DRIVERS OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT IN INDIAN INDUSTRY -A COMPARATIVE STUDY

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The one important HR practice which can optimise utilization of human resource is "Employee Engagement" and the organizations have started taking initiatives to increase the level of employee engagement because now they know that it is only through committed workforce that has high level of engagement can give organization the much required competitive edge over their competitors in the market place.

Thus, the managers now know very well that in order to stay ahead of competition HR has to be given due importance and in turn HR will take all possible initiatives to increase employee commitment and employee engagement.

Actually, before studying employee engagement scholars developed Q construct known as Organizational Commitment. It measures the desire of the employees first to stay in the organization and second their belief in and acceptance of the organizational goals and values and third, their readiness to put in required efforts on behalf of the organization.

"Affective commitment, refers to the employee's emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organization" (Meyer and Allen, 1991) which is now referred as the important aspect of employee engagement. The implications of affective commitment of employees have been studied by researchers and has been found that it has a positive impact on employee productivity, customer satisfaction, employee retention and thus overall profitability.

To deal with the present day competition employees of the organization should be full of enthusiasm, dedicated to their work and actively involved in their work activities. This will happen when employees feel appreciated, recognised, see their job as meaningful and thus have positive emotions towards their work. The work environment should be positive and appreciative of collaboration and team work.

Research Methodology

Objective of the study

To identify the main drivers of employee engagement in the three Industries.

Scope of the Study

The responses of the employees working in three sectors- IT, Education and Retail was taken on a pan India basis during the period 2015-2016. Through which the Primary data was collected. The names of companies are not being disclosed as they were promised of confidentiality.

Research Instrument Applied

The Gallup Incorporation an American research based global performance management consulting company has developed a questionnaire to gauge the level of employee engagement. This research instrument (Gallup Q12 Employee Engagement Questionnaire) is being widely used by the industry.

The questionnaire has 12 dimensions to measure the health of the work place. These dimensions consistently correlate the 4 outcomes- employee relation, customer matrix, productivity and profitability.

The same instrument has been used by the researcher to measure the level of engagement of the employees of the three sectors.

Sample Characteristics

The sector-wise distribution of respondents to Gallup's employee engagement questionnaires is as follows:(Table 1)

Table 1 : Sector wise Distribution of Responders

Subordinate (Junior Employee) response sector wise	Number
IT	212
Education	210
Retail	78
Total	**500**

Significance of the Study

It may help the organization to decide as to which type of culture and the leadership style should be promoted and practiced by the managers so that there is an improvement in the level of Employee Engagement.

Rationale of the Study

Every single employee has a role to play and a job to perform in the achievement of organizational goals. The presence of service sector in Indian economy and it's contribution in GDP is increasing every year with the passage of time. That is why the researcher has decided to choose the three predominant industries of the service sector. These are the sectors which have a significant role to play in the present and in the future also. Their presence and contribution is not going to be marginalized rather it is likely to increase. Today the life of every individual is full of stress both at personal and professional front, which is resulting into increase in number of cases of psychological disorders and work life imbalances. All this further asks for an organization to be a place where work is not a stress but an experience of self achievement and proving oneself.

Limitations of the Study

1. Data was collected on a self report basis from the employees of the three sectors in a single time frame and the responses could be biased.

2. Every sector is characterized by certain job characteristics which is prevalent only in a particular industry. Therefore the results could be influenced by the set of conditions prevailing in that particular sector.

The terms leader and manager have been used interchangeably. In case of educational institutions also in place of Directors, Principal, head of the Department the terms managers/ leader have been used to maintain uniformity in the three sectors.

The responses of employees and its analysis are presented below.

Overall Satisfaction with the Company

The first question measures the overall satisfaction of the employees with one's company as it results into positive contribution, higher productivity, more profitability, low employee turnover and higher sense of belongingness towards the Organization.

