CHAPTER-2
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

The huge interest which Employee Engagement (EE) as a terminology, draws from the academicians and consultancy practitioners seems to be enormous. EE as of now has been very successful in attracting the industry because of the organization level outcomes it promises. Almost every organization at this point of time is conducting an EE survey in order to know the engagement levels of their employees. The growing problem of attrition is almost similar in every organization. So the quest is how to engage the employees, so that they stay and raise the performance for the betterment of the organizations. EE has in recent times materialized as a subject of discussion in the HRD (human resource development) community, and the conversation seems to be escalating. The initial manuscript publications began emerging in academy-sponsored conference proceedings (Shuck & Albornoz, 2008) in the year 2008 and then in the year 2009, the first publication having the usage of the expression employee engagement appeared in a HRD–sponsored journal (Chalofsky & Krishna, 2009). Shuck and Wollard, (2010) regard EE as a novice construct and they equate EE with those constructs which are in the initial phases of development, they further mentioned that new constructs as EE usually requires steadiness in definition and stable application across different fields. For some academicians and authors, EE is basically a re-conceptualization of established and well-investigated constructs depicting an old phenomenon like an old wine in a new bottle or same lady-different dress as elucidated by Ferguson (2007). However, there are others authors who advocate the uniqueness of EE as a construct (Saks, 2006). Still further, a few peer-reviewed measures or approaches for evaluating EE currently exists (for a listing of known measures, Christian et al., 2011). This makes it even more glaring that rigorous study is still the need of the hour as far as measurement of EE as a construct is concerned with. The community is concerned with the academic researches which underpin the construct of EE and not just the industry or consultancy based researches which favour EE because it shows clear causal relationship with organization based variables such as profitability. Evidently therefore, there appears great scope for
erudite study, intensification, and discussion around the topic of EE, its antecedents in an organization and the consequences which follow once the construct of EE is underpinned theoretically. On the contrary, in spite of being comparatively novice to scholastic scope, EE has considerably drawn attention and thus has gained esteem in the practitioner literature since the early 1990s (Clifton & Nelson, 1992). The first revolutionary work on EE dates back to 1990 in which Kahn (1990) introduced the concept of Personal Engagement. Since then numerous authors have contributed to the existing literature on EE. The consulting groups like Gallup, Hewitt Associates, DDI, CIPD have shown considerable interest in bringing forth the concept of EE in the organizations and propagating the earnest role which EE can play in maintaining the employee quotient over the long run. However, the interests shown by different and varied groups have actually created a problem around the construct which is not immaculate as yet. The reason behind the problem is the unique set of heterogeneous researches being carried out without focussing on the innate characteristics of what EE can be. The consultant groups for example are more inclined towards producing a concept which leads to the development of unique HRD in consonance with organizational development which looms largely as fashionable in the industry echelons. In addition to this some researchers and consultants regard EE to be the foundation to talent management and consequently business prosperity. On this pretext the concept of EE has churned out well in the industry as well as academic circles, consequently developing a considerable practitioner following.

So the question which needs to be asked is that a how concept which is graded in the nascent stage of development, be regarded as a keystone to business success. When the context is nascent stage of development it means differing definitions by engagement researchers up till now, very little commonalities, and few validated measures to measure EE in any organizational context. So the focus of this research study is to look into the differing aspects of EE, to bring the common researches and validate the measures. The researcher’s main aim is to investigate into the antecedents of EE, give a working definition of EE, unify the most glaring researches in the field of EE done thus far, incorporate and integrate the consequences of having an engaged workforce, validate the measurement of EE (both the driver scale, and EE) in the
organizations, and lastly to bring out a model of EE which would integrate the predictors, outcomes, and EE in the most precise way. The first step is the identification of the drivers of EE, which the researcher planned to execute in the literature review itself. The review of literature brings out a discussion on the construct of EE. The review of literature has been carried out for the consequences of EE, i.e., assessment of the relationship of EE with varied outcomes identified, thus answering the questions which pertains to employee’s In-Role Performance (IRP), Job Involvement (JI), Job Satisfaction (JS), and the Intention to Stay (ITS).

So the main objectives of literature review undertaken are:

1. To study the construct of EE.
2. To study the drivers of EE and identify the most relevant drivers through the driver identification process.
3. To study the varied consequences of EE which have been commonly depicted in academic and consultant literature.

### 2.2 Employee Engagement- A Study of the Construct

Recently, there has been a great enthusiasm relating to EE. Many of the authors and researchers have propagated the theory which advocates that EE has a causal effect on the organization level outcomes such as financial performance e.g., shareholders return on investment, employee outcomes, organizational success to name a few (Bates, 2004; Baumruk, 2004; Harter et al., 2002; Richman, 2006). There is also a fear among the industry experts and consultants that the level of EE is on a decline and there are increasing cases of disengagement exhibited by the employees today (Bates, 2004; Richman, 2006). The researcher again wants to press on the point that though unfortunate, most of the work done on EE or written about EE comes from the practitioner literature and consulting firms. For any construct to be established in entirety, and its effect justified; the consequent research needs to be conducted by the academicians and its theories validated and examined thereof. Robinson, Perryman, and Hayday (2004) report the lack of adequate research in the academic literature on EE.
Engagement Defined

The compilation of definition for EE is indeed a difficult task, and the main impediment which could be recognised in compiling information on EE, has been the dearth of a general definition and measurement of EE (Melcrum Publishing, 2005). The assessment of such dearth was reinforced when Ferguson (2007) further elaborated that there still exists the lack of a universal definition of EE. The topic of EE has become very popular in a limited time span; however, the interest in EE does not match with a very little academic and empirical research study (Robinson et al., 2004). Further, the construct of EE these days is increasingly been used as an umbrella term which may include many concepts and constructs, even to repackaging of other constructs to some extent (Macey & Schneider 2008; Saks 2008). Consequently, the EE has now been construed by many researchers as a fad construct. The critics of the consultancy definitions given by the industry consultants also make a point that EE has been defined in numerous ways, and for that matter it resembles some of the constructs already established like Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB), Job Involvement (JI), and Organizational Commitment (Robinson et al., 2004). Most commonly EE has been equated in the same sense as being committed to the organization emotionally and cognitively (Baumruk, 2004; Richman, 2006; Shaw, 2005). Frank et al., (2004) also equated EE with the quantum of unrestricted (discretionary) endeavour exercised by employees while doing their works depicting OCB at work. Kahn (1990, p. 694) in the pioneering work of engagement defines engagement as the harnessing of the organization’s member selves to the work roles. This harnessing or utilisation of selves takes place while performing a work role. He further advocates that in engagement people utilize and articulate themselves cognitively, emotionally, and physically. As far as the interest EE draws is enormous. Since, the pioneering work of Kahn (1990), across a plethora of academic disciplines numerous peer-reviewed articles have been published which are related to engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008; Christian et al., 2011; Schaufeli & Salanova, 2010). It has also been reported by numerous authors that articles related to engagement have started emerging in journals and proceedings related to HRD (Berry & Morris, 2008; Chalofsky & Krishna, 2009; Nimon, Zigarmi, Houson, Witt, &
Diehl, 2011; Shuck, 2011), which clearly depicts the construct’s progress and continued research related to it. Shuck and Wollard (2010, p. 103) define EE as “an individual employee’s cognitive, emotional, and behavioural state directed toward desired organizational outcomes”. O’Reilly (2007) mentions the different types of engagement identified varied across three main spectrums:

1. Engagement as a momentary or pervasive experience.
2. The various sub-constructs that make up engagement.
3. The engagement relationship as either: a relationship between employees and their organization, employees and their work role, or employees and their work colleagues.

Employee Engagement was defined by Kahn (1990, p. 694) as “the harnessing of organization members’ selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances”. The cognitive or intellectual dimension of EE is related to the belief of the employee about the organization s/he is working in, the leaders who lead the organization and the conditions at work. The emotional facet is concerned with how employees feel about their organization, their leaders, and the working conditions they experience, and what kind of emotional attitude they carry for their organization and leaders. To be engaged in the workplace the employee needs to exert one’s self to the work role entrusted. In order to fulfil those work roles, physical energies also need to be applied in order to cater or accomplish the task assigned. Thus, according to Kahn (1990), engagement signifies psychological (cognitive and emotional) as well as physical presence whilst occupying and performing an organizational role.

EE is acknowledged as a multi-faceted, multidimensional construct, as propounded by Kahn (1990), however, Truss, Soane, Edwards, Wisdom, Croll, and Burnett (2006) define EE precisely as ‘passion for work’, a psychological state which seems to contain the three dimensions of engagement proposed by Kahn (1990). Kahn (1992) later refined the research work by investigating on the significance of ‘psychological presence.’ In quintessence, Kahn advocated that employees, who are engaged, have a presence which is psychological in nature; this psychological presence encompasses
the physical attributes like being attentive, integrated, connected, and focussed (1992). Schaufeli, Martinez, Marques-Pinto, Salanova and Bakker’s (2002) work on engagement draws parallel with the work of Kahn (1992) that engagement is a state of mind which is optimistic and satisfying and is depicted by vigour, dedication, and absorption (May et al., 2004; Rothbard, 2001). The most common aspect of the definitions of engagement which has been deciphered thus far is that it is a positive psychological state; Bakker & Schaufeli (2008) envisage that EE connects the employee’s state of mind with their work and their performance.

