

A Study on the Relationship between Psychological Climate, Employee Engagement and Organizational Citizenship Behavior

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ABSTRACT

Employee engagement is becoming an important area of focus by many HR consultancies in the recent years. Organizations having engaged employees tend to out-perform than employees who are not engaged or disengaged; also it will enable them to compete better in their industry resulting in higher performance, lower turnover, more profitability etc.,. Despite of all this there are still some industries who are ignorant and neglect the importance of having engaged employees. Therefore there is a necessity for more of academic research on employee engagement which helps in creating awareness to these organizations about the prominence of focusing on employee engagement and the findings will also augments the existing literature on employee engagement. The study was conducted on 433 employees working in travel organizations set up in Bangalore with the purpose of determining the relationship psychological climate (antecedent) has on employee engagement and in turn its relationship with organizational citizenship behavior (outcome). The study also determines the mediating relationship of employee engagement between PC and OCB.

Keywords: *Psychological Climate, Employee Engagement, OCB, Travel Organizations*

INTRODUCTION

Travel and tourism industry plays a major role across all countries, and this is more evident with respect to India. It is considered as the largest service industry which contributes a considerable portion to the total

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nation's GDP as well as to the world's GDP. According to the statistics provided by World Travel and Tourism council (WTTC) in 2015, the total GDP contribution by travel and tourism industry in 2014 was 6.7 per cent of India's GDP; with respect to employment in 2014 it was 8.7 per cent of total employment. This is one of the fastest growing sector and India has huge potential to become one of the most chosen destinations among the international tourist because of its diverse culture and heritage. Travel and tourism industry consist of different sub sectors such as hotels, travel trade, airlines, cruises, railways and so on. This study focuses on one of the sub sector of tourism industry i.e. travel trade which is often referred to as travel organisations, tour operators or travel agencies.

According to Vora (2008) it is said unlike earlier a person working in travel organizations is not restricted only to ticketing or "simple vanilla tours" rather the job profile has become broader. Travel organizations have been more dependent by the travellers seeking their help in planning and executing the entire tour, hence satisfaction of travelers' lies based on efficiency of employees in designing a good travel package. Thus travel organizations need tourism professionals specializing in different operational and managerial functions as their job description consists of -tour planning and itinerary designing, travel information, reservation and ticketing services, destination counseling, sales and marketing, finance and accounts, conferences and conventions, visa and travel insurance, foreign exchange services and many more. Hence it is important to have employees who are not only professional in these areas at the same time should also have the willingness to do multiple tasks and this can be achieved only when employees are engaged.

Employee engagement can be explained as a behavior in which employees show care for their work they do and perform all work related activities with passion and enthusiasm. It can also be explained as the emotional connection one has towards their work and organization, as a result it can be seen in their productivity and performance. As it was said by Kruse (2012) that when employees care they become engaged and this in turn leads to use of discretionary effort. Engaged employees are exceptional or they are the ones who put little extra effort than the ordinary employees (Macey, Schneider, Barbera & Young, 2009). According to the study by Gallup (2012) engaged employees have various positive outcomes such as revenue, profit, customer engagement, safety, quality work, and employee retention. There are also other positive outcomes such as higher operating income, net income growth and earnings per share (Ditchburn; n.d); increases retention (Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001;

Siddhanta & Roy (n.d)); higher profitability and financial performance of the companies (Siddhanta & Roy(n.d); Cawe, 2006) and higher productivity (Siddhanta & Roy (n.d); Schaufeli, et al., 2002; Salanova et al, 2003; IABC Research Foundation, 2011). Despite of numerous positive benefits of having engaged employees most of tourism organizations still lack awareness on the importance of having engaged employees.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Employee Engagement (EE)