Table 2 : Overall Satisfaction with the Company

Level of satisfaction/ Employee response sector wise	Extremely satisfied	Satisfied	Not sure	Dissatisfied	Extremely dissatisfied	Total
IT	26	170	3	13	1	212
Education	14	110	0	46	40	210
Retail	4	12	13	49	1	78
Total						500

92% employees from IT sector are moreover satisfied with their companies as are the 59% employees from Education sector. There is a huge difference in the satisfaction level of employees from the Retail sector, only 21% of employees from Retail are satisfied with their organization.

The above suggests that the employees of IT sector are engaged with organizations, which is likely to result into higher productivity more profitability and lower attrition as compared to the employees of the Retail Sector.

Understanding and Clarity of Expectations at Work Place

Every employee should have clear cut understanding of what is expected of him at the work place. The table below shows the responses of employees in terms of their understanding and clarity of expectations at work place.

Table 3 : Understanding and Clarity of Expectations at Work Place

Level of satisfaction /Employee response sector wise	Extremely satisfied	Satisfied	Not clear	Dissatisfied	Extremely dissatisfied	Total
IT	37	129	11	22	13	212
Education	19	117	10	39	25	210
Retail	12	15	11	13	27	78
Total						500

78% employees from IT sector have understanding of the expectations at work place while almost 65% of employees from Education sector have the same. From the Retail sector 51% seem to be quite dissatisfied with what is expected out of them. Also, as many as 14% employees are quite unclear with what are the organizations expectations' from them.

In the absence of role clarity and organization's expectations from them the employees are indecisive, hesitant and unsure of themselves. Clarity and understanding of expectations can guide employees towards better achievement of results.

Availability of Material and Equipment

For the optimal use of resources be it - human, material, financial etc. we need a right kind of balance between different inputs. In the absence of the availability of the right kind of material and equipments at the workplace the utilization of capabilities of people remains impaired and

underutilized.

Table 4: Availability of Material and Equipment

Level of satisfaction /Employee response sector wise	Extremely satisfied	Satisfied	%	Not sure	Dissatisfied	Extremely dissatisfied	Total
IT	72	80	71.6	2	58	0	212
Education	84	40	59	11	39	36	210
Retail	10	23	42.3	0	41	4	78
Total	166	153	319				500

72% employees from IT sector are moreover satisfied with the availability of material and equipment in comparison to 59% of employees from Education and 42.3% of employees from Retail sector. Employees from IT & Education are more satisfied with their organization in comparison to Retail sector where almost 58% employees are dissatisfied in terms of not being provided with the material and equipment for facilitating work.

IT companies which operate under intense national and international competition should make available the best of necessary tools to maximise potential of their employees otherwise survival will be a threat and Education sector should also do the same. The efficiency of the employees in the Retail sector is largely impaired by non availability of right kind of equipments. The organizations that recognize and use the impact of various innovations and adapt to the changing environment remain in the business and survive.

Opportunity to do what I do best

Desirable overlapping of the employee with his job gets the best result.

Table 5 : Opportunity to do What I do Best

Level of satisfaction/ Employee response sector wise	Extremely satisfied	Satisfied	Not sure	Dissatisfied	Extremely dissatisfied	Total
IT	78	110	2	10	12	212
Education	43	89	4	48	26	210
Retail	13	9	8	31	17	78
Total						500

63% employees from IT sector are more satisfied in terms of getting opportunity to perform, what they do best in comparison to Education (89%) which is next in satisfaction level followed by Retail employees (28%).

The analysis shows that IT companies while recruiting employees take into consideration the requirements of the job and try to match them with the person's talent. It is only then better and effective utilization of human potential can be achieved. The organizations can also think of job crafting to more effectively utilize specific talents of their employees. It is not possible for a manager to develop in his subordinates those set of skills of which they do not have the potential. Excellence can only be achieved if employees get an opportunity to grow their inherent talents and use them to their fullest potential.

In this context it is expected of HR department to recruit people on the basis of their capabilities and potential and not merely on their educational qualification and experience. It is advised that the

company should go in for psychometric analysis and potential mapping of the applicants to create a right match between man and the job.

