor, 2002; Hakanen, Schaufeli & Ahola, 2008; Llorens et al., 2007; Mauno, Kinnunen, & Ruokolainen, 2007; Langelaan et al., 2006).

1.1.1 Definitions of Employee Engagement

Employee engagement is a multidimensional concept and different studies reveal different definitions of employee engagement but because it is beyond the scope of the research to explain all those definitions only few are explained in the following section

William.A.Kahn (1990) was the first to conceptualize employee engagement. He explained employee engagement as the “harnessing of organizational member’s selves to their work roles”

Harter et al. (2002) from the Gallup organization defined employee engagement as “an individual’s involvement and satisfaction with as well as enthusiasm for work”

Schmidt et al. (1993) described employee engagement as an “an employee’s involvement with, commitment to and satisfaction with work.”

Another consulting firm, Towers Perrin (2003) stated that engagement represents the extent to which employees put discretionary effort into their work beyond the minimum requirement to get the job done.
Hewitt Associates (2004) defined employee engagement as the “the state in which individuals are emotionally and intellectually committed towards organisation”

DDI (2005) defines employee engagement as “the extent to which people enjoy and believe what they do”

Buckingham & Coffman (1999) says that feeling of engagement depends on the strength of the workplace not necessarily on corporate leadership

According to William H. Macey and Benjamin Schneider (2008), employee engagement refers to positive feelings on the part of employees about their jobs and also the motivation and efforts put by them into their work. Engagement leads to positive employee behaviors which in turn lead to organizational success.

1.1.2 Related Constructs

While the area of engagement is interesting at the same time it is quite confusing concept because of inconsistency in definitions. Some authors argue that engagement is a multidimensional construct while some says it is a global construct as it is a combination of job satisfaction, job involvement, organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behavior.

**Job Satisfaction:** Job satisfaction is defined as a positive emotional state resulting from the job experiences (Locke and Henne, 1986). It is positively related with organizational commitment, job involvement and mental health and it is negatively related with turnover.

On the other hand, employee engagement is much more than job satisfaction. It occurs when multiple job factors meet out.

**Job Involvement:** Job involvement is the degree to which one is busy with, engaged in his job (Paullay, et al., 1994)

**Organizational Commitment:** Organizational commitment is the degree to which individual is identified with his job and committed towards his work (Dessler, 1999). Allen and Meyer (1990) identify three types of commitment:
i. Affective Commitment: it occurs when an employee feels emotional attachment towards his organization

ii. Continuance Commitment: it is related with the employee’s recognition of the costs involved in leaving an organization.

iii. Normative Commitment: it is related with the moral obligation to remain with the organization

But employee engagement is very closely related with the affective commitment. But commitment and engagement are not considered as same. Rather commitment is an element of engagement (Little, 2006)

Organizational Citizenship Behavior: OCBs are discretionary behaviors which are beyond formal obligations. It is an outcome of the attitudes of job satisfaction and organizational commitment which seems to be similar to the definitions in the engagement literature of willingness to go extra mile (Robinson, 2004)

1.1.3 Antecedents of Employee Engagement

There are various studies done by researchers and on the basis of their studies models of employee engagement have been developed till date. These researches revealed that there are no fixed all purpose lists of engagement drivers. Gallup organization (1999) developed a model to examine the relationship of management and organization. It believes that combination of employee job fit with manager will lead to have engaged employee.

JD-R model categorized job related factors into two groups i.e. job demands and job resources. According to this model job demands are those aspects which require physical and psychological skills, for example job insecurity (Kinnunen, Mauno & Ruokolainen 2007), unfavorable organizational climate (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Job demand is something which reduces energy (Vigor) and reduce dedication. On the other hand job resources are psychological, physical and organizational aspects of job that help employees to achieve goals. For example pay, career etc. According to JD-R model various aspects of job demands and job resources are related with engagement and its dimensions i.e. vigor, dedication and absorption.
According to Hewitt model drivers of engagement are

i. People  
ii. Compensation  
iii. Processes and procedures  
iv. Quality of life  
v. Opportunities  
vi. Work values

Robinson et al (2004) from his study found “feeling valued and involved” as a driver of engagement and within this particular dimension he found many elements like performance appraisal, communication, pay & benefits, co-operation, health & safety and many more that have varying influence on the feeling of valued and involvement. Findings of the study of Robinson et al (2004) suggest that many of the drivers of engagement are common to all organisation’s irrespective of sector with some variation in the strength of each driver.

