

Job Satisfaction as a Function of Leadership Support for High Performance Engagement: A Study of Indian Healthcare Executives

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ABSTRACT

Leadership is an important attribute for high performance engagement. Leadership support motivates and influences high performance engagement in the healthcare sector to accomplish goals and stretch goals with commitment and passion beyond compliance. Based on Engagement theory and theory of performance the authors hypothesized that perceived leadership support for high performance engagement will be positively correlated with job satisfaction and the correlation will be highest with the facet of motivation. Empirical results (n=88) from the health care executives in South India supported both the hypothesis. The global scenario management and its implications are discussed and recommended.

Keywords: *Job Satisfaction, High Performance, Engagement, Leadership Support, High Performance Engagement*

INTRODUCTION

High Performance Engagement in organizations has been increased over the recent years (IBM, 2014) as a blend of performance excellence and employee-engagement. High performance work system significantly moderates work engagement (Rabiul, Patwari & Panha, 2022) at the same time, having a direct significant relationship with organizational engagement climate and employee voice (Badru, Karadas & Olugbade, 2022). Employee-engagement is the level of commitment and willingness the employee puts to work, to use the full potential to contribute to the

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organization and walk the extra mile. Employee engagement (Baillien, Salin, Bastiaensen & Notelaers, 2022). The impact of high performance work systems on employee attitudes and employee engagement was researched and established that, high performance work systems positively affect the employees' positive mood and job satisfaction and in turn will lead to high employee engagement (Huang, Ma & Meng, 2017), whilst, the interactive effect of high performance human resource practices and the leader member exchange through psychological empowerment was found to have significant influence on employee engagement (Jie He, Morrison & Zhang, 2021). It was also found that high performance work system had significant relation to human resource wellbeing and performance attributions, and this in turn also had an interactive effect on employee engagement and employee outcomes (Alfes, Veld & Furstenberg, 2021). Employee engagement is an antecedent to high performance, and in an enabling context it is committed leadership, compelling vision, strength of values and clarity in mission, while the key drivers are characteristics of job roles, environment in the organization and the support given by the management. If such a climate exists within the organization, the individual outcomes will include highly engaged, high-performing employees, while the organizational outcomes will be improved employee productivity, cost reduction, retention, reputation, customer centricity, safety, and quality (Lowe, 2012). In high performance engagement there is the full involvement, enthusiasm, inspiration, and passion of employees to work in an organization and are fully concerned about the organization's future, and are adaptable and flexible to the organization (Crim & Seijts, 2006). Performance is an observable thing employee do using their skills to attain organizational goals (Campbell et al., 1993), while there is a trend in shortage of skill (McKinsey, 2015). The performance is also construed as the sum total of the expected value to the organization, the discrete and unique behavioral episodes, of each individual estimated over a period of time (Motowidlo & Peterson, 2008) and that performance is an accomplishment or execution of orders (Armstrong, 2006). The high performance engagement of employees is inclusive of employee productivity which in turn affects the organizational outcome, efficiency and effectiveness in achieving its goals (Motowidlo, Borman & Schmidt, 1997). Engagement links performance on the assigned job role and further extra-roles (Baker et al., 2004). This was reiterated by Schaufeli et al., in 2006 and it was found that job role performance is linked to turnover intentions (Halbesleben & Wheeler, 2008). These observations

imply that high performance is an outcome of engagement which includes productivity and affects the overall outcome of organization performance.