Recognition for the good work done

Appreciation at work place is something that all employees look forward too as it is a great motivator. Their satisfaction and productivity level rises if employees and job done by them is valued.

Table 5: Recognition for the Good Work Done

Level of satisfaction/ Employee response sector wise	Extremely satisfied	Satisfied	Not sure	Dissatisfied	Extremely dissatisfied	Total
IT	43	133	0	26	10	212
Education	39	91	10	60	10	210
Retail	10	15	1	35	17	78
Total						500

83% employees from IT, 62% from Education and only 32% employees from Retail are of the opinion that their performance is recognized at their workplace.

While comparing the three sectors, it is evident that IT and Education sector employees get more recognition for their performance, as compared to Retail sector. Workplaces that continue to follow the old culture of being indifferent towards employees will destroy the very human spirit that makes the real difference in quality output and service delivery .Retail sector seems to be suffering from that very culture.

As against the assumption that appreciation comes only from supervisors and managers, Gallup found that employees value the recognition and praise from their peer group too as they are the people who exactly know the various aspects of a given job.

Compensation is not the only need of employees from an organization. Along with that regular appreciation of good work done is also expected and appreciated very few organizations have well established regular initiatives of formally recognising the contributions of their subordinates in terms of- Employee of the month, Best performing employee etc.

Someone at work cares about me

Table 7: Someone at Work Cares About Me

Level of satisfaction/ Employee response sector wise	Extremely satisfied	Satisfied	Not sure	Dissatisfied	Extremely satisfied	Total
IT	53	110	27	22	0	212
Education	47	60	34	49	20	211
Retail	10	23	4	28	13	78
Total						500

77 % of employees from IT sector are of the opinion that they feel someone at workplace cares for them in comparison to 51% of employees from Education and 42% from Retail sector. 5% employees from the Retail sector have no idea about the presence of such people at their workplace. Also 53% of them believe that no one at their workplace cares about them. It can therefore be inferred that leaders from IT & Education are successful in communicating their concern regarding their

employees in comparison to Retail.

It is often said and heard that organizations are not bad and people do not leave companies due to that but the leaders are bad and that's why they leave the organizations. Negative behaviour of a senior with his subordinates can be very costly to any organization and to the employees.

Encourage my Development

Now a days individuals who have multiple job opportunities with them do not choose the organization solely on the basis of compensation. One factor which is given highest consideration is the opportunity to learn and grow there. Whether and to what extent the organization is likely to offer this has become a significant criteria.

Gone are the days when the progression of an employee in an organization was simple, linear and progressive. The environment has become very competitive and the growth has become complex and trajectile- similar to the movement of a projectile.

People remain and grow in an organization only if they are able to add value to their work which in turn is possible only if the organization/manager gives encouragement and regular opportunity to grow by offering employees new projects/ committees/ tasks/ task force/ autonomous work groups or send them to attend training programs within and outside. These can be some of the measures to help employees develop. Employees in good organizations are not developed only in the areas which are weak but are given an opportunity to develop where they have potential and their strength lies.

Table 8 : Encourage my Development

Level of satisfaction/ Employee response sector wise	Extremely satisfied	Satisfied	Not sure	Dissatisfied	Extremely satisfied	Total
IT	123	47	0	15	27	212
Education	39	103	9	36	23	210
Retail	1	5	4	50	18	78
Total						500

80% of employees from IT sector and 68% of employees from Education sector are convinced that they are being encouraged to develop and hone their skills in their organization. On the other hand 87% of them from the Retail sector are totally dissatisfied, as they do not feel that they are being encouraged for their further development.

Opinion Counts at Work

Most of the organizations which used to follow autocratic style of managing are non existent. They used to dictate terms unilaterally without giving opportunity to the employees even to voice their opinion. Human beings are social animals with a need to participate in the process of decision making and give their suggestions (and at times their suggestions are the most honest ones as they are hands on to any given job). They feel good when their voice is heard and even better when it is valued. When the opinion of the employees is heard in any organization, connect between the individual employee and the organization becomes strong.

