CHAPTER – 7

SUMMARY
AND
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This chapter summarizes the entire study, draws the major conclusions from each chapter and delineates the future avenues for research.

7.1 SUMMARY AND FINDINGS

**Chapter 1** introduced the concept of employee work engagement and its significance in the contemporary work arena. In the context of globalization, boundary less organizations need to capitalize upon the strength of work engaged employees. The strong association of work engagement with employee retention, customer satisfaction, productivity and profitability was brought out while similar relationships were not found for traditional constructs like job satisfaction. The rationale for the current study was explained in the light of the challenges faced by Indian higher education system. Given the issues of below expected quality of teaching and learning, lack of quality assurance and poor accountability of teaching staff in higher education institutions, it was found essential to investigate the status of work engagement amongst faculty members, explore the factors associated with it and identify measures for its enhancement.

**Chapter 2** dealt with the review of literature that was relevant to the subject matter of the thesis. Approximately, more than hundred research papers published in various international journals, related articles from books and websites and significant reports published on this subject were reviewed. All the studies were categorized into five sections namely studies on work engagement as a unique construct; studies on measurement of work engagement; studies on factors affecting work engagement; studies on relationship of work engagement with job crafting, organizational commitment, work life balance and work stress and studies on engagement –performance link. The review revealed that engagement is a novel and unique concept accepted in both managerial and academic literature and unlikely to be forsaken as a fad. Engagement was distinguished from job satisfaction, commitment, job involvement, work holism and work related flow. The instruments for measuring employee work engagement were explored. The commonly cited
instruments were found to be Gallup Workplace Audit or Q12, Maslach Burnout Inventory, Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (OLBI) and Utrecht Work Engagement Scale. Various studies on the factors affecting work engagement were reviewed. A comparative analysis revealed that work engagement is predicted by factors such as job characteristics, personal resources, interpersonal relations and organizational support. The studies detailed the qualitative aspects of each of these factors. Work engagement, being a multi dimensional concept was found to be related other behavioral phenomena. A few studies revealed a positive association between job crafting and work engagement, indicating that employees who take proactive steps to establish a better person-job fit are more work engaged. The relationship of work-life balance and work engagement was explored by a few studies. They found that employees who carry positive feelings from their work to personal life and vice versa experience higher levels of engagement. A few studies investigated the relationship between work engagement and organizational commitment. They found a positive association between the two. Studies on the relationship between work engagement and work stress revealed that the two are inversely related. Studies on the engagement performance link highlighted that engaged employees outshine others in both in-role and extra-role performance. They are creative problem solvers and display the ability to inspire and coach their co-workers.

The review of literature revealed the need to conduct a comprehensive study of work engagement of faculty members in the higher education sector, as very few such studies existed in the Indian context. The factors affecting work engagement of faculty members was found to be a less researched area, particularly in the Indian higher education sector, having its unique size and challenges. The relationship of work engagement with related phenomena like job crafting, work life balance, organizational commitment and work stress was found to be a subject of research gap and interest. Based on these, measures for enhancement of work engagement were sought to be identified. Hence, according to these research gaps, the present study was undertaken with the following objectives:

1) To measure the level of work engagement amongst the employees (faculty members) working in organizations under the study.

2) To study the relationship (if any) between the level of work engagement and personal variables.
3) To identify factors affecting the level of work engagement amongst employees (faculty members).
4) To identify the measures required for enhancement of work engagement amongst the employees (faculty members).
5) To study the relationship (if any) between the level of work engagement amongst employees (faculty members) and
   - job crafting initiatives
   - work-life balance
   - level of work stress
   - level of organization commitment

Chapter 3 explained the research methodology including the research design and sampling technique, data collection, sample description, research instruments and finally the statistical analysis approach was explained. A cross-sectional descriptive study was designed using the quota sampling technique for drawing a fixed number of faculty members from each of the four broad faculty work areas namely Commerce and Business Management (CBM), Science, Engineering and Technology (SET), Applied Medical Sciences (AMS) and Education and Humanities (EHUM) from public and private higher education institutions. The respondents were drawn from higher education institutions located in the districts of Amritsar, Bathinda, Jalandhar, Ludhiana, Patiala and the capital of Punjab – Chandigarh as these districts are considered the hubs of higher education in Punjab. A total of 463 fully filled questionnaires were received from 41 Higher Education Institutions.