Penna (2006) in his study presented a hierarchy of engagement factors and in this hierarchy factor of “meaning at work” (the situation where the employee is being valued, appreciated, have sense of belonging with the organization and also they feel they are contributing to organization) is found to have impact on engagement. Also he found that factors like leadership, trust, respect, development, learning etc are making contribution towards increasing engagement.

Studies by Mercer (2007) was conducted through collecting data from 22 countries and four global drivers of employee engagement were identified namely recognition and rewards, communication, leadership and work itself.

Based on the study of Karen Kelly Wollard and Brad Shuck (2011) till now 42 antecedents (individual as well as organizational) are found which make impact on the level of employee engagement among which half were empirically and conceptually tested. List of the individual antecedents and organizational antecedents which was given by the author is mentioned below:
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1.1.4 Consequences of Employee Engagement:

Many consulting firms have also conducted various studies on employee engagement and and presented various outcomes of employee engagement including sales and revenue growth (DDI; Gallup,2007; Hewitt Associates, 2004; ISR, 2007; Towers Perrin,2003;) and reduced turnover (Towers Perrin,2003; DDI)

Gallup organisation is an international organizational research firm which conducted the most influential surveys on employee engagement. Studies by Gallup organisation found the links between employee engagement, customer loyalty and
business growth which also helped many companies worldwide to improve the performance through employee engagement.

Studies done by Hewitt (2004) also suggest that there is correlation between employee engagement and sales growth, employee retention and productivity.

In academics community, employee engagement is quite new and emerging concept since the definitions are still being tested for validity and there are very few antecedents & consequences are identified in academic context. The concept requires more studies so that more accurate understanding of employee engagement can be established.

In the past more than 20 years, research on employee engagement yielded various conceptualizations. Employee engagement researchers continue to call for studies that compare various concepts of employee engagement to make a clear concept of it. Most of the studies on employee engagement conducted by consulting firm focused on industries but there are very few studies that focused academics. And so this study was intended to examine as to what influences employee engagement and how employee engagement influences other variables specifically in academics.

1.2 TALENT RETENTION

Talent may be defined as the inherent ability of an individual to do a particular task in particular way. (Sinha, Vol 8, Issue 1, Feb 2008). Talent is something valuable and rare to imitate. Talent is any inbuilt capacity that enables an individual to display high performance that requires special skills & training (Simonton, 1999, p.436). There is no single definition of talent. On one hand it is viewed as powerful and innate component (Echols, 2007) On the other hand , it is believed that factors of working environment cause talent to emerge (Barab and Plucker 2002).

Talent retention refers to various practices of the organisation which lead to employees stick to organisation for long. Every organisation invests cost in terms of time, money, training to make them appropriate for the working of the Organisation. The organisations face a great loss when employees leave the job after becoming suitable to the organisation.
Employee retention is a systematic effort by the employers which lead to create a favorable environment for the employees to work which in turn encourages them to remain with the organisation. Retention of employees is significant to the long term success of the organisation. Retaining the talented staff ensures satisfaction to students (in the case of academics) to the students and satisfied colleagues. Failing to retain talented staff is a costly aspect for every organisation. Smart employers always realize the importance of talent retention and so make efforts to increase the retention rate. After any organisation invested time and cost to train the employees to make them productive, it must also find out the strategies to generate the profit from the trained employees and so it calls for identifying innovate ways or strategies to retain talent. Organisations, now a days have also realized retaining employees is much more cost effective than to replace them. When we talk about retention it means to retain the talented or skilled employees. Talented employees always have good opportunities in their hand and they may easily get attracted to other organisation if find themselves dissatisfied with the present employees. If the organisation neglects this dissatisfaction of their employees, they would be left with no talented employees.

As the competitive environment is increasing day by day and so the demand of talented employees, the employers have to identify the ways to retain them. So, this study is done with a view to identify the ways to retain the talent especially in academics. Study also focuses employee engagement as a tool which enhances talent retention.

Employee retention involves taking measures to encourage employees to remain in the organization for the maximum period of time. Organisations face lot of problem in employee retention. Hiring knowledgeable people for the job is essential for every employer but retention is more important than hiring. There is no lack of opportunities for talented people. There are many organizations which are always in search for such employees. If a person feels dissatisfied by the job he’s doing, he may switch over to the organisations which fulfills his needs and desires. And so it becomes very important for organizations to retain their employees (Nase Daniel, 2009)
According to Get Les McKeow, 2007 (http://www.articlesbase.com) employee retention is defined as “effective employee retention is a systematic effort by employers to create and foster an environment that encourages current employees to remain employed by having policies and practices in place that concentrate on their divers needs. Also the cost of employee turnover is a matter of concern (including hiring costs, productivity loss). Replacement costs usually are 2.5 times the salary of the individual. The costs connected with turnover may include lost customers, business and damaged morale. In addition there are the hard costs of time spent in screening, verifying credentials, references, interviewing, hiring, and training the new employee just to get back to where you started.”