Sustained competitive advantage can only be achieved when organizations encourage their people

to express their ideas and more so if those ideas are valued and implemented by the managers. The growth of Quality Circles is a good example in this context. All those employees who work from shop floor or those who are in direct contact with the customers are in a position to suggest new ideas resulting in to product/ process innovation, new product development/ increased efficiency. The category of employees termed as knowledge worker only stays with the organization when they are given an opportunity to experiment with their ideas and this entire process of experimentation is valued. For sectors like IT, it is very much required and for Educational institutions also it matters significantly.

Table 9: Opinion Counts at Work

Level of satisfaction/ Employee response sector wise	Extremely satisfied	Satisfied	Not sure	Dissatisfied	Extremely satisfied	Total
IT	39	123	20	17	13	212
Education	21	79	10	59	41	210
Retail	0	5	1	42	30	78
Total						500

76% employees from IT sector and 48% employees from Education sector believe that their opinion counts at work while 92% employees from Retail sector seem dissatisfied, as they do not feel that their opinion counts or makes any difference.

Therefore it can be inferred that employees from IT and Education play some part in decision making while employees from Retail do not seem to be given any part in decision making in organization.

Relevance and Importance of Job Profile

As stated earlier, it is not solely compensation for which employees join any organization A set of factors which make employees feel attached to the organization and remain motivated to perform their jobs are : relevance and the significance of their jobs. They increase their intrinsic motivation. When the employees feel that their contribution is meaningful it enhances their involvement, degree of satisfaction and motivation to perform. Thus, the organizations that prepare job profile which is of significance makes employees feel that they are an integral part of the organization and in turn they stay committed to it. Good organizations take initiative to discuss its vision and mission with the employees, too.

All those job profiles which have significance in the eyes of individual employee, co-worker and society at large make the job meaningful in the psychological state of individual job holder and in turn makes an individual feel from within highly motivated and this increase the sense of belongingness towards the organization.

Table 10 : Relevance and Importance of Job Profile

Level of satisfaction/ Employee response sector wise	Extremely satisfied	Satisfied	Not sure	Dissatisfied	Extremely dissatisfied	Total
IT	26	129	12	17	28	212
Education	37	94	8	27	44	210
Retail	3	4	5	36	30	78
Total						500

85

73% employees from IT sector realize the relevance and importance of their job profile and are satisfied as are the 62% employees from Education sector. Only 9% employees from Retail are satisfied with the relevance of their job while more than 85%   are dissatisfied. The majority of the employees do not find their jobs important or relevant in line with the objectives of the organization.

This suggests that managers in IT industry put in efforts to prepare job profile that has relevance and significance which is not largely done in Retail. This in turn make them feel that they are involved in jobs which are irrelevant and do not see any direct linkage between what they do and how it relates to the overall company objectives.

Associates also Committed to Quality

Quality output is not the contribution of a single employee- it is a result of each individual having a concern for quality and collaboration. In team functioning people often come together and represent different departments/ expertise. For everyone to prioritise on the same lines is not easy. Conflict between team members arises due to this and calls for a great deal of understanding between each other, knowing each other's strengths and weaknesses and streamlining the efforts of all the members by focusing on their strength at large.

Table 11: Associates also Committed to Quality

Level of satisfaction/ Employee response sector wise	Extremely satisfied	Satisfied	Not sure	Dissatisfied	Extremely satisfied	Total
IT	13	139	33	10	17	212
Education	56	31	23	46	54	210
Retail	1	12	5	40	20	78
Total						500

72% employees from IT sector against 41% employees from Education sector believe that their associates are also committed to quality. There is a difference in the opinion of employees from the Retail sector; who seem to be less satisfied with their associate's commitment level to quality and almost 77% employees are dissatisfied in this aspect.

This calls for very strong need to change the culture prevailing in Education and Retail sectors. Initiatives should be taken by the managers of these two sectors to change the work culture and help employees to recognise and understand that customer satisfaction and loyalty can only result if every employee has a positive approach towards problem solving and concern for quality issues.