The research instrument used for data collection consisted of eight parts including (i) a self-developed 92 item scale that explored the respondents’ perception regarding self, current job and current organization (ii) job crafting scale adapted from Tims et al. (2012) (iii) work-life balance scale developed by Hayman (2005) (iv) nine-item version of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale developed by Schaufeli et al., 2006 (v) Organizational Commitment scale developed by Saks (2006) (vi) a work stress scale adapted from Organization Role Stress Scale developed by Udai Pareek (1983) (vii) an ordinal scale to see respondents’ ranking of changes required for improving engagement. The statistical analysis approach included descriptive statistics, one-way ANOVA, exploratory factor analysis,
measurement of scale reliability with Cronbach’s alpha coefficient, correlation analysis, non-metric correlation analysis using Spearman’s rank correlation coefficient and hierarchical multivariate regression analysis. The data analysis was done using SPSS version 16.0.

Chapter 4 dealt with data analysis related to level of faculty work engagement and investigated its relationship with personal variables chosen for the study. While a majority (57.23%) of the respondents reported a moderate level of work engagement a significant number of respondents (38.66%) reported high level of work engagement, thus highlighting the scope and need to improve the work engagement of faculty members. The difference in mean work engagement across the samples categorized on the basis of personal variables was analyzed using one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). Wherever the difference in the level of engagement was found to be significant, Post-Hoc tests using Least Square Difference (LSD) were applied. Work engagement of faculty members varied significantly with faculty work area, district wise posting, designation, experience in current organization, total experience, age, educational background and salary. However, no statistically significant variation was found with respect to gender, regional background, government versus private institution and posting at university campus or affiliated college. Work engagement of faculty members belonging to education and humanities (EHUM) was significantly higher than those belonging to commerce and business management (CBM) and applied medical sciences (AMS). It could be attributed possibly to the higher personal resources possessed by the Education and humanities faculty most of whom possessed a formal qualification as Teacher Educators. Faculty members who possessed a doctoral degree (Ph.D) reported higher engagement than the others. In the light of Kahn’s (1990) model of personal engagement, doctoral degree can be considered a key intellectual resource to enhance the psychological availability for the faculty role. This points to the need to increase faculty enrolment in doctoral degrees. Those drawing a salary of less than Rs. 30,000 per month were significantly less engaged than the next higher salary bracket 30,001 to 50,000 per month as well as the highest salary bracket Rs. 1,10,000 and above.

Chapter 5 dealt with identification of the factors affecting work engagement of faculty members and measures for enhancing the same. Exploratory factor
analysis was applied in the light of its key objective of reducing a larger set of variables to a smaller set and to summarize the data. Ten unique factors or dimensions were identified, all having acceptable Cronbach’s alpha. They were named as perceived organizational support, personal and professional orientation, supervisory coaching, climate of participation and recognition, organizational orientation for results, interaction with students, intrinsic rewards, empowerment, task variety and support from associates. Correlation analysis was done to study whether there is an associative relationship between work engagement and the ten factors identified through factor analysis. The results revealed that all the factors were significantly associated with work engagement. The highest correlation of work engagement was found with ‘personal and professional orientation’ and the lowest with ‘support from associates’. In order to understand the direction of the relationship, hierarchical multiple regression analysis was performed. The results revealed that typically in the higher education sector, the job related factors which significantly predict faculty work engagement are perceived organizational support, intrinsic rewards, task variety, organizational orientation for results and supervisory coaching. At the individual level, personal and professional orientation is a vital resource driving work engagement.

Chapter 5 also reported the measures required for enhancement of work engagement amongst faculty members. The respondents were given a list of 11 statements and asked to rank the top five changes in order to work with better energy, dedication and involvement. The top five measures identified were greater role clarity, more empowerment for decision making, better intrinsic rewards, more openness towards change and innovation and organizational support for career advancement. In order to evaluate the consistency of response across the demographic sub groups of respondents, comparison was made according to gender, type of institution, designation, salary, faculty work area and district of posting. Spearman’s rank correlation coefficient was calculated. Results revealed that the measures required for work engagement enhancement were significantly correlated according to gender but there was no statistically significant correlation in the response of faculty sub groups according to type of institution, designation, salary bracket and work area. Placed at starting rung of teaching hierarchy, the lecturers expressed a strong need for role clarity; Assistant Professors emphasized upon the
need for empowerment; Associate Professors gave top most priority to the need for intrinsic rewards for example meaningful, interesting and valuable work. While the faculty from science, engineering and technology gave maximum importance to development oriented leadership, faculty from other work areas stated the requirement for greater role clarity. It implies that if the target is to engage the faculty in their work roles, a ‘one size fits all approach’ may be insufficient. Engagement measures might need to be customized to suit the needs of various groups.

Chapter 6 dealt data analysis for investigation of the relationship of work engagement with other phenomena. The results revealed that work engagement is positively associated with job crafting, work-life balance and organizational commitment and inversely related with work stress.