2.3 Progression of Employee Engagement

Before the work of Kahn (1990) the term engagement was not used in the same context. The earliest works most probably related to engagement was on ‘embracement’ which was used to describe the investing of one’s self and energy (Goffman, 1961). Role embracement was construed as an articulated attachment to the work role more similar to perceptible investment of attention and effort (Goffman, 1961). Kahn (1990) used the role embracement concept and theorised a framework to appreciate the human nature as to why an employee invests varying degree of organizational selves in the performance of the work role. However, Kahn made a different point by stating that Goffman’s work emphasized on momentary face-to-face instances, a different setting however governs the need to fit the organizational life which is “ongoing, emotionally charged, and psychologically complex” (Diamond & Allcorn 1985). Several disciplines were investigated by Kahn (1990), to fully gauge the complex and differing levels of role attachment articulated by individual employees, It was assessed and assimilated that psychologists (Freud, 1922), sociologists (Goffman 1961, Merton 1957) and group theorists (Slater 1966, Smith & Berg 1987) had an unifying idea which distinguished that individuals are generally tentative about being members of progressive groups and systems. Thus they look to shield themselves both from separation and engulfment by moving away and towards the membership (Kahn 1990), which depicts the importance of membership in organizations.
The employment and articulation of the ‘preferred self’ is then exhibited in the tasks and performances. The ‘preferred self’ is the self-dimension which employees preferably employ to express when performing a certain role. Kahn (1990, p. 700) explains this concept by examining the role of a scuba diving instructor, while giving instruction to the students the instructor could experience moments of pure personal engagement. The instructor could fully discharge his role by articulating his preferred self in cognitive, emotional, and behavioural manner. Kahn (1990) also talks about personal disengagement wherein the withdrawal of preferred self in those behaviours which depict a lack of connection i.e., a person takes back one’s preferred connection to remove energies from physical, emotional, and cognitive employment of self. Kahn (1990) compared this to burnout (Maslach, 1982) and automatic or robotic behaviour displayed at work (Hochschild, 1983).

Personal Engagement

Kahn’s (1990) work revolved around the interviews he conducted with the 16 summer camp counsellors and 16 members of an architecture firm. In the camp he noticed how the employees dwelt with their responsibility at work on a moment-by-moment basis. He took into consideration the multiple levels of influences (individual, interpersonal, group, intergroup, and organizational) when making the observations. He observed the varied types of conditions on work, and assessed the awareness, employment, expression, and withdrawal of self during role performances at work.

The next question which the study assessed was the maintenance of the state of engagement. In order to maintain this state, firstly Kahn advocated that the job or work being catered to should be embraced as a psychological meaningful experience. Further, the employees should have the necessary job resources to employ on the job; the resources at their disposal could possibly make the employees confident in their abilities to cater to the task and thus be psychologically available. Thirdly, psychological safety was identified as a requisite in the sense that employee’s should experience safety without affecting their self-image and career adversely (Kahn, 1990). The possible disengagement of employees could be traced to a situation in which an employee does not experience the three psychological states of
meaningfulness, availability, and safety. The disengaged employee then withdraws the energies (cognitive, emotional, and physical) employed at work. The possible withdrawal of energies as emphasized by Kahn (1990) may further lead to burnout, robotic behaviour, and probably effort shrinkage. The work of Kahn (1990) was investigated further by May et al. (2004) in their ethnographic study, the results demonstrated that all the three psychological conditions were positively linked to the construct of EE.

Rothbard (2001, p. 656) defines engagement with a new stead that engagement is a psychological construct coupled with two important contributors’ viz., attention and absorption. Attention to the intellectual accessibility and the time expended in thinking about the job role entrusted. Absorption, on the other hand, signifies being immersed in a job role and could be portrayed as the intensity of one’s focus on a role.

**Employee Engagement**

The building blocks of any organization are the employees. The importance of employees nowadays is largely being felt by the organizations all across the globe. For instance, the belief of ‘Customer First’ is now being replaced by ‘Employee First’ (Nayar, 2010). The prime reason being the thought process which says that - without employees or to be precise engaged employees; the organization functions like a body without a soul. The farce is quite obvious then! Employing of the organization’s intellectual capital is readily being established as the foundation of competitive advantage (Becker & Huselid, 1998; Buckingham & Vosburgh, 2001), EE is the answer to the successful navigation of problems and building intellectual capital in the organizations. It is very much an organization’s self interest that can build wealth as fast as disgruntled one can destroy it.

Catlette and Hadden (2001) have put it this way that an organization’s self-interest and awareness can bring about wealth and foster development; on the contrary discontented employees can cause the maximum damage and destruction. So the idea is to bring about an awareness in the employees so that they are committed to the work entrusted, motivated towards self and others, full of vigour and energy levels, and an enthusiastic problem solver. Engaged employees display cognition and
emotion towards the job and the accomplishment thereof, as they are engrossed in their work, put their heart up their sleeves, display excitement about the work role, exercise energy in their work, and are, therefore, the basis of competitive advantage for the organization (Katzenbach, 2000). The unrestricted endeavour which an employee displays towards the organization or towards her/his colleagues is her/his sole prerogative (Catlette & Hadden, 2001). The engaged employees are more likely to exhibit unrestricted endeavours (discretionary behaviour) and augment individual performance (Corporate Leadership Council, 2004). They are less likely to experience cynicism and exhaustion. Further, an employee who is engaged at work will consistently perform in an outstanding fashion, always achieving new heights of excellence (Harter et al., 2002). Towers Perrin (2003) survey affirms that the alignment of the company programs and practices in order to drive the opportune conduct from the employees is the necessary step in bringing forth EE in the organization; having taken the step the organization then positions itself to comprehend an appropriate return. The Towers Perrin (2003) report also emphasize about the necessity of the organizations to give attention to the factors that influence engagement like reasonable remuneration, work life balance, self-actualisation opportunities, reasonable competitive benefits, enriching work, supportive employer, and their reputation thereof, ability of co-workers, etc. (Beauchesne, 2005).

The practical or consultancy research of EE moves around the varied researches carried out by the Gallup Research Group. Employee Engagement (EE), a term coined in modern usage, by the Gallup Research group, seems to attract the practioners and academicians alike. EE has been publicized to have a causal relationship with productivity, profitability, employee retention, safety, and customer satisfaction (Buckingham & Coffman, 1999; Coffman & Gonzalez-Molina, 2002). Such causal relationship with organizational outcomes has not been shown for most of the traditional constructs viz., job satisfaction (Fisher & Locke, 1992).

The intention behind the Gallup Research Group has been to create a comparative measure for workplaces all across the globe. Several books, consulting magazines, academic journals have been launched by Gallup Research Group, and subsequently put on the organization’s website. The refinement of a set of employee opinion
questions related to organizational outcomes on which Gallup Research Group have been working all along was reported (Buckingham & Coffman, 1999).

Gallup’s recent meta-analysis depicts striking variability in terms of key business results between the top and junior quartile workgroups (2010). This meta-analysis is utilised as a tool to validate the 12 item viz., Gallup Q 12. The results prove that those companies which are having higher engagement boast of showcasing 3.9 times the EPS growth rate when evaluated with organizations having lower engagement.

The Gallup (2010) study also establishes a relationship with return on investment. Increasing EE directly correlates with a positive effect on key business metrics. The statistically derived 12 items, called the Gallup Workplace Audit (GWA), which measures EE, are related to productivity, profitability, employee retention, and customer service at the business unit level (hospital, hotel, factory, etc.). They report that employees who score high on the questions are “emotionally engaged” in the work and the organization.

The second book “Follow This Path” coming of Gallup Group states that engagement is not just about the thinking, but also envisages the feelings of the employees (Coffman & Gonzalez-Molina, 2002). They portray the engaged employees to be the embodiment of the economic force that drives the profitability and growth of an organization. The grouping of employees based on the level of engagement was also categorised as the actively engaged, the non-engaged, and the actively disengaged employees.

Gallup (2006) further researched on approximately 24,000 organizations made a comparative study of the top quartile and bottom quartile financial performance with engagement scores of the employees. Those organizations which were having their employees in the bottom quartile reported 31-51% aggravated employee attrition, 51% augmented inventory contraction, and 62% more employee accidents. On the contrary, the organizations which featured in the top quartile reported 18% higher productivity, 12% augmented profitability, and an increased customer advocacy of 12%.

The main objective of engagement, as put forth by Towers Perrin (2003), is the discretionary effort which ultimately augments organizational performance.
Continuing with the earlier research, Towers Perrin (2007) investigated and reported that those organizations with more engaged employees subsequently increased their operating income by 19% and earning per share (EPS) by 28% annually. EE, however, defined by consultancy group’s draws resemblance from the academician’s definition of EE, as they refer EE to be a pervasive state of being that employees experience based on their emotional and intellectual involvement with their organization (Hewitt Associates, 2003; Towers Perrin, 2003).

Johnson (2011) asserts that if applied correctly the engagement data can well act as a warning system for the organization, the study reports a negative correlation between the specific instances of workplace deviations and levels of EE within the organization. The causal relationship measured through statistical methods, between engagement and financial organizational success has been reported by numerous studies. For instance, Cedric (2011) asserts in the report ‘Employee Engagement Underpins Business’, that organizations with highly engaged employees are much better off than those organizations having less engaged employees in terms of operating income, net income growth, and earnings per share.