While it was observed that there is a linkage between engagement and performance of business units (Harter et al., 2002), links were also found between service settings and client satisfaction (Salanova et al., 2005), performance outcomes and engagement (Bakker et al., 2008), engagement and safe working in work settings (Nahrgang et al., 2011). The indication is that engagement precedence naturally links performance, in the in-role of the job, while the extra-role situational demands, business unit performance, client satisfaction, performance outcomes, customer safety and helps to lessen attrition in organizations. Engagement was also viewed as the emotional connect and the psychological level of employee investment in the organization (Aon Hewitt, 2017) and was found to be a full mediator of the effects of high performance work systems on performance (Karatepe & Olugbade, 2016). Employee engagement is the connection and commitment level to an organization and the employee engagement trends may be measured using a '3S' ('Say', 'Stay' and 'Strive') model. The aspects of 'Say', is when the employees say positive things of the place of work, 'Stay', is the intend to stay long-term, and 'Strive', is if there is motivation, for the organization to succeed. Thus, in organizations, if the environment is conducive for high performance engagement, employee turnover intentions are reduced, they say positive, about the organization, stay and strive for organizational excellence.

To measure performance engagement, the need for an efficient performance management system, calls to build robust practices, driven by strong framework, measured continuously, appraised periodically, rewarded and benefitted accordingly. Performance management system has to be transparent and strong to identify the faulty behaviour of employees, identify the problem areas, address issues segment wise, to sensitize policy formulation, and continuously addressing room for improvement. The metrics have to be in place, to utilize resources, and to induce growth through performance engagement, and change management. In high performance, performance not only indicates productivity but also human aspect of work (Garg, Punia & Jain, 2019) and is rated as a value creation mechanism and value enhancement for all the stakeholders. Further, organizations need to look for innovative and unconventional practices to achieve high performance engagement practices, since performance is the production of valued results by any individual or group to engage in a collaborative effort, and is a journey and

not a destination and thus, developing the performance is a journey and the level of the performance describes each location in a journey and there by characterizes the effectiveness or quality of a performance (Elger, 2007).

Needless to say, high performance engagement is applying extra energy, time and persistence to accomplish stretch goals and is achieved through the right mix of motivation, skills, competencies, job-design or role and responsibilities (Levenson, 2017). Whilst motivation and competencies are catered to some extent in organizations, job-design with equal importance is receiving less attention (Levenson, 2017). Factors influencing high performance are performers mindset, the 'how' to engage with positive emotions, to constantly deal with challenging goals, to take failure as natural to attain high performance, physical immersion into the environment that is social and intellectual, to elevate and also stimulate performance, through personal and professional development, social interactions, disciplinary knowledge, active learning, emotions both positive and negative, and also spiritual alignment (Elger, 2007). Strategy for fostering immersion is creating quality learning environment, reflective practices, learning experiences to observe current performance level, analyze strengths and areas for improvements, develop identity, and improve levels of knowledge. Thus, High performance work design gives employees the autonomy, breaking down the hierarchical ways of organizing and managing work.

The bounded rationality and cognitive limitations enforce psychological insights for desired behaviors (O'Leary et al., 2016), which explains the common employee behaviour of performance, based on consequences and altered for favorable and unfavorable consequences, in turn affecting their performance and getting disengaged in the long run. Disengaged employee slowly gets indifferent or aggressive and is likely to leave, with a clear correlation between employee disengagement and turnover (Saks, 2006; Sundaray, 2011). Needless to say, recruitment and selection can only get the right people on board physically, it is employee engagement that gets them on board emotionally (Nortje, 2017). The disengaged and not engaged employees outnumber the engaged employees worldwide and outnumbered engaged employees by nearly 2-1 in a survey by Gallup (2011-2012). TINY pulse (2017) survey responses from over a million anonymous employees, from 1000 organizations, all over the world revealed that a happier employee refer talent more effectively, that there was 11% drop from 2016 for the number of employees who felt connected to workplace and colleagues,