Talented employees are no longer available in plenty nor are they easily replaceable. Thus the organizations are faced with the daunting task of attracting, retaining, growing its people in competitive advantage.

Various researches have been done to identify the factors relating to employee retention. Studies found that these factors are situated on both organizational & employee levels. Factors on organizational sides may be challenging work, empowerment, new opportunities etc. (Birt et al., 2004). Walker (2001) identified various factors which enhance retention. They were compensation & appreciation of the work performed, provision of challenging work, opportunities to learn, positive relationships with colleagues, recognition of capabilities & performance contributions, good work life balance & good communication within organisation. Hytter (2007) stated that workplace factors like rewards, career opportunities, training and development of skills, work life balance have an indirect influence on retention. Other researchers like Arnold (2005), Hezman(2005) and Hiltrop (1999) also found that effective training & opportunities to learn & develop enhance retention. Rodriguez, 2008 shown that if employees feel they are no longer growing, they begin to look new job opportunities. Meaningful work and rewards are what employees are looking for. They now demand control over their careers, an enhanced pace of learning individualized attention, responsive management systems and exciting possibility of unlimited growth.
1.2.1 Talent Retention in Academics:

Although, there is difference between the culture of industries and education field but it has to be appreciated that as issues related to talent retention within and outside the education are concerned, there are more similarities than that of differences.

There are basically three important constraints in any institution and they are:- teaching faculty, environment and infrastructure. With the gap in demand supply for talent the institutes experience shortage of talent. If we go through trend few years back people showed less inclination for teaching as a career because this sector was not having very high levels of salary as compared to corporate world. And so it also had impact on the number of candidates opting for PhD qualification as they never took teaching as their profession. But this situation forced serious thinking regarding the revision of compensation levels in education field.

Research done by Stumpf et al. (2002) also focused on the situation changed in academics. The research found that deans of more than 270 business schools in US experienced shortage of PhD faculty which was the biggest challenge faced by the schools. This study also emphasized the importance of quality teaching faculty.

It is very difficult to define quality teaching in one single way. Some says quality is reflected by the output of teaching in terms of feedback by students and colleagues (Boyer, 1990) whereas some says that factors like learning, type of knowledge etc. reflects excellence of teaching (Kreber). Some says excellence of teaching faculty can be found by quality of scholarly research papers he writes (Nicholls, 2004). It is debatable issue on teaching excellence as different organizations have different opinions as quality teachers.

On the basis of availability of research and research done by Raman Kumar (2014) some of the characteristics of good teaching faculty are mentioned below:

1. Passion: It is the passion for teaching and doing activities to develop teaching skills, adopting techniques for promoting.
2. Communication skills: Demonstration, presentation, having knowledge to share and knowing how to say it, raising important questions rather than giving lectures, command over students, maintaining discipline among students. Good teacher motivates students and has to be empathetic.

3. Conductive student-teaching faculty interface: How teachers interact with students, to what extent he/she is accessible to student and how they cooperate with students

4. Effective and active learning: Motivating students to take initiative and proactive, also encourage them to develop the habit of self learning.

5. Balancing between the expectations of students and teachers: Acknowledging expectations of students and also let them know about what they can expect from teacher and thereby creating learning environment.

6. Accepting diversity of student’s talent: As the students in a classroom are diversified, a good teacher demonstrates respect for the students and their diversity and adopts the learning needs of different students.

The competence of teaching faculty, their performance, qualification, richness and diversity of research output by them play a significant role in institute’s ranking. Apart from their academic significance, Dudestadt found “ethical administration of institutions” as one more important role of teaching faculty. Attracting good faculties and retaining them are important activities for any educational institution but retention of good faculty has become a very challenging task for them. Many doctorates (mostly in business schools) not only leave their jobs but also the profession of teaching and move to other sectors. Main reason is the salary levels paid to them are at times half in comparison to the salary levels paid in industrial sector (Nienhuis, 1994)

Fresher in teaching profession mostly quit the jobs and even teaching profession which harms both the institution and student performance (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003; Howard, 2003). It is however well known to the institutions that in order to retain the talented faculty, they need not only to pay good salary but also make the environment healthy i.e Compensation level only does not always matters for sufficient satisfaction among teaching faculty (Nienhuis, 1994). Some research
studies suggest that fairness of salary with perceived to equity enhances the satisfaction and commitment. Also there are non-financial factors like promotions, allowances for research work, leave benefits etc. also helps in retention of teaching faculty.