Khan (1990) was the first to develop this concept which was then called as personal engagement and personal disengagement. Personal engagement was explained as ‘harnessing of organization members’ selves to their work roles’; in engagement, ‘people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively and emotionally during role performances’ and personal disengagement means ‘uncoupling of selves from work roles’; in disengagement ‘people withdraw and defend themselves physically, cognitively and emotionally during role performances’ (p. 694). Though Khan (1990) was the first to develop and explain the concept ‘engagement’, the concept was later reconstructed as ‘Employee Engagement’ which was coined by a consulting firm name Gallup in 1999 and started applying at a business level. Thereby Buckingham and Coffman (1999) defined Employee Engagement as, ‘a fully engaged employee as one who could answer yes to all 12 questions on Gallup’s workplace questionnaire’. There are also many other researchers who has contributed towards the development of concept ‘employee engagement’ (Maslach & Leiter, 1997; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2001; Schaufeli et al, 2001; Harter et al., 2002; May, Gilson & Harter, 2004; Robinson, Perryman & Hayday; 2004; Saks, 2006; Macey & Schneider, 2008; Soane et al, 2012).

Psychological Climate (PC) and its Relationship with Employee Engagement

The concept was first operationalized by Jones & James (1977) which a year later was redefined by James, Hater, Gent and Bruni (1978, p. 786) as ‘The individual’s cognitive representations of relatively proximal situational conditions, that reflect psychologically meaningful interpretations of the situation’. Further two decades later a study was conducted by

Brown and Leigh (1996) on PC, which consisted of six dimensions such as supportive management, clarity and self-expression based on psychological safety and dimensions such as contribution, challenging and recognition, was based on psychological meaningfulness. These are the two well-known and most cited studies on psychological climate, however there are many other studies on climate but they are based on organizational climate. Employee engagement as mentioned is one of the important aspects every organization needs to focus on and there are many individual and organization related antecedents which positively influence employee engagement. One such antecedent is psychological climate, where when employees positively perceive about their work related factor then it positively influences employee engagement. There is couple of studies which has explored the relationship between PC and employee engagement. A study conducted by Conning (2009) on sample size of 175 which included people working in different government contracting and private industry found that when employees positively perceive about PC it leads to higher engagement, also there few other studies which supported and proved this positive relationship (Thayer, 2008; Hart, Caballero and Cooper, 2010; Shuck, 2010; Lee, 2012).

Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB) and its Relationship with Employee Engagement

Organizations having employees who are willing to go an extra mile than their work what they do is always considered to be strength for the company. Bateman and Organ (1983) explained this behavior as 'citizenship behavior' also known as 'organizational citizenship behavior' which is generally demonstrated as reciprocation for some kind of benefit the employees' receives from the organization. Later after few criticisms on OCB by Dyne, Cummings and Park (1995) it was clarified by Organ in (1997) that defining OCB as ERB will not be any more relevant because of this difference of opinions that arise among supervisors, co-workers and employees' and not necessary OCB has to be always non-rewarding at the same time OCB cannot be assured with a guaranteed reward all time. As a result of this challenge and criticism the definition of OCB was updated as 'contributions to the maintenance and enhancement of the social and psychological context that support task performance' (Organ.1997. p.91). Since the inception of OCB there are several authors who has contributed to the theory building of the concept with different dimensions and to mention a few are (Graham, 1991; Morrison, 1994; Dyne, Graham and

Dienesch, 1994; Farh, Earley and Lin, 1997). Any organization would want their employees to willingly go an extra mile than restricting only to their works. This is more required in case of travel organizations because there can be customers walking to the company directly asking queries on various aspects of their travel and demand will be really high during peak seasons. In such circumstances employees should always have the mindset to answer all the queries of the customers and provide them with best solution. Obviously not all the employees working in an organization will able to exhibit citizenship behaviour, only when the employees are engaged they would be willing to go one step ahead than the given work. Thus OCB is the positive outcome of employee engagement, which is proved in many studies and with respect different sectors and countries. Studies which has explored and proved a positive relationship between employee engagement and OCB (Rurkkhum, 2010; Roberson & Strickland, 2010; Islam, Khan, Aamir, Ahmed, Ahmad & Shaukat, 2012; Thomas, 2011; Allameh, Shahriari & Mansoori, 2012; Mansoor et al, 2012; Andrew & Sofian, 2012; Soane et al, 2012; Ariani, 2013).