whilst 27% felt organizations try for team building efforts, but management's failure to foster cross-functional relationships increases the gap among departments. Only 26% of those surveyed felt that they are valued at their workplace which was a drop of about 16% from receiving recognition from superior with no deserving recognition or if received a late recognition. Only 49% believe they have a clear career path opposed to 62% of their managers who believe the same. Career development opportunities are adequate only for 26% of employees as opposed to 50% of managers. Only 25% of the employees felt their management is transparent compared to 42% of managers' perception of the same. Further, only 21% of employees believed that the performance review process in their company is good. The report concludes that every leader intends to bring out the best in their employees and to have a high performance team but in order to do so the leader needs to start making the necessary changes to build a stellar workplace where employees thrive. It was found that the engagement score of employees worldwide for a period from 2011-2017, and as of 2017, only 65% were engaged (Statista.com, 2018). Saks (2006) identified the duality of engagement which is not only distinct but also complimentary and how employees are engaged is likely to depend on the work design, and the work-design promotes the productivity (Levenson, 2017). Nonetheless, understanding this duality of engagement enables employees to improve the levels of employment. Studies (Baggs et al., 1999; Baggs, et al., 1992; Miller, 2001) suggested quality outcomes to emerge from collaborative interdisciplinary relationships.

Benefits of high performance engagement at work (Stairs & Gilpin, 2010) are, on average employees take fewer sickness leave, while actively disengaged employees take an average more than six days a year. There is a 4% difference on average in employee turnover between organizations in the top and bottom quartiles on employee engagement. This may not sound much, but it equates to \$12,000 per unit per year and employees who are most committed perform 20% better and give a 57% increase in discretionary effort, a one-point (on the measurement scale) increase in the commitment of employee can lead to a monthly increase of \$200,000 per unit; there is a 2% difference in customer satisfaction between organizations in the top and bottom quartiles on employee engagement, equating to millions of dollars of revenue per organization per year. Employee satisfaction, employee engagement and performance are related to the outcomes that are meaningful and is important to organizations. The mindset of employees is also a crucial factor.

The need for each employee to understand the purpose of the organization is essential as conceptualized by IBM Technical White paper (2014) that established high performance engagement as a combination of optimum performance excellence and high engagement. Whilst in a manufacturing organization, the purpose is high productivity, high quality, low scrap, minimum waste and minimal operational expense, Service organization purpose looks into customer experience. Performance engagement is the full involvement, enthusiasm, inspiration, and passion of employees to work in an organization and employees who are engaged are concerned about the organization's future and are adaptable and flexible to the organization (Crim & Seijts, 2006). The expected value to the organization, and the discrete behavioral episodes (Motowidlo, 2008), an engaged employee brings to the table through cognitive focus and emotional connect to the organization is invaluable (Campbell et al., 1993). Employee performance is inclusive of employee productivity which in turn affects the organizational outcome, efficiency and effectiveness in achieving its goals (Motowidlo, 1997).

Rationale for a Positive Correlation Form the Underpinning Theories

Theoretically, Kahn (1990), the founding father of engagement, in his seminal paper about psychological conditions of personal engagement and disengagement at work, described engagement as depth of selves and disengagement as uncoupling of selves, with physical, cognitive and emotional withdrawal in role performance. An organization's best assets are its' people and thus, recruiting rightly, striving to retain them, constantly developing them through continuous training and skill acquisition, and using this acquisition and knowledge as a competitive advantage drives the organization forward. Thus, performance engagement is a construct with correlated dimensions, "in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively and emotionally during role performance" (Kahn's, 1990, p. 694). Equity, fairness, rewards, and motivation (Adams, 1963) and reinforced desirable behaviour (Skinner, 1938; 1953) drives engagement, while motivation drives and predicts behaviour (Vroom, 1964). The rewards are a motivational factor for employees and they themselves judge it as fair or unfair, the outcomes are balanced subjectively and compared with other employees. In the process if they feel that equality or fairness is absent then the effect is seen in the reduction of the quality and quantity of work or as turnover. On the other