The term EE has been employed in numerous ways. On a general note, business and industry consultancies have centred their interest on the bottom line, and thereby drawing base comparisons by employing the concept of EE. In this scenario, engagement is the measure of “energy and vigour” that employees demonstrate for their organization. Consequently, this energy, vigour, and passion displayed by the employees transforms into action which ultimately augments the business results (bottom line) of their organization (Buckingham & Coffman, 1999; Hewitt Associates, 2003). The organizations, however, need to generate and manage engagement and for that the specific set of drivers needs to be identified. The drivers of engagement in any organization may include supervisory relations, co-workers relation, job resources, workplace spirituality, etc. This form of engagement is similar to that proposed in the current study, as it is most similar to the type of engagement operating in the Indian organizations.

**Burnout and Engagement:** Maslach and Leiter (1997) in an entirely different research on EE, assert that the construct of engagement is a pervasive state of being.
They explain further by describing a continuum in which one pole represents burnout and the other extreme pole of the same continuum depicts engagement. They describe engagement to be the positive antithesis to burnout. The energetic employee concept has been advocated by Maslach and Leiter (1997) in which an engaged employee is willing to commit time and effort on their job, simultaneously feeling competent in the work they are catering to. The sense of psychological meaningfulness which one experiences while working on the job, and secondly the psychological availability i.e., the confidence required to be demonstrated while performing the job role, is visualized by Maslach and Leiter (1997), almost in conformity to the work of Kahn (1990) on personal engagement.

The distinguishing component of the work of Maslach and Leiter (1997) however is the incorporation of the energetic dimension to the engagement concept, though Kahn (1990) also discusses about energy in the physical engagement component of personal engagement. Maslach and Leiter (1997) describe engaged employees as energised, enthused, and effective, and burned out employees as exhausted and cynical with low levels of self-efficacy.

Work Engagement: The concept of work engagement was first propounded by Schaufeli et al., (2002). Their research refined the engagement/burnout continuum propounded by Maslach and Leiter (1997). They did agree with the work Maslach and Leiter (1997) in which the negative relation of engagement and burnout has been reported, however, Schaufeli et al. (2002) disagreed to the concept of both constructs being opposite in the same continuum. Work engagement was defined as a construct consisting of vigour, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli et al., 2002), opposing the engagement definition given by Maslach and Leiter (1997) in which engagement consisted of energy, enthusiasm, and self-efficacy. So vigour could be compared to energy, dedication could be compared to enthusiasm for work. However, absorption at work and self-efficacy are differently portrayed in sense and meaning.
Schaufeli and Bakker (2003), point out that their interview with employees and supervisors have yielded that the phenomena of being immersed and happily engrossed in work is absorption, which characterises engagement more than efficiency or effectiveness. Absorption was also not a component in Kahn’s personal engagement, nor the consultancy based employee engagement. Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) asserted that burnout could arise when engagement erodes; energy would convert into exhaustion, efficacy would give way to hopelessness, and cynicism would replace involvement. The concept of absorption though has been discussed when vital engagement comes into the picture.

Vital Engagement: The concept of flow which has been introduced by Csikszentmihalyi (1990) refers to the moment-by-moment experience as asserted by Kahn, 1990. This experience is felt by the employees when they are fully immersed in their work roles. According to Nakamura and Csikszentmihalyi (2002) when employees are in a state of flow, they operate at their full capacity. Consequently by virtue of working at their full capacity the employees experience satisfaction, happiness, creativity; this equips them further to work with high efficiency. To attain the experience of ‘flow’ the employees need to delicately balance the perceived abilities and the opportunities to fully employ those abilities. The concept of flow

**Figure 2.1: Schaufeli and Bakker Research Model**

Source: Schaufeli and Bakker (2004)
stems from the fact that if the work entrusted is too challenging for the employee, the employee may experience anxiousness. On the contrary, if the job offers too little challenge, employees may feel bored or monotonous. Thus, vital engagement is construed a state of flow in which the employees achieve a meaningful connection with their environment (Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2003). This state of flow can be equated with Kahn’s (1990) work on personal engagement in which a psychological meaningfulness is experienced through self employment. The difference between the two concepts of personal engagement and vital engagement can be asserted through the fact that personal engagement is a broader term which encompasses the intellectual, emotional, and physical dimension, however, vital engagement is more or less related to the intellectual form of engagement (May et al., 2004). This draws similarity between vital engagement and personal engagement, that they are joined by common essence i.e., momentary states of being. The employee engagement concept which is quite appropriate for the consulting or industry form signifies pervasive state of being. The need of the hour is the integration of both the states of being to unify the conflicting thought processes and research related to engagement.

On assessing the construct of engagement, the researcher took into consideration the theoretical background and the subsequent developments of engagement. The task to universalize the definition of engagement and the process which is intertwined was quite intimidating. The assessment results portray EE to be complex and multidimensional, in the same vein quite diverse in interpretation and usage. The clarity of definition of EE and the application thereof needs to be underpinned. The credibility of EE as a construct is not justified as of now. Two decades of research has yielded some clarity on what EE is, yet the construct validity, the antecedents and the valid consequences of EE needs to be clear and pristine. The numerous researches which are being conducted relating to EE are a welcome sign. However, what the academicians and researchers do not want is the construct to fizz out in oblivion for the want of sufficient construct validity, nor do they want it to be observed as a construct driven by survey organizations as Melcrum Report (2005, p. 13) put it. The report further quantifies that the engagement reports were akin to the job satisfaction
questions plus a few additional questions to gauge satisfaction. The objective of the ensuing sections is to distinguish the construct of EE with other related constructs.

The following section outlines related constructs, including job satisfaction, job involvement, and organizational citizenship behaviour and how they are related to and differ from engagement. The review serves to explain engagement in terms of its nomological network.

2.4 Engagement and Related Constructs

Academic literature has found engagement to be associated and at the same time discrete from related constructs in organizational behaviour (Saks, 2006, p. 601). Robinson et al. (2004, p. 8) confirm this by stating that, engagement takes into consideration elements of OCB and Organizational Commitment, but does not entirely matches with either of these. In addition to commitment and OCB, engagement has been compared mostly with constructs of job involvement and job satisfaction (Leiter & Maslach, 2004; Mills, 2005). A comparison of these constructs with engagement has been done in ensuing section.

Employee’s Job Involvement

Lodahl and Kejner (1965) define job involvement (JI) as “the degree to which a person is identified psychologically with his work or the importance of work to his self image” (p. 24). The relationship which an employee shares with her/his job is the main focus of JI. The other constituents of JI include the feeling which an employee has about the work role he has been entrusted with; and also the importance which they give to their performance in terms of their own self-worth (Robbins, Waters-Marsh, Cacioppe, & Millett, 1994). The same aspect which JI and EE both cover is the enthusiasm of the employee which they depict while performing their work role and the resultant self-efficacy experienced (Maslach & Leiter, 1997). The varied relationship of JI was studied and construed in various ways; this was done by identifying the relationship of JI with numerous variables viz., the characteristics of job, job performance, employee turnover, and absence (Kanungo, 1982). JI was defined by Lawler and Hall (1970) as the level of importance of one's job to one's
personality. Bass (1965) asserted JI to be the level to which an individual is enthusiastically participating in his or her job. However, Etzioni (1975) anticipated and propagated three types of involvement viz., moral, calculative, and alienative. Blau and Boal (1987) portrays that JI is the measurement of the extent to which an employee identifies psychologically with his or her job. JI is also depicted to be related to OCB and job performance (Diefendorff, Brown, Kamin, & Lord, 2002). Kanungo (1982) recommended JI as a cognitive state of psychological identification. Job involvement at a casual level can be said to belong to a conceptual space labelled as ‘state engagement’. Engagement on the other hand, elaborates active use of emotions, cognitions, and behaviours and has been equated by Harter et al. (2002) with both satisfaction and involvement.

Some of the authors advocate the ‘state of involvement implies a positive and relatively complete state of engagement of core aspects of the self in the job’. Brown (1996) states that a state of job involvement referring to a positive and complete engagement of the self with the job. Bass (1999) gives a subtle difference between engagement and involvement in his review of transformational leadership in which he recommended that when the self-significance of an individual employee is at stake then there is also an increased level of task engagement followed by job commitment. This task engagement signifies the keenness to achieve the work goal.

In the existing definitions of EE, and in the literature on engagement, JI is studied as an important facet of engagement, definitely a fraction of engagement but not alike engagement (Salanova, Agut, & Peiro, 2005). There are many comparisons in the academic literature between JI and engagement, according to Maslach, Schaufeli, and Leiter (2001) engagement is categorized by energy, involvement, and efficacy. Many of the researchers such as Brown (1996) have placed engagement as entirely distinct in concept from organizational commitment; the reason forwarded is that the centre of its construct is one’s work and not the organization. Engagement is different from job involvement as it is a broader construct which includes efficacy and energy. It is imperative for the researcher to take into consideration the viewpoints of Salanova et al., (2005) and Maslach et al. (2001) regarding engagement as a broad
multidimensional construct which takes into purview a unit of related and more explicit constructs which focus on individuals’ relationships with their work roles.