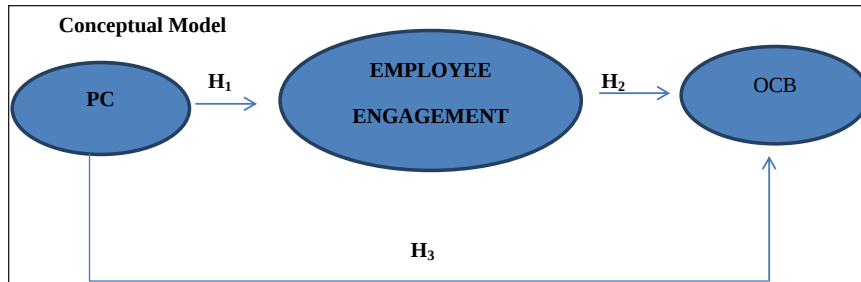
Thus the objective in this study is to explore two direct relationships (a) PC and EE; and (b) EE and OCB. Thud PC is considered as the antecedent of EE and OCB as the outcome variable of EE. The study also tries to determine the mediating relationship of EE between PC and OCB. The following are the objectives and hypothesis that have been developed:

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To determine the employees engagement level in travel organisations
- To measure the influence of psychological climate in driving employee engagement
- To measure the influence of employee engagement on organizational citizenship behavior

Hypotheses

- H_1 : There is a significant and positive influence of psychological climate on employee engagement
- H_2 : There is a significant and positive influence of employee engagement on organizational citizenship behavior
- H_3 : Employee engagement mediates the relationship between PC and OCB



METHODOLOGY

Population and Sampling Technique

Population of the study covers full time employees working in travel organizations (domestic and MNCs) set up in Bangalore. The study ensured that employees answering the questionnaires should be working with these organizations for more than one year because it was mentioned by Byrne (2005) that individuals in their first year of employment in any organization tend to exhibit higher organizational citizenship behavior and are more likely to be engaged in order establish themselves in the organization and make their job secure. A total of 459 questionnaires were distributed out of which 433 usable questionnaires were considered for the final study.

Methods and Tools of Data Collection

The researcher employed a quantitative data collection method by using a survey method. The tools used for the study was standardized questionnaire which was validated by earlier studies. The scales used were for PC (Brown & Leigh, 1996), employee engagement (Soane et al, 2012) and OCB (Podsakoff, Mackenzie, Moorman & Fetter, 1990) where items for each construct was generated based on the OCB definition by Organ (1988).

Validation of the Instrument

A content validation of the questionnaire was done by consulting research experts from academics to ensure that the content and language used

are understandable also managers working in travel organizations were contacted to get review on the suitability of the questionnaire in travel sectors. The experts reviewed the questionnaire and items included in the questionnaires are said to be simple to understand and are appropriate for travel organizations. As a final stage, pilot study was conducted to check the reliability of the questionnaires on a sample of 60 employees and the alpha values for all the scale were good thus without any modification the study proceeded with final data collection.

Tools for Analyzis

Cronbach's alpha was computed to check the reliability of the questionnaires. Mean was calculated also correlation was computed to explore the inter-relationship between the independent and dependent variables and determine the strength of a relationship. All the tests were conducted with the help Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS Version 21). SEM in Analysis of Moment Structure (AMOS) was also used to test to conceptual model which was developed and to test the hypothesis.