hand, if employees feel they are highly rewarded, then the motivation for higher performance engagement is multifold. Objective observations, perceptual inequities and situational inequities also exist. Perceived inequities need to be reduced and the theory of equity throws light to the fact that employees overreact to inequities more, than to perceptual inequities. Behavior patterns emerge from operant conditioning and past consequences and are conditioned for rewards or to avoid negative or unpleasant consequences (Skinner, 1938; 1953). Designing the external environment can motivate employees to ignore the feelings of internal conflicts, impressions, attitude and such cognitive behaviors. Reinforcement for good performance based on the reward aspect will impact every action of employee and behaviours will be predictable. Motivation and behavior can be predicted, and it is a function of expectation, behaviour, and contribution, therein, an employee's belief about his/her effort and performance, and the reward desirability in performance are determined by the motivation received (Vroom, 1964) and it drives employees to be engaged to perform to the full potential and commitment. Elger (2007), helps to identify what constitutes performance and explains that every human being is capable of producing extraordinary accomplishments and that performance engagement is all about the opportunities for growth, quality and commitment to mission, purpose and vision, the sense of belongingness, the feeling of what one can do and what one can get, through the performance drivers of leadership, brand, work role and organizational practices. The outcome of performance engagement is employee satisfaction and loyalty for employees and for business it is talent retention, operational productivity, customer satisfaction, financial growth and shareholder returns. While engagement is a psychological construct, the practice of positive psychology (Seligman, 1999) can be an approach. Investing in best resources for manager and leaders, and best practices will engage employees, produce superior performances, higher success levels and customer satisfaction. People who are sensible try positive thinking patterns to achieve in life. Positive psychology refers to the rigor of scientific experiments discovering reliable and repeatable phenomenon. Positive psychology at work is embedded in the strategies of positive leadership. Positive leadership helps to bring out the best of individuals and organizations, ensuring the right objectives as well as the resources of the entity to cultivate the optimum level (Allio, 2011). The factors can be work satisfaction, organizational ownership, positive effect,

commitment (Luthans et al., 2007), perceived organization support, personality trait and passion. Leadership motivation is essential for engaging employees. Avolio and Gardner (2005) established authentic leadership to the five positive leadership theories including transformation leadership theory, behavioural theory, the self-concept based theory, the servant leadership theory, and the spiritual leadership theory. Positive leadership also enhances the positive reaction from the employees, and they accept changes to work with the new requirements of the organization (Leavy, 2011) fostering engagement. Leaders have to constantly find out the lead and the lag for performance engagement, total number of engaged and disengaged workers and also an engaged workforce should be in the priority list of leaders, continuously eliminating reasons for disengagement through behavioural strategies. This in turn will bring profitability and a competitive advantage. This is not easy and sustainable but if not taken care of, organizations cannot excel. Contemporary management (Jones & George, 2008) defined the leadership aspect as the process an individual exercise and also influence over others for inspiring, motivating and directing their activities to help achieve group or organizational goals. Leaders have to strive for high performance engagement through the right mix of motivation (engagement), skills (competencies) and job-design (role/s and responsibilities), (Levenson, 2017). Motivation and competencies are catered to some extent in organizations, but job-design is often ignored (Levenson, 2017). Employees wish to contribute to organizations that they are proud off and they achieve competencies to do a job well done, and find satisfaction for the same (Simons, 2000). The compilation of the body of research dictates the high performance engagement context and, on that pillar, and further through a preliminary exploratory study, the high performance engagement questionnaire was developed by the researcher.

This paper examines the relationship between perceived leadership support for high performance engagement and job satisfaction, and the hypotheses were tested as below:

H₁: Job satisfaction of an employee and that employee's perception of leadership support for high performance engagement will be positively correlated.

H₂: The relationship between job satisfaction and perceived leadership support for high performance engagement will be highest for the motivation from leadership.

METHOD

Healthcare executives, in South India (n=88) were surveyed. 75% of the respondents were males and the rest female executives. Most of the respondents had a postgraduate degree in management from tier 1 cities and top institutions. The mean age of the respondents was 36.81 years of age with a standard deviation (SD) of 8.66. The mean experience in years was 10.73 years with an SD of 8.70. The surveys were anonymous with voluntary participation and to the organizations only the summary of the reports were revealed. Therefore, the executives were free to provide information on the perceived leadership support to high performance engagement, job satisfaction and their demographic detailing. Leadership support to high performance engagement was measured with 4 items, Job satisfaction was measured using 5 items and High performance engagement with 6 items (Appendix).