7.2 KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of previous research and the results of the current study the key recommendations are:

[1] Faculty work engagement in higher education sector of Punjab, is at a moderate level. The statistics indicate a large scope of improvement. Given the merits of a work engaged faculty team, HEIs are urged for action in this direction.

[2] The significant factors affecting work engagement of faculty members, as per the current study are: perceived organizational support, personal and professional orientation, intrinsic rewards, task variety, organizational orientation for results and supervisory coaching.

[3] The top five measures required for enhancement of work engagement include greater role clarity, more empowerment for decision making, better intrinsic rewards, more openness towards change and innovation and organizational support for career advancement. Interestingly, it was found that if work engagement measures can be more effective if customized according to type of institution, designation and faculty work areas. For instance, government and government aided Higher Education Institutions need to focus on providing greater role clarity, empowerment and open communication. Private sector HEIs need to pay attention to better intrinsic
rewards in terms of interesting work, satisfaction from work and a sense of progress along with better organizational support for career advancement.

Work engagement of faculty members was significantly predicted by two constituents of job crafting, namely, increasing structural job resources and challenging job demands. It implies that work engagement is likely to increase with a bottom–up approach wherein faculty members are encouraged to use a two pronged strategy to alter their job design. One set of initiatives they can take include seeking structural job resources like autonomy, task and skill variety and opportunities for self development. Another set of efforts include seeking challenging job demands by volunteering for new projects, keeping abreast of the most recent developments, taking initiative to start new projects and extra tasks.

Work engagement is significantly predicted by two aspects of work–life balance namely personal life interference with work and work–personal life enhancement (WPLE). It implies that HR policy initiatives to establish a mutually enhancing relationship between work and personal life could have a significant impact on work engagement. In this direction, flexible work options can be explored. Flexible working hours can be given wherein faculty members can choose their preferred timings subject to meeting a prefixed number of hours. The option of telecommuting allows the employees to work from anywhere and stay in touch with the office with advanced technological assistance for example video conferencing and webinars in case of faculty members. Flexible benefits or cafeteria style benefit program allows employees to choose from a range of benefit options that best suit their personal and family needs, upto the value of a set allowance. The option of having a compressed work week allows employees to work for longer hours on certain days and enjoy a longer week end for example it allows the freedom to work ten hours a day for four days instead of eight hours a day for five days. Another novel idea tried by some organizations is the option of job sharing or twinning. Herein, two employees share the job responsibilities in a full time job. Permission for availing career breaks for self development can also be a highly sought after...
measure for better work life balance and hence work engagement of faculty members.

[6] Work engagement was found to be inversely related with work stress. Results of the present study revealed greatest dissatisfaction on role interference dimension requiring them to compromise on quality of work due to quantity, underutilization of talent and need to make changes in current role profile. Self–role distance and role expectation conflict were inversely related with work engagement. It calls for action by those in academic leadership positions, playing supervisory role as Heads of Departments. Intrinsic rewards in the form of allocating faculty preferred courses for teaching and appreciation for good work can erode the negative impact of work stress and create a positive gain spiral for faculty work engagement.

[7] Faculty members who are highly committed to their current organizations are likely to be more work engaged. Work engagement of long tenured faculty members (>20 years) was found to be higher than others who had less experience (<5 years) in the current organization. It appears that when faculty members stay associated with an organization for a long tenure, they develop a clear understanding of organizational orientation for results which was identified as another vital factor predicting faculty work engagement. A long tenure could be an outcome of a match between organization’s result orientation with employees’ personal and professional orientation. Hence, it implies that HEIs must design ingenious ways to map the two orientations so that they can retain faculty members for long tenures and capitalize upon their work engagement. An employee value proposition of care and concern fuels affective commitment which has a strong positive association with work engagement.

7.3 FUTURE RESEARCH PROSPECTS

This study also found the vistas for future research. A majority of the studies on work engagement especially in the Indian context have used a cross-sectional design which cannot explain why even highly engaged employees may be less engaged on some days. Hence, longitudinal studies are required to analyze the pattern of daily changes in work engagement and identify the factors leading to
these. Such studies could have important implications for better understanding of employee well being. The current study investigated the relationship between work engagement and job crafting and found a positive association. Further studies in this area may answer the question as to whether all employees are equally inclined for job crafting. Can people be trained for job crafting? Is there a relationship between personality and job crafting? The current study highlights the need for work-life balance measures in HEIs. Studies mapping the perception of policy makers in the government and private sector can be instrumental in identifying the feasibility of adopting such initiatives. They can dramatically change the workplace scenario and increase workforce participation of many sections of the society which can be instrumental in enhancing the overall work engagement. Work engagement will be sustainable when employee well being is also high (Robertson and Cooper, 2010). Studies on work engagement can be furthered to construct workplace happiness index – an aggregation of all vital metrics of employee well being.