Robinson (2006) envisages that there is a problem of under-utilization of employees in the organization because they are not involved in the decisions which are work-based. Beardwell and Claydon (2007) regard JI to be a vital theory of ‘soft’ HRM, in which the idea is to capture the inputs of the employees and getting assurance of employee commitment. JI is considered to be reliant on need saliency and the need satisfying potential of a work or job. JI thus, is a consequence of an intellectual decision related to the potential of the job/work to satisfy the needs of the employees. Jobs in this view are tied to one’s self image. Engagement is different from JI as it is related to the application of the self by the employee to the performance of the job. Moreover, the energetic use of emotions is envisaged in engagement. Finally, involvement may be thought of as a factor of EE in that individuals who experience deep involvement in their roles like being given a position to provide inputs in decision making, should come to identify with their jobs and become deeply engaged, moreover it is a matter of fact that engagement is a much wider term than involvement. It can be said that involvement can be a valid consequence or outcome of engagement.

Latest researches on high involvement practices during the performance of work roles may lead to optimistic beliefs and attitudes which are allied with EE, such high involvement practices may lead to the discretionary behaviours displayed by employees which could further lead to augmented performances in the job/work. High involvement workplaces use “a system of management practices giving their employees skills, information, motivation, and latitude and resulting in a workforce that is a source of competitive advantage” (Guthrie 2001).

Lawler and Worley (2006) envisage that for a high-involvement work practice to be effective and impact engagement in a positive manner, the employees should be provided with authority. This authority may lead the employees to take better decisions which could impact their performance and add quality to the work lives of employees and subsequently engaging them. Therefore, the aforesaid authors assert
that when the authority is given to employees to take individual decisions in the
organization related to their work/job, then involvement is maximised and thus
engagement is strengthened.

Purcell, Kinnie, Hutchinson, Rayton, and Swart (2003) study found a number of
factors to be strongly associated with high levels of EE. One similarity which could
be traced among all the factors discussed was the connection between involvement
and the work/job.

Engagement of employees is dependent on the supervisors and managers in a great
way. Cufaude (2004) advocates a situation when the supervisors adopt the viewpoint
where the main objective of the supervisor is to support and serve the employees;
such a situation fosters high level of engagement among the employees Soltis (2004)
in the same vein asserts that the first step for any organization is to have engaged
managers or supervisors, Soltis (2004) advocates that if the managers are not engaged
themselves, all other efforts to engage the employees becomes futile. Research has
demonstrated that employee engagement tends to be based on factors such as the
relationship they have with their managers in the form of supportive supervisory
relations (May et al., 2004). Some other researcher’s viz., Lloyd (2004) and
MacDonald (2002) advocate that EE is reliant upon contributing and augmenting the
capabilities of the employees in addition to offering such jobs or work-roles which
could be aligned with the interest of the employees.

Job Satisfaction

The feeling of the employees towards their work is reflected by how satisfied an
employee is with his/her work (Spector, 2003). JS thereby refers to “the positive and
negative feelings and attitudes we hold about our job” (Schultz & Schultz, 2002, p.
235). It has been established that JS as a construct has been related with the broader
wellbeing construct of life satisfaction, both the constructs depicting positive causal
relationships both ways (Argyle, 2001). The most commonly used JS questionnaires
for example the job descriptive index (Smith, Kendall, & Hulin, 1969) and the
Minnesota satisfaction questionnaire (Weiss, Dazis, England, & Lofquist, 1967),
depict a construct which is akin to the engagement construct being reviewed here. So
the distinguishing aspect needs to be clarified here, Blizzard, (2004) clarifies that job satisfaction is compared to a passive state and engagement an active state. Other notable distinctions between engagement and satisfaction has been brought about by the Melcrum Report as it portrays satisfaction as “what gets employees to show up for work. It’s the base level of employee contentment – whether or not they can do the job, how happy they are with their pay, [and] how well they like their work environment”, but in terms of discretionary effort they have no desire to “go the extra mile” (Melcrum Publishing, 2005, p. 6). So the difference which draws a line between satisfaction and engagement is the unrestricted endeavour or discretionary endeavour displayed by the employees at work. Generally, satisfied clients do not worry about the organization and other co-workers, the engaged employees do. Melcrum Publishing, (2005) assertion about the distinctive characteristics of an engaged employee and a satisfied employee is further supported by Ray Baumruk of Hewitt Associates stating that job satisfaction is about “how people like it here”, as opposed to measuring behaviours that will help organizations become more successful (Gorman, 2006).

**Job performance**

To gauge the job performance (JP) of employees, Salanova et al. (2005) investigated the case of personnel working in Spanish restaurants and hotels. The use of Structural equation modelling (SEM) analyses depicted a full mediation model in which the service climate was predicted by the resources of the organization and the work engagement. The service climate so predicted further explained the performance of the employees and also the loyalty of the customers. Therefore, JP was formulated as the consequence of having a good engagement in the organization in this present study. Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, and Schaufeli (2007) in their study of Greek employees working in a restaurant established a convincing case of the work engagement being the predictor of performance on a daily basis. This provides another constructive proof that engagement acts as a predictor of job performance. The availability of job resources acts as a predictor for engagement was also supported in this study. Xanthopoulou et al. (2007) further report that engagement leads to better employee performance which could be gauged at a daily level.
Why engaged workers perform better

The performance of an engaged employee is always better than those non-engaged employees. Different researchers have investigated this relationship, which can be complied here. The experience of positive emotions, experiencing better health, creating one’s own job and personal resources, and transferring their engagement to others were the possible abstraction which an engaged employee experiences.

Positive emotions

Positive emotions as an outcome of engagement were researched upon by various scholars (Schaufeli & Van Rhenen, 2006). Positive emotions thus explain the higher level of performance and productivity. Cropanzano and Wright (2001) advocate that those employees who are content are more prone to sense and take up the opportunities which approach them at work, such content employees are thus, more sanguine, and are ready to lend a hand to others. The broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions (Fredrickson, 2001), advocates that there are some positive emotions like joy, interest, and contentment, which can share the aptitude of the employees to enhance the people’s momentary thought – action repertoires and build their personal resources by extending the ambit of thoughts and actions that come to mind. Personal resources could be physical, intellectual, social, and psychological. Fredrickson (2001) envisages the need to explore further the thought-action inventory to convert them to specific resolution.

Good health

There are several researches which establish the positive linkage between good health and engagement. This has clear implications for the organizations that healthy employees are engaged employees. Demerouti, Bakker, De Jonge, Janssen, and Schaufeli (2001) reported moderate negative correlations between engagement (particularly vigour) and psychosomatic health complaints (e.g., headaches, chest pain). In addition to this, Hakanen, Bakker, and Schaufeli (2006), in their study among Finnish teachers showed that work engagement is positively related to self-rated health and workability. The causal relationship however needs to be explored.
Ability to mobilize resources

The reason why engaged employees are more productive and thus perform better in their job could be the ability to generate their own resources both personal and organizational. Fredrickson’s (2001) broaden-and-build theory advocates that moment-by-moment experience of positive emotions can help to initiate by building psychological resources and continuing with those resources to lead up to an emotional well-being stage of work life. The emotions which are positive help endure the good feeling among the employees for a longer period of time (Fredrickson & Joiner, 2002). Furthermore, Schaufeli, Bakker, and Van Rhenen (2008) study among managers showed that engagement was predictive of increases in next year’s job resources, including social support, autonomy, learning opportunities, and performance feedback. All the aforesaid evidences suggest that while comparing non-engaged employees to engaged employees, the latter are better able to assemble and marshal their personal resources on the job and the job itself.

Crossover of engagement

Performance on the job is the culmination of combined efforts of employees in any organization. The concept of crossover of engagement is derived from this generalization, and this crossover may lead to augmentation in performance for the other employees. Westman (2001) defines crossover of engagement as an emotional contagion which gets transferred from one employee to another. This emotion can be in the form of experience both positive, and negative. If the co-workers are able to make an impact on each other with their levels of engagement, then there is a possibility that they would perform better as a group. Bakker, Van Emmerik, and Euwema (2006) in their research study among 2,229 officers working in one of 85 teams established that team-level work engagement had a relationship with individual team members’ engagement (vigour, dedication, and absorption). This could be done after taking in control the individual members’ job demands and resources. Thus, the engaged employees who transfer positive experience and wisdom, created a positive team climate. This was not dependent on the demands and resources the employees
were exposed to. This concludes that the engaged employees are able to make an impact on their co-workers and subsequently work and perform in an enhanced way.

**Positive Psychology and the Value of Engagement Research**

The growing popularity of engagement is because of the fact that it has been positioned as providing mutual benefits to the individual employee as well as the organization. It has been described in the positive psychology literature that why engagement benefits both parties, and how can engagement link both wellbeing and motivation. By managing the workplace environment in a way that promotes engagement, employees are said to be happier and the organizations bottom-line increases as a result (Harter, Schmidt, and Keyes, 2003; Keyes & Magyar-Moe, 2003). The mutual benefit can be explained by a theory often cited in positive psychology: the “happy productive worker” hypothesis. So engagement has been construed as a linking pin to the happiness experienced by the employees. The well-being studies undertaken by researchers emphasize that if the employee’s exhibit positive emotions to a greater degree (happy employees) then the performance of those employees are enhanced going by the supervisor’s ratings (Harter et al., 2003; Wright & Bonnett, 1997; Wright & Cropanzano, 2000). Isen (2003) links positive affect of emotions to the helpful nature, generosity displayed by the employees, the social responsibility catered to, and the ability to think in a pristine manner.

**Organizational Citizenship Behaviour and Employee Engagement**

Organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB) is the flexible and open behaviour free from any formal obligations. OCB as has been portrayed by several researchers is instrumental in keeping the communal mechanism of the organizations frictionless and efficient (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Bommer, 1996).