It is clear that faculty plays important role in development of student’s knowledge as per needs & expectations of the corporate world. Teacher is the only source that helps student make aware about taking and making right decisions for their career life. Therefore it is clear that competence level of teachers plays very important role in developing students and so the brand image of the institution. But the fact is that even good institutions face problem of retention. Therefore it becomes important for the institutions should design the policies in order to effectively compete with other institutions for retaining the best teaching faculty. Also it might be fruitful to implement retention strategies. Retention of good faculties has become the important issue for the institutions as they are the building blocks of the institutions. The scenario is that all the educational institutions are competing with each other in retaining the best available faculty talent especially the doctorates.

1.2.2 Indian Perspective of Talent Retention in Academics:

India is having only few very good institutions of higher education but they face the severe shortage of good teaching faculty. But good teaching faculties, if they have opportunities, prefer working in corporate sector in view of faster growth. So there comes the requirement for institutions to make effective retention strategies. With this view both institutions and the government started working for these issues.

At the time immediate after independence, higher education was restricted to be available for elite classes. But in 1960s there was seen a big jump in number of institutions in Government as well as private. And during the last two decades, with the liberalization in India, the Government started enrolling maximum number of students in the schools. Initially the appointment of faculties was done not on the merit basis but on the basis of caste, religion etc. But the impact of liberalization and globalization was seen on education sector which came with advanced technology and which then required faculties having diverse knowledge. At the same time it has to be accepted that through education only consistent and sustainable growth can be
made possible. Management of the institutes should place the right faculty at the right place and the HR policies should be based on best practices and in tuned with the practices followed by top institutions. Also these policies should cover all HR related issues like salary, leaves, relationships, recognition, career opportunity etc. If the HR policies are not properly designed and implemented, the teaching faculty will get attracted by other institutions.

1.3 Working Environment:

Now days, employees expect a lot from the jobs beyond salary/ compensation or financial benefits. One of the important factors among these is good working environment. Many researches (Brown, 1967; Moore and Gardner, 1992; Stein, 2000; Beck, 2001;) shows that reasons for employee departure may be many like organizational bad practices, salary and benefits, poor working conditions and unfavorable working environment. The term working environment refers to the surroundings within which employee work (www.businessdictionary.com). It includes the physical, social and psychological conditions and all other factors that influence work. Working environment also includes supervisory support, recognition programs, communication practices etc. (Dr. C.B Gupta, human resource management, 2008).

According to European Industrial Relations Dictionary (2007) Working environment covers matters related to work and work activities, training, health and safety, work life balance etc. Working environment includes non-pay aspects, leaves/ breaks, health and safety related aspects such as lighting and ventilation of work places, safety at work place, disciplinary procedures (John Black, 2002).

Overall, if the employees treated well by the organization, they are more likely to stay. Treatment includes importance to them, recognition they receive from the organization, acknowledgement they get on their birthdays or anniversaries, receiving bonuses on special occasions and other perks. Working environment is a set of all surroundings, circumstances, environment, situations, behavior of employer and colleagues, organizational attitude etc. Up to great extent, the efficiency of the employees is influenced by the environment in which he works. On the basis of review of literature, research done by Demerouti and Cropanzano, 2010
and Schaufeli and Salanova, 2008 concluded that even engagement is associated with employee attitudes, employee psychological well-being, psychological conditions etc. Working environment is also related to the factors present at the workplace that gives satisfaction to the employees. Studies of Mc Cashland 1999, Miles 2001 & Harter et al., 2002, Holbeche and Springett, 2003 reveals that employee engagement is something that is produced by the working environment factors.

Working environment is considered as one of the important factors which lead to talent retention (Zeytinoglu & Denton, 2005) and people intent to stay with organizations that provide good working environment (Ramlal 2003). Study of Wiesenberger and Associates (1993) found that recognition from bosses, colleagues and co-workers enhance the loyalty and retention.

1.3.1 Factors of Working Environment:

Working environment is a complete set of features that comprise surroundings around the work. It refers to the conditions that the employee has in its surroundings. It includes all the factors that act on the body and mind of the employees. There are certain physical and psychological conditions present at the workplace that impact the engagement level and the performance of the employees. Some of them are mentioned as follows:

1. Atmospheric Conditions
2. Encouragement
3. Information about work
4. Involvement in decision making
5. Flexi time programs
6. Rest pauses
7. Rewards and recognition
8. Management practices etc.
REFERENCES


Introduction