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The alpha values of each construct were, employee engagement ($\alpha=.892$), PC ($\alpha=.872$) and OCB ($\alpha=.858$). According to Spector (1992) it was said that the alpha value should be above .70 which explains that the questions measure the same underlying construct. The reliability values ranged between .70 and .90 and thus can be confirmed that the scales adopted are reliable. Mean score of all the constructs was calculated and table 1, 2 and 3 shows the mean values of EE, PC and OCB. Employee engagement was measured on a scale of 5 and from the table it can been seen that mean scores of employee engagement and its sub-dimensions are above 3.5 and closer to 4.0 which indicates that employees in travel organizations are to an extent intellectually, socially and affectively engaged. In case of psychological climate which was measured on a scale of 5, the mean score of sub dimensions as well as the overall mean scores were closer to 4, which further indicates that the respondents positively perceive about their organizations work environment to be psychologically meaningful and safe. The mean score of OCB and its sub dimensions such as altruism, conscientiousness, courtesy and civic virtue had a mean score between

3.5- 4.0 which indicates that employees in travel organizations are willing to exhibit citizenship behavior.

Table 1 Mean Scores of Employee Engagement

Employee engagement dimensions	Mean
Intellectual engagement	3.99
Social engagement	3.60
Affective engagement	3.82
Overall mean	3.81

Table 2 Mean Scores of Psychological Climate

Psychological climate dimensions	Mean
Supportive management	3.83
Role clarity	3.83
Contribution	3.78
Recognition	3.63
Self-expression	3.77
Challenge	3.95
Overall mean	3.79

Table 3 Mean Scores of Organizational Citizenship Behavior

Organizational citizenship behavior dimensions	Mean
Altruism	3.74
Conscientiousness	3.77
Sportsmanship	3.50
Courtesy	3.73
Civic virtue	3.98
Overall mean	3.73

In order to explore the interrelationship between the independent and dependent variables and to determine the strength of a relationship correlation was used. The correlation between EE and PC ($r=.393$) and EE and OCB ($r=.673$) were calculated and found there existed a positive moderate relationship between the variables. After determining the strength of the relationship SEM was used to test the hypothesis related to the study and a two stage approach suggested by Anderson and Gerbing (1988) was adopted. In the first stage measurement models for all the variables

were done and the validity of the constructs was assessed based on the fit indices values and the following values were considered. The second stage is structural model testing was done to determine the relationship and to test the hypothesized model.

First Stage

The fit indices of all the constructs were assessed and the results are shown in table 4. The hypothesized model is set to be acceptable only if the value of GFI exceeds .90 (Byrne, 1994). The threshold value of AGFI should exceed 0.90, even if the value is above .80 it is acceptable (Baumgartner & Homburg, 1995; Doll, Xia & Torkzadeh, 1994). The threshold value of IFI must exceed .90 (Bollen, 1989), TLI with the most lenient threshold value being equal or greater than .80 (Garson, 2004). CFI value greater than .90 indicates a good fit (Ullman, 2006), however the lower threshold value .80 can be considered (Byrne, 1994b:24). It was suggested by Hooper et al (2008) that SRMR is considered to indicate good fit for values less than 0.08. RMSEA should have ideally value less than .50 (Stieger, 1990), however researchers has also recommended value less than .80 is acceptable (Browne & Cudeck, 1993), but not exceeding .80 (Hu & Bentler, 1998). Thus the fit indices are found to have values which are acceptable and the model is considered to have a good fit and is considered for further analysis.

Table 4 Fit Statistic of Model

	CMIN/DF	GFI	AGFI	IFI	TLI	CFI	SRMR	RMSEA
EE	3.342	.962	.929	.980	.969	.980	.0304	.074
PC	3.086	.907	.870	.902	.875	.900	.0567	.069
OCB	2.608	.903	.876	.901	.884	.900	.0684	.061

Second stage

In this stage structural model testing was done to test the relationship between (a) PC and EE and (b) EE and OCB also hypothesized model was tested.

Results of testing the direct relationship

The regression weight of paths between H₁: PC and employee engagement (B=1.169) and H₂: employee engagement and OCB (B=.374), hence the relationship. It was suggested by Byrne (2001) that

in SEM the significance level is based on the critical ratio (CR) of the regression estimate. If the CR values is greater than or equal to 2.58 then the significance level is 99% (0.01) and if the CR value is greater than or equal to 1.96 but less than 2.58, then the significance level is 95% (0.05). Thus the hypothesis H_1 and H_2 are accepted at a significance level of 0.01. The standardized values (β) are also shown in table 5.