Initial literature on OCB focussed on the discretionary nature of certain behaviours which were deemed essential to organizational success without them being formally defined as part of employee engagement. The focus of literature in recent times has been on exploring the limiting discretion to extra-role behaviours. The functioning definition of OCB has been extended in scope to also comprise of those behaviours
that augment and sustain the psychological and social environment which is essential for individual employee’s task performance (Organ, 1997), OCB is an expression strongly related with relative performance (LePine, Erez, & Johnson, 2002). Researchers have raised questions regarding the dimensions of OCB, which could be stated as original behaviours encompassing three broad premise – supporting others, supporting organization, and conscientiousness (Borman, 2004; LePine et al., 2002). The behaviours comprising conscientiousness imply doing “something extra,” which is in line with more traditional definition of employee engagement like “going the extra mile.” Several researchers of OCB have enlisted different dimensions of OCB – some authors are of a view that OCB is discrete from elevated level of job performance, or in-role performance (Van Dyne, Graham, & Dienesch, 1994), or self-discipline (Van Scotter & Motowidlo, 1996), or comprehensive fulfilment (LePine et al., 2002). A matter of concern in view of OCB as a part of engagement or engagement itself involves whether the scope of EE is limited to the concept of above and beyond of a specific task performance or it is something more than this. The question has to be considered in the background of the fact that boundaries between in role and extra-role performance are not very definitive. For example, Vey and Campbell (2004) make a similarity pitch by depicting that some forms of OCB viz., conscientiousness or courtesy could be in-role and not extra-role performances. The core conceptual issue here is if behaviour of interest must be discretionary in order to be considered as engaged behaviour, i.e., a person has a choice not to do it and has chosen to do the same. This entails all behaviours to be assessed for how much they included making a choice to do more or to do something different and so on. This puts a conditional value on such behaviours as they may be deemed normal or typical in certain circumstances and situations (in some groups and companies) and maybe classified as unusual in other circumstances. To elaborate “a typical” implies a frame of reference which may originate in a variety of ways. For example, Meyer, Becker, & Vandenberghe (2004) elucidated that when under certain circumstances, failure to perform a task as usual might be excused due to extraordinary conditions, other in-role behaviours might also be considered extra-role. This means that freedom of choice as to engage in certain task behaviours or not is allowed under certain conditions. Engagement or “doing something extra” then becomes doing what is
normal when normal conditions do not apply. However, there are limitations to defining employee engagement behaviour as such and frequency and extent of opportunities which demonstrate such behaviours would also need to be explored and explained.

2.5 A Global Perspective on Engagement

The Gallup Organization is an international organizational research and consultancy firm which has over 70 years of experience in conducting influential business surveys. It can also be credited with bringing EE in the notice of industry by undertaking many EE surveys based on its EE scale which was patented by Gallup in 1988.

The Gallup’s EE scale or simply Q12 is a culmination of studies conducted from 1985. By early 2001, the Gallup engagement survey had maintained a database of 1.5 million employees from over 87,000 organizational units and more (Thackray, 2001). These numbers are indicative of the importance being given to EE by organizations and its global acceptability. Gallup’s database consists of 6.5 million employees representative of more than 8,15,000 workgroups in 16 major industries and more than 70 sub-industries in 170 countries worldwide (Gallup, 2010). Apart from Gallup, other major international employee research organizations have also focussed their studies on EE. ISR, a major consulting firm with over 30 years of experience, has in a large scale international EE study drawn data from over 360,000 employees from 41 companies in the world’s ten largest economies, over a three-year period (ISR, 2005). Developmental Dimensions International Inc (DDI) and Kenexa, a provider of HR solutions are other major human resources consultancies who are conducting engagement surveys. DDI is known for its compilation of EE database of employees across 200 organizations all across the globe (DDI, 2005). Kenexa conducted the survey on a global scale for 116,000 employees in 37 languages and across 750 locations in 80 countries (Pont, 2004). Towers Perrin compiled 35,000 employee’s database across dozen companies to ascertain the relationship between EE and sales growth, lower cost of goods sold, customer focus, and reduced turnover (DDI, 2005). Additionally, many international researches and consultancy firms’ viz., Hewitt Associates, The Hay Group, Achieve global, and McKinsey & Company are
Review of Literature

conducting engagement surveys. EE surveys are not only being administered at international level on large scale but local consultancies are also increasingly becoming involved. This indicates increased interest and intent of businesses across the world to seek benefit from the EE research and development.

Impact of Employee Engagement on Business

Research findings have found substantial benefits in EE for performance and profit. Most notable results have come from Gallup Organisation and International Survey Research. The Gallup Organization found customer loyalty, business growth, and profitability to have important links with EE. Many of the Fortune 500 organizations across the US, were dealing with the problem of varying performance across stores, consequently they hired Gallup to tackle this problem. On analysis and assessment the Gallup organization concluded that those stores which depict low engagement and customer loyalty under-performed (Gallup, 2010). The Gallup Organization in its literature on EE has cited how it is helping many companies throughout the world to improve their performance through improvement in EE. They have mentioned numerous examples of how increased EE has resulted in increased corporate profitability for those organisations. Gallup (2010) assert that companies with world-class engagement have 3.9 times the Earning Per Share (EPS) growth rate when compared with those organizations having lower engagement. In the same vein DDI assert based on estimation of those organizations having total population of 10,000 employees that if such organizations could transform the engagement from low to high and it could have an impact of $42 million (DDI, 2005). DDI further emphasize the importance of engaged sales force, engaged employees on an average achieve 99% of their sales goals when compared with disengaged employees achieving only 91% (DDI, 2005). The ISR research firm has also cited many examples of increased EE resulting in increased profits for companies. ISR investigated on the relationship between EE and the specific corporate performances (financial), the mechanism for such measurement was assessment of the changes in operating margins and net profit margins. On comparison of high-engagement companies to low-engagement ones over a three-year period, substantial financial differences were found (ISR, 2005). Convincing evidence was found by ISR that organizations are able to reach their full
potential only by emotionally engaging employees and customers (ISR, 2005). International Survey Research (ISR) based on its own engagement survey reported the results of engagement survey in 2004; this survey was conducted in 10 countries. Hewitt Associates (2004) compared the engagement levels of the employees; this survey was conducted for 12 nations. Average engagement score was published by the Hewitt Associates instead of reporting a nation wise engagement result. The most notable feature of these consultancy researches was that each consulting firm employed a different measure to gauge the levels of engagement, utilized indigenous reporting of results, and had different nations as sample. Each consultancy group used varied definitions of engagement and a different measure to support their findings.

2.6 Engagement- problems associated with the construct

The engagement literature points towards conflicting justifications, the literature does not seem to present a clear picture of EE construct. The varied definitions of EE across different constructs and continuums add to the confusion. According to Halbesleben (2003), EE has been reported to be the anti-thesis of burnout and on the continuum of stress. Goddard (1999) interestingly advocates EE to be on the continuum of time, wherein it can be gauged by the time spent on a role or work. According to Harter et al. (2002) EE has been regarded as a measure of job involvement (JI), and also as a measurement combination of an employee’s involvement, satisfaction, and enthusiasm for work.

The assessment made by Kahn (1990) on employees suggest that while on daily routine work employees experienced personal engagement and disengagement, those employees who were disengaged separated themselves from the work roles and such withdrawal or uncoupling was cognitive and emotional. Kahn (1990) propagated that disengaged employees were mechanical and automatic, and could not display complete performance on the role or work entrusted. McCashland (1999) propagates that EE is an emotional outcome stemming from the critical components of the workplace. Miles on the other hand describes engagement to be intense taking in its purview all the employees, he further describes engagement as a cascading phenomenon which brings dialogue, feedback, accountability, empowerment, and
creative alignment which could transform the whole organization in the right direction (Miles, 2001). Harter et al. (2002) pronounced engagement to be the blend of an employee’s involvement, satisfaction, and enthusiasm from the work. Harter et al. (2003, p. 205) define engagement as ‘cognitive and emotional antecedents in the workplace’. The definitions of EE in the psychological literature are confusing and differing, the confusion persists in the relation of EE with other workplace constructs. Some of the descriptions of EE portray that EE is something which an individual employee brings to the organization and is individual specific (Harter et al., 2002; Goddard, 1999), however some of the researchers suggest that EE is the culmination of some of the aspects in the organization (McCashland, 1999; Miles, 2001; Harter et al., 2003). However, it can be asserted that there seems to be some consensus over the construct of EE as some of the researchers follow the conceptualization given by Kahn (1990) and advocate that EE may be a culmination of workplace situations (which may be even momentary), and other facets mediated in a different manner by the perceptions of the employees and made familiar through emotion and cognition.

**Definitions in Management Literature**

The recent definitions of EE focus on and define EE in terms of the discretionary effort exhibited by the employee, more specifically the definitions showcase that organizational citizenship behaviour is a valid consequence of having engaged employees in the organization. EE has also been pronounced as a two-way positive relationship between the employee and their organizational workplace, where the parties’ viz., the employee as well as the organization, identify and acknowledge the needs of each other and work in unison to realise such needs. Therefore, as Daniel (2004, p. 1) elaborates that both the employee and the organization go the extra mile to receive mutual benefits. Lanphear (2004, p. 2) resonates similar views by describing EE to be a bond that the employees feel towards their organization, which fosters care towards the organization which ultimately leads to employees showcasing discretionary efforts. The concept of servant-leadership also gives a cue to the managers as to how to conduct them in the workplace in order to bring engagement. It is asserted by different theorists that in order to foster highly engaged workforce, the managers must assume their primary role of serving and supporting the employees.
under their supervision, as May et al. (2004) advocate supportive supervisory relations to be a valid predictor of EE. While some other researchers (Soltis, 2004; Blizzard, 2003) advocate that the managers and superiors need to be engaged first to create a highly engaged workforce.