ANALYSIS

This study conducted bivariate correlations between items of job satisfaction with the perceived leadership support to high performance engagement. The assessment of leadership support to high performance engagement was measured such that the top scores indicated high commitment from leadership to high performance engagement. Job satisfaction measures were scored so that top scores indicated high satisfaction. The positive correlations supported our hypothesis as the perceived leadership support to high performance engagement increases job satisfaction also increases.

RESULTS

The possible values, means and SDs of the variables are analyzed and reported in this paper (Table 1). The correlations between the perceived leadership support to high performance engagement and job satisfaction are evidenced in Table 2. The correlations were not significant at the 0.01 level (two tailed) Thus hypothesis 1 is not supported. The correlation to high performance engagement was highest with motivation and hypothesis 2 was supported.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Leadership Support	3.64	0.54
Satisfaction with leadership motivation	2.78	0.62
Satisfaction with promotion	2.88	0.57
Satisfaction with pay and responsibilities	2.98	0.56
Satisfaction with career development	2.73	0.55
Satisfaction with merit based promotion	2.89	0.47

Range from 1 to 4 with 1 representing strongly disagree and 4 strongly agree.

Table 2: Bivariate Correlations

Satisfaction Correlated with Perceived Leadership Support for High Performance Engagement	Correlations
Satisfaction with leadership motivation	0.01*
Satisfaction with promotion	0.12
Satisfaction with pay and responsibilities	0.11
Satisfaction with career development	0.07
Satisfaction with merit based promotion	0.06

N=88, $p < 0.05$

DISCUSSION

This study stated and tested the relationship between the perceived leadership support for high performance engagement and the job satisfaction of employees. This was premised on the engagement theory and performance theory, that employees who perceive the leadership support for high performance engagement will be more satisfied with their jobs. Nevertheless, the correlations were not significant; however, there was a strong correlation between perceived leadership support and high-performance engagement, particularly in the area of motivational support. Cultural differences for the postulation of hypotheses must have contributed to the findings. Many researchers caution against generalizing management theories (Hofstede, 1980; Wiersema & Bantel, 1992). In India, high power distance persists, which suggests that healthcare executives may still accept leadership decisions passively. This study may be extended to a global context to validate this assumption. Future research may also examine

the perceived leadership support for high performance engagement and job satisfaction based on the processes, whether it may increase the trust factor for the processes, accountability and credibility enhancement. A lack of trust may reduce job satisfaction; conversely, satisfied employees may perceive higher levels of trust and leadership support. Future research could examine whether individual outcomes are influenced by leadership support for high-performance engagement, as well as the potential impact on organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behaviors. Additionally, it would be important to investigate if a lack of trust induces stress and creates a deficiency in psychological safety. This study could be extended to many under-researched countries, providing valuable insights for practitioners, policymakers, and contributing to the existing literature.

APPENDIX

Items Used

Leadership Support for High Performance Engagement

- Leadership in my organization does not tolerate unethical behavior.
- Leadership in my organization keeps motivating always.
- Leadership supports corporate gain ethically.
- Leadership supports employee participation in decision making.

Job Satisfaction

- I am paid better than my competitor organizations.
- The pay is mapped with my responsibilities.
- I am paid generously with variable pay.
- Promotion is based on merit in my organization.
- I am satisfied with my career development.

High Performance Engagement

- High performance is modelled and bench-marked.
- I am proud of my organization.
- I do not think of leaving my organization.
- Performance standards are clearly defined.
- High performance work culture gives competitive advantage.
- More than individual wins, teamwork and outcomes are focused upon.

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Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest among the authors.

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