Best friend at Work Place

Large part of the active work day is spent by the employees in their organizations and this call for a need to develop quality relationships at the workplace. Many organizations have started recognizing and appreciating this fact and create work spaces, work groups in such way that promotes healthy interactions. Good number of organizations organizes formal and informal gatherings to strengthen introduction as this addresses to the human need for affiliation and recognition. An environment promoting trust between people, strengthen such relationships. Large numbers of researches have showed that if an employee has a best friend at work then he tends to be more focussed, loyal to the organization and passionate towards the work. The employees' retention rate is higher. They

infrequently go on sick leave and fewer accidents occur. The career decisions often depend upon the quality of relationships in the work place.

Table 12 : Best Friend at Work Place

Level of satisfaction/ Employee response sector wise	Extremely satisfied	Satisfied	Not sure	Dissatisfied	Extremely Dissatisfied	Total
IT	77	93	8	23	11	212
Education	47	63	19	57	24	210
Retail	12	10	3	23	30	78
Total						500

80% employees from Education sector and 52% from IT are satisfied with their affiliation at work place and have best friend there too. On the other hand 68% employees from Retail sector are of the expression that they don't have a best friend at work place. It shows that IT and Education sector employees are able to make more affiliation and bonding at work in comparison to employees from Retail sector.

It shows that the managers form IT company have initiated the efforts to build the quality relationships and healthy workplace environment. This is largely missing in Retail Sector which suggests that these employees work under stress and are emotionally distressed. Their loyalty towards co-workers is likely to be poor as the element of trust is weak. All this calls for initiatives to be taken to strengthen friendly relationships among employees as the absence of this can cause stress and burnout. Healthy interactions at the workplace also act as de-stressor and promote cohesiveness.

Discussed my Progress

Employees have a psychological need to know whether the contribution which they are making by undertaking various activities on the job are in the right direction or not. This asks to give regular feedback on the part of managers to their employees with regard to their work progress. It helps in building their motivation. The managers who are of the view that annual performance review is sufficient enough to help employees understand themselves and give them a perspective of their contribution are proving to be incompetent. On the contrary, effective managers have developed formal and informal procedures of reviewing the contributions of their subordinates. In this competitive world the customers do not want to wait and want the delivery of their product/ service in real time. For this every employee should first know what is expected of him, should discuss the process and know the feedback on how it is being delivered. Both his good and not so good work activities should be discussed with him in an environment which is positive healthy and trustworthy. Effective managers make it a practice to do it on the regular basis.

The main purpose behind such regular feedback is to help employees consolidate on their strengths and not to be discouraged by highlighting their areas of weaknesses during discussion. The understanding of oneself by an employee and its relevance in the present and future work activities of the organization makes individuals more confident, focused towards their purpose and aligned with the organization. This also addresses to the anxiety of lay off and future career uncertainties.

Table 13: Discussed my Progress

Level of satisfaction/ Employee response sector wise	Extremely satisfied	Satisfied	Not sure	Dissatisfied	Extremely dissatisfied	Total
IT	21	134	8	46	3	212
Education	39	83	7	52	29	210
Retail	2	13	8	35	20	78
Total						500

73% employees from IT sector and 58% from Education sector are satisfied that they have people who discuss their progress at work place. In comparison to them Retail sector employees do not agree with it. Almost 71% of employees opine that nobody is there at their work place to discuss one's progress with them on time to time basis. It goes on to prove that IT and Education sector employees get the opportunity to discuss this as compared to employees from Retail sector.

The above suggests that the employees of the Retail sector largely and to some extent of Education sector have concern regarding their contributions towards the organization. This uncertainty results into stress regarding their career today and tomorrow and can also lead to negative productivity and dissatisfaction. This calls for a change in the formal system of performance feedback and also asks to work on informal ways to communicate on the regular basis with individual employee regarding his work progress, contributions, strengths and the ways and means to consolidate on those strengths so that the future career related anxieties are addressed to.