Leiter and Harvie (1997) note that confidence in the organization and the supervisor’s engagement with work is positively related to that of their staff members. Still other management theorists believe that EE depends on empowerment and that jobs should fit employees’ interests (Lloyd, 2004; MacDonald, 2002). Other management theorists have argued, similar to some psychological theorists, that there are two types of EE: rational commitment and emotional commitment, with latter being more important in determining performance (Buchanan, 2004). However, these theories confuse the construct of engagement with that of commitment which adds to the challenge of understanding EE.

2.7 Evidence of Construct Validity – An Overview

Halbesleben (2003) has provided factorial and construct validity to the measure of engagement by measuring engagement as the antithesis of burnout. Evidence of construct validity has also been provided by the Gallup Organization after conducting multifactorial research based on its 12-point questionnaire, the Q12 (Buckingham & Coffman, 1999). Macgowan (2003) provided construct validity for a measure of EE through a scale called the Group Engagement Measure (GEM). In addition, Kahn (1990, p. 703) demonstrated construct validity for a measure of EE by recognizing three psychological conditions—meaningfulness, safety, and availability that are relevant to the construct.

While all the above mentioned measures of engagement claim to be measuring the same construct, they are focused on different aspects of it. Therefore, there arises a need to clarify the definition, measurement, and construct validity of EE.

Various conceptualisation of Employee Engagement

EE has been conceptualised in theoretical frameworks in literature in unique and diverse manners. Many researchers have related EE to burnout and have defined
'engagement' as the theoretical antithesis of burnout (Halbesleben, 2003; Montgomery, Peeters, Schaufeli, & DenOuden, 2003). Others have argued that burnout is not related to EE and it is a simple concept measured on a stress continuum. Burnout has become an important aspect for workers worldwide and along with its supposed corollary- engagement, it has been found to act as mediators in most of the relationships between workplace variables. Laub (1998) advocates that in order to maintain the qualified staff it is imperative to phase out the burnout and promote in more engagement. Halbesleben (2003) asserts that there are many unanswered questions related to the process and management of burnout, further it is becoming more important to conduct significant research related to engagement so that it becomes clear as to what are the ramifications of engagement on the employees and the organization. The study of Halbesleben (2003) assessed numerous concerns regarding burnout and engagement including their measurement and identification of the processes. Halbesleben initially established evidence of the factorial and construct validity of alternative measure of burnout which took into consideration some of the constraints of the then Maslach Burnout Inventory.

There are other theories related to engagement most notably by Goddard (1999), which signify that engagement with task and organization could be related to the time use. Engagement was defined as to be present in the organization physically and mentally and subsequently supporting the goals of the organization. Disengagement on the other hand would denote not paying attention i.e., being mentally out of the picture or not being focussed on the given job. The engagement seems here to be more interesting as it equates engagement at task to be present and attentive to the task entrusted, issue being catered to, or problem to be solved relating to the organization. Disengagement would be not being attentive to the task, issue or the problem being handed over to the employee. The hypothetical complex relationship of time and engagement was considered to be the locus of an individual’s use of time along the axes of engagement or disengagement from the work and the organization (Goddard, 2001).
Theoretical justification of Employee Engagement

Kahn (1990) illustrates the sound theoretical outline of EE showcasing the ways in which the psychological experiences of work or job contexts give direction to the process of employee’s conduct during the performances of tasks in the organization. He scrutinized varied disciplines to unearth the fact that the individual employees are intrinsically unsure of being the part of members of an ongoing community or group or even systems. Therefore, they seek to provide themselves with protection from either of the extreme cases of isolation or overwhelmed surrounding by the groups. The employees protect themselves by alternatively pulling themselves away or towards the social fabric. These alternative pulls were termed calibrations of self-in-role which could help the employees in extreme cases of indecisions or external exigencies.

Kahn (1990) uses the terms- personal engagement and personal disengagement to describe these calibrations of self-in-role. He explains that “they refer to the behaviours by which people bring in or leave out their personal selves during work role performances”. (Kahn, 1990, p. 694). These terms developed by Kahn integrate and strengthen the previous ideas which state that people need self expression and self employment in their work lives as a matter of course (Alderfer, 1972; Maslow, 1954). Kahn has analysed each moment of engagement as if there exists a contract between person and role (Schein, 1970). According to Kahn, three psychological conditions which emerge as components of EE are: meaningfulness, safety and availability (Kahn, 1990, p. 703).

Management Today (2004) has attributed the evolution of the term EE to the recent valuing of staff opinion. Management Today believes that EE is the current term being used for the same phenomenon that has been previously believed to be ‘the key to building a sustainable high-performance organization’ (2004). It argues that in the past “loyalty and commitment” ‘psychological contract’, DE has been stressed on. Now EE is the term that has replaced these concepts. It further argues that EE originally started with ‘happy sheets’ and basic staff satisfaction surveys which weren’t the most scientific attempts to ascertain what staff were thinking and feeling about the company. However, it was when employers began to at least partially
believe the ‘people are our biggest asset talk’ that their interest in thoughts and feelings of employees was really ignited. It goes on to note that ‘cracking EE at your firm really is the Holy Grail, the X factor dividing winners from losers’ (Management Today, 2004, p. 1).

No consistency in definition

As discussed before, there is inconsistency in the literature on psychology and management in defining EE. Terms like ‘Commitment’, ‘participation’, ‘involvement’, ‘inclusion’ and ‘job-fit’ have been used alternatively and in addition to ‘engagement’ even within the same articles. Interestingly, EE has at times been viewed as the antecedent to workplace productivity and at other times viewed as the product of workplace variables. Approach to understanding EE has resulted in different theoretical frameworks with differing continuums such as burnout and time being adopted to study EE in detail. Hence, the concept of EE is inconsistent in its understanding and explanation of whether it is relevant to one’s task, job, role, manager or organization. The Gallup Organization’s EE scale is based on studies from 1985, but still their definition of this construct is unclear. Gallup believes that it is the engagement of complex emotions of employees and customers that help great organizations win business. Gallup argues that EE is ‘the psychology of how each employee connects with customers and with the organization’; that it is ‘an instant, and constant, competitive edge where engaged employees utilize their natural talents’ (Coffman & Gonzalez-Molina, 2002, p. 2). Gallup identifies EE as a significant predictor of desirable organizational outcomes like customer satisfaction, retention, and profitability (Buckingham & Coffman, 1999; Luthans & Peterson, 2002). ISR notes that most research firms view EE from only one or two dimensions which are: affective and behavioural. Affective dimension explores how employees feel, their emotions towards the company, leadership, work environment while behavioural dimension seeks to understand how they intend to act (behaviourally) in the future, whether they will stay, give extra efforts, etc. ISR claims to bring in a third important dimension: cognitive, which explores if employees believe in and support the goals and values of the organization (ISR, 2005).
There are as many definitions of EE as there are research firms and with each research firm claiming to uniquely define EE, it poses a challenge as to how to definitively define EE.

**Individual differences**

Individual differences can affect work performance and there is evidence in literature to support such claims. Kahn (1990) has laid focus on identifying general psychological conditions which can explain personal engagement and disengagement across individuals. Kahn elaborated that ‘individual differences shape peoples’ dispositions toward personally engaging or disengaging in all or some types of role performances’ (1990, p. 718), just as they shape people’s abilities and willingness to be involved or committed at work. He further states that people would engage differently, ‘given their experiences of psychological meaningfulness, safety, and availability in specific situations’ (Kahn, 1990, p. 718).

Portello (1996) explained that when people experience situations which they deem unsafe, depending on their individual differences and coping strategies, they engage or disengage. Some people might be driven by previous experiences while some will be driven by degree of courage they possess. Kahn (1990) has called for future research to focus on courage.

Personal relationships have also been found to have an impact on work engagement. Family stress, in particular has been found by recent studies, to have a major impact on work stress (Moore, 2004). In addition, gender differences with opposing impacts have been found. While men experience enrichment from work to family, women experience depletion from work to family. On the other hand, while women experience enrichment from family to work, men experience no links from family to work (Rothbard, 1999). Some people work to live, while others live to work. Hence, differences of health and personal values may also impact EE. Lastly, EE is also expected to be impacted by differences of skills, ability, and variances in other dispositional variables.
Contextual variables – culture, climate and structure

Many authors argue that EE is also influenced by socio-cultural factors, in addition to individual differences as culture and climate of organizations is expected to influence EE. Schein, (1970) has understood climate to include aspects such as systems and satisfaction with the organization and culture to include aspects such as community. Further, organizations need to work towards developing a culture of sharing good practices and having good value system, which could subsequently lead to EE (Singh & Sharma, 2011; Lather, Puskas, Singh, & Gupta, 2010; Sinha, Singh, Gupta, & Dutt, 2010).

In recent years, the use of outsourcing, virtual workstations, and teams has increased dramatically and has somewhat become a strategic process in the corporate world. However, the empirical research on organizational commitment has not focused adequately on the outsourcing work environment (Marquardt, 2000).