Table 5 The Relationship between The Antecedents (PC and EE) and (OCB and EE)

Direct Effect	B (unstandard- ized estimates)	S.E	C.R	P	β (Standardized estimates)
PC----->EE	1.169	.301	3.889	***	.399
EE----->OCB	.374	.066	5.707	***	.843

*** Significant at 0.01

Results of testing the mediating relationship

The study also measured to see the relationship PC has directly on OCB and how the relationship affected when employee engagement was considered as a mediating variable. The results are shown in table 6 with standardized estimates of direct effect, indirect effect and total effect. The mediation effect was tested with the help of bootstrap method to establish bias-corrected items and valid confidence interval. SEM bootstrapping helps in measuring the indirect effect of predictor variable on the outcome variable.

Table 6 The Mediating Effect of Employee Engagement between PC and OCB

RELATIONSHIP	DIRECT EFFECT	P	RELATIONSHIP (EE-Mediating variable)	INDIRECT EF- FECT	P	TOTAL EFFECT
PC----->OCB	0.259	.001	PC----->EE--->OCB	0.438	.000	0.697

From the analysis it could be interpreted that the direct relationship between PC and OCB is significant, however it was only 0.259, whereas

when introduced mediation the indirect effect is higher and it was 0.438, which was also significant. Thus it can be concluded that there is direct relationship between PC and OCB, but when EE mediates the relationship it becomes stronger thus can be concluded that there is partial mediation. Thus it can be said that EE partially mediates the relationship between PC and OCB, a similar relationship was also determined in a previous study with respect to hospitality businesses (Kataria et al, 2013; Strydom, 2014). The validity of the hypothesized model is assessed with the goodness of fit indices value and overall fit indices values arrived were good; CMIN/DF=2.190, GFI=.903, AGFI=.889, SRMR=.613, IFI=.914, TLI=.908 and CFI=0.910 and RMSEA= 0.052. Thus the fit indices values were in the acceptable range the model can be said to be valid and proved empirically.

LIMITATIONS

- The findings of the study cannot be generalized as it is limited only to travel organizations in Bangalore.
- The study used a self-report information hence it can lead to some amount of socially desirable responses especially in case of OCB. Even though the respondents are informed about the anonymity of their identity still the respondents would try inflating and giving more of positive responses. Thus in future it is recommended to collect data from multiple sources like from peers, managers and sub-ordinates.
- The study adopted non- probability sampling techniques, thus the sample selected is not a representative sample of the population.

CONCLUSION

Jack and Suzy Wlech has said that employee engagement should be considered always as the first goal irrespective of whether a company is small or large; otherwise it will be difficult for companies to survive in long run. If the employees are disengaged then they fail to believe in firms' mission and do not understand how to attain company's objectives (as cited in Macey et al, 2009, p.1). Thus from the study it can be concluded that the employees in travel organizations are engaged to an extent. Organizations can take more measures to improve the psychological climate of the organization which in turn will benefit to keep the employees engaged. Because when employees feel that their managers are supportive and

communications from the managers are clear they tend to engage more in their job and roles that is given to them (Lee, 2012). When employees perceive positively about their work environment it in turns leads to greater level of employee engagement and the findings are consistent with a previous studies (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008; Schaufeli et al., 2009; Shuck et al., 2011; Xanthopoulou et al., 2009., Strydom, 2014). Also it was found the when employees are engaged they are willing to exhibit a citizenship behavior and these finding were in consistent with previous studies (Avey et al. 2008; Strydom, 2014). Employees' exhibiting proactive behaviour to a great extent is important in travel organizations as this is one of the sectors were during peak season the work would be really high and employees working should always have the willingness to go out of their work and take up extra works. The study also proved that engaged employees would like to remain with the organization which in turns helps travel organization to reduce labour turnover. Thus these findings of the study would help the travel industry to understand how to strategize so that they can make their employees engaged in the organization.

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