Opportunity to Learn and Grow

With changing scenario, growth is only possible when the individual on a regular basis adds to his present level of competence towards acquiring futuristic relevant knowledge. This is the reason why individuals are more attracted towards organizations which give them an opportunity on the regular basis to learn and hence the Evolution of Learning Organizations.

Organizations need to create a culture that promotes to think out of box, generate new ideas, new ways and means of doing the job. Experimentation with new and different ways of doing things needs to be promoted. Although all this asks for huge resources and may result into some failures also but eventually may turn out to be more beneficial in the long run. Companies can become more productive and efficient by offering variable compensation to their employees. But if an organization wants its employees to be smart rather than making them just the work horses needs to build a culture which promotes free exchange of ideas, experimentation and risk taking.

Table 14 : Opportunity to Learn and Grow

Level of satisfaction/ Employee response sector wise	Extremely satisfied	Satisfied	Not sure	Dissatisfied	Extremely satisfied	Total
IT	119	47	7	29	10	212
Education	31	98	10	37	34	210
Retail	5	15	2	51	5	78
Total						500

78% employees from IT sector are moreover satisfied with opportunity to learn and grow in their organization and so are the 61% employees from Education sector. There is a difference in the satisfaction level of employees from the Retail sector, where 70% of them appear to be dissatisfied

The analysis of input from the employees of the three sectors suggests that the employees of the Retail sector are largely told one best way of doing things and follow it. Generally most of the things are pre-decided by their managers and the employees are to follow the directions. They are in a very limited way given an opportunity to innovate and do things differently. Their work environment does not promote learning new things and experimenting with new ideas. All this results into their mechanical involvement with the job and the organization and the desirable emotional bonding does not take place.

Conclusion

The main drivers of employee engagement for the three sectors respectively are

 A. Main drivers for engagement in IT sector are:

- Opportunity to do what employee can do best.
- Recognition for the good work done.
- Best friend at work place.
- Encourage employee development.

 B Main drivers for engagement in Education sector are:

- Encourage employee development.
- Understanding of Expectations at work place.
- Opportunity to do what employee can do best.
- Relevance and Importance of job profile.

 C Main drivers for Disengagement in Retail sector are:

- Encourage my development.
- Relevance and Importance of job profile.
- Associates also committed to quality.
- Recognition for the good work done.

Thus, in order to improve the level of employee engagement in the three sectors under study the manager of IT, Education and Retail sectors can work on the main drivers cited above to improve their competitive advantage. Though, it is difficult to start working simultaneously on all the drivers mentioned above hence, it is advised that a company should decide the sequence of implementation and work on them one by one by taking into consideration the availability of resources at their disposal and the priority of the top management.

Suggestions

For IT Sector

 1. Managers should make an assessment of individual potential and assign work on its basis.

2. As and when the employee is able to meet the expectations it should be appreciated by going in for both monetary and non monetary form of appreciation.

3. Create an environment which encourages every employee to open up and share his concerns with trust and confidence.

4. Prepare a specific career progression chart for employees with potential and provide them opportunities for development.

5. Assign them with new projects and overseas assignments whenever possible.

For Education Sector

1. Offer opportunities and sponsorships to attend seminars, conferences and FDPs on Institutions' time.

2. Provide financial incentives for publishing papers in reputed national and international journals.

3. The faculty should be sent to the premier institutions to attend refresher and short term courses.

4. There should be clear communication of expectations regarding academic delivery, student counselling and evaluation.

5. Academic assignments should not be forced but should be assigned on the basis of the interest of the faculty.

For Retail Sector

1. The superior should differentiate between "X" and "Y" type of employees. "X" type of employees should be closely supervised and rewarded financially. For "Y" type, growth opportunities should be discussed and bottlenecks should be addressed.

2. Every employee should be told the significance of his job and his contribution to the organization.

3. As the employees in this sector to a large extent are less mature and educated they need to be trained to deal with customers. Soft skill training in this area is desirable.

4. Every store should recognise the efforts of its employees by introducing a system of appreciation like "Employee of the month / quarters", they can be sent for picnic on company sponsored tours to break the monotony and to encourage the performance.

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