2.8 EE- Study of Antecedents and Consequences

Antecedents of EE can be described as those constructs, conditions, or strategies etc., which have paved the way for the development of EE and are utilities that assist and permit requisite states or requirements for EE to develop. In this research study, antecedents have been recognised as those constructs which form into EE, i.e., cause EE to occur in any organization. They are not dependent on process and definitely appear before the organization starts reaping benefits of EE in terms of consequences (e.g., higher job satisfaction, lower levels of turnover). According to Wollard and Shuck (2011), EE culture can be generated in the organization by employing different ways, strategies, and methods that are idiosyncratic to the organizations. Some of the causal inferences which could be made regarding the antecedents keeping on record majority studies on EE which are mostly cross-sectional and can be summarised below. Based on the need hierarchy theory propounded by Maslow (1970), Gallup organization projected a model of engagement based on the hierarchy of needs. It propagated the need hierarchy assessment that before moving towards the higher order need requirements, basic needs at work need to be fulfilled first, which could be further augmented to understand the antecedents of EE. Clarity in expectations, provision of basic amenities to work in the lower level; followed by the experiencing
of a sense of contribution towards the organization coupled with receiving recognition and reward related to work performance in the next higher step (Harter et al., 2003). Therefore, a sense of belongingness develops as employees move up higher the ladder of hierarchy, and thus employee gets aligned with the organization. This condition is followed by employees taking up more meaningful work, accomplishing goals, participating in decision making, and lastly having a meaningful relationship with the peer and supervisors. Harter et al., (2003) asserts that aforesaid conditions foster and strengthens work creativity and good communications across the organization. In conformity with the self-actualization as propagated by Maslow’s (1970), self-development remains at the zenith of an employee’s need hierarchy. For the organizations Harter et al. (2003) suggest that proper requisite skill development programs for employees coupled with developing and excelling in existing ones should be initiated which could foster a kind of culture which helps employee engage hence, become more productive.

On identifying potential antecedents from Kahn’s (1990) and Maslach et al. (2001) model, the following assessment could be made. Kahn (1992) observes that psychological meaningfulness involves a sense of return on investments of the self-in-role performances and can be achieved from task characteristics that provide challenging work, variety, allow the use of different skills, personal discretion, and the opportunity to make important contributions. Hackman and Oldham’s (1980) conceptualization of job characteristics viz., skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback are listed in the job characteristics model. Kahn (1992) asserts that individual employees benefit by having more opportunity and greater incentives from those jobs which are having high core job characteristics, this subsequently acts in fostering engagement among such employees. Maslach et al. (2001) advocate that specific job characteristics viz.; feedback and autonomy are linked to burnout. Maslach et al., 2001 model aids in highlighting the importance of job characteristics for engagement. Giving a different perspective of job characteristics, the Social Exchange Theory (SET) forward an argument that employee’s works and jobs can be enriched and made more challenging and they could respond back with higher engagement levels.
**Rewards and recognition:** The vivid perceptions that different employees perceive of the rewards and benefits they would receive from a work-role acts as a stimulator of the level of engagement the employee displays (Kahn, 1990). Additionally, employees perceive a sense of return on investment, from the extrinsic rewards and recognition coupled with meaningful work. Researchers claim that it can be expected from the employees to perform in such a manner in their work-roles and to that extent which can provide them with greater rewards and recognition. For want of appropriate and just rewards and recognition, employees may experience burnout or exhaustion (Maslach et al., 2001) In terms of Social Exchange Theory (SET), the employees feel obliged to return with higher levels of engagement when their organizations looks to reward and recognise the employees justly.

**Perceived organizational and supervisor support:** Kahn (1992) envisages that a condition of psychological safety is experienced by the employees, when an individual employee is free from any kind of negative consequence and can show and employ his/her self without negativity. This safety can be experienced by the employees when there is a perception among them that the superiors and the organization cares for them and provides them with requisite support.

![Figure 2.2: May, Gilson, and Harter (2004) framework of Engagement](image-url)
Kahn (1990) asserts that a supporting and a trust relationship between the supportive management and the employees could lead to psychological safety. The employees feel safe, secure and open in a work environment which is supportive and open. An organization which is supportive for their employees also retains the benefits, because such environments encourage the members of the organization to experiment, innovate, or try out new things without fearing for any backlash or failure (Kahn, 1990). On further testing the conceptualization of Kahn (1990), May et al. (2004) in their ethnographic work established the positive relation of supportive supervisory relations and psychological safety.

Moreover, some of the researchers theorise that the first-line supervisors could be the reason for bringing in engagement among the employees as well as chronic root cause of employee’s disengagement (Bates, 2004; Frank, Finnegan, & Taylor, 2004).

**Co-worker Relations:** Social support in the form of rewarding co-worker relations is another state explained by the Maslach et al. (2001) model. Schaufeli & Bakker (2004) found that sustenance and support from colleagues which could well be a measure of job resources helped predict engagement. May et al. (2004) also envisage the importance of rewarding co-worker relations as a pre-requisite in fostering EE. Maslach et al., (2001) bring out a different perspective by stating that a dearth of social support from the colleagues and peer groups could lead to burnout among the employees. Building on the previous work of Kahn (1990, 1992), Saks (2006) advocated when the antecedents identified previously were present, the individuals felt rewarded when people experienced favourable interactions with their co-workers. These feelings of reward led to a sense of engagement, resulting in the individual having feelings of dignity, self-appreciation, and self-worth, promoting a relationship where people wanted to give to and receive from others in the organization (Saks, 2006).

**Workplace Spirituality:** Workplace Spirituality (WS) has been associated with key dimensions of organization behaviour viz., meaningfulness at work; purpose of work; feeling of transcendence; connection with peers, supervisors, and customers; feeling of completeness and joy; alignment with organizational values; expression of complete self at work and so on and so forth. On analysing deeper into the meaning of
WS, it becomes clearer that WS and EE talk about the spirit at work. Ashforth and Pratt (2010) propounded three major dimensions of WS viz., transcendence of self, holism, harmony, and growth. Giacalone and Jurkiewicz (2010) describe WS to be such aspects of the organizational workplace that promote and secure the employee’s individual feeling of satisfaction through transcendence. Krishnakumar and Neck (2002) define WS as search for meaningfulness and fulfilment at work and propagate that WS is associated with the feeling of being connected to one and all. According to Saks (2011) EE and WS have similar implications of employee’s experiencing completeness and wholeness. According to Duchon and Plowman (2005), the whole self comprises of the spiritual self and the workplace, and those places where spirit is ignored, employees may be less productive. Krishnakumar and Neck (2002, p. 158) emphasise that promoting WS in an organization may lead to the experience of completeness among the employees. Parallels can be drawn when there is an analysis of the constructs of EE and WS, as EE also involves the feeling of wholeness, completeness, and harnessing of self at work. Further as advocated by Saks (2011) EE and WS both are involved with the employment of complete self at work. Krishnakumar and Neck (2002, p. 159) further pitch their point by emphasising that spirituality is an essential dimension of human personality and that those organizations which encourage spirituality at workplace are actually encouraging employees to bring their whole self to the work they are catering to. Jurkiewicz and Giacalone (2004, p. 134) assert that organizations exhibiting spirituality build a workplace environment in which integration of self and profession becomes possible which further leads to engagement among employees. Researchers have also emphasized the importance of connection as a key dimension in the constructs of WS and EE. Connection with one’s work as well as with co-workers and other people related with work has been emphasized in the WS literature (Krishnakumar & Neck 2002; Milliman, Czaplewski, & Ferguson, 2003), similarly engaged employees demonstrate emotional connection with their work and others (Kahn, 1990). Additionally, the consequences of having WS and EE are also similar. According to Millman et al. (2003), high intrinsic job satisfaction, lower intention to quit, and high job involvement are the possible consequences of having WS in any organization. According to engagement researches done over the years, it becomes clear that EE
leads to higher performance, lower intention to quit (Halbesleben, 2010), EE causes job satisfaction, organizational citizenship behaviour (Saks, 2006), and EE shows causal relationship with task performance (Rich et al., 2010). This shows that WS and EE though have developed independently as different constructs; however, the similarities show that they might exist side by side in any organization (Saks, 2011). Empirical testing of whether WS acts as an antecedent to EE has been carried out in this research study.

Saks (2006) propagated the point that Kahn (1990) and the Maslach et al. (2001) engagement models do not address the psychological antecedents required for engagement. Saks (2006) model of EE has been depicted in Figure 2.3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Antecedents</th>
<th>Employee Engagement</th>
<th>Consequences</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job Characteristics</td>
<td></td>
<td>Job Satisfaction</td>
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<tr>
<td>Perceived Organizational Support</td>
<td></td>
<td>Organizational Commitment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Perceived Supervisor Support</td>
<td></td>
<td>Intention to Quit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reward and Recognition</td>
<td></td>
<td>Organizational Citizenship</td>
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<tr>
<td>Procedural Justice</td>
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<td>Behaviour</td>
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<tr>
<td>Distributive Justice</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: Saks (2006)

Figure 2.3: Saks Model of Employee Engagement

Saks however, points out that the theory of engagement was more linked to the social exchange theory propagated by Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005), in which the tasks were created by exchanges of different employees who were reliant on each other at work. They gave an example of an employee who after having received socio-economic benefits from the organization feels obliged to give the favour back to the organization. Similarities could be drawn here with the work of Kahn (1990), in which Kahn emphasises of a situation when the employee is provided with compensation and resources for carrying out the work, and then the employee feels obliged and brings herself/himself more into the work performance, on the contrary, if
the organization does not provide requisite resources the employee starts feeling disengaged.

Saks (2006) further projected his own model of EE which consisted of specific predictors of EE viz., perceived supervisor support, rewards and recognition, procedural justice, distributive justice, and perceived organizational support. When employees apparently received these positive predictors, EE could be reinforced in any organization at both the job and organizational levels which would further result into outcomes/consequences for EE viz., job satisfaction, organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behaviour, and low intentions to quit resulted (Saks, 2006).

For the employees to identify with their jobs and be more engaged, Saks (2006) showcased that it was a necessary requirement to have those jobs or work-roles which were high in core work features. In the absence of such job characteristics, employees feel burnout as conceptualized by Maslach et al. (2001). Singh and Dhawan, (2012) emphasize on organizational stressors to have an impact on the stress levels of the employees. Control over the work has also been given due importance in the engagement literature. In situations where employees were given due control over the work they were catering to, they felt safe; on the contrary when the managers were reluctant and hesitant in handing over the control to the employees, those employees did not feel trusted and feared of the consequences when they would overstep the confines set by the supervisor (Saks, 2006). Such situations where there was lack of trust among the employees for their organization and managers/supervisors it would result in chaos where the performance of employees would suffer. Investing oneself for the organization and the level of engagement also could suffer because of such a situation (Saks, 2006).

Social support was also a component of both the Maslach, et al. (2001) and the Schaufeli & Bakker (2004) models and both studies showed support from the organization predicted engagement. People needed to feel that their managers were capable enough and secure enough in their own ideas to create channels along which subordinates could safely travel (Kahn, 1990). Saks (2006) found that employees who perceived that they were receiving higher levels of organizational support were more
likely to respond by being more engaged in their job and the organization. Rhoades & Eisenberger (2002) advocate similar views demonstrating that employees perceived supervisory support to be akin to the organizational support therefore, an aid to showcase the level of engagement shown by the employees. Additionally, Bates (2004) and Frank et al. (2004) envisaged the cause of disengagement could be traced back to the lack of supervisory support demonstrated by the first-level managers.

Kahn (1990) identified that in the presence of the antecedents of EE, and EE itself, it could further lead to some of the consequences for the organization as well as the individual employee reportedly, job satisfaction, lower intention to quit, and organizational citizenship behaviour. Saks (2006) reported that employees having good cordial relationship with their supervisors demonstrated enhanced optimism and positive attitudes and behaviours, which subsequently leads to higher intention to stay in the organization. There are few studies which show EE to be positively related to job performance (Demerouti & Bakker, 2006). Nevertheless, the results look promising. Bakker, Demerouti, and Verbeke (2004) showed that engaged employees received higher ratings from their colleagues on in-role and extra-role performance, indicating that engaged employees perform well and are willing to go the extra mile. Schaufeli, Bakker, and Salanova (2006) found that work engagement is positively related to in-role performance. However, there is a need to substantiate the relationship between employee engagement and employee’s job performance to make generalizations.

The reason for employee engagement being in the spotlight is the positive consequences it brings for organisations. This is supported by previous studies showing connection between employee engagement and business results (Harter et al., 2002). But this impact on business results is a secondary impact since engagement is an individual-level construct and the primary impact is on individual-level outcomes. Following these, employee engagement is expected to be related to attitudes, intentions, and behaviours of individuals. (Saks, 2006)

Neither Kahn (1990) nor May et al. (2004) have specifically studied outcomes in their studies, though Kahn (1992) had postulated that engagement leads to individual
outcomes as well as organizational-level outcomes. While individual level outcomes include quality of people’s work and their own experiences of doing that work, organizational-level outcomes are concerned with the growth and productivity of organizations. The Maslach et al. (2001) model has treated engagement as a mediating variable for the relationship between the six work conditions and various work outcomes. Furthermore, engagement like burnout should be related to outcomes such as increased withdrawal, lower performance, job satisfaction, and commitment (Maslach et al., 2001). Engagement can be expected to relate to work outcomes and positively influence them through positive experiences and emotions as experience of engagement has been described as a fulfilling, positive work-related experience and state of mind (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004; Sonnentag, 2003), and has been found to be related to good health and positive work affect (Sonnentag, 2003). Engaged employees are likely to be more attached to their organisations which results in lower tendency to leave the organization (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004).

2.9 Summary

The literature review points towards a mediating role of EE, since the antecedents are expected to predict EE, and subsequently EE causing the consequences or outcomes to occur. This conceptualization is constant with other researches on EE establishing that EE does play a mediating role between its antecedents and consequences (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Sonnentag, 2003) such conceptualization also holds well when the Maslach et al. (2001) model is assessed.

The conceptualization of EE has been done in numerous manners; the literature review gives evidence of the same. On summarising it becomes clear that such varied definitions, descriptions, and methodologies given by different researchers on EE lead to a difficult state of understanding of EE. The understanding around EE and its construct needs to be made clear and unifying. Kular, Gatenby, Rees, Soane, and Truss (2008) envisage that the similarity could be drawn between varied researches on EE. Most of the EE researches claim that the level of engagement seems to be on a lower side in organizations across the world. This problem is imminent, employees shirking responsibility, seeming uninterested in work, and most importantly gaining
little meaning from the work they do is a common thread which can be seen across the world.

Holbeche and Springett (2003) advocate that people have a perception of finding meaning from their work roles based on the level of engagement they display and the kind of performance they deliver on the job. The findings also emphasise that employees are more prone to finding meaningfulness at work rather than in their daily lives. Kular et al. (2008) suggest that in such situations the employers need to do all the sole searching regarding their employees and come to a valid conclusion as to what really appeals to the senses of their employees, and that how the works could be made more meaningful for the employees. Holbeche and Springett (2003) state further that meaningfulness just doesn’t impact the individual employees but also the bottom line of the organizations. The literature review also suggests that EE seems to have a connection with the bottom line of the organizations as several consultancy researches depict that EE leads to business outcomes, and this explains why EE is so enticing a concept for the corporate organizations.

Kular et al. (2008) also envisage that the evidences surrounding EE literature point towards negative outlook, as the levels of engagement differs among the countries across the world. They summarise that one size may not fit all, and that different work cultures may require different assessments and actions. Additionally Kular et al. (2008) also assert that difference in engagement among different nations and organizations may be partly because of the different values, culture, politics, type of management, functioning of the economy, etc. being followed. The suggestions which they give for the management here is to have awareness across all divides, with the advent of globalisation an organization works across varied countries round the globe, so understanding of the antecedents in the host countries need to be examined in a succinct manner. The psychological literature in EE clearly spells the varied working styles and different performance of different employees. Kahn (1990) asserts that such differences among individuals shape up the nature and personality of the person and that governs the ability of individual employees to engage or disengage from the work and their organization.
May et al. (2004) advocate the importance of emotional experiences in a work role and in which way EE is related to such emotional experience. The practitioners literature also signifies the importance of emotions and that it is more or less related to the individual level of satisfaction that an employee receives from the work role (Towers Perrin 2003). Holbeche and Springett (2003) however, hold differing views regarding emotions, they advocate that free flow of emotions need to be restricted and managed in order to have highly productive employees. Relationships within the workplace have also been found to have an impact on ‘meaningfulness’, which relates to engagement.

The assessment of some of the demographic variables on EE substantiate that EE is affected by some of the demographic variables. Gender difference may also have some effect on the level of engagement; females tend to be high on engagement than their male counterparts. Johnson (2005) advocates that women find more fulfilment in their works and hence more engaged than men. Kular et al. (2008) however caution that demographic variables may not impact an employee’s predisposition to be engaged. They further advocate that the manner in which the employees are managed by implementing good management styles and apt job designs for the employees can work wonders for the level of engagement among the employees, which may be regardless of any demographic differences.

An individual employee’s intention to stay in the organization is an apt measure to gauge the feeling of the employee towards the organization. It can be emphasized here that two schools of thoughts are prevalent about the employee’s intent to stay in the organization. Whilst the first theorist claim that the employees who are more engaged in their work are less likely to leave the organization because they feel an attachment with the work role or job per say (Schaufeli & Bakker 2004; Truss et al. 2006). This establishes the fact that EE leads to greater intention among the employees to stay in the organization. The second school of thought however, portrays differing views, Ferguson (2007) and Truss et al. (2006) advocate that the longer the employees serve an organization, the level of engagement becomes lesser. In order to ward off such exigencies, Kular et al. (2008) emphasise the importance of engaging employees for
long terms, solving pertinent issues between the employer and employee rather than letting such relationship decay.

Researchers also emphasise that engaged employees are more likely to display discretionary efforts for the organization. Konrad (2006) specifies that engagement is closely related to the feelings of being valued and involved; in such scenario employees are more prone to display discretionary efforts. Kular et al. (2008), therefore, advice the management of organizations to have increased sharing of control and take feedback from employees regarding significant decisions, which may lead to involved and engaged employees who are more likely to exhibit discretionary behaviour at work.

The literature review also explains how Workplace Spirituality (WS) and EE are related to and similar to each other. Several researches have reviewed the importance of spiritual development of the employees, and how it may foster EE; in this sense WS can well be a valid predictor